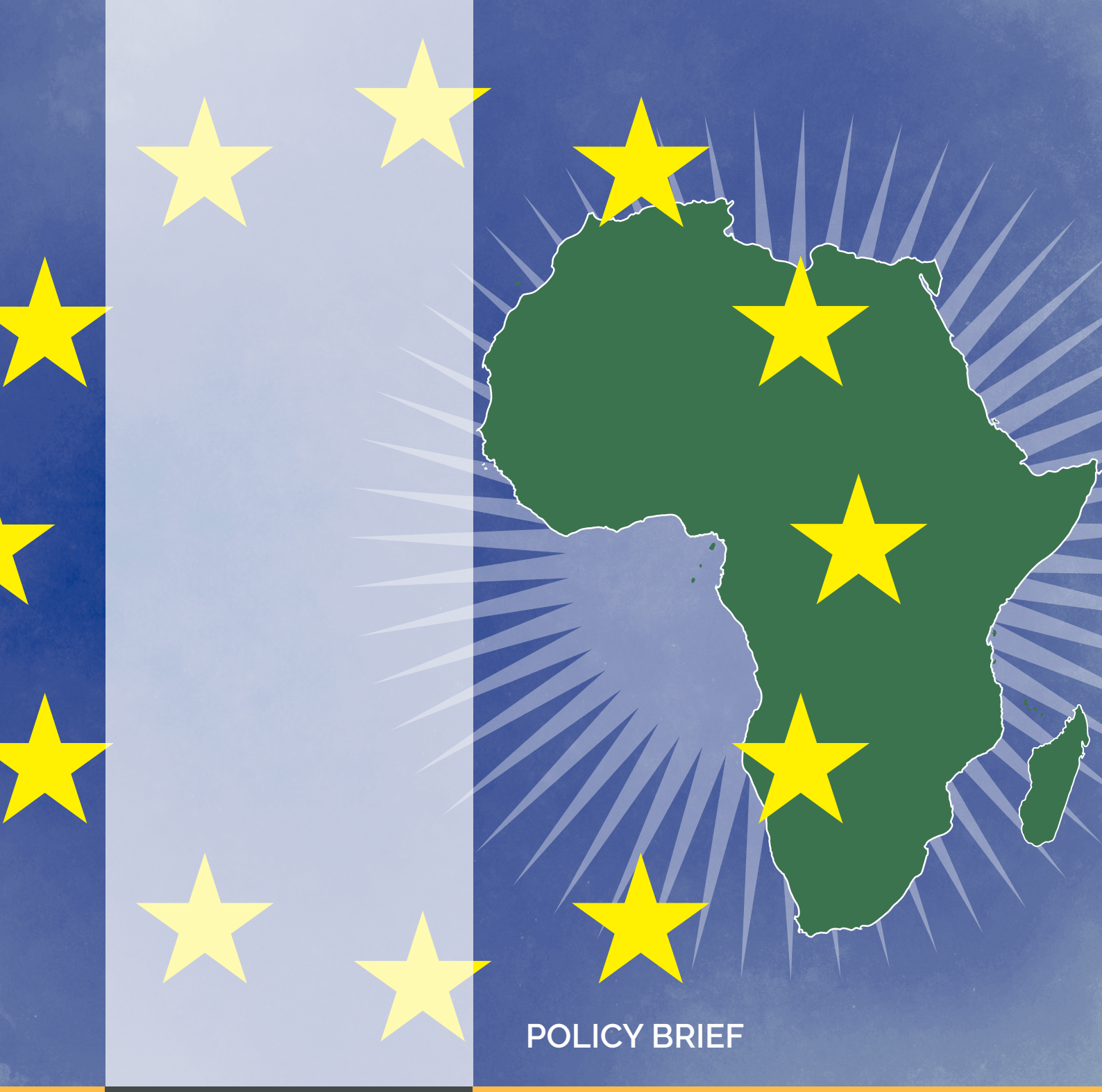

POLICY BRIEF

DECOLONISING GERMAN AND EUROPEAN UNION FOREIGN AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES: PRAGMATIC STEPS TOWARDS BETTER RELATIONS

APRI
AFRICA POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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By Tshepo Gwatiwa

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Executive summary

This policy brief spotlights the decolonisation of Africa–Germany/European Union (EU) relations. It primarily focuses on development cooperation and examines a few select cases between the two actors and Africa. The arguments in this brief are twofold but thematically and analytically entwined.

The EU's and Germany's approaches to foreign relations and development initiatives underline persistent coloniality, shaping power dynamics and perpetuating exploitation and marginalisation in the continent. The EU's foreign policy towards Africa encompasses diverse areas such as peace and security, development, energy and migration. Notably, peace, security and development have been intertwined through the security-development nexus. The implementation of EU foreign policy currently operationalised through the Foreign Policy Instruments and the Common Foreign and Security Policy reflects colonial legacies and power dynamics. The discussion in this brief highlights the fact that the EU's stance in Africa perpetuates perceptions of neocolonialism, evident in summit dynamics and decision-making processes that often sideline African agency. Moreover, EU interventions in Africa, especially in development projects, highlight continuing colonial practices and symbolic hierarchies. German foreign and development policies in Africa echo similar themes, focusing on economic interests, raw material access and foreign direct investment.

At the inter-regional level, Germany's role in security and military missions alongside France raises questions about power dynamics and colonial legacies. The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Germany's development agency, implements projects in Africa that often fall short of empowering local communities and aligning with African nations' priorities. Germany's involvement in African development projects, particularly in border demarcation and regional economic community support programmes, raises eyebrows due to its historical colonial ties and current economic interests in former colonies like Namibia. The country's assistance in delineating African borders established during the colonial era in Berlin appears contradictory as it perpetuates colonial legacies under the guise of reducing conflict. The focus on resource-rich territories in Southern Africa further emphasises Germany's economic motivations. Moreover, German aid to the Southern African Development Community is criticised for its imposition of agreements and lack of consultation with African counterparts, indicating a neocolonial approach that hampers African agency. In Namibia, Germany's development aid, while substantial, is marred by issues such as the handling of reparations for past atrocities and the imposition of conditions on fund usage, reflecting a paternalistic attitude that undermines the agency of affected communities. Furthermore, in countries like Namibia and Zambia, the GIZ is accused of micromanaging projects, creating dependency and disregarding local priorities, thereby diminishing African ownership and leadership in development initiatives. The instances of

German intervention highlight a concerning pattern of marginalisation, exploitation and saviourism that continues to shape post-colonial power dynamics and impede genuine progress towards autonomy and self-determination in African development efforts.

This policy brief provides conclusive remarks with recommendations on how to enhance Africa–Germany/EU relations.

1. Introduction

In 2022, the European Union (EU) published a communique which stated that the EU and the African Union (AU) had agreed to commit to a 'joint vision' wherein they would pursue a 'renewed partnership' founded on 'geography, acknowledgement of history, human ties…mutual respect and accountability, shared values, equality between partners and reciprocal commitments' (European Union, 2022). The following year the German government held discussions about the legacy of colonialism, whereupon the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) sought to reflect on colonial continuities evinced by 'power imbalances and racist structures' (BMZ, 2023a). These developments are not new. In the lead-up to the negotiation of the Africa–EU partnership under the Lome Agreement, African negotiators were instructed to push back against 'Eurocentrism' and demand respect for African interests (OAU, 1999, p. 9). However, the current discourse on the decolonisation of Africa–Europe relations resonates not only with the pressure that individual states (such as Namibia) have put on erstwhile colonisers (such as Germany) to address colonial legacies, but also with the demands that the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) has tabled in recent negotiations (see discussion below).

As important as the relations are for both regions, the issue of coloniality is still persistent. It is particularly evident through the imbalance in political, economic and social relations. The meaning of coloniality here refers to the 'hidden weapon' of the logic of modernity styled as 'developmentalism' to 'justify all kinds of actions, including war, in order to eliminate "barbarism" and overcome tradition' (see Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2009, pp. 132–133). For instance, while the AU and EU often tout their partnership as equals, the EU always has a bigger say and models the AU in its image. The EU has used its economic advantage to secure political advantages in security issues (Gwatiwa, 2022). Similarly, when Africa (as a region) declined to take sides in the current Russia–Ukraine conflict, the German government, which had previously presented themselves as neutral and not imposing on African agency (see Adebajo, 2014; Gwatiwa, 2022), was incensed, threatening to cut development funding (African ambassador, personal communication, April 2023). Economic relations are still tilted towards Europe (Dieye, 2021; United Nations, 2023). As the BMZ (2023a) noted in its assessment, relations between Africa and Europe reflect a lot of coloniality in what Van der Merwe (2021) termed 'affective' and 'infrastructural' labour, as well as structural networks between the developed and developing world. The current discourse around decolonisation, while not new, is welcome. This brief examines current Africa–Germany/EU foreign relations and development cooperation, highlights indicators of coloniality and recommends pragmatic steps towards the decolonisation of these policies.

This policy brief starts with a contextualisation of Africa–Germany/EU relations. It then introduces a conceptual, analytic framework that operationalises the notions of decolonisation and African agency and outlines variables with which to analyse coloniality: exploitation, marginalisation,

pathologisation and saviourism. The brief restricts its examination to Germany and the EU as actors in international cooperation with Africa. The subsequent section examines key elements of German and EU foreign and development policies in Africa. Finally, the brief offers a conclusion and set of recommendations on decolonising European foreign and development policies towards Africa.

2. Contextualising and conceptualising Africa–Europe relations

The legacy of colonialism in Africa–Europe relations is apparent in various aspects. The current shape of states and borders, notions of statehood, approaches to state-making, modes of nation-building and approaches to international cooperation are all traceable to European colonialism (Mbembe, 1992, 2006). The present relationship depends on a network of relations between elites and institutions that perpetuate structural inequality and other elements of coloniality (Galtung, 1971). While France and Britain are the most commonly known colonisers, Germany – a key part of this study – once had colonies in Namibia, Cameroon, Tanzania, Togo, Rwanda and Burundi (Gottsche, 2013). These countries are key partners in the BMZ's Africa Strategy for 2023,[1] which is considered one of the most novel developments in Africa–Germany development cooperation.

Access to raw materials and markets plays an important part in Africa–Europe relations. The first process of decolonisation after World War II was largely a reconfiguration of relations as opposed to previous forms of decolonisation of the Tsarist, Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires (Thomas, Moore & Butler, 2015). The interests of European colonisers were so important that they formed the basis of negotiations of early European treaties (Adrian & Whiteman, 2004, pp. 133–134). While these economic ties were important for most colonising states, the resurgence of Germany in post-colonial Africa is particularly interesting. Although Germany lost its African colonies at the end of World War II (Gottsche, 2013), the country has since become one of the major actors in Africa. Like other European states, Germany needs access to raw materials from Africa. On the other hand, Africans need industrial technology to transcend the dynamics of the current relationship. Africa's dependency in this regard has been largely engineered by erstwhile colonisers (read: France) through foreign policy jingoism entailing a combination of military bases in Africa, repayment of colonial development costs with taxes and depositing 50% of state revenues in the French treasury. This has limited Africa's potential to develop (Ayittey, 2006; Moncrieff, 2012; Lindley-French, 2007; Mays, 2002). As a result, the present structural and agential dynamics steeped in coloniality have limited African agency in international politics.

The relations between Africa and Europe can be characterised as inter-regional. There are two forms of inter-regional relations: First, bilateral inter-regionalism refers to low-level, institutionalised, group-to-group meetings between two or more regional organisations. These meetings centre on information exchange and cooperation on specific projects (Rüland, Hanggi & Roloff, 2006). The current Africa–EU partnership is an example of bilateral inter-regionalism, evinced by meetings and projects at the level of heads of states, chiefs of secretariats and technical experts who deal with common interests. Second, trans-regionalism refers to cooperation between institutions with more diffuse membership. These interactions may include regional organisations, states which are not members of any of those organisations and/or states that are members of more than one of the organisations (Rüland, Hanggi & Roloff, 2006). The most common of these are known as 'Africa+1'

summits (Soulé, 2020). Germany, as one of the largest economies in Europe, has harnessed its political muscle to project itself through the 'Compact with Africa', which, very much like the Korea-Africa Economic Cooperation (KOAFEC) Conference, is very selective of its membership.

It is important to clarify concepts that relate to the core problem in this brief. First, colonialism is 'a thoroughgoing, comprehensive and deliberate penetration of a local or "residentiary" system by agents of an external system, who aim to restructure the patterns of organisation, resource use, circulation and outlook so as to bring these into a linked relationship with their own system' (Brookfield, 1972, pp. 1–2). Second and related to the first, 'postcoloniality' or the 'postcolonial condition' refers to 'a global phenomenon of interactions based on unequal power relations in an era that goes beyond the world of colonialism but that has been (and continues to be) decisively shaped by the logic of coloniality' (Honke & Muller, 2012, p. 386). African states, societies and institutions also exist in the 'postcolony', which refers to 'nation states…once governed by, for, and from elsewhere' (Comaroff & Comaroff, 2006, p. 2) and 'interactions based on unequal power relations', which 'designates situations of rule and subjectification that are based on "us versus the inferior other"' (Mignolo, 2005, p. 69). The African postcolony is 'made up of a series of corporate institutions, and a political machinery that, once in place, constitute a distinctive regime of violence' (Mbembe, 2006, pp. 101–102). Third, and most important to this discussion, is the notion of 'decolonisation', which refers to 'a process which engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels' with the aim of undoing colonialism (Capan, 2017, p. 1). These are useful concepts that will drive the narrative and analysis in this brief.

Development is another central concept in this brief. Generally, it entails temporal movement of societies along a trajectory of progress. Eurocentric developmental discourses have been used as 'ideologies masking imperialism's coercive fabrication of colonial underdevelopment' (Temin, 2023, p. 235). Furthermore, 'modern development has been riven by contradiction at its foundation, because European imperial expansionism and…capital accumulation [has] been the motor of African underdevelopment and source of the accumulated wealth of the West' (Rodney, 2018, p. 8, as cited in Temin, 2023, p. 239). Empirically, Africa is marred more by 'maldevelopment' – a practice wherein African elites purposely frustrate or withhold development – than underdevelopment (Chinweizu, 1987). This phenomenon blights most development efforts in Africa.

3. Methodology

This policy brief uses a nuanced qualitative approach. This methodology is apt for policy research because it seeks to balance theoretical and/or conceptual orientations with empirical and policy-level arguments. The brief uses a combination of the following data collection and review methods: a historical approach, document analysis and interviews. Thus, it relies on both public documents and confidential documents from the sampled organisations and institutions. It also uses data obtained from key informant interviews from randomly sampled African and EU policymakers. They have been selected on the basis of their experience with any of the development agencies and ministries, diplomatic missions and multilateral institutions. A common challenge is that the majority of those interviewed had to be anonymised due to restrictions around sharing of information, especially the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit's (GIZ) prohibition of its staff to discuss German foreign policy.

This brief uses Fofana's (2021) four variables to examine coloniality in Africa–Europe relations: exploitation, marginalisation, pathologisation and saviourism. Exploitation is a situation wherein the referent entity is merely a subject with no agency. At best, the entity is somewhat involved in decisions or transactions, but with minimal agency. The second variable, marginalisation, occurs when the voice of the referent party is either limited or eliminated. Their actors may be acknowledged, but they are excised from decision-making and empirical transactions. In its more dire manifestation, actors are neither involved nor acknowledged. Pathologisation refers to a situation wherein parties (or the stronger party) do not necessarily deal with structural, root-cause factors but buy into perfunctory (and often racist) tropes about incapacity or recklessness. Finally, saviourism is seen when the stronger party tends to prescribe rushed and shallow interventions (or aid) under the pretext that these are 'better than nothing'. In this case, the recipients or beneficiaries are denied other options, often on the basis that they are unqualified to choose solutions to the problems.

The above-mentioned variables will be applied as the basis of analysis in this brief. This will be applied to German and EU foreign and development policies as well as the modalities of concomitant programmes.

4. European Union foreign policy towards Africa

EU foreign policy towards Africa is broad, covering areas such as peace and security, development, energy and migration. Although issues such as migration, trade and industrialisation have taken centre stage in recent years, peace and security as well as development (aid) have been the pinnacle of European foreign policy towards Africa (Engel & Porto, 2010; Haastrup, 2013a, 2013b). The focus on security and development has been based on the notion of the security-development nexus (Duffield, 2010). This notion was incorporated into the 2003 Cotonou Agreement, where Article 11 stated that 'the Parties [sic] acknowledge that without development and poverty reduction there will be no sustainable peace and security, and that without peace and security there can be no sustainable development' (European Commission and Africa Caribbean Pacific States Secretariat, 2000, p. 22). The implementation of EU foreign policy has thus so far been perceived as intertwined with peace and security. However, this does not mean that development policy is not autonomous. Far from it. The EU's development policy focuses on human and social development and economic development, mostly implemented as development cooperation and/or development aid (European Commission, n.d.). Development cooperation, financed through the European Development Fund (EDF), was a key part of the Cotonou Agreement (now expiring).

Currently, the EU implements its foreign policy through the (Service for) Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI). The current implementation falls under the Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)-Global Europe, spanning 2021–2027. The other aspect of this foreign policy is the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).[2] In 2022, the FPI allocated 59% of the total budget to NDICI and 39% to CFSP (European Commission, 2023, p. 8). Under the NDICI, EUR 600 million was allocated towards food security in African, Caribbean and Pacific states (European Commission, 2022, p. 3) and elements of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), formerly the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

5. Coloniality in European foreign policy towards Africa

Although the current foreign and development policy takes place under the CFSP and the NDICI, it is imperative to highlight the colonial element as far as Africa is concerned. In the security domain, the main players are erstwhile colonisers (with neocolonial linkages). It is simplistic to assume that the NDICI-Global Gateway has changed much. In principle, Article 11 of the Cotonou Agreement promised agential capacity in broad strokes: '[the] parties shall pursue an active, comprehensive and integrated policy of peace building and conflict prevention and resolution, and human security, and shall address situations of fragility…This policy shall be based on the principle of African ownership…' (European Union, 2000). In reality, however, EU foreign policy towards Africa has remained largely unchanged in the recent years, except in areas of funding.

France, Germany (and the United Kingdom prior to Brexit) have dominated security policy within Europe and in their international missions in Africa (Phinnemore, 2010, p. 41; Howorth, 2007). From the early 2000s, as Africans augmented their regional organisations (particularly the AU), the former colonisers began to 'Europeanise' their security policies towards Africa.[3] France fully ceded its RECAMP[4] security programme to the EU to become EURO RECAMP, Britain (then a member state) transformed its British Peace Support Teams (BPST) into the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP), and Portugal also 'Europeanised' the *Programa de Apoio às Missões de Paz em Africa* (PAMPA) (Bagoyoko & Gibert, 2009).

Africa–German historical relations also require brief contextualisation. Germany's colonial history was interrupted by World War II, the post- World War I trusteeship system and the Cold War (see Bentwich, 1946; Blackshire-Belay, 1992). During the Cold War, East and West Germany had different approaches to Africa: East Germany had stronger cooperative ties with African liberation movements, largely in the area of security and intelligence training (Retired military general, personal communication, November 2023). German unification largely retained the West German approach to Africa, with fewer elements of East German foreign policy – especially in security cooperation. Since then, the country's role in European security and Africa has increased. Alas, even with the resurgence of a stronger African foreign and development policy, coloniality is still strongly identifiable.

The first element of coloniality in Africa–Europe relations manifests in how the EU constantly preserves Africa's relative position of weakness and subalternity (less power). First, and foremost, the EU has designed the structural nature of the relationship to its own benefit. Currently, the AU – the continental body through which the EU exercises its foreign policy – is known for its 'Africa+1' summits. This was a European (particularly French) idea and design laid out in the period following World War II. The conventional wisdom in standard/Western international relations is that when states act through international/regional organisations they reduce transaction costs (Abbott &

Snidal, 1998). However, upon close inspection, all the hallmarks of coloniality are present: The Africa–Europe relationship reflects exploitation, marginalisation, pathologisation and saviourism, which places the African continent in a permanently subordinate position.

The EU is fully aware of the power it yields through its summitry, which bundles all 55 African states into a single entity. Meanwhile, erstwhile colonisers, such as France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy, have also either retained or started their own Africa summits. Summits held in Europe are widely publicised (Giuffrida, 2024; Giuffrida & Tondo, 2024). However, it is not just the aesthetics of a developed Europe presenting itself as a global power helping a poor continent that is an issue: The element of saviourism perpetuates perceptions of neocoloniality. The weakening of African agency within these summits is also problematic: The EU decides most of the agenda, funds the cost of the summits, drafts agreements and often negotiates with 'Africa' even when Africa is yet to reach a common position. As one diplomat indicated, most of the preparatory work is done by Europeans before Africans are involved (African diplomat, personal communication, December 2023a). An even more controversial issue about this relationship (even in academic circles) is that the inter-regional summitry has promoted mimicry[5] whereby an institutionalised AU becomes a duplication of the EU. By reproducing itself in African multilateralism, the EU is retaining the postcolony (with cosmetic modifications) while hampering a full manifestation of African agency in international affairs.

Europe's agreements with Africa are designed to limit Africa's gains from international cooperation. Africa is made up of many countries with different strategic needs and priorities. Bundling African states causes friction among those states and reduces their capacity to negotiate and bargain. This first occurred during the negotiation of the Africa–EU strategic partnership of 2007, when the Africans were outmanoeuvred by the Europeans, resulting in a partnership that reflected African agency in breach more than observance (Ethiopian diplomat, personal communication, June 2014). Even now, colonialism is said to define the partnership, which is the rationale for this policy brief. In 2023, issues relating to resource beneficiation, integration into (Western) global production value chains, fairer trade and reduction of aid dependency were among the main preferences of Africans in the recent negotiations around the EU–OACPS (or Samoa) Agreement. Yet, the EU appeared to favour a continuation of the present model (African diplomat, personal communication, December 2023b). The EU, which has delegations (the EU term for 'embassies') in almost every African country, has made efforts to persuade each country to hastily sign the pending agreement, even though major African states have insisted on changes to increase African agency in the spirit of 2019's Revised Georgetown Agreement. If many OACPS countries sign and ratify the agreement as it is, there will be a continuation of the status quo. This would entrench existing exploitation and marginalisation of Africa in the international political economy.

These agreements have mostly revolved around European interests at the expense of African interests, much like those conducted at the Berlin Conference. Even since the signing of the Cotonou Agreement in 2000, the Europeans have set the agenda for the majority of the summits, no matter whether they were held in Africa or the EU. This has been the case even when it has involved issues of mutual interest. For instance, when dealing with security crises in Africa in the early 2000s, the EU was more concerned with developing its capacity for external interventions (see Ulriksen, Gourlay & Mace, 2007). In the wake of the so-called 'migration crisis' in Europe of 2015, the EU pressured (northern) African states to quell non-legal migration into Europe, while ignoring calls by South Africa and other major African states to move the Africa–EU strategic partnership from development aid (which does not always reach intended beneficiaries) to development

projects and industrialisation. This would have improved economic development and reduced migration (Senior South African diplomat, personal communication, February 2013). Presently, the Samoa Agreement reflects the same, entrenched pattern of development aid, with the result that little more has been accomplished than embellishing an enduring colonial relationship where a majority of African states still export unprocessed raw materials and rely on development aid.

On paper, the Cotonou Agreement and its subsidiary – the Africa–EU strategic partnership of 2007 – is a partnership of equals. However, in nearly twenty years African agency has not grown. Erstwhile colonisers, particularly Germany, France and the United Kingdom (then a member) have ensured that most of the security and development programmes reflect their individual foreign policies, none of which have been reformed since the Cold War (see Gwatiwa, 2022). This is a symptom of the exploitation of Africa and the marginalisation of African interests and development. Furthermore, the EU has pushed back against the idea of African states gaining agency and resource beneficiation from natural resources, with one EU commissioner labelling it resource nationalism (Money, Frøland & Gwatiwa, 2020). This push-back has grown into a culture of classifying raw materials as either 'critical' or 'non-critical'. African countries which are rich in critical materials, such as South Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), often receive preferential treatment in foreign direct investment (FDI) and more concessions when engaging in foreign cooperation, which weakens regional collective bargaining power.

The element of colonial saviourism is apparent in EU interventions and missions in Africa. The EU currently operates 'civilian' and 'military' missions in different parts of Africa as part of the CSDP and CFSP. Starting with Operation Artemis in 2003, the EU has operated 23 such missions, of which ten are still active. These include the EU Naval Force (EUNAVFOR), active since 2020, and the European Union Training Mission in Mozambique (EUTM Mozambique), active since 2021 (EEAS, 2023). The European Union Capacity Building Mission in Somalia (EUCAP Somalia) efforts are essentially within the security domain and involve training internal security forces with a focus on anti-terrorism, organised crime, controlling illegal migration and improving maritime capacity (EEAS, 2023). Almost every mission is led by an erstwhile coloniser. Either that or the former coloniser does most of the resource mobilisation. French commissioned military officers have led all EU missions in conflict hotspots in francophone Africa. A Portuguese major-general heads the current EU training mission in Mozambique. While Europeans often invoke language as rationale for erstwhile colonisers leading these missions, this occludes the fact that this approach perpetuates colonial continuities.

The current EU foreign policy posture is more about power projection than mutual interest. In Africa, this policy is encapsulated in the NDICI-Global Europe. The NDICI expands EU foreign policy and influence beyond the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) domain. Launched in 2021, it will run to 2027. Sub-Saharan Africa remains one of the geographic pillars of the instrument and receives the largest share of the budget – EUR 29.1 billion (European Union, 2020). Josep Borrell (the EU chief diplomat) justified the transition to NDICI-Global Europe policy shift from the previous mode of direct bilateral engagement between Africa and Europe as an EU projection of global power (Herszenhorn, Barigazzi & Marks, 2020). This was announced before the renewal of the Africa–EU partnership. However, this meant that the subsequent Africa–EU partnership would need to align with European foreign policy posture.

A key feature of this foreign policy adjustment is how it demarcates Africa into two regions. There is a so-called 'Neighbourhood South', consisting of North Africa (or the Maghreb), and sub-Saharan

Africa (European Union, 2020). This demarcation, popularised by the European anthropologists of last century, portends an attempt to weaken Africa's collective diplomacy. For starters, Maghreb states are the largest funders of the AU Commission and, alongside Nigeria and South Africa, produce the most effective African diplomats. Moreover, Maghreb states are contiguous to the most volatile African states (i.e. the Sahel): Transnational terrorism in the Sahel is directly tied to the Maghreb region (especially Libya and Algeria). For the NDICI to separate the Maghreb from the rest of the continent is a corrosive approach. It empirically weakens all African parties' ability to solve the region's political and economic problems. It also represents an attempt to weaken African agency at the bargaining level, especially given that this policy largely occurs through the AU (of which all 55 states are members).

6. European Union development policy and implementation

As explained in the preceding section, EU foreign policy and development policies towards Africa are intertwined. Development policy towards Africa mainly includes development aid and development cooperation. Development aid is supposed to help finance development programmes in developing countries. Until the recent shift towards the NDICI, this was financed through the EDF, which operated outside the annual EU budget. Development cooperation focuses on poverty reduction and eradication, food security and support for development projects determined or accepted by the developing country.

Although development cooperation forms a key part of EU policy towards Africa, it cannot be divorced from the key role of Europe's quest for the access to raw materials. Since the colonial period, raw materials have formed an important part of Africa–Europe relations as well as development cooperation. Access to raw materials in former colonies or so-called 'dependent territories' was guaranteed under one of the key post-war settlements, the Treaty of Rome of 1957 (Hewitt & Whiteman, 2004, pp. 133–134). In the 1960s and 1970s, African states' attempts to obtain more revenues and beneficiation in raw materials did not amount to much. However, since the 1990s, the demand for natural resources in emerging markets such as Asia has threatened European access to African raw materials (Rotberg, 2008). In 2008, the then EU Trade Commissioner, Peter Mandelson, alluded to the rise of 'resource nationalism', pointing out how export restrictions on African raw materials threatened to impede Europe's economy and its overall economic preponderance in Africa (Mandelson, 2009, p. 53). In response, the EU came up with the Raw Materials Initiatives (RMI). The original version of the RMI was openly hostile to the idea of increased African agency in the extractives industry (Money, Fröland & Gwatiwa, 2020). The RMI remains in place and is fully institutionalised, though the concept of 'raw materials' has been superseded by 'critical raw materials' (CRMs). Needless to say, CRMs influence how the EU prioritises countries and regions in its development cooperation. South Africa and the DRC (as the only two countries in the current CRM list) have been a major focus of EU development cooperation and, in the case of the DRC, security. In order to fully appreciate EU development policy, it is important to go beyond the written policy and discuss how the policy is implemented.

7. Coloniality in development policy implementation: Selected cases

The EU's development policy encompasses humanitarian aid, development assistance and cooperation. However, colonial social and political symbolism is still prevalent in EU development policy implementation. This brief assesses the implementation of randomly selected development projects in Mauritania, Mali and South Sudan.

EU development support in Mauritania covers three sectors: food security and sustainable agriculture, the rule of law, and health. In the project, the EU helps 'create a universal health coverage system in the entire country' based on the National Health Development Plan and the National Social Protection Strategy (European Commission, 2018). However, this programme is largely implemented via international non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The primary coordinators of the health programme are from *Medicin Sans Frontiers* (MSF or Doctors Without Borders). These are primarily French nationals of Caucasian descent (whites). Africans do not occupy top positions. Diasporan Africans are often given good positions but never in the lead (Aid consultant (a), personal communication, December 2023). This racial, hierarchical symbolism is starkly colonial and supremacist. However, the managerial optics are the least of the concerns in this assessment.

The modalities of this 'development' programme deserve scrutiny. The project is implemented under the Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP). While the project mandate is to 'support', the reality is much different. According to one source, the EU has a tripartite approach to this development project. First, contrary to claims of supporting national health development plans, the EU itself decides in which areas of the health sector the funding will be used. This inadvertently marginalises the agency of local authorities, especially by redirecting their priorities to what the EU wants. Second, the EU chooses the locations where the programme will be implemented. This is typically expected to be a joint effort. Third, the EU also chooses the sub-sectoral targets, e.g. sexual health and reproduction (Aid consultant (b), personal communication, December 2023). According to the source's assessment, these choices do not always align to the priorities and preferences of the local actors. When they protest, they refer to the terms of reference of the funding or development support. This evinces the prevalence of marginalisation wherein the agency of African actors and institutions is significantly limited, if not denied altogether. This is a continuation of colonial practices. Even during colonialism, Africans were given merely symbolic agency through traditional leaders.

Similar dynamics are at play in EU development assistance to South Sudan. Under the Multiannual Indicative Program (MIP), health and nutrition form an important part of the EU development assistance to the country. South Sudan is a relatively young state where, given the fragility of the institutions, the processes of state-making and nation-building are more sensitive. However, the EU has the upper hand in deciding what types of programmes are to be prioritised and implemented (Development consultant, personal communication, December 2023). This has resulted in a situation wherein the

EU appears to shape and direct the health development policy. At an empirical level, this approach results in EU programmes that are incompatible with the local health systems and programmes. Local actors who do not align with EU policy are excluded from being beneficiaries (Development consultant (a), personal communication, December 2023). In essence, the marginalisation of those local actors exercising agency works in step with attempted pathologisation, so that neither party deals with the root causes of the issues in the health sector.

Development assistance projects focusing on education also fail to graduate from coloniality. The EU funds projects focusing on the 'talibe' in the Sahel. Talibe are children who have been exposed only to the study of the Koran/Quran and have no formal schooling (see Le Floch, 2020). Although they exist in several Sahelian countries, this brief focuses on a project in Mali funded since 2008. The project is supposed to impart skills that can enhance employability, especially mathematics and the French language. However, the project also faces similar problems that limit African agency. For instance, the input of locals is limited (Development consultant (b), personal communication, December 2023). In terms of those involved in the project, the EU – as in other projects – tends to prefer workers with European qualifications over their local counterparts who may be much more familiar with the problem. This is emblematic of pathologisation, saviourism and marginalisation. The funding parties – the EU, the GIZ and the French Development Agency – use short-duration funding schemes as a way of controlling beneficiaries and entrenching dependency. The duration of funding is also very short, necessitating frequent renewals. According to the source quoted above, this causes anxiety among recipients as they have to find quick fixes in order to meet targets set by the funder, even if they are not realistic. The EU ran a similar project in Mauritania. However, that project exhibited more agency for local actors as the educational authorities are more involved in the active management and implementation of the project. It is not clear what accounts for the difference in the agential latitude between Malian and Mauritanian actors. Whether it is a variation in the design of the project or the fortitude, choice and decisions of the local actors, neither project graduates from coloniality: choice and action are limited.

8. Germany's foreign policy towards Africa

As previously described, EU and German foreign and development policies are intertwined. However, because Germany has become a particularly important actor in African foreign and development affairs, the country's foreign and development policies deserve separate discussion. In order to understand Germany's foreign policy towards Africa, it is important to first explain the posture of German foreign policy, premised as it is on identity, interests and institutions. Germany's identity was shaped by the post-war settlement and the subsequent unification. The context of the unification privileged Western influence in German foreign policy. Furthermore, as Goetz (1996) argues, due to Germany's (Western) institutional embeddedness, the national and European interests in German foreign policy were, for a long time, almost indistinguishable (Goetz, 1996). Although German foreign policy is Europeanised, different (German) federal institutions play a key role in the formulation and execution of German foreign policy. The different 'Africa strategies' that have been published over the years are essentially amalgamated policy positions. Ironically, even though Germany's 'Africa' strategies or guidelines tend to touch on developmental issues, Germany is also strongly involved in security (military and police) and civilian missions in Africa.

9. Coloniality in German foreign policy implementation in Africa

Power – political and military – is a critical element of empire and coloniality. In fact, foreign policy can be an instrument of imperialism and maintaining coloniality. It is hard to argue that Germany is aiming towards imperial expansion, but the country's lockstep with France in Africa is symptomatic of such ambitions. States generally seek leadership positions in multilateral missions in order to advance their power and pursue their interests (Adler-Nissen & Pouliot, 2014). Aligning with the notion of *Westbindung* (institutional embeddedness to the West) in foreign policy, Germany has seconded several high-ranking military and intelligence officers to CFSP missions as well as UN or coalition missions in Africa. For instance, for every CFSP mission, Germany and France always provide high-ranking officers. A senior GIZ officer previously told the author that they always oppose French foreign policy jingoism in Africa (Gerhard, personal communication, July 2014). If this is true, we may ask: What is the role of Germany in the echelons of the EU military apparatus in Africa? Are they keeping French foreign policy jingoism in check? If so, what warrants the purported savourism? While German diplomats secretly tend to highlight French policy narrowness, senior leaders (ministers and chancellors) have not directly criticised their French counterparts. In fact, they have worked with them efficiently for two decades. This is a stark contrast to Italy, which has directly criticised French foreign policy in Africa several times in the last five years (Giuffrida, 2019; Ridgwell, 2019; Barry & Ganley, 2023). The silence of Germany, as a powerful state with the potential to dilute French jingoism in Africa, amounts to acquiescence.

Germany deployed special forces and intelligence officers as part of the United Nations (UN) Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and, until termination of the mission in 2023, headed its intelligence unit, the All Sources Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU) (see Albretcht, Cold-Ravnkilde & Haugegaard, 2017; Hellquist & Tidblad-Lundholm, 2022). While Germany led the ASIFU, it 'worked as though in a military-led NATO[6] operation and initially had difficulty understanding that a UN mission is principally a political-civilian endeavour that requires working (and therefore sharing information) with African and Asian countries outside of NATO's protected system of information' (Abilova & Novosseloff, 2016, pp. 18–19). Moreover, just before the Malian *coup d'etat* in 2020, Germany was poised to deploy soldiers to neighbouring Niger as part of an EU operation, an addition to those already stationed in Mali (Al Jazeera, 2023).[7] The role of special forces and intelligence systems in Africa is primarily to gather strategic information for political and economic gain, and less to do with the 'security missions' in a system of 'accumulation by dispossession'. As a result, Germany's expanding military role in Africa, couched in multilateral institutions, should be the main concern among Africans (see Gwatiwa, 2021; Van der Merwe, 2021). Although Germany has a difficult time dealing with its colonial past in Namibia and elsewhere, signs of systematic dispossession running in parallel to the rhetoric suggest a lack of genuineness and seriousness to decolonialise. Demilitarising foreign policy would be a sign of Germany's true intentions to decolonise.

Raw material access and acquisition, key elements of the old colonial relationship between Africa and Europe, are among Germany's primary foreign policy interests in Africa. As a background note, Germany's economic relations with Africa have soared over the last two decades. In 2022 alone, trade between Germany and Africa grew by 60% to EUR 59.8 billion. German imports from Africa also grew by 27.4%, totalling EUR 33.4 billion (Intergest, 2023). Clearly, access to African markets is vital for Germany. The German Chamber of Commerce and Industry works closely with the German diplomatic corps to help German investors access African markets (Coordinator of German Chamber of Commerce and Industry, personal communication, January 2024). However, the importation of raw materials is a much bigger interest that is codified in German foreign policy and policy institutions. This is clearly enunciated in the German government's raw materials strategy. In fact, by 2007 Germany had 'elements of a raw materials strategy' before the European Commission had developed its own (BMWi, 2010, p. 6). In 2010, the federal government formed the German Mineral Resources Agency (DERA) to facilitate the acquisition of these raw materials. (This coincided with the surge in the number of GIZ country and liaison offices across Africa.) Most of the CRMs sourced from Africa primarily come from South Africa and the DRC. Not included among these are the large oil, petroleum and gas deposits in West, East and Southern Africa, where Germany is actively pursuing economic interests under the guise of 'development cooperation and assistance' (see discussion below).

Acquisition of raw materials by the pharmaceutical industry is emblematic of Germany's enduring colonial policy and actions. Interestingly, three similar cases have been registered in South Africa, Namibia and Botswana, where German companies, in concert with German intelligence agencies, have scrupulously acquired or have been intercepted trying to traffic indigenous medicines. In the case of Namibia, patents of indigenous medicines were signed off (Confidential source (a), personal communication, December 2023). In Botswana, a leader of one of the major Khoe San tribes was intercepted by the civilian intelligence while on his way to sign off patents as part of an operation that had been ongoing for seven years (Confidential source (b), personal communication, April 2021). This practice, which amounts to a stark exploitation of African resources at the expense of 'natives', has not received condemnation from German officials. Expectedly, German diplomatic and commercial officials deny any knowledge of such activities and point to possible penalties for, and condemnation of, those involved should they come to light (German diplomat, personal communication, January 2024; Coordinator of German Chamber of Commerce and Industry, personal communication, January 2024). However, it is surprising that the German government has focused on historical crimes and injustices (which are not unimportant) while neglecting contemporary practices that Namibian diplomats have raised with their German counterparts. This implies that Germany can be held morally and systematically responsible, especially given that their intelligence services are implicated in these acts of dispossession and exploitation. This is a continuation of a system of exploitation that is steeped in colonial history.

Perhaps a more fitting question would be why Germany has not made skills development in the pharmaceutical industry a top priority. Various German embassies in Africa facilitate training programmes for Africans to train in various skills in Germany and then return to Africa (Federal Foreign Office, 2023/24). It is clear from the type of programmes offered under the training facilitated by German embassies and their private sector counterparts that Germany does not focus on high-level skills development (see IDOS, 2024; GIZ, 2019). Most of the targeted skills sets are basic levels of engineering and telecommunications technology, which are offered in plenty of African universities. German diplomats struggle to explain why the technical training targets such low-level skills but avoids those much needed by, for example, the manufacturing and pharmaceutical industries in

order to reduce heavy dependency on Europe. One of the reasons they put forward is that 'there are no industrial pharmacists in Southern Africa' (German diplomat, personal communication, January 2024). However, there are many pharmacists trained across Africa who could be further trained to attain that advanced status. The lack of pragmatism in these skills' development programmes reeks of the old colonial practices wherein mainland Africans were mostly limited to certain subaltern positions within selected professions. That often resulted in a situation where populations in the postcolony retained lower skills and failed to transcend their subaltern state, while the erstwhile coloniser retained power through various modes of systemic exclusion.

10. German development policy implementation in Africa

Through the GIZ, the German government supports projects in Africa spanning education, healthcare, agriculture and renewable energy, among others (BMZ, 2023). Their approach involves building partnerships with African countries, civil society and the private sector. Germany also collaborates with international organisations to promote good governance, human rights and economic growth in Africa. According to the official policy narrative, the aim is to empower local communities and contribute to the achievement of Africa's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, there are discrepancies between policy and empirics.

Germany's foreign and development policy towards Africa emphasises cooperation, development and addressing global challenges. Germany's key instrument in the international political economy is the G20 'Compact with Africa' (CwA). As part of her Africa policy, former Chancellor Angela Merkel vehemently pursued the promotion of private investment and economic stability in African countries. By 2019, the compact had fallen short of expectations (Pelz, 2019). The CwA, therefore, deserves scrutiny. Contrary to media portrayal, the compact features only thirteen countries – Benin, Guinea, Egypt, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Morocco, Rwanda, Togo, Tunisia, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and the DRC (the last to be admitted). It leaves out the two biggest economies in Africa: Nigeria and South Africa. Adebajo (2017) posited that the 'G20 "Compact with Africa"…largely recycles many of the failed experiments of the World Bank and IMF [International Monetary Fund] over the last four decades'. According to the compact monitoring report, 'FDI inflows into CwA countries increased by 25% in 2022 to reach USD 24.3 billion, while FDI inflows in the rest of Africa fell by 66%' (World Bank Group, 2023). From one vantage point, the compact only privileges a few African economies and marginalises the rest. This does not imply that trade with other states (such as South Africa) is heavily compromised: Germany has embassies in many African countries and has strong relations with the AU and the regional economic communities (RECs) as well as German chambers of commerce in key states. However, by focusing on just a few economies which are already doing well (with the exception of the DRC and Burkina Faso), the compact may deprive other countries of necessary FDI.

A striking feature of the CwA is its one-dimensional, self-serving approach. Its 'investment policy reforms' are primarily geared towards creating favourable tax regimes and tax exemptions for investors (World Bank Group, 2023, p. 17). Another feature is how the compact aims to promote trade among the CwA states in a plan that does not seem aligned with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Finally, an examination of sector composition of investments shows a strong leaning towards raw materials and energy, yet Africa's current developmental master plan focuses on industrialisation.

The GIZ conducts a number of projects in different parts of Africa, where it implements development projects via multilateral institutions (such as the AU and RECs) and on a bilateral basis. At the level of

the AU, the GIZ claims to support the AU's Agenda 2063 by supporting the following programmes: peacebuilding and conflict prevention, governance and migration, sustainable economic growth and infrastructure, and health and social development (GIZ & African Union, 2023). Perhaps the most visible aid the GIZ provided to the AU Commission was the funding of what is currently named the Julius Nyerere Peace and Security Building. This was built solely by the German government, although slowly. Eventually the United States offered to help (AU official, personal communication, June 2014). AU mid-managerial staff often detest this form of tokenism and blame the (AU) Assembly of Heads of State and Governments (AHSG) for their penchant for free gifts. This tokenism can be blamed on Africans, but Germany could also have approached other African states to contribute. (African states have the funds and capacity. For instance, Equatorial Guinea financed the building of the headquarters of the Committee on Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA), just next to the AU Commission compound.) It is not clear why Germany built the Julius Nyerere Peace and Security Building. There was no lack of facilities in a building previously financed by African states. It is also ironic that Germany criticises French 'colonialism' but takes the Chinese approach that undercuts African agency in its regionalism.

Migration has been a major concern for Germany. The idea of supporting economic growth in African countries is meant to curb unskilled migration. However, this is a relatively minor issue. A key feature of this assistance is the support for demarcating African borders. The last report on the assistance to the AU shows that 35 countries have been contributing to the progress of this programme since 2008 (GIZ & African Union, 2022). The irony is that these borders were first drawn by colonialist states in Berlin in 1885 at the behest of the German government. These colonial borders have perpetuated different problems and conflicts in the postcolony. One may ask: Why would Germany be interested in reviving a colonial legacy under the pretext of reducing conflict in the continent? A first glimpse at the border delimitation map (GIZ & African Union, 2022, p. 19) shows that the GIZ has primarily focused on former colonies or countries in which they once laid colonial claims, such as Namibia, Tanzania, Cameroon, Congo, Togo, Ghana and Chad. Surprisingly, the programme has mostly reached completion in disputed territories with oil, petroleum and gas projects, particularly in Southern Africa. Tanzania and Namibia – where projects were completed – have border disputes or grievances with neighbouring states: Malawi and Botswana, respectively.

It is arguable that the GIZ is only supporting the AU Border Programme (AUBP), but it should be noted that Germany is focusing on countries with which they have strong economic ties. According to a highly placed source in African diplomacy, Germany has encouraged some resource-endowed countries to push for more claims in disputed borders (African ambassador, personal communication, April 2023). This amounts to exploitation of contemporary African interstate grievances birthed by colonialism and the jingoism which was institutionalised in Germany more than a century ago. This also points to an undermining of African agency, because agency slack (especially shirking) – which was the technique used by African states in dealing with border disputes – was meant to find alternative solutions that equitably address grievances. In essence, most of the efforts in the border programme focus on access to raw materials.

Support to the RECs is also an important part of Germany's multilateral engagement in Africa. The GIZ provides support to almost all the RECs, ostensibly for the implementation of the following programmes: transboundary water management; climate resilience and management of natural resources; and strengthening national–regional linkages throughout the region (GIZ & African Union,, 2022). However, all is not what it seems. Here, we will examine the nature of the relationship with one of the most institutionalised RECs – the Southern African Development Community (SADC). First,

contrary to public relations statements, Germany dictates and controls its agreements with the RECs. For example, the technical cooperation agreement reads like a set of instructions to SADC. The agreement only stipulates German obligations in Article 2, and the rest are instructions on SADC's obligations until it closes off with joint pledges. From the wording of the document, the agreement was clearly written by the Germans and handed to the SADC secretariat for signing about a year later (Government of the Federal Republic of Germany & SADC, 2020). This follows a pattern whereby European negotiators are always steps ahead of the negotiations. They offer to draft agreements but do not give their African counterparts time to fully assess the documents. Pressure is then put on the lesser party to sign (Senior African diplomat, personal communication, November 2023). Perhaps this can be blamed on complacency and dependency on the part of African technocrats and diplomats. From interactions with SADC officials who did not wish to be cited, the general indication is that funding has been forthcoming, but there are instances where officials infer a rigor mortis among Germans, especially with regard to perceptions of SADC priorities and modalities of implementation. However, it is the bilateral level that can help drive the narrative of coloniality in German aid and development cooperation with Africa.

Namibia is an epitome of German coloniality in development cooperation in Southern Africa. As a former German colony with a special place in German development policy in Africa, the country still has a large German settler population that controls a significant stake in the economy. Germany is also the largest development aid donor to Namibia, ahead of the US and the EU in terms of monetary volume, as well as the total number of programmes and projects (NPC, 2023, pp. 9–13). The development envelope for Namibia, at around EUR 900 million, is the largest in the SADC region. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Germany provided a significant amount of material and financial support. A couple of issues stick out in this foreign and development policy implementation. First, Germany has been having a difficult time closing the issue of reparations for the genocide perpetrated by the Germans against the Namibian Herero and Namaqua people between 1904 and 1907. Until 2017, Germany was reluctant to negotiate this issue, but Namibian diplomats (especially those based in Europe) insisted on negotiations. The initial position of the Merkel government was 'apology but no reparations' (Chutel, 2016). Subsequent to further negotiations, the German government admitted to the genocide and agreed to pay EUR 1.1 billion in reparations (Oltermann, 2021). (Note that the president of Germany also travelled to Tanzania and apologised for a similar atrocity.) The Herero and Nama protested against the amount, but the Germans insisted that they do not negotiate with the affected communities, only the Namibian government (Pelz, 2023). The main issue raised by the communities was the fact that the German government was dictating how the 'reparations' should be used. For example, though they initially proposed to channel money through the GIZ to community development projects and scholarships for students from these communities, the condition was that the students would have had to undertake these studies in Germany. The Namibian government rejected this proposal and demanded that the German government deal directly with them on a bilateral basis.

This approach to the German genocide in Namibia is a case of coloniality. Although the German government finally conceded to the demands, the marginalisation of the Herero and Nama people robbed them of agency in their quest to find healing from historical injustices perpetrated by Germany. In addition, for Germany to insist on determining how these funds are used demonstrates colonial pathologisation which purports to understand the needs of the aggrieved communities better than the agents, while suggesting that students of the aggrieved should study in Germany is a twisted form of saviourism and limits the options of the aggrieved. What if the recipients wanted to study elsewhere? Moreover, how did this approach demonstrate the reconciliation path often

mentioned by Angela Merkel and her foreign minister Heiko Maas? This is an instance of the (un) intended consequences of coloniality trying to redress the atrocities of colonialism.

The GIZ conducts projects that are of strategic value to African states. However, a key criticism of German development policy is its pathologisation and benign exploitation. In Namibia and Zambia, sources indicate that beyond the veneer of 'partnership' the GIZ is actually intrusive. In both countries, the GIZ officers tend to choose their preferred areas of cooperation, which often diverge from the preferences of the government. In Namibia, German agencies target niches that are weak spots of the host government. They tend to undertake projects that create dependency on German expertise, such that if they were to pull out, the entire project would collapse (Namibian diplomat, personal communication, December 2023). This evinces the marginalisation of the voice of the host government and weakens the agency of local actors, rendering them heavily dependent on the German government and/or institutions. However, this does not discount commendable projects such as the funding and technical support for an underground water basin project in northern Namibia, which has the potential to reduce Namibia's major water challenge.

Another concern in Germany's policy implementation is that in both Namibia and Zambia, GIZ officials micromanage projects and demonstrate a lack of confidence in the local partners. This also points to saviourism. In Zambia, the officials are accused of marginalising the role of local economists and government workers, especially over development policy. The GIZ prefers smaller projects, some of which are clear tokenism, for example building bus stops, water and sanitation management, and augmenting border posts with the DRC, a key country in Germany and the EU's CRM strategy. Meanwhile, the Zambian national development plan is focusing on large infrastructure that can facilitate international trade, the mining sector and agriculture (Zambian diplomat, personal communication, November 2023). By neglecting the Zambian government's national development priorities, Germany is dwarfing African agency. This is a redirection of African priorities and runs contrary to elements of African ownership and leadership in Africa–Europe partnerships, of which Germany is part.

11. How to decolonise the Africa–Germany/European Union relationship: Conclusive remarks on an open conversation

In order to decolonise German/EU foreign and development policies, practical steps need to be taken. As a reminder, 'decolonisation' here is defined as a 'process which engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels' (Capan, 2017, p. 1). Any actions should therefore be aimed at eliminating (or minimising) exploitation, marginalisation, pathologisation and saviourism in the Africa–Europe relationship.

The first imperative is for Germany and the EU to dismantle exploitative structures in the current Africa–Europe relationship. The most practical step would be to respect African states' agential demands regarding the Samoa Agreement. Currently, 35 member states of the OACPS have refused to sign the New Partnership Agreement offered by the EU. At the very least, the EU should abandon the coercive techniques it uses to threaten member states that had not signed the partnership by 1 January 2024. The contentious points in the draft agreement relate to fairer trade and natural resource beneficiation, both major sticking issues in this unequal and unfair relationship. African states seek to reduce aid dependency and be more integrated into global trade structures. The coercion is meant to perpetuate the exploitative culture that has characterised the Africa–EU relationship since the end of World War II. There is no question that most African states still want to trade with Europe. After all, their countries are innately linked with Europe culturally, politically and economically. However, in the present era, African states are more aware of their options.

The second imperative in the decolonisation of German and European foreign and development policies would be to cease enabling colonial programmes and linkages through the union. As mentioned, the EU has allowed its most powerful member states to 'Europeanise' various security and development programmes. This amounts to allowing erstwhile colonial states to apply cosmetic changes to programmes that perpetuate coloniality. The starkest colonial resilience is evinced by French influence in most EU programmes. Structured cooperation and the use of pooled funding to the AU has made the latter susceptible to manipulation by states such as France, which seek to coerce Africa or continue their imperial undertakings. To be sure, regionalism depends on national interests, but the European Commission appears more prepared to accommodate erstwhile colonisers' foreign policy jingoism. As a matter of fact, it has even given the weakest one-time colonisers a stronger voice from the tomb. For example, when dealing with the violent extremist situation in Mozambique, Western and African states that sought to intervene militarily in Cabo Delgado and protect Total's oil and gas exploration pushed Portugal – a reluctant and weakened erstwhile coloniser – to use its incoming presidency to persuade President Nyusi to accept an EU training mission.

Decolonisation requires respect for Africa's attempt to form a new positive identity. Currently, Africa has a problem of negative self-consciousness. This is compounded by Eurocentrism among

Africans (especially elites), which results in incongruence between policy prescriptions and empirical challenges faced by ordinary people. Since the Lomé Agreement, Eurocentrism has been a prominent aspect of the Africa–EU relationship. That is why the negotiators of what became the Cotonou Agreement (see OAU, 1999) were instructed to press the EU on this subject. However, not much has changed. Even though the resultant strategic partnership purports to respect African ownership and leadership, this is not visible in any of the programmes. Instead, the partnership exports European ideologies, institutions and policies in the name of institutional reconciliation and mimicry. Essentially, the implementation of the Africa–EU strategic partnership has been an exportation of European ideas, as well as an attempt to reproduce the EU in Africa under the auspices of the AU (see Gwatiwa, 2022). This is problematic because African leaders and technical experts (particularly those from the Francophonie) have a big appetite for Eurocentrism – a product of colonialism in itself.

Germany and the EU need to respect and accommodate African interests in earnest. Africa betrays its own course in this case. It is currently difficult to speak of African interests and preferences, partly due to the geographic size and political diversity of the continent, but also due to the scant attention identity has received over the decades. The interests of small, medium and large states vary. Meanwhile, the EU has a clear interest: access to cheap raw materials. African states, particularly in this case, have two major priorities that the EU (and Germany) seem unprepared to accept. First, since 2009, the African community has adopted a position on resource beneficiation, i.e. the African Mining Vision of 2009. Yet Germany and the EU have pursued a parallel process around their so-called 'critical minerals strategies'. The resulting Critical Raw Materials Act undermines Africa's negotiating position (European Union, 2024). The Act seeks to pit African states against alternative sources of raw materials such as China, India, Australia and Latin American states which have rare earth minerals, thus weakening Africa's negotiating position.

Second, the EU has been avoiding Africa's key interest in the relationship: supporting industrialisation. Africa's industrialisation aspirations were adopted by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in July 1989 (see African Union, 2022), yet the EU has largely avoided this issue and undermined it on various platforms. In fact, since the Cotonou Agreement and follow-up meetings spearheaded by South Africa, the European liaison delegations in Southern Africa and the AU have repeatedly refused to shift the strategy implementation to major industrial and infrastructural projects which would facilitate better trade between Africa and Europe, as previously set out during OAU–EU summits (DIRCO director, personal communication, February 2013). Instead, the strategy has largely involved piecemeal 'development' programmes which are essentially capacity substitutions on the obligation of African states.

Germany has also missed this opportunity. Following its lauded open-door policy during the 2015 migration 'crisis', Germany and the EU quietly approached AU member states to help curb migration to Europe. The AU's position was that development policy should include industrialisation to create more jobs in Africa (AU official, personal communication, December 2015). The EU shirked and resumed its policy of financing North African states to increase the securitisation of their borders, a policy that continues to play itself out, often in dramatic episodes (Sorgi & Barigazzi, 2023). The decentring of industrialisation projects has one purpose: to keep Africa in a subaltern position and dependent on Europe. (To be fair, this is no more the onus of the EU and Germany than it is of the African actors.) If anything, Germany and the EU have been supporting maldevelopment and mediocrity.

Another major step in the decolonisation of German/EU foreign and development policy will be the cessation of the divide-and-rule (and other) parasitic mechanisms that have continued unabated under a neocolonial cloak. Germany and the EU have capitalised on a key weakness in African collective diplomacy and policy: solidarity. Compared to unity, solidarity is a loose cooperative principle embodying less commitment. It largely accounts for the tepid trajectory of Africa's international relations. The Banjul Formula and subsequent cooperative mechanisms have failed to augment African regionalism. As a result, the AU has become inconsistent in its overall foreign policy.

The EU has weakened African agency by offering to fund almost everything at the AU Commission, including African negotiation meetings. Granted, as Gassama (2013) has argued, African negotiations are always innately divided between the five regions of the African continent. In recent years, the EU has offered to fund the negotiations of AfCFTA. The EU demanded – through some African states – that they be given preferential treatment in the resultant agreement (AU official, personal communication, December 2015). Germany has presented itself as a supporter of regional integration in different parts of Africa. This notion is absurd because African regional integration is not in the interest of any external party. If anything, given earlier evidence of the GIZ's intrusive approach to its 'support', this is a weakening of African agency. For the EU and Germany to fund even the most minute of African regional programmes is a deliberate disempowerment of the continent through dependency. If African states genuinely seek integration, they should fund the process and own it. At a recent experts' symposium, there was talk of European actors targeting small and less powerful African states to weaken African regionalism. (Note that AU decision-making relies on consensus and egalitarian principles.) As alluded to earlier, Germany's self-adulation around the AUBP is causing more divisions and reviving protracted but dormant border conflicts by targeting states with oil, gas and petroleum discoveries around contested borders. In the short term, both the AU and various member states will start shirking and slippage as agential techniques. In the interest of both parties, the EU should abandon its current approach.

Decolonisation of these policies must address the question of African ownership in development cooperation. In earlier sections, evidence emerged that despite agreements or 'strategies' written in colourful promissory language, the reality on the ground is quite different, exhibiting different nodes and modes of coloniality. In order to improve relations with African actors, it is imperative for Germany and the EU to provide leeway for African participation and ownership in cooperation from the negotiating stage through implementation. The current approach, as argued earlier in the brief, entails 'technical' expertise, including writing agreements – something that the AU and the RECs do on a regular basis. This patronisation is emblematic of the vicissitudes of colonialism. Thereafter, the EU or Germany, as the bigger, stronger parties, often use a common clause in the agreements – 'this agreement will be subject to further negotiation' – to alter the terms of engagement. From that point on, as evinced by German and EU development' programmes, African voices and initiatives are gradually marginalised under the pretext that they do not have the expertise and capacity. This is a common complaint from African economists and development planners who participate in development programmes funded by Germany and the EU. It amounts to an erosion and thinning of African ownership of their development course, and accentuates the maldevelopment that creates long-term dependency on European expertise. In order to improve Africa–Europe relations, African ownership of development programmes must be observed in observance rather than breach.

Related to the above is the need to dismantle the pathologisation of African underdevelopment, i.e. the idea that Europeans have a better idea of what Africans should do to develop socially and

economically. This reignites the old trope of whether the African native can think for her/himself. As Mudimbe (1988) argues, this notion – rooted in eighteenth-century philosophies and shared by almost all European anthropologists and colonial administrators – largely accounts for the destruction of the African continent. German and EU officials, regardless of their nationality, must avoid prescribing solutions to African problems. Certainly, European nations do their due diligence in collecting various forms of political and economic intelligence in Africa before they commit to any projects. However, Germany has become notorious for using their intelligence services to steal native medicines from Botswana and Namibia to patent under their pharmaceuticals – covert action and clandestine operations which are typically used for underhanded tactics to ensure plausible deniability. However, it is ill-disposed for European actors to always prescribe cosmetic solutions to African problems, most of which they caused during and after the colonial period. Likewise, it would be inappropriate for Europe to substitute African governments to govern and provide for their populations. This does not imply that Africans should be excused for their failure to use strategic intelligence to augment their negotiations with Germany and Europe. Nor does it imply that Africans always have solutions for their problems. Certainly, there are countries that are struggling, but there are many more that simply need support in areas where either Germany or the EU has better capacity. In the interest of better cooperation and sustainable development, European actors must resist the temptation to relive the eighteenth century. Similarly, Germany – being mindful of its mission to erase its ugly colonial past – and the EU must (on ethical grounds) also address instances of the symptoms of the dependency syndrome they have created.

Finally, optics and tokenism must be abandoned in respect to modern Africans. First, the practice of placing Europeans (of Caucasian descent) to head German/EU-funded projects must be stopped, even when there are equally or more qualified local counterparts. Modern Africans detest this notion, viewing it as a reincarnation of the colonial idea that Europeans are the visual harbingers of progress. It may invoke memories of Lothar von Throta, except in modern regalia. Second, when employing 'local staff' or issuing 'calls for applications' for funding, the EU and the GIZ prioritise those with Western qualifications. This impugns on local capacity. Even if one accepts the suggestion that Western academic institutions are superior, they should bear in mind that hundreds of thousands of African diplomats, economists and development planners have been trained in the West but have mostly failed to lead their countries to better development.

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Endnotes

1 This is a BMZ strategy for Germany's international cooperation with Africa. It is aimed at lending support to the AU and member states towards the attainment of development goals, co-working towards global transformation underpinned by dignity and security, and jointly addressing intercontinental challenges in solidarity.

2 The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is a policy instrument of the EU. Under this policy, the European Commission combines diplomatic and security sector instruments to 'preserve peace and strengthen international security' (in line with the United Nations charter). Some of the key projects are the civilian and security missions, EU special representatives and disarmament projects. Most of their projects are predominantly in Africa, but also in the Middle East and parts of Europe. For more information, see European Commission (n.d.).

3 'Europeanisation' is defined as an 'ongoing, interactive and mutually constitutive process of change linking national and European levels, where the responses of the member state to the integration process feedback into EU institutions and policy processes and vice versa' (Major, 2005, p. 177).

4 *Renforcement des Capacités Africaines de Maintien de la Paix*

5 Here I align with Bhabha's argument that '…colonial mimicry is the desire of a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence*; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference' (1994, p. 86, emphasis in the original). Bhabha argues that 'mimicry is also the sign of the inappropriate, however, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an imminent threat to both "normalized" knowledges and disciplinary powers' (ibid.).

6 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, also called the North Atlantic Alliance.

7 This is alongside a planned permanent deployment in Lithuania as part of NATO's containment of Russia (Wilke & Von Der Burchard, 2023) and participating in military exercises in Australia as part of a Western show of strength against China (Von Hein, 2022).

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