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Dr. Rasha Mahmoud Elsayed Eid El Baz

Assistant professor, Political Science, School of Economics and politics,
New Giza University (NGU)

[rasha.elbaz @ngu.edu.eg](mailto:rasha.elbaz@ngu.edu.eg)

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Dr. Rasha Mahmoud Elsayed Eid El Baz

[rasha.elbaz @ngu.edu.eg](mailto:rasha.elbaz@ngu.edu.eg)

Abstract:

This research explores the dynamics of great power competition in Africa, analyzing the roles of major global actors such as China, the United States, Russia, and the European Union. The study examines the economic, political, and social impacts of these interactions on Africa. Findings highlight how foreign investments influence economic development and dependency, affect political sovereignty, and contribute to social inequalities. The study provides insights into strategies for maintaining African autonomy and leveraging international relations for sustainable growth, offering valuable perspectives for policymakers and scholars on the continent's evolving geopolitical landscape.

Keywords: Geopolitical Influence, Economic Sovereignty, Regional Stability, Neocolonialism, Resource Competition, Strategic Alliances.

تنافس القوى العظمى في أفريقيا: التحديات الحالية والسيناريوهات المستقبلية

د. رشا محمود السيد عيد الباز
مدرس العلوم السياسية بكلية الاقتصاد والسياسة
جامعة الجيزة الجديدة

المستخلص:

تبحث هذه الورقة في تأثير صراعات القوى العالمية - الصين-روسيا-الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية-الاتحاد الأوربي- على أفريقيا، وتسلط الضوء على التحديات الجيوسياسية والاقتصادية الناشئة عن التأثيرات الخارجية. فبينما تتنافس القوى الكبرى على المزايا الاستراتيجية، غالبا ما تجد البلدان الأفريقية نفسها على مفترق طرق المصالح المتنافسة، مما يؤثر على مسارات تنميتها. ومن ثم تتناول الدراسة التأثيرات الاقتصادية والسياسية والاجتماعية لهذه التفاعلات على الدول الإفريقية. كما تكشف النتائج عن كيفية تأثير الاستثمارات الأجنبية على التنمية الاقتصادية، وتأثيرها على السيادة السياسية، والمساهمة في التفاوتات الاجتماعية. وتقدم الدراسة رؤى حول استراتيجيات الحفاظ على استقلال إفريقيا والاستفادة من العلاقات الدولية لتحقيق نمو مستدام، مما يوفر وجهات نظر قيمة لصانعي السياسات والباحثين حول المشهد الجيوسياسي المتطور للقارة.

وتستكشف الدراسة كيفية تأثير هذه الديناميات على الحوكمة والسياسات الاقتصادية والاستقرار الإقليمي. وتؤكد الدراسة على حاجة الدول الأفريقية إلى التغلب على هذه التعقيدات لتحقيق النمو المستدام والاستقلال السياسي. وتقدم توصيات لتعزيز القدرة على الصمود وتعزيز التعاون الإقليمي في مواجهة الضغوط العالمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النفوذ الجيوسياسي، السيادة الاقتصادية، الاستقرار الإقليمي، الاستعمار الجديد، المنافسة على الموارد، التحالفات الاستراتيجية.

Introduction

The primary drivers of conflict in Africa are often conceptualized as British colonial boundaries or European thoughtless boots-on-ground policies which divided societies. The dynamics to these narratives are, however, not one-directional. Their smaller, subjugated less powerful African counterparts often dictated Britain and European Union. In light of such factors, we will be analyzing the interplay of global, particularly US, Chinese, Russian, EU powers' struggle for Africa. Being the chessboards of greater powers, Africa's burgeoning resources are thrust into the fire of geopolitical expedience. This essay will study if, and if yes then how, the acceleration of energy unfolds by powerful extrinsic states affects the destiny of African nations.

Africa's 17% exports are drastically pinched. 45 states Luxembourg-based "Court of Conciliation", renamed the International Court of Justice in 1946, asserts; admitted in abundance and as foundational in respecting the "injuries resulting from the contravention of" treaties such as compensation. Beyond explaining history, such statements also give rare acknowledgement to the role of extra-African powers in entrenching the Congo's downfall. Even after officially bowing out at independence, Belgium remained discreetly cloaked in the DRC's injustices. Domestically, massive evident trends exist as well. (Ajiola, 2021)

The world has changed significantly since the 1990s with the collapse of the Soviet Union, ending the Cold War. An unipolar moment of supremacy unfolded when only one superpower, the United States, governed politics. After several waves of democratization in the world, this expansion was frustrated with the emergence of authoritarian governments entrenched

in power, and by the end of the 1990s, it was believed that the process was partly reversed. The aftermath of the invasion of Iraq led by the United States opened up a political space for other countries or groups of countries to challenge this hegemony. The emergence of China as a major economic player, the struggle for power in Europe with the resurrection of Russia and the EU, and the rejuvenation of Islamic jihad worldwide marked a new era of multipolarity or fragmented power worldwide, which posed a complex global challenge to U.S. interests. In this context, it is not surprising that a worry arose within the United States of a great power competition reminiscent of the pre-Cold War era with the two major ideological rivals, Russia and China.

Even though this concern refers primarily to Asia and Europe, Africa is part of this equational relationship. Western Central Africa, prior to the War on Terror phase, being one of the most complex political spaces to study, understood underdeveloped states impregnated by poverty, always struggling against either Western, Soviet and more recently U.S. domination and influence. External activities of these powers have always been conflicting and thus worsening local realities. Interventions have mostly added complexity rather than offered solutions to the problems, similar to the historical lesson of Western colonization of Africa. Given these complexities, the assumption upon which this study is constructed is that Africa, in this contemporary cold war phase, or great power competition phase, is entering a new conditionality, the outcome of which is extremely difficult to apprehend, along a continuum of a huge pregnant reality of the failures of the previous situations. (Ramani, 2023)

The degree to which the central hypostudy could be substantiated or rejected would historically contextualize these three parts of the greater

contestation and analyze the dynamic of this competitive tridimensional in Africa itself rather macroscopic ideological perspectives. The aim of this study is neither to endorse nor reject a priori any specific ideological or rival diagnosis but to understand the mechanisms, the effects, and the outcomes in the local, national and global contexts, and the role of individuals within these structuring processes. It will be understood not as the dilemma of power, particularly great power, against redistribution of power, but rather of inequalities throbbing through the whole world political space.

Research Problem

The resurgence of great power competition in Africa poses significant challenges and opportunities for the continent. While this competition brings increased investment and development potential, it also raises concerns about economic dependency, political sovereignty, and social disparities. African nations must navigate complex relationships with global powers such as China, the United States, Russia, and the European Union.

This research seeks to address the following main question:

What are the current challenges of great power competition in Africa, and how might these influence future geopolitical scenarios on the continent?

By exploring this question, the study aims to understand the multifaceted impacts of great power competition on Africa, providing insights into how African nations can leverage foreign engagements for sustainable development while safeguarding their sovereignty and cultural identity.

to answer previous main research questions the study will work to answer the following subquestions:

1. *How does Chinese investment through the Belt and Road Initiative affect the long-term economic sustainability of African nations?*
2. *What are the implications of U.S. trade policies on African economic development and diversification?*
3. *In what ways do Russian military engagements influence the political stability and sovereignty of African states?*
4. *How do European Union policies and aid programs impact governance and democratic processes in Africa?*
5. *How does great power competition shape social inequality and access to resources within African communities?*
6. *What cultural shifts have resulted from increased exposure to foreign media and values due to global power influence?*
7. *How do foreign investments in African natural resources impact environmental sustainability and local communities?*
8. *In what ways does the presence of foreign military bases and security assistance programs affect regional security dynamics?*

These questions aim to explore the diverse dimensions of great power competition and its consequences for African nations.

The importance of this study mainly includes:

1. Understanding Geopolitical Dynamics, Analyzing how interactions between global powers shape Africa's political landscape and influence international relations.

2. Economic Implications, Investigating the impact of foreign investments on Africa's economic growth, development strategies, and potential dependency.
3. Sovereignty and Governance, Examining how external influences affect political sovereignty and governance structures, offering insights into maintaining autonomy.
4. Social and Cultural Impact, Exploring the effects on social inequalities and cultural transformations, providing a basis for policies that preserve cultural identity.
5. Security and Stability, Assessing how foreign military presence and aid contribute to regional security or exacerbate conflicts.

This research can guide policymakers in navigating complex international relationships and fostering sustainable development in Africa.

Litrature review.

The resurgence of great power competition in Africa has become a focal point of scholarly analysis, reflecting the continent's growing geopolitical significance. This literature review explores how global powers, particularly China, the United States, Russia, and the European Union, engage with African nations and the resulting impacts on economic development, political sovereignty, and social dynamics. By examining historical contexts and contemporary strategies, this review highlights the complexities and consequences of these interactions, offering insights into the challenges and opportunities facing Africa in a multipolar world.

1. Alden, C., & Large, D. (2019). *China and Africa: Building peace and security cooperation on the continent*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Discusses China's role in African peace and security, highlighting strategic interests and implications for African nations.

2. Brautigam, D. (2009). *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa*. Oxford University Press.

Provides an in-depth analysis of China's economic engagement in Africa, focusing on aid, trade, and investment.

3. Cheru, F., & Obi, C. (Eds.). (2010). *The Rise of China and India in Africa: Challenges, Opportunities and Critical Interventions*. Zed Books.

Explores the impact of rising powers in Africa, assessing economic and political consequences.

4. Shinn, D. H., & Eisenman, J. (2012). *China and Africa: A Century of Engagement*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Offers a comprehensive history of Sino-African relations, detailing economic and diplomatic interactions.

5. Stent, A. (2019). *Putin's World: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*. Twelve.

Analyzes Russia's global strategy, including its re-engagement in Africa through military and economic means.

6. Taylor, I. (2014). *Africa Rising? BRICS - Diversifying Dependency*. James Currey.

Critiques the notion of Africa's economic rise, examining the role of BRICS countries and dependency issues.

7. Vines, A. (2013). A Decade of African Peace and Security Architecture. *International Affairs*, 89(1), 89-109.

Reviews African peace and security frameworks and the influence of external actors.

8. Zoubir, Y. H., & Aghrout, A. (2015). Algeria and the Sahelian Security Crisis: Regional Security Dynamics and the Role of External Actors. *Journal of North African Studies*, 20(3), 349-366.

Discusses the role of external powers in regional security, focusing on Algeria and the Sahel.

as it is clear from previous literatures This study offers a unique perspective on great power competition in Africa by integrating diverse theoretical frameworks such as realism, liberalism, dependency theory, and neocolonialism. Unlike previous literature reviews that often focus on individual powers or specific regions, this study provides a comprehensive analysis of the interplay between multiple global actors and their collective impact on African nations. By emphasizing the multidimensional effects on economic, political, and social spheres, this research highlights both the opportunities and challenges that arise from these complex interactions, offering fresh insights into Africa's evolving role in global geopolitics.

Historical Context of Great Power Competition in Africa:

The African continent has long been a theater for international power struggles. Beginning as early as ancient Egypt, foreign interests have shaped Africa's political and social dynamics, engrossed in a legacy of exploitation and domination. New great power competition today stokes fears of a return to such domination. Inadequate understanding of historical circumstances, and the often unintended African responses, dims understanding of today's great power competition on the continent. Conversely, African agency in this competition offers mitigation strategies necessary for equitable and

sustainable development paths. This chapter explores the historical context underlying today's great power competition in Africa. It establishes the historical legacy of external exploitation and domination, prior to exploring the implications for contemporary development trajectories on the continent. (Blair et al., 2022)

Africa's international trade began with ancient Egypt around 2400 BCE, but it was only after the arrival of the Portuguese in the fifteenth century that Africa began to attract foreign interests extensively. With the conquest of Egypt in 1517 and the establishment of Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau in the 1570s, the Ottomans and the Portuguese engaged in a fierce economic and religious battle involving enslaved trafficking and conflict with Islam. In the sixteenth century, Portuguese, Spanish, French, Dutch, and English efforts to control direct east-west trade routes marked a departure from millennia-old patterns of Mediterranean-centered trade, which had fostered notably rich Swahili city-states. (García2021)

After the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), the Dutch, French, and British shifted to Africa's gold, slaves, and sugar. The Treaty of Utrecht (1713) granted Britain the Asiento de Negros or the exclusive right to supply Spanish colonies with enslaved African laborers. Concordantly, the British Crown chartered the Royal African Company to invade control prior Portuguese trading stations along the Atlantic coast. As with all medieval conquests, Britain recruited coastal fiefdoms, enslaved African laborers, cannon, and Portuguese cartographers in return for armament shipments. In Elmina and Accra, British slaves held great influence over state policy. (Pincus, 1660)

Seized colonial wealth generated powerful rival trading companies such as the Dansk og Guinea Compagnie in Denmark and the Deutschen

Westafrikanische Compagnie in Brandenburg. Black-Atlantic competition unleashed unrestrained destructiveness. As the economic basis of African states disintegrated, elites shifted from generating wealth through trade based on commodities in demand in Europe to producing commodities en masse for sale in Europe, now only commercially viable through violence. Through this dynamics, thousands of African states descended into civil war and chronic violence. At the same time, changes in European warfare devastated African states. By the 1770s, thousands of coastal fiefs were denuded of military and political leadership. (Ian2020)

Theoretical Framework:

The emergence of competition between major world powers is not a recent phenomenon and can be better conceptualized with the help of theories focusing on great power politics, including realist theories and growth dynamics of complex systems. Great Power Competition (GPC hereafter) as an important field of International Relations (IR) has been approached through different theories, but as the very term does not appear in a single approach comprehensively, there is a demand for a more coherent understanding of this phenomenon. A comprehensive analysis of the GPC using simple heuristics from the existing literature and the history of International Relations reveals the following patterns on the dynamics of the phenomenon.

The realist tradition in IR emphasizes conflicts regarding interests, norms, and power among states. GPC is considered an outgrowth of the anarchic nature of the international system, focusing on the concept of security dilemma. In a region dominated by great power competition, upon perceiving a potential threat from a power upgrade by some state, others in need for security are induced to increase their own military capacity. The

struggle of different states to attain power and the conflict that occurs has been explained through the systematic nature of IR, focusing on factors determining the "expansionist role," "aggressive policy," and "nationalism" of states. A great imbalance of power has the potential to induce hegemony as the systemic outcome of power transition. The unipolar moment after the Cold War was generally conceived to be an era in which the states with limited capacity for world impact were insulated from historical punishment, thus emanating high levels of mutual restraint in long-term relations among states. (Leigh, 2020)

In a global context, space, resources, technology, and other factors rot the state structure. State capacity, understood as legitimacy, authority, and ability to protect its territory, nation, and people, is constrained by the biophysical environment. Factors, including geographical location, weather conditions, ethnic composition and religion, fall within the realms of politics and policy but shape the sovereign decision latitude of states. The asymmetries of opportunity resulting from endowments of natural capital form the foundations of inequality between states and constitute the blueprint of the growing disparities in the geopolitical power and economic wealth of states. (Williams et al.2020)

structure of the study:

The study divided to 4 sections:

1st section of the study will discuss, Key Great Powers Compete in Africa mainly (United States, China, Russia, European Union,India, andTurkey).

2nd section will discuss Dimensions of Great Power Competition including (Economic Dimensions, Military dimintion, Soft Power and

Influence Strategies, Diplomacy and Multilateral Organizations, Cultural Exchanges and Education Programs ,Social and Environmental Impacts)

3rd section delves in to main Case Studies of Great Power Competition in Specific African Countries(Nigeria, South Africa, Ethiopia)

4th section will discuss main Regional Organizations and Alliances in Africa like(African Union- ECOWAS- SADC)

at the end the study discuss main Geopolitical Shifts and Power Balance, Security Challenges and Conflict Resolution, Conclusion and Recommendations.

Section 1: Key Great Powers Compete in Africa:

In the geostrategic environment of Africa, six distinct actors stand out for their complex yet interconnected activities: the United States, China, Russia, the European Union, India, and Turkey. Each country, with its own specific approaches and instruments, pursues goals of a similar nature and magnitude, albeit with disparate consequences. Overall, the United States, China, and Russia appear as more competitive and proactive actors, while the European Union, India, and Turkey appear as less engaged in this evolving rivalry.

The State of Africa Report: 2021 observes that by continent-wide statistics, the United States ranked higher than China and Russia in the total number of ongoing projects (over 1,000), and their values (about \$100 billion). Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that dynamics often diverge from "common denominator" numbers, as particular countries' results stem from precisely defined agendas. (Haider et al.2020)

The United States utilizes economic, political, military, educational, socio-cultural, and humanitarian instruments. Policy priorities, primarily shaped by post-9/11 counterterrorism efforts, have increasingly gravitated to sub-Saharan Africa, overshadowing the attention paid to North Africa, which is still influenced by the Arab Spring uprisings. Despite initial normalization efforts, the United States-Africa relationship is once again in crisis. The Biden administration announced its new African policy only ten months into its tenure—a rarity in American foreign policy history and partly reflective of Africa's declining geopolitical importance. Other priorities have topped the United States' agenda, like countering China and Russia, managing relations with Iran and North Korea, domestic political polarization, and the Covid-19 pandemic. (Reimagining & Carr Jr)

The policy is primarily framed as a response to, and a tool to counterbalance, growing Chinese and Russian involvement on the continent. Despite insisting on its overarching purpose (the most recent attempt being the December 2022 U.S.-Africa Leaders' Summit to bolster food and energy security, increase investment, combat climate change, and support democracy), the core of American involvement is shifting dramatically. While previously emphasized pillars were public health, peace, and security, trade and counterterrorism, currently central themes are security cooperation and fighting foreign influence. Additionally, more generally defined objectives like trade, investment, development assistance, and environmental sustainability remain relegated to secondary importance. (Hruby, 2022)

Effectively competing with China and Russia is seen as a matter of national security. Moreover, the view that China and Russia actively conspire to undermine U.S. interests is trumpeted, giving particular urgency to strategy implementation. The perceived vulnerability of U.S. positions

and a growing fear of envelopment resonate with similar sentiments expressed in other regions in relation to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

United States:

The United States has engaged in great power as well as global contests in Africa, including political, military, economic, and ideological efforts. Some experts believed that America had abandoned Africa in 2009 when it passed over Africa to China and Africa became alienation, that there was "no more single American policy." Nonetheless, in a 2012 report titled "Terrorism in Africa: A New Approach to U.S. Counterterrorism," the African continent reappeared in America's horizon of national interests. The report listed "African Islamist Extremism" among the threats and significantly hypothesized that Africa would be "the most promising theater for U.S.-led counterterrorism operations" in the future. The 2015 U.S. National Security Strategy for Africa and the 2016 U.S. Strategy for Africa further reinvigorated America's interests in Africa. They depicted a scenario that "the multipolar world led by the United States may evolve into a leading and competing world contest" and "China would continue to indulge Africa in commercial activities similar to the comprehensive lending strategy presently being implemented in Latin America." In those histories, it has been argued that the key reasons for America's re-engagement in Africa as a great power arena of competition with China include terrorism, antisocial violence, immigration, and Chinese engagement. Analysts have predicted scenario-based future dynamics between America and China in Africa through modeling frameworks under diverse settings ranging from probability distributions to Nash equilibriums. (Devermont, 2022)

These historical records depict a highly homogenized picture of both America and China, such as the notions that Africa is "China's terminus of diplomacy" and "the U.S. retains a relatively more advantageous position" in the competition. Hence, there is a need for a more nuanced framework that embeds the macro and structural levels of games to analyze the real-world dynamics in Africa as an arena of potential conflict. The initial examinations explore the formal structure of Africa as a second-level arena and the underlying dynamics of great power contestation in/to Africa pursued by international states and non-states actors for interests at the first-level or macro level. Since the historical Westphalian state system no longer holds, Africa has a high possibility of political turn-to-competition. Emerging great powers driven by competition as the basis of their systemic interest has contradictions with the unfortunate condition of Africa burdened by underdevelopment and chaos. An interest-theoretical model is proposed to study the diversities of interests and contention at each level in the arena, embedding variance in initial strengths and interest types in the gameplay. (Wang, 2020)

China:

China's pursuit of African connections has grown significantly during the last few decades, fostered by the continent's strategic importance and natural resources. This involvement has been further propelled by the U.S.-China trade war and Western sanctions against China, showcasing an intentional strategy to strengthen relationships with African nations. China has gradually reshaped its perception from being an isolated state to a prosperous and proactive aspiring power with its own foreign agenda.

Historically, China's engagement in Africa followed Mao's anti-imperialism and internationalism lines, with support for liberation

movements and socialist development methods, showcasing a North-South gap narrative. Although this influence weakened after the Cold War, China's "Go Global" policy in the 1990s established a new stage. Amidst rapid economic expansion, intensifying resource demands, and global imbalances, China elevated its focus on African partnerships within the broader South, coupled with proactive measures in Central Asian and Asian regions. (Matusevich, 2021)

In 2000, China initiated the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), emphasizing a non-interference policy and respect for African ownership, which contrasted with Western powers' thrust for good governance and human rights. China's approach, rooted in anti-colonial resistance and non-interference principles, has been endorsed by African leaders wary of Western dominance and neocolonialism. Economic ties flourished through investments and financial assistance were often coupled with state contracts, leading to grievances around low income for African nations and job concerns due to Chinese outsourcing. Furthermore, there was contention regarding the funding of infrastructure in exchange for mineral access, nutrient outflows, and debt accumulation. (Omolo, 2022)

Nonetheless, China's rise interrupted Western dominance in Africa and positioned it as a 'reference model' for economic development. On the flip side, Chinese businesses faced numerous challenges, including corruption scandals, infrastructural quality criticisms, accusations of labor violations, and pro-Panda's presence. Against this backdrop and experiencing resource-rich African nations repaying loans with coal, oil, or precious minerals, China's concern grew about the seemingly endless supply of African raw materials. Consequently, China introduced the Going Global strategy to earmark funds for overseas investments in energy, mining, finance, and

construction sectors. These investment trends continued despite growing political risks and fears regarding the use of oil contracts to police China. (Murphy, 2022)

This evolving backdrop sets the stage for another chapter in Chinese engagement in Africa under Xi's leadership, shifting focus from economic investment and development assistance to security, military, and political ties. This transition continues within China's earlier policy framework of strengthening Sino-African connections, safeguarding investments, and tackling terrorism. Thereby, Chinese engagement in Africa unveils as multi-layered, with local circumstances deliberating the interplay between active and passive Chinese involvement.

Russia:

In the context of great power competition in Africa, Russia plays a unique role. Russia's historical ties to Africa and the political climate of Africa combined to stimulate a renewed interest in the continent by Russia. Outlined below are the historical patterns leading up to and starting in the 2010s, as well as the policies and strategies stemming from those patterns. Ultimately, Russia seeks to establish itself as a legitimate global power while simultaneously blunting US and Western influence.

The Soviet Union offered various forms of support and assistance to liberation movements and new governments in African countries after decolonization. Some countries in Africa adopted a Marxist-Leninist model of government and became allies of the Soviet Union, while others pursued non-aligned policies in an effort to garner assistance from both sides of the great power competition. This assistance included military and economic aid, socialist condition approach, and promoting socialist ideology. The

USSR also supported African organizations and youth and student movements that had a pro-Communist agenda. This policy saw limited success, and Françafrique reigned supreme until the 1980s. A number of woke and politically correct books and articles followed. Yet, the re-emergence of Russian interest in Africa was immediate and evident. This interest was similar in many respects to that shown by China – Africa was seen as a land of opportunity with huge resources but beautiful people. However, whereas China's re-engagement in Africa was largely geared towards trade and investment, Russia's assumed a political and military dimension. Many dictators decided they preferred a new friendship with Russia to cooperation with the West, resorting to Russian private military companies (PMCs) such as the infamous Wagner Group to help fight Islamist insurgencies and/or shore up their regimes. (Nogee, 2022)

Over the past decade, Russia has sought to revive ties with Africa and to elevate its profile on the continent. A formalized comprehensive policy and strategy was adopted – the Policy of the Russian Federation regarding the African continent and the Russian Federation's Strategy for the Development of Cooperation with African countries in the Political, Security, Trade, Economic, and Cultural Humanities Spheres until 2025. These documents note the need to enhance Russia's political and economic relations with the countries of Africa, as well as promoting greater social contact. However, there is a tension between two narratives. On one level, Russia is purported as a benevolent force wanting to assist African countries; on another, it is regarded as pursuing opportunistic and self-serving policies in order to wrongfoot Western countries and further its state interests. (Volkov and Konstantinova2023)

European Union:

Africa has served as a theater for the proxy struggles of often more powerful great powers in the past, but its recent renewed attention has surprised many observers. The European Union is one continent whose prominence in Africa's economies has faded since the colonial age. Nevertheless, Europe remains one of Africa's main trading, investment, and donor partners, providing it with deep historical ties. Mutual security interests, stemming from Africa's strategic position close to Europe, have driven the ongoing engagement between Europe and Africa, as well as the effort to develop a common European approach towards Africa and a dialogue on the future of European-African relations. In the field of developmental cooperation, the EU leads international efforts in Africa. However, in dealing with the security aspects of African development, the EU has moved slowly and with difficulty. In the absence of a rapid militarized response to the dramatic deepening of the crisis, the EU may need to reassess its approach to the region. (Hill et al., 2023)

At a time when the EU and its member states hope to return to their roots, the African continent remains marred by a deepening economic crisis, civil wars, and terrorism, while efforts to promote democracy and human rights have faltered. The recent EU member states included many from Central/Eastern Europe, which - as was to be expected - have seen a Central/Eastern European post-1989 policy focus on similar countries. Europe's approach was fragmented and inconsistent, composed of the efforts of different actors operating in different policy areas. Regarding Africa, none of those actors possessed a deliberate exit strategy, hindering or at least diminishing the impact of Africa policy. The foundations of African policy

need to be rethought in light of changing expectations within Africa and within Europe. (Ukaeje2022)

Increasing migration towards Europe, terrorism, and climate change repercussions are new phenomena, forcing Europe to revise its approach to Africa. Between 2007 and 2013, African interest rose significantly in international cooperation on developmental aid and far more than in the EU's grand strategy. From a European standpoint, moves towards partnerships found fertile ground on a continent where the absence of colonization offers post-colonial states common ground for unprecedented cooperation. The strategy of "going global by going regional," focusing first on Africa, was therefore not only natural but also indispensable.

India:

India's affinity for Africa is socio-culturally intimate yet politically distant as compared to other great power players. The ongoing great power competition provided India the motivation to boost its involvement in Africa, a continent of immense commercial and strategic interest. The Balakot airstrikes served as a watershed moment for India's increasing quest for a high posture of global engagement wherein Africa was accorded special attention as a theatre for Indian resurgence. Thereafter, as a part of its grand strategy for a comprehensive global engagement, India innovatively utilized its memberships in the BRICS and the G-20 forums to elevate its Africa game. (Mazumdar, 2020)

India pursues a three-pronged strategy involving soft power, strategic partnerships with African states, and a "long march" to counter the threat posed by other great powers, particularly China. India envisions the social and economic upliftment of African states aligning their national interests in

accordance with Indian geopolitical concerns. This includes sustainable economic development, upholding national sovereignty, and the fight against terrorism and climate change. India's game is constructivist in orientation as its envisioned geo-socio-economic model is premised on the post-colonial solidarity that necessarily incorporates an associative friendship, fraternal family resemblance, and common belongingness with the African continent.

However, the design, expectation, and methodology of operationalizing the three-dimensional game varies in different scales of African states. With a view to contest the prospect of China's hegemonic emergence in Africa, India's Game 3 strategy prioritizes competitive counter-offensive partnerships with a select few African states like Mauritius, Seychelles, Kenya, Mozambique, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Zambia, Namibia, Nigeria, and South Africa. As a part of this selective strategy, Africa's largest exporter of crude oil, Angola, was left out of India's engagement strategy. Therefore, after the soft power engagement with the concert of small African states, India initially strategized its G-20 engagement with the pivotal tier of mid-sized African states like Nigeria, South Africa, and Kenya. (Chanie2021)

Turkey:

The Republic of Turkey is also examined as a key player in Africa and its competition with other great powers such as the US, Russia, and China. Since 2005, Turkish activities in Africa have gained greater focus, particularly since President Erdogan's meeting with African leaders in 2014 and the completion of the next level of Turkish embassies and organizations. In 2007, then-Prime Minister Erdogan visited several African countries, and the first-ever summit with African leaders was held the same year in Istanbul. (Dahir, 2021)

In addition, Turkey's involvement in Africa has been fueled by the opening of new embassies, the establishment of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), and the Turkish International Peacekeeping Force Phosphor-01 joining various operations. Turkey has signed bilateral agreements with many African countries to open discussions on various issues, including education, trade, investment, but mainly focusing on military and security efforts. (Orakçi, 2022)

Turkey's competition with other great powers comes chiefly from the United States, with a focus on the geostrategic portion of North Africa and growing concerns against the rising Chinese economy. However, Turkey also sees the need to compete with and develop relations with other great powers to establish themselves as important players in the Africa continent. Turkey is a candidate country for EU membership, and Turkey's candidacy has been stalled.

In other parts of Africa, interests also diverge, with Turkey's interest being in the Gulf of Guinea and economic investments, trade, and oil exploration. On the other hand, Libya is seen as an economic investment and long-term political stability for Turkey's geostrategic position in the Mediterranean. There are also many religious undertones in present-day conflicts, especially between Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco.

Section 2: Dimensions of Great Power Competition:

Economic Dimensions:

Africa's vast economic potential, coupled with its rapidly burgeoning population, has placed it squarely at the center of intense rivalry among global superpowers, most notably the United States, China, and Russia. The battle for influence over this resource-rich continent manifests itself through

extensive investments, burgeoning trade partnerships, and ambitious infrastructure development initiatives. As these titans of geopolitics vie for dominance, Africa's trajectory becomes an increasingly critical determinant of their global standings. A stage has been set where the economic destiny of Africa shall be shaped by the far-reaching maneuvers of these mighty nations, each striving to secure a favorable position in this fiercely contested race. Through labyrinthian networks of financial investments, the forging of strategic alliances, and the meticulous construction of modern transport links, this great power competition subtly reshapes Africa's economic, political, and social landscape. (Ashine, 2024)

Each power has its own strategy in Africa. The United States prioritizes health and good governance, evident in the PEPFAR program and the Food for Peace Act, fearing that without U.S. assistance, African nations could fall under Chinese or Russian influence. China employs an economic strategy, offering investments through the Belt and Road Initiative. Russia's focus has been on arms deals to counter U.S. influence but has recently expanded into infrastructure projects.

Africa's diverse and captivating landscape is not only home to a rich tapestry of cultures, but also serves as a hotbed for investment and aid from around the world. Among the key players in this dynamic global arena, China indisputably takes center stage, exerting a formidable presence. However, closely trailing behind are the United States and the United Kingdom, both vying to leave their indelible mark on the continent's future. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the rising influence of emerging players such as Ukraine and Singapore, who are increasingly making their presence felt in Africa's economic landscape.

When it comes to aid, the United States assumes a pivotal role as Africa's largest benefactor and provider of arms. With its vast resources and expertise, the US actively contributes to the continent's development and security efforts. On the other hand, China has firmly established its dominance in the realm of infrastructure projects, spearheading ambitious initiatives that are transforming Africa's physical landscape. From impressive transportation networks to sprawling urban centers, China's investments have left an indelible imprint on the continent's development trajectory.

However, amidst this heavyweight competition for influence and control, African nations have shown remarkable resilience and astute political strategizing. They have demonstrated a careful balancing act, ensuring that no single great power holds excessive sway over their affairs. With a keen awareness of their own interests, African nations have carefully navigated the intricacies of international relations, safeguarding their sovereignty while simultaneously reaping the benefits of collaboration with various global actors.

In this intricate dance of power and diplomacy, Africa remains a captivating theater where the influence of great powers converges, collides, and ultimately shapes the destiny of the continent and its people. As the world watches with anticipation, Africa's leaders continue to chart their own course, adeptly maneuvering the currents of geopolitical dynamics to forge a brighter future for their nations and the entire continent. (Carrozza & Marsh, 2022)

Africa's trade relations are also dynamic, attracted by growing economies. Trade, particularly exports, is vital for African countries, leading some to open up to new partnerships. China's growing investments

weakened Africa's relationships with the U.S. and the EU, presenting them with the challenge of finding their place in the new global trade order.

The development of roads, railways, ports, and internet broadband is crucial for trade and investment. These projects, traditionally dominated by the U.S. and EU, are now mostly Chinese-funded. Infrastructure is vital for the U.S. to counter China. As Russia's energy exports decline, it has focused on hydrocarbon projects in Africa.

Investments and Aid:

Africa's immense natural resources and market potential have increased interest from great powers. Thus, countries like China and the US are increasingly trading and investing in Africa, leading to competition between great powers over the same territory. To understand the growing great power rivalry in Africa, potential competition elements must be inquired, including investment and aid. These elements are chosen because, unlike trade relations, they can be freely manipulated without restriction; protectionist US policy could complicate trade relations.

Inhospitable to conventional great power competition, Africa comprises 54 underpopulated states, few or no significant power projection capabilities, and is far from key military bases. Africa's 200 million Muslim and 300 million Christian population's beliefs and security and economic fallibility have also invited great power attention. The world's least-developed continent and about 40 percent of the world's landlocked and least-developed countries give a competitive advantage to competitor states that can afford to deliver foreign investments or technological and military support. Great powers' interest in Africa can be best understood through three elements: investments, trade relations, and military aid. For instance,

China has become Africa's largest trading partner since 2009, and China, France, and Britain compete with military aid and arms supplies. Investments are considered a separate element central to competition. (Reid, 2020)

Investments and foreign natural resources and energy acquisitions conducted by state-owned companies and private enterprises with soft loans and development aid are, together with military security, important interests of great powers. Africa is still viewed as the last frontier, but it has been a focus of investments and acquisition of energy and natural resources outside of great power competition. The great power interests in Africa's natural resources, energy, and markets have also increased investments and acquisitions by private companies. If public opinion starts reacting negatively against Chinese exclusivity, aid will become an important tool for great powers to support their companies' involvement in the continent. Interest in Africa's resources and participation in its development has revived, and newly competing states must be studied. A comprehensive approach to potential great power competition elements is also needed, focusing on behind-the-scenes activities, trade relations, and soft loans rather than overt international struggles over energy resources and national security. (Kepe et al.2023)

Trade Relations:

Trade relations represent another fascinating dimension of great power competition in Africa, and the countries under investigation have actively pursued trade ties with the continent. So far, China's trade deficit with African countries has widened. However, its export of machinery and electrical equipment, textiles, and ore and metal products plays a significant role in offsetting the trade deficit. As for U.S. exports, 92.4 percent consisted

of machinery and electrical equipment, ores and metals, and agricultural products, predominantly oil crops and foodstuffs. As far as imports are concerned, China's imports of oil and natural gas from African countries have surged. Supplies from Angola, Nigeria, Sudan, and Equatorial Guinea have contributed to a lowering of China's reliance on oil imports from the Middle East. Products imported by the U.S. include ores and metals, raw products, and agricultural products. Tragically, a majority of goods imported by the United States from Africa have low added value. Overall, the two competing powers adopt highly complementary strategies toward trade relations with Africa, with China focusing on import supply and the U.S. concentrating on export demand. (An et al., 2020)

Intra-continental trade and multilateral cooperation have emerged as preconditions for sustainable socio-economic development in Africa. Intra-continental trade provides a feasible way to meet food security needs in a context of rising commodity prices. It also holds the potential to generate employment, empowering small-scale farmers and invigorating local economies while predominantly exploiting natural resources. However, according to the report of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), intra-continental trade, which accounted for 12 percent of total African trade in 2007, remains low in comparison to other regions. Western Africa provides itself as an outstanding counter-example, with intra-regional trade estimated at 25 percent. The establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) holds significant promise in addressing these obstacles. If well implemented, the AfCFTA is poised to create a market with a total population of 1.2 billion, a combined GDP of more than US\$3 trillion, and substantial trade benefits (approximately US\$16 billion to US\$34 billion of additional intra-African trade by 2022).

Vis-a-vis great power competition, Africa is neither a battleground nor simply a target to be conquered. Great power competition could clash with African unity. Consideration of a philosophical framework could help Africa strategically position itself in such a competition. (Mold, 2022)

Infrastructure Development:

Infrastructure development in Africa, often viewed as the third phase of great power competition, has historically been a contentious battleground for external powers. While traditionally dominated by the UK and France, newly-ascendant great powers, particularly China, are increasingly vying for influence in African infrastructure development, utilizing the carrot of economic partnership and the stick of conditionality to wield competing influence over African sovereigns. Recently, infrastructure development has regained prominence as a priority for African states. The growing salience of multi-modal transport networks underlies this shift, with external powers staking competing claims to newly-minted overlordship over African transportation networks. (Omeje2021)

On the one hand, European powers seek to re-establish the colonial-era dominance of roads, railways, and ports linking resource-rich hinterlands to key nodes in global supply chains and markets. On the other hand, China is pursuing its own vision of empire through multi-modal Belt and Road Initiative transport networks that would bypass European port-dominated supply chains while forging new networks for intra-Africa trade. Amidst the heated competition over infrastructure development in Africa, two sets of questions emerge. First, what are the discovery-related dividends and dangers for African sovereigns, and how can they be maximized and minimized? Second, for external powers, what are the imperial dividends

and dangers of capturing key transport nodes, and how can they be maximized and minimized?

Addressing African sovereigns first, the reparative potential of newly-completed infrastructure projects during the last phase of competition was warped by conditions imposed by external powers. These conditions stymied capital accumulation by African sovereigns and encouraged a 'cargo cult' reliance on rarely-implemented development programs. In contrast, the possible capital-reinforcing dividends of infrastructure investments are apparently compromised by neo-colonial competition. For instance, Chinese investments in Western Africa's transport canals would jeopardize European investment in landlocked countries. However, China may also be seeking to exacerbate competition and scramble for transport channels wetting African capitals and coastlines compliant with its design. Alternative net importers like the EU or US risk being trapped just as they are trying to escape. Moreover, given the rising contestability of capturing key points of access to African hinterlands, there are questions about the viability of imposing exclusionary conditions on access to transport channels. African capitals must carefully assess the potential gains or losses of transport channels and capture the rivalry between external powers. (Albers et al., 2023)

Military Aspects of Great Power Competition:

The United States and China are engaged in a fierce competition for influence in Africa. This competition takes a number of forms, including military measures. Though these military aspects of great power competition in Africa are still limited, they are growing. Moreover, they are poised to become a more prominent part of US-China Africa competition in coming years. The US and China employ a range of military measures in their efforts

to persuade African states to choose one side in their competition. (Blair et al., 2022)

Major powers can exert military influence over a state in three basic ways: arms sales and military aid, military bases and operations, and the stationing of military forces. The most common means of exerting military influence is through arms sales and military aid. The US and China arm a number of African states, with the US giving preference to arm Angola, Tunisia, Nigeria, and Morocco, while China's primary beneficiaries are Algeria, Ethiopia, and Nigeria. The vast majority of US arms sales are done through the Foreign Military Sales program, while almost all African arms sales from China are done through the Chinese defense industry.

In addition to sales of arms, the US and China each give military aid to a number of states in Africa. The US provides military aid through both the FMF and IMET programs. The countries receiving military aid through these programs are mostly US close partners, including North African states and Nigeria. China also provides military aid, though humanitarian assistance is far more common. US military aid to Africa has decreased since the late 2000s, while aid from China steadily increased over the last two decades. (Blair et al., 2022)

Arms Sales and Military Aid:

The military dimension of great power competition in Africa is analyzed in two areas of special focus: arms sales and military aid; and military bases and operations. Africa is a growing market for arms exports and military aid, making it a key battleground for great powers. Relations with Algeria, Nigeria, and Uganda, among others, are examined. The African arms market remains relatively modest, but it offers growth

opportunities for sellers in a competitive global environment. Despite political and economic challenges, growth rates in the region's arms imports are expected to exceed the global average through the 2020s. Most African countries are found to be on the lower end of the global arms transfers scale, with 19 countries accounting for over 77 percent of Africa's total imports during the period of interest. Expanded coverage of military aid explores U.S. and Russian assistance and its implications for regional stability. (Khan et al., 2021)

Great power competition manifests itself variously in Africa, with some countries receiving military aid or arms transfers from multiple powers and many others specified with no engagement. The early focus is primarily on Algeria—a confirmed client of Russian military equipment and the beneficiary of U.S. training—and then Nigeria and Uganda, engaged militarily with China and Russia, respectively. These chosen case studies reflect the spectrum of military assistance environments across the continent, enabling a systematic exploration of different outcomes across the continent. In the context of U.S.-Russia relations, the military engagement is observed as a potential avenue for re-engagement and cooperation and is framed in terms of great power interstate competition for comparative and more general situational relevance. (Blair et al., 2022)

Military Bases and Operations:

The establishment of military bases in Africa by the U.S., Russia, and China is an important aspect of great power competition on the continent. Although Africa has a long history of foreign military bases, their significance has increased since the early 2000s due to the expanding interests and influence of great powers as a result of globalization. In recent years, Africa has become an area of high competition among external great

powers, specifically the U.S., France, the U.K., Russia, and in particular China. As these powers expanded their interests on the continent, so did the necessity for military bases to support these interests. Out of these powers, the U.S. and France are the only ones with a long-term military presence on the continent, while Saudi Arabia and the U.K. have recently established bases. This subsection provides an overview of foreign military bases in Africa from the perspective of Russia, the U.S., and China. (Rogozińska & Olech, 2020)

The rationale for base building in Africa by the U.S., Russia, and China varies. The U.S. military presence is predominantly characterized by the post-9/11 War on Terror, as well as competition with China and Russia at the piano in Africa. In the context of the competition with great powers, Washington's rationale for military presence is the necessity to counter both China and Russia decisively and to prevent strategic losses to either outside power. The latter was explicitly stated in the 2022 National Defense Strategy of the U.S., which describes the need to "defend against malign Russian and Chinese influence." At the same time, U.S. military presence in Africa is motivated by feeling the implications of the strategic footprint of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The establishment of military bases by the PRC is perceived by Washington as jeopardizing overall U.S. interests. Thus, the rationale is clearly stated in the 2022 U.S. National Security Strategy, which emphasizes "Russia's and China's efforts to reshape the international order" as threats to American national security. (Sullivan, 2023)

As for Russian military presence in Africa, it is predominantly characterized by the gradual strengthening of political, economic, and military ties with African states since the mid-2000s. Similar to the U.S. and

NATO, Russia's rationale for military presence is the incapacity of "failing" states to ensure the safety of Russian economic and investment activities, as well as the military capacity to protect and secure the global Russian national interests and convergence with like-minded partners against the hegemonic unipolarity of the U.S. and its allies. Accordingly, the recent military base building is aimed at obtaining operations from which to project hard and soft power further across the continent and in the oceans off the continent's coasts. Advancement is expected to promote the broader geopolitical ambition of being perceived both to continental and global parties as a great power with the associated rights. (Droin & Dolbaia, 2023)

On the other hand, China's military presence in Africa is predominantly characterized by maritime combat operations. U.S. media outlet Politico reports that the existence of Chinese military posts in Africa is aimed at enhancing navy combat operations in the Indian Ocean in general with specific focus on countering American operations. The rationale stresses the need to hasten procurement of overseas support facilities in areas where threats to Chinese merchant vessels are likely to happen, especially the waters off East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Strait of Bab el Mandeb, and to ensure maritime swiftness and combat capability alongside stronger port requirements. (Devermont, 2022)

Soft Power and Influence Strategies:

While hard power, notably military and economic aid, plays a critical role in international relations, the significance of soft power has gained traction in recent years. Soft power, as defined by Joseph Nye, is the power of attraction. In the context of the competitive politics of great powers, this entails the ability of a state to entice or co-opt partners through non-coercive means. However, soft power's allure is subjective and state-specific; thus,

there can be no universal measurement of soft power. Since the end of the Cold War, global competition has shifted from military efforts to the strategic pursuit of soft power through diplomacy, culture, and talent. This section focuses on the roles of diplomatic, cultural, and educational policies in shaping soft power and influencing competition in Africa. (Winder, 2020)

Traditionally, diplomatic initiatives take the form of bilateral relations, including aid packages, military agreements, tech transfers, and investment incentives. Recently, influence strategies have improved, leveraging regional organizations such as the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the East African Community (EAC). There also exist multiparty relations, such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), approved by the UN. Africa joined the BRI vantage plan to enhance economic trade routes, while the U.S. seeks to counteract China's economic dominance through the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment initiative, designed to improve roads, trading posts, power plants, etc. (Lammich2024)

Soft power extends beyond mere material resources to include the political credibility of a state in the international arena. It encompasses the appeal of a nation's ideals, culture, political values, and overall image. The political impact of soft power relies on the perception of the target from the influencer. Attempts to unnaturally amplify soft power, as witnessed in the U.S. to counter China's global growing influence post-2008 financial crisis, may inadvertently jeopardize credibility. Failure to translate a nation's cultural appeal into broad influence owing to mistrust can result in soft power deficit, as dramatized in the disastrous U.S.-backed attempt to overthrow the Arab Spring in Egypt.

Cultural exchanges, media collaborations, informal people-to-people ties, and education systems play a pivotal role in amicable perceptions about nations. Globalized exchanges of ideals assure that civilizational values are amicable, focusing on producing mutual externalities and increased predictability in state policies.

Diplomacy and Multilateral Organizations:

The competition for influence and strategic positioning in Africa among major world powers has given rise to several paradigmatic shifts in diplomacy and multilateral organizations on the continent. The United States is beginning to care more about Africa as Russia emerges as a credible alternative to the West. France is becoming desperate to maintain its long-held dominance in West Africa as it faces widespread opposition and hostility. The rise of China, the Gulf States, and other non-Western countries has further complicated the post-colonial paradigm, resulting in African countries' emergence as maneuvering players. In this context, Africa's expectations from its great-power partners are diversifying. Diplomatic histograms of the great powers about Africa demonstrate the underappreciation of the new equilibrium among the players on both sides, necessitating a broad paradigm shift to either exploit or mitigate the rising competition. (Murphy, 2022)

Recent developments in Africa's diplomacy, multilateral forums, and international organizations have begun to demonstrate the possibility of setting the rules of engagement among themselves and designing new responses to the political and economic challenges emerging from great-power competition. Africa's membership in several newly-established organizations such as the G20 and BRICS, hosting several multilateral summits, and increasingly leading international discussions have allowed

some agency over the past two decades. Recent peace initiatives put forward by African leaders regarding the war in Ukraine and the Israel-Palestine conflict have led to the resumption of diplomatic talks, updated framework agreements, and the inclination to establish new norms for trade security agreements with external powers.

However, there are still major diplomatic vulnerabilities, with recent voting records at the United Nations displaying the rise of divisions among the African group. The political, economic, social, and ontological relevance of the African diaspora and the new alignments in organizations are being overlooked by the great powers. Africa's overseas cooperation ties are extending to military intelligence cooperation over trade exchanges and investments, calls for sovereignty regarding the digitization of social media, and interrogating cultural soft-power influences over common values and historical memories. The frustrations arising from failed partnerships and the imposition of unilateral actions are transforming strategic partnerships into ethical trials on the legitimacy and relevance of influence and civilizational references to African partners. (Rembe, 2022)

Cultural Exchanges and Education Programs:

In addition to traditional engagement strategies, soft power competition involves the use of more benign tools such as cultural exchanges and education programs. Both China and the U.S. have utilized culture and education as tools designed to enhance their ability to positively influence African partners, in attempts to promote a favorable narrative of their respective models of governance. At times, these initiatives appear to mirror one another, as both great powers utilize similar venues in their soft power efforts. However, they often differ in the content of the promoted narratives, as China's exchanges tend to be more ideologically-driven, while the public

focus of American initiatives typically revolves around more apolitical social and economic development topics. Within Africa, power competition in the cultural and educational domains is diffuse, contentious, and often complex, which occasionally affords options for some countries to play off more than one great power to their own benefit. (Benabdallah, 2020)

Both China and the United States have invested resources in enhancing their ability to influence Africa positively through cultural and educational exchanges. Cultural exchanges involve a variety of informal or people-to-people contacts and initiatives such as study-abroad grants, ID exchanges for journalists, various kinds of twinning projects, and the invitation of foreign experts to showcase one's country (e.g., through art exhibitions). Traditionally, the aim of such exchanges is to enhance mutual understanding and friendship, thus subtly promoting a more benevolent view of one's country. A major tool in the exercise of soft power is the use of Confucius Institutes, which promote Chinese language and culture. Other Chinese educational and cultural initiatives in Africa include the establishment of Chinese government-funded model schools, offering scholarships, training, and educational grants to African partners, and the establishment of media partnerships with African nations. (King, 2020)

Immediately after the collapse of apartheid, the United States poured resources into educational aid for South Africa. A major focus was to establish strong ties between South African and American universities, and since the early 1990s, more than one hundred South African universities have had partnerships with American institutions, supported by the American government. While cooperation on blue-sky research continued during the high times of the 1990s and 2000s, much of the educational and cultural exchanges between the United States and African countries appear

to have taken a backseat under the Trump administration. (Meyer & Frank, 2020)(De and Merckx2022)

Social and Environmental Impacts of Great Power Competition:

As great powers seek influence and control over Africa, their agenda has implications for African countries in both areas of human rights and the environment. Sometimes, the powers may even be counterproductive to their overall goals.

This chapter provides an overview of potential social and environmental impacts of great power competition, focusing on human rights, environmental policies, and conservation efforts. More detailed considerations of these topics can be found in the Appendices.

Africa does not have as great a stake in the outcome of U.S.-China great power competition as it does in the U.S. engaging with China in a "decoupling race." International relations literature may caution that when great powers confront each other, activity tends to gravitate towards the powers' borders (the Cold War immediate periphery) where their perspectives may collide the fiercest. But the outcome of big power competition usually hinges on the visions of the social order (unipolarity vs. multipolarity, e.g.). It is not what most great power competition is about. Indeed, great power competition is most intense where there is a convergence of interest and goals.

The Sino-U.S. relationship obviously has a serious military and nuclear element. But as long as China's missions are more neutral in a historical sense and since China has little interest in Southeast or Northeast Asian regime security, it can be much more tolerable for the interests of Southeast and Northeast Asian countries. Some of them even view China's

rise as a counterbalance to American dominance, ensuring a multipolar world. As a result, Beijing is trying to increase its presence in all fields in these two regions through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). In Africa, the population of most countries believe that China's rise for now is mostly a boon for their countries in terms of investment and infrastructure development.

However, regarding human rights, the rhetoric of both countries presents a distinctly different picture of how they perceive Africa. Human rights discourse is an essential part of great power competition as both of them have developed a zero-sum mentality of one party's victory resulting in the other party's demise. As a response to America's ongoing accusation that China is undermining the existing order, Beijing has also championed an "Asian view" of rights—one that emphasizes development and cooperation over political participation and democratic competition. Both countries envision Africa as a battlefield for fulfilling their human rights agenda.

Human Rights:

The competition among great powers for influence, resource access, and the establishment of bases in Africa has brought various indirect social impacts on the continent. This concerns various social issues such as human rights violations and mass displacements caused by states and multinational corporations (MNC), often exporting structural violence to Africa in their struggle for interests. This should be addressed by examining the human rights record of great powers concerning MNC and domestic states involved in resource plunder and dispossession, with case studies from the continent.

Following a brief historical overview of great power competition in Africa with respect to resource exploitation, it is analyzed how this has structured social inequalities, violence, and human rights abuses. Special emphasis is placed on Peruvian MNCs and how their development and global expansion among the greatest copper reserves serve as an example of the economic model's consequences in Africa. The study shows that, historically, as great powers have become increasingly reliant on Africa's natural resources to address deeper structural crises of the utilization of natural resources, their interests have translated into MNC investment and involvement in states with the highest resource potential and lowest human rights records concerning MNC. This has had consequences concerning the human rights record of both MNC and domestic states. Using a geographic focus on countries such as Zambia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and South Africa, the dissertation examines human rights abuses stemming from extraction on their territory. (Blair et al., 2022)(Liu et al., 2022)

It has also elaborated how China's investment strategy in Latin America mirrors that of Western countries in Africa, as Chinese and Peruvian investment often collides with the interests of domestic MNC or states in promoting policies of dispossession. Understanding the relationship between MNC, states, and human rights is critical, as structural dimensions of violence are seldom taken into account in the design of human rights policies. The recent crisis of democratic institutions is linked to resource plunder. Selective attention to state violence structures impunity. MNC often escape accountability due to the impossibility of recognizing their structural involvement with economic policies in Africa, which further legitimizes human rights abuses.

Environmental Policies and Conservation Efforts:

As the great powers compete for greater influence over African nations, they will inevitably shape local environmental policies and practices. Therefore, examining their histories and efforts to date can anticipate this new competition's impacts on Africa's environment. This view is limited to only large states, which are indirectly defined in a broader manner as any nation with sufficient economic resources to pursue global aspirations that fundamentally reshape foreign states. This includes, but is not limited to, China, the EU, India, Russia, and the US. This will ultimately show that strengthened foreign economic interests do not, in and of themselves, imply a greater neglect of local environmental concerns, as neither group of states is united in purpose. (Long & Long, 2022)

A long history of colonial struggles has dictated that western states naturally view Africa as a space of opportunity to better their own interests. Accordingly, both the US and western Europe have long sought to impose their own conception of rights, ethics, and hierarchies on Africa. In addition to this, the much newer ambitions of China and Russia have brought competition into play but could take a wide variety of forms depending on how both nations, and others like them, approach Africa. China's state capitalists propose unlimited partnership, while Russia's oligarchs approach resource extraction with little regard for consequences. At the same time, nations also compete internally and regarding non-resource-based foreign economic efforts, drastically complicating each state's approach to environmental issues.

A particularly revealing case is the Kuiseb River in Namibia, which China planned to dam for its own economic gain to the detriment of local wildlife and people. However, the dam ultimately did not occur, as China

was outbid by a German company acting with strict dedication to protecting the local environment. Thus, caring for the environment is in the interest of nations competing on the same terms, but competing strategies and hierarchies may yield different effects. It is therefore important to scrutinize the viability of proposed interests and strategies of action.

Section 3: Case Studies of Great Power Competition in Specific African Countries:

This section will provide a detailed analysis of three specific African countries – Nigeria, South Africa, and Ethiopia – as case studies for examining the dynamics of great power competition in Africa. The focus will be on China, Russia, and the United States as the three great powers of interest. Each case study will involve the use of aggregate data and an index of great power competition for the selected African countries. Nigeria's case study employs data from the period 2012-2022, while South Africa and Ethiopia utilize data from 2017-2022.

The three African countries were chosen based on the initial analysis of the continent as a whole, where Nigeria displayed the most competition, South Africa demonstrated no net gain or loss in competition, and Ethiopia had the least competition. The goal of these case studies is to explore the validity of the early results, with Nigeria scrutinized first, followed by South Africa and Ethiopia.

Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa with the continent's largest economy. Despite Nigeria's geographical size, affluence, and population, the country seemed to be sidelined by the great powers prior to the arrival of China. However, since 2000, Nigeria has emerged as a central hub for their competition on the continent for its massive telecom and

financial markets. Over the past decade, Beijing has strained to quell Boko Haram's insurgency, providing numerous military assets to Nigeria. The rise of ISWAP (the Islamic State's West Africa Province) has turned Nigeria into a significant theatre of jihadism – one reminiscent of the nation-building efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Nigeria's complex security challenges have prompted Western powers to reconsider their positions in Abuja. As China deepened its investment in Nigeria, the United States stepped up intelligence sharing and drone surveillance operations.

South Africa is a distinct contestant in the great power competition in Africa. Although the country is squared off against both Russia and China in the UN, Pretoria has opted for a more ambiguous, non-aligned stance on the continent. South Africa had a unique position during the Cold War, which saw the rise of a neo-colonial world order throughout the Global South. As apartheid-era leaders were rebuffed by Western powers, the Soviet Union initiated ties with Pretoria and offered lucrative arms deals that fueled South Africa's military-industrial complex. Nevertheless, Russia and later China also became deeply ensconced in the conundrum of clandestine procurement networks – acquiring South African military technology and skills – that persists to this day. (McMahon, 2021)

Ethiopia is a landlocked country and the birthplace of the African Union that has sought to position itself as the defender of African interests on the global stage. Above all, Ethiopia is engaged in a protracted civil war against the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) that leverages its ties with Moscow. Russia's ties with Ethiopia date back to the mid-1970s when Soviet advisers helped to build the country's military force and install a Marxist regime. Although the geopolitical landscape in the Horn of Africa changed with the dissolution of the USSR, post-9/11 responses to the

Islamist threat saw a resurgence of cooperation as the US abruptly withdrew its support for Ethiopia's War of Aggression against Somalia. Russia and China have sought to unearth lucrative opportunities in Ethiopia – the continent's second-most populous country – given its local manufacturing capacity and large-scale investments in logistics that could promote intra-continental trade. (Nyadera & Osedo, 2023)

Nigeria:

Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa and the largest economy on the continent, is caught up in the web of great power competition due to its strategic location and immense resources, particularly in oil and gas. The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), a government-owned corporation, has been described as both a blessing and a curse to Nigeria. Although Nigeria is an oil-rich country, its poor governance and failure to invest oil profits wisely in public infrastructure, national development, or sustainable industries have triggered systemic economic decline and stagnation.

In the past decade, oil-producing and exporting countries have climbed up the ladder of power and improved their advantage over other states. The OPEC cartel was established in 1960 and Nigeria joined it in 1971, bringing significant growth of GDP and welfare as oil prices skyrocketed. In the mid-2000s, Nigeria surpassed South Africa in terms of GDP, becoming the largest economy in Africa. Nevertheless, Nigeria is generally excluded from the top club states (the UN Security Council, G8/G20, or the Nuclear Club) due to its FAS status and corrupt political elite. Nigeria's oil wealth has become a source of civil violence and wars, failing to generate development.

In the phase of a liberalized oil market (1975-1981), Nigeria was a flock of OPEC and due to its small population, poverty, lack of real value-added industry and technologies, saw no threat. In turn, Nigeria's oil was the bedrock of miraculous economic growth and improvement of people's living standards. Currently, Nigeria is considered as a potential candidate for becoming the next "BRIC country," alongside China and India. However, after a decade of rapid economic growth thanks to high oil prices, Nigeria has been faced again with its weaknesses. The country's financial system, although developing rapidly, is still a tiny fraction of overall global finance, struggling to compete for capital based on hard currencies and infrastructure or companies worth several billion dollars. (Ezema and Onuzurike2020)

South Africa:

Since the end of apartheid, South Africa has undertaken an ambitious strategy of reorienting its foreign policy in a new direction. Central to that strategy has been the decision to promote Pan-Africanism. In the broader context of this new strategy, South Africa took a lead role in promoting the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) - a prospective development blueprint for a prosperous African renaissance - and ensured that NEPAD would be anchored in the African Union (AU). At the same time, it actively maintained its traditional focus on multilateralism and the promotion of development in the South via the G77 and G15, blocs of developing nations in the UN, and the Non-Aligned Movement, a bloc of over 100 nations outside the Western military and political alliances. Given the focus placed on both Africa and the South as a whole, it was imperative that South Africa avoid colliding with potential partners in the North - whether Europe with the G77 or the US with NEPAD. Thus, there has been

a considerable emphasis on working alongside and progressively joining Western-led initiatives. (KAYODE-IYASERE et al.2020)

The end of apartheid opened an opportunity to once again pursue a foreign policy that had been engaged before apartheid. In effect, apartheid had imposed a divorce on the foreign policies of nations like South Africa and Egypt, making it more difficult for them to pursue their natural affinities. End apartheid, as was warned at the time, and these affinities would potentially collide. This is what happened to South Africa upon its democratization; possibly at the most profound level, given the extent to which apartheid defined the foreign policy of South Africa. In the initial stages, there was a need to carefully define national interests and priorities, and since world processes of change had created expectations for a reorientation in policy, there was also a need to consult widely. During this period of consolidation and assessment, it was generally maintained that these affinities would not collide.

The early naive hope that democratization would force a reorientation in the foreign policies of all nations and that since South Africa was pursuing a similar reorientation, its affinity with the West would ease its isolation vis-a-vis its erstwhile adversaries (the Soviet bloc, China, Libya, Cuba, Zaire, and in many cases, in the name of Pan-Africanism, much of Africa) was to rapidly be proved misplaced. In the South African context, attempts at rapprochement with Africa had instantaneously unearthed unresolved contradictions in policy, which dated prior to the apartheid era. So wide was the gulf between South Africa and its African neighbors that the contention was made from Africa's side that there could be no reconciliation without a radical change in the government's position on Namibia. (Weber and Weber2020)

Ethiopia:

Ethiopia, with its rich history as one of the oldest nations in the world and its unique traditions and institutions that predate colonial rule in Africa, has, over the ages, engaged in a fierce struggle to safeguard its sovereignty and independence in the face of aggressive incursions by overwhelming external powers. However, in the past two decades, Ethiopia has been thrust into a markedly different and unprecedented environment of pawns and pressure as a full-fledged front in the resurgent global power competition. This great power competition has manifested itself in a dramatic increase in the geopolitical stakes, interests, and activities of external powers in Africa, a scramble for Africa reminiscent of the colonial scramble of the 1880s and the 1890s. Out of the acute awareness of the growing competition, the heavy weight of the respective interests and activities of the external powers, the reactions of the Ethiopian regimes, and attendant perceptions, fears, and concerns, the essay examines Ethiopia as a vivid case of great power competition in Africa. (Fikremariam, 2020)

The Ethiopian case study, exploring the interaction of the different variables of great power competition, is presented in three parts. The first part offers key historical events that form the backdrop to the pre-regime, regime, and past regime eras, each of which lasted about a quarter of a century. The historical discussion will show that even during the Cold War era, when Ethiopia was at the heart of East-West geopolitical competition, the country had managed to maintain remarkable independence in the face of monumental difficulties and pressures. In the post-Cold War era, however, a different trajectory began to unfold, in which the country became increasingly subjugated to generic neoliberal globalization and attendant US geo-strategic interests.

The second part examines the foreign policy interests, priorities, and frameworks employed by the three regimes to engage with the external powers. The strategic interests of the three regimes and by extension Ethiopia with regard to the three great powers in the post-1991 period, particularly in terms of the overly unequal relations forged in the processes of comprehensively and hastily engaging with and institutionalizing ties with the UN, IMF, World Bank, EU, OECD, and US, are then examined. The analysis will show that with the fall of the Derg regime, a post-ideological and hyper-global neoliberal strategy was enthusiastically adopted, leading to an extreme pro-Western drift that significantly compromised the country's sovereignty and independence in both foreign and domestic spheres.

Section 4 Regional Organizations and Alliances in Africa (African Union- ECOWAS- SADC):

Regional Organizations and Alliances in Africa:

Regional organizations and alliances have been an essential element of international relations in the post-Cold War era and are increasingly prominent in a new multipolar world. The continued marginalization of Africa in the processes of globalization underscores the importance of the renewal of efforts by African states to strengthen their regional organizations. The integration of the African continent and the entrenchment of the international system of states handle and mediate a number of interconnected developments, including economic integration, the spread of democracy, the proliferation of conflicts, and terrorism.

The African Union (AU) was established in 2001 and launched in Durban, South Africa, in July 2002. It built on earlier efforts to establish continental unity among African states made by the Organization of African

Unity (OAU) in 1963 and has spurred debates about the relevance and impact of AU activities as part of the broader international system of states, with emphasis on its relationships with other regional organizations outside Africa. Established in the early 1970s as the West African political union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has been actively involved in post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building efforts in nations affected by violent political turmoil amid a broader regional trend towards democratization. At the southern end of the continent, and while continuing to face developmental and political challenges, Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states have taken significant political and economic reform efforts to rejuvenate their regional organization. (Chekol, 2020)

Regional organizations and alliances such as the AU, ECOWAS, and SADC have started to shape the overall form of the African continent and the continuing marginalization faced as a whole by states on this continent. Though originally well-meaning outfits, collectives intended to bolster national and continental sovereignty and development were co-opted by the Cold War superpowers in their bid for influence over strategically important states and resources. This led to divisions and an unprecedented militarization of Africa with the imposition of unwanted civil wars and proxy conflicts. The end of the Cold War gradually released African states to determine their futures free of external interference, politically complicated by claims of second independence and increasing frustration with a faraway and disconnected United Nations in New York.

African Union:

The African Union (AU), founded in 2002 and headquartered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, is a continental organization comprising 55 African countries. The AU seeks to actively engage with the various global powers competing for influence across the continent. This chapter will examine the AU's relations with each of the powers and its overarching initiatives to enhance its own influence through its relations with the powers, attempts to exert greater control over the continent's natural resources, initiatives to push back against unwanted foreign military intervention, and support for African solutions to African problems guaranteed by AU-led peacekeeping missions.

Insecurity and instability across the continent provide a favorable environment for the great powers to engage in an unwanted contest. Historically, this competition has taken the form of military intervention, whether by the US, the former colonial powers, or regional powers. War on the continent has frequently resulted in foreign arms supplies, such as the Cold War arms race regime led by the US and USSR, and was often accompanied by the deployment of foreign troops. Since 2001, following the terrorist attacks on the US, military and intelligence cooperation has aimed at curbing the influence of al-Qaeda in Africa, effectively legitimizing and financing the covert operations of the West and its proxies. Capabilities were built up in regions such as the Horn of Africa, the Maghreb, and the Sahel as part of the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative. (Matisek, 2020)

More recently, the fallout from the Arab Spring and the escalation of tensions between the US and Russia, as well as the West's focus on Afghanistan, the Middle East, and the Pacific, has led to a security vacuum on the continent that others have sought to exploit. Some countries have ramped up covert operations against alleged extremists and subversives in

Africa. There is significant debate in the West about China's intentions in Africa, with "China threat" analyses becoming increasingly common. Many African leaders appreciate the balance of power it offers, particularly against Western patron-client relations characterized by a focus on political conditionality and human rights considerations. However, other African leaders have started to worry about potentially losing their sovereignty amidst structural indebtedness and being forced into exclusive economic relations with China.

ECOWAS:

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is a regional economic community made up of fifteen West African countries. In operation since May 1975, ECOWAS, founded on the principles of collective self-sufficiency, solidarity, and economic cooperation, has evolved over the years from an economic union to a regional peacebuilding organization. With the mandate of promoting peace and security in West Africa, ECOWAS has emerged as a capable peacekeeper in the region with its doctrine of intervention called the ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping, and Security. The regional organization has deployed peacekeeping missions in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, and Guinea. (Adetula et al., 2021)

Like the African Union (AU), ECOWAS has had to deal with geopolitical rivalries in its areas of operation. Despite Western hegemony declining in the wake of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, US-China competition did not directly affect ECOWAS. Nevertheless, the arrival of Oriental Powers and new Western players had implications for the regional organization as they were recipients of increased ODA/vulnerability to direct investments from the new Powers. ECOWAS adopted a new development

agenda - Vision 2020 - which stated that cooperation with the external partners should take "the form of comprehensive partnership" and should be "based on a negotiation of power relations." However, without main Powers in mind, ECOWAS could not control the impact of the new partnerships established by its member countries in the security or economic domains. (Callistus & Vincent)

The regional organization was alerted to the rise of external Powers by the political challenges to its authority in Liberia (1992), Sierra Leone (1998) or Guinea-Bissau (2008). Yet, despite its increasing involvement in complex multi-level crises, ongoing rivalries between its member countries hampered its capacity to efficiently implement a regional response to "muscular democracies." In this context, French prescience took the form of military dependence on the ECOWAS member country with a Francophile political regime, Senegal. On the New York UN Security Council, France's 1992 armed involvement in Liberia was presented as "an ECOWAS operation." In return, Senegal benefited from a Western financial increase and was provided with "a permanent seat" within the UN security structure.

SADC:

With fifteen member states, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is the second biggest African regional organization after ECOWAS. It aims for regional integration through enacting protocols on trade, safety and security, food security, mining, energy, and others. SADC's members are then classified into two groups: a small circle of countries almost entirely surrounded by South African influence and wealth (Botswana, Lesotho, Eswatini, and Namibia) and the rest (Angola, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Seychelles, and Malawi) representing the policymakers continent-

wide but politically in the SADC itself. These countries are usually regarded as South Africa's backyard. The island off the southeast coast of Africa (Madagascar) does not seem to care much about Africa's developed countries due to historical, cultural, and political ties with France. SADC Secretariat, headquartered in Gaborone, Botswana, has to date established fifteen SADC protocols. A protocol is a formal legal document signed by parties specifying the terms of an agreement between them and ratified by the respective parties' national parliament. For SADC protocols to take effect, a member state must ratify them within a specified time-limit determined on a case-by-case basis. (Kahombo, 2023)

At the end of May 2009, the then newly created Egyptian Arab Republic had spared no effort in trying to allocate the SADC national parliaments, bicameral Congress with its House of Representatives and House of Elders, one of its own senators, Mohamed Abdel Wahab. He had been sitting at the Committee on Affairs of Arab and African Countries since early October 2009 without trying to participate actively in any meeting, including a committee meeting dedicated to assessing SADC's poverty alleviation, development, and regional integration protocols. According to protocol twenty-one, "Coordinating capacity building, infrastructure, and knowledge base projects in support of poverty alleviation, poverty reduction, and promotion of enhanced regional integration." The input for the report was compiled from SADC's community-based organizations (CBOs) and a random sample of 6477 households aged 15 years or older across thirteen SADC countries covering the period of January to June 2009. (Altun, 2022)

This was part of SADC's information illiteracy strategy aimed to prevent the region's CBOs from participating in Africa's global knowledge and information society (KIS/IS). The skillful Egyptian then devised another

plan to have SADC countries misinterpret the report, thereby trying to win "votes" to postpone the implementation of protocols 2-20 dealing directly with information and communication. South Africa's political history complements SADC. Twenty-three years from political freedom for South Africa today would be 233 years for Tanzania, Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique. Would such countries have had peace and stability as well as the political will to foster regional integration?.

Future Prospects and Implications of Great Power Competition in Africa:

The future prospects of great power competition in Africa remain uncertain, but ongoing geopolitical shifts and increased competition for influence and resources will have profound implications for African countries and global geostrategic stability. Africa's historical legacies of colonialism and external exploitation will continue to influence the behavior of external powers such as China, the United States, and Russia, as they vie for strategic influence and access to key resources. Geopolitical shifts and the emergent multipolar world order speed up the contest and widen its scope, leading to dangerous escalations that taint broader Africa.

Inevitably, the great power competition manifests itself in stripes of competition characteristic of Africa. As a latecomer to the continent, especially compared to China and European powers, the United States government and other established powers promise partnerships while steering Africa away from China and Russia as high-priority geopolitical competitors in the context of the Indo-Pacific Major Powers and Greater Middle East. The West's promises of "partnership" depend on China's stepping back in favor of America's capitalistic development model, particularly in regard to telecommunications, 5G networks, hard

infrastructure, and media and information technology. Thus, China is pressured to observe a "responsible" competition and greater vigilance against information mechanisms that challenge the West's normative hegemony. (Soulé, 2020)

Internal separation, polarization, and conflict will further characterize the great power competition as it becomes increasingly acute, with competition heating up between African countries becoming a novel aspect of the competition. This scenario poses dire security challenges for multiple African countries and sparks greater aspirations for continental security cooperation and conflict resolution. In such a complex landscape, African countries should strive to promote a regional and continental crisis management capability while securing a normative vision to guide the development of Africa's emerging multipolar order.

Geopolitical Shifts and Power Balances:

In recent years, Africa has been at the center of a dynamic geopolitical landscape that has witnessed significant shifts in power balances. The growing competition between Donald Trump's America, Xi Jinping's China, and Putin's Russia poses intricate challenges and opportunities for Africa, its leaders, and peoples. Great power competition in Africa manifests through numerous opportunities and pitfalls for African nations who are faced with the challenge of threading the narrow and complex path of non-alignment and strategic autonomy.

Geopolitical shifts and power balances between major powers have developed over the last three decades. Following the 1991 disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the US became the undisputed global superpower. However, this unipolar moment was short-

lived, as by the late 1990s, Europe began to look toward a multipolar world with multiple rising powers. The 9/11 attacks on New York City marked a new moment of great power competition; however, this competition took on the form of a "long war on terrorism," which manifested in proxy wars across the greater Middle East and the Global South.

The US invasion of Iraq led to a further geopolitical shift whereby, in 2008, China surpassed the US as the world's largest economy, according to purchasing power parity (PPP) metrics. This shift was, in part, exacerbated by the GFC whereby the Chinese economy remained relatively insulated from the global economic meltdown, all while actively appropriating key assets and investments in the Global South states. By 2016, Russia had embarked on a campaign of resistance as it re-emerged as a global power once more. Beginning with the annexation of Crimea, Russia engaged in hybrid warfare strategies through complex media disinformation campaigns, the exploitation of popular grievances within the EU, and proxy wars within geopolitical adversaries' backyard. (Salvatore, 2020)

In the early years of the new millennium, Africa was relatively insulated from the geopolitical competition occurring elsewhere in the world. The relative global focus on the "war on terror" meant that Africa was seen as largely inconsequential to great power competition. However, this would change dramatically. By the mid/late 2000s, Africa was suddenly and unexpectedly thrust into the geopolitical limelight, as western financial institutions, major powers, and multinational corporations scrambled to secure a foothold in the continent. The global financial crisis (GFC) of 2007-2008 and the rise of emerging powers such as BRICS and the N11 further exacerbated the focus on Africa.

In this new era of great power competition, the impending rise of emerging powers would shape a new global power balance, with grave implications for Africa and its peoples. Faced with a plethora of choices, it was suddenly "open sesame" for Africa, and the question was no longer whether Africa was on the radar but rather who would be "Africa's friend" (and on whose terms).

Security Challenges and Conflict Resolution:

Great power competition is likely to intensify global instability and insecurity, particularly in the world's most vulnerable regions. As major powers vie for influence, diminishing common interests or prospects for cooperative focus on African security may increase tension as an unintended byproduct. Africa has numerous resource-rich countries where great powers can seek to exercise influence at the expense of rivals. In some cases, great power competition may fuel existing states' local conflicts. The frontrunners in these tournaments are likely to be China and the United States, but Europe and Russia may also seek favorable configurations of African states as agents of influence. (Kassab, 2020)

While there are numerous arenas that could be arenas of great power competition, excessive global competition in response to environmental shocks - climate change, disease proliferation, or mass migration - could assist the spread of conflict. Most critically, it could feed increasingly adversarial great power competition itself. Climate change, for example, is likely to exacerbate competition over increasingly scarce fresh water supplies and "water wars" among great powers could develop, with Africa as a potential battleground. Other shocks likely to exacerbate competition include the spread of disruptive technology, cyber warfare proliferation, and the risk of regional or even global pandemics. Finally, armed conflict among

the major powers would risk ideogenic escalation and nuclear holocaust. (Unfried et al.2022)

Nevertheless, armed confrontation between great powers appears unlikely in the next couple of decades given the importance of mutually assured destruction to conflict de-escalation. Instead, competition is likely to take indirect forms largely conducted among client states. Just as the Cold War was, in many respects, a competition to win over newly independent post-colonial states, many newly independent states in Africa may be courted as agents of great power influence. This should be seen as an opportunity for Agency Africa to reject attempts by great powers to impose their ideology on its states, politics, and economies. Africa must not play catch-up with political movements whose results have been, at best, deeply ambiguous.

Conclusion and Recommendations:

The rapid pace of the ongoing geopolitical transformation has turned Africa into a theater of competition among the great powers. With Africa's rising global importance, the continent has not been spared from the great power contestations that have characterized the international system since at least the time of the Cold War. Throughout history, the victors of previous power struggles have imposed their notion of statehood, culture, and worldview on the global periphery. These were mostly 19th-century European-centered, monocentric views that were articulated and spread by Western colonialism. The prevailing world order in Africa is a product of contestation and hence not self-evident or natural. Given the African continent's current geopolitical and geoeconomic circumstances, African countries' agency, voices, and influence in restructuring an increasingly multipolar world and addressing internal structural predicaments are vital.

This study attempts to analyze the foundation and significance of the newly emerging global power order.

Central to the inquiry is to explain great power rivalry parameters in Africa and researching its historical underpinnings, the global changes that have impacted African countries, their responses, and potential policy options. The burden of deep-rooted mutual suspicion and distrust of foreign intentions in Africa remains a striking legacy of the colonial encounter, intensification of global economic exploitation, and postcolonial interventions in the internal affairs of African countries. The study seeks to investigate Africa's future trajectory in the global power struggle and possible scenario-based outcomes distilling from historical interaction patterns across Africa with external great powers. The historical context and major power contestations on the continent up to the contemporary geopolitical significance of Africa are examined.

In an increasingly multipolar world, Africa's geoeconomic attractiveness as a market destination and sources of natural resource dependency on a growing hierarchy of external great powers has rekindled renewed great power interests and contestation for influence among emerging powers - China, India, and Brazil. Along with long-standing Western powers, Russia and Turkey have been actively enhancing their engagement with the continent. A domestic social, economic, and political transformation should be realized by Africa in order to ensure its new engagement with emerging powers and the West can yield mutual and sustainable benefits for African countries.

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