

A Postcolonial Analysis of the One Plus-Africa Summits:

A New Scramble for Africa?

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Since the colonial epoch, Africa has functioned as a ground wherein global powers vie for influence and access to resources, imprinting enduring ramifications on the continent's international relations. Despite attaining political autonomy, African countries grapple with the persistent specters of neocolonialism and economic exploitation. The advent of One Plus-Africa Summits marks a discernible juncture in global geopolitics, engendering discourse surrounding their underlying motivations and operational modalities. Critics argue that these summits risk perpetuating neocolonialism, thereby potentially disenfranchising economic independence while enabling continued exploitation. This study adopts a postcolonial analytical framework to comparatively scrutinize the Russia-Africa, China-Africa, and France-Africa summits, probing their historical antecedents, motivating factors, and impacts. By advocating for more equitably configured paradigms of international engagement vis-à-vis Africa, this inquiry endeavors to foster the empowerment of African states, foregrounding imperatives of sovereignty, developmental progress, and dignified agency. By examining colonial legacies, divergent impetuses, consequential ramifications, and prospective models of collaborative engagement, this scholarly exposition furnishes in-depth insights into the negotiation of intricate postcolonial power dynamics and the advancement of African prerogatives within the global milieu.

Keywords: Africa, Postcolonialism, Global Powers, Neocolonialism, Summit Diplomacy

Introduction

Since the dawn of the colonial era, Africa has been a stage where global powers have vied for influence, resources, and geopolitical advantage. This has been referred to as the "Scramble for Africa" to imply the rapid colonization of the continent by European powers in the 19th-century (Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2016). In recent years, this concept has resurfaced as new global players engage in resource extraction and geopolit-

ical competition in Africa, raising concerns about neocolonial practices and the impact on local autonomy (Mlambo et al, 2024). Despite achieving independence, Africa's struggle for sovereignty has continued in the face of neocolonialism and economic exploitation. In the last three decades, a new dynamic has emerged on the African continent: the convening of summits between African nations and the world's major powers, termed the One Plus-Africa summits (Soulé,

2021a). These gatherings represent a significant shift in global power dynamics and raise critical questions about the motivations and implications of such engagements in a post-colonial context.

The One Plus-Africa Summits have sparked debates and controversies regarding their true nature and underlying objectives. Critics like Usman (2023) and McKesson (1993) argue that these summits perpetuate a new form of colonialism, wherein African nations are once again subjected to the influence and interests of foreign powers. They question whether these engagements truly serve the interests of African nations or merely facilitate the exploitation of their resources and markets by external actors (Suleiman, 2016: 322-323). Further criticisms contend that such summits risk sidelining the agency and sovereignty of African states, potentially undermining their efforts towards self-determination and equitable development (Harper, 2017). He urged for greater transparency and inclusivity in diplomatic initiatives concerning Africa's future.

This study aims to critically analyze the One Plus-Africa Summits through a postcolonial lens, examining the power dynamics, agendas, and implications of these gatherings for African nations. Specifically, it seeks to: analyze how colonialism has shaped modern relationships between Africa and major powers; investigate the motivations of both African nations and these powers in attending the summits; assess the effects of these interactions on African sovereignty, development, and agency; and consider alternative models of cooperation that

prioritize African interests.

Comprehending the dynamics of the One Plus-Africa Summits is vital for policy-makers, scholars, and activists seeking to enhance African sovereignty, development, and dignity in the global arena. By elucidating the complexities of postcolonial power relations, this study aspires to inform more equitable and sustainable approaches to international engagement with Africa.

This study will begin by providing a historical overview of colonialism in Africa and its lasting impact on the continent's relations with the great powers. It will then analyze the motivations and objectives of both African nations and the great powers in participating in the summits. Subsequently, it will examine the implications of these engagements for African sovereignty, development, and agency. Finally, it will conclude with reflections on alternative models of cooperation and partnership that prioritize African interests and agency in the global arena.

Conceptualizing Postcolonial Dynamics Between Africa and Great Powers

The historical context of colonialism in Africa is a multifaceted and complex narrative that has profoundly shaped the continent's trajectory. European powers embarked on the scramble for Africa in the late 19th century, driven by motives ranging from economic exploitation to geopolitical competition as Rodney (1972) established. The Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 formalized the partition of Africa among European powers, disregarding the continent's existing

socio-political structures and cultural boundaries.

Scholars such as Chinua Achebe (1958), Frantz Fanon (1961), and Walter Rodney (1972) have extensively analyzed the impact of colonialism on Africa. Achebe's seminal work, *Things Fall Apart* vividly portrays the disruption of traditional African societies by European colonialism, highlighting the clash of cultures and the erosion of indigenous values. Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* delves into the psychological and existential consequences of colonization, emphasizing the dehumanizing effects on both colonizers and the colonized. Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* examines the economic exploitation inherent in colonialism, tracing the roots of Africa's underdevelopment to centuries of extractive colonial policies.

Postcolonial theory emerged in the latter half of the 20th century as a critical framework for understanding the enduring legacies of colonialism. Scholars like Said (1978; 1993), Bhabha (1994) and Spivak (1988) have pioneered postcolonial discourse, examining issues of power, identity, and representation in the aftermath of colonial rule. Said's *Orientalism* exposes the Eurocentric constructions of the "Other" in Western discourse, revealing how colonial powers constructed distorted narratives to justify domination. Bhabha's concept of "hybridity" explores the interplay of cultures and identities in colonial and postcolonial contexts, challenging essentialist notions of identity and offering possibilities for resistance and subversion. Spivak's

notion of the "subaltern" interrogates the marginalization of voices within colonial and postcolonial discourse, emphasizing the importance of representing the perspectives of the oppressed and disenfranchised.

In the African context, postcolonial theory offers a perspective for analyzing ongoing battles against recolonization, cultural resurgence, and political liberation. It highlights the significance of challenging Eurocentric narratives, reclaiming indigenous histories and identities, and understanding power dynamics shaped by colonial legacies. This theory prompts critical examination of neocolonial structures and promotes transformative practices grounded in decolonization and self-determination.

Great power dynamics continue to play a significant role in shaping Africa's political landscape. The legacy of colonialism has left a heritage of resource exploitation, geopolitical rivalries, and neocolonial interventions in Africa. In the post-Cold War era, global powers, particularly the United States, China, and Russia, have vied for influence in Africa, engaging in strategic partnerships, investment, and military cooperation.

China's growing presence in Africa, characterized by extensive infrastructure projects and resource extraction deals, has sparked debates about the implications of its no-strings-attached approach to investment and its impact on African sovereignty and development (Oqubay and Lin, 2019). The United States has pursued counterterrorism objectives and sought to expand its economic interests in Africa,

through military interventions and security assistance programs (Boyle, 2022). Russia's reemergence as a global player has led to renewed engagement in Africa, primarily through arms sales, energy deals, and diplomatic overtures (Gruzd, Ramani & Clifford, 2022). The intersection of great power competition and Africa's internal dynamics, including governance challenges, ethno-political conflicts, and economic vulnerabilities, has profound implications for the continent's stability and development trajectory. It underscores the importance of African agency in navigating external pressures and shaping their own futures.

Africa summits, whether regional or international, have been the focus of considerable scholarly attention in recent years. These gatherings provide platforms for African leaders to address common challenges, articulate collective goals, and forge partnerships with external actors. Research on One Plus-Africa summits have examined various themes, including governance, peace and security, economic integration, and sustainable development. Scholars (Woldearegay, 2024; Soulé, 2021b; Gavin, 2021; Shaw, 1983) have assessed the effectiveness of summit outcomes in addressing pressing issues such as conflict resolution, poverty alleviation, and infrastructure development. They have also analyzed the power dynamics at play within summit forums, exploring questions of representation, influence, and decision-making processes. Additionally, scholars like Soulé (2021a, b and c) have evaluated the role of regional organizations in facilitating

and mediating summit processes. They have examined the motivations behind external involvement, as well as the impact of external agendas on African priorities and interests. Overall, research on these summits contribute to a deeper understanding of regional dynamics, governance structures, and the evolving relationships between African states and external actors in an increasingly interconnected world.

A Postcolonial Framework

Postcolonial Theory emerged from a critical examination of the legacies of colonialism and imperialism. At its core, it seeks to understand and challenge the power dynamics inherent in colonial encounters and their lasting impacts on societies, cultures, and identities. Postcolonial Theory is underpinned by several key concepts and principles which include othering, subalternity, hybridity, and colonial discourse. The concept of "othering" forms a central tenet of Postcolonial Theory (Dimitrijevskaja-Jankulovska, A. & Denkovska, 2023; Olson, 1998; Said, 1978). This refers to the process through which dominant powers construct and essentialize the identities of colonized peoples as inferior or different. Othering legitimizes the subjugation and exploitation of colonized populations by portraying them as inherently backward or uncivilized. Postcolonial theorists emphasize the fluid and dynamic nature of cultural identities in the wake of colonial encounters. Hybridity suggests that cultures, identities, and practices are not fixed but are constantly evolving through interactions between colonizers and

the colonized. This concept highlights the complexity and richness of cultural exchange in colonial contexts.

Coined by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the term “subaltern” refers to the marginalized and silenced voices of the colonized. Subalternity emphasizes the agency and resistance of oppressed groups whose perspectives are excluded from dominant narratives of history and power. Postcolonial theorists seek to amplify these subaltern voices and challenge hegemonic discourses. Postcolonial Theory examines the systems of knowledge, representation, and discourse produced by colonial powers to justify their rule and maintain hegemony. Colonial discourse encompasses a range of cultural, political, and intellectual practices that reinforce colonial hierarchies and perpetuate colonial ideologies.

Postcolonial Theory offers a critical lens through which to analyze the dynamics of power, domination, and resistance in the international arena. Postcolonial Theory can deconstruct dominant narratives in international relations because it challenges the Eurocentric biases inherent in traditional IR theories and narratives. By interrogating the universalization of Western experiences and perspectives, Postcolonial Theory exposes the ways in which colonial histories continue to shape global politics.

Secondly, the theory interrogates global hierarchies by highlighting how colonial legacies persist in contemporary patterns of economic exploitation, political domination, and cultural imperialism. By examining the unequal distribution of power

and resources in the international system, Postcolonial Theory illuminates the ways in which former colonial powers continue to exert influence over formerly colonized regions.

Thirdly, by dwelling on the perspectives of formerly colonized peoples and subaltern groups in the study of IR, this framework amplifies the marginalized voices. By foregrounding the experiences and agency of marginalized populations, Postcolonial Theory provides a more inclusive understanding of international relations.

Methodological Approach

To analyze the One Plus-Africa summits, this study adopted document analysis as a methodology. Document analysis as a methodology offers a comprehensive lens through which to explore complex socio-political phenomena, such as the One Plus-Africa Summits, from a postcolonial perspective. This approach involves scrutinizing the language, symbols, and power dynamics present in the documents to uncover underlying ideologies and structures of dominance (Rapley, 2007). In the context of “the New Scramble for Africa,” document analysis can unveil how historical narratives, representations of Africa, and textual analysis contribute to the reassertion of power by former colonial powers and emerging global players. By deconstructing the rhetoric employed in these summits, document analysis allows for a critical examination of how notions of development, cooperation, and sovereignty are constructed, contested, and manipulated in

the pursuit of geopolitical interests (Naeem et al., 2023). Through this methodology, this article examined how colonial legacies continue to shape Africa and great power relations through the One-Plus Africa summits.

Evolution of Great Power Involvement in Africa

Great Power involvement in Africa has undergone significant evolution over the decades, reflecting changes in global geopolitics, economic interests, and security dynamics (Gooch et al, 2022; Shaw, 1983). From colonial exploitation to Cold War rivalries and contemporary economic engagements, the relationship between Great Powers and Africa has been multifaceted and complex. Historically, colonial powers dominated Africa, exploiting its resources and exerting political control (Kalu & Falola, 2019; Rodney, 1972). However, the wave of decolonization in the mid-20th century reshaped the continent's dynamics, leading to the emergence of independent African nations and the onset of new forms of engagement with Great Powers (Odijie, 2021; Hodges, 1972).

Africa-Plus-One summits are high-level engagements between African countries and a single global power or bloc, including the United States, China, Japan, the European Union, France, the UK, and Russia. This includes forums convened by middle powers such as India and Indonesia (Wekesa, 2024). These summits focus on issues such as trade, investment, infrastructure, security, and development, with each summit reflecting the specific

interests of the host power. For instance, the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit emphasizes governance and economic partnerships (U.S. Department of State, 2022), while FOCAC (Forum on China-Africa Cooperation) prioritizes infrastructure and trade (Oxford Analytica, 2022). The India-Africa Forum Summit focuses on economic growth and cooperation in education (Bhuyan, 2024), and the UK-Africa Investment Summit addresses trade, investment, and climate change (UK Government, 2024). The France-Africa Summit strengthens diplomatic, cultural, and economic ties (French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, 2021) while the Russia-Africa Summit emphasizes military cooperation, energy, and trade (Wekesa, 2024). These summits provide African nations with opportunities to secure resources and forge strategic partnerships within a complex geopolitical context.

However, implementation challenges and unequal partnerships may hinder the realization of mutual benefits (Amare, T., & Vines, 2024). This is because their outcomes are a reflection of the geopolitical interests in Africa as well as access to resources. This competition has exacerbated regional tensions and complicate efforts for peace and stability in West Africa and the Sudan (Adekaiyaoja, 2024; Opalo, 2024). Thus, some summits address security challenges in Africa, such as terrorism and other security concerns (Ross, 2024). However, differing priorities and approaches among Great Powers may hinder coordinated efforts and sustainable solutions.

Analyzing agendas and outcomes of Russia-Africa, France-Africa, and China-Africa summits will provide insights into the trends and changing dynamics of Africa's relations with Great Powers and the challenges and opportunities they present for the continent's future.

The Russia-Africa Summit

The Russia-Africa Summit is a significant diplomatic event that underscores Russia's renewed interest in strengthening its ties with African nations. The inaugural Russia-Africa Summit was held on October 23-24, 2019, in Sochi, Russia. This marked a pivotal moment in Russia's engagement with the continent, symbolizing its desire to deepen economic, political, and strategic partnerships with African countries (Russia-Africa Forum, 2023). The history of Russia-Africa relations dates back to the Soviet era, characterized by ideological support, arms sales, and development assistance to African liberation movements (Grey, 1984; Brayton, 1979). However, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia's focus shifted away from Africa as it grappled with internal challenges (Ferragamo, 2023; Goumidi, 2023).

In recent years, there has been a noticeable resurgence of Russian interest in Africa, driven by several factors including geopolitical, economic and so on. Russia seeks to expand its global influence and counterbalance Western dominance (Lukyanov, 2016) by cultivating relationships with African states. This is particularly evident in Russia's engagement with

resource-rich countries and its desire to establish military footholds on the continent. Africa's growing economies, vast natural resources, and burgeoning consumer markets present lucrative opportunities for Russian businesses. Energy, mining, infrastructure development, and arms sales are key areas of interest for Russian investors (Medvedev, 2015). The Russia-Africa Summit serves as a platform for enhancing diplomatic ties, fostering cooperation, and exploring areas of mutual interest such as counterterrorism, peacekeeping, and trade (Antwi-Boasiako, 2022). Viewing the Russia-Africa Summit through a postcolonial lens reveals complex power dynamics and historical legacies. Africa's history of colonization and exploitation by Western powers has shaped its relationships with external actors, including Russia. While Russia may present itself as a non-Western alternative, it is not immune to criticisms of neo-imperialism or neocolonialism. Critics like Ferragamo (2023) and Herd (2021) argue that Russia's engagement in Africa may perpetuate patterns of dependency, extractive industries, and uneven power relations. Moreover, Russia's history of supporting authoritarian regimes (Bartosiewicz, 2023) and its strategic interests in natural resources raise concerns about human rights abuses and environmental degradation in African countries. On the other hand, proponents of Russia-Africa cooperation like Mishra (2023) and Duursma and Masuhr (2022) emphasize the importance of diversifying Africa's diplomatic and economic partnerships. They argue that African states should leverage

their agency to negotiate favorable terms and maximize the benefits of engagement with Russia and other global actors.

The Russia-Africa Summit holds both opportunities and challenges for African states. African countries stand to gain significantly by broadening their diplomatic and economic alliances beyond the conventional Western partners. Collaborating with Russia presents promising prospects for trade diversification, investment opportunities, and technological exchanges. Leveraging Russian proficiency in crucial sectors like energy, transportation, and telecommunications could fuel infrastructure advancements across Africa, effectively tackling pressing infrastructure deficits and fostering economic advancement. Rosatom, Russia's state nuclear energy corporation, has been actively involved in constructing nuclear power plants in African countries such as Egypt and South Africa with talks currently underway with Ghana, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Morocco, Tunisia and Uganda.

Furthermore, Russian Railways, one of the world's largest railway companies, has been engaged in various infrastructure development projects across sub-Saharan Africa. For example, in West Africa, Russian Railways has indicated interest in railway project that will connect Burkina Faso and Ghana, aiming to improve transportation connectivity between the two nations and within the region broadly (Russia-Africa Forum, 2023). These projects aim to enhance energy security, stimulate economic growth, and provide clean and reliable electricity to meet the rising energy demands of these

nations. However, African nations must adeptly navigate the intricate landscape of international relations, ensuring a delicate balance between their interests and engagements with Russia. It is imperative for them to prioritize developmental objectives, safeguard sovereignty, and uphold long-term sustainability in all collaborative endeavors or partnerships by drawing lessons from previous projects with same and other partners like the Ajaokuta Steel project that has been abandoned after decade (Braithwaite, 2020).

The Russia-Africa Summit represents a significant milestone in the evolving dynamics of global geopolitics and economic relations. The First Ministerial Conference of the Russia-Africa Partnership, held on November 9-10, 2024, reaffirms Russia's commitment to enhancing peace, security, and development in Africa, offering a forum for strengthened cooperation on conflict resolution and regional stability (Russia-Africa Forum, 2024). By emphasizing economic growth and infrastructure development, the conference presents African states with opportunities to diversify their international partnerships and secure strategic investments in critical sectors such as energy, technology, and agriculture. While it offers opportunities for cooperation and mutual benefit, African states must approach engagement with Russia critically, mindful of historical legacies, power imbalances, and their own developmental aspirations.

The France-Africa Summit

The France-Africa Summit encapsulates a multifaceted nexus of historical, political, and economic interdependencies between France and its former African colonies. Rooted in the colonial legacy of the Scramble for Africa, this summit functions as a pivotal forum where contemporary Franco-African relations are articulated and negotiated. Established amid the wave of mid-20th century decolonization movements, France's postcolonial engagements have since evolved into a complex diplomatic architecture encompassing economic cooperation, security partnerships, and cultural exchanges (Chafer, 2002; McKesson, 1993; Nwokedi, 1989). Convened periodically, the summit symbolizes France's sustained influence in shaping Africa's socio-political landscape, while simultaneously highlighting the entrenched dynamics of power, privilege, and dependency that characterize postcolonial interactions.

When examined through a postcolonial theoretical framework, the France-Africa Summit reveals the persistence of colonial hegemonies and the ongoing contestations for agency and sovereignty across the African continent. Despite presenting itself as a platform for equal partnership, the summit often reproduces asymmetrical power relations (Mattheis, 2024; Nicolaidis, 2017), whereby France maintains substantial leverage over its former colonies. This enduring dominance is manifest in economic structures that perpetuate neocolonial dependencies, as African economies remain intricately tied

to French commercial interests, thereby reinforcing cycles of underdevelopment and economic subordination. Furthermore, France's military footprint across Africa, ostensibly aimed at maintaining regional stability and countering security threats, has been critiqued as an extension of neo-imperialist influence, reinforcing France's strategic grip on African affairs (Gibbs, 2024; Sylla, 2024). Concurrently, cultural imperialism permeates Franco-African relations, privileging French language and norms at the expense of indigenous cultural expressions, thereby perpetuating cultural subjugation (Mentan, 1989; Ali, 2023).

For African states, participation in the France-Africa Summit presents a complex interplay of opportunities and constraints in managing the legacy of postcolonial diplomacy (Tasamba, 2021). Economically, the summit facilitates access to French markets and investment capital, albeit often compromising authentic economic sovereignty. Politically, it offers African leaders a venue for bilateral negotiations and collaborative problem-solving; yet, this engagement frequently risks perpetuating a neocolonial status quo in which African agency is circumscribed by French interests.

Historically, France has exerted profound influence in West Africa as a consequence of its colonial past. However, contemporary discourse increasingly underscores a marked erosion of French influence in the region. France maintained a significant military presence in West Africa, most notably through now-terminated Operation Barkhane, which was tasked with

combating Islamist militant insurgencies in the Sahel. Nevertheless, this military presence has engendered widespread contestation, culminating in the unprecedented expulsion of French troops from multiple West African states, including Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, in response to mounting popular dissent and political rejection of French interventionism (Bertrand et al., 2023; Chafer et al., 2024). These expulsions represent a watershed moment, signaling a substantive rupture in France's traditional security architecture in the Sahel and reflecting broader demands for sovereignty and self-determination. Such developments highlight a discernible decline in French influence and an attendant reconfiguration of regional security dynamics, as affected states seek alternative partnerships to address their security challenges.

Simultaneously, demographic shifts, particularly the burgeoning youth populations in West Africa, have catalyzed heightened political mobilization and demands for transparent governance, fueling revolutions and social movements that have challenged entrenched French influence (Chatelot, 2023a; Chatelot & Bensimon, 2023b). In this context, West African leadership increasingly asserts its autonomy vis-à-vis former colonial powers. Despite formal independence attained in the mid-20th century, France's enduring presence through economic, military, and cultural ties has perpetuated significant influence. Yet, rising critiques of French neo-colonialism have galvanized efforts to diversify diplomatic and economic alliances.

This strategic realignment is evidenced by an increasing orientation towards emerging global powers such as China, India, Brazil, and Russia. Through these diversified partnerships, West African states aim to diminish their historical dependency on France and enhance their bargaining power in international affairs. Consequently, these states are progressively cultivating more balanced and multifaceted diplomatic relations to better navigate the complexities of the contemporary global order.

The France-Africa Summit thus serves as a microcosm reflecting the intricate and contested power relations inherent in postcolonial engagements. While emblematic of enduring historical legacies and dependencies, it also offers a critical site for African states to assert agency and renegotiate the modalities of their engagement with France and the wider international community. As Africa confronts the geopolitical challenges of the twenty-first century, the summit remains a barometer for the continent's aspirations towards genuine autonomy, solidarity, and self-determination amidst ongoing neocolonial pressures.

China-Africa Summit

The China-Africa Summit represents a pivotal juncture in the evolving dynamics between China and African nations. Established against the backdrop of historical colonial legacies and contemporary global power shifts, this summit serves as a platform for diplomatic engagement, economic cooperation, and strategic partnership

between China, a rising global power, and African states, representing a diverse array of socio-economic and political contexts (Ibonye, 2022; Kyirewiah & Xiaolong, 2022). China's involvement in Africa spans decades, characterized by multifaceted engagements encompassing trade, investment, infrastructure development, and aid. The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), initiated in 2000, has been instrumental in fostering dialogue and collaboration, culminating in the triennial summits that underscore China's commitment to deepening ties with African nations.

Examining the China-Africa Summit through a postcolonial lens unveils a complex interplay of power dynamics, historical contexts, and socio-economic implications. Postcolonial theory posits that the legacy of colonialism continues to shape global relations, influencing perceptions, policies, and interactions between former colonizers and colonized nations. China's engagement with Africa intersects with postcolonial discourses in several ways. Critics such as Omolo (2022) argue that China's pursuit of resources and markets in Africa echoes colonial-era exploitation, perpetuating asymmetrical power relations. Moreover, China's non-interference policy, contrasted with Western interventionism, raises questions about the balance between sovereignty and external influence in African states.

However, proponents of China-Africa cooperation assert that it offers African nations agency and alternative pathways

for development, countering traditional Western hegemony. They argue that China's investment in infrastructure, technology transfer, and capacity building empowers African states to assert their interests on the global stage, fostering South-South cooperation and challenging traditional North-South power dynamics (Suleiman & Slighoua, 2024). The China-Africa Summit holds profound implications for African states, shaping their socio-economic trajectories, political landscapes, and international standing. Economic partnerships with China provide avenues for infrastructure development, industrialization, and job creation, addressing critical developmental challenges facing many African nations.

Nevertheless, African states must navigate the complexities of engaging with China, balancing the pursuit of economic opportunities with safeguarding sovereignty, environmental sustainability, and social welfare. Critiques (Mutai, Cuong, Dervishaj, Kiarie, Misango, Ibeh, Popoola, & Lallmahamood, 2024; Ofosu & Sarpong, 2022) of China's investment practices, such as debt-trap diplomacy and labor exploitation, underscore the importance of robust governance frameworks and strategic planning in maximizing the benefits of cooperation while mitigating potential risks. Moreover, the China-Africa Summit underscores the evolving geopolitical landscape, wherein African nations emerge as strategic partners in China's global ambitions (Singh, 2024). African states wield newfound leverage in international affairs, leveraging their partnerships with China to

diversify diplomatic ties and enhance their bargaining power on issues ranging from trade negotiations to climate change mitigation. The China-Africa Summit encapsulates the complexities of contemporary international relations, navigating the intersections of history, power, and development.

Great Power Dynamics and Neo-Colonialism

Africa endures indelible scars of socio-economic, political, and even, cultural landscape bequeathed by colonial and neocolonial relations. While formal colonialism has ostensibly ended, the legacy of imperial domination persists through neo-colonial mechanisms perpetuated by great powers. This paper investigates the manifestations of neo-colonialism in Africa, focusing on three key dimensions: economic exploitation, military presence, and cultural hegemony. Great powers have historically exploited Africa's abundant natural resources for their economic gain. This economic exploitation continues unabated, with resource-rich African nations trapped in unequal trade relationships and subjected to predatory lending practices. Multinational corporations, backed by powerful states, extract minerals, oil, and other valuable resources, reaping immense profits while leaving local populations impoverished and environments degraded. The persistent plundering of Africa's resources perpetuates cycles of poverty and underdevelopment, reinforcing the continent's dependency on external actors.

The strategic significance of Africa's geopolitical location has led great powers to maintain a substantial military presence across the continent. Under the guise of promoting stability and combating terrorism, foreign militaries intervene in African conflicts, further entrenching their influence and advancing their geopolitical agendas. Military bases, training programs, and arms sales serve to bolster the security interests of great powers, at the expense of African sovereignty and self-determination. Moreover, these military interventions frequently exacerbate local conflicts and contribute to the perpetuation of violence and instability.

Cultural imperialism continues to shape Africa's values and identities through the enduring influence of colonial legacies, Western media, consumer culture, and globalization, marginalizing indigenous cultures and languages (Elkandoussi, 2015; Daramola & Oyinade, 2015). However, Africa is increasingly reclaiming its cultural sovereignty through movements like Afrocentrism, the promotion of local languages, and the resistance to foreign cultural dominance, asserting a more independent and diverse cultural identity. An example of cultural imperialism in Africa is the dominance of Western brands and media, such as Hollywood films and fast food chains like McDonald's, which shape consumer habits and ideals of success, overshadowing traditional African customs and lifestyles. In response, African countries like Nigeria have embraced Afrobeat music and Nollywood film industry, promoting

local culture globally and reasserting pride in African traditions (Faidi, 2024; Busari, 2024).

The analysis presented in this article underscores the enduring relevance of colonial legacies in shaping contemporary power dynamics in Africa. Great powers continue to wield influence through economic exploitation, military intervention, and cultural hegemony, perpetuating neo-colonial structures that undermine African sovereignty and development. Addressing these entrenched inequalities and power imbalances requires concerted efforts to challenge and dismantle the mechanisms of neo-colonialism, fostering genuine partnerships based on mutual respect, equity, and self-determination. Only through such transformative actions can Africa chart a path towards true independence and prosperity.

Navigating Neocolonialism: African Responses at Great Power Africa Summits

In the dynamic landscape of international relations, African nations find themselves grappling with the complexities of neocolonialism, manifested through the agendas of great powers. The Great Power Africa Summits serve as platforms where these tensions come to the forefront, prompting African states to adopt multifaceted strategies to assert agency and resist neocolonial influences.

African nations demonstrate agency by asserting their sovereignty and pushing back against neocolonial impositions during Great Power Africa Summits. They refuse

to be passive recipients of external agendas and instead actively engage in shaping the discourse. This is evident in their insistence on equitable partnerships, fair trade practices, and respect for national autonomy. By leveraging their collective strength, African states assert themselves as equal partners in global affairs, rather than mere subjects of neocolonial exploitation.

African states employ a range of strategies to counter neocolonialism. Economic diversification, regional integration, and diplomatic alliances are key tactics employed to reduce dependency on external actors and enhance self-reliance. Additionally, investment in education, technology, and infrastructure bolsters African economies, enabling them to negotiate from positions of relative strength. By diversifying their partnerships beyond traditional colonial powers, African states mitigate the risk of falling prey to neocolonial traps (de Freitas, 2023). Chinese investments have had both positive and negative effects on Africa. On the positive side, they have improved infrastructure, created jobs, and boosted economic growth, enhancing connectivity and trade. These developments have helped reduce youth unemployment, leveraging Africa's demographic advantage.

Pan-Africanism and regional organizations play crucial roles in the fight against neocolonialism (Oloruntoba, 2023). Pan-Africanism fosters solidarity among African nations, emphasizing the importance of unity in confronting external threats. Regional organizations such as the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community

of West African States (ECOWAS) provide platforms for collective action and coordination of strategies to counter neocolonial influences. Through these platforms, African states amplify their voices and present a unified front in negotiating with great powers, thus enhancing their bargaining power.

Civil society and grassroots movements serve as vital agents of change in challenging neocolonialism. These movements mobilize communities, raise awareness about the impacts of neocolonial policies, and advocate for alternative approaches that prioritize African interests. By amplifying marginalized voices and holding governments accountable, civil society organizations contribute to the democratization of decision-making processes at Great Power Africa Summits. Grassroots activism empowers local communities to resist exploitative practices and assert their rights in the face of neocolonial pressures.

Great Power Africa Summits represent critical junctures where African nations navigate the complexities of neocolonialism. Through agency, strategic planning, Pan-African solidarity, and grassroots activism, African states assert their autonomy and resist external domination. By harnessing collective strength and advocating for equitable partnerships, Africa charts a course towards a future free from the shackles of neocolonialism, where its nations stand as equal players on the global stage.

Implications for Policy

Great power engagement in global affairs holds significant implications for the international community, shaping geopolitical dynamics and influencing regional stability. As major powers vie for influence and dominance, the consequences reverberate across diverse domains, from economic cooperation to security arrangements. Understanding these implications is crucial for navigating an increasingly complex global landscape and charting future directions for international relations.

The consequences of great power engagement are multifaceted and extend across various spheres:

Geopolitically, great power engagement leads to geopolitical shifts as states compete for strategic advantage. This can result in alliances realignments, territorial disputes, and proxy conflicts, altering the balance of power in key regions. Economic interdependence characterizes great power engagement, with states forging trade relationships, investment partnerships, and financial dependencies. However, economic competition can also breed tensions, as seen in trade disputes, currency manipulation, and the imposition of sanctions.

Military posturing is a prominent feature of great power engagement, with states enhancing their military capabilities, conducting joint exercises, and projecting power in contested regions. This militarization raises concerns about arms races, escalation risks, and the potential for conflict. Further, ideological contestation

accompanies great power rivalry, as states promote competing visions of governance, development, and international order. This ideological competition shapes diplomatic discourse, media narratives, and public perceptions, influencing global norms and values. Also in the perspective of global governance, great power engagement impacts global governance structures, with states seeking to shape institutions, norms, and rule-making processes to advance their interests. This can lead to debates over the legitimacy, effectiveness, and inclusivity of international institutions.

African countries stand to benefit from infrastructure investment facilitated by great powers, addressing critical gaps in transportation, energy, and telecommunications. However, these investments may come with strings attached, such as debt burdens or resource extraction agreements. Africa's rich natural resources attract the attention of great powers, leading to competition for access and control. While resource exploitation can stimulate economic growth, it also raises concerns about environmental degradation, resource depletion, and unequal distribution of benefits. Great power engagement in Africa intersects with security dynamics, including counterterrorism efforts, peacekeeping operations, and military assistance. While external support can enhance security capacity, it may also exacerbate conflicts, undermine sovereignty, and perpetuate dependency.

Great power involvement in African affairs poses challenges to governance and

sovereignty, with states facing pressure to align with external agendas and interests. Balancing sovereignty with the need for international cooperation remains a central dilemma for African policymakers. African economies seek to leverage great power engagement to diversify trade relations, attract investment, and stimulate economic growth. However, structural barriers, such as limited market access and regulatory hurdles, hinder the realization of Africa's economic potential.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

As policymakers navigate the implications of great power engagement and seek to promote African development, several recommendations merit consideration. First and foremost, African countries should pursue strategic partnerships with multiple great powers. By diversifying their engagement, they can mitigate dependency risks and maximize developmental benefits. Moreover, enhancing transparent governance practices is imperative. Transparency, accountability, and good governance are crucial to ensuring that external investments contribute to sustainable development and benefit local populations.

Furthermore, strengthening regional integration efforts is paramount. This can enhance Africa's collective bargaining power and resilience amidst great power competition. Additionally, it fosters intracontinental trade and cooperation, bolstering the continent's position on the global stage. Investing in human capital development, infrastructure,

and institutional capacity building is equally critical. This empowers African states to negotiate on equal footing with great powers and manage external engagements more effectively. Prioritizing conflict resolution is another vital aspect. By focusing on conflict prevention, mediation, and peacebuilding initiatives, African nations can mitigate the destabilizing effects of great power rivalries. This, in turn, creates conducive environments for sustainable development.

By adopting this approach to great power engagement and addressing the unique challenges and opportunities it presents, African countries can position themselves as active participants in shaping the future of international relations. In doing so, they can advance their developmental aspirations while contributing meaningfully to global discourse and progress.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Great-Power Africa Summits, encompassing France-Africa, Russia-Africa, and China-Africa engagements, have served as pivotal platforms for understanding and analyzing the multifaceted dynamics shaping the continent's global relationships. Recapitulating key findings, these summits have highlighted the evolving strategies of great powers in Africa, ranging from economic cooperation to geopolitical influence. France has emphasized historical ties and security cooperation, Russia has pursued resource extraction and military partnerships, while China has prioritized infrastructure development and trade. These

summits have significantly contributed to scholarship by offering insights into the complex interplay between geopolitics, economic interests, and development agendas in Africa. They have underscored the need for balanced analyses that consider the diverse interests and strategies of both great powers and African states.

However, further research is necessary to delve deeper into the socio-economic impacts of great-power engagements in Africa, including their implications for governance, human rights, and local communities. Additionally, exploring the effectiveness of different models of engagement and the potential for African agency in shaping these relationships would enrich our understanding of the dynamics at play. In essence, the Great-Power Africa Summits have laid a foundation for ongoing discourse and research, highlighting the significance of global partnerships in shaping Africa's trajectory in the 21st century.

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