

LmunA 2022

# Research report

Forum: The Fourth General Assembly  
Issue: Creating Measures to Combat Neo-Colonialism in Africa  
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Lorentz Lyceum  
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## **Table of Contents**

<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Definitions of key terms</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>General overview</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Major parties involved</b>	<b>6</b>
The United Kingdom	7
France	7
The United States	7
China	7
<b>Timeline of Key Events</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Previous attempts to solve the issue</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Possible solutions</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Further reading</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>10</b>

## **Introduction**

Colonialism in Africa has led to the murder of hundreds of thousands, various wars, mass human rights violations, poverty, hunger, tension, poor economic development, scarcity of clean drinking water, and much more. The lasting effects of colonialism today are what we now refer to as neo-colonialism. Neo-colonialism has not only devastated much of the African continent as a result of oppressive occupying powers but has greatly influenced all aspects of life in countries that were former colonies.

Neo-colonialism is upheld in Africa through various methods, overtly or covertly, that tend to largely benefit the colonial power at the expense of nations that are often impoverished or less economically developed. The most common form of neo-colonialism, particularly in Africa, is economic imperialism, used by countries like China and France to hold countries back from development while exploiting their natural resources such as land or mineral resources.

## **Definitions of key terms**

### **Colonisation**

The practice of expanding a country's control over an area through domination of peoples or an area.

### **Neo-Colonialism**

The indirect control of less economically developed countries (LEDCs) by former colonial powers which is often to block growth or benefit the former colonial power.

### **Economic Imperialism**

When a nation has a large amount of economic power or influence over another state.

### **Indentured Servitude**

The act of employing a person under a work contract for a specified period of time. Generally speaking, indentured servitude is a lesser form of slavery that is consensual, but comes from a place of desperation from the indentured servant.

## LmunA 2022

**Apartheid**

Apartheid was the policy in South Africa of legal economic, political, and social discrimination and segregation of whites (the minority) and nonwhites (the majority).

**General overview****Scramble for Africa**

In 1885, the Berlin Conference was held in Germany with the purpose of regulating European powers' colonisation and trading in Africa. This conference started as a platform to prevent tensions on the European continent and ended with the Scramble for Africa. As a result of this conference, the seven most powerful European nations (Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Belgium, and Spain) began to expand their colonies further inland on the African continent. By 1914, the majority of Africa was occupied by European colonies.



At the Berlin conference, the principle for effective occupation was established in order to properly divide the continent without false claims to land. The principle defined 'effective occupation' as having treaties with local leaders, their flag flown in the occupied territory, and a governing body present with a police force to assist its governance and maintain its control over the territory.

**South Africa**

South Africa was discovered by Europeans in 1488 by a Portuguese mariner. Centuries later in 1652, the Dutch East India Company permanently established a settlement at the Cape in order to supply their ships. After trading with the Khoikhoi (indigenous South Africans) stopped, the Dutch East India Company began bringing Dutch farmers from the Kingdom of the Netherlands to establish farms. To work its farms, the company brought over 70,000 slaves from Dutch colonies in India, Indonesia, East Africa, Mauritius, and Madagascar. Importing slaves was the approach the Dutch took during their settlements at the Cape as they considered it impolite' to enslave local populations. Despite this, the Dutch East India Company eventually decided to make local Khoi populations indentured servants. The Dutch settlement in the Cape has had a great influence on the language and culture of South Africa, especially with interracial

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## LmunA 2022

marriages, bridging the divide between white settlers and racially diverse populations and influencing Afrikaans (one of the primary languages spoken in modern-day South Africa).

Other than its strategic location, the British originally had little interest in settling in the Cape Colony. The British eventually decided to purchase the colony from the Dutch in 1815 for 6 million pounds. Early on, the British made it their objective to erase the Dutch language and culture from the Cape Colony. They did this by outlawing the Dutch language and bringing thousands of British immigrants in 1820 to populate the colony and spread British culture. A turning point for colonialism in South Africa became the Anglo-Boer Wars. The Boer people are Dutch-speaking descendants of the original Dutch settlers. By 1877, various republics (the Orange Free State under British supervision, South African Republic, Natalia Republic, and British Cape Colony) were in control of what is now South Africa, and it was at this point that Britain forcefully annexed the South African Republic (also known as the Transvaal Boer Republic). This began the start of the First Anglo-Boer War which ended a couple of decades later but was succeeded by the Second Anglo-Boer War, which eventually led to the Union of South Africa in 1910.

Colonialism has had an undeniably lasting impact on South Africa. As was previously mentioned, one of the official languages of South Africa, Afrikaans, is a language that evolved from Dutch. Apartheid is another devastating, long-lasting effect of colonialism in South Africa. In 1948, the National Party, which governed South Africa, formed the segregationist policies that became the legal system for apartheid. The policies included forced eviction of black residents and extrajudicial killings of activists by the state. The policies of apartheid were deeply rooted in the Dutch and British colonial eras with a painful history of slavery and unequal economic development. Although the era of legal and official apartheid has ended, racism and discrimination are still heavily present in the country as a result of neo-colonialism.

### French West Africa

After the Scramble for Africa, the French made a move to colonise vast amounts of inland areas of Africa. The federation of French West Africa lasted from 1895 until 1960, consisting of eight countries; Ivory Coast, Dahomey (now Benin), French Sudan (now Mali), Guinea, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), French Togoland (now Togo), and Enclaves Forcados and Badjibo (located in modern Nigeria).

The French government in Paris appointed a Governor-General to govern the colony in Dakar, Senegal, who reported to and received orders from the Minister of Colonies in Paris. The Governor-General would communicate with Lieutenant Governors who were appointed for each colony that made up French West Africa.

Despite the emancipation of more than a million African slaves by the French and the abolition of slavery in French West Africa in the 1910s, Africans living under French colonial rule were referred to as “subjects” by the French government and were not afforded the same rights as French citizens. This meant a lack of property ownership rights, and rights to travel, dissent, or vote.

## LmunA 2022

The impacts of France's occupation of West Africa, much like the impacts of Dutch/British colonies in South Africa, have been large and mainly have affected the languages, economies, cultures, and lives of Africans living in former parts of the colony. French is still widely spoken in West African countries, as well as Arabic, Fula, and various other regional languages and dialects.

Unlike many other African colonies, the end of the French colonisation in West Africa was relatively peaceful with France agreeing to give nations their independence. France still keeps its influence in West Africa despite its president, Emmanuel Macron attempting to detach France from neo-colonialism and describing the institution of French colonisation of West Africa as a "crime against humanity". A hallmark of France's presence in the region is the existence of the African Financial Community (CFA), which employs a currency (the Franc) modelled on the French Franc which was in place prior to the adoption of the Euro.

## Major parties involved

### *The United Kingdom*

Much like the previous mention of France's ongoing involvement in West African neo-colonial ambitions, the United Kingdom still has a great influence on its former colonies and uses this influence to its advantage in the modern era.

### *France*

France was a major colonial power in Africa and has been upholding neo-colonial systems in West Africa including the CFA.

### *The United States*

Although the United States was not one of the colonial powers in Africa, it used its influence with foreign aid in the 1960s particularly when the nation's primary goal of its foreign policy was to stop the spread of Communism amid the Cold War. They generally supported colonial presences at this time.

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## LmunA 2022

### *China*

Despite not being a colonial power in Africa itself, China practises economic imperialism in Africa, using its long standing diplomatic relationships in the region and vast wealth to invest in African nations. China directly benefits from investment by gaining natural resources but also gains access to new markets, boosting its trade, and furthers its global influence. China not only invests in countries purchasing resources, but sends financial aid to LEDCs in order to win influence over their governments, that will benefit them materially later on. African governments tend to view Chinese aid and investment more favourably than Western aid and investment as China is often classified as a developing country despite its immense wealth and influence.

### **Timeline of Key Events**

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>1488</b>         | A Portuguese mariner becomes the first European to discover what is now South Africa   |
| <b>1652</b>         | The Dutch East India Company establishes its colony at the Cape (modern-day Cape Town) |
| <b>1815</b>         | The British purchased the Cape Colony from the Dutch for £ 6 million                   |
| <b>NOV 15, 1885</b> | The Berlin conference takes place in Germany   |
| <b>OCT 27, 1895</b> | The Federation of French Colonies (French West Africa) is established                  |
| <b>1905</b>         | Slavery in French West Africa is abolished   |
| <b>MAY 31, 1910</b> | The Union of South Africa is formed  |
| <b>DEC 26, 1945</b> | Introduction of the CFA Franc currency in West Africa                                  |
| <b>1948</b>         | The era of Apartheid begins in South Africa  |

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## LmunA 2022

- 1960** French West Africa collapses
- 1994** Apartheid in South Africa was ended officially due to the election of a black government led by activist Nelson Mandela
- DEC 21, 2019** Alassane Ouattara, President of the Ivory Coast, and Emmanuel Macron, the French President, announce a joint initiative to replace the CFA with the Eco in much of West Africa, reducing French influence and ties to the region.

### Previous attempts to solve the issue

Foreign aid to Africa has been the primary mechanism for countries seeking to support Africa and counteract the effects of neocolonialism. Many criticise the foreign aid tactics used by former colonial powers and other Western superpowers as a way to uphold their interests in the region and on the global stage (e.g. stop the spread of Communism during the Cold War with American support, thus propagating a pro-American view from governments and their citizens as well as establishing ties to the government).

### Possible solutions

Although foreign aid is a very viable solution to the effects of neo-colonialism, critics of ongoing foreign aid programmes argue that more just use of foreign aid funds should be to supply African countries with the machinery or physical infrastructure to support their food production capabilities, transportation networks, roads, and economies, among other things. It is also believed by many that foreign aid should be viewed as a short-term solution to ease the pain caused by neo-colonialism. The idea of this model is to support African countries' infrastructure temporarily, in order to allow them to develop their economies and industries autonomously and free themselves from dependency on foreign aid.

Easing the pain caused by neo-colonialism also means building confidence in the governments of African countries that have colonial pasts. It is important for delegates to consider measures to support democracy without military force or violent coup d'états. It is essential that advanced democracies diplomatically support African nations with developing democracies through

LmunA 2022

various means including funding for fair and free elections, support for administrating elections or supporting political systems that have multiple parties.

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LmunA 2022

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