

CHINA'S AFRICAN POLICY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

A Capstone Presented

by

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ABSTRACT

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China's engagement in Africa in recent years has drawn extensive attention across the globe. The involvement not only concerns the economic development in China and Africa, but also affects the interests of Africa's traditional trading partners from the West. As one of the highly controversial issues, human rights is frequently at the debate forefront in terms of China's African initiative. Using data that have been collected from newspaper, government documents, journals and books, this capstone examines China's policy toward the African continent in the first decade of the 21st century and the impact of this policy on both China and African countries in Sub-Saharan region. By examining the evolution of China's policy, from "brothers" to "strategic partners", I will present three hypotheses. First, the current African initiative fits China's economic and political interests and its global ambition. Second, while China's business activities bring development opportunities to Africa, China needs to increase the transparency of its practices and deliver more benefit to local residents. Third, China's practice helps improve human rights in terms of the basic meaning that human rights is survival and development. Yet, adjustments should be made to "non-inference" policy. I offer recommendations to the current initiatives in Africa from the perspectives of China, African and the West.

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Table of Content

| | |
|--|----|
| Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| Chapter 2 BACKGROUND & DRIVING FORCES..... | 4 |
| 2.1 Background..... | 4 |
| 2.2 Driving Forces..... | 7 |
| Chapter 3 KEY COMPONENTS..... | 14 |
| 3.1 Diplomatic Strategy..... | 14 |
| 3.2 Integration of Business and Aid..... | 20 |
| 3.3 Development Assistance..... | 29 |
| 3.4 Culture..... | 34 |
| Chapter 4 POLICY ACCESSING..... | 36 |
| 4.1 From the Perspectives of China | 36 |
| 4.2 From the perspective of Africans | 40 |
| 4.3 Human Rights..... | 43 |
| Chapter 5 RECOMMENDATIONS..... | 48 |
| 5.1 Chinese Side | 48 |
| 5.2 African Side | 50 |
| 5.3 Both “New” and “Old” Donors | 51 |
| Chapter 6 CONCLUSION..... | 52 |
| REFERENCE LIST..... | 53 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|---|----|
| 2.1 China's oil production and consumption between 1990 and 2010..... | 9 |
| 2.2 Africa's share in China's crude oil imports | 10 |
| 4.1 Angola's Crude Oil Exports by Destination..... | 38 |

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

China's engagement with Africa has continued for over half a century. The Sino-African relations have evolved from "brothers" (Chang, 2006) to "strategic partners" (China's African Policy, 2006) with the changes of China's domestic situation and international environment. Launched in 2000, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) has become an important vehicle of China-Africa strategic partnership to boost cooperation in various fields (China urges, 2010). In 2006 "strategic partnership (China's African Policy, 2006)" has been articulated again as China's dominant Africa Policy. Instead of singing the old tune of proletarian internationalism which stressed "rich ideology and the reinforcement of political benefits (Sorensen, 2010, p139)", the policy paper highlights "economic win-win cooperation (China's African Policy, 2006)," which can be better understood within the framework of "South-South cooperation (China-Africa, 2000)". In recent years, the two sides have witnessed the dramatic increase in trade, capital flow, and personnel exchange, among others. Therefore, this paper will focus on the Sub-Saharan region and the time span of the first decade of the 21st century. I will analyze the key components of the strategic partnership that includes diplomatic strategy, integration of business and aid, social development assistance and cultural exchange.

China's engagement in Africa is one of the most controversial issues in international relations in the new century. Abundant books, academic papers and media reports have appeared, focusing on various of aspects of China's activities on the continent. Opinions are diverse. In her book *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa*, American professor Deborah Brautigam (2010) highlights the positive roles of China's involvement in the Sub-Saharan region.

When defending the criticism such as human rights from the West, she stresses that the West did the same or even worse things at times in the past, and points out China's inability of handling some issues such as labor practice that are not solved yet inside China neither. A leading Chinese researcher on Africa, He Wenping (2007), praises the China's engagements in Africa in her paper *The Balancing Act of China's Africa Policy*. Yet, she acknowledges that the long-standing non-interference policy is facing the challenge of how to respond to human rights issues (Sorensen, pp.157-158). On the contrary, Senegalese journalist Adama Gaye holds negative views of China's involvement, claiming that China gets more from Africa by grabbing huge natural resources and dumping cheap products. And Professor George Ayittey asserts that China's increased engagement has impeded Africa's "halting steps towards democratic accountability and better governance (Ayittey, 2010)." Standing somewhere in between, Ian Taylor (2009) presents a "balanced appraisal of China's engagement in Africa (Taylor, 2009, p. 3)" in his book *China's New Role in Africa*.

After scrutinizing these materials mentioned above as well as other literature, I will come to three hypotheses from the perspectives of China, the Sub-Saharan region and human rights. First, China has basically reached its goals of securing natural resources and market access in the region and has succeeded in increasing its global profile. Second, China's involvement in the region has helped boost the economic growth in sub-Saharan region, and has improved the livelihood of ordinary people to some degree; however, China needs to increase the transparency of its practices and deliver more benefits to local residents. Third, China and the western countries have different understandings with respect to human rights. In my opinion, China has done a good job in terms of the basic meaning that "human rights is survival and development" (Taylor, p.94). Yet, policy-makers should carefully think about making some adjustments in

terms of the “hands-off” policy and move closer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Movement in this direction will help to alleviate the criticism of supporting rogue regimes such as Sudan and Zimbabwe.

The paper has several sections. The first part is a general introduction and explains why the issue is of significant importance. To better illustrate the evolution from treating African countries as “bothers” to “strategic partners”, in section two I will give a snapshot on the history of Sino-African relations over the past half a century and point out four driving forces that have contributed to the policy change. Section three will uncover the toolkit of China’s African policies in terms of diplomacy, integration of aid and commerce, social development assistance and culture. I will analyze these tools in relations to the three hypotheses mentioned earlier in section 4. Major recommendations will be included in the last section.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND DRIVING FORCES

2.1 Historical Background

The evolution of Sino-African relations from “brothers” to “strategic partners” can be stood in the historical context. Generally, from mid-1950s when China began contacts with African liberation movement to late 1970s when China started implementing the reform and opening-up policy, China’s African initiative was primarily political driven (Sorensen, pp.138-142). From late 1970s to present, China’s Africa policy has become increasingly pragmatic and economic driven. The establishment of FOCAC in 2000 “laid the basis of strategic partnership in the new millennium” (Euka, 2011, p.222).

The earlier “brothers” diplomacy was reflected in two aspects in terms of ideological construction and generous assistance. First, the brotherhood with African countries was forged by the ideological emphasis of “anti-hegemonic crusade”, “anti-colonial movement”, and “anti-imperial posture” (Talyor, 1998, pp.443-460). The birth of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) was against the background of the Cold War in which the United States and Soviet Union (USSR) were struggling to enlarge their scope of influence across the world. China was suffering diplomatic isolation due to the different national ideology from the United States and the split of China-Soviet alliance (Talyor, 1998). As a member from the socialist camp, China’s relationship with the United States was rocky, and the confrontation was escalated during the Korea War and the Vietnam War (Sorensen, 2010). As for the relations between China and USSR, they had sound relations during the early years of the founding of PRC; however, the honeymoon was end

since 1960s when USSR suppressed China from seeking its own developmental road (Talyor, 1998). To guarantee its national survival and win international legitimacy under the unfavorable international environment, China allied African countries by stressing the common historical misfortunes of semi-colonial and colonial control by the West, and the struggle experiences for national liberation (He, 2003).

The initial step of China's involvement in Africa was taken in 1955 at the Bandung Conference (China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2000). Later, China signed the first official bilateral trade agreements with Algeria, Egypt, Guinea, Morocco and Sudan. From December 1963 to February 1964, Premier Zhou and Vice-Premier Chen Yi toured ten African countries (China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2000), which was seen as a major milestone in the development of friendly relations between African countries. In 1971, African countries supported China's successful bid to restore Beijing's legitimate seat at the UN, with 26 of 76 votes from African countries, making one third of the total (Li, 2007). As late Chairman Mao said "it is our African brothers that carried us into the United Nations" (Chang, 2006).

Second, the brotherhood highlighted China's generous aid to Africa with little economic link. At that time, China provided material aid, funds and military equipment to support the independent movement in African countries. Many of figures leading the independent movement later became heads or officials in some African countries (Sorensen, 2010). China also provided aid to Africa for social development to its full capacity, and sometimes even offered more than it was unable to afford. Among the most famous projects was the Tanzania-Zambia railway which was constructed from 1967 to 1975 during the hardship of Cultural Revolution (Hare, 2007). "The project completed at a cost of US\$600 million and with the help of 15,000 Chinese workers

(Sorensen, p.123).” Additionally, Beijing government helped Guinea to build a match factory and a cigarette factory, sent agricultural experts to Mali and medical teams to African countries including Tanzania, Somalia and Congo (Sorensen, 2010). At that time, China’s generosity towards Africa was primarily political driven to secure its state survival with little economic implication.

Yet, the brotherhood with the emphasis on ideology and generous assistance began to wane since late 1970s, as China switched its focus toward building the domestic economy. During the early years of economic reform from late 1970 to mid-1990s, Chinese leadership started to shift their outlook from proletarian internationalism to national pragmatism, and played down the ideological difference between socialism and capitalism. As the late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping who initiated the reform and opening-up policy said "whether a cat is black or white makes no difference. As long as it catches mice, it is a good cat” (Reformer, 1999). The beginning of the opening-up and reform policy, and subsequent economic attention directed towards Japan and the United States, saw a general decline in two-way trade and aid from Beijing towards Africa. Yet, throughout the 1980’s and into the 1990’s Chinese leaders made a number of high level visits to Africa (Brautigam, 2007). Former Chinese premier Zhao Ziyang visited 11 African countries in early 1980s, where “he proposed four principles for developing economic cooperation with African countries” (Sorensen, p.143). It was echoed by the then President Jiang Zemin who paid a visit in 1996, calling for “seeking common development on the basis of mutual benefit with Africa” (Sorensen, p.143). To summarize, the initial stage of economic reform can be seen a transition period where brotherhood of Sino-African relations was fading away and partnership between the two sides was emerging.

As China shifted from a net oil exporter to importer in 1993, and economic reform deepened from mid-1990s, Chinese leadership started to pay close attention to African countries for their natural resources and market access. Driven by China's rapid economic growth, Sino-African strategic partnership has been full-blown since the establishment of FOCAC in 2000. Based on the figures released from the National Bureau of Statistics of China, the economy recorded over 10 percent growth annually between 2003 and 2007, which increased China's dependence on imported oil, and push China to seek natural resource and energy anywhere it can. African countries are an ideal provider because of their oil reserves and the traditionally friendly bond with China.

2.2 Driving Forces

Over the past 50 years, there are two types of driving forces that contributed to the policy evolution from earlier brothers to recent strategic partners. China's African policy was influenced by the domestic issues in terms of Tiananmen Square Incidence and economic reform, and international issues in terms of the end of the Cold War and globalization.

2.2. 1 Tiananmen Square Incidence

After the Tiananmen Square incident on 4 June 1989, China underwent a major re-evaluation of its foreign policy. The demonstrations and subsequent military crackdown around Tiananmen Square resulted in a severe crisis in China's relations with the West (Gustafson, 2008). Previously, human rights issue in China had been quietly ignored because the economic reforms were perceived as including social and economic change that was well received by the West (Taylor, 1998). Indeed, Taylor notes that throughout the 1980's Beijing was given

favorable treatment. However, the June crackdown ended China's 'honeymoon' relationship with the West, and shifted the attention of the western countries to the human rights in China.

The fall out with the West led Beijing to reassess China's foreign policy formulation. While the West imposed sanctions on Beijing, African countries lent their hands to China. Angola's foreign minister, for example, expressed the support for the resolute actions to quell the student movement, whilst Namibia's Sam Nujoma sent a telegram of congratulations to the Chinese army (Taylor, 1998). The Tiananmen Square Incident did not affect the China's relations with the Third World as it did with the Western world (Taylor, 1998). As a result, the developing world gained renewed emphasis from China's policy makers and has become a 'cornerstone' of Beijing's foreign policy.

2.2.2 Economic Reform

China's economic achievement, resulting from its reform and opening-up policy, has contributed greatly to China's strong presence on the African continent in recent years. China's meteoric rise over the past two decades from an impoverished developing country to one of today's most important economies has called for sharp increase in natural resource and energy. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s China was a net oil exporter; it became a net oil importer in 1993 and is growingly dependent on foreign oil (figure below).

China's Oil Production and Consumption, 1990-2010*

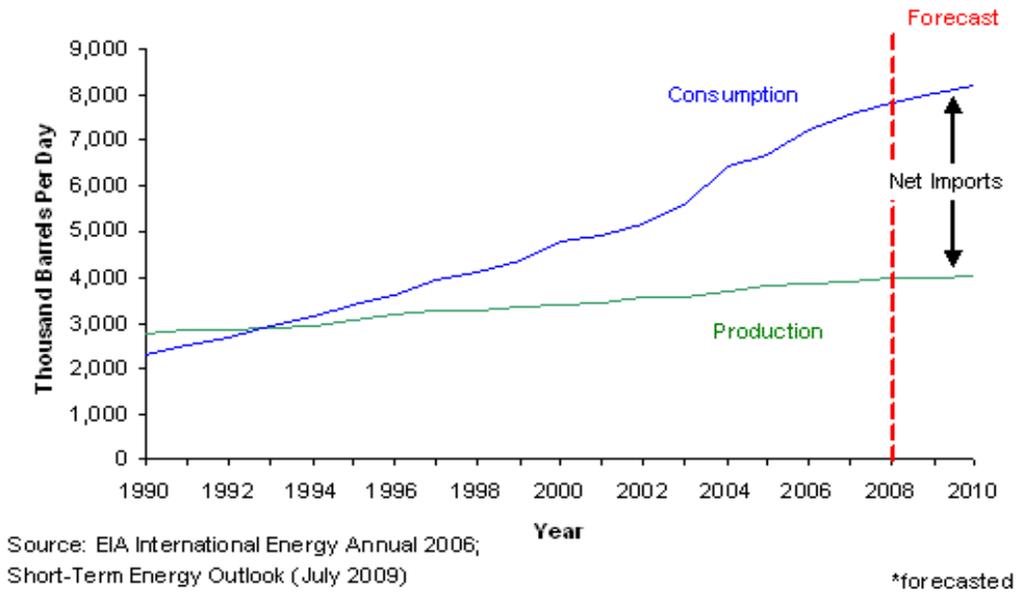


Figure 2.1 China's oil production and consumption between 1990 and 2010.

Facing the gap between consumption and production, China has to be dependent on imports. Based on the following figure 2.2, it is clearly seen that China's import from Africa has seen roughly steady increase in China's economic mix since 2000. In addition to oil from major countries including Sudan and Angola, China's imports from Africa include cobalt, copper and timber from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), manganese from South Africa and uranium from Niger.

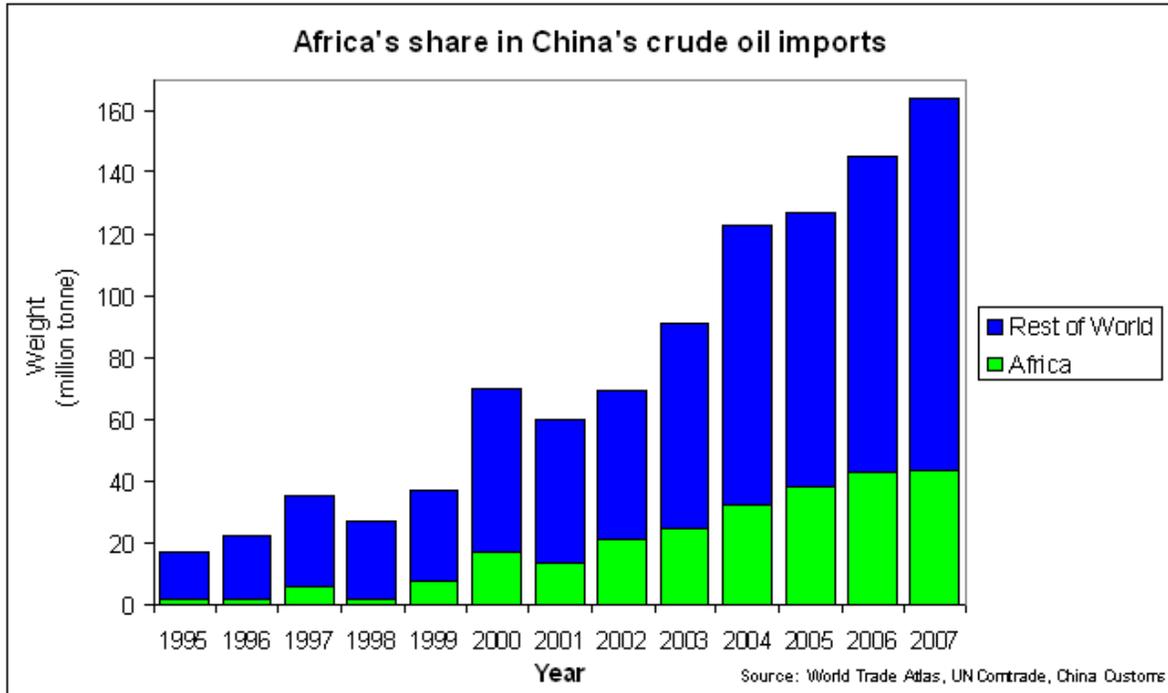


Figure 2.2 Africa's share in China's crude oil imports.

The more fundamental reason behind the extensive engagement was not only China's economic growth but the energy-driven growth model. Over the past three decades, the Chinese leadership has pursued a modernization program largely built on traditional economic development model: heavy industrialization, labor intensive manufacturing industries, export-led growth and high environmental damage (Strauss & Saavedra, 2009). Statistics show that “with about 6 percent of global GDP, China consumes 31 percent of the world's coal, 30 percent of iron, 27 percent of steel , 40 percent of cement, 20 percent of copper, 19 percent of aluminum and 10 percent of electricity” (Jiang, 2009). As acknowledged by Zhao Guobao, deputy commissioner of China's National Development and Reform, to generate every 10,000 yuan of GDP, China uses as much as three times the energy as the global average. The ratio is even higher than major advanced industrialized countries. “In producing US\$ 1.00 GDP, China

consumes eight times the energy that Japan does, and in producing the same industrial goods, China uses 11.5 times the energy of Japan” (Jiang, 2009). Both the rapid economic growth and the growth model based on heavy demand for energy and raw materials impelled China’s “go out” strategy which encourages Chinese enterprises to go to Africa. As a result, china is now dependent on Africa for “around 30% of its oil imports, 80% of its cobalt imports and 40% of its manganese imports” (Foster, 2009, p 6).

2.2.3 End of the Cold War

The end of the Cold War left the Sub-Saharan region with a sense of indifference from the West and a giddy embrace for multi-party system. During the Cold War, Africa was the battle field between the United States and former Soviet Union as both wanted to expand their scope of influence (Talyor,1998). The two major powers would vie for alliances, offering financial and military support for loyalty. For example, although Ethiopia was long pro-American, it joined the Soviet camp in 1977 and was rewarded with Cuban troops and billions of dollars of military equipment (Perlez, 1992). Washington responded by pumping arms and money into the vacuum left by Moscow in neighboring Somalia. However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, both African countries were ignored. Ethiopia, which intended to establish democracy in the early 1990’s, had not received any of the economic aid that Washington has promised. As for Somalia, it considered so irrelevant that Washington successfully pushed for a sharp reduction in the size of the United Nations peacekeeping there (Perlez, 1992).

With the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the US’s victory in the Cold War, an increasing number of African countries started to adopt a multi-party political system. Statistics showed that in 1990, only 13 out of 52 independent African countries used multi-party system, but by

the end of 1994, almost all African countries already or announced to employ multi-party system (Xu, 2003). It was encouraging for African countries to have political reform; however, since most African countries failed to build up necessary political and economic institutions to keep the democracy running, two third African countries ended with civil wars and social unrest instead (Xu, 2003).

To sum it up, the end of the bi-polarity left the vacuum of power struggle between the United States and Soviet Union. The social unrest that resulted from the giddy embrace for democracy in many African countries created an opportunity for China to step in and become an alternative development model for African leaders to emulate.

2.2.4 Globalization

At the same time as the Cold War was ending, the concept of globalization was emerging in international discourse. Globalization refers to the integration of most economies into the global capitalist economy. The demise of the Eastern Europe in the early 1990s has created an opportunity in which capitalism as an economic system now dominates the globe more than it had been at any time in its history (Akindele, Gidado, & Olaopo, 2002). One of the most important consequences of globalization in Africa “is the erosion of sovereignty, especially on economic and financial matters, as a result of the imposition of models, strategies and policies of development on African countries by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the World Trade Organization (WTO)” (Challenge of globalization, 2002, p.18). As a result, in African continent, “globalization leads to the development of anti-developmentalism” (Challenges of Globalization, 2002, p21), leaving Africans worse-off.

As globalization hit a setback at the end of 1990s with the highlight of Seattle protest in 1999, in Africa even as structural adjustment policies with the focus on the demand for privatization and liberalization continued to shape the aid from the West, attention was gradually given to fighting poverty, building up good governance, debts relief and so on (Brautigam, 2010). As a result, in September 2000, almost 150 world leaders at the UN's Millennium Summit signed off on a symbolic commitment to eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Brautigam, 2010).

Meanwhile, in the past years, globalization has given birth to the emerging financiers such as BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) who have fueled global demand for petroleum and other resources. Africa is richly endowed with natural resources that the emerging economies need, and thus faces a historical opportunity to harness its natural endowment and the foreign investment to support the local economic growth and reduce poverty. Foster (2009) explains that foreign investment into infrastructure resources in Africa have been steadily rising in the past decade. He further notes that financier flows “are now broadly comparable in magnitude to the official development assistance (ODA) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development OECD donors” (Foster, 2009, p. xviii). Among the emerging economies, China is an important player. Chinese leadership strategically integrated itself into the global economy through the entry of WTO. With increasing economic muscle and the failure of the West's approach, China has started to promote “Beijing Consensus (Ramo, 2004)” in Africa, and try to build up itself as a responsible power by supporting African countries to realize the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Thompson, 2005).

To summarize, the Tiananmen Square Incident and China's economic reform explain why China sought to revive its involvement on the African continent politically and economically. From the perspective of Africans, the failures to establish democracy after the Cold War and the economic marginalization in the process of globalization have contributed to African leaders' willingness to have China's presence in the continent.

CHAPTER 3

KEY COMPONENTS IN CHINA'S AFRICAN POLICY

Although China established relations with a number of African countries in 1960s, and some state-owned enterprises have started to look to investment since the early 1990s, the engagement on all fronts has swept the continent over the past decade. Since Africa is of significant importance to develop China's economy and increase its global profile, Beijing has devised a kit of policies in terms of politics, integration of aid and business, social development assistance and culture to enhance relations with the partner.

3.1 Diplomatic Strategy

The current diplomatic strategy is rooted in the past over 50 years of friendly, respectful, and supportive relations between China and African countries, and can be depicted by the characteristics of adjustment, flexibility and continuity (Dittmer & Yu, 2010). The Chinese leadership has developed the constructive thinking of "three-world" theory to current "South-

South Cooperation” (Strauss & Saavedra, 2009), with the adherence to the “non-interference principle” and the frequent visits by high-level officials.

3.1.1 South-South Cooperation

Politically, China used to portray itself as the herald of developing countries to lead the independence movement. Today, China puts a new twist on this old tune to fit the new environment by describing itself as both political and economic leader of the developing countries under the framework of South-South Cooperation (Strauss & Saavedra, 2009).

The late Chinese chairman Mao Zedong proclaimed that the world has divided into three primary units: The First World led by the United States and former Soviet Union; The Second World consisting of Australia, Canada, Europe, and Japan; and the Third World, the "new" South, made up of Africa, Asia (except Japan), and Latin America (Sorensen, 2010). With global structure of unipolar system, China has replaced “the former Three-world theory with the new emerging three-world configuration: the super-power United States, the rising European Union and the developing world, or the new South” (Dittmer & Yu, 2010).

The South-South cooperation has both economic and political significance, and is well presented in China’s African initiative. Under the existing international economic order, closer South-South cooperation will put the developing countries in better position in their dialogues with the developed countries and constitutes an important step toward establishing a new global economic order (South-South cooperation, 2008). Moreover, “better economic cooperation among the developing countries will also give big impetus to closer political and diplomatic ties among themselves and consequently have profound impacts on containing power politics”

(South-South cooperation, 2008). For example, politically, at the United Nations, China as a permanent UN Security Council member used its veto right to block the moves to impose sanctions on Sudan (Chinese leader, 2007). Mutually, African countries supported Beijing to fight back a proposal by the West who accused of China's practice in human rights (He, 2007). Moreover, the South-South policy is well reflected in the commercial connections between China and African countries because of their complementary economies. China has been thirsty for natural resources and energy from Africa, and African countries need investment and assistance from China. The IMF report also indicates that "the shares of developing countries in global economy are constantly growing while their dependence on markets in developed countries is reducing" (South-South cooperation, 2008). The reducing dependence on industrialized countries is actually what China wants. In short, the South-South Cooperation is well demonstrated in China's initiatives in Africa squarely fits China's effort to create a sound international environment for its development and its ambition to increase the global reach.

3.1.2 Flexibility in Non-interference Principle

The non-interference is viewed as a cornerstone in China's foreign policy. It has been hailed by most African countries that suffered the scar over the colonial control, but criticized by the West for the support to rogue regime and failed states. Due to the one-party system and the criticism from the West of China's human rights, Chinese government strictly adheres to non-interference in principle to defend the West from meddling in its internal affairs. Yet, China has started to make it flexible in practice in the process of the engagement in Africa, especially when it comes to its national interest.

There are more and more examples demonstrating China's flexibility in non-interference in terms of African affairs. With the pressure from the International community in the run-up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics, China urged Sudanese government to end the fighting in Darfur and accept the hybrid peacekeeping troops of UN and AU (Bhattacharji & Zissis, 2008). Chinese President Hu Jintao held talks with Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir during the Beijing Summit of the FOCAC in 2006 and during his visit to Sudan in February 2007. While in Khartoum, Hu put forward four key principles to solve the Darfur issue (He, 2007). In August 2007, the Sudanese government accepted the hybrid troops partly because of the pressure from China.

Likewise, similar intervention can be noticed in 2006 Zambia election. The president candidate, Michael Sata, criticized the alleged Chinese poor business practice in the country, and threatened to chase away the Chinese, if elected. Local media also reported that he had met with Taiwanese businessmen in Malawi to get funding for his campaign and reportedly stated that he would recognize Taiwan as an independent country if he were elected. (Hare. P, 2007)" AFP reported that the Chinese Ambassador to Zambia, Li Baodong, responded by saying that China shall have nothing to do with Zambia if Sata wins the elections and goes ahead to recognize Taiwan". Li also reportedly added that the Chinese business community would halt additional investments until the bilateral relationship between the two countries was clarified (Hare. P, 2007). In the end, Sata lost the election.

It is clearly seen that non-interference is the long-standing China's foreign policy towards Africa. Yet, China makes the policy flexible when its national interest is under threat. However, flexibility does not mean shaking the cornerstone. China will basically continue to stick to non-

inference rhetorically because the policy, hailed by African leaders, facilitates the exploitation of oil and natural resources on the continent. Also, if China would shake the non-interference policy, the move would tacitly legitimate the West to interfere China's internal affairs. Therefore, Beijing quietly makes the principle flexible and publicly complies with it to serve its economic and political goals.

3.1.3 High-level Visits

For a long time, China has maintained the tradition of frequent visit by high-level officials to African countries. Since the beginning of the new century, the friendly co-operative relationship between China and Africa has entered a new phase of all-round co-operation (He, 2003), China's new generation of leadership remains highly attentive to developing the relations with African countries. The continent has witnessed frequent visits by top Chinese leaders.

In February 2004, President Hu Jintao raised a three-point proposal during his first African trip as China's head of State. He stressed the importance of maintaining mutual assistance, promoting common prosperity for China and Africa and protecting the interests of developing nations (Yu, 2006).

At the Asian-African Summit in April 2005, according to China Daily, President Hu proposed four principles for constructing a new strategic partnership between Asia and Africa in terms of politics, economy, culture and security (Yu, 2006).

In April 2006, Hu Jintao visited Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Nigeria and Kenya as a preparation for the Beijing Summit of the FOCAC. In February 2007, Hu Jintao made his first visit to Sudan, and put forward four key principles to solve the Darfur issue. In 2008, Hu Jintao met South

African counterpart Thabo Mbeki on bilateral relations and the situation in Zimbabwe in Japan on the sidelines of the outreach sessions of the Group of Eight (G8) summit. In early 2009, a weeklong tour took the Chinese president to Saudi Arabia, Mali, Senegal, Tanzania and Mauritius (Yu, 2006). Since Hu took office in 2003, he paid visit to Africa almost every year. Although he did not go to Africa in 2008 partly due to Beijing Olympics and the Wenchuan Earthquake, he held talks with leaders from African countries during international conferences. Additionally, the absence of Hu Jintao' visit in 2008 was, to some extent, filled by Chinese top legislator Wu Bangguo's African tour which took him to Algeria, Gabon, Ethiopia, Madagascar and Seychelles. Besides, for more than 10 years, the first destination for Chinese foreign minister to visit after New Year celebration is Africa.

Every time Chinese roll out the red carpet to welcome the state visits by top leaders from African countries. In contrast, when African leaders visit London or Washington, unless they are from South Africa, Egypt, or one of the few other states deemed important, "they are barely afforded a few minutes and even then they are more likely to be admonished for their chronic failure in governance than they are to be toasted as dear friends...(Taylor, 2009, p.24)."

China's initiative in Africa is exemplary for the South-South cooperation, which "squarely combines China's interest in Africa and its global strategy to promote China as a peacefully developing and responsible rising power" (Gill. B & Reilly. J, 2007). Although there is no substantial change about the controversial non-inference principle, the move to make it somehow flexible helps China better protect its national interest, and build up its image as a responsible power. Finally, the frequent visits by top Chinese leaders demonstrate that China has attached

great importance to the relations with African countries, which facilitates its political and business practice in Africa.

3.2 Integration of Business and Aid

Commercial relations have dominated China's African policy in the past decade, and are the essential part of China's national interest in Africa. The combination of economic activities and commerce-related aid reflects China's African policy evolving from idealism to pragmatic realism (Sorensen, 2010), and makes the headline of the current commercial engagement. Since the dividing line between profit and aid are so blur that even the 2006 China's African Policy Paper does not have a section devoted to "aid". The policy paper spells out the cooperation scope through the categories of "the political field", "the economic field" and "education, science, culture, health and social aspects." Furthermore, the paper does not neither touch the words such as "recipient" and "donor" nor contain anything implying Africa is the most underdeveloped continent in the world (Sorensen, 2010). Instead, what the policy paper emphasizes are "mutual benefit", "mutual support" and "common development." Therefore, this section will include both business activities and commerce-aid and their interactions. I will leave China's aid for Africa's social development including education and health to discuss in the next section.

3.2.1 Background of Aid-Business Integration

The combination of business and China's ODA is the result of China's economic growth which calls for market access and nature resources, and is serving China's "going global" strategy.

There is no better place than the integration of aid and profit to show the policy evolution from treating Africa as a “brother” to “partner.” Over the past half a century, the goal of using aid was changing from politics to economics and from proletarian internationalism to mutual development. As mentioned earlier, in the past China provided assistance to African countries in exchange for their political support. At that time, China offered generous help to Africa even during its hardship of Cultural Revaluation. Today, Chinese leadership has become very realistic and pragmatic. A package of commercially related aid has been devised, such as concessional loans for assisting Chinese firm to enter an unfamiliar region with daunting challenges (Sorensen, 2010). Also, a great number of infrastructure projects with the dual roles of assisting natural resource extraction and local development have been implemented under aid programs.

The aid reform in the middle of 1990s shed light on the change of aid from being political to economic driven and shaped China’s aid program well into the new millennium. As mentioned earlier, the inception of the policy shift can date back to the early 1980s when then Chinese premier Zhao Ziyang called for developing economic cooperation with African countries (Sorensen, 2010). It was echoed by the then President Jiang Zemin who paid a visit to Africa in 1996. As the reconstruction of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) deepened, China’s aid policy started to become increasingly market-oriented (Zhou, 2008). China’s aid was changing from free assistance to serving economy as policy banks were established in 1994 and aid reform was launched in 1995.

In 1994, three policy banks, China Development Bank, China Export Import Bank (Exim Bank) and China Agricultural Bank, were created (Zhu, 2008), with the former two playing a

crucial role in providing concessional loans and non-concessional finance to support Chinese companies to invest overseas through a hybrid of planning and market means (Brautigam, 2010).

The year of 1995 was a turning point of China's overall reform with respect to foreign aid. A conference held in October on aid to foreign countries addressed that as the opening-up policy was going forward and the international situation was changing, the ways of giving aid to foreign countries was facing a profound change. With the establishment of socialist market economy, enterprises became the primary players in business activities and finance institutions started playing an increasing important role in market economy. The conference also encouraged Chinese companies to implement foreign aid through setting up joint ventures with their counterparts in aid recipient countries. Chinese companies were encouraged to apply the successful experience of the market reform to African countries, such as establishing economic development zone. The conference acknowledged that the form of joint venture would be conducive to combining the capital from both government and enterprise to help channel more funding sources, expand the scale of aid projects and improve the efficiency of assistance (Zhou, 2008). Obviously, China's engagement in the past ten year has followed the guideline set by the conference, with the emphasis on the role of aid in serving business.

When it comes into implementation, Chinese government usually finances their own companies directly to carry out aid project. Unlike the World Bank, for example, they do not issue aid funds into accounts controlled by the host governments. As Chinese analyst explained, China Exim Bank wants to guarantee the economic benefits and the safe return of the loan (Brautigam, 2010). For example, "in Sudan and Angola, the Eximbank disburse the loans

directly to a Chinese enterprise or joint venture, believing this can better guarantee its productive use, and thus repayment” (Brautigam, p 142).

3.2.2 Finance Institutions

Given the increasing complex and comprehensive business activities, there are growing numbers of stakeholders in policy-making including governmental authorities and bank institutions who make policies and provide services to facilitate China’s companies to invest overseas.

The State Council (China’s cabinet) is the highest executive organ and decides on overall China’s policy. Generally speaking, the Ministry of Commerce (MOC) is a relatively primary actor in dealing with business and commerce-aid. There is perhaps nowhere else in the world where the MOC is more involved in foreign policy than in Africa (Gill & Reilly, 2007). Responsibilities are divided across four departments: The Department of West Asia and African Affairs, responsible for providing policy advice on Africa to top policymakers and encouraging investment and trade; the Department of Outward Investment and Economic Cooperation, responsible for making policies regarding economic cooperation and regulating all Chinese companies involved overseas; the Department of Aid to Foreign Countries, playing a central role in administering China’s aid projects; and the operational authority over the office of the Economic and Commercial Counselor (ECC), which can be seen as local MOC representatives in Africa (Gill & Reilly, 2007).

In the meantime, state-owned banks including China Exim Bank and China Development Bank (CDB) are also primary agencies implementing china’s pledge to Africa. China Exim Bank

is “responsible for the preferential credit component and CDB for the FDI support fund” (Wang, 2007, p13). China Exim Bank is the sole bank handling concessional loans. It has a special Concessional Loan Department, “evaluating loan aid projects and having special list of companies which are allowed to participate in tenders. Most of the companies are state-owned” (Sorensen, 2010, p.124). Along with two sister banks CDB and China Agricultural Development Bank, The Exim Bank is tasked to promote export and investment. It provides low-rate loans to African governments for aid programs (Sorensen, 2010). Most of Exmibank’s portfolio consists of export seller’s credits and export buyer’s credit to support Chinese companies operating abroad and finance foreign borrowers’ imports of Chinese products. By 2007, “China Exim Bank had become the world’s largest export credit agency” (Brautigam, pp107-113). The Exim bank coordinates with the MOC to authorize Chinese firms to bid for China's aid projects (Gill & Reilly, 2007). The CDB, as China's biggest foreign investment and financing bank, has stuck to the principle of serving China's strategy toward Africa. In 2007, On March 14, 2007, the Chinese government officially approved the establishment of the China-Africa Development Fund US\$ 5 billion in total, with first-phase funding provided by China Development Bank (Brautigam, 2010). The fund primarily aims at encouraging Chinese companies to operation in Africa.

Since compared with other regions, Sub-Saharan Africa relatively has high risk for investment, it is important to mention the China Export and Credit Insurance Corporation (SINOSURE), which is “China's only policy-oriented insurance company specializing in export credit insurance” (SINOSURE, 2006). SINOSURE that began operation in 2001 aims to support Chinese exports and investment abroad by insuring against buyer and country risks, such as foreign exchange restrictions, expropriation, nationalization and war (Wang, 2007). In 2006 the

volume of new business reached US\$29.4 billion, up from just US\$2.8 billion in 2002. Although “only 3 percent of its short-term insurance was for Africa in 2006, Africa accounted for near 30 percent of SINOSURE’s medium- and long-term business, second only to Asia” (Wang, 2007).

3.2.3 Commercial Policies

In the past ten years, the two-way trade and investment have increased dramatically due to the implementation of a variety of commercial or quasi-commercial policies. China-Africa bilateral trade volume increased from US\$10 billion in 2000 to over US\$100 billion in 2008 (China-Africa, 2010). The average annual growth rate of China-Africa trade over the period “reached 33.5%, with its proportion in China's total foreign trade volume rising from 2.2% to 4.2%” (China-Africa, 2010). In recent years, China’s investment in Africa also witnessed tremendous increase. China’s direct investment to Africa reached US\$490 million by the end of 2003 and rocketed to US\$9.33 billion by the end of 2009 (China-Africa, 2010). A series of measures including zero tariffs, development fund and establishment of economic zones contribute to the growth in trade and investment.

China has offered the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) of Africa that have diplomatic relations with China zero tariffs on some of their exports to China since 2005. By July 2010, African products that enjoy zero-tariff treatment had increased to 4,700 taxable items, and “are expected to cover 95% of the total taxable items mentioned in the Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Import and Export Duties” (China-Africa, 2010). As a result, the export of African products to China that are free from Chinese customs duties has been growing rapidly. From 2005 to the end of June 2010, China had imported African products with an accumulated value of US\$1.32 billion under zero-tariff terms, including agricultural products, leather, stone

materials, textiles and garments, machine spare parts, base metals and wood products (China-Africa, 2010). The measure undoubtedly helped contribute to the balance of trade. In 2008, “US\$50.8 billion is China's exports to Africa and US\$56 billion is imports from Africa” (China-Africa, 2010).

The establishment of African commodities trade center is another important step taken by China to promote African exports to China. The center will be based in the World Trade Center in Yiwu city, Zhejiang province, with a total space of 5,000 square meters (Interpretation of New Measures, 2010). The center will focus on products with African characteristics and promote African products to Chinese and global consumers, by leveraging the platform and brand name status of the Yiwu International Small Commodities Distribution Center. The center will adopt preferential policies such as “fees reduction and wavering, as well as other conveniences for participating African enterprises” (Interpretation of New Measures, 2010).

As mentioned earlier, China started to implement the China-Africa Development Fund in 2007. This is a stock equity fund created by China's financial organizations to give special support to Chinese enterprises when they invest in Africa (Brautigam, 2010). Over the three years since its establishment in June 2007, the fund has approved investment in over 30 projects, covering agricultural development, machinery manufacturing, electric power, building materials, industrial parks, mining and port logistics, among other fields (Interpretation of New Measures, 2010). Now the arrangement of the first-stage fund of US\$1 billion has been completed, and the fund is expected to be increased to US\$5 billion (China-Africa, 2010).

China has also been pushing forward the building of overseas economic and trade cooperation zones in Africa. Supported by governments of the two sides, Chinese enterprises

take charge of infrastructure construction in the operation zones, and attract Chinese and foreign enterprises to move in and gradually form industrial clusters (Brautigam, 2010). At present, China is building six economic and trade cooperation zones in Zambia, Mauritius, Nigeria, Egypt and Ethiopia, having invested US\$250 million in infrastructure construction (China-Africa, 2010). The Zambia-China Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone was the first overseas economic and trade cooperation zone launched by China. So far 13 companies have moved in; “they engage in mining, prospecting, nonferrous metals processing, chemical engineering, and construction, having made investment worth US\$600 million, and providing more than 6,000 jobs for local people” (China-Africa, 2010). The overseas zones can be seen as way to support the Chinese companies to “go global” in group. “This strategy reduces anxieties’ about foreign investment about foreign investment, and it can provide economies of scale, former Minister of Commerce Bo Xilai noted” (Brautigam, p99).

Similar with economic zones, China and Nigeria are building one of Africa's largest free trade zones on the tip of the Lekki Peninsula in Lagos, the capital city of Nigeria. The Lekki Peninsula is one of the fastest growing areas in Lagos State and will soon have a new deep water port, an international airport and new hotels (China and Nigeria, 2010). The free trade zone, covering 16,000 hectares, is being constructed as part of a 60-40 partnership between the Chinese government and Lagos State (China and Nigeria, 2010). The Lekki Free Zone is one of the responses to the grand strategy of “going global”. Adeyemo Thompson, the deputy managing director of the Lekki Free Zone Development Company, said “the Nigerian free trade zone gives Chinese companies greater access to growing African markets for consumer goods, electrical equipment, and industrial products” (China and Nigeria, 2010). First, Nigeria has the population of 137 million, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

consisted of Nigeria and its neighboring countries has about 500 million population; however, the local industry is very weak with heavy dependence on imported products. Second, products made by Chinese companies stationed in Lekki Free Zone can enjoy relatively low tariff and sidestep quota restriction to export their “made in Nigeria” to the EU and the US. Third, since Nigeria is rich in oil, natural gas, timber and minerals, it will save the transportation cost by taking advantage of the access to local natural resource to produce products (Li, 2007). The official website of the Lekki free trade zone noted that the move helps directing Chinese firms at lower end who produce excessive light industrial products to move outside China and seek new markets, according to. For Nigeria, Lagos State Governor Babatunde Fashola once said that the free trade zone will help develop Nigeria's manufacturing sector while cutting prices for consumers. Nearly 90 percent of products used in Nigeria come from outside the country. The free trade zone will “allow Nigerians to buy many of the same products now produced in China without the cost of importing them, while creating jobs for Nigerian workers” (China and Nigeria, 2010).

The growth of commercial activities between China and Africa has been accompanied by a significant expansion of Chinese official economic assistance to the region, which is focused mainly on infrastructure and typically channeled by China’s Eximbank and CDB. The mix of business and aid is very common in terms of infrastructure in African countries with the endowment of natural resources including Angola, Sudan, DRC and Sierra Leone. Chinese employ the practice of resource-backed infrastructure loans. China learned the practice from Japan who used it in 1970s and 1980s when China was lacked of infrastructure and had abundant natural resources. The logic behind it is quite simple: “you want infrastructure built? You have resource to guarantee a loan? We have a deal” (Brautigam, p.146).

Angola, who is a China's biggest oil importer in Africa, is a typical example of resource-back loan for infrastructure. Following the end of the Angola's domestic conflict in 2002, post-conflict reconstruction has become the government's priority (Campos & Vines, 2007). China has in particular played an important role in assisting these efforts. "Chinese financial and technical assistance has kick-started over 100 projects in the areas of energy, water, health, education, telecommunications, fisheries, and public works" (Campos & Vines, 2007). Although aid-linked quasi-commercial projects "usually cannot generate as much as profit as commercial projects, however, they can generate new business" (Brautigam, p148).

In addition to those mentioned above, it is very common to see the use of "conditional aid" by both Chinese and the West when it comes to the rehabilitating the war-torn infrastructure in Africa. MOC's grants and zero-interest loans are tied to Chinese companies and goods. For example, as Angola has emerged as China's biggest oil supplier, "China announced two credit lines totaling US\$4.4 billion for "reconstruction and national development". A significant portion of this is tied to the purchases of Chinese goods and services" (Tjonnaland et al., 2006, p13).

3.3 Social Development Assistance

Since it is impossible to separate aid and business, the commerce-related aid was discussed in the section above. This section, I will focus on other characteristics of China's aid to foreign countries and the aid with respect to social development.

3.3.1 Aid with Chinese Characteristics

First, China's aid bureaucracy is fragmented. There is no overarching agency for aid management. Unlike the United States Agency for International Development and UK

Department for International Development, in China the MOC plays a primary role in making policies and implementing aid programs as I mentioned earlier. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) also takes part in policy formulation. The diplomats “on the ground are the ‘front line’ in advising the leadership in Beijing on the quantity of aid for particular African country” (Brautigam, p108). The involvement of MOFA is to make sure that aid not only facilitates money-making but also serves political mission. Additionally, local governments also get involved in aid programs to African countries.

Second, not only the definition of aid is blur, the amount of aid to African countries is also vague. Since there is no single main agency responsible for all foreign aid, and there are many actors involving in the engagement in Africa, it would be very difficult to exactly calculate how much aid China has delivered to Sub-Saharan region. Moreover, it would be sensitive to disclose the figures because there would be various interpretations from the West, leading to international pressure on Chinese authorities. Furthermore, since many social conflicts and poverty are still severe inside China, the disclosure of foreign aid would be detrimental to social harmony which is more important than anything else for the incumbent Chinese leadership.

Third, most Chinese aid takes the form of being bilateral, rather than involving in multilateral development initiatives. I believe it is partly because China and the West have different ideological views regarding “‘no strings attached’ versus ‘conditionality’, ‘non-interference’ versus ‘interference’” (Sorensen, p157), and thus China does not want to be under the leadership of the World Bank. Moreover, Chinese leaders believe that both China and African countries are developing countries, therefore, “the ‘poor helps poor’ model doesn’t belong to the OECD/DAC club (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and

its Development Assistance Committee)” (Sorensen, p.151). In 2005, China sent a delegation to attend the aid conference in Paris, and signed the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. But by all accounts, “they [Chinese] were thinking of their own role as a recipient of aid, not their role as a donor” (Brautigam, p.133). Instead of joining traditional donor club, China is moving towards more multilateral collaboration under the frame work of UN by pledging to increase its contribution to the World Health Organization, World Food Program, UN Industrial Development Organization, among others. Additionally, with the development of African integration, another way of taking the multilateral approach for China would be to strengthen the ties with the African Unions and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) as well as sub-regional African organizations (Sorensen, 2010). To sum up, since China is experienced and successful in conducting assistance through bilateral approach, most aid package takes the form of bilateral agreement. The multilateral approaches have so far been confined to the collaboration within UN framework or local African organizations.

Last but not the least, in the past China gave strong emphasis on physical infrastructure construction and the aid for social development was confined to limited aspects such as agriculture and medical care. Recently, China has moved to “software” fields and intensified its effort to a broader scope with respect to education, science and culture.

3.3.2 Aid for social development

The aid for social development which is less business linked and less controversial includes debt relief, education and training as well as medical care and public health.

A type of aid emerging in the past years is the China's youth volunteer corps. Unlike the previous practice of sending volunteers to teach Mandarin, it was the first effort to send Chinese youth to assist in various development fields abroad. In 2005, China sent 12 young volunteers to Ethiopia as part of a trial operation. In 2007, Seychelles was the second African recipient for Chinese volunteers. The next year, about 100 young volunteers were dispatched to five African countries (Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Seychelles, Tunisia and Mauritius) to assist a variety of fields such as agriculture and medicine (Brautigam, 2010). China Radio International reported that 300 youth volunteers went to Africa between 2008 and 2010. So far, Africa ranked the top in receiving Chinese volunteers. Compared with other countries such as the United States and Japan, the size of Chinese volunteers is still quite small. Many Chinese scholars and policy advisors call for regulating the practice and expanding the youth volunteer corps. They believe that, sending young volunteers, to some degree, would be an alternative way to divert unemployed college graduates in China. Even though the current number of youth volunteers is small in comparison to the number of the unemployed, the practice provides a possible solution in the long term. More importantly, it helps promote the mutual understanding between the two peoples since volunteers work closely together with locals. For African countries, since volunteers assist in a number of development fields through passing on the know-how on a daily basis, their presence can bring more benefit to local Africans than the short-term workshops.

In addition to the emerging practice of sending youth corps, there are various approaches to support education and training in Africa including building schools, providing scholarship and holding training sessions. At the 2006 Beijing Summit, China announced the initiative to build 100 rural schools and train 15,000 personnel for Africa in the next three years (Interpretation of New Measures, 2010). Since then, China has fulfilled its pledge by building 126 schools and

improving conditions at some existing schools. This will provide schooling opportunities to 30,000 African children. China has held a total of 700 training sessions for African officials and technical personnel, covering 20 areas including economic development and trade, foreign policy, defense, public administration, medical care and public health, agriculture, fishing and animal husbandry, education, radio and television program production, science and technology, culture, environment protection, telecommunications, transportation, finance, and energy. These sessions have already trained a total of 16,000 personnel by the end of 2009 (Interpretation of New Measures, 2010). Besides, “at present, the Chinese government offers about 5,000 scholarships to students from African countries each year” (China-Africa, 2010). Additionally, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in 2006 announced during the visit to South Africa that China would donate 500,000 U.S. dollars to aid NEPAD's nurses and maternity assistants training program.

In addition to the increasing attention to education, China has maintained the strong momentum in improving public health and medical care for African people. By the end of 2009, China had helped to build 54 hospitals, set up 30 malaria prevention and treatment centers, and provided anti-malaria drugs worth 200 million yuan (US\$31 million) to 35 African countries. Since 1963, China has sent medical teams to 46 African countries with a total number of 18,000 medical workers, treating as many as 200 million patients and training tens of thousands of African medical staff over the decades. They have not only cured common and frequent diseases but also created the conditions to perform challenging operations like treatment of cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases, re-attachment of severed limbs and removal of large tumors, saving the lives of many patients in danger and filling the medical gap in the aided countries. At present, over 1,000 Chinese medical workers are providing medical services in 41 African countries (China-Africa, 2010).

Last but not the least, “a debt relief mechanism was formed in 2000, which consisted of ministries of Commerce and Finance, the Central Bank and other banks with aid affairs” (Sorensen, p157). By 2009, China canceled 312 debts of 35 African countries, totaling 18.96 billion yuan (about US\$3 billion) (China-Africa, 2010).

In sum, commercially related aid program will undoubtedly facilitate China’s economic expansion, while the development aid helps polish China as a responsible power in the world amidst the controversy of its engagement in Africa.

3.4 Culture

Although politically China portrays itself sharing similar experience because of the semi-colonial control during the contemporary history, the culture between the two sides are quite different. Cultural exchanges have a highly strategic significance. For one thing, cultural exchange helps promote the understanding of each other, which is undoubtedly conducive to China’s business activities in the region. For another, because of the long-time colonial control and the economic globalization initiated by the West, the western culture is far more dominated than China’s. Therefore, enhancing the cultural exchanges can help China to project its soft power in the long run.

In 2006, the Beijing Summit of FOCAC established the new type of strategic partnership between China and Africa, “featuring political equality and mutual trust, economic win-win cooperation and cultural exchanges” (Interpretation of New Measures, 2010). This raised the cultural exchange and cooperation to the same level of significance as political and economic cooperation. The Beijing Action Plan (2007-2009) passed by the Beijing Summit set out three

initiatives: “to actively implement the bilateral government exchange programs, promote and support art exhibitions and performances at the local level and between the peoples, and set up the African Cultural Visitors Program” (Interpretation of New Measures, 2010).

To date, China has set up three Chinese cultural centers in Egypt, Mauritius and Benin (Liao, 2010). These centers have become an important window for the African people to understand China and the Chinese culture. These centers in Africa already witnessed the visits by more than 734 members of Chinese art troupes from 20 provinces and cities. The Chinese side has invited a total of 370 artists from 21 African countries to visit and perform in China, participating in international art festivals hosted by Chinese (Liao, 2010).

The African Cultural Visitors program is also blossoming. Since 2007, China's Ministry of Culture invited a total of 61 African cultural officials and personages in six groups to visit China (Interpretation of New Measures, 2010) and participate in activities like Roundtable Conference on Cultural Policy to further the China-Africa culture exchanges.

Cooperation in academia and institutions is also an integral part of China-Africa cultural exchange. China has opened 23 Confucius Institutes and classrooms in 16 African countries. Also, Beijing has established effective communications mechanisms with press authorities in many African countries. News media, with reporting and coverage of the other side, play a unique role in strengthening China's influence in Africa. For example, China Radio International in 2006 launched its FM station in Kenya. The station is transmitting programs in English, Kiswahili and Mandarin Chinese (Chang, 2006).

Because of geographical distance and language differences, Chinese culture is not as popular as Chinese products yet. Cultural exchange covering the three levels of government, group and individual, is pressing for China's long-term interest in Africa.

CHAPTER 4

POLICY ASSESSING

4.1 From the Perspectives of China

China's current engagement in Africa is by no means charitable. Like almost all countries in the world, self-interest guides China's priorities when making the road map for the engagement in Africa. I argue that the key components in the toolkit mentioned in Chapter 3 helps China to safeguard its political interest, boost economic development and build up its global profile.

China has received the political support from most African countries in terms of safeguarding national sovereignty and countering the West's criticism of China's human rights record. Although preventing Taiwan's independence is now not the top immediate concern for China's engagement in Africa, it always has a position in China's diplomatic policy (He, 2007). In 1963, Taipei had established relations with sixteen African states. However, when Malawi established diplomatic relations with Beijing in 2007, only four African countries continued recognized Taipei; they are Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Swaziland, and St. Tome and Principe (Malawi, 2008). It is obvious to see that Beijing's involvement in Africa has paid off because Taiwan's diplomatic room has dramatically shrinking.

More importantly, the strong support from African countries has allowed China to fight back unfavorable proposals from the West in terms of China's human rights record. Between 1990 and 2004, the United States, along with other western countries, brought 11 proposals against China for its human rights record at the United Nations Conference on Human Rights (He, 2007). Chinese researcher He Wenping explains that African nations, which hold 15 of the 53 seats at the Commission on Human Rights helped block these proposals. China could not have defeated such proposals without the stalwart support of Africa (He, 2007). It was also Africa whose support helped Beijing in its campaign to host the 2008 Olympics. An official in Sierra Leone's ministry of foreign affairs expressed a common view that, "In Africa we look after our friends and help them" (Taylor, 2009, p.24).

Economically, China's engagement has paid off by the increasing amount of oil imports from Africa. As previously mentioned, China became a net oil importer in 1993, due to its rapidly rising demand for energy resources. Today China receives one third of its oil import from Africa (China-Africa, 2010). Although there was a slight decrease in 2001, the overall trend witnessed a steady increase. Angola, Sudan, Nigeria, Republic of Congo and Equatorial Guinea are the primary oil importers from Africa. In particular, China's effort to build infrastructure through resource-backed loan generated tremendous gains from Angola (Campos & Vine, 2007). Since 2002 Angolan oil exports to China have increased seven-fold, compared to only 3.5 times to the United States. Angola's oil exports to China reached \$3.9 billion in 2004, making it a major supplier and ranking it third after Saudi Arabia and Iran. By 2005, Angola had overtaken Iran with exports totaling 17.46 million tons of oil, which represents 45.5 percent of China's African oil imports (Campos & Vine, 2007). During the first six months of 2006, Angola temporarily leapfrogged Saudi Arabia as the largest supplier of crude oil to China, with 23.45

million tons of crude oil shipped from the African nation that year. Angolan oil imports now represent over 18 percent of China’s total oil imports, and this proportion is increasing (Campos & Vine, 2007).

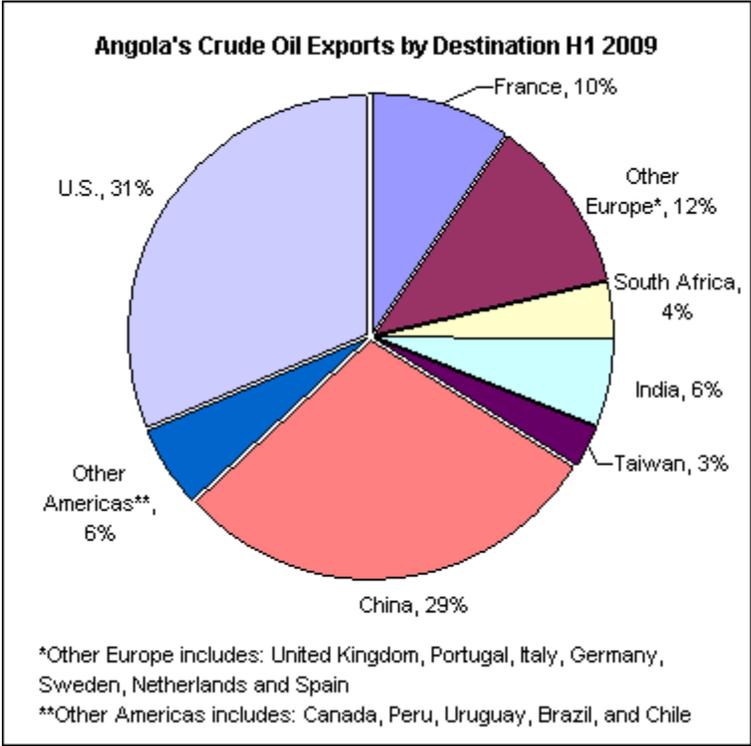


Figure 4.1: Angola’s Crude Oil Exports by Destination.

Additionally, the toolkit is conducive to promoting the “going global” strategy for the Chinese firms at the high and low ends. In December 2004, for example, Huawei, a major Chinese communications technology company, received a US\$10 million to promote its international activities (Gill & Reilly, 2007). This loan enabled Huawei to obtain “contracts worth \$400 million to provide cellular phone service in Kenya, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe” to promote its international operations (Gill & Reilly, 2007). The excessive production of light industrial products has forced many low-end companies to shut down (Brautigam, 2010). Yet,

because of the complementary economies between the two sides, the establishment of trade free zone in Nigeria helps relocate these small firms and provides a new market.

Additionally, China's increasing economic muscle helps leverage the relations with opposition parties in African countries. Although opposition parties usually dispute China's negative influence during their campaigns, their attitude changes when they take office due to the cash flow from China (Nossiter, 2010). In 2010, the military junta in Niger replaced the autocratic president, Mamadou Tandja, to run the country. China's business suffered a little perturbation; however, business resumed just a few days after the coup. In fact, Nossiter reports that "a crucial 'signing bonus' of \$300 million, part of a secretive oil deal Mamadou Tandja reached with China in 2008, has been instrumental in keeping public finances afloat, first for Mr. Tandja and now for the junta that deposed him" (Nossiter, 2010).

Yet, not all policies generate positive results for China. The "non-interference" policy, while hailed by African leaders, has been facing severe challenges by the International community. Critical challenges include China's lack of response to the human rights issue and poor governance in African countries (Ayittey, 2010). In the globalizing world, it has become increasingly difficult to define what internal affairs are. Sudan and Zimbabwe have been frequently mentioned when the Western countries accuse China of supporting rogue regimes. In fact, it has also become a debate among Chinese scholars too (Sorensen, 2010). Many events have already sounded an alarm about the backlash against "non-interference." The kidnappings and even killings of Chinese workers happened in the countries of Sudan, Ethiopia, Niger and Nigeria. In Sudan, five Chinese oil workers taken hostage were killed in October 2008 (Sorensen, 2010). Chinese leaders have already realized the challenge of the controversial

investment in these failed states. In March 2007, the National Development and Reform Commission, China's main economic planning agency, released a public document saying that Sudan had been removed from the latest list of countries with preferred trade status. This also means that "Beijing would no longer provide financial incentives to Chinese companies to invest in Sudan" (Sorensen, 2010, p158). Beijing's effort to urge Sudanese government to cooperate with international community by accepting hybrid troops as mentioned above also demonstrate the flexibility. Yet, I believe China's policy makers are encouraged not only to think about economic objectives but give more deliberation to the impact on Chinese workers and local Africans, taking more effort to balance the traditional principle of "non-interference" and the request and needs from international communities, civil society of Africans and even some Chinese scholars.

4.2 From the perspective of Africans

The assessment regarding whether or not China's engagement is good for Africa's development is highly controversial and complex. Scholars even have dividing opinions about it. Reporters from the Xinhua News Agency state that "[Chinese enterprises] are localizing their operations by employing a large number of local workers" (China-Africa, 2011). On the other hand, media in the West assert that Chinese companies have brought lots of its own workers to Africa and are reluctant to hire local Africans (Ayittey, 2010). Some scholars and media reports give positive remarks in terms of the agricultural projects in Africa such as pilot agro-technical stations for popularizing agricultural techniques and farms (China-Africa, 2011). Other commentators see China's agricultural activities as a land resource grab (Ayittey, 2010). Some Chinese leaders argue that the Western media has a strong bias against China, and can persuade

public discourse. Western media accuses Chinese government of its opaque business practice in Africa. Despite these mixed perspectives on China's engagement in Africa, I argue that African countries in Sub-Sahara region would not be better-off without China-Africa cooperation and exchanges. However, China should deliver more substantial improvement to ordinary Africans.

China's engagement has also brought benefit to African countries. In 2007, Africa registered 5.8 percent economic growth, its highest level ever. Much of this growth results from Chinese investment (China-Africa, 2011). One of the prominent aspects is China's contribution to Africa's infrastructure. Unreliable power supply lead to losses in industrial production valued at 6 percent of turnover. Furthermore, Africa's limited infrastructure services tend to be much costlier than those available in other regions. For example, "road freight costs in Africa are two to four times as high per kilometers as those in the United States and travel time along key export corridors are two to three times as high as those in Asia" (Brautigam, 2010). It is estimated that Africa's deficient infrastructure may be costing as much as 1 percentage point per year of per capita GDP growth. For example, in spite of low labor costs, sub-Saharan firms have very low participation in export markets partly because of the high indirect cost from the infrastructure deficits (Brautigam, 2010). For strong exporters, indirect costs tend to absorb no more than 10-12% of total production cost. But, in sub-Saharan Africa, the indirect costs can be as high as 20-30% of total production cost, with half of which infrastructure related (Brautigam, 2010). Moreover, traditional donors, bilateral or multilateral, tend to allocate only a relatively small proportion of their funding to infrastructure, since investing in infrastructure in poor countries is believed to a high-risk business (Wang, 2007). Between 2002 and 2007, "World Bank loans for industry and trade combined came to less than 5% of all loans made to sub-Saharan Africa, the traditional donor countries allocated less than 1 percent of their aid to industry" (Brautigam,

p.91). Therefore, although Chinese have built some showcase projects such as stadiums and government buildings, their contribution to infrastructure is definitely be conducive to the regional economic growth.

Additionally, in recent years as the African economy develops, African enterprises have been investing more vigorously in China (Ayittey, 2010). Mauritius, South Africa, Seychelles, Nigeria and Tunisia all have companies operating in China. A beer joint venture started by a South African enterprise in China is operating nearly 70 breweries (China-Africa, 2010). A chemical fertilizer joint venture formed by Tunis and Chinese enterprises has become a leading compound fertilizer producer in China (China-Africa, 2010). By the end of 2009 African countries' accumulated direct investment in China amounted to US\$9.93 billion, covering petrochemical engineering, machinery and electronics, transportation and telecommunications, light industry and household appliances, garments and textiles, bio-pharmaceuticals, agricultural development, entertainment and catering, real estate, and other sectors (China-Africa, 2010). Africa's investment in China features mutually complementary advantages, thereby promoting China's exports to Africa and other regions.

However, China's cheap goods such as textiles, although affordable for locals, hinder the infant industry from taking off in African countries. The issue is under spotlight since clothing and textile industry is considered vital to creating high employment and boosting African's future development. In Ethiopia, the Chamber of Commerce and Sectoral Association has voiced concern about the growing 'takeover' of the domestic market by Chinese owned firms with cheap products. In Nigeria, one complaint by Nigerian investors is that Nigeria is fast becoming a dumping ground while indigenous companies are dying (Taylor, 2009). Likewise, in

Kenya, “unease seems to be rising as Chinese businesspeople become significant players and, some cases, overtake Kenyan locals” (Taylor, 2009, p.64). Moreover, in South Africa, the textile environment is facing severe challenges. Historically textile and clothing imports into South Africa originated from a wide range of countries including Taiwan, South Korea and Europe. However, according to the website of the official organization of South Africa Textile Industry, since 2001 imports have increasingly been sourced from the mainland China. The website reported that in the case of clothing imports, 89% currently originates from China, 3% from India and the remaining 8% from the rest of the world. Therefore, China had to implement quota in 2007 to slow the flood of Chinese products into South Africa.

There are some arguments that China’s engagement in Africa fails to improve the livelihood of ordinary residents, even though it benefits countries’ economies (Ayittey, 2010). It may be true that governments of African countries benefit more from China’s activities than the ordinary people. Yet, the local livelihood would be worse-off without China’s presence. For example, low-cost housing projects in Seychelles, Mozambique, Angola and Ethiopia have improved the dwelling conditions of the local people. The well-digging projects in Nigeria, Senegal and Equatorial Guinea and the water supply systems in Tanzania and Niger have solved the drinking-water problem for many people. The national television center in Equatorial Guinea has made the transmission and coverage of local television signals possible (China-Africa, 2010). Additionally, China also contributes peacekeepers to UN missions across Africa, including Liberia and Darfur. It has cancelled \$10 billion in bilateral debt from African countries, sends doctors to treat Africans across the continent, and hosts thousands of African workers and students in Chinese universities and training centers (China-Africa, 2010). All of these undoubtedly help improve the livelihood of ordinary people directly or indirectly.

4.3 Human Rights

In addition to the debate regarding the benefit of China's engagement to national development in Africa, criticism in terms of human rights remains a consistent issue. The answer to whether China's practice is constructive or destructive to human rights in Africa varies based on the different concepts about human rights between China and the West, and the different understandings in terms of Universal Declaration of Human Rights. I maintained that although China's practice to improve the local human rights has flaws, the West's approach is going too far at current stage.

There are three pillars to understand the China's concept of human rights. First, sovereign rights are superior to human rights. This perspective is influenced by historical relations with foreign powers (Taylor, 2009). Between 1840 the start of Opium War to 1945 the end of Japan's invasion, China was bullied by foreign powers. This experience made the Chinese aware that "sovereignty is a precondition to their enjoying human rights" (Taylor, 2009, p 95). This can, in part, help to explain China's adherence to the non-interference principle. As mentioned earlier, if China combined political conditions with business and aid, the move would tacitly legitimate that the West could intervene China's internal affairs.

The second pillar is belief that bread comes first than ballot. Chinese leaders believe that "the human rights to food, clothing, shelter, economic development, and security... are paramount over traditional Western-style individual political liberties" (Taylor, p 93). For example, as former Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing pointed out "the basic meaning of human rights is survival and development" (Taylor, p 93). Judged by this standard, China has been a leader, not a laggard, in promoting the human rights of its people. When it comes to its engagement in Africa,

China's business expansion and the effort to build infrastructure undoubtedly help with the reconstruction in war-torn African countries. Moreover, its aid programs, as mentioned earlier, include debt cancellation, medical service and training, which deliver substantial improvement to livelihood of African residents.

The third pillar is that collective interests are higher than individual interests. China's economic and commercial counselor, Liu Kungyuan, once said "China's own development success began with similar low wages that allowed more people to find a job. If you sacrifice on labor costs now for future generations, then Namibia will develop. Let people be paid lower wages now and attract more FDI and set up manufacturing so that the future generation will reap the benefits of the sacrifices (Brautigam, p301)." China believes that, at this current stage, it is premature for Africa to stress on individual right. This standpoint is in contrast to the Western countries which place "much emphasis on individual's right human rights while collective rights are neglected" (Human rights, 2005). China formed this philosophy from its own development experience. The huge army of "cheap labors" has been the engine to drive China's economic growth. In Chinese eyes, no pain means no gains. But in the eyes of Western countries, low wage falls in the category of poor labor practice.

Yet, although China's role has positive outcomes in improving human rights in Africa, China has also exported its development flaws to Africa. Although its investment has driven the GDP growth in Africa, it has not yet contributed to a redistribution of wealth (Sorensen, 2010). Looking at China itself, the gap between the rich and the poor has reached alarming levels, despite significant economic growth over the past three decades. Since China is currently unable to make rational income redistribution within itself, and wealth remains in the hands of a small

group of people, it is very difficult for China to help deliver the betterment to ordinary Africans. Likewise, the poor labor practice is also one of the enduring critiques of China's engagement in Africa. It is common to see that African workers complain about the poor working conditions and low wages provided by the Chinese companies. Yet, not only African works that have the problems. In March 2008 in Equatorial Guinea, "some 200 Chinese construction workers allegedly went on strike in the frontier town of Mongomo, leading to a violent clash with local security forces" (Brautigam, p.300). It is true that some Chinese companies turn a blind eye to local labor laws and regulations, "but more typically, Chinese companies in Africa apply the same low standards that have been common in many parts of China" (Brautigam, p.300). Similarly, hydropower dams built by China are at the center of criticism for the negative social and environmental impact. Both China and Africa came late for the development of hydropower. Industrialized countries in Europe and North America built the dams before there were awareness of environmental impacts and issues of resettlement. "Up to 70 percent of the hydropower potential in the wealthy West was exploited in the era when a dam as seen as a sign of progress, not a badge of social and environmental devastation" (Brautigam, p. 302).

To summarize, the issue of human rights is significant for both China and its African partners. Based on the China's concept of human rights, China's role in Africa helps advance the human rights in the continent. The negative effect that China has brought to Africa is actually reflected the domestic problems in China which the leadership is currently unable to deal with.

The Chinese discourse on rights is not compatible with the West's concept which stresses individual rights, democracy and good governance. First of all, since a large number of Africans are still unable to access to the substance of basic needs, it is difficult to touch the specific need

of individuals. Second, as for democracy, “it would be odd if the Chinese, who do not practice democracy at home, required it of others” (Brautigam, p.286). More importantly, Chinese believe that democracy is not a panacea for Africa. On the contrary, it causes chaos and power struggles in Africa since it is built upon very weak institutions without the establishment of rule of laws. Since most opposition parties in Africa have not proved to be better than incumbent governments, it is not helpful to replace them with another power of bad governance. Moreover, anarchy would make the situation even worse, just like what happens to Somali. Chinese believe that democracy does not necessarily lead to economic prosperity; on the contrary, the former is the result of the latter. Lastly, China’s close tie with Sudan and Zimbabwe comes to the fore of the criticism by the West. The West believes that this relationship subverts the effort by the World Bank and IMF to improve good governance in Africa. However, if China did not invest Africa, the people in the continent would be worse-off. Also, it is ordinary people that have to pay the bill if there is sanction on their government. It is clear to see that China’s human rights discourse does not match the West’s philosophy. Therefore, from the West’s perspective, China’ role in Africa is destructive to human rights improvement.

Using the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a yardstick to gauge China’s human rights policy in Africa, there are mixed conclusions. Like other governments, China is upholding some aspects of the declaration while overlooking others. For example, the article 25 asserts that “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services” (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). There is a synergetic match between the article and Chinese discourse of "survival and development". But, China’s human rights philosophy is apparently disharmonious with some articles which mentioned “freedom of

opinions and expression” and the “freedom of peaceful assembly and association” (Taylor, 2009, pp. 95-96).

CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS

After suffering colonial control for hundreds of years and fifty years of post-colonial dysfunction, the Africa renaissance calls for concerted efforts from all parties concerned. Pragmatic measures should be taken. China, who has a crucial interest in Africa and is trying to build up its profile as a responsible rising power should improve its practice to contribute more to Africa’s development.

5.1 Chinese Side

Chinese companies should enhance their consultations with local counterparts to make sure the training they are going to provide is not only what they need, but also meets the requirements of African counterparts to make a balanced win-win scenario. For example, China’s major telecoms company Huawei has established training centers in Angola, South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt, Tunisia and Kenya to train Africans in skills needed to operate and maintain wireless telephones and broadband internet systems (Brautigam, p.160). Yet, the training was more oriented to Chinese companies’ needs. What are needed are multiple consultations including not only Chinese side, but also African elites, civil society, ethnic organization and opposition party

should be involved in aid planning and implementation to make aid delivered in a more effective manner.

Second, China should strengthen its capacity to make and implement foreign aid, Although Africa has become increasingly important; China still lacks expertise in dealing with foreign aid. Research on foreign aid has lagged far behind China's aid activities in Africa. He Wenping, Director of African Studies Section of the Institute of West Asian & African Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), pointed out that "it is not sufficient to build up expertise only through "learning by doing". It is quite encouraging to see that CASS, the biggest think tank for the Chinese government, is about to create a development policy institute and is expressing an interest in working together with international institutions (Sorensen, p161)." Currently, only a limited number of Chinese universities have set up centers for African studies including CASS, Peking University, Zhejiang Normal University and Yunnan University. Moreover, departments for foreign aid are severely understaffed. "Development of Foreign Aid is unbelievable small, with a staff of only about 100 in thirteen divisions. A small cadre of about a dozen researchers focus on foreign aid, economic cooperation, and international development in the MOC's "think tank," the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation (CAITEC). This is only a small fraction of the 1,6212 staff in Britain's DFID, or 2,200 in the USAID (Brautigam, p.109)." Moreover, the Department of Aid to Foreign Countries in MOC is small because "it has no overseas office. Instead, the Chinese Economic and Commercial Counselor's office attached to China's embassy will designate one or more staff to oversee the aid program, trouble-shooting, monitoring and checking up at their completion (Brautigam, p.109)," and these staff do not have to have relevant expertise.

Third, Chinese governments should build up civil society for law enforcement. Although Chinese entities rarely give cash to African governments to avoid corruption, and there are many laws and regulations in place, it is still inevitable that some Chinese companies will bribe local governments for winning project tenders or break rules for profit. In 2008, China's State Council issued the "Administrative Regulation on Contracting Foreign Projects," pointing out that contactors are not allowed to engage in corruption with African governments. In August 2007, China's State Forestry Administration and the Ministry of Commerce released a guideline, emphasizing that overseas Chinese logging companies should consult and compensate local communities. It is very encouraging to see such type of laws to regulate business practices overseas, however, without the much civil society activism in China to hold Chinese companies accountable, progress will be slow (Brautigam, p. 301). More importantly, only with the supervision by an independent force such as civil society can help make sure Chinese government's good will can fully be converted to the substantial improvement to local Africans and Chinese workers there, otherwise, the good will could only primarily benefit a small group of people such as the local elites and leaders of Chinese firms

5.2 African Side

African elites, organizations and civil society should get involved in consultations as much as possible with Chinese and other foreign companies, and should strive for a fair deal when cooperating with other countries. Not only China, but all donors should try to figure it out how to use "conditional aid." It seems aid has already become a major economy, which seems to serve donors more than borrowing countries. I agree that "teach to fish is better than give a fish." Trading with and investing in Africa is much better than just pouring cash. However, if the fruit

of trading and investment is lopsided to donors, then it would not be aid any more. MOC's grants and zero-interest loans are tied to Chinese companies and goods. "Foreign aid project tenders are posted publicly, but companies eligible must be on a list of the pre-qualified Chinese firms...Official aid through Eximbank is tied at a level of 50% (Brautigam, p152)." Also, as Anglo has emerged as China's biggest oil supplier, "China announced two credit lines totaling US\$4.4 billion for "reconstruction and national development". A significant portion of this is tied to the purchases of Chinese goods and services (Tjonnaland et al., 2006, p13). It is not new to China. In fact, China just follows the steps of traditional donors. "As recently as 2001, according to figures published by the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD, Italy's official development aid was 92% tied, and Canada's 68% (Brautigam, p152)." Since Africa is suffering the scarcity of expertise and technology, the imports of manufacturing products have strong negative effects on African's indigenous industry. What Africans need is technology transfer and market protection to produce their own products.

5.3 Both "New" and "Old" Donors

China and OECD donors should avoid politicization, and sidestep the difference on abstract concepts and principles, but focusing on specific topics. The debate regarding whose aid model is better does not contribute to the improvement of African people's livelihood. Instead, they should develop a pragmatic attitude to work on specific topics and learn from each other. Many thorny problems such as agriculture can only be better solved through the efforts of both "new" and "old" donors. Currently, a large number of people in African countries are still suffering from food shortage, but they have been urged to grow cash crops and sell at low prices. It is very important for both the "old" and "new" donors to sit down together to figure out how to make

agriculture both feed the population and generate economic growth. Africa should not be a place for a new Cold War, but a place calling for a joint effort to realize the MDGs.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

China is emerging in the 21st century as one of the global economies. Primarily due to the four driving forces mentioned earlier, the Sino-African relations have gradually changed from “brothers” to “strategic partners.” African countries have become increasingly important to China, because they provide continued political support, and energy and raw material supplies as well as markets for China’s companies and their products.

To build and cement the strategic partnership with Africa, Beijing has devised a set of tools including diplomatic strategy, the integration aid and business, social development assistance and culture, which are closely linked with each other. Under close examination, I believe these policies have succeeded in serving China’s political and economic goals, and contribute to the economic development in Africa. Yet, China needs to increase the transparency of its practices and deliver more benefits to local African residents. While, China’s practice helps improve human rights in line with its own philosophy, Chinese policy-makers should carefully think about moving closer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which will help to alleviate the criticism of supporting rogue regimes and build up the profile as responsible power.

To make China's African initiative to better serve both sides in the future, law enforcement should be in place to regulate Chinese business practice and more experts are urged to study Africa in China, since Beijing's engagement on the continent will be a long term endeavor.

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