

Title: The Role of the Mongols in the Development of Moscow's National Hegemony

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Although the Golden Horde's policies were intended only to control and extract tribute from Russia, the country's subservience to the Mongols allowed Moscow to develop from the small, unimpressive principality it was during the thirteenth century into an influential hegemon. The Horde's role as kingmaker within northern Russia greatly benefitted Moscow. The Horde's desire to prevent any one of Russia's numerous principalities from becoming too powerful led them to consistently select Muscovite princes to rule the grand principality of Vladimir-Suzdal due to the fact that Moscow was initially weak. This ensured that Moscow would not be subdued by prominent rivals within Vladimir-Suzdal, such as the city of Tver. As Moscow's power increased, the alliance cultivated between Muscovite Grand Princes and the Horde's Khans sustained Mongol favoritism towards Moscow while encouraging the Horde to prevent Catholic nations from dominating Moscow, a fate that other Russian principalities suffered. As Muscovite aristocrats reaped both power and profit, Moscow's Grand Princes used the conditions afforded to them under this alliance to triple Moscow's territory during the three centuries that Russia functioned as a Mongol tributary state. Finally, Moscow's stunning victory against the Mongols at the Battle of Kulikovo in 1380 gave rise to a brand of Russian nationalism that held Moscow to be the leader among Russia's principalities. Moscow's consolidation of power and territory, coupled with its newfound prestige, allowed them to replace their Mongol overlords and exert influence throughout Russia for the next five centuries and into the modern day.

Works Cited

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