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A New Cold War: How West Africa Has Become the New Stage for Power Politics Between the West and China

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A New Cold War: How West Africa Has Become the New Stage for Power Politics Between the West and China

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Abstract:

This thesis seeks to determine how French influence in West Africa will impact a US-China power competition in the region. Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire served as case studies for the evaluation of French influence in the region since many consider these former colonies to have the most French influence. French economic, political/military, and socio-cultural influence was analyzed in each case study, as well as this influence in the context of US-China competition. Although France influences both countries, France has more influence in Côte d'Ivoire and may be able to influence decisions there more so than Senegal. Nevertheless, China has become a popular figure in both countries as France has decreased in popularity. French and US coordination in West Africa will need to address infrastructure, investment, and other political demands of Africans to counter Chinese influence in the region.

Introduction

This paper argues that French influence in West Africa can impact US-China competition in the region, despite waning influence. As China and the United States begin to compete globally for political and economic dominance, they will use their various forms of influence and power to counter each other. This will mean the mobilization of allies, resources, and connections to coordinate a cold war that mimics the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The first part of the paper is the Theoretical Framework. This section describes the mechanisms of power, great-power competition, and its manifestations in the international system. This section is necessary for understanding how the United States and China compete, and how France and West Africa are influenced by this competition. The Literature Review gives information about the history of US-Chinese relations and their current relations. Next, great power competition in Africa is discussed. This part describes French influence in West Africa since colonialism, which gives context to how France influences Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal today. It also describes Chinese influence and French-US relations in Africa. This section is meant to provide greater context to how French influence is manifested in West Africa and how this relates to US-Chinese competition.

Next Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal will serve as case studies to evaluate contemporary French influence and how it related to US-China competition. These two countries were picked because of many reasons. First, these countries have been historically influenced by France, more so than its other former West African colonies. If French influence could impact a US-China competition in West Africa, it would most likely occur in these countries. Second, these countries have been influenced by Chinese influence in the region, with both accepting Chinese

investment and trade. These two countries can accurately determine the degree of French influence present that may influence a broader global competition.

Next, an analysis of these case studies will seek to determine whether French influence in each respective country could impact a US-China competition. This section analyzes French political/military, economic, and sociocultural influences in each country, then applies this to a broader US-China competition. Information from Afrobarometer will be used to determine some of the French influence in the region. Finally, the discussion and conclusion sections will discuss the implications of great-power competition in Africa and how they impact not only the countries involved but also the world. This paper can serve as a guide to other regions impacted by global competition amongst great powers.

Theoretical Framework:

Power and Great-Power Competition:

The concept of power has been studied for thousands of years. One of the earliest works on power is called *The Art of War*. This work of prose was written in the 5th century BCE in China by Sun Tzu. The work discusses the tactics and implications of war and conflict.ⁱ It has been studied by generals and revolutionaries. Another example of historical work on power is *On War* written by Prussian General Carl von Clausewitz. Published in 1832 after the Napoleonic Wars, Clausewitz asserts that war is a means for a political end.ⁱⁱ These works have influenced generals and scholars on the influence of power and war. Power can be projected in different ways and different forms. For example, hard power is the typical combat, military-style power that countries traditionally use when at war.ⁱⁱⁱ A country's nuclear weapons stockpile, naval power, and overall military capacity are forms of hard power. Soft power, on the other hand, often refers to the cultural or economic influence a country has. Nations often deploy economic measures, like sanctions or trade barriers, and/or diplomatic measures, like sending aid or spreading values, as a form of soft power. The United States, China, and France all have soft power. France has soft power in West Africa, notably Senegal and Cote d'Ivoire, due to shared language, history, and culture, but also through economic means via currency manipulation. China is a top trading partner and holder of debt in Africa because of infrastructure projects and investment, and therefore also has economic soft power. The United States and France have both been working to address growing Chinese influence on the continent, although arguably too late.

Another concept to understand in terms of great-power competition is network power. Network power is a tool that states can use when engaged in great power competition and is like soft power. Network power is a derivative of network theory, which is a computer science

concept that studies the representation of graphical data. Social network theory evaluates the relationships and connections of nodes within a social setting. According to Jason Owen-Smith from the University of Michigan, network theory has many different levels of analysis, and can be applied to the evaluation of relationships and power within a given social network.^{iv} This concept can even be applied to complex social sciences, like political science and international relations. Looking at how nodes, in this case, nations, have different institutional, economic, and/or cultural connections with each other can help us better understand the current power dynamic in Africa.

Some different international coalitions and networks exist to benefit those within them. Jai Chul Heo, a research fellow at the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy, writes about the Chinese networking strategy in the international political economy. He asserts that network power is made up of three types of power: collective power, positional power, and programming power.^v Collective power refers to the power derived by the actor(s) who formed the network and thus depends on the size of the network. This comes from the coalition, organization, or whatever the network is. There is collective power in the fact that the European Union is collectively one of the largest economies. Next, Positional power refers to the “qualitative mechanism of power” formed by the interlinking network.^{vi} For example, the position of a given country within a network like a military alliance or trade organization matters when determining the power derived from that network. Does this coalition have a sort of hierarchical chain, and if so, where is a nation’s position within that structure? Finally, programming power refers to the ability to make a structural change to the international system. In other words, if a network can alter international norms or standards, that network has programming power. The United States and its Western allies have a lot of programming power.

Countries that join established networks can gain greater access to trade opportunities and investment, diplomatic connections or aid, and other opportunities that are not present in more isolated nations. Emilie M. Hafner-Burton, Miles Kahler, and Alexander H. Montgomery describe network theory in the international system in the article “Network Analysis for International Relations.” Network theory analyzes the strength and connections between nodes in terms of values, information sharing, and closeness between different nations.^{vii} Figure 1.0 is from the text and evaluates the network between selected countries. The thickness and proximity of nodes refer to the strength of the connection. France and the United States have the closest cultural and informational ties, as seen by the thickness of the lines in Figure 1.0. In terms of great-power competition in West Africa between the United States and China, these countries are actively trying to join, create, and promote networks to increase soft and potentially hard power.^{viii} France has established networks and institutions with West Africa like la Françafrique, the cultural institution among France and Francophone, and some non-Francophone countries in Africa. China has been forming networks and institutions throughout the world, especially in Africa. The United States has military and economic networks everywhere but has recently sought to increase them throughout Africa.

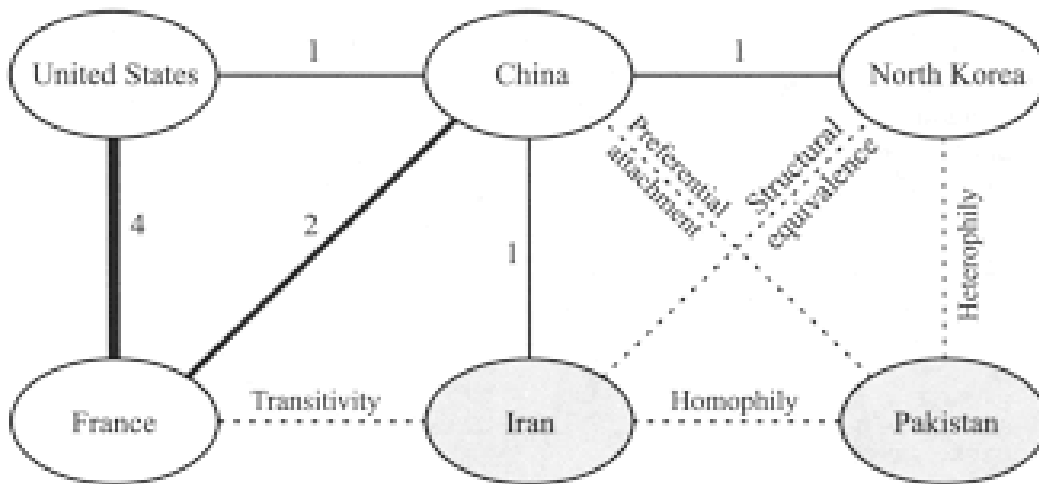


Figure 1.0^{ix}

History of Great-Power Competition and the International System

Great-power competition is the projection of these forms of power by the strongest political entities. Today, we often think of great-power competition between nation-states, like that of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. But great-power competition has occurred in many ways throughout history. Historical examples of great-power competition include competition between Carthage and Rome during the Punic Wars and competition between European powers like Great Britain and France for control of North America during the eighteenth century.^x Whether it be between nation-states or empires, powerful political entities have competed for military, economic, and/or socio-cultural influence.

Polarity is the term scholars use when describing great powers in the international system. Multipolarity is when more than two great powers dominate the international system. An example of a multipolar world order is when European powers like France, the United Kingdom, Portugal, and Spain competed for maritime trade during the age of exploration and colonization. Bipolarity is when two great powers compete on the international stage. The Cold War is the perfect example, where the Soviet Union and the United States competed against each other for

global dominance. US-China global competition can also be seen as an example of a bipolar world order, where countries are forced to choose either the “US” or “China” team. Finally, unipolarity is when one global power dominates the international system. The United States enjoyed this privilege after the Cold War when the United States was the uncontested global superpower. However, the United States now looks at a growing China, whose economic, military, and political might threaten US hegemony.

Political theorists have different ideologies and interpretations of international politics. Since the international system is anarchic, states are considered politically sovereign.^{xi} Despite this autonomy, the nation-states compete, cooperate, and depend on each other in the context of international politics. The three dominant theories of international relations are realism, liberalism, and constructivism. Realists argue that nations seek security above all things and will do what is in their self-interest. Realism takes root in the philosophy of Thomas Hobbes, notably that the world is in a constant state of all versus all.^{xii} This means that nations will naturally compete for power and is the predominant mentality within the context of great-power competition. Next, liberals seek to promote a rules-based international system based on cooperation. Liberals often support ideologies like democratic peace theory, interdependence, and the creation of international organizations.^{xiii} The United Nations and other international democratic institutions often reflect liberal ideology. Lastly, constructivism argues that the international system is socially constructed. Constructivists analyze the international system from a different perspective, they analyze the adoption, rejection, and evolution of norms by state and non-state actors.^{xiv} The diffusion of complex, diverse forms of normative behavior can often have unexpected consequences for the international order.^{xv} These theories often dictate how scholars and political leaders analyze the current international system. All theories have

their strengths and weaknesses, but great power competition is often seen through the realist lens, especially in an increasingly bipolar world order.

Literature Review

Background

This paper seeks to analyze French influence in Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire in the context of US-China competition. To do so, an understanding of the development of a US-China global competition and how Africa is a current battleground of that competition is needed. Next, a historical overview of the French presence in West Africa and the type of influence France has will be given. This will provide necessary information before discussing the specific cases of Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire, and how French influence in these countries will impact US-Chinese competition in the region.

Background to US-China Global Competition

Realism is the dominant theory within the context of great-power competition. The Cold War is the perfect example of a modern case of great-power competition with realist logic.^{xvi} Rosato describes this in detail in his book. The Soviet Union and the United States could not trust each other during the Cold War, and the United States and Russia can't trust each other now. Neither can the United States and China. Many scholars argue that a new Cold War is developing between the United States and China as U.S. unipolarity comes to an end. Randall L. Schweller and Xiaoyu Pu write in the article "After Unipolarity: China's Visions of International Order in an Era of U.S. Decline" about China's intentions to become a global superpower as U.S. hegemony ends. They discuss how China has the economic, military, and political means to surpass the United States in terms of international influence.^{xvii} They also discuss how China has the intention to do so. This is evident when analyzing current President Xi Jinping's assumption for a third term, who has stated intentions of making China a global power. If China and the United States continue to mistrust each other, the United States will continue to view Chinese

investment and presence in Latin America, Africa, and the Pacific as menacing and problematic. This is because China threatens U.S. military, political, and economic global hegemony, as well as regional dominance in the Pacific and the Western Hemisphere.^{xviii} This is in part due to China's rise and ideological differences with the West, but also due to US failures and lack of engagement on the international stage.^{xix}

History of US-China Relations (Post-World War II)

Understanding the history of US-China relations will make it easier to understand why the United States and France view Chinese influence in Africa as threatening. Mao Zedong established the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in October of 1949 after a winning brutal civil war against the Nationalist government led by Chiang Kai-shek. The Nationalists fled from China to Taiwan and establish the Republic of China (ROC) in Taipei. Since the United States supported Nationalist China against the Japanese in World War II, the U.S. supported this newly created government in Taiwan.^{xx} These are the origins of the disagreement over Taiwan between the United States and China, which China views as a rogue province waiting to eventually reunite with the mainland. Shortly after the CCP seizes control of China, the Korean War starts when Soviet-backed North Korea invades the US-backed South Korea. China supported North Korea during the three-year conflict where as many as 4 million people died.^{xxi} An armistice was signed in 1953 between the United Nations, China, and North Korea that ended the war and created the modern-day boundaries and demilitarized zone between North and South Korea.^{xxii}

The First Taiwan Strait Crisis began in 1954 after U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower lifted the U.S. Navy blockade of Taiwan. ROC leader Chiang Kai-shek sends thousands of Taiwanese troops to the Quemoy and Matsu Islands in the Taiwan Strait to defend Taiwan. China reacts by bombing the islands. The United States threatened to attack China if fighting

continued, and the conflict ends in 1954. This crisis occurred again in 1956 and 1996.^{xxiii} At this point, the United States and China have disagreed over many conflicts throughout Asia. The following Vietnam War was no different, as China amassed thousands of troops at its border with Vietnam during the seemingly endless war. At the same time, in 1964, China tested its first nuclear bomb, joining the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and France as the only countries (at the time), with nuclear weapons.

Despite initial conflicts between the United States and China, the Sino-Soviet border conflict in 1969 led the Chinese to view the Soviet Union as a bigger threat to Chinese security than the United States. This led to a rapprochement between the United States and China, as China began its period of rapid industrialization during the Great Leap Forward. During the 1970s, China, which began as a planned economy, started the slow process of economic liberalization. This process began by “phasing out of collectivized agriculture, and expanded to include the gradual liberalization of prices, fiscal decentralization, increased autonomy for state enterprises, the foundation of a diversified banking system, the development of stock markets, the rapid growth of the non-state sector, and the opening to foreign trade and investment.”^{xxiv} China also began to engage more openly with neighboring states, which resulted in political legitimization by the United States and the international community. This led to China receiving its rightful place in the U.N. Security Council in 1971, which was formerly held by the ROC in Taiwan. Deng Xiaoping, the leader of China during this period of reform and opening, paved the way for Chinese economic development and liberalization. In 1979, President Jimmy Carter extended full diplomatic recognition to the People’s Republic of China, while also recognizing China’s “One China Policy,” which formally recognized Taiwan as a part of China. Nonetheless, the United States has continued to support Taiwanese sovereignty through the Taiwan Relations

Act, which furthered economic, cultural, and military ties between the United States and Taiwan.^{xxv}

Throughout China's rise, the Chinese Communist Party has been tested for its political legitimacy and ability to lead. Despite being called the Chinese Communist Party, China is not communist. China transitioned during its period of economic liberalization from a planned economy to a mixed-market economy with aspects that reinforce state power but also allow for private funding and foreign investment.^{xxvi} But while the Chinese Communist Party slowly became willing to economically liberalize, it was not willing to democratize. An example of this is the Tiananmen Square Massacre. In the spring of 1989, thousands of pro-democracy and anti-corruption protestors demonstrated in Tiananmen Square, Beijing. As these protests grew larger, the CCP sent in military troops from the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to clear the protestors, leaving hundreds of protestors dead in what became known as the Tiananmen Square Massacre.^{xxvii} This moment shows how serious CCP state legitimacy and power are. Many in the West believed that economic liberalization would lead to political liberalization and democratization. Therefore, many argued for China's acceptance into the World Trade Organization, claiming that, as seen in Hong Kong and Taiwan, China would accept a liberal, rules-based international system. China has proved that this is not the case. China and the WTO often disagree, primarily because the WTO has not been equipped to deal with China's rise as an economic and global power.^{xxviii} China's State-Owned Enterprises (SEOs), the illegal transfer of intellectual property rights, and other state-imposed actions are examples of how the Chinese economic system threatens the largely liberal and capitalist global economic structure.

Contemporary Relations between the US and China

Although many thought that China would develop into a more politically and economically free society, this has not been the case. Many in the United States and the West view China as a threat. By 2010, China became the largest holder of U.S. debt, at over \$600 billion, and the second largest economy in the world, surpassing Japan. China is expected to pass the United States as the world's largest economy by 2027.^{xxix} Since realism views the international order as a zero-sum scenario, China's rise both economically and politically is a threat to the United States' position as a global hegemon. Therefore, increased Chinese soft power, increased Chinese military spending, and reliance on Chinese exports have caused the United States to "pivot" to Asia in terms of diplomatic engagement.^{xxx} Under President Barack Obama's first term in office, the United States began to focus its attention on Asia; diplomatically, economically, and militarily. This pivot towards Asia coincides with a change in leadership in China. In 2012, Xi Jinping assumed the role of President, Communist Party General Secretary, and chairman of the Central Military Commission. At the same time, approximately 70% of China's leadership in the Politburo, the State Council, and the Central Military Commission were replaced.^{xxxi} This signaled a significant change in Chinese policy, notably as President Xi Jinping, who just recently assumed an unprecedented third term and reinforced power in the leadership bodies, is increasing Chinese state power and global economic integration.^{xxxii} In his most recent acceptance speech, President Xi spoke of China becoming a global superpower.

Under President Obama, economic coordination with US allies in the Asia-Pacific region became the primary tool in countering the rise in Chinese influence. The most notable example was the highly contested Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) between 12 Pacific-Rim nations. This free trade agreement was meant to counter Chinese economic influence in the region by

decreasing trade barriers on certain products between member states.^{xxxiii} President Obama has a liberal perspective on international politics. This means that international cooperation and interdependence were cornerstones of his U.S. foreign policy. This can be seen in his support of the TPP, the 2015 Paris-Climate Accords, and other international agreements meant to either counter or engage with Chinese power. But the agreement faced bipartisan criticism, and in 2017 President Donald Trump withdrew from the pact.^{xxxiv} The organization forged ahead without the United States, with largely the same parameters, creating the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

President Trump’s signature policy toward China was the infamous “Trade War.” The former president often spoke of the U.S.-China trade imbalance, where U.S. imports of Chinese goods (Chinese exports to the U.S.) are higher than Chinese imports of U.S. goods (U.S. exports to China). This essentially means that the U.S. buys more from China than China buys from the United States. This can be seen in the graphic below, Figure 1.1, which illustrates bilateral trade between the U.S. and China in 2017.

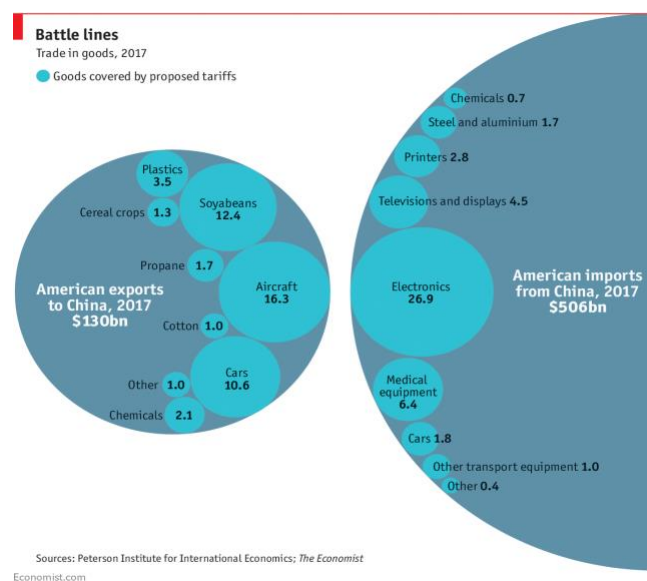


Figure 1.1^{xxxv}

The effects of this “Trade War” are still being understood. The “Trade War” occurred in stages, as tariffs were placed on Chinese goods throughout the Trump presidency and were then reciprocated by China. Tariffs are trade barriers meant to prioritize domestic goods over imports. The Trump administration put tariffs on electronic devices, semiconductors, solar panels, furniture, and clothing, among other products.^{xxxvi} As a result, many Chinese exports were redirected to other countries like Germany and France. The same has occurred for U.S. exports, which were sent to other countries because of retaliatory Chinese trade barriers. Furthermore, the United States now relies on other exporting countries like Vietnam and Taiwan to replace Chinese products, often at a higher price for the consumer.^{xxxvii} Both the United States and China have tried to work around these tariffs, as they are costly and sometimes counterintuitive for both countries. For example, most solar panel imports (and its many components like lithium and other essential minerals) pre-Trade War came from China. Since U.S. trade barriers have been placed on these products coming from China, Chinese solar panels are transported to smaller, Southeast Asian countries like Laos and Malaysia to then be exported to the United States.

Current U.S. President Joe Biden, the former Vice-President under President Barack Obama when the TPP was initially negotiated, has stated that he does not plan to rejoin the agreement unless there are stronger environmental and labor protections.^{xxxviii} Like President Obama, President Biden has a liberal international perspective, meaning he does support international coalitions and free trade agreements. This is clear when analyzing Biden’s Build Back better for the World plan, which seeks to build infrastructure in the Global South. This plan will be discussed in greater detail later. At the same time, President Biden has kept many of the duties and tariffs in place from the Trump administration, which is, in

essence, against the neoliberal ideals of free commerce across borders. However, protecting domestic industry and jobs is politically popular. Given these policies, many see the deterioration in U.S.-Chinese relations as a period of economic “decoupling.” Since the US and China both rely on Chinese exports to America, the sudden change in economic policy may signal a new period of U.S.-Chinese economic decoupling, where the United States either imports goods from other exporting countries or relies on domestic manufacturing. Both seem to be the case, as the United States has relied on other countries for its imports/exports due to the Trade War but has also passed many domestic bills like the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the CHIPS and Science Act. The latter was meant to support U.S. domestic manufacturing in semiconductors and electronics, decrease reliance on imports, and counter Chinese influence in the electronics industry.^{xxxix} Although President Biden has worked to ameliorate US-Chinese relations, it has become normalized that the two countries are rivals in many respects, and have different worldviews. Many important issues impact US-China bilateral relations that cannot be fully explained in this paper. These issues include coordination on climate change and global sustainability, Chinese human rights abuses against Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang, China’s handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, and many, many others.^{xl}

Great Power Competition in Africa:

Background

The context behind US-Chinese global competition is important in understanding how the Global South, in this case, Africa, plays a role in the newest “Cold War.” As China became the world’s dominant exporter and rose to become a global economic power, the CCP branched out to other developing nations, notably in Africa. This has substantially increased Chinese

network power and overall soft power in Africa vis-à-vis the United States. Instead of worrying about a military presence or political legitimacy in Africa, like the United States and France, the CCP prioritized trade and economic dependence. To understand how Africa has become a battleground in the broader US-China great power competition and how France plays a role in this battle, China's foreign policy in Africa will be discussed. Next, a historical overview of France in Africa will be discussed, as well as French-US cooperation in Africa and their reactions to China in Africa.

China in Africa

Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, Debt, and China's Africa Policy

China has, largely under President Xi Jinping, begun a process of economic integration with countries throughout the Global South. The United States has been particularly concerned with Chinese projects within Latin America, and more recently in Africa, where China has not been a traditionally dominant power. The China-Global South Project (CGSP) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to exploring China's engagement with these countries. Journalist Eric Olander and media scholar Dr. Cobus van Staden founded CGSP in 2010 and run the project's China in Africa Podcast.^{xii} The two have released many podcasts surrounding China's engagement in Africa as it relates to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Chinese debt in Africa, and its influence vis-à-vis the United States and other regional powers. Much of my perspective throughout this paper has been influenced by this podcast. China is now Africa's largest trading partner by volume and is a large holder of debt for the continent.^{xiii} This is especially true within the Franc zone of West Africa, where China is the number one trading partner with many former French colonies, taking the spot that France once held. This is seen in

Figure 1.2, which compares China's and France's standing as trading partners with each African country listed.

Franc Zone Country	1995		2017	
	France	China	France	China
Cameroon	1 st (337.1)	Outside top 10	2 nd (508.1)	1 st (892.8)
Chad	1 st (88.8)	7 th (6.2)	No Data	No Data
Congo Republic	1 st (145.1)	Outside top 10	3 rd (364.2)	5 th (295.7)
Equatorial Guinea	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data
Gabon	No Data	No Data	No Data	No Data
Central Africa Republic	1 st (90.7)	No Data	1 st (109.4)	4 th (27.7)
Mali	No Data	No Data	4 th (341.7)	2 nd (660.1)
Niger	1 st (78.4)	Outside top 10	No Data	No Data
Senegal	No Data	No Data	1 st (989.9)	2 nd (654.5)
Côte d'Ivoire	1 st (647)	Outside top 10	2 nd (1100)	1 st (1300)
Togo	1 st (114.4)	Outside top 10	2 nd (174.5)	1 st (317.1)
Benin	No Data	No Data	6 th (207.8)	3 rd (240.3)
Burkina Faso	1 st (126.2)	Outside top 10	3 rd (318.6)	1 st (518.7)

Figure 1.2^{xliii}

This is thanks to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The BRI was created in 2013 and is the cornerstone of President Xi Jinping's foreign policy strategy. It was originally meant to mirror the historic Silk Road, which connected Eurasia along a single trade route.^{xliv} The BRI has grown to become a global infrastructure investment program that seeks to build much-needed infrastructure in places where there is high demand, increase markets to Chinese investors, and increase economic dependence on China. Africa has been a major recipient of investment for these projects, as there is a huge demand for global infrastructure in Africa.^{xlv} China's Belt and Road Initiative is controversial. Many in the West argue that the BRI leads to "debt trap diplomacy," where developing nations are trapped paying large infrastructure debts that may not pay off in the end, often for projects that are of poor quality. Some of the debts held by receiving countries are resource-backed, meaning loans are paid back to Chinese creditors

through the country's natural resource exports, typically oil.^{xlvi} These are exceptionally dangerous, as many developing countries, particularly in Africa, are export-oriented nations. Therefore, Chinese resource-backed loans extract money from these exports, leading to a decrease in the amount of money a country makes from its primary source of revenue (the export on which the loan is predicated). Western nations also argue that China seeks to create a Chinese-centered world market where infrastructure, trade, and economic activity point toward Beijing.^{xlvii} Proponents of the BRI argue that the project provides much-needed infrastructure like ports, roads, bridges, railways, and broadband to nations that need it when the World Bank simply cannot.^{xlviii} Below are two maps from the China-Global South Project that shows which African nations have engaged with Chinese BRI investment. Figure 1.3 shows which African nations have signed onto BRI cooperation agreements, which is virtually the entire continent. Figure 1.4 shows specific port and rail projects in Africa. Note that both Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire have signed BRI agreements and that Abidjan, one of Côte d'Ivoire's largest cities, already has a Chinese-operated/developed port in construction. The specific relationship between China and these two countries will be discussed later in the Case Studies section.

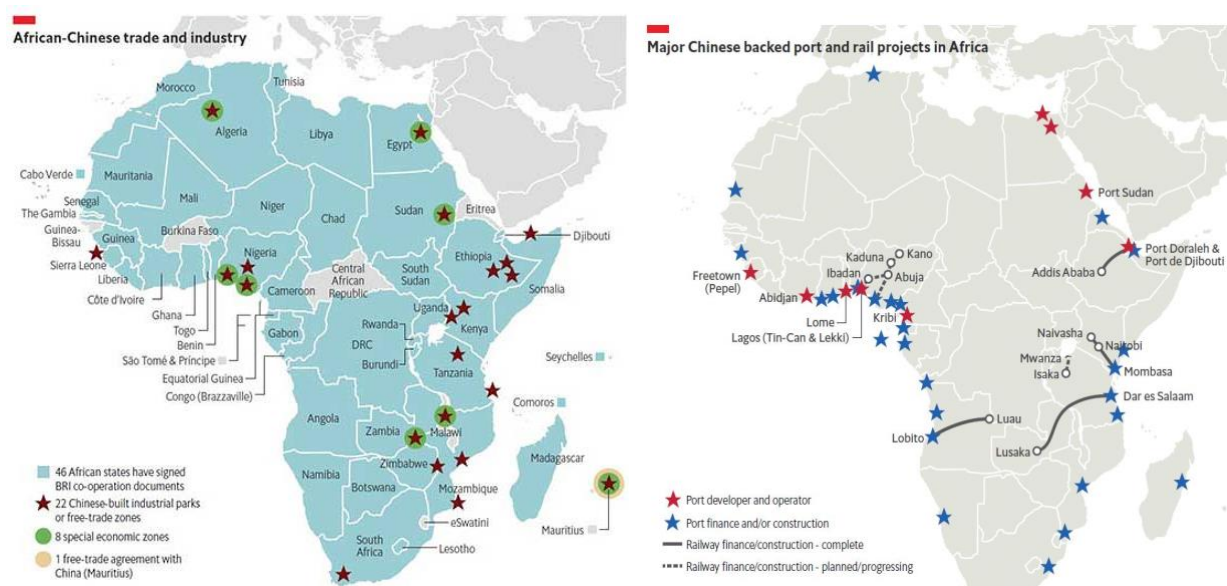


Figure 1.3 and Figure 1.4, respectively^{xlix}

The vastness of China's BRI project in Africa allows for increased exports of Chinese manufactured goods into Africa and an increase in raw material imports to China from African nations, especially when the repayment of Chinese loans is contingent on the country's resource exports.ⁱ Furthermore, more than 10,000 Chinese enterprises hire millions of Africans across the continent, which is expected to generate over \$250 billion by 2025. Most of these businesses are privately owned, however, sectors that involve energy and infrastructure are mostly Chinese SOE-driven.ⁱⁱ West African nations like Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea, among others, export natural resources like crude oil to China. They also have many Chinese-backed projects, which signals a growing economic and political relationship with China. These relationships are dangerous for the West because they can lead to military/political relationships that jeopardize Western interests. For example, stronger relations between China and Equatorial Guinea have led China to plan the installation of a new naval base in Equatorial Guinea. This base, which rests on the Atlantic Ocean and is very close to Europe and the United States, gives China a strategic advantage should a military conflict between the two superpowers arise.ⁱⁱⁱ The coordinated effort by China is a good example of economic statecraft that influences nations to favor Chinese markets, loans, and businesses, and essentially the Chinese state, over Western ones. It also shows how China is exceedingly increasing its soft power, network power, and hard power throughout the African continent.

Historical Western Engagement in Africa

Background

Understanding Western engagement in Africa is crucial to understanding how France plays a role in a US-China competition in the region. This section will first discuss French

history in Africa. Next, historical US-French relations in the region will be discussed, adding context to how France interacts with the United States concerning African policy. Finally, contemporary French and American policies in Africa will be discussed and how they relate to China's growing presence.

French Colonization, Colonialism, and Decolonization in Africa

French history in West Africa began during the era of European colonization. This period stretches from the late 1500s to the mid-1800s and is followed by the period of French colonialism from the mid-1800s until the period of decolonization in the 1960s.^{liii} Europeans were first involved in Africa after the discovery of the Americas during the "Age of Exploration." European explorers and traders first interacted with Africa to seek new trade, natural resources, and eventually slaves. As European powers established colonial empires in the Americas, many of the indigenous Americans died of disease and starvation or were deliberately killed and/or tortured by European colonizers. As local populations diminished due to these factors, Europeans needed a consistent supply of manpower, notably African slaves, who were resistant to the Old-World diseases that Europeans exposed the indigenous populations to. The Atlantic slave trade was established to serve this purpose. For the many centuries that this trade lasted, over 12 million Africans were sold and transported to countries like Brazil, the Caribbean, and the American South.^{liv} The effects of the slave trade and the subsequent colonial period on Africa still have implications for African countries and people of African descent, not just those living in Africa.^{lv}

France played a major role in this centuries-long struggle for power. France competed with mostly the British in Africa. Senegal was the first and consistently the most important French post in French West Africa.^{lvi} Throughout and until the late 1800s, European powers,

mostly the French and British, were actively competing to make connections and control land in Africa. To avoid a potential European conflict over colonizing Africa, German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck held a conference in Berlin in 1884 to discuss the peaceful partitioning of Africa by the colonial powers. Countries invited to the Berlin Conference included Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden-Norway (union until 1905), the Ottoman Empire, and the United States.^{lvii} No African countries were invited to this conference. The only African country that was not colonized was Ethiopia. As a result of the conference, France solidified its position as the dominant colonial power in West Africa, as seen in Figure 1.5.

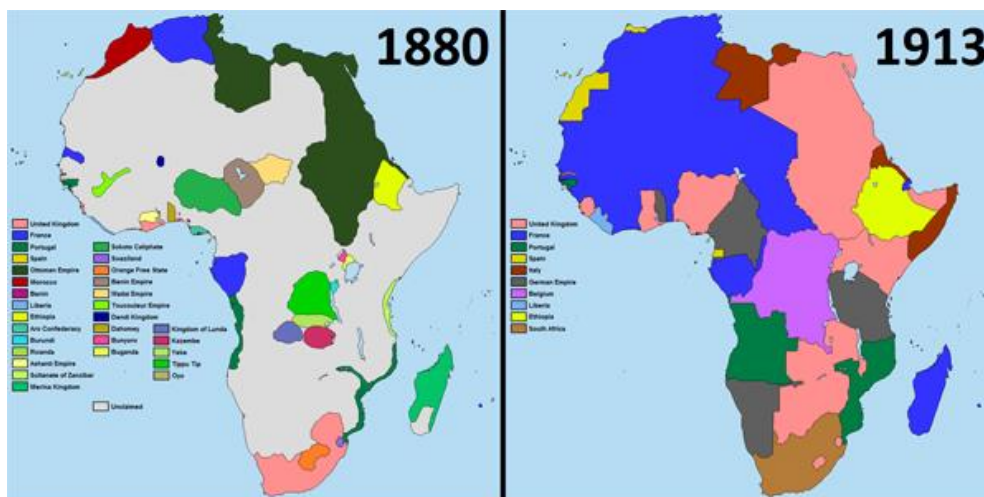


Figure 1.5^{lviii}

French colonialism differed from British colonialism such that France preferred direct rule over Britain's policy of indirect rule. The British mostly utilized local administrations to govern their colonies by engaging with local power holders. The French created an entire power structure to oversee their subjects, and often strictly enforced it through proclamations like *Le Code Noir* and its colonial administrations.^{lix} The French, as did the British, extracted natural resources, labor, and other resources from Africa to meet the developing capitalist demand for industrialization. Many scholars debate over the reasons why the French wanted to colonize

Africa. There are many reasons why, including control of natural resources for an industrializing France and glorifying French national pride^x. After nearly a century of harsh, direct colonial rule, after fighting two European World Wars, and after experiencing massive crimes against humanity like slavery, rape, and genocide, Africans demanded independence from France. In 1946, the French constitution included the Union Africaine, which hinted at potential local governance under the French national government. The African Union had supporters, like Leopold Senghor of Senegal and Félix Houphouët-Boigny of Côte d'Ivoire. These two will be discussed later in each case study, respectively. The French Fifth Republic was created in 1958 and replaced the African Union with the Communauté Française. French President Charles de Gaulle tried relentlessly to keep Africa under France's control.^{lxi} But, because of the Algerian War, increasing demands from Africans, and declining French power, most African states received independence by 1961.

Although many African states received independence by 1961, the French continued to exploit West African states both economically and politically. One example is the CFA Franc. The CFA Franc was created in 1946 by French President Charles de Gaulle to continue to economically dominate African economies and link them to France. Once decolonization swept the continent, the CFA franc was reinvented. Two economic zones were created: the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CAEMC). The former consists of Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo. This region of West Africa was given the African Financial Community franc. The latter consists of Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and Chad. This central region of Africa received the Central African Financial Cooperation franc.^{lxii} We will be focusing on

WAEMU, the CFA franc, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The original agreement forced member-states to keep 50% of their foreign reserves in the French Treasury, with additional financial liabilities.^{lxiii} In 1994, the CFA franc was devalued under IMF-Western counsel to decrease debt and boost member-states economic outputs.^{lxiv} Originally valued at 50 CFA franc to 1 French franc, that number shifted to 100 CFA franc to 1 French franc.^{lxv} Since 1999, the CFA franc has been pegged to the Euro and has similar exchange rates that reflected the CFA franc-French franc relationship.^{lxvi} While the devaluation did help grow exports, it also made it more expensive to buy imports, which many export-oriented economies rely on. This devaluation was met with widespread criticism in African countries, and arguably started a process of waning French influence across CFA countries.

The CFA franc has become intensely scrutinized in the last few years, as opponents call it a neocolonial tool that limits the economic sovereignty of the ECOWAS member states. They argue that the CFA franc and continued French monetary power over West African states according to Isabelle King, a writer for the Harvard International Review, writes on the topic:

The monetary zone limits industrialization and economic development and discourages trade among member states. The credit-to-GDP ratio rests between 10 and 25 percent for CFA countries but is approximately 60+ percent for other states in sub-Saharan Africa. The CFA franc stimulates huge capital outflows and, due to the fixed exchange rate regime, pushes that money towards Europe, often France. 11 out of the 14 CFA states are deemed “least developed” by the United Nations, and Sub-Saharan member countries fall at the bottom of the UN Human Development Index.^{lxvii}

Other tools of French neocolonial rule exist as well. These include the use of conditional development aid, the continued presence of the French military, and the fact that French companies profit off Africa’s many natural resources, while African countries do not have access to the finished products of those natural resource exports. This latter example is especially true for French mining companies, like Orano, in Niger, which mines Niger’s many uranium

deposits.^{lxviii} While it is great that France is relying heavily on nuclear energy, less than 20% (2020 levels) of Niger's population has access to electricity, in a country with 5% of the world's uranium deposits.^{lxix} This just proves to show how French influence can often lead to the extraction of natural resources at the detriment of the host country.

Contemporary France in Africa

Current French President Emmanuel Macron has recognized African dissatisfaction with France. Therefore, he met with Ivoirian President Alassane Ouattara in 2019 to announce changes to the CFA. In 2027, ECOWAS will adopt a new currency called the "eco." According to King, "The reform includes additional adjustments such as those about the reserve requirement and the elimination of the French-held board position in the BCEAO." While this is a much-needed change since France will no longer hold 50% of reserves and ECOWAS will have full liberty of those reserves, France will still be the currency's guarantor and the currency will still be backed by the euro with a fixed exchange rate.^{lxx} Whether it is the CFA franc, the eco, or whatever new currency French and institutional leaders create, France still holds a degree of control over the monetary policy of former colonies, especially Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire.

President Macron has refocused France's engagement with all of Africa. In doing so, France has even increased its attention outside of the French traditional spheres of influence by seeking relationships with Angola, Nigeria, and other non-Francophone countries in Africa.^{lxxi} France has increasingly promoted socio-cultural ties, through institutions like la Françafrique, and politically through military cooperation, like in the G-5 Sahel. Continued military occupation in the Sahel, including and especially in Senegal, has been a cornerstone of French foreign policy in Africa. This includes an increased military presence in West Africa and an overall larger effort to engage with prominent African political and economic leaders. There are many French

military bases throughout Africa, as seen in Figure 1.6. This is to address Chinese and American influence, but also to reinforce its historical influence on the continent.^{lxxii}

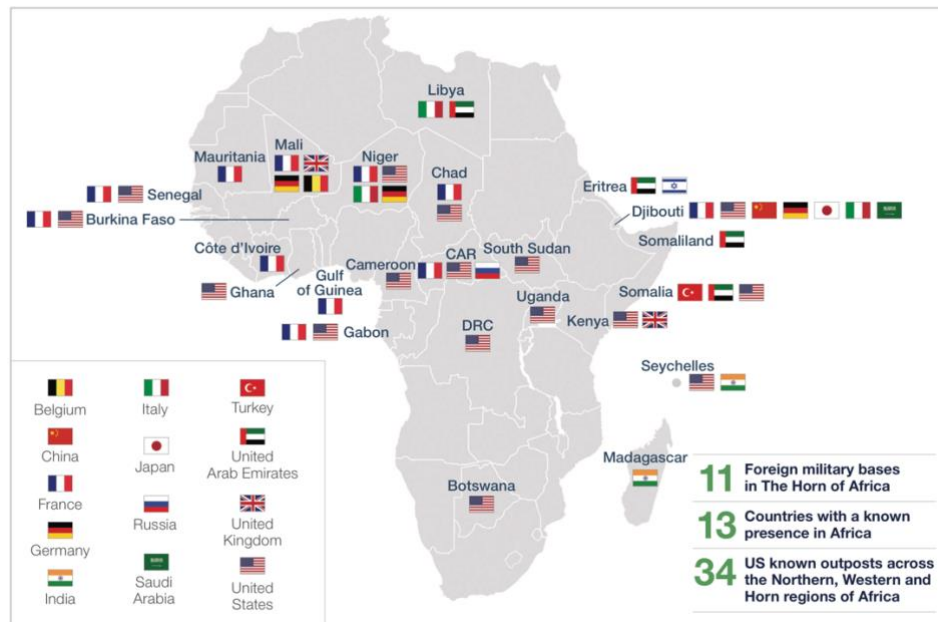


Figure 1.6^{lxxiii}

President Macron has tried to separate France’s colonial history from its current ambitions. This is most evident in Marcon’s 2017 speech at the University of Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso. Macron started this speech, to hundreds of African students and elected officials, by proclaiming that there is no African policy for France^{lxxiv}. He continued to convey that France is cognizant of its colonial history and wants a new relationship with Francophone Africa. He called French colonialism a “crime against humanity.”^{lxxv} As the first French President born after the French colonial period, one may believe the sentiment. His speech gives the impression that there are no French intentions in Africa. However, he transitioned to the traditional French rhetoric of appealing to Africa’s youth and future potential. Despite Macron’s efforts to strengthen diplomatic ties in West Africa, France has become increasingly unpopular in the region. Afrobarometer is a reputable polling institution that polls Africans across the continent on a variety of social, political, and international issues. According to results from many

countries, French popularity in virtually all African countries, especially in Francophone Africa, has decreased. Country-specific results from Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire will be used to analyze French influence in each country, respectively, as well as analyze African perceptions of US-China competition in the region.

US-French Relations in Africa

Relevant US-French relations in Africa begins during the Cold War. While it is called the Cold War, conflicts via proxy states were the cornerstone of US-Soviet geopolitics. This occurred throughout the “third world,” a term used to describe the remaining countries not part of the Western or Soviet blocs. But while the United States was determined to stop communism wherever it spread, the US was far more concerned with Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, and East Asia than Africa. Africa has historically been neglected in US foreign policy, except for Liberia, which has a history with the United States.^{lxxvi} Furthermore, the US State Department did not create a Division of African Affairs until 1957 and looked towards the colonial powers in London and Paris when interest arose.^{lxxvii} Given France’s continued presence in Africa since colonialism, the United States relied on French influence throughout Africa to advance U.S. foreign policy. Peter J. Schraeder is a professor of Political Science at Loyola University Chicago and has studied US foreign policy in Africa. In his work, “Cold War to Cold Peace: Explaining U.S.-French Competition in Francophone Africa,” Schraeder describes the progression and divergence of US and French policies in Africa. France views Francophone Africa through the context of its former colonial history. After decolonization and throughout the Cold War, France focused on promoting French culture and intellectual tradition, notably through the concept of la Francophonie. US Cold War policy in Africa was centered largely on the ideology of containment; limiting Soviet and communist influence was the top priority.

Although with different agendas, French and American policies during the Cold War often overlapped. While there were moments of disagreement, American officials viewed France as a partner and stabilizer in the region.^{lxxviii}

US-French relations have consisted of both competition and cooperation. Schraeder asserts that many in the international community assumed that the end of the Cold War would lead to stronger US-French cooperation in Africa. However, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the effective end of the Cold War, Schraeder argues that US-French cooperation turned into a competition. International competition increased after the end of the Cold War, and France and the United States began to compete economically in Africa. Both the United States and France had a post-Cold War African policy centered on trade and investment. France looked to expand its influence and economic reach beyond its traditional francophone territory, engaging with countries deemed as regional powers like Nigeria and South Africa.^{lxxix} Schraeder argues that economic competition, what he refers to as economic self-interest, became the dominant mentalities for both French and American administrations.^{lxxx}

Today, given the threat of a rising China, both the US and France have formed a united front to counter Chinese debt, infrastructure, and trade in Africa. According to current US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, France and the United States are “on the same page” when it comes to rising Chinese influence globally, but specifically in Africa. The West has released its version of an infrastructure plan called the “Build Back Better for the World” program or B3W. The B3W is a G7-led initiative to counter China’s BRI and its global influence. According to the Biden administration, B3W is meant to address 4 areas for development: climate, health, and health security, digital technology, and gender equity and equality.^{lxxxii} Overall, the G7 nations (Canada, United States, France, Italy, Japan, Germany, and the United Kingdom) have

dedicated over \$600 billion in infrastructure, with “\$3.3 million in technical assistance to Institut-Pasteur de Dakar in Senegal as it develops an industrial-scale flexible multi-vaccine manufacturing facility in that country that can eventually produce COVID-19 and other vaccines.”^{lxxxii} Although the Biden administration has mentioned that African nations are not to “pick sides” between the U.S. and China, it appears that a bipolar face-off is certainly coming to fruition.

Case Studies

Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire will serve as case studies when evaluating French influence in West Africa vis-à-vis U.S.-China competition. When evaluating each case study, a short historical and demographic overview of the country will be given. Then, an overview of French influence since colonization will be provided, followed by current bilateral relations. Once the degree of French influence is established, Senegalese and Ivorian public perceptions of France and a US-China competition will be provided, which were conducted by the African polling institution, Afrobarometer. This information will make it clear how French influence in each country impacts US-China competition. An analysis of the results and of how French influence impacts U.S.-China competition will be provided in the Analysis section of the paper.

Senegal:

Overview

Senegal is a country located on the Westernmost coast of West Africa. According to Country Watch data, as of 2021, Senegal has a population of just over 16 million with its largest city and capital being Dakar. As seen in Figure 2.0, Senegal is bordered by Mauritania to the north, Mali to the east, Guinea to the southeast, Guinea-Bissau to the southwest, and the Atlantic Ocean to the east. The country of Gambia borders Senegal along the Gambia river, which cuts into Senegal from the Atlantic Ocean. Senegal is a majority Muslim country, with 92% of the country practicing Islam. The major ethnic groups in Senegal include Wolof, Pular, and Serer, which comprise about 43%, 24%, and 15%, respectively. There are other, smaller ethnic groups living in Senegal, including the Jola, Mandinka, and others.



Figure 2.0^{lxxxiii}

Many of the borders, like that of Senegal and Gambia, are arbitrary and a result of the region's colonial period. Since Senegal was one of the first places that Europeans arrived in West Africa, it became a highly contested area between the colonizing nations. Portuguese navigators first arrived in Senegal in the 15th century, with the Portuguese, French, British, and Dutch eventually competing for control of trading posts along the coast of West Africa, especially in the Senegalese and Gambian river basins.

French History and Influence

Colonial Period

France built its first trading posts in Senegal in the 17th century. These trading posts, notably St. Louis and Gorée, became important bases for commerce, especially for trading gold, Arabic gum, and slaves.^{lxxxiv} The British and French often fought for control of this section of West Africa, with Gambia becoming a British protectorate and the surrounding posts belonging mostly to the French. By the mid-1800s, Senegal was primarily under French control. This included a constant military presence to protect French business interests, mostly the extraction of natural resources and crops. In the 1890s, France made Senegal an official part of French West Africa,

which had its headquarters in Dakar, Senegal. Since many relevant ports and French administrators were located there, Senegal became an important part of French West Africa.^{lxxxv} Since Senegal sent troops during the first and second World Wars, France granted greater political representation to Senegal, despite still being a part of French West Africa. As demands for independence throughout the colonial world began to augment during and after World War II, France's new constitution in 1958 gave French West Africa a referendum on whether to stay within the Communauté Française or to become independent. Senegal voted to stay within the French Community, given the close relations between France and political leaders like Léopold Senghor, who would later become Senegal's first President.^{lxxxvi} In 1958, Senegal and French Soudan formed what was known as the Mali Federation, a self-governing political body under the purview of the French Community. This type of federalist rule, where the French retained some degree of power over its former colonies, was preferred by French loyalists like Senghor. But, by 1960, the Mali Federation became independent of the French Community. The federation wouldn't last long; after a few months of true independence, Senegal left the Mali Federation and declared independence.

Independence

Léopold Sédar Senghor was Senegal's first President. He later became known as the "Poet President" due to his affiliation with the international Negritude movement. Senghor was born in Senegal and studied in France for many years, which influenced his motivations as President to continue French-Senegalese relations. Senghor was an academic and was the Chair of the Linguistics Department at the French National School for Overseas Departments and Territories, a position he held until 1960 when he became President.^{lxxxvii} Before independence, Senghor served as a representative of the Senegal-Mauritania region in the French National Assembly, as

well as many other representative positions between World War II and independence. Senghor advocated for a federalist structure of power between former French colonies and France. He believed that continued French investment and political leadership could help develop and modernize the newly independent states.

As President of Senegal, Senghor kept a close relationship with France. Senghor traveled to and from France constantly and created Senegal's "Special Relationship" with France.^{lxxxviii} French decolonization, according to Tony Chafer, a scholar on the topic from the University of Portsmouth, made the cost of French colonialism much cheaper, yet retained many of the strategic military, political, and economic influences with select colonial allies, like Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, and others. Instead of immediately becoming independent in 1958, Senghor kept Senegal in the French Community to continue the direct transfer of funds from France to Senegal. As mentioned in the Literature Review, France prioritized the promotion of French culture and influence during the Cold War. Senegal's relationship allowed France to continue to influence language policy, economic/monetary policy, and foreign policy in Senegal.^{lxxxix} While Senghor provided political stability at a precarious time for many newly independent African states, much of French development aid during this "special relationship" period only helped the French-speaking political elites, not the greater population of Senegal. Senghor stepped down in 1980 and later died in 2001. He died in France, and his successor, Abdou Diouf, continued this Special Relationship throughout the 1990s until French influence began to wane.

Current French Influence

Economic Influence

Today, France is still an important economic partner for Senegal. As seen in Figure 2.2, France is a major trading partner for Senegal, primarily for Senegalese imports (France exports).

Imports from France account for over 15% of imports in Senegal. China and the United States account for 9% and less than 3%, respectively. France, however, accounts for less than 2% of Senegalese exports, which is smaller than both the United States and China, which account for less than 3% and less than 7%, respectively. Imports are far more important to Senegal’s economy than exports. Senegal’s trade balance (exports-imports) is over -3.8 million, which means that Senegal imports (or buys foreign products) more than it exports (or sells Senegalese products).^{xc} Therefore, although a small export partner, France accounts for a large percentage of Senegalese imports.

Partner Name	Trade Balance (US\$ Thousand)	Export (US\$ Thousand)	Import (US\$ Thousand)	Import Partner Share (%)	Export Partner Share (%)
France	-1,146,750.62	76,880.27	1,223,630.89	15.66	1.96
United States	-93,974.96	117,363.87	211,338.83	2.71	2.99
China	-455,072.63	264,372.12	719,444.75	9.21	6.73

Figure 2.2^{xc}

In addition to trade, France also holds economic power over Senegal through the CFA France and French aid. As mentioned in the Literature Review, France holds some degree of monetary power over Senegal given France’s connection with the CFA. Furthermore, France also holds economic influence through foreign direct investment (FDI) and aid. In 2020, Senegal received FDI worth 7.5% of the total GDP.^{xcii} France is Senegal’s largest source of FDI, with China, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States also becoming large sources of Senegalese FDI.^{xciii}

Military/Political Influence

Current Senegalese President Macky Sall, who is also the chairperson of the African Union, has committed to strengthening European-African relations. After many meetings with the French President, Sall has called for increased attention to Africa’s growing youth, and increased investment in Africa, especially Senegal.^{xciv} This commitment to increased investment will come

from the European Union, but also through French FDI and infrastructure. In this meeting, Macron has tried to push for over \$100 billion in special drawing rights from the IMF specifically for Africa. France closed its military base in Senegal nearly a decade ago, but the two countries have maintained close military alliances. For example, just this year, France, Senegal, and many other West African states in the Gulf of Guinea (including Côte d'Ivoire) have conducted anti-drug trafficking military exercises.^{xcv} This cooperation, which also included the United States and the United Kingdom to lesser degrees, shows a continued commitment to French military presence in Senegal and the greater region of West Africa.

Cultural Influence

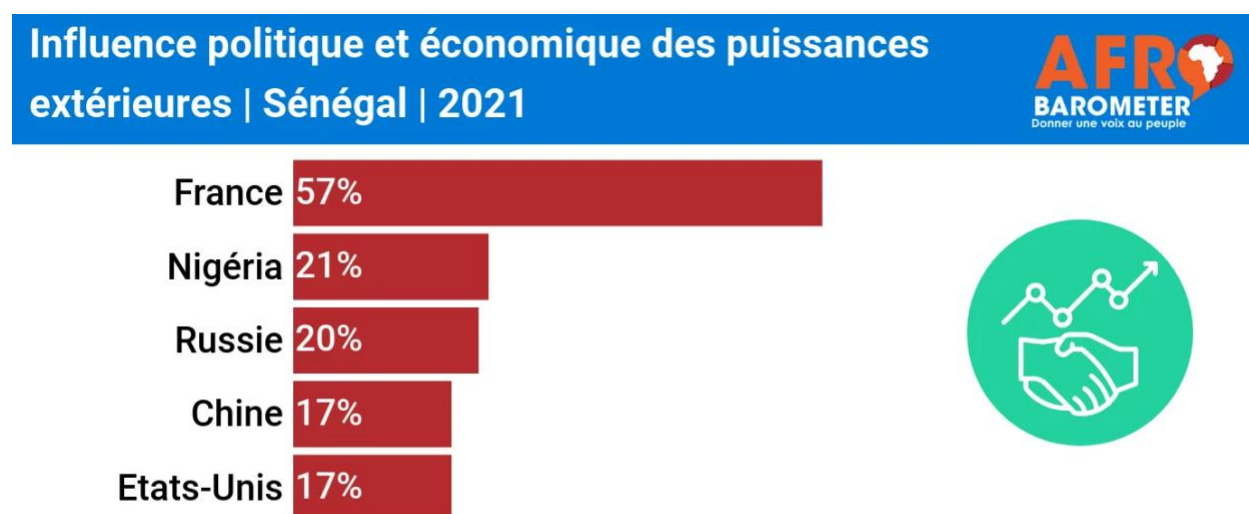
France's cultural influence remains in Senegal. As the first French colony in Africa, Dakar has become an important and symbolic partner in France's post-colonial foreign policy. Senegal's official language is French, which is taught in public schools and government administrations throughout the country. However, French is spoken by less than a quarter of the population and has proved a major barrier to much poorer Senegalese.^{xcvi} Wolof is the most widely spoken language and ethnic group in Senegal. While more emphasis has been placed on this language/ethnic group, French still dominates political discourse. However, France's public image has deteriorated, especially in Senegal.

Senegalese Public Perceptions

Afrobarometer is a reputable polling source that collects data on many African countries, including Senegal. The following data was taken from Afrobarometer's polling rounds in Senegal about international relations and institutions. The same will be done with Côte d'Ivoire.

Most Senegalese respondents in 2021 viewed Chinese economic and political influence as positive. 59% said that China was a very positive or somewhat positive influence on Senegal, with

only 17% saying that Chinese influence was either very negative or somewhat negative. The same question was asked about the United States and France. The United States was viewed very positively or somewhat positively by 53% of respondents, with only 17% viewing the USA either very negatively or somewhat negatively. France, however, was not as lucky. 57% of Senegalese respondents viewed French influence as very negative or somewhat negative. Only 32% of respondents characterized French influence as very or somewhat positive. Figure 2.4 shows the percentage of negative perceptions in Senegal of the following exterior powers. France is perceived most negatively, as noted before.



Question posée aux répondants : Pensez-vous que l'influence économique et politique de chacun des pays suivants sur le Sénégal est plutôt positive, plutôt négative, ou n'en avez-vous pas suffisamment entendu parler pour vous prononcer ? (% qui disent négative)

Figure 2.4^{xcvii}

Even for development models, China’s development model is preferred in Senegal over that of the United States and France. 30% of respondents responded saying that Senegal should follow the Chinese development model, with 28% and 10% for the United States and France, respectively. Of those responding whether Senegal was too indebted to China, 31% said yes, while only 8% said no. Nearly 53% were undecided.^{xcviii} These reports are important in understanding

public perceptions of US-China competition in Senegal. These results will be further analyzed in the Analysis section.

Côte d'Ivoire

Overview:

Côte d'Ivoire, known as the Ivory Coast in English, is a country located in West Africa. Côte d'Ivoire is in the southern region of West Africa, bordering on the Gulf of Guinea to the south, Mali and Burkina Faso in the north, Liberia and Guinea in the west, and Ghana in the east, as seen in Figure 3.0. Côte d'Ivoire has a diverse population of around 27 million people, 40% of which are Muslim, around 35% of which are Christian, and the rest belong to more traditional animist religions.^{xcix} The official language is French, with other native languages like Dioula, and Baoulé also common in many regions.



Figure 3.0^c

Throughout Africa, many ethnic groups are either split across different countries or mixed with other ethnic groups, which has caused ethnic tension across and within countries, including Côte d'Ivoire.^{ci} The country's major religions, Islam, and Christianity are largely split geographically between north and south, respectively. This, along with other reasons that will be discussed later, caused Côte d'Ivoire to have two civil wars spanning from 1999 to 2012. Côte

d'Ivoire's long-standing relationship with France, however, has helped the country gain notoriety as a rapidly developing African country, landing the nation's economic rise with the name "the Ivorian miracle."

French Influence

Colonial Period

As mentioned in the literature review, Côte d'Ivoire was under the rule of the French during the period of French colonialism. Like Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire was a major economic center for the French to extract natural resources. Although not as influenced by the slave trade as Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire became a major port for trade. During the seventeenth century, ivory was a luxury commodity in France. As its name suggests, the Ivory Coast had an abundance of ivory due to its high elephant population. In addition to ivory, the French focused on cocoa, banana, and palm oil cultivation and production.^{cii} Côte d'Ivoire became an important French colony for exporting these low-cost raw materials. After the Berlin Conference, France politically reorganized West Africa, including Côte d'Ivoire. French West Africa was separated into different administrative zones, where direct French rule dominated land review, the economy, and the division of labor. The French promoted assimilation into the French language, culture, and society. Legacies of the colonial period and this assimilation are evident during and after the period of decolonization. For example, the French language is the official language (and the official name of the country), Côte d'Ivoire still exports natural resources and the promotion of Christianity. Christianity is common in the south, which had the most French presence during the colonial period.

Independence

Côte d'Ivoire became a member of the French Community in 1958. It was not a member of the Mali Federation, like Senegal. In 1960, Côte d'Ivoire was granted full independence from France. Just as Senegal had an influential independence leader and first president, so too did Côte d'Ivoire. Felix Houphouët Boigny was the son of a wealthy Baolé chief, who, before starting his political career, worked as a doctor and wealthy planter. In 1944, he started the African Agricultural Syndicate to better organize and protect African farmers against European control. Whereas Senegal began elections for the French National Assembly in 1916, Côte d'Ivoire did not elect representatives until the end of World War II. Felix Houphouët Boigny was elected to the French National Assembly in the country's first elections and served in other positions before the President, such as the mayor of Abidjan and leader of multiple political parties. Houphouët Boigny amassed a lot of power throughout his political career, serving as President from 1960 until he died in 1993.^{ciii}

Under his presidential rule, Houphouët Boigny led Côte d'Ivoire's economic development to being one of the most prosperous sub-Saharan economies. Houphouët Boigny led a free-market economy, promoting cash crops like cocoa and palm oil, as well as other exports. Much of Côte d'Ivoire's agricultural sector was labor intensive and thus required immigration from neighboring countries like Burkina Faso. Houphouët Boigny promoted migration into the country, which is now a cornerstone of ECOWAS membership.^{civ} Like Senghor, Houphouët Boigny embraced French influence. President Boigny recognized that African nations could benefit from French investment, businesses, and leadership post-independence. French troops had also been stationed in the country during his reign. During the Cold War, Boigny promoted a free-market economy while many neighboring nations embraced a state-led industrialization plan. As mentioned in the Literature Review, Western foreign policy in Africa at this time was to promote free-market capitalism over

state-led communism. Boigny knew that and even went so far as to call both the Soviet Union and China poor influences on the African state and economic development. In addition to economic development, Houphouët Boigny became a political strongman who consolidated power both domestically and across Africa. For example, Houphouët Boigny intervened in neighboring Burkina Faso, Liberia, and even Angola.^{cv}

After Boigny's death, Côte d'Ivoire held nationwide elections. Due to the power vacuum created when he died, political turmoil ensued, and the country was plunged into a civil war. In 1999. The country experienced its first military coup, with the military intervening in presidential elections. The civil unrest occurred for over a decade, with different military and political leaders using influence to seize power.^{cvi} As stated beforehand, the conflict was intensified through cultural, religious, and ethnic division. French forces became involved in the Second Ivorian Civil War, especially due to internal and international pressure. In 2010, Ivorian elections between President Laurent Gbagbo and opposition leader Alassane Ouattara were contested after Ouattara won but President Gbagbo contested the results. The United Nations, the United States, the European Union, the African Union, and ECOWAS all supported Ouattara.^{cvi} French military presence was crucial to the war's end when Gbagbo was captured and Ouattara was sworn in. French military presence and influence impacted Côte d'Ivoire, even as the country had been independent for nearly half a century.

Current French Influence

Economic Influence

French economic influence, although waning, is still present in Côte d'Ivoire. As mentioned in the Literature Review, the CFA franc is still the currency of many francophone-African states, including Côte d'Ivoire. Despite changes made, France still holds a degree of

power over the country’s monetary policy. In addition to monetary control, France is also an important investor in the country. France is the largest source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) for Côte d’Ivoire, with \$509 million in FDI in 2020.^{cvi} Côte d’Ivoire is also France’s leading trading partner in the CFA franc zone and the third largest trading partner in sub-Saharan Africa.^{cix} According to World Bank data from 2019, Côte d’Ivoire’s largest trade partners are the Netherlands, the United States, France, Malaysia, and Vietnam, respectively. Although the value of trade may be more for the Netherlands and the United States, Côte d’Ivoire exports a higher number and larger percentage of exports to France. This can be seen in Figure 4.0, where nearly 40% of all different exports are sent to France. Over the years, however, Côte d’Ivoire has diversified its trading partners to not rely solely on one country.

Partner Name	No Of exported HS6 digit Products	Export Share in Total Products (%)	Export (US\$ Thousan)	Export Partner Share (%)
Netherlands	154	6.52	1,358,756.44	10.68
United States	396	16.77	767,522.03	6.04
France	925	39.18	752,958.57	5.92
Malaysia	48	2.03	634,138.33	4.99
China	64	2.71	371,260.42	2.92

Figure 4.0^{cx}

Partner Name	No Of imported HS6 digit Products	Import Share in Total Products (%)	Import (US\$ Thousan)	Import Partner Share (%)
China	2,697	69.56	1,801,977.25	17.19
Nigeria	1,176	30.33	1,409,939.50	13.45
France	2,995	77.25	1,125,835.53	10.74
United States	1,586	40.91	522,355.97	4.98

Figure 4.1^{cx}

In terms of imports, Côte d’Ivoire imports most of its products from China, Nigeria, France, and the United States, respectively. As seen in Figure 4.1, China accounts for almost twice as many imports into Côte d’Ivoire as France, and nearly five times as much as the United States.

Although both the United States and France are more important trading partners (exports and

imports accounted for), Côte d'Ivoire relies on China for most of its imports, notably finished goods.

While economic French influence is present, it is waning as other trading partners like China and the United States increase trade with Côte d'Ivoire. However, French FDI, debt relief, and trade relations are a huge part of Côte d'Ivoire's economic development plans. Given the prevalence of these three aspects of Côte d'Ivoire's economy, they are an important part of France's contemporary influence on Côte d'Ivoire.

Military/Political Influence

Contemporary French military influence in Côte d'Ivoire was most evident during the First and Second Ivorian Civil War, where French forces helped to eventually overthrow President Gbagbo from power. Since then, the French military has had no active military presence in Côte d'Ivoire. But French military presence is there, as well as a French military base, as noted in the Literature Review. Politically, French President Macron has tried to bolster France's image in the country. It was in Côte d'Ivoire that France decided to announce changes to the CFA franc in 2019 with Ivorian President Ouattara, as mentioned in the Literature Review. Ouattara has positively received French influence, although maybe not as much as first President Felix Houphouët Boigny. Although he does support moving away from the CFA franc zone, he did support pegging the new ECO to the Euro.^{cxii} Despite obvious declines in French influences, Côte d'Ivoire still maintains French defense pacts and political engagement. France still holds tremendous network power, both politically and in business.

Socio-Cultural Influence

France's cultural influence in Cote d'Ivoire is still present. This is evident since French is the nation's official language. French is taught in schools throughout Côte d'Ivoire and is the

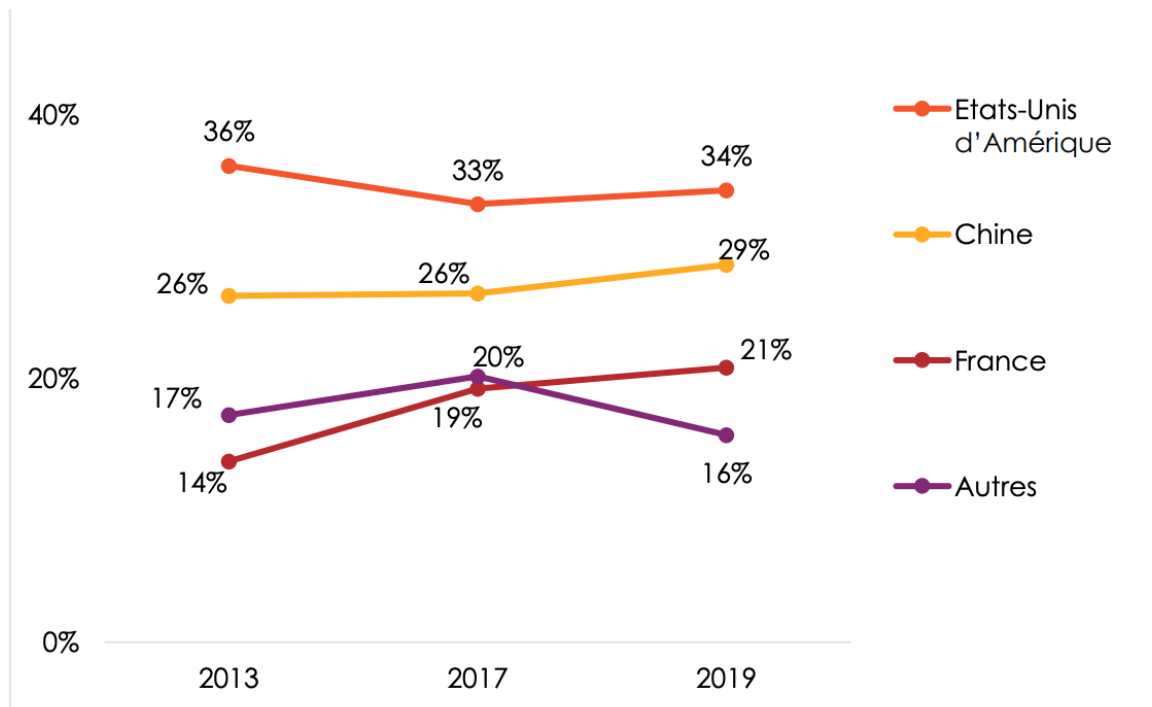
administrative language of the Ivoirian government.^{cxiii} French language and cultural influence are promoted through the existence of Françafrique, as noted in the Literature Review. The francophone institution promotes cooperation and cultural engagement across the francophone world, of which Côte d'Ivoire is a part. Therefore, there is some degree of contemporary French cultural influence. Furthermore, nearly 100,000 Ivorians are living in France, which is the third largest Ivorian population outside of Côte d'Ivoire.^{cxiv} Obvious cultural, historical, and linguistic ties make France the top destination for Ivorian migrants in Europe.

Ivorian Public Perceptions

Afrobarometer is a reputable polling source that collects data on many African countries, including Côte d'Ivoire. The following data was taken from Afrobarometer's polling rounds in Côte d'Ivoire about international relations and institutions, as was done with Senegal. In Côte d'Ivoire, 43% view French influence as either very negative or somewhat negative, while 47% of Ivorians view France as a somewhat positive or very positive influence on the country. Although more view France as a somewhat positive influence, the characterization of French influence as very negative received the most responses, with 30% of Ivorians selecting this choice.^{cxv}

The influence of China and the United States, however, was received much more positively. A large majority of Ivorians, 70%, believe that Chinese economic and political influence is a positive thing for Côte d'Ivoire. About 64% of respondents said the same thing about the United States. While nearly half of respondents who are familiar with Chinese influence believe that Côte d'Ivoire is too indebted to China, the belief that China has a large influence on the Ivorian economy has decreased from 70% in 2014 to 53% in 2019.^{cxvi} Furthermore, Ivorians prefer the U.S.-style development model over a Chinese-style one, as seen

in Figure 4.2. The graphic compares the preference United States, China, France, and “Other” development styles, according to Ivorians.



Question posée aux répondants: À votre avis, lequel des pays suivants, le cas échéant, serait le meilleur modèle de développement futur de notre pays, ou y a-t-il un autre pays en Afrique ou ailleurs qui devrait être notre modèle?

Figure 4.2^{cxvii}

Overall, Afrobarometer results show that while there is skepticism about Chinese aid and development, Ivorians view China as a positive economic and political influence. This data also shows the nuance and complexity of studying a US-China competition in Africa. The analysis of this data and the data from Senegal will be discussed in the Analysis section of the paper.

Analysis

Introduction

The analysis section seeks to determine whether French influence in each case study (Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire) will impact US-China competition in the region, and if so, how. To do so, each case study will be analyzed and compared. French influence will be analyzed based on the economic, political, and sociocultural influence that France has on each case study. Next, French influence concerning US-China competition will be established. From there, the degree of impact that French influence, if any significant amount, would have on a US-China competition will be discussed. The following discussion section will discuss the broader impacts for the region of West Africa, as well as for the world.

French Influence in Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire

French Economic Influence

French influence in Senegal will be determined through the analysis of the economic, political, and sociocultural connections between France and Senegal. The same will be done for Côte d'Ivoire. In terms of economic power, the CFA franc does inherently give France some degree of control over any country that uses the currency. Therefore, both Senegal's and Côte d'Ivoire's monetary policies are influenced by France. Furthermore, France is the number one supplier of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) for both Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire. FDI is important for the long-term, sustainable development of both countries. Therefore, France holds a degree of economic power for both countries in this respect. Finally, France is a top trading partner for both countries. France supplies Senegal with approximately 15% of its imports, mostly manufactured goods like pharmaceutical goods and industrial machinery. These products are

necessary for industrialization and are therefore very important. Similarly, France accounts for 6% of Ivorian exports and nearly 11% of Ivorian imports. Like in Senegal, these products are finished goods and represent higher-value commodities like electrical equipment and machinery. Although being reliable trading partners for France, both Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire have diversified their economies, notably reaching out to countries like China for finished products. Despite China's growing presence, France is still major economic power for both Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire.

French Political Influence

France continues to enjoy close political and military ties with both Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire. Despite the closing of French military bases, French and Senegalese forces, in addition to other African and Western powers, continue to hold joint military operations throughout the West African region. France and Côte d'Ivoire arguably have closer military ties, given France's role in the Second Ivorian Civil War. France continues to aid in Ivorian coastal security against anti-trafficking and piracy, among other issues. Politically, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire have close French ties, with arguably closer ties between Côte d'Ivoire and France. France under Macron focused on increased cooperation between France and its former colonies. This includes reigniting and reinforcing powerful allies in the region. Furthermore, despite its diminished presence since the era of Senghor, French-speaking political and business elite are often the recipients of French FDI, industrial exports, and other forms of French cooperation. Therefore, although diminished, French political influence remains in both Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal.

French Socio-Cultural Influence

Despite being the official language of Senegal, French is not the most widely spoken language and is also the language of the political elite, as mentioned above. While French is more

widely spoken in Côte d'Ivoire, it is still not the only language and serves as a lingua franca for the dozens of languages present in the country. Despite the presence of the French language and culture through la Francophonie, everyday Ivorians and Senegalese view France as a negative external power. Afrobarometer polls in Senegal found that French power is viewed negatively, with 57% of respondents indicating that French power was slightly or very negative. Once considered the epitome of French West African conquest, Senegal has become a country that views France as more dangerous than Russia. This sentiment persists despite the economic, political, and historical connections between the two countries. It most likely persists because of these connections. While many respondents (43%) view France negatively, 47% view France positively. Therefore, while France is viewed negatively in both countries, many Ivorians welcome French influence. Nonetheless, overall French influence has declined in both countries.

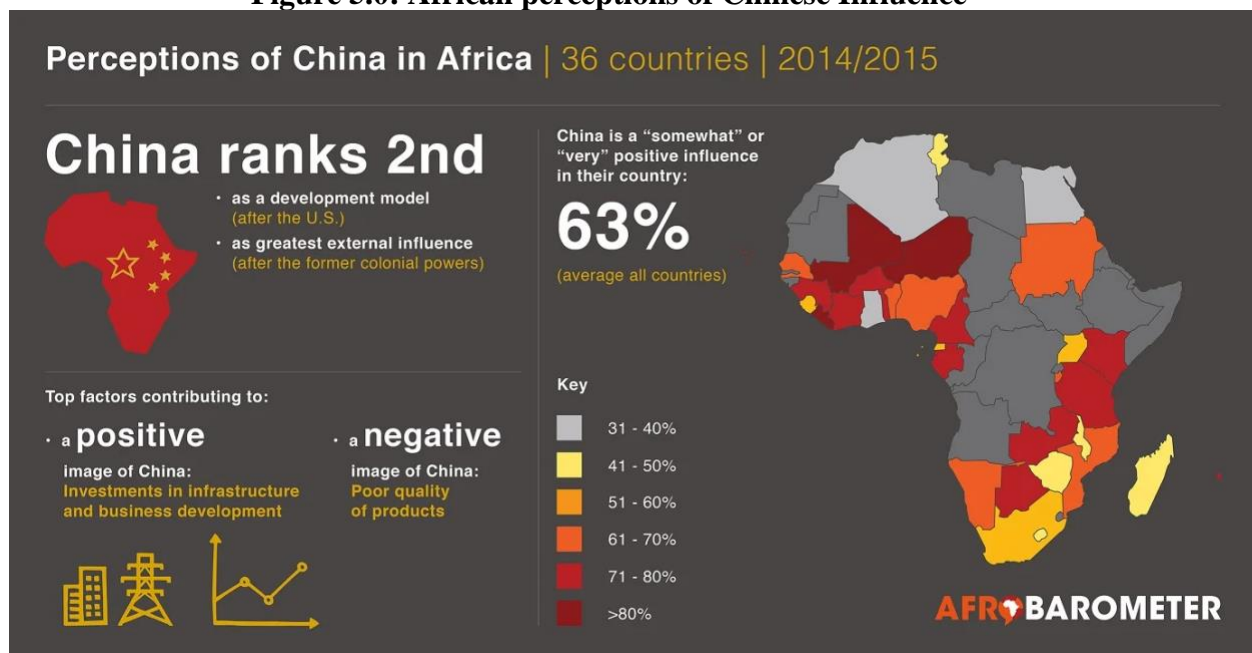
While both countries appear to have deep cultural, historic, economic, political, and military ties, Côte d'Ivoire appears to be more influenced by France than Senegal. Furthermore, according to public opinion polls, France is more unpopular in Senegal than Côte d'Ivoire, despite both countries having negative perceptions of French power and influence.

French Influence in US-China Competition

French influence in the region is important for understanding how Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal react to a US-China competition. China has become an important trading and investment partner in both Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire. China has negotiated infrastructure projects through its Belt and Road Initiative in both countries as well. Furthermore, China gives both countries options for infrastructure projects, FDI, and manufactured, industrial goods necessary for development.

According to Afrobarometer, both Senegal and Côte d’Ivoire view Chinese investment and influence as positive for their respective countries. While some have worries about Chinese-owned debt, overall, both Côte d’Ivoire and Senegal welcome Chinese influence. This trend can be seen in Figure 5.0 from Afrobarometer. China has become Africa’s top trading partner and a major source of investment across the continent. As noted in the Theoretical Framework and the Literature Review, increased Chinese investment, engagement, and hegemony seems threatening in areas not traditionally of Chinese spheres of influence.

Figure 5.0: African perceptions of Chinese Influence^{cxviii}



France and the United States have coordinated in West Africa long before Chinese investment was a threat. They have done so militarily for decades. If Chinese investment is a threat, there is no reason to think that France and the United States would work together to address the issue. They have already begun to address China’s influence in Africa. Western countries, led by the United States and France, have released infrastructure plans to rival the Belt and Road, financial opportunities to rival Chinese loans and banking, and military coordination, seemingly to promote stability. But no matter how hard they try, China is popular in Africa. As noted in China

in Africa Project's podcast, African countries across the continent do not want a new Cold War. They do, however, welcome investment opportunities from China and especially from the United States. They also do not want to be used as geopolitical pawns in a global competition for economic and political hegemony. But a realist, global competition for economic and political hegemony may happen between the United States and China. If so, both countries will use allies to advance their strategic goals. In the case of West Africa, addressing China is in the interest of both the United States and France. France could likely offer network ties, as well as economic and military support, but could probably not make the United States any more popular, given France's low approval rating. Nonetheless, the United States itself appears to be popular and US infrastructure is welcomed.

Discussion

Africa is the fastest-growing continent, with the world's youngest population. Furthermore, Africa is rapidly industrializing and urbanizing. Conditions in Africa impact the world. The results of great-power competition not only impact the great powers involved, but also the states that serve as proxies for this competition for global and political hegemony. France was a great power but has fallen in importance in the 20th century. However, France has maintained network power, hard power, soft power, and other forms of influence on many of its former colonies, notably in West Africa. France uses its influence to fortify economic and business ties, strengthen political and military power, and bolster its image. As a global superpower, the United States does the same thing with its allies, connections, and partners. The United States has historically relied on French connections in Africa to pursue its goals, notably during the Cold War. As the United States and China begin to compete globally, the United States will continue to use its network, economic, and political power to counter Chinese influence. Africa is no stranger to global competition and will likely be engaged in the next global competition. Hopefully, this new US-China competition will be focused on growth and may provide better options for Africans. But Africa will not be alone in this competition, as South America and the rest of the developing world will likely be engaged. This competition would impact the lives of billions, and, if the competition becomes more than economic and political engagement, it can lead to war. Africans can benefit from US-China competition, but not as subjects in a competition, but as partners in development.

Conclusion

The United States and China are arguably the world's two global powers. As China's influence stretches beyond its traditional spheres of influence and into U.S. or other allies'

spheres of influence, the U.S. will react to counter this influence. France and the United States have coordinated vis-à-vis foreign policy and containment in Africa. France has been the traditional power in West Africa and continues to hold a degree of influence, although this influence is waning. In a US-China competition, France will work to counter growing Chinese investment, political influence, and presence in Africa. Using the case studies of Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal, this paper analyzed French power in the context of US-China influence. Although France holds power in both countries, China has become increasingly popular as France has become less popular. Therefore, while France may be able to influence some decisions in West Africa, notably Côte d'Ivoire, it appears that the United States and France need to work on solutions that beat those of the Chinese. These solutions include providing infrastructure investment, financing, and addressing employment, migration, agriculture, and development.

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