NEOCOLONIALISM AND THE WEAKENING OF AFRICAN DEMOCRACY

By

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Abstract

The legacy of colonialism gave rise to neocolonialism, which continues to disproportionately affect developing countries. Neocolonialism is simply a different form of colonialism. It is the former colonial powers that maintain control over former colonies. This article adopted doctrinal research methodology to examine the concept of neocolonialism, weakening, Africa, and democracy. Also discussed neocolonial factors, their negative and positive effects on African democracy, and how to strengthen democratic governance in Africa and found that neocolonialism has positive and negative effects on African democracy. Firstly, the neocolonial powers backed by foreign aid have supported undemocratic and authoritarian regimes characterised by corruption, undemocratic rule, weak institutions, inadequate infrastructure, and economic exploitation, all of which contribute to Africa's inequality and poverty. The poor have limited opportunities to actively participate in their countries' political processes because people who cannot meet their basic needs are less likely to do so. All of this reduces participation in civil society and democratic institutions in many African countries. Though not limited to, but significantly, neocolonialism has numerous negative effects on the democratic process, including the undermining of democratic institutions and processes, which continue to weaken democracy in Africa. Africa's democracy is weakened, making it vulnerable to external influence and exploitation. For example, multinational corporations frequently wield significant power and influence to advance their interests at the expense of their host countries, such as Africa. In contrast, neocolonialism through foreign aid and investment has contributed to improving infrastructure and education in some African countries. It also spread Western democratic ideals, which led to a high demand for democracy in Africa. This is reflected in the growing number of democratic elections and increased participation from civil society organisations. Furthermore, it helps to resolve conflicts and promotes stability in some African countries. Consequently, this article recommended promoting domestic industries and limiting foreign investment to reduce the influence of multinational corporations in African countries; encouraging economic diversification by investing in manufacturing, agriculture, and other sectors; providing education and training to develop a workforce with the required skills; strengthening judicial independence and the rule of law to combat corruption and increase accountability; and promoting press freedom and free expression to ensure government accountability and transparency; promote cooperation and development by deepening regional integration.

Keywords: *Neocolonialism, Weakening, Africa, and Democracy*

1.0 Introduction

Neocolonialism has existed on the African continent for centuries. The Scramble for Africa was the first major instance of neocolonialism in Africa, taking place in the nineteenth century. During this time, European powers rushed to claim African territories, frequently disregarding the wishes of the local populations. As a result, many African countries gained independence only to fall under the control of foreign powers in a new form. Neocolonialism remained a problem in Africa throughout the twentieth

century. For example, many African countries relied on World Bank and International Monetary Fund loans.[1]

The late twentieth century saw a renewed push for democracy in Africa driven by international pressure and internal democratic struggles. However, many African countries continue to face significant obstacles in establishing and maintaining a true democracy. These include poverty, corruption, ethnic conflict, and a lack of democratic experience. So, many African countries remain a long way from achieving a stable and just society. Despite these obstacles, there have been some success stories. Countries such as Ghana and Botswana, for example, have made significant strides towards establishing democratic institutions.[2]

In Africa, political and economic neocolonialism coexisted. For example, Western countries backed the dictators who ruled over many African countries. These autocrats frequently oppressed their people to maintain power through Western aid. These despots were occasionally held accountable for violating human rights. The Idi Amin regime in Uganda is the most notorious example of this. Western nations helped the cruel dictator Idi Amin take control of his country. He violated many human rights while in power and caused the country's economic collapse.[3]

Numerous detrimental effects of neocolonialism have been felt by African democracy. A grave consequence is the deterioration of regional democratic structures and procedures. Authoritarian governments in Africa, which are usually corrupt and anti-democratic, are regularly supported by neo-colonial powers. In many African nations, this has led to the deterioration of democratic institutions and civil society. Neocolonialism has also often led to economic exploitation, which has exacerbated inequality and poverty. Because people are less likely to engage in politics if they are unable to meet their basic needs, this has weakened democracy in Africa.[4]

Several factors contribute to neocolonialism's impact on African democracy. One factor is the legacy of colonialism. Colonialism has left many African countries with weak institutions and inadequate infrastructure. This makes them vulnerable to external influences and exploitation. Another factor is the presence of multinational corporations in Africa. These corporations frequently wield considerable power and influence, which they can use to advance their interests, often at the expense of the African

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1   G N Baru, Africa's Foreign Policy After the Cold War: From Cold War Clientelism to Neocolonial Dependency? In G N Baru, *Foreign Policy in Africa: The Basic Concepts* (Grove Press Limited 2006) 88-105.

2   G N Baru, Africa's Foreign Policy After the Cold War: From Cold War Clientelism to Neocolonial Dependency? In G N Baru, *Foreign Policy in Africa: The Basic Concepts* (Grove Press Limited 2006) 88-105.

3   L Gould, Neocolonialism: A Review of Historical Trends and Research in African Development [2013] (4) (2) *Journal of International and Global Studies*; 99-114.

4   W Rodney, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa (Bogle-l Ouerture Publications 1972) 20-35.

people. Furthermore, neocolonialism is frequently supported by foreign aid, which has the potential to strengthen undemocratic regimes.[5]

2.0 Conceptual Framework

For a proper comprehension of this article, a few principal concepts are examined. They are:

a. Neocolonialism

Neocolonialism is a variant of colonialism. It is how former colonial powers maintain control over former colonies, usually through economic, political, or cultural means. Neo-colonialism differs from traditional colonialism in that it does not include direct political control over a country. Rather, it uses more subtle and indirect methods to exert control. Neo-colonialism is frequently regarded as a form of economic imperialism, in which countries are forced to rely on former colonial powers for economic development. Neo-colonialism is the continued political, economic, and cultural influence that former colonial powers wield over former colonies, even after they have formally gained independence.[6]

The exploitation of a nation's labour and resources for the gain of the former colonising power is a common feature of neo-colonialism. Furthermore, by enabling former colonial powers to meddle in domestic affairs, neocolonialism has the potential to erode democracy in the former colony. In Africa, neocolonialism has had a profound effect.[7]

b. Democracy

Democracy is a form of government in which the people determine how their country is to be run. In a democracy, people elect representatives who act on their behalf. Democracies can take many forms, but they all adhere to the same fundamental ideas. These include the separation of powers, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights. The term "democracy" comes from the Greek words "demos," which means "people," and "kratos," which means "power." In a democracy, the people have the power to choose their preferred form of government.[8]

c. African Democracy

The phrase "African democracy" refers to democratic systems found in African countries. Democracy is still a relatively new concept and has faced many challenges in many African countries. African democracies are often characterised by their institutional fragility and unpredictability. In addition, they might have to cope with problems like poverty, corruption, and ethnic conflict. Despite these challenges, many African countries have made progress towards establishing stable democracies. Examples of countries displaying developing democracies are Botswana, South Africa, and Ghana. Free and fair elections are becoming the norm as these countries' democratic institutions continue to strengthen.

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6   L Gould, Neocolonialism: A Review of Historical Trends and Research in African Development [2013] (4) (2) *Journal of International and Global Studies*; 99-114.
7   I R Rotberg, When *States Fail: Causes and Consequences* (Princeton University Press)20-25.
8   (n 7).

3.0 Factors Responsible for Neocolonialism and Weakening of African Democracy

Lack of media freedom in many African countries is one of the factors that contribute to neocolonialism and its consequences for African democracy. Government control over the media is common in many countries, limiting citizens' access to information and their ability to make informed decisions.

People may find it more difficult to demand democracy and hold governments accountable as a result. Neocolonialism can also cause brain drain, as talented and educated people frequently leave Africa in search of better opportunities elsewhere. This makes it difficult for African countries to establish strong democracies.[9]

African democracies are rifted with neocolonialist clues. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) plays an important role in many African countries. The IMF frequently imposes stringent requirements on loans to African nations, such as the need to privatise state-owned businesses and reduce social service spending. This can have a devastating impact on ordinary people's lives. Another example is the United States' impact on many African countries. The United States frequently uses its economic and military power to put pressure on African countries to support its interests. This could be harmful to democracy because it limits the autonomy of African nations.[10] African democracies have many traces of neocolonialism. The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) role in many African countries is one example. The IMF frequently imposes onerous conditions on loans to African countries, such as the need to reduce social service spending and privatise state-owned enterprises. In the lives of ordinary people, this could have disastrous consequences. Another example is America's influence in many African countries. The United States frequently uses its economic and military power to coerce African nations into supporting its objectives. Given that it limits African nations' autonomy, this may be detrimental to democracy.

International aid organisations' involvement in Africa is often contentious. Many organisations provide much-needed assistance to African nations. They may also be viewed as a form of neocolonialism because they frequently wield a great deal of power and influence over how funds are distributed. They may also be perceived as forcing Western ideals on African nations. The USAID situation in Kenya is one example of this. During the 1980s and 1990s, USAID put pressure on Kenya's government to pass legislation that benefited the USA. This sparked numerous demonstrations and a backlash against the USA.[11]

Furthermore, religious organisations' influence is a form of neocolonialism in African democracies. Religious organisations frequently wield significant social power in many deeply religious African countries. Nonetheless, religious institutions have used their power to force their beliefs on others. The Family, an evangelical group based in the USA, has been accused of attempting to persuade African governments to pass laws discriminating against homosexuality. Furthermore, they have been charged

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9   K Nkrumah, *Neocolonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (International Publication Co. Ltd 1965) 20-45.
10   (n9).
11   (n9).

with attempting to influence elections in Kenya and Uganda. This has the potential to cause social unrest and undermine democratic values.[12]

Following the foregoing, numerous factors have contributed to neocolonialism in the African political space. One of the most significant factors is the legacy of colonialism. Many African countries achieved independence from colonial powers in the mid-twentieth century. However, they were frequently left with ineffective and unstable governments that have made them vulnerable to the external influence of former colonial powers. Another factor is the heavy reliance of African countries on aid from developed countries. This gives these countries significant power and influence in Africa.[13]

The first examines how the Cold War affected Africa and how the USA and the Soviet Union fought over African influence resulting in several proxy conflicts, including the civil wars in Mozambique and Angola. The involvement of one or both superpowers in these conflicts contributed to the instability of African countries. Furthermore, it facilitated the spread of weapons throughout Africa making conflicts occur more frequently and are more difficult to resolve. As a result, foreign powers now easily interfere in African affairs.[14]

Second, the globalised economy has contributed to the growth of neocolonialism in Africa. Globalisation has culminated in increased investment and trade in Africa. However, it has resulted in increased economic instability and inequality. For example, the export of raw materials such as minerals and oil provide a significant source of income for many African countries which is vulnerable to changes in global prices. Furthermore, because foreign investment is frequently focused on large-scale projects that fail to improve living standards or create jobs, it rarely benefits the local population. Finally, globalisation has increased the prevalence of neoliberal economic policies in Africa.[15]

Third, after Angola gained independence from Portugal in 1975, the Angolan Civil War broke out. The conflict pitted the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) supported by the USA and South Africa, against the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) supported by the Soviet Union and Cuba. Following twenty-seven years of fighting, the war was declared over in 2002. Following Mozambique's independence from Portugal in 1977, the Mozambican Civil War commenced.[16]

Fourthly, there was a Mozambican Civil War between the Mozambican Liberation Front (FRELIMO) and Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO). The FRELIMO was backed by Cuba and the Soviet Union and the RENAMO was backed by Rhodesia and South Africa. 1992 saw the end of the war, which had lasted 16 years. The countries engaged in both conflicts suffered greatly as a result. In Angola, four million people were forced to flee their homes and over half a million died. In

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[12]   J Lliffe, Africa: The Modern History of a Continent (Cambridge University Press 1995) 30-35.
[13]   (n 12).
[14]   (n 12).
[15]   (n 12).
[16]   F Cooper, *Africa Since 1946: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge University Press 2013) 20-30.

Mozambique, more than a million people lost their lives and more than five million were displaced. The wars destroyed the economies of both countries and caused massive damage to infrastructure.[17]

As neocolonialism spread throughout African democracies, Western donors and aid organisations gained influence. The conditions that these organisations frequently imposed on aid prevented African governments from functioning independently. Furthermore, many African nations began to rely on aid to fund their budgets, leaving them vulnerable to external influence. Furthermore, the effect was the rise of "rentier states," relying on natural resource revenue rather than profitable economic activity leading to corruption and stagnation.[18]

Another neocolonial effect on African democracy is the expansion of multinational corporations. These companies frequently exploit labour and natural resources without benefiting the host communities leading to poverty and environmental damage. Furthermore, foreign companies frequently advocate for laws that benefit their interests rather than Africans. Finally, Africa is experiencing a brain drain as a result of neocolonialism. A large number of educated, intelligent, skilled and talented Africans have emigrated from the continent in search of better opportunities. As a result, skilled workers and slow economic growth are scarce.[19]

a.   The Cold War

The Cold War had an enormous effect on Africa's political development. Proxy wars were frequently used in the US-Soviet rivalry for African influence. In Angola, for example, the US supported UNITA and the Soviet Union supported the MPLA. Many African countries suffered political and economic setbacks as a result of these wars, which were frequently extremely destructive. They also contributed to African nations' lack of confidence and the belief that the continent was merely a Cold War pawn.[20]

b.   Western Donors

Aid from Western donors is now a significant source of income for many African countries. Because of this reliance, Western donors now wield significant influence over African institutions and policies. Western donors, for example, frequently require political or economic reforms in exchange for aid. This could have a significant impact on how African countries develop their political and economic structures. Furthermore, Western donors' priorities frequently differ from those of African nations, impeding progress on issues that are important to Africans. Many African countries rely heavily on foreign aid. Aid to Africa is frequently contingent on economic reforms that benefit Western nations more than the people living in those countries. Also, there are frequently limitations on how this assistance can be used, among other factors. Corruption and a lack of accountability could result from this. Furthermore, many African countries owe significant sums to Western countries and organisations, including the World Bank and the IMF.[21]

c.   Colonialism

Numerous negative consequences of colonialism remain in African countries. First, colonialism left many African nations with weak institutions. This is the result of colonial powers' frequent failure to

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18   (n 16).
19   P Manning, Africa's Development in Historical Perspective (Cambridge University Press 2013) 40-55.
20   (n 19).
21   (n 19).

invest in the development of strong institutions in favour of resource extraction from Africa. Second, colonialism exacerbated Africa's ethnic and tribal divisions. This is because colonial powers frequently pitted different groups against one another, leaving a trail of distrust and animosity. Last but not least, colonialism caused many Africans to lose faith in their government. This is due to colonial powers frequently oppressing their subjects and acting against their best interests.[22]

d.   The Role of African Elites

A small group of people have dominated the majority of wealth and power in many African countries. As a result, a small group of people now benefit from the system at the expense of the majority of the population. The importance of natural resources is another consideration. Natural resources are abundant in many African countries, but they have frequently proven to be a burden rather than a benefit. This is because they have not always benefited the nation's citizens, but rather caused conflict and corruption.[23]

e.   The Role of External Actors

The role of external actors in the weakening of democracy in Africa includes other countries and organisations in addition to Western donors. China, for example, has made significant investments in Africa, resulting in both positive and negative outcomes. Positively, Chinese investment has helped to promote development and economic growth. In contrast, Chinese businesses have been chastised for allegedly violating environmental and human rights principles. Furthermore, some African countries have suffered as a result of the actions of terrorist groups such as Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab.[24]

f.   The Role of Multinational Corporations

Multinational corporations and their businesses are widely distributed across many African countries, and they operate with little oversight or regulation. This has led to a variety of issues, including tax evasion, worker exploitation, and environmental degradation. In addition, these corporations can effectively dictate African nations' economic policies and frequently have a significant impact on government policies. The importance of foreign direct investment (FDI) is the third economic factor. Foreign direct investment can have both positive and negative effects on African countries. Positively, it may provide these countries with much-needed funding and technology.[25]

g.   Lack of Democracy and Good Governance

Many Africans feel disconnected from the political process due to the long history of autocratic rule in many of these countries. People are now having difficulty influencing national policy and have lost faith in the government as a result. Furthermore, corruption is a major issue in many African nations. As a

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[22]   (n 20).
[23]   M Mamdani, Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism (Princeton University Press 1966) 30-50.
[24]   (n 23).
[25]   (n 23).

result, many people now lack access to basic services such as healthcare and education, while a small number of people control a sizable portion of the country's wealth.[26]

h.   The Impact of Culture and Religion

Tribalism, which has historically existed in many African nations, can also cause strife and tension, and the strong cultural and religious identities of many African nations can lead to internal conflicts. In Nigeria, for example, the division between the Christian south and the Muslim north has frequently resulted in conflict. The division of African nations as a result of all these social factors has made the establishment of strong democracies difficult.[27]

i.   The Role of Women

Women experience violence and discrimination in many African nations. Although there are frequent cultural and religious connections to this, it also has a big economic impact. A less stable and affluent society results from women's limited economic participation, which also slows down economic growth. Thus, addressing gender equality and women's rights is crucial to building a democratic and peaceful society in Africa. Ultimately, it is impossible to overlook the effects of violence and conflict. The history of civil war and other conflicts in many African nations has had a terrible effect on these nations' social fabric.[28]

4.0 Negative Impacts of Neocolonialism to the African Democratic Climate

Neocolonialism's negative impact on African democracy manifests itself in a variety of ways. Specifically, neocolonialism has resulted in the rise of strongman leaders who frequently rule with an iron grip. These leaders are frequently backed by foreign powers, giving them a level of impunity. Second, neocolonialism has resulted in the erosion of civil liberties and human rights. For example, journalists are frequently imprisoned or killed for criticising the government. Finally, reliance on foreign assistance caused by neocolonialism has allowed corrupt and ineffective governments to remain in power. Equatorial Guinea is one example of how neocolonialism harms African democracy. Equatorial Guinea's dictator, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, has held power since 1979. During his reign, he has enriched himself and his family by exploiting his country's vast oil wealth, even though the majority of the population lives in extreme poverty. Furthermore, there are virtually no civil liberties, and the country ranks among the most corrupt in the world.[29]

To the detriment of the vast majority of people, this case is a prime illustration of how neo-colonialism has led to the consolidation of power in the hands of a small elite. The lack of democracy and the rule of law have a detrimental effect on the country's long-term development. In Equatorial Guinea's case, it has led to a brain drain as many bright and gifted people have left the country in search of better

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[26]   S Huntington, *The Third Wave Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (University of Oklahoma Press 1991) 20-25.

[27]   (n 26).

[28]   (n 26).

[29]   J A Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World* (University of California Press 1991) 20-35.

opportunities overseas. Due to this, the country's ability to develop and create jobs for its people has been further hampered.[30]

Beyond the particular situation in Equatorial Guinea, neo-colonialism has affected African democracy more broadly. For instance, it has contributed to the emergence of "democratic decay." In certain nations, elections are held, but they are not impartial or free. The ruling party frequently represses the opposition and benefits from its sway over the media and the economy. A "hybrid regime" is a term used to describe this kind of arrangement, which is indicative of the absence of democracy in Africa.[31]

Neocolonialism has also contributed to the spread of violence and instability in Africa. The existence of authoritarian regimes, as well as the absence of democracy, fosters conflict. For example, neocolonialism sparked a twenty-year conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, resulting in millions of deaths and displacements. The nation's vast mineral wealth, which has been exploited by both domestic and foreign actors, has also contributed to the conflict. The Congolese people have suffered greatly as a result of the conflict, which has destabilised the region.[32]

Furthermore, neocolonialism has had an impact on Africa's ability to achieve sustainable development. For example, many African countries rely heavily on the export of primary commodities such as oil, minerals, and agricultural products to generate revenue. Because they rely on a small number of exports, the countries are vulnerable to price fluctuations and other external shocks. As a result, many African countries are currently caught in a cycle of underdevelopment and poverty. The environmental impact of the extractive industries has exacerbated this problem. Another effect of neocolonialism is the impact of civil society organisations (CSOs) on African democracy. CSOs are critical to the advancement of democracy and the protection of human rights. However, in many African countries, CSOs face many challenges, including government repression and a lack of funding. This has limited CSOs' ability to function effectively and reduced the space for democracy. Overall, neocolonialism has had a significant impact on African democracy, with negative consequences for the continent.[33]

5.0 Positive Impacts of Neocolonialism/Challenges to African Democracy

Neocolonialism had both positive and negative effects on African democracy. For example, foreign investment and aid have improved certain African countries' infrastructure and educational systems. Furthermore, as the West spreads democratic ideas, Africa is becoming increasingly pro-democracy. The number of democratic elections and the participation of CSOS are increasing, reflecting this. Finally, there is evidence that democracy has contributed to greater stability and a reduction in violence in some African countries.[34]

The expansion of democratic institutions demonstrates neocolonialism's positive impact on African democracy. The African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance is one of the tools that the

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30   (n 29).
31   (n 29).
32   J Haynes, *Democratization in Africa* (Palgrave Macmillan 2001) 20-35.
33   (n 32).
34   G Hyden, African Politics in Comparative Perspective (Cambridge University Press 2008) 45-65.

African Union (AU) has developed to promote democracy. This charter establishes several democratic ideals and directives for member states. Furthermore, many African nations have adopted constitutions that protect democratic freedoms and rights. These include the freedoms of expression, press, and association. Overall, the existence of democratic institutions has helped to strengthen African democracy.[35]

Even though neocolonialism aided African democracy, the continent still faces numerous challenges. One of the most significant obstacles is corruption. Many African countries suffer from high levels of corruption, which jeopardises democracy by impeding the equitable distribution of resources and the efficient functioning of the state. Furthermore, many African countries face major issues such as poverty, poor institutions, and a lack of education. These elements impede the spread of democracy and citizens' meaningful participation in national governance.[36]

Term limits are one of the major issues confronting African democratic governance today. Many African leaders have attempted to stay in power for longer periods, often using force or changing constitutions. In some countries, this has led to instability and conflict, as well as a decline in trust in the political system. Furthermore, many African governments are not transparent or accountable. Citizens struggle to hold their leaders accountable for their actions as a result. Another issue is that many African governments are unable to function. This may impede reform and policy implementation while also increasing public distrust of the government.[37]

Ethnic conflict is another issue that African democratic governance must address. Conflict may arise as a result of the ethnic diversity that characterises many African countries. In countries such as Kenya and Nigeria, ethnic conflict has caused political unrest and violence. This undermines governments' ability to carry out their responsibilities and the establishment of democracy. The final challenge for African democracy is a lack of gender equality. Many African countries with patriarchal cultures have low representation of women in politics and government. Gender equality and giving women a voice can be difficult to achieve.[38]

Despite the challenges that African democracy faces, there are some prospects for future growth. The expansion of CSOs is one improvement. These organisations aim to hold governments accountable for their actions while promoting democracy and human rights. Another encouraging development in Africa is the emergence of a new generation of leaders. These leaders are more committed to democratic values and often have a higher level of education than their predecessors. Finally, African citizens are beginning to understand the importance of democracy. Opinion polls show that democracy is becoming increasingly popular, as evidenced by rising voter turnout.[39]

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[35]   (n 34).
[36]   (n 34).
[37]   (n 34).
[38]   J Lonsdale, State and Social Processes in Africa: A Historical Approach (Heinemann Publishers 1992) 20-35.
[39]   (n 38).

6.0 How African Countries Can Fight Neocolonialism to End Weak Democratic Governance

In recent times military technic have been employed by some African countries to tackle the effects of neocolonialism in their country. With specific reference to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region comprises three West African countries: Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso, all of which have military governments in place following coups. The three countries have issued a joint statement accusing ECOWAS of putting member states at risk by abandoning its founding ideals to appease foreign powers. have thus left the regional bloc to exercise complete sovereignty. They impose illegal, illegitimate, and careless sanctions because they believe they are being outgunned in their fight against terrorism and instability. To tackle the emergence of violent armed groups in their respective countries, the military chiefs of the three nations formed the Alliance of Sahel States. The three nations have severed military ties with their former colonial power, France. As a result, France announced that its troops would leave the three nations. ECOWAS, which typically mediates political impasses, has not accepted the withdrawal.[40]

African nations can combat neocolonialism and advance democratic governance through a variety of strategies. Improving government transparency and accountability is an important first step. This can be accomplished by enacting strict anti-corruption legislation and establishing independent organisations to monitor government performance and spending. The strengthening of democratic institutions is another critical step. This can be accomplished in two ways: by ensuring free and fair elections and by strengthening the independence of the media and judiciary. African countries can also benefit from international aid and collaboration.[41]

African nations can combat neo-colonialism and fortify democratic governance by collaborating more with global institutions such as the World Bank, the African Union, and the United Nations. These groups can offer resources and technical support to help African nations strengthen their governance. They may also be very helpful in advancing human rights as well as the rule of law. For example, the African Union has ratified many conventions and guidelines that support democracy and good governance. Lastly, regional cooperation and integration can be advantageous to African nations. This may aid in fostering economic growth and lowering tensions.[42]

7.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, neocolonialism has had a significant impact on African democracy. Despite some encouraging changes, such as the expansion of civil society organisations, the overall impact has been negative. This is demonstrated by brain drain, a lack of economic growth, and ineffective institutions. Reducing foreign influence and promoting independence and self-sufficiency are critical to strengthening African democracy. Improving accountability and governance, as well as promoting long-term economic development, are all critical. African democracy will not flourish until then. It is critical to reduce African nations' reliance on aid to promote independence and self-sufficiency. To

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[40]   ALJAZEERA, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso announce withdrawal from ECOWAS (aljazeera.com, 28 January 2024) <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/28/niger-mali-burkina-faso-announce-withdrawal-from-ecowas> accessed 25 April 2024.
[41]   (n 38).
[42]   J Lonsdale, State and Social Processes in Africa: A Historical Approach (Heinemann Publishers 1992) 20-35.

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ensure that countries are not reliant on a single source of income, one strategy is to promote economic diversification. Domestic industry development, as well as investments in education and training, are critical. This will help to develop a skilled labour force that is independent of foreign labour. Accountability and good governance are also important. This can be accomplished by strengthening judicial independence, press freedom, and the rule of law.

To address the neocolonialism that has weakened the democratic tenets in Africa, this article recommended the promotion of domestic industries and limit foreign investment to reduce the influence of multinational corporations in African countries; encourage economic diversification by investing in manufacturing, agriculture, and other sectors; provide education and training to develop a workforce with the required skills; strengthen judicial independence and the rule of law to combat corruption and increase accountability; promote press freedom and free expression to ensure government accountability and transparency; promote cooperation and development by deepening regional integration.