

The Impact of the United States's Presence on Chinese Influence in Africa (2000-2022)

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Abstract

Objectives: This research aimed to explore the dynamic interplay between American and Chinese influence in Africa from 2000 to 2022, focusing on how U.S. presence impacts China's strategic positioning in the continent. The study also investigates the following pivotal question: In what ways does American presence affect Chinese influence in Africa during this period? The hypothesis posits that a heightened American presence inversely affects Chinese influence. This analysis stands out for its rigorous quantitative approach to U.S.-China competition in Africa, a perspective often overlooked in previous research. **Methods:** This study used and employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data analysis with comparative case studies to examine the impact of US' presence on Chinese influence in Africa (2000-2022).

Results: The study results showed that increased American engagement prompts China to bolster its influence aggressively to safeguard its political and economic interests. Furthermore, the research highlights the United States' acute awareness of the implications of Chinese influence, as it poses a potential threat to American interests.

Conclusion: The study shows that the competition between the two powers is marked by convergent strategies, with China leveraging soft power as a counterbalance to the US' military assertiveness on the continent.

Keywords: US presence; China's strategic positioning, Africa continen

تأثير الوجود الأمريكي على النفوذ الصيني في أفريقيا (2000-2022)

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ملخص

الهدف: يستكشف هذا البحث التفاعل الديناميكي بين النفوذ الأمريكي والصيني في أفريقيا من عام 2000 إلى عام 2022، مع التركيز على كيفية تأثير الوجود الأمريكي على الموقف الاستراتيجي للصين في القارة. وتبحث الدراسة في السؤال المركزي: بأي طرق يؤثر الوجود الأمريكي على النفوذ الصيني في أفريقيا خلال هذه الفترة؟ تفترض الفرضية أن الوجود الأمريكي المتزايد يؤثر عكسياً على النفوذ الصيني. يتميز هذا التحليل بنهجه الكمي الصارم للمنافسة بين الولايات المتحدة والصين في أفريقيا، وهو منظور تم تجاهله في الأبحاث السابقة.

المنهجية: تتبع الدراسة نهجاً مختلطاً، يجمع بين تحليل البيانات الكمية ودراسات الحالة المقارنة لفحص تأثير الوجود الأمريكي على النفوذ الصيني في إفريقيا (2000-2022)...

النتائج: تكشف النتائج أن المشاركة الأمريكية المتزايدة تدفع الصين إلى تعزيز نفوذها بقوة لحماية مصالحها السياسية والاقتصادية. وعلاوة على ذلك، يسلط البحث الضوء على الوعي الحاد للولايات المتحدة بتداعيات النفوذ الصيني، حيث يشكل تهديداً محتملاً للمصالح الأمريكية.

الخلاصة: تتميز المنافسة بين القوتين باستراتيجيات متقاربة، حيث تستفيد الصين من القوة الناعمة كقوة موازنة للحزم العسكري الأمريكي في القارة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الوجود الأمريكي، التموضع الاستراتيجي للصين، قارة أفريقيا



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1. Introduction

This research explores the impact of American presence on Chinese influence in Africa from 2000 to 2022. China's expanding role in Africa has raised significant concerns for the United States, which closely monitors developments on the continent. Washington's unease is driven by a desire to protect its interests and sustain its influence and power in Africa—regions tied closely to oil, natural resources, and strategic partnerships vital to the US economy as it competes with other major global powers, especially China. While this competition shapes African development, African nations are not passive observers. They actively engage in this relationship, often strategically leveraging the rivalry to secure better terms for development projects, aid, and diplomatic support. This study examines not only the competition between the US and China but also how African nations navigate and shape this relationship.

China's rise as a global power, driven by substantial economic expansion and international partnerships, has contributed to a phenomenon known as "Sinophobia"—a growing hostility toward its global influence. The United States remains vigilant about China's activities worldwide, particularly in Africa, where China has established itself as a key partner for numerous nations. This expanding Chinese presence presents a challenge to US foreign policy and complicates its strategic interests on the continent.

The competition between the United States and China in Africa is often discussed within the framework of global leadership and polarity. Following the Soviet Union's dissolution in 1991, the world became unipolar, with the US playing a dominant role in global leadership and influencing international relations to achieve its strategic aims. China, however, views unipolarity as a destabilizing factor for the global power balance and seeks to solidify its role in global leadership. Although China has made significant strides toward this end, its rivalry with the US remains central to its foreign policy, particularly in Africa, where the allure of economic opportunities, especially in oil, attracts both nations.

As US interests in Africa grow, so do its efforts to strengthen its foreign policy on the continent, primarily through foreign aid, military assistance, economic partnerships, and opposition to certain regimes. This involvement, however, is driven by strategic interests and varies according to the US principle of prioritizing national interests.

Chinese and American goals in Africa overlap, especially in the economic domain. China views African nations as valuable allies that support its economic agenda, benefiting from the continent's resources and oil, which are crucial for both the global economy and China's development. This alignment has positioned China as a strong competitor to the United States in Africa. Unlike the more assertive American approach, China generally applies soft power by focusing on diplomatic ties and economic alliances. Many African countries view this strategy as a pathway for growth and an opportunity to reduce reliance on the US.

The deepening China-Africa cooperation, however, raises challenges for US foreign policy and prompts scrutiny from African groups concerned about China's long-term intentions. Issues surrounding China's political influence in Africa, including its stance on human rights and humanitarian matters, contribute to these concerns.

Assessing Sino-American competition in Africa reveals that the continent stands to be significantly affected by this rivalry, with potential positive or negative outcomes depending on the goals, strategies, and effects of this struggle for resources and influence. This competition, particularly around oil, underscores the idea that both countries' primary motives are to secure their interests, often prioritizing their own foreign policy goals over genuine support for African development.

Consequently, the trajectory of African development and progress hinges on the results of this US-China competition. As the two powers vie for influence, the question arises: How can the situation in Africa be assessed and its future predicted amidst the escalating US-China rivalry? The continent's internal dynamics and the foreign policies of both China and the United States—shaping the tools of intervention, nature of conflict, and potential outcomes—play critical roles in answering this question.

2. Significance of the study

This study holds scientific significance in exploring the impact of American presence on Chinese influence in Africa from 2000 to 2022 and its analysis of how these interactions shape African affairs. By examining the mechanisms and strategies employed in this competition, the study contributes new insights and findings to the existing body of research. It

is particularly valuable because it emphasises the role of the American presence as an independent variable—a reality on the continent closely tied to US foreign policy and strategic interests—and its effect on the dependent variable, the expansion and growth of Chinese influence in Africa.

Moreover, the study's twenty-year scope provides a comprehensive period for analysing the dynamics of this competition, supporting the findings of Al-Amin's (2021) research. Additionally, this study addresses existing knowledge gaps in research by Al-Shaawi (2023) and Al-Zaidi (2021), particularly regarding future projections for Africa amid the Sino-American rivalry. Doing so offers a deeper understanding of the long-term implications of this geopolitical competition on the continent's development.

The practical significance of this study lies in its examination of over two decades of Sino-American competition in Africa, enabling it to track a wide range of variables that influence this rivalry. The study's findings and recommendations will be particularly valuable for policymakers, offering insights that can guide the formulation of foreign policies that align with the evolving geopolitical landscape and advance national interests. Furthermore, policymakers in Qatar may find the study's outcomes beneficial in shaping the state's foreign relations and policies, focusing on fostering interests, partnerships, and mutual understanding. The study also highlights the most effective tools and strategies for predicting and enhancing relations with African nations and other key players in the international system.

2.3 Objectives of the study

- Analyze the nature, scope, and evolution of the competition between the United States and China in Africa from 2000 to 2022, focusing on economic, political, and strategic dimensions.
- Investigate how the rivalry influences Africa's economic growth, infrastructure development, and political landscape, identifying both opportunities and challenges for African nations.
- Compare the approaches of the United States and China in Africa, including their use of soft and hard power to achieve their respective goals.
- Assess the broader consequences of this rivalry for global leadership, unipolarity, and multipolarity in the international system.

2.4 Statement of the study Problem

From 2000 to 2022, the competition between the United States and China in Africa has significantly shaped the continent's development and global power dynamics. China's expanding influence through economic partnerships and infrastructure investments challenges the United States' strategic interests in Africa, including access to resources and geopolitical influence. This rivalry sees both nations prioritizing their national interests, often at the expense of Africa's developmental needs.

While China employs a soft power approach focused on economic and diplomatic ties, the United States combines economic aid, military support, and opposition to certain regimes. African nations, however, actively leverage this competition to secure better terms for aid and investment, demonstrating strategic agency.

This study explores how the US-China rivalry impacts African development and the continent's ability to shape its future amidst external pressures, analyzing the interplay between foreign policies, African agency, and broader global shifts. More specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

In what ways does American presence affect Chinese influence in Africa during this period?

2.5. Hypotheses

2.5.1 Scientific Hypothesis

- This study is based on a theoretical-scientific proposition: There is a positive relationship between US presence and Chinese attempts to have larger influence in Africa.

2.5.2 Practical Hypotheses

Based on the above scientific hypothesis, the following practical hypotheses can be formulated:

- The more official US visits to Africa increase, the more official Chinese visits will respond in kind.
- The more US military bases are established in Africa; the more China will increase all forms of presence in the continent.

- As US investments in Africa grow, this will be met with an increase in Chinese investments on the continent.

The logical reasoning behind these hypotheses is tied to China's pursuit of policies, actions, and strategies that enable it to enhance and strengthen its influence in Africa. This is in response to the practical efforts by the United States to increase its presence and influence on the continent. These actions are fundamentally based on securing the interests of both nations.

2.6 Delimitations of the Study

Spatial delimitation: The Impact of US Presence on Chinese Influence in Africa (2000-2022).

Temporal Delimitations: This study focuses on the period from 2000 to 2022. This timeframe is significant as it captures key developments in the Sino-American rivalry in Africa.

2.7 Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data analysis with comparative case studies to examine the impact of US presence on Chinese influence in Africa (2000-2022). The research design follows a systematic approach to measure both direct (military bases, investments) and indirect (diplomatic visits, development projects) indicators of influence. The study adopts a longitudinal perspective to track changes over the 22-year period, allowing for the identification of patterns and trends in the US-China competition dynamic.

3. Previous Studies

The study draws on a diverse set of previous research to enrich the theoretical framework with ideas and themes supporting the study's focus. The methodology for selecting previous studies was based on choosing research directly related to the study's topic in a way that supports and explains the study's variables, whether the independent variable (American presence in Africa) or the dependent variable (Chinese influence on the continent), ensuring that these studies cover the study's time frame from 2000 to 2023. Additionally, it was important that the studies be as recent as possible to address contemporary aspects and issues in the relationship between American presence and Chinese influence in Africa.

3.1 Studies on the Independent Variable (American Presence in Africa):

Belhoul, N. (2013). *The US military initiative in Africa: A new strategic approach?*

Belhoul (2013) addressed the central question: What is the impact of the American presence on the African continent? The study focused primarily on military affairs, particularly emphasising the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) role and its influence on African security dynamics. The findings concluded that US foreign policy in Africa should prioritise strengthening cooperation between the United States and AFRICOM as a strategic approach to achieve national security and development.

Altzani, K. (2015). *The US military presence in Africa: Motives and stakes.*

Altzani (2015) explored the evolution of US interests in Africa, analysing the reasons behind America's growing focus on the continent and the objectives of its military interventions. The study revealed that African nations often perceive US military actions as primarily serving American interests rather than those of Africa. For instance, the US presence in Mali was seen as a means of preserving American dominance rather than supporting African stability.

Al-Janabi, Q. M. U. (2017). *Internal factors influencing US strategy towards the Horn of Africa after 2001.*

Al-Janabi (2017) examined the internal American factors driving US intervention in the Horn of Africa. The study concluded that the events of September 2001 were pivotal in enabling the US to expand its global influence under the pretext of counterterrorism. Washington's actions in the region were part of a broader strategy to contain other major powers and protect US interests.

Al-Zaidi, M. K. (2021). *US policy towards Nigeria during the Trump era (2016-2020).*

Al-Zaidi (2021) addressed the question: What were the features of US foreign policy toward Nigeria during the Trump administration from 2016 to 2020? The study hypothesised that the Trump administration aimed to maintain US oversight over Africa's economic, political, and security sectors, focusing on Nigeria due to its energy resources and large population. The study emphasised that Trump's central role in shaping US foreign policy influenced the prioritisation of issues. It also highlighted that Trump's approach in Nigeria centred on exploiting oil resources and viewed the growing African-Chinese relationship as a threat to American interests.

Al-Shawi, S. (2023). *US policy towards the African continent*

Al-Shawi (2023) aimed to clarify US foreign policy directions in Africa, examining the pillars that enhance US interests on the continent. The study explored the question: What are the US foreign policy directions in Africa? It was based on the hypothesis that as US interests in Africa increase, so will the strengthening of US foreign policy in the region. The study concluded that US intervention in African affairs is primarily driven by pursuing American interests, employing various strategies such as aid provision, opposition to corrupt regimes, economic partnerships, and military support.

3.2 Studies on the Dependent Variable (Chinese Expansion in Africa):

Al-Waeli, K. M. K. S. (2013). *China's foreign policy towards Africa*.

In exploring the goals, frameworks, and mechanisms of Chinese foreign policy toward Africa, Al-Waeli (2013) analysed the impact of China's presence on African countries. The study concluded that China's engagement in Africa is primarily driven by its economic interests, utilising soft power to support these interests while strategically reducing US influence. African nations, in turn, seek to leverage China's expansion by maintaining balanced relations that serve their growth.

Abdul-Razzaq, B. H. (2015). *China's economic policy in Africa: Reality and prospects*.

Abdul-Razzaq (2015) offered a forward-looking perspective on China's presence in Africa, highlighting the economic opportunities and challenges China faces. The study found that China's objectives include securing vital oil supplies, enhancing its global standing, advancing strategic ambitions, and resisting Western pressures related to global trade liberalisation.

Jennifer Y.J. et al. (2016) focused on the expansion of Chinese non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Africa, with particular emphasis on Ethiopia and Malawi. Through interviews, the study revealed that political systems could significantly affect the ability of Chinese NGOs to operate, particularly in expanding development projects. Despite this, the study predicted that Chinese NGOs would continue their work in Africa and that efforts to formalise development would not hinder China's ongoing expansion in these countries.

Al-Amri, I. M. (2017). *China's role in Africa: A study in soft power diplomacy*.

Al-Amri (2017) examined China's use of soft power as a key tool for maintaining an influential presence in Africa. The study sought to answer the question: What are the manifestations of Chinese soft power in Africa? Focusing on the economic dimension, it concluded that China leverages its economic influence to secure African support in its global competition with major powers, particularly the United States.

Bousaid, A. (2020). *China's positioning in Africa: Context and tools*.

Similarly, Bousaid (2020) explored China's motivations and methods for strengthening its African presence. The study found that China had successfully convinced African elites of its commitment to supporting African nations. However, it also emphasised that China needs more effective policies to solidify its position on the continent. One major challenge China faces in this regard is the ongoing presence of America in Africa.

Al-Amin, S. M. (2021). *China's approach to Africa: A study of motivations, opportunities, challenges, and mechanisms*

Al-Amin (2021) delved into China's strategic objectives in Africa and the methods it uses to implement its strategy and navigate the reactions of former colonial powers. The study concluded that China's approach relies heavily on investments and partnerships with African nations, relying on soft power and diplomatic efforts. Despite these efforts, China faces opposition from African interest groups, which remains a significant challenge to its expansion on the continent.

3.3 Studies on Both Variables (Independent and Dependent)

Al-Tayeb, A. H., & Dafallah, K. M. (2007). *U.S.-China competition over oil in West Africa: Projections of migration and political change*.

Al-Tayeb and Dafallah (2007) focused on oil as a key determinant in the Sino-American competition and its impact on refugee movements and political change in West Africa. They argued that the competition over oil intensifies as both nations aim to support their economies, influencing the continent's political dynamics and refugee movements. The study

concluded that oil plays a crucial role in shaping political change and refugee movements in Africa, with China and the United States vying for influence to secure their interests and assert dominance.

Jalti, G. (2014). *The rise of Chinese influence in North Africa and increasing U.S.-French concerns.*

Jalti (2014) examined the rise of Chinese influence in North Africa and the growing concerns of the United States and France. The study hypothesised that increasing Chinese influence in North Africa would heighten American and French concerns. The findings indicated that Beijing is a prominent partner with North African countries, while the US and France view China's expansion with apprehension as it impacts their strategic interests.

Al-Salami, M. A. M. (2015). *The power struggle over African oil and its impact on the present and future of the continent.*

Al-Salami (2015) highlighted the centrality of oil in the Sino-American competition over African resources. The study emphasised that major international powers, including China, are drawn to Africa's resources, particularly oil, which affects the continent's development pathways. It concluded that the conflict between China and the United States over these resources threatens Africa's stability and development.

Belkhtir, N. (2017). *The power struggle in Africa: Between Chinese economic penetration and US military presence.*

Belkhtir (2017) analysed the strategies of the United States and China in securing their presence in Africa. The study addressed how American military strategy compares with the region's Chinese soft power (economic and diplomatic efforts). It hypothesised that as the US military presence increases, China would enhance its economic engagement to strengthen its soft power. The study found that African countries perceive American military actions as a threat, increasingly turning to China for economic cooperation as a more equitable partner.

Murad, M. (2021). *Chinese expansion strategies in the Horn of Africa amid US presence in the region.*

Murad (2021) explored China's expansion strategies amidst the US presence in the Horn of Africa. The study argued that China employs soft and hard power to advance its interests and counter American regional influence. It concluded that the Horn of Africa is a strategic battleground for major powers, with China leveraging soft power to achieve its goals. At the same time, the US seeks to reassert its influence.

Munene, M., (2023). *The Horn of Africa in 2023: A Geopolitical Analysis.*

Munene (2023) investigated the geopolitical and geo-economic factors making the Horn of Africa a competitive arena. The study concluded that the region's resources attract global powers and that Sino-American competition has significant security implications for the continent.

Al-Waeli, K. M. K. S. (2013). *China's foreign policy towards Africa.*

Al-Waeli (2021) analysed the geopolitical competition between the US and China in Africa post-September 11, 2001. The study found that the September 11 attacks significantly influenced US strategies to maintain its global interests, including in Africa. Both nations use various strategies to secure their interests on the continent.

Qallaa Al-Darros, S. (2022). *The African continent between Chinese expansion ambitions and US positioning challenges.*

Qallaa Al-Darros (2022) examined the impact of Sino-American competition on Africa, arguing that such competition does not significantly contribute to the continent's development. The study emphasised the need for African countries to address their challenges equally with major powers to achieve development. It highlighted that while the US uses security and military policies like AFRICOM to extend its influence, China relies on economic strategies to strengthen its presence.

Ibrahim, M. I. (2022). *The U.S.-China competition for energy resources in Africa: A study in political geography.*

Ibrahim (2022) sought to understand the mechanisms China and the US employed to secure African energy resources. The study concluded that Africa's strategic geographical position is crucial in global power dynamics. It found that the competition between China and the US is heavily driven by oil, with both nations pursuing distinct foreign policies to enhance their presence and access to resources on the continent.

3.4 Comparative Regional Power Dynamics

Understanding the U.S.-China competition in Africa becomes clearer when compared with similar power dynamics in

other regions. The case of U.S.-Russian rivalry in the Middle East offers valuable insights into how major powers compete for influence in resource-rich regions (Bani Salameh & Mashagbeh, 2018). According to Al-Alyawi (2021), both situations show how global powers use a mix of military presence, economic investments, and diplomatic relations to maintain their influence. The key difference is that while Russia primarily relies on military power in the Middle East, China emphasizes economic partnerships in Africa, reflecting what Al-Amin (2021) describes as China's preference for soft power approaches.

Infrastructure development serves as another important tool for gaining regional influence. The "Dam Wars" situation in Ethiopia provides a relevant parallel to Chinese infrastructure investments in Africa. Just as Ethiopia's dam projects have created regional tensions and opportunities for external influence (Murad, 2021), China's extensive infrastructure investments in Africa serve both development and strategic purposes. This mirrors how the United States used large infrastructure projects during the Cold War to gain influence, though China's approach focuses more on economic partnerships rather than military alliances (Al-Waeli, 2013).

The experience of smaller states navigating relationships with competing powers offers lessons for understanding African nations' positions. Bahrain's approach to maintaining balanced relationships with regional powers, as noted by Al-Salami (2015), provides insights into how smaller African nations manage relations with both the U.S. and China. Like Bahrain, many African countries seek to maintain productive relationships with both powers while avoiding overdependence on either one. This strategy, which Al-Zaidi (2021) terms "strategic balancing," allows smaller nations to maximize benefits while minimizing risks in great power competition.

The competition for resources shows similar patterns across regions. In the Middle East, as Al-Janabi (2017) explains, the U.S.-Russia rivalry often centers on oil and strategic locations. Similarly, in Africa, both the U.S. and China seek access to natural resources, though their approaches differ. While the U.S. often combines military presence with economic partnerships, China primarily uses economic tools and infrastructure development to secure access to resources (Ibrahim, 2022). This difference in approach significantly influences how African nations respond to each power's initiatives.

Regional organizations play different roles in these power dynamics. While the Gulf Cooperation Council serves as a platform for collective bargaining in the Middle East, the African Union takes on a similar role in Africa. However, Qulaa Al-Darous (2022) notes that African regional organizations tend to be more receptive to Chinese infrastructure initiatives compared to Western military partnerships. This preference reflects a broader trend where developing nations increasingly view economic cooperation as more beneficial than traditional military alliances.

Comparing these regional dynamics reveals that while the basic pattern of great power competition remains similar, the specific tools and approaches vary significantly. As Munene (2023) concludes, understanding these similarities and differences helps explain why China's economic-focused approach has gained considerable traction in Africa, even as the U.S. maintains significant military and political influence through its traditional approaches to power projection.

3.5 Differences between the Current Study and Previous Studies

The current study employs a transnational analysis methodology, which shifts focus from state-centric models to examining state relations, interests, and soft power dynamics. This approach provides a more nuanced understanding of competition and conflict. From 2000 to 2022, the study captures various changes and events, offering insights into how China and the United States have adjusted their foreign policies to align with their interests in Africa. This study's use of statistical data and evidence is crucial, as it offers an objective, quantitative perspective, contrasting with the primarily descriptive and analytical methods used in previous research. This scientific approach enhances the accuracy and depth of the analysis of Sino-American competition in Africa.

4. Nominal Concepts

4.1 Independent Variable

- *US presence in Africa* refers to the policies and actions the United States takes to ensure its active presence in Africa, secure its interests, and expand its influence on the continent.

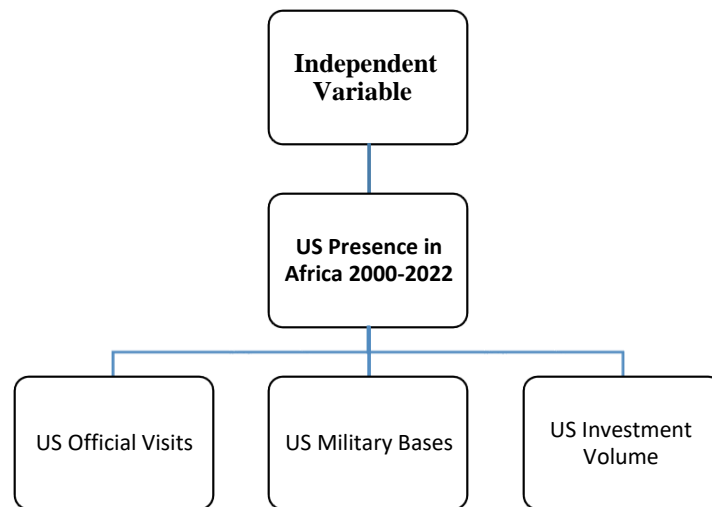


Fig 1: Independent Variable

4.2 Dependent Variable

- *Chinese influence in Africa*: This refers to China's efforts to enhance its interests in Africa through a foreign policy that employs various strategies to achieve its primary objectives and ensure an active presence on the continent.

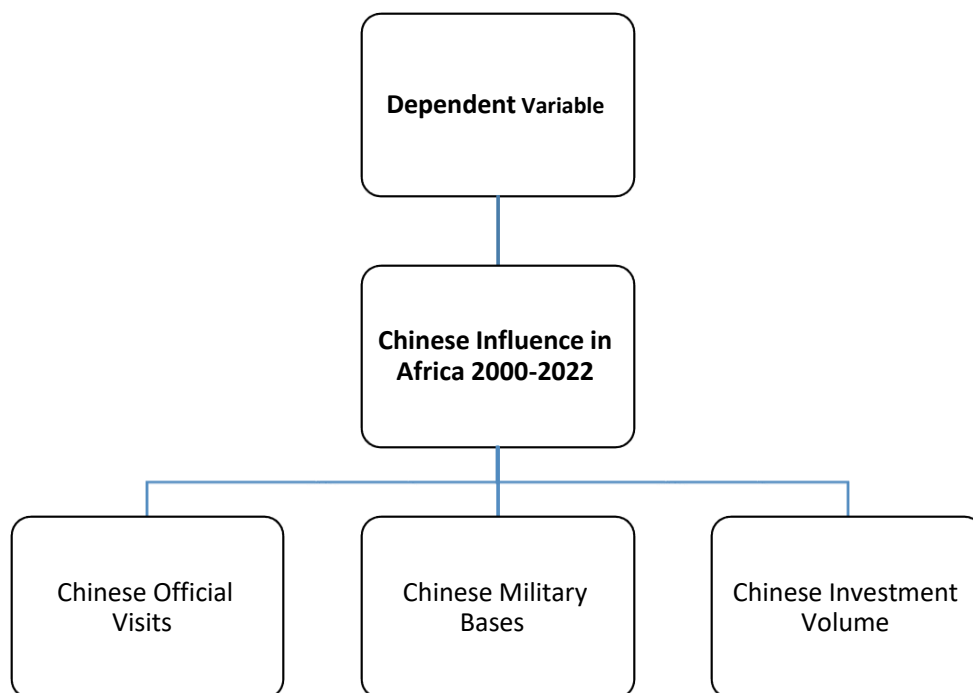


Fig 2: Dependent Variable

4.3 Measuring the Independent Variable

- *US presence in Africa*: This will be measured by tracking official US visits, the number of US military bases in Africa, and the scale of US investments on the continent. These quantitative indicators will illustrate the US presence in Africa and how it changes over time. The choice of these indicators is based on their importance in understanding the extent of US presence in Africa, as they cover political, military, and economic dimensions and reflect US policies for engaging

with African nations.

4.4 Measuring the Dependent Variable

- *Chinese influence in Africa*: This variable will be measured by tracking official Chinese visits to Africa, the number of Chinese military bases on the continent, and the scale of Chinese investments in Africa. These indicators will demonstrate Chinese influence in Africa and show the changes in this influence according to the independent variable and its indicators. The selected indicators correspond to those used for the US, facilitating a comparison of the two countries' approaches to engagement with Africa.

4.5 Data Sources

Independent Variable

- *US presence in Africa*: The study will analyse data related to the independent variable using quantitative sources that illustrate the changes in US foreign policy toward Africa. These sources include:

- US Department of Defense: <https://www.defense.gov/>
- US Department of State: <https://www.state.gov/>
- The official White House website: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/>

These sites were specifically chosen for their reliability in providing information and data to help understand the US presence in Africa.

Dependent Variable

- *Chinese influence in Africa*: The study will analyse data related to the dependent variable using quantitative sources demonstrating the changes in China's foreign policy toward Africa. These sources include:

- Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <https://cutt.us/KdBr3>
- Chinese Ministry of Defense: <http://eng.mod.gov.cn/>
- The SAIS China Africa Research Initiative (SAIS-CARI): <http://www.sais-cari.org/chinese-investment-in-africa>

These sites were selected for their reliability and for containing data and information that help understand Chinese presence in Africa, particularly in official visits, military bases, and Chinese investments on the continent.

5. Methodological Framework

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data analysis with comparative case studies to examine the impact of US presence on Chinese influence in Africa (2000-2022). The research design follows a systematic approach to measure both direct (military bases, investments) and indirect (diplomatic visits, development projects) indicators of influence. The study adopts a longitudinal perspective to track changes over the 22-year period, allowing for the identification of patterns and trends in the US-China competition dynamic.

5.1 Data Collection and Analysis

Primary Data Sources: For the independent variable (US presence), the study utilizes data from:

- US Department of Defense (<https://www.defense.gov>)
- US Department of State (<https://www.state.gov>)
- Official White House archives (<https://cutt.us/2O4PT>)

For the dependent variable (Chinese influence), data is sourced from:

- Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (<https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ara/>)
- Chinese Ministry of Defense (<http://eng.mod.gov.cn/>)
- SAIS China Africa Research Initiative (<http://www.sais-cari.org/chinese-investment-in-africa>)

Data Analysis Methods: The study employs:

Quantitative Analysis:

- Time series analysis of investment flows
- Frequency analysis of official visits
- Comparative analysis of military base establishments
- Statistical correlation tests between US presence and Chinese response indicators

Qualitative Analysis:

- Content analysis of official policy documents
- Comparative case studies of specific African regions
- Analysis of diplomatic statements and agreements

5.2 Methodological Limitations

The study faces several important data limitations that must be acknowledged. First, there are significant accessibility challenges regarding Chinese investment data, which may be underreported in official sources. This is particularly relevant when examining private sector investments and smaller-scale projects across African nations. Additionally, information about military bases and strategic installations often faces classification restrictions, limiting the ability to fully assess military presence indicators. The study also recognizes that informal diplomatic interactions and unofficial visits between nations may not be documented in official records, potentially leading to gaps in understanding the full scope of diplomatic relations.

Quantifying influence, particularly soft power, presents inherent methodological challenges. The study acknowledges the difficulty in measuring intangible aspects of influence, such as cultural impact and diplomatic goodwill. Furthermore, variations in reporting standards between countries create challenges in maintaining consistent measurement criteria across different regions and time periods. Time lags in official data releases also pose a challenge, as some recent developments may not be fully captured in the available data sets.

To address these methodological limitations, the study implements several mitigation strategies. Data verification involves cross-referencing multiple sources to ensure accuracy and comprehensiveness. When exact figures are unavailable, the study employs conservative estimates based on verified information from multiple reliable sources. Where data gaps exist, these are explicitly acknowledged in the analysis to maintain transparency. The study also utilizes triangulation methods, combining quantitative data with qualitative insights from policy documents and official statements to provide a more complete picture of the US-China dynamic in Africa. This comprehensive approach helps ensure that the conclusions drawn are robust despite the noted limitations in data availability and measurement challenges.

The methodology prioritizes transparency and replicability while maintaining scientific rigor in data collection and analysis. Statistical programs and graphical representations are used to visualize relationships between variables and test the study's hypotheses. This approach enables a comprehensive understanding of how US presence affects Chinese influence in Africa while acknowledging the inherent complexities of measuring international influence.

6. Results:

6.1 Results of the Independent Variable (US Presence in Africa 2000-2022)

First Variable: US Official Visits

From Table (1), it is clear that US official visits to Africa covered most of the period defined in the study, from 2000 to 2022, at the presidential level. The characteristics of these visits can be identified, and interpretations can be made based on US decision-makers views on relations with African countries at the time. President Bill Clinton visited Africa once in 2000, and President George W. Bush visited thrice in 2003 and twice in 2008. President Barack Obama was the most frequent visitor to Africa during this period, visiting once every year except for 2014. President Donald Trump visited once in 2018, and President Joe Biden visited once in 2022.

The frequency of visits during the Bush and Obama administrations can be linked to US foreign policy ideology aimed at containing competitors to the United States. President Bush focused on strengthening US military power after September 2001, while President Obama sought to promote a constructivist view of international relations. As shown in Chart (1), President Obama was the most frequent visitor to Africa during this period, with a total of eight visits.

The variation in the number of visits from one US administration to another reflects changes in the US administrations' approaches to dealing with international variables and how they sought to contain them in ways that served US interests. These visit rates also indicate the level of importance that different US administrations placed on the continent at specific times.

Table (1): US Official Visits to Africa from 2000-2022

Year Type	2000	2003	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2015	2016	2018	2022
Official visits	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
Total visits	14											

Source: <https://www.state.gov/>

Second Variable: US Military Bases

Military bases, or what can be termed military power, represent a key tool that defines US strategies to strengthen its influence in various parts of the world. Following the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US relied on military power to control global affairs in a unipolar world.

Based on Table (2), US military bases have proliferated across the continent, with the listed bases being permanent. This is in addition to temporary bases established to serve US interests in certain countries.

The events of September 2001 emerged as a significant factor that necessitated the expansion of US military bases in many parts of the world. Given the importance of Africa, particularly regions such as the Horn of Africa and oil-producing areas, Washington established permanent military bases in the locations outlined in the Table to manage conflicts and ensure that these developments did not negatively impact US interests, especially economic interests, in these countries.

The US has implemented a foreign policy that reflects its military focus on the continent by establishing AFRICOM, the United States Africa Command. This military command consists of a leadership centre and a unified combatant command under the direct administration of the US Department of Defense. This unit manages all US military operations in Africa and strengthens military relations with 53 African countries (Bahloul, 2013).

Table (2): US Military Bases

State Type	Djibouti	Kenya	Niger	Cameroon	Uganda	Gabon	Ghana	Burkina Faso	Senegal	Chad	Somalia	South Sudan	Total
Number of military bases	2	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	12
Number of troops	2000	350	1100	200	300	400	925	750	350	1000	450	200	8025

Source: <https://cutt.us/nNy82>

Third Variable: US Investment Volume

Table (3) shows that US investment volume in Africa between 2000 and 2022 fluctuated across two periods. The first period, from 2000 to 2014, saw an increase in US direct investment in Africa, from \$11.89 billion in 2000 to \$69.03 billion in 2014. However, these investments began to decline in 2015, dropping to \$52 billion and stabilising at \$46.07 billion in 2022.

It can be said that the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) promoted by the United States in Africa represents capital inflows that could contribute to the continent's economic growth while also boosting the US economy. These investments are closely tied to the US economy's general state, particularly when financial surpluses allow for overseas investment. Africa represents an attractive investment destination for the US due to its oil reserves and raw materials, which help stimulate economic activity in the United States.

Regarding the benefits these investments bring to African countries, they facilitate the transfer of technology, especially new types of capital inputs that may not be achieved through financial investments or trade in goods and services. Foreign direct investment can also help create new job opportunities in Africa, improve human capital, encourage competition in

local input markets, and offer higher investment returns that influence the continent's gross domestic product (GDP). The decline in US investment in Africa since 2014 can be attributed to the global economic recession caused by the drop in oil prices in mid-2014, which affected the volume of US investments directed towards the continent.

Table (3): US Investment Volume in Africa 2000-2022

Investment volume (US\$ billion)	Year
11.89	2000
15.57	2001
16.04	2002
19.84	2003
20.36	2004
22.76	2005
28.16	2006
32.61	2007
36.75	2008
43.94	2009
54.82	2010
57	2011
55.85	2012
60.88	2013
69.03	2014
52	2015
49.63	2016
50.4	2017
48.07	2018
45.04	2019
43.81	2020
45.81	2021
46.17	2022

Source: <https://cutt.us/nfTI4>

Fourth Variable: US Soft Power Initiatives

Beyond military presence and economic investments, the United States has deployed significant soft power initiatives across Africa from 2000 to 2022. According to Al-Shaawi (2023), these initiatives represent a crucial but often overlooked aspect of US influence on the continent. The US approach to soft power encompasses educational exchanges, humanitarian assistance, health programs, and cultural initiatives, creating a multi-faceted engagement strategy that complements its military and economic presence.

In the educational sector, the US has maintained several flagship programs. The Fulbright Program, as noted by Al-Zaidi (2021), has facilitated academic exchanges between US and African institutions, with approximately 2,200 African scholars participating between 2000 and 2022. Additionally, the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), launched in 2010, has trained over 24,000 emerging leaders from sub-Saharan Africa. These educational initiatives create long-term connections between the US and Africa while developing local capacity in various sectors.

Humanitarian aid represents another significant aspect of US soft power. According to Al-Amri (2017), US humanitarian assistance to Africa between 2000 and 2022 totaled approximately \$32 billion, focusing on food security,

disaster relief, and refugee support. Notable initiatives include the Feed the Future program, which has invested in agricultural development and nutrition across 12 African focus countries. The program has reached over 6.7 million households and significantly improved food security in target regions.

The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) stands as one of the most successful US health initiatives in Africa. Murad (2021) reports that PEPFAR has invested more than \$85 billion in HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and research since its launch in 2003. The program has saved an estimated 20 million lives across Africa and supported antiretroviral treatment for over 18.9 million people. Beyond HIV/AIDS, the US has also supported malaria prevention through the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) and contributed to strengthening healthcare systems across the continent.

Cultural influence forms another pillar of US soft power in Africa. Al-Amin (2021) discusses how American cultural products, including movies, music, and media, have maintained a strong presence in African societies. The State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs has sponsored numerous cultural exchange programs, arts initiatives, and English language programs. These cultural connections help maintain positive perceptions of the United States among African populations, particularly young people who engage with American popular culture.

The impact of these soft power initiatives can be measured through various indicators. According to Ibrahim (2022), surveys conducted between 2000 and 2022 show that African countries receiving significant US soft power investments tend to maintain more favorable views of the United States compared to those primarily experiencing military or economic engagement. This suggests that soft power initiatives play a crucial role in building sustainable, positive relationships between the US and African nations, offering a different dimension of influence compared to China's predominantly economic approach.

6.2 Results of the Dependent Variable (Chinese Influence in Africa 2000-2022)

First Variable: Chinese Official Visits

Table (4) reveals that official Chinese visits to Africa were significant to Chinese decision-makers, as indicated by the number of visits. The Chinese president visited African countries ten times between 2003 and 2018, a relatively high rate. However, it is noteworthy that no Chinese official visits to Africa occurred during the three years preceding 2003. This can be explained by aligning these visits with China's economic approach towards Africa and its emergence as a key player in international relations and the global system.

The frequency of these visits indicates Africa's importance to China, particularly from 2009 to 2016, when the Chinese president visited Africa five times. This was when China sought to build economic partnerships and strengthen diplomatic and political ties with African countries to support its global expansion strategy. Chinese official visits to Africa also reflect China's foreign policy, which emphasises non-interference in the internal affairs of African countries. This fosters goodwill and acceptance for China in Africa, free from the dominance or unwarranted interference that often characterises other foreign policies.

The data on Chinese official visits to Africa indicates that Chinese decision-makers value the political support African countries can offer China, particularly concerning the human rights issues and violations China faces. This is one of the driving factors behind China's political outreach towards Africa.

Table (4): Chinese Official Visits to Africa 2000-2022

Year Type	2003	2004	2006	2008	2009	2010	2013	2015	2016	2018
Official Visits	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total Visits	10									

Source: <https://cutt.us/KdBr3>

Second Variable: Chinese Military Bases

Table (5) shows that China has only one military base in Africa, located in Djibouti. This is a very small percentage of

Chinese military presence in Africa, which can be explained by previous studies and an objective analysis of the factors discussed in this study.

Previous research explains this low level of Chinese military bases in Africa by highlighting that its economic interests primarily drive China's presence on the continent. China does not rely on hard power or military influence to engage with Africa. Instead, it emphasises soft power to advance its interests and reduce US influence. Thus, military bases, as indicators of military power, are not central to China's foreign policy in Africa (Al-Waeli, 2013).

Moreover, China's African expansion is primarily driven by strengthening investments and partnerships with African countries rather than military power. This allows China to leverage its soft power in the continent and establish strong partnerships that reassure African nations of China's good intentions in its involvement in African affairs.

The results of this variable highlight the limited Chinese military bases in Africa. The base in Djibouti reflects the strategic importance of this region to China and its competition with other global powers. Djibouti represents a contested area of geopolitical importance, prompting China to establish a military presence to monitor developments and protect its political, commercial, and economic interests.

Table (5): Chinese Military Bases

State Type	Djibouti
Number of military bases	1
Number of troops	1000

Source: <https://cutt.us/1jBLA>

Third Variable: Chinese Investment Volume

Table (6) shows that Chinese investment in Africa increased significantly from 2000 to 2022. Investment levels consistently rose from 2000 to 2018, then declined in 2019 and 2020, before increasing again in 2021 and 2022. This trend can be explained by China's strategic focus on establishing an economic presence in Africa, recognizing its importance to its global ambitions.

China's direct investments in Africa represent one of the most important tools used by China to solidify its presence on the continent. These investments are also a key element of China's soft power strategy, which it deems highly effective in its interactions with African nations. By examining previous studies and analysing the significance of Chinese investments in Africa, it can be concluded that China's economic policies on the continent are driven by its need to secure oil supplies, strengthen its global position, and pursue its strategic ambition of becoming a world power. China also seeks to counter Western pressures related to global trade liberalisation. Undoubtedly, the diversity of Chinese investments in Africa will provide China with further opportunities to utilise its soft power and exert influence on the continent to benefit its economic and political interests.

China's investment growth in Africa aligns with its broader vision of expanding its economic and strategic influence, ensuring continued access to vital resources, and securing a foothold in important markets. This is essential to China's economic development and competitive edge in global trade over the past three decades, as reflected in the results shown in Table (3) and the corresponding Chart on Chinese investment volume in Africa from 2000 to 2022.

Table (6): Chinese Investment Volume in Africa 2000-2022

Year	Investment volume (US\$ billion)
2000	0.2
2001	0.25
2002	0.3
2003	0.3

Year	Investment volume (US\$ billion)
2004	0.9
2005	1.59
2006	2.56
2007	4.46
2008	7.8
2009	9.33
2010	13.04
2011	16.25
2012	21.73
2013	26.19
2014	32.35
2015	34.69
2016	39.88
2017	43.3
2018	46.1
2019	44.39
2020	43.4
2021	47.1
2022	40.9

Source: <https://cutt.us/mV6IB>, <https://cutt.us/FeVDo> , <https://cutt.us/dN0QF>

Fourth Variable: Non-Resource Sector Competition

While much attention has focused on U.S.-China competition over Africa's natural resources, the rivalry has increasingly expanded into non-resource sectors. According to Al-Amin (2021), both nations have recognized that long-term influence in Africa requires engagement beyond traditional resource extraction. This shift has led to intense competition across several key sectors that directly impact African development and modernization.

In the technology sector, the competition has become particularly evident in digital infrastructure development. As noted by Murad (2021), China's digital presence in Africa has grown significantly through companies like Huawei and ZTE, which have built approximately 70% of Africa's 4G network infrastructure between 2000 and 2022. The United States has responded through initiatives like the Digital Transformation with Africa (DTA), launched to counter Chinese digital influence. According to Al-Zaidi (2021), U.S. companies have focused on software solutions and digital services, while Chinese firms have dominated hardware infrastructure, creating a two-tiered competitive dynamic in Africa's digital transformation.

Educational partnerships represent another crucial battleground. Al-Waeli (2013) reports that China has dramatically increased its educational engagement with Africa, establishing 61 Confucius Institutes across the continent and providing over 40,000 government scholarships to African students between 2000 and 2022. The United States, as documented by Al-Shaawi (2023), has maintained its influence through traditional academic exchanges and the establishment of American-style universities in several African countries. Competition in this sector extends beyond student exchanges to include research partnerships, curriculum development, and technical training programs.

Healthcare has emerged as a particularly significant area of competition, especially following global health crises. According to Ibrahim (2022), while the United States has maintained its leadership through programs like PEPFAR and the President's Malaria Initiative, China has rapidly expanded its health diplomacy through the construction of hospitals, deployment of medical teams, and donation of medical equipment. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified this competition,

with both nations engaging in vaccine diplomacy. Chinese medical teams have served in 45 African countries, while U.S. health initiatives have established extensive networks of clinics and training facilities.

Agricultural cooperation represents a growing sector of competition between the two powers. Belkhtir (2017) highlights how China has focused on establishing large-scale demonstration farms and agricultural technology centers across Africa, while the U.S. has emphasized sustainable farming practices and small-holder farmer support through programs like Feed the Future. Both nations have invested in agricultural research, with China establishing agricultural demonstration centers in 23 African countries, while the U.S. has supported agricultural education and market access programs affecting over 7 million African farmers.

The competition in these non-resource sectors reveals different approaches to building influence. Al-Amri (2017) observes that while China often emphasizes rapid infrastructure development and visible projects, the U.S. tends to focus on capacity building and institutional development. This difference is particularly evident in technology transfer, where China provides turnkey solutions while the U.S. emphasizes training and local capacity development. These contrasting approaches have created diverse opportunities for African nations to leverage competition for their development needs.

6.3 Results of the Relationship between the Independent Variable (US Presence in Africa) and the Dependent Variable (Chinese Influence in Africa)

Variable 1: Official Visits

Table 7 indicates that the number of official visits by the United States and China to Africa between 2000 and 2022 was relatively close. This reflects decision-makers perspectives on the importance of these visits in strengthening relations with African nations to serve their national interests.

The United States did not conduct official visits to Africa in some years, coinciding with US administration policies from 2004 to 2007, which focused on counterterrorism and addressing challenges to national security post-9/11 (Al-Alyawi, 2021). During the Trump administration, only one visit to Africa was recorded, as the administration was more preoccupied with bolstering US presence in regions such as the Middle East and Asia. US official visits to Africa during this period (2000-2022) numbered 14.

In contrast, Chinese official visits during the same period totalled only 10, indicating that the US outpaced China in this variable. This suggests that the US administration, at times, placed significant importance on political and diplomatic engagement with Africa, depending on national interests and the continent's political, economic, and military developments. Previous studies on the independent and dependent variables have framed this competition between the two nations as being driven by national interests, access to resources, and oil, as evidenced by the investment indicators for both countries in Table 9. However, official visits remain a key starting point for cooperation, shaping policies before, during, and after these visits based on decision-makers' guidance to strengthen ties between the country and Africa.

Table 7: Official Visits by the United States and China to Africa (2000-2022)

Year	2022	2018	2016	2015	2013	2012	2011	2009	2008	2006	2004	2003	2000
USA	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2			1	1
China		1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	

Variable 2: Military Bases of the United States and China in Africa

Table 8 shows that the number of US military bases in Africa far exceeds that of Chinese bases. The US has established 16 military bases in various African countries, while China has only one military base in Djibouti.

The US's focus on establishing military bases reflects the growing strategic importance of Africa, as well as concerns about violent extremist activities, armed conflicts, piracy, and other illicit operations that could threaten US interests. Additionally, there is ongoing concern about numerous humanitarian crises and armed conflicts in Africa, prompting Washington to use its military tools to exert leadership in the continent through permanent and temporary military bases, aligning with the US's foreign policy, which often relies on hard power.

On the other hand, China's approach to hard power differs entirely from that of the US. China sees soft power as more effective in addressing various issues and promoting African cooperation and security. This explains its lack of interest in expanding its military presence on the continent as the US has.

The number of military bases in African countries reflects the interests of both the US and China in maintaining a military presence in line with each country's foreign policy approach, whether through China's reliance on soft power or the US's use of military intervention and hard power, which has characterised its foreign policy in recent decades.

Table 8: US and Chinese Military Bases in Africa

State Type	Djibouti	Kenya	Niger	Cameroon	Uganda	Gabon	Ghana	Burkina Faso	Senegal	Chad	Somalia	South Sudan	Total
US bases	2	2	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	17
Number of troops	2000	350	1100	200	300	400	925	750	350	1000	450	200	8025
Chinese military bases	1												1
Number of troops	1000												1000

<https://cutt.us/1jBLA>, <https://cutt.us/nNy82>

Variable 3: US and Chinese Investment in Africa (2000-2022)

The variable of US and Chinese investments in Africa between 2000 and 2022 is a significant indicator of both countries' interests in the continent, as investments are a key means of attracting and engaging African nations, many of which suffer from economic instability and the impacts of conflicts.

The results in Table 9 reveals a positive correlation between US and Chinese investments in Africa. Chinese investments started at lower levels than US investments but increased significantly over the past decade. US investments have declined since 2014, while Chinese investments have generally followed an upward trajectory, with only a slight decline in 2022.

Direct investments serve as a form of soft power. China and the US use them to strengthen ties with African countries and pursue national economic interests amid ongoing economic competition. In China, economic influence is a critical component of soft power. As its economy has expanded, it has become an increasingly important trade partner and investor on the international stage. This growth has amplified China's need for political support, particularly regarding human rights and other contentious issues.

For the United States, investments in Africa align with its strategy to maintain a strategic presence on the continent, safeguard US interests, and compete in the global race for Africa's resources and wealth.

Table 9: US and Chinese Investment in Africa (2000-2022)

Year	US Investment Volume (US\$ Billion)	Chinese investment volume (US\$ billion)
2000	11.89	0.2
2001	15.57	0.25
2002	16.04	0.3
2003	19.84	0.3
2004	20.36	0.9
2005	22.76	1.59
2006	28.16	2.56
2007	32.61	4.46

Year	US Investment Volume (US\$ Billion)	Chinese investment volume (US\$ billion)
2008	36.75	7.8
2009	43.94	9.33
2010	54.82	13.04
2011	57	16.25
2012	55.85	21.73
2013	60.88	26.19
2014	69.03	32.35
2015	52	34.69
2016	49.63	39.88
2017	50.4	43.3
2018	48.07	46.1
2019	45.04	44.39
2020	43.81	43.4
2021	45.81	47.1
2022	46.17	40.9

Source <https://cutt.us/mV6IB>, <https://cutt.us/FeVDo>, <https://cutt.us/dN0QF>

6.4 African Nations' Strategic Responses

African nations have developed sophisticated strategies to navigate the U.S.-China competition, often leveraging their position to maximize benefits from both powers. As Al-Amin (2021) observes, this strategic balancing has become increasingly refined between 2000 and 2022, with different countries adopting varied approaches based on their specific needs and circumstances.

Case Studies of Strategic Responses

Nigeria, Africa's largest economy, provides a compelling example of strategic balancing. According to Al-Zaidi (2021), Nigeria has maintained strong military cooperation with the United States while simultaneously pursuing extensive economic partnerships with China. Between 2015 and 2022, Nigeria secured Chinese infrastructure investments worth \$23 billion while maintaining U.S. military training programs and security assistance. This dual-track approach demonstrates how larger African nations can effectively engage both powers to serve different national interests.

Ethiopia presents another significant case study. Murad (2021) documents how Ethiopia has leveraged Chinese financing for major infrastructure projects, including the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, while maintaining important security partnerships with the United States. The country received approximately \$13.7 billion in Chinese investments between 2000 and 2022, while simultaneously benefiting from U.S. security assistance and humanitarian aid. This approach highlights how African nations can use different aspects of each power's engagement to advance their development goals.

Voting Patterns and Diplomatic Alignment

Analysis of African nations' voting patterns in international forums reveals calculated diplomatic strategies. According to Ibrahim (2022), African countries' voting patterns at the UN General Assembly between 2000 and 2022 show a nuanced approach rather than consistent alignment with either the U.S. or China. For instance, on human rights issues, 60% of African nations maintained neutral positions in U.S.-China contested votes, demonstrating their ability to preserve diplomatic flexibility. Al-Shaawi (2023) notes that this voting behavior reflects a deliberate strategy to maintain autonomy in international relations while securing benefits from both powers.

Economic Partnership Strategies

African nations have developed sophisticated economic strategies to benefit from U.S.-China competition. Al-Salami

(2015) highlights how countries like Kenya and Tanzania have successfully negotiated better terms for infrastructure projects by leveraging competing offers from Chinese and American companies. For example, Kenya secured more favorable financing terms for its standard gauge railway project by encouraging competition between U.S.-backed and Chinese proposals. This approach has become increasingly common across the continent, with African nations using competitive bidding to secure better terms for major development projects.

Regional Coordination Efforts

The African Union has emerged as a crucial platform for coordinating responses to U.S.-China engagement. Qulaa Al-Darous (2022) describes how the AU has developed frameworks for engaging external powers, including the 2022 Africa-China Cooperation Vision and parallel strategic dialogues with the United States. This regional coordination has strengthened African nations' collective bargaining power. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the AU's centralized vaccine procurement strategy successfully secured commitments from both China and the U.S., demonstrating the effectiveness of coordinated regional action.

The effectiveness of these strategic responses varies across the continent. Belkhtir (2017) argues that countries with stronger institutions and clearer development strategies have been more successful in leveraging U.S.-China competition to their advantage. This observation underscores the importance of building institutional capacity and maintaining clear national development objectives when engaging with global powers. The success of these various approaches suggests that African agency in international relations has grown significantly, with countries increasingly able to shape their relationships with both the United States and China to serve their national interests.

7. Findings

The study proved the hypothesis that a relationship exists between US presence and Chinese influence in Africa. The study also confirmed the practical assumptions that the increase in US official visits to Africa is met with a corresponding increase in Chinese official visits and that a rise in Chinese investments mirrors an increase in US investments in Africa. However, the United States surpasses China regarding the number of military bases in Africa, reflecting each nation's policies and perceptions regarding the importance of military bases and their impact on achieving national interests.

Additionally, several factors and variables defining the trajectory of U.S.-China competition in Africa were identified, with the economic factor emerging as the most significant influence on African affairs. Chinese soft power has proven to be an effective tool through which China demonstrates its ability to compete with the United States in forming close relations with African countries. Many African nations see closer ties with China as more beneficial than relations with the US, whose military strength and bases are aimed at protecting its interests. This strategy has become increasingly less relevant in international relations.

The differing approaches of the US and China toward Africa reflect their respective ideologies in shaping foreign policy and how they build relationships with countries to further their national interests. It ultimately depends on the ability of African nations to understand the intent behind these foreign policies and the tools employed by both the US and China, which influences how African countries accept or reject these policies in line with their interests. The future of Africa remains dependent on the outcomes of this U.S.-China race, with both countries' competition tied to how they perceive the benefits of closer relations with African nations on multiple fronts.

8. Future Studies

Based on the findings of this study, several promising areas for future research emerge regarding U.S.-China competition in Africa. As noted by Ibrahim (2022), the increasing digitalization of African economies suggests that future studies should focus on technological competition between the U.S. and China, particularly in areas such as 5G infrastructure, digital payment systems, and e-governance solutions. Additionally, as Al-Shaawi (2023) emphasizes, research is needed to examine how African nations can develop more effective frameworks for engaging with both powers while maintaining strategic autonomy. This could include investigating successful models of technology transfer, evaluating the long-term sustainability of different development approaches, and analyzing the effectiveness of regional coordination mechanisms in maximizing benefits from great power competition.

Another crucial area for future research involves the environmental and social implications of U.S.-China rivalry in Africa. According to Al-Amin (2021) and Murad (2021), both powers' development approaches have significant environmental footprints that warrant careful study. Future research should examine how African nations can leverage environmental standards and social impact requirements to ensure development projects serve local interests while meeting global sustainability goals. This research direction becomes particularly relevant as Africa's population continues to grow and urbanize, creating new challenges and opportunities in areas such as renewable energy development, sustainable urban planning, and climate-resilient infrastructure. Such studies would benefit from longitudinal approaches that track the long-term impacts of different development models and their implications for African agency in international relations.

9. Conclusion

At the end of this study, it is evident that there is strong competition between the United States and China in Africa. As US political and diplomatic presence in Africa increases, so does China's political and diplomatic presence. Likewise, as US direct investments in the continent rise, so do Chinese investments. Both countries use these tools to strengthen their influence. However, their foreign policy approaches differ in how they employ elements of power: the US leans towards strengthening its military presence. At the same time, China enhances its soft power, which is primarily based on economic strength and partnerships with African countries. These divergent approaches reflect the ideologies of both nations as they strive to protect their interests in Africa.

Tracking the U.S.-China competition in Africa is straightforward. Each country engages with African nations in specific ways, which can help one understand its overall foreign policy directions. This study successfully identified these variables as key indicators of competition between the two countries on the continent.

Finally, the study has confirmed the validity of its hypothesis through various indicators and data highlighting the intensity of U.S.-China competition in Africa. The study's results also showed that the US needs to better coordinate with African nations to foster more constructive engagement and mobilise its soft power to mitigate the negative impact of its military approach in relations with African countries. Furthermore, both countries need to focus more on addressing developmental issues that benefit the continent, as this could create more positive interactions with African countries and foster an environment that promotes the interests of all actors in these relationships.

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