Scientific Research Publishing

Open Journal of Political Science, 2022, 12, 670-684
https://www.scirp.org/journal/ojps
ISSN Online: 2164-0513
ISSN Print: 2164-0505

US-China Competition in Africa: The Strategic Ambiguity

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How to cite this paper: Lohalo, G. O., Lestari, Y., Shongo, T., Mushinda, B. N., Diur, N. K., Badila, J. M., Mutombo, S., Nonga, M. Y., Itaka, C. B., Bafita, C. M., & Mutshembe, F. L. (2022). US-China Competition in Africa: The Strategic Ambiguity. *Open Journal of Political Science, 12,* 670-684.
https://doi.org/10.4236/ojps.2022.124036

Received: September 3, 2022
Accepted: October 23, 2022
Published: October 26, 2022

Abstract

This paper briefly discusses the essence of the US-China competition in Africa and introduces a principial categorization to group their respective interests in Africa. It is about what US and China individually want or seek to achieve in Africa, through their own tools and policies towards the continent. For that, we thought, understanding these elements and dimensions will enable the students of International Relations in general and of great power politics, in particular, to better elucidate the post-cold war international system dynamics especially, in the developing world. The principial categorization, through the case of the DRC, helps understand why the US-China competition is overall moderate.

Keywords

US-China Competition, Africa, Strategic Ambiguity, Principial Categorization, DRC

1. Introduction

The post-cold war world is currently experiencing an amazing and combined phenomenon, the *great power shift* and increased *globalization*. Boundaries, frontiers, and distances are not taken into account anymore when capital, goods, and information flow across all corners of the globe. The aims, strategic interests, and outputs of great powers have greater influence over the processes and outcomes of the international system. Even though political, economists, strategist scientists are debating which countries will be the great powers of the 21st century, however, they're surely convinced about the *End of the Unipolar Moment.* Indeed, numerous scholars see China as threatening worldwide US leadership or increasingly becoming its peer competitor. This situation leads to believe a world camp divide. With the US Pivot to Asia strategy and the trade war against China, many are sighted the rise of a new cold war, especially in Africa. Africa would then be at the center of global stakes and challenges.

Due to the clear shift in worldwide economic wealth, led by China, there is a consensus today among scholars (Meirsheimer, 2014; Jacques, 2009; Allison, 2017; Mahbubani, 2020; Acharya, 2014) suggesting the structural transformation of the Post-cold war international system. China, which was at the bottom of the list in recent geopolitical rankings, return shook the unipolar moment and inaugurates the continuation of power politics governed by realpolitik laws. It is therefore worth recalling that if the American Gulf war launched the "*Unipolar moment*" (Charles, 1990), the American *Trade War* against China inaugurates today's "*quasi-bipolar moment*". China's political leadership and continuous economic growth contributed to mitigate adverse effects of 2008's global financial crises and the 2014 IMF World economic outlook projections of China's economic might in terms of purchasing power parity constitute key events of profound structural transformation in the post-cold war international system. More importantly, China's striving for achievement policy is equally a decisive factor inaugurating the Middle Kingdom's new behavior and making the US-China strategic competition very complex, uncertain, and global.

To understand the US-China competition implications in Africa, it's essential to master first the motives of their competing actions in Africa as a whole.

Therefore, this paper briefly discusses the essence of the US-China competition in Africa and introduces a principal categorization to group their respective interests in Africa. It is about what US and China individually want or seek to achieve in Africa, through their own tools and policies towards the continent. For that, we thought, understanding these elements and dimensions will enable the students of International Relations in general and of great powers politics in particular to better elucidate the post-cold war international system dynamics especially in the developing world. The principial categorization helps understand why the US-China competition is overall moderate.

2. Essence of US-China Competition in Africa

According available statistics and projections (EUISS, 2015), China's GDP will surpass that of the United States within a decade. As a result, the international system of the 21st century is amid geopolitical and geo-economic transformations. The United States sees the rise of China as an economic, military, political, and even ideological challenge. To contain this unprecedented development of China and to safeguard the American hegemony, President Obama, between late 2011 and early 2012, initiated the Asian policy as a component of the American foreign policy of the future; to make the United States play a leading role in Asia and beyond (Meirsheimer, 2014; Green, 2016). Upon taking office, Donald Trump labeled China a strategic competitor and decided to launch, in 2018, an economic and technological war against China (Mahbubani, 2020) banning US companies to sell equipment to Chinese firm Huawei, relaying the human rights situation in Xinjiang, restricting visa on Chinese students and scholars: thus inaugurating the US-China competition for global primacy. This action, in my opinion, puts an end to the post-Cold War *uni-polarity* and inaugurates the *quasi-bipolarity* feature of the current international system. Moreover, President Joe Biden has just launched, with the G7 allies, the Build Back Better World (B3W) program whose objective is to contain Chinese influence in all regions of the world, especially in Africa.

In Africa, the US-China competition responds to the imperatives defined by each great power to protect its vital interests. This competition is visible in Africa by the various initiatives or frameworks launched in Africa by the two great powers. Since 2000, the United States has launched and implemented key institutions and programs, particularly: The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the African command (AFRICOM), the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), and recently the B3W, to be present on the continent and compete with China. Some have the initial objective to support African economies and fight terrorism in Africa. In recent years, AFRICOM for instance has added a new objective which is to contain Chinese influence in Africa. The B3W, since the last G7 summit in England, has the role of proposing another alternative of economic, commercial, and industrial development, facing the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, for a green growth that fights against global warming, especially in Africa. In response, China relies on its historical friendship without political interference with African states, its strategic partnership each periodically evaluated during the FOCAC, its complex interdependence amplified by trade and investment for more than two decades that has completely made possible the economic and social momentum of the last two decades in Africa and the grandiose BRI that connects Africa in his vast project of infrastructure and overall opportunities never build in the known history of humanity.

In practice, available economic data confirm China's dominance over the United States in trade with the 55 countries on the African continent. In 2017, while trade reached a total of USD 58.65 billion, including USD 24 billion in imports from the United States to Africa and USD 34.6 billion in exports from Africa to the United States, trade with China reached a total of USD 206 157.3 billion, including USD 97 billion in Chinese imports compared to USD 60.3 billion in African exports. It can therefore be argued that China is, commercially speaking, three times more present than its American strategic rival on the African continent (Ega, 2021). Of course, China's trade data has almost doubled between 2017 and 2021 while US kept declining.

The U.S. and China are now in a fierce competition for dominance in the technology sector. The United States has long been at the forefront developing technologies (bio, nano, information) that are central to economic growth in the 21st century. However, China is investing heavily in research and development and is already on par with the U.S. in several key areas, particularly artificial intelligence, a sector in which it aspires to be the world leader by 2030. Some experts believe it is poised to achieve this goal, due to its colossal data resources, lack of digital privacy, and the fact that advances in machine learning require skilled engineers more than advanced scientists. Given the value of machine learning as a versatile technology used in many other fields, China's advances in artificial intelligence are of particular importance. To achieve this goal, Americans and Chinese are investing huge amount in Africa's plenty of mineral countries (**Table 1**).

While politic, economic and commercial interests make US-China interplay in Africa conflictual and competitive, US and China finds areas for cooperation in Africa. Recently, scholars have observed that China for instance needs the US in setting common rules and the later has urged Beijing to join western-led initiatives, for instance the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, Equator Principles, and the Congo basin partnership, in Africa (Wang, 2019). The United States and China are also partnership finds also common group on issues such as nuclear nonproliferation, peacekeeping, public health and climate change. This is the ambiguity unfolding US-China strategic competition in Africa and may contradict the realism core assumption.

3. Principial Categorization of US-China Interests in Africa

According to the realist school of thought, there are three scenarios in US-China competition. The first sees China fighting US hegemony, the second privileges cooperation between the two great powers, and the third, finally, presents a docile China seeking to maximize the benefits under American hegemony until it becomes powerful enough to form its own world order. Theoretically, the realist school of thought, in its diversity, presents us a real politic rule old as humanity: when a dominant power feels threatened by a rising power, the dominant power organizes itself to contain the rising power with the objective of annihilating or slowing down rising power momentum (Sparta vs. Antenna, Roma vs. Carthage

Table 1. US-China trade and investments in Africa.

	US	China	Year
Trade	USD 56 billion	USD 200 billion	2021
Investment	USD 49 billion	USD 50 billion	2021
Key countries	South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Mauritus, DRC	South Africa, DRC, Nigeria, Angola, Zambia, Ethiopia	2021
Key sectors	Mining	Mining, construction, manufacturing, digital services	2021

Source: China Africa Business Council 2021, Wang Lei (2020).

US vs. USSR) (Allison, 2017). The US is the current dominant power and China as a rising power dilute worldwide US influence.

Based on direct observation of each great powers action in Africa and in accordance with the realist school of thought, in its diversity, the US-China competition in Africa is dictated by the pursuit and protection of their respective national interests. Thus, the principal categorization (**Table 2**) helps regroup these interests into 3 categories: 1) Hard-core interests (political, economic, security); 2) Soft-core interests (humanitarian, religion and development); and, 3) Global common interests.

This categorization in no way attempts to escape the definitional volatility of the concept of national interest in international relations. However, it allows us to situate the actions of great powers in Africa and to answer why they are in competition in Africa, particularly in the DRC and further, why in certain countries of Africa they could have a totally different relationship. The concept national interest is controversial and loaded. It is a key feature of statecraft and the study of foreign policy. It is considered to be one of the most controversial, evocative and emotional objects of foreign policy analysis (Nye, 1999). National interests refer to the fundamental objectives and ultimate determinants that guide the decision-makers of a state in conducting foreign policy. It is a general conception that constitutes the most vital needs of a state, including self-preservation, independence, territorial integrity, military security, and economic well-being (Kabila, 2020).

Until recently, there was a consensus among elite in the US that Africa was not important to the United States (Keller, 2014; Woodward, 2011; Walle, 2009). As a result, it has been marginalized in U.S. foreign policy. Different administrations in the past have not paid enough attention to Africa. The underlying reasons for that are the general assumptions that Europe has a responsibility for Africa due to its colonial ties with Africa (Schraeder, 1995). Indeed, there is

Table 2. Principial categorization of US-China interests in Africa.

Categories	Content	Relevance
Hard-core interests	Politics, economics, security	Direct link for national security
Soft-core interests	Ideology, humanitary, religion, development	Indirect link to national security but helpful in yielding soft-power.
Global common interests	Actions to counter: Global warming, pandemics, immigrations.	To counter common danger. Link to strategic credibility.

Source: Georges Olemanu Lohalo, influence of the US-China competition on the foreign policy of the DRC, PhD thesis, School of Politic and International studies, CCNU, may 2022.

a debate in the US today among scholars and politicians about the relevance of Africa to the US. Intellectuals believe that Africa is of limited importance to US national interests, while politicians demonstrate and maintain, by sending signals from George W. Bush, that Africa is of paramount importance to US national interests.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the George W. Bush Administration established the Millennium Challenge Corporation and later the African Command to make US play a leading role in Africa. Later Barack Obama organized, in 2014, the first America-Africa Summit whose objective was to revive the presence of the US in the economic, peace and security fields in Africa. Donald Trump, despite his pessimistic views, launched the Africa Initiative, while Joe Biden has just launched the B3W with his G7 allies, whose objective is to involve and increase US influence in the continent's affairs.

However, China's interests in Africa cover various and diversified areas. In this regard, Sun writes: contrary to the conventional wisdom that China is only interested in Africa's minerals, China's interests in Africa include at least a range of four dimensions of national interest: political, economic, security and ideological. Regarding the last two decades China Africa engagement, there is any doubts about China have diverse interests on the Continent.

The United States and China pursue and protect substantial hard-core, soft-core and global common interests in Africa. This analytical perspective helps understand why in certain countries the competition is rude and in others they're cooperating or why in a same country US and China competing on strategic minerals while cooperating to counter Global warming negative effect or Covid-19.

4. Implications on the Democratic Republic of the Congo: The Strategic Minerals

The DRC is one of the most important African countries for US and China. It is a country located in the *Afrique du Milieu,* surrounded by 9 countries and Atlantic Ocean; always superlatively praised for its soil and subsoil full of mineral, oil, fishery, environmental and human resources. Following its eventful history, from slavery trade to present day, the DRC has a crying need for basic infrastructure to not only integrate her but also promote trade and therefore economic growth inside the country and the whole continent. A country always wanted by great powers. If yesterday were robust men of Kongo kingdom that had to be brought across Atlantic to Americas, rubber that had to be extracted for manufacture of tires, Uranium of 1945 to annihilate Japan, cobalt in 1960 to have a strategic advantage over Soviet Union, today still the DRC is worth for its forests to mitigate global warming (Kabila, 2020); minerals for green energy (Apoli, 2013), an always expanding internal market, etc. China, which discovered the Congo in late 19th century, is well aware of its strategic relevance in the *Afrique du Milieu*.

The U.S. support of the *Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Liberation* was the result of two interrelated realities: to promote democracy in Zaire by removing the cumbersome old dictator Mobutu, and to access strategic minerals for their relevance role in the American economy and military industry. For U.S. officials, the Western economy is linked to that of the Congo (and its neighbors). By supporting a pro-American government in the Congo in 1997, the U.S. wanted to run Gécamines, the main mining company of the DRC. On this subject, Mpwate recalls (Mpwate, 2010) that Mze Kabila refused to privatize Gécamines; even though, the author points out, that before coming to power, he agreed to transfer Gécamines to the American Mineral Fields Incorporated (AMFI), the main financier of the AFDL rebellion. The US goal was clearly to access the Congolese copper and cobalt. It is necessary to register the American will to protect the supplies of strategic minerals not only for itself but also for the industrial life of all NATO countries. After the assassination of Mze Kabila, the majority of the American companies in the Congolese mining sectors closed for two main reasons: the refusal of Mze Kabila to respect the agreements signed with these companies before he came to power on the one hand and the violence caused by the ramifications of this war in the Congolese Southeast on the other. Today, access interest, not investment, is the most important characteristic of American involvement in Congolese mining.

However, since mid-1990s, the Chinese were keenly interested in investing in the then Zaire. The political instability of those years led to withdrawal of investors and partners, including Chinese. The return was possible after victory of the AFDL regime and the launch of FOCAC-Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. Over return, Chinese firstly invested in artisanal mines in Katanga province. From 2007, the signing of the memorandum of understanding between the Congolese government and some Chinese public companies demonstrated China's ambition to access the heart of Congolese copper and cobalt mines. The agreement formalized by the *Convention de collaboration* 2008 has been and continues to be interpreted in various ways both internally (in the Congo) and globally. It should be added that this *Chinese contract*, as it was labeled, is one of the key events in the *China's strategic move in Africa*. Since China's entry in the Congolese minerals, it dominates foreign investments and trade sectors with the DRC.

The DRC is not a great power. However, it has almost all critical resources indispensable for great powers. This explains why it was created during a conference of great powers (Berlin conference). Since its creation and decomposition as a geopolitical entity by western powers, the DRC has always been at the center of world and conveyed in all great power competitions (UK-Germany, US-USSR, US-France, US-China). Let analyze Sicomines debate to elucidate the extent of US-China competition in the DRC for strategic minerals.

A lesson for the future: The United States opposed the Sicomines deal.

The Sicomines Agreement is the great shift on Sino-Congolese Relations. It's one of the DRC-China's widely, if not the unique, discussed subject. To capture the real concept above let start from the beginning: why did DRC's government initiated the deal? Why did Chinese accept?

After 16 years of struggle for democracy in the DRC, the 2006 general elections provided an opportunity to put an end to the years of interminable wars, all the horrors that these wars caused, and, most importantly, to rebuild a country that had been destroyed in all areas. Until the 1990s, China-Congo cooperation was relatively marked by the general aspects of relations between officials, even though certain achievements testify to the anchoring of this relationship: the construction of stadiums, hospitals, public buildings, granting of scholarships, financing and sending of troops to the UN peacekeeping operation in the DRC, sending medical teams, etc (Actualite, 2018). Moreover, the effective holding of elections followed by the installation of the institutions of the Republic has made it possible to re-launch China-Congo cooperation not only at the level of officials but especially in the promotion of exchanges between populations.

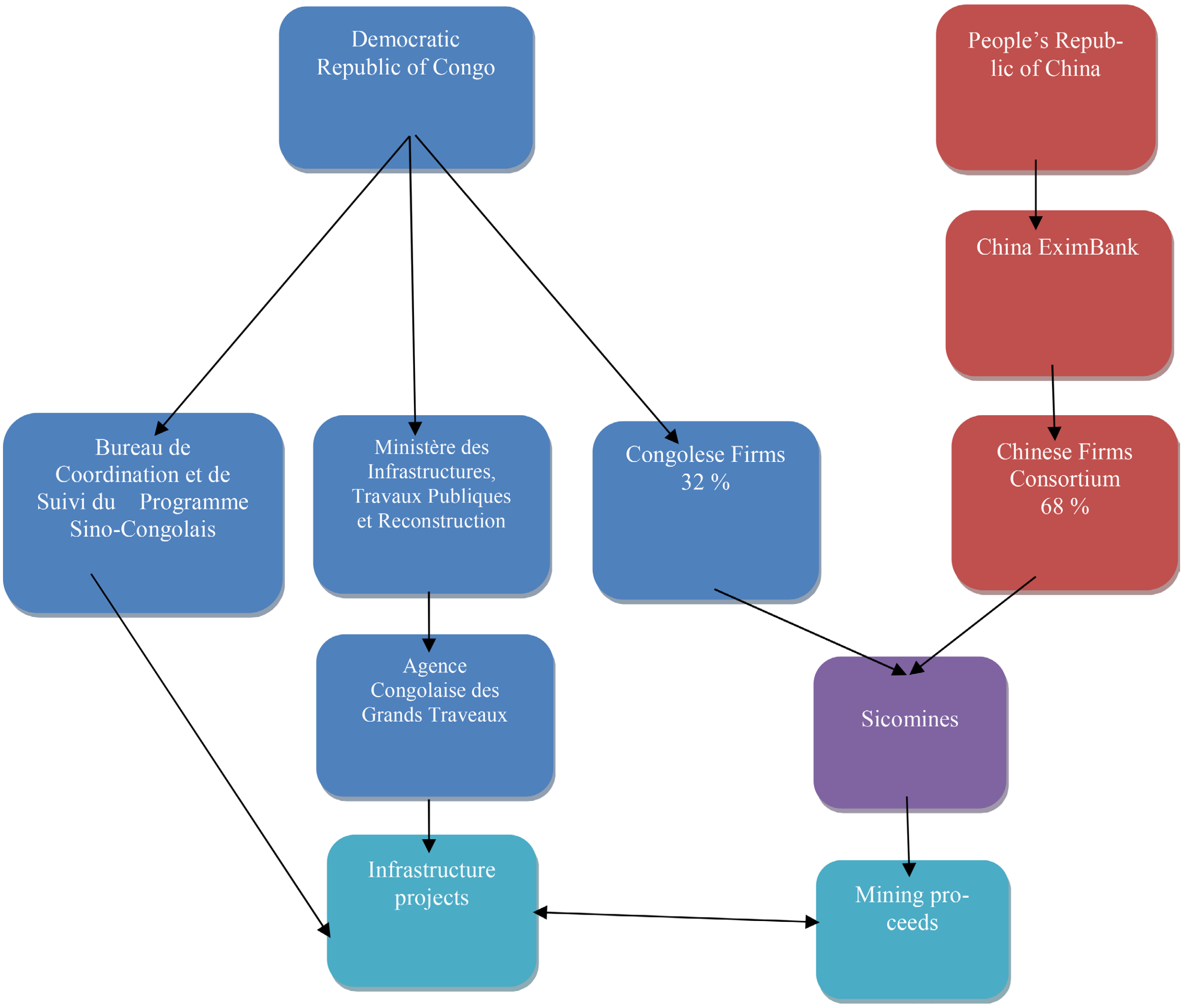
From this point of view, the 2008 agreement on infrastructure and minerals signed between the two countries reflects both the Congolese desire to rebuild the country torn apart by years of war and also reflects the Chinese ambition to engage the international community in general and Africa in particular as a key player. The objective was to access the immense Congolese mineral resources exactly as was the case for Angolan oil. Like all countries, China supports the need for access to energy or mineral sources for its companies, especially CREC in the DRC, which is a Chinese state-owned company. It was a complementarity in that the Middle Kingdom needed these resources to support its industrial development as much as the Congo needed the financing to rebuild the country. From the beginning, this exceptional agreement in the Congolese context created enough confusion as to its nature. Observers wanted to know if it was an aid agreement, a trade agreement, an investment agreement, or all three. Indeed, it's known that China adopts several frameworks to facilitate its economic activities with foreign countries (Brautigan 2010). The Sicomines agreement is both development assistance and an investment agreement and has implications for increasing trade relations between the two countries, as all the institutions involved are official (Olemanu, 2021). The agreement scrupulously respects the principles and nomenclature of the OECD in this matter.

The Congo's motivation to initiate and sign the Sicomines agreement lays on the country's context of the time and Joseph Kabila's political interests as first elected President. He took power right after his father's assassination. With 29 years old, Joseph Kabila became the world's youngest head of state (Landry, 2017). To strengthen the ideological basis of power, Joseph Kabila was sent by his father to Beijing to study at the National Defense University of the People's Liberation Army. In addition, he improved his performance in military command and leadership, especially in the search for peace and the consolidation of his power in general, especially during the second Congo war and when he took power. After his election in 2006 as President of the Republic and in order to rebuild the country, Kabila initiated Les Cinq Chantiers. This gigantic program included the following sectors: infrastructure, jobs, education, water and electricity, and health. To do this, huge funds were needed, which the Congo did not have (Olemanu, 2021).

As a country at war or in a post-conflict situation, the Congo of 2001-2008 was practically piloted and co-managed by the international community. There was a range of bilateral and multilateral actors and NGOs of all kinds to curb or alleviate violence and pain of all kinds in the country. Rightly so, analyzing the situation at the time, Elikya Mbokolo (a renowned Congolese historian) concluded that without NGOs and the churches, the Congo would no longer hold together as a country. However, the funding brought to the country by all these actors, including the United Nations, was not compatible with the national reconstruction that the Congolese government planned under the 5 *chantiers de la République* program. In addition to this difficulty related to the nature of the financing provided by the partners at the time, the Congo had less chance of getting into debt, especially with traditional partners, because the country had a public debt of more than 13 billion dollars inherited from Mubutism. In addition, the Congo was not able to complete the IMF review in 2006, which consisted of reducing poverty due to the non-execution of certain measures and the failure to comply with instructions regarding budgetary spending. The IMF Executive Board Approves US$195.5 Million Disbursement to the Democratic Republic of the Congo Under the Exogenous Shocks Facility. Despite the pressing need felt by the authorities to carry out the five projects, no State or technical and financial partner of the DRC was ready to finance them. Faced with the evidence, the decision-makers adopted CREC's proposal to exploit the Congolese mines, which led to the signing of the agreement of the century. As a logical consequence, the DRC and CREC signed a memorandum of understanding in 2007 for mining and infrastructure construction valued at US$9 billion. This protocol actually inaugurated the mega-agreement that will be signed in 2008 between the same partners, dividing the participations as follows: 68% for the Chinese SOEs and 32% for the Congolese SOEs within a joint venture called Sicomines. Concretely, the DRC had put the licenses of exploitation of copper and cobalt located in the current province of Lualaba, while the Chinese party was to provide the DRC with financing of infrastructure projects.

To consolidate and clarify all aspects of the deal, the *Convention de Collaboration* was signed in 2008 between the Chinese SOEs and Congolese entities. The Chinese side committed to disburse all the tranches for the financing of infrastructure in addition to the loan for the development of mines (Mines, 2008). The contractor of each project would be the beneficiary. In return, the DRC guaranteed the mining loan, agreed that the Congolese parliament would pass a law guaranteeing the conditions within 12 months of the Chinese government doing the same, and also agreed that the feasibility studies for the project would guarantee the Chinese side a 19% internal rate of return.

Misunderstandings began here. Not unexpected, countries in the Western community, International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and non-governmental



Sources: Georges Olemanu Lohalo: The cooperation between China and DRC in Mining and Infrastructure sectors, China Foreign Affairs University, MA Thesis, 2019.

Sicomines management structure.

organizations have made many claims telling the agreement was unequal. The main concern was the structure of the deal, which the International Monetary Fund said would impose unsustainable debt on the DRC (Jansson, 2011). The IMF had made it clear that granting such a large loan would make the DRC's debt situation unsustainable. So the issue for the DRC was either to abandon the Sino-Congolese agreement and continue to follow the debt completion point program (which the government of the time had not contracted but those of the Mobutu regime) or to simply ignore the enlightening recommendations of the IMF, which unfortunately had not been able to pull the Congo (then Zaire) out of its economic slump despite the structural adjustment programs. Some experts had questioned the interest rate set by the agreement, particularly Global Witness stated, the guaranteed nature of the internal rate of return set by the agreement is commercially highly unusual in that it removes the investment risk of the agreement from the Chinese parties and instead makes it the responsibility of the Congolese government (Global Witness, 2011). The problem at this level if not for the false propaganda it should be an astonishing reading of the collaboration agreement that creates and presents Sicomines as a joint venture from which all bills would be paid by the profits co-produced (**Table 3**).

In addition, the interventions of traditional partners and Bretton Woods institutions led to the modification of the collaboration agreement. The resulting rider reduces the infrastructure credit to $3 billion instead of the $6 billion initially planned. It pruned the Congolese government's guarantee on the mining credit. Although these amendments were made to the agreement, nothing has changed in terms of the percentage of participation. However, the Chinese retain their 68 percent, while the Congolese retain their 32 percent (Congo, 2009) (**Table 4**).

The above story happened between 2007 and 2009. Someone may object that all this happened before the trade war and therefore US-China competition was not yet on the agenda. The reality is that today Washington is supporting the renegotiation or outright cancellation of these contracts (Chris & Jim, 2021). The Congolese President's plans to revise all the contracts the DRC has signed with China were largely inspired by the United States (Africa, 2021). The very active US Ambassador welcomed the idea of contract renegotiation. After the 2018 DRC's elections, Kikaya bin Karubi (Kikaya, 2020), former diplomatic advisor and close friend of Joseph Kabila confirmed the fact declaring that Sicomines agreement has created countless misunderstandings between the former regime and the Western community, mainly the USA. Obviously, it's clear as Joseph Kabila was presented as China's ally (since Sicomines deal) current Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi is well under US protection and explains all

Table 3. Sicomines agreement and amendments.

	Protocole d'Accord (2007)	Convention de Collaboration (2008)	Avenant (2009)
Infrastructure Loan	Usd 6.565 B	Not Mentioned	Usd 3.0 B
Terms	Not Mentioned	6-Month LIBOR + 1%	6-Month LIBOR + 1%
Mining Loan	Not Mentioned	Not Mentioned	Not Mentioned
Terms	Not Mentioned	70%:6.1% 30%:0% (Shareholder loan)	70%:6.1% 30%:0% (Shareholder loan)
Bonus	Not Mentioned	Usd 350 M	Usd 350 M
Reserves	Cu: 8.05 M Tons Co: 202 K Tons Au: 372 Tons	Cu: 10.6 M Tons Co: 627 K Tons	Cu: 10.6 M Tons Co: 627 K Tons

Sources: Protocole d'accord 2007, Convention de collaboration 2008, Avenant 2009, Georges Olemanu Lohalo: The cooperation between China and DRC in Mining and Infrastructure sectors, China Foreign Affairs University, MA Thesis, 2019.

Table 4. Sicomines ownership structure.

Chinese Enterprises	Total Share Ownership
China Railway Group Ltd.	27.0
China Railway Resources Development Ltd.	6.0
Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt Company Ltd.	5.0
Sinohydro Corporation Ltd.	26.0
Sinohydro harbor Company Ltd.	4.0
Congolese Enterprises	**Total Share ownership**
General des carrières et des Mines Sarl (Gecamines)	20.0
Societe Immobiliere du Congo SPRL (Simco)	12.0

Sources: The Avenant, 2009; Georges Olemanu Lohalo: The cooperation between China and DRC in Mining and Infrastructure sectors, China Foreign Affairs University, MA Thesis, 2019.

why he doesn't yet visit China despite Xi Jinping multiples invitations (Olemanu, 2019).

Furthermore, former Congolese President Joseph Kabila worried to Jeffrey Gettleman a New York Times reporter about the Western community's opposition to the Chinese contract in these terms: "*I don't understand the resistance we've encountered. What is the Chinese deal? We said we had five priorities: infrastructure; health; education; water and electricity; and housing. Now, how do we deal with these priorities? We need money, a lot of money. Not a* 100 *million U.S. dollars from the World Bank or* 300 *from the IMF. No, a lot of money, and especially that we're still servicing a debt of close to* 12 *billion dollars, and it's* 50 *to* 60 *million U.S. dollars per month, which is huge. You give me* 50 *million dollars each month for the social sector and we move forward. Anyway, that's another chapter. But we said: so, we have these priorities, and we talked to everybody. Americans, do you have the money? No, not for now. The European Union, do you have three or four billion for these priorities? No, we have our own priorities. Then we said: why not talk to other people, the Chinese? So we said, do you have the money? And they said, well, we can discuss. So we discussed. Well, I don't understand why they said don't sign these deals. Probably because a lot of ignorance, ignorance of how difficult our situation is. Of course, when you sit in Washington or you sit in New York, you believe the whole world is like Washington or New York. But people are suffering. What revolted me was the fact that there was resistance to this agreement and there was no counter proposal*" (Jeffrey, 2009).

5. Conclusion

The post-cold war world is currently experiencing an amazing and combined phenomenon, the great power shift and increased globalization. Boundaries, frontiers, and distances are not taken into account anymore when capital, goods, and information flow across all corners of the globe. The aims, strategic interests, and outputs of great powers have greater influence over the processes and outcomes of the international system. Even though political, economists, strategist scientists are debating which countries will be the great powers of the 21st century, however, they're surely convinced about the End of the Unipolar Moment. Indeed, numerous scholars see China as threatening worldwide US leadership or increasingly becoming its peer competitor. This situation leads to believe a world camp divide. With the US Pivot to Asia strategy and the trade war against China, many are sighted the rise of a new cold war, especially in Africa. Africa would then be at the center of global stakes and challenges.

To understand the US-China competition implications in Africa, it's essential to master first the motives of their competing actions in Africa as a whole. Therefore, this paper discussed the essence of the US-China competition in Africa and introduced a principial categorization to group their respective interests in Africa. It is about what US and China individually want or seek to achieve in Africa, through their own tools and policies towards the continent. At the end, the paper discussed the implications on the DRC by highlighting the Sicomines debate. The principial categorization helped understand why the US-China competition is overall moderate because based on conflictual and convergent interests. If the two great powers compete on critical minerals, they're cooperating on convergent resources to mitigate global warming and other common dangers.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thanks the anonymous reviewers, Professor Dai Yi of Central China Normal University, Professor Jean Omeonga of Kinshasa University and the editorial team of the *Open Journal of Political Science* for their valuable and constructive comments.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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