

THE CHINESE FACTOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF POST COLD WAR AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

The economic boom of China has placed her as a major player in the corridors of world economy. China has grown to become the largest economy in the world by GDP PPP and Second largest by GDP nominal. She is the world largest exporter and also one of the largest Foreign Direct Investors in the world. This profile is of great and significant importance to Africa that happens to share same Global South status with China. In the spirit of south-south cooperation, China considers herself blessed to be a blessing to other developing countries in the world. China's engagement with Africa after the cold world era presents both opportunities and challenges to Africa. Through trade, Foreign Direct Investment, Development aid and military assistance, China has overtaken the western countries in being at the lead in the development of post cold war Africa. China has overtaken western economies as Africa's largest trading partner with the engagement cutting across natural resources extraction, agriculture, manufacturing and investment. Africa engages with China freely without fear of ideological infiltration, hence she is more receptive to China than the west and this is because, unlike the western economies, China does not attach conditionalities and political interest to her loans and development aids to Africa. This paper examines how the china engagement with Africa since the end of the cold war has so far contributed to the development of Africa. The paper indentified the threats and opportunities in the China-Africa engagement and also advanced some recommendations for policy option.

Keywords: China, Development, Africa, Trade, Relation

1. INTRODUCTION

Africa is a continent in dire need of development. She appears to be lagging behind other countries of the world in terms of development. High poverty ratio, decaying infrastructure, poor living conditions, worsening youth unemployment, hunger, sickness, high mortality rate and insecurity have become the recurring decimal with African affair, a state of affair that has reduced her to the junk site of the world.

Africa is a net importer of virtually every finished good, while she in turn exports only primary commodities which includes the raw materials for the goods she imports. Africa lacks the capacity to even feed her very high population.

This condition has left Africa very vulnerable to other countries of the world especially the advanced capitalist countries. This vulnerability state has made Africa very open to any willing foreign power that shows willingness to assist, even with very punitive conditions attached to such assistance; this has also made most African countries to be quite skeptical about loans from the west as such assistance does not usually go without some conditions that are not always in the interest of Africa.

Owing to the rise of new international players as emerging countries, the dominance of the European Union (EU) and US in the world economy is increasingly being challenged. Among these rising powers, China merits particular attention. Because of her size in terms of geography, population and gross domestic products, China is considerably different from other rising powers (Humphrey and Messnor, 2008).

In recent decade, China has witnessed a rapid economic expansion, making the transition from a low-income economy to a middle income country (MIC). As a consequence of her rapid economic growth, China is starting to adopt a more active global posture. In the context of its ambition to play a more prominent international role, China's engagement with Africa has attracted particular attention (Staul, 2016).

Chinese investment in Africa has grown dramatically, making the country the single largest contributors of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) capitals and jobs in Africa. The data released by Ernst and Young, a London headquartered professional service firm, shows that since 2005, China has invested in 293 FDI projects in Africa, totaling an investment outlay of US \$ 66.4 billion and creating 130, 750 jobs. Chinese FDI into Africa is well diversified across sectors covering resource oriented ones as well as services and manufacturing. It also shows diversification of Chinese investment across more countries, covering both resource rich countries like Nigeria, South Africa and Angola and agricultural exporters such as Kenya.

Jobs created from Chinese FDI projects reached an all time high in 2016, more than double the number in 2015 and more than three times the number of jobs created by the next biggest investor, the United States, said the E&Y report.

Besides trade and FDI, Chinese companies and state related entities have finished and built many infrastructural projects across the continent including ports, roads, railways, dams, telecom network, power stations and airports. One notable example is the launch of a Chinese built

railway linking Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia to the Port of Djibouti in October, 2016, involving an investment of 4 billion US dollars.

Since after the cold war in the 1990's, Sino-African relations have grown rapidly, the fear of ideological infiltration has been abolished as Africa has warmly received Chinese engagements. China today is Africa largest trading partner, bilateral trade between China and Africa stood at \$149.1 billion in 2016, (english.gov.cn).

The development landscape in Africa is therefore changing with this new partner from the global south taking a more paramount role as providers of the much needed finance and know-how for Africa's development. China being the most paramount emerging foreign partner has not failed in this regard. The growing trade and investment relations are often supported by grants or concessional loans from China's government as part of the country's "Going Global" strategy (Schiere, Ndikumana, and Walkenhorst, 2011).

The growing Chinese presence in the world, but most specifically in Africa triggers divergent reactions from western as well as African intellectuals and the media arena. The Chinese penetration of Africa is considered by some as an opportunity for the development of Africa while some others assert that it is a new form of colonialism (Nonfodji, 2013).

Background of sino-african relations

China involvement with Africa is not a recent event. It dates back to the Mung Dynasty (Filani, 1972) but became more pronounced after the formation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. China's engagement with Africa was very crucial to her in many ways including securing Africa's support in China's diplomatic battle with Taiwan (Republic of China), in her "One China" policy and subsequent securing of United Nations representation. This was achieved in 1971 when China took the position as the true representative of the Chinese people in the UN and also assumed her place as permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

This came at time most African states had gained independence from colonialism, which also increased the number of African states that were members of the UN as at the time of China's recognition in 1971.

In 1959, Mao Zedong referred to Africa as a partner in the "struggle" against imperialism, implicitly tying recognition to greater ideological battles (Mao, 1998). From 1960-1963, 13 of the 23 African countries recognized Taiwan compared to five for the People's Republic of China. In 1963-1965, Chinese Premier Zhon Enlai visited eleven Africa countries attempting to frame China's position in the region as an ally in anti-colonialism, while committing the PRC to

nearly \$120 million in aid, (Braitgan, 2007). Despite all poor recognition for Zhou at the time, by mid-decade, support on the continent was nearly evenly divided between China and Taiwan, highlighting Africa's role within this cold war conflict. By the end of the 1970s and after gaining a seat on the UN Security Council, the tides had turned with forty four African countries recognizing China compared to the five for Taiwan (Taylor, 2002).

Cold war rationales for recognition in most cases did not equate to deeper relations, nor did this fundamentally change in the immediate post cold war era. While diplomatic relations globally are rarely revoked once established, African countries continually played a bargaining game between China and Taiwan. Nine countries – Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, The Gambia, Lesotho, Liberia, Niger, Senegal and Central African Republic – have switched relation more than once, with the later switching five times since 1962.

Again, expanding relations in Africa tied into growing Sino-Soviet conflict. While Beijing made appeals from at least the Bandung Conference of 1958 to position itself as the benefactor of the third world, China also used its new found influence in Africa to support revolutionary and national liberation movement in present day Namibia, Zimbabwe, Algeria, Cape Verde and elsewhere.

The 1980s saw China improving on its independent foreign policy of peace. Thus, while China during this period advanced relations with the developing countries, it gave greater attention to expanding funding and cooperative relations with the developing countries, especially those of Africa, (Orngu, 2009). The leadership of China at the time advanced some four principles on economic and technological cooperation between China and African countries as follows; equality and mutual benefit, stressing on practical results, diversity in forms, and attainment of common progress.

Formal diplomatic relations between Nigeria and China took off in February 1971. The same goes with most other African states at ambassadorial level, which was done in bilateral context. As at the moment, it is only Burkina Faso and Swaziland that are the remaining African countries that have relations with Taiwan (Wikipedia, 2018).

Sino-african relations in post cold war

For over 40 years, Sino-Africans relations could only be explained through ideological frontlines. However, it was also during this time that China began to assert itself as a global economic and political powerhouse. Promoting rapid economic development, while the PRC has in part based their legitimacy on it, the Post-cold war environment, would require greater access to international market and natural resources. Concurrently, many African governments found themselves struggling to develop due to lack of external investment and interest even though

many of these newly independent countries have an abundance of natural resources (Richie & Recker, 2013).

As African states attempted to improve economic conditions, relations with China become more important as an export destination. Although the focus has been natural resources such as oil, the sheer size of the Chinese domestic market should make many developing countries interested in increasing export to China. Besides boosting export levels, increased Sino-African relations increases public revenue (Resien, 2007).

Chinese Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is supported by the government “Going global strategy”, which assists Chinese enterprises in becoming multinationals through the provision of soft loans and other assistance to aid foreign investment in, particularly, emerging markets. (Schiere, 2011).

China growth and its capacity to move in thirty years from under-development and extreme poverty to an emerging global power and the world largest exporter of manufactured goods has indeed attracted the attention of many development countries including Africa. China has served as a development model of Africa and an alternative source of trade and finance from Africa’s traditional development partners (Renard, 2011).

Relations with China offers a number of advantages compared to western countries, as China;

- i. Demanded fewer or no condition on providing assistance
- ii. Granted loans at a very low interest rate, repayable over very long period and
- iii. Offered training to professional and technical personnel.

From a political perspective, China gave priority to highly visible prestige projects such as stadium, hospitals etc. China also financed the construction of railway line between Zambia and Tanzania between 1973 and 1976 and dispatched 15,000 Chinese for the project, although the investment was earlier turned down by the British government and the World Bank Group (Chaponniere, 2008). China’s role in providing developing assistance as well as some military support was striking.

Chinese engagement with Africa has become mutually benefiting. Africa desperately needs China to buy her raw materials and agricultural produce. Africa also needs China as export destination for some of her manufactured goods, Africa needs China’s aids and development assistance for investment and for partnership while China needs Africa too as export destination for her cheap goods and services, source of raw materials, and diplomatic purpose. The large population of Africa provides for China a very big market and source of cheap raw materials.

The end of the cold war provides an opportunity for Africa to engage with China without expressing ideological fears or offending erstwhile colonial masters that are of ideological wars with China, the post cold war periods provide opportunity for Africa to throw caution to the wind in relating with China at least no superpower will feel ideologically offended.

Chinese role in development of post cold war Africa can be analyzed under the following:

Trade

Trade between Africa and China began to grow in 2000 when official two-way China-Africa trade stood at US \$ 10.5 billion, this rose to US \$ 29.5 billion in 2004, nearly US \$40 billion in 2005, US \$55.5 billion in 2006, US\$ 73 billion in 2007 to the current US \$ 149.1 billion in 2016. For some years now, China has maintained steady lead as the largest trade partner of Africa. The profile of China's import from Africa reflects the unequally distributed geography of Africa's resources. China has become a major market for key Africa raw materials and soft commodity producers; Angola, Nigeria, Sudan, Zambia and DR Congo. Overall, five oil and mineral-exporting countries account for 85% of Africa export to China (Broadman, 2007).

Oil is the most significant export, making up 98% of Angolan exports to China. Growing African exports to China correlates narrowly with the growth of its major commodity exports (oil, metals, minerals, agricultural produce, woods, cotton) to China. China-Africa trade relations should be considered in world context and the differential impact within African appreciated. China has significantly contributed to keeping annual world economic growth above 4% threshold deemed "critical" for improving the terms of trade for primary commodity producers (Goldstein *et al*, 2006). China is a key world net importer of commodities.

The expansion of China's manufactured export may have hoped to reduce world prices for manufactured goods but this has adversely affected major African exporter of clothing (Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, South Africa, and Swaziland) which have been impacted to differential extents. Africa is benefiting in a mixed ways from a worldwide growth cycle driven by China and reinforced by India.

The established pattern of trade with China importing African natural resources and exporting manufactured goods in return shows little sign of being changed to an extent. This is due to the bad leadership and corruption that have impeded the growth and development of Africa.

The basic question facing Africa trade with China is, what can be exported to China beyond natural resources? It is rather very unfortunate that at a time economic openness and removal of trade barriers is being emphasized; the only thing Africa have to take to the world market is just cheap primary products. This state of affair places Africa at the receiving end and also at a

disadvantaged position in the international market. African leaders needs to starts diversifying the economy from being just primary producers to manufacturing. This will place the country in strategic position to maximize the Sino-Africa relations.

On the other hand, Chinese manufactured goods could stifle African competitors where both countries produce similar goods. The infant manufacturing industries in Africa does not have what it takes to stand the international competition cheap Chinese goods could pose to them. Depending on the country considered, this applies in particular to textile, furniture, footwear, or ceramic products (Morrissey and Zgovu, 2011). It is either the home market of African suppliers could be contested by Chinese firms or African exports to third markets, for instance in Europe or America could be displaced (Giovannetti and Sanflippo, 2009).

This reveals the opportunities and risks involve in China- Africa engagements

The forum on China – Africa cooperation (FOCAC) was established in October 2000 as an official forum to strengthen the relationship. China introduced duty free status for over 10 major export products of 31 African countries in order to help improve Africa exports. The export products includes, agricultural goods, mineral, leather textile and garment electric goods and furniture (Xiaofeng, 2009).

In 2006, China granted trade concession by lifting tariffs on 190 goods from Africa's least developed countries. In 2007, the number of African goods entitled to duty free entry in Chinese market was increased to 440 (Broadman, 2008).

Furthermore, China has constituted special economic and trade free zones including the Zambian – China Economic Cooperation Zone, Nigeria – Guangdoi Economic Cooperation Zone, Suisse Economic and Trade Zone in Egypt and Oriental Industry Park in Ethiopia. These are in order to build export capacity, promote development of Africa economies and create chances of technology transfer (Xiaofeng, 2009).

2. FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

Chinese investment in Africa has increased dramatically making the country the largest contributor of foreign direct investment (FDI) capital and jobs in Africa in 2016. China has invested in 293 FDI projects in Africa since 2005, totaling an investment outlay of US\$ 66.4 billion and creating 130,750 jobs. This is according to Ernst & Young's (EY) latest Africa Attractiveness Report released.

The report indicates that in 2016, jobs created from Chinese FDI projects hit an all time high more than double the number in 2015 and above three times the number of jobs created by the next biggest investor, the United States.

The increase in the flow of capital over the years was stimulated by the development of the investment of the Chinese state owned companies in diverse sectors. Chinese state owned companies are encouraged to invest and to operate abroad. This is included in the objectives of China to search for strategic resources and market shares. Since early 2000, the presence of China is significant in Africa than in other continents. The state owned companies are at the heart of the global presence of China and made major breakthroughs in the overseas market.

In 2009, 34 Chinese companies appeared among the largest companies, ranked between 9th and 489th. In 2011, we counted 57 Chinese companies with an improvement of the rank situated between 3rd and 488th with three companies ranked among first ten.

Given China's natural resources scarcity, firms in these sectors were inclined to expand globally in order to find new suppliers including in Africa.

In Angola, Sinopec invested in six deep –water oil fields in cooperation with Angola's state oil group, Sonangal, between 2004 and 2013. These oil fields have turned into a black hole of sorts, swallowing funds from Sinopec without generating any commercial value. At the end of 2014 China reported a stock of US \$ 32 billion of ODI on the African continent. The amount invested in the ten biggest recipient are listed ,South Africa, Algeria, Nigeria, Zambia, Dr Congo, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Angola, Ghana and Republic of Congo. For reference, the stock of FDI in each country at the end of 2011 is also shown

China Direct Investment in Africa (in million of USD)

Country/Region	ODI 2014	ODI 2011
Africa	32,350.07	16,244.32
1. South Africa	5,954.02	4,059.73
2. Algeria	2,451.57	1,059.45
3. Nigeria		
4. Zambia	2,323.01	1,415.61
5. Congo DR		
6. Sudan	2,271.99	1,199.84
7. Zimbabwe		
8. Angola	2,168.67	709.26
9. Ghana		
10.Congo,Rep	1,747.12	1,525.64
	1,695.58	576.44
	1,214.04	400.09
	1,056.69	270.15
	988.76	142.40

Source: MOFCOM Statistical Bulletin of China's Outward Foreign Direct Investment(2014)

Some of the arguments against Chinese Direct Investment in Africa are that she does not care to know the governance structure and compliance with rule of law. She is accused of investing in countries with governance failure, with no regards for democratic ideals.

Some of the country with poor governance indicators are designated as "fragile state" by the World Bank and the IMF. These are countries with weak institutions and high levels of poverty that have been singled out for special donor assistance. It is useful to examine whether Chinese ODI is targeted to these fragile situation. But that turns out not to be the case. An indicator variable for fragile states has no explanation power in examining the allocation of ODI across African countries. Some of the countries that have received African Chinese ODI are fragile states, such as DR Congo. However, other poor governance states that have received a lot of

Chinese investment such as Angola and Nigeria are not poor and are not designated fragile states.

China's investment in Africa are in both state-owned enterprises that are driven by states interest and the private sectors that are driven by market forces and are investing beyond the extractive sectors unlike the states.

Generally, a significant investment has come from Chinese state –owned enterprises but investment from the private sector is growing in an unprecedented manner (Jing, 2009). The scale of investment in each sector and country is not the same. This indicates that China's investment in Africa is growing and increasingly diverse and concentration is not increasing in the extraction sector.

Oil makes up 72% of the total 80% African mineral and energy exports to China. Angola contributes 47%, Sudan 25%, the DRC 13%, Equatorial Guinea 9% and Nigeria 3% to the total exports. The top eight trading African countries with China are Angola, South Africa, Sudan, Nigeria, Algeria, Congo and Kenya (Chun, 2009). All except, Kenya and South Africa supply oil to China. China exports a variety of commodities to Africa, mostly manufactured goods (Xiaofeng, 2009).

3. AIDS & DEVELOPMENT

Perhaps one attractive aspect of the China's engagement with Africa is her developmental aid, which very much unlike the western countries does not attach conditions and political strings, expect the "one China" policy that is being pushed by PRC will all she has got. An important feature of Chinese aid and development assistance is offered on the basis of stated "equality and mutual benefit" in a spirit of partnership geared towards common benefit.

This is opposite of the western donor practice. The Chinese do not see themselves as "donors" preferring the language of cooperation and "partnership" (Brautigam, 2007).

China's economic assistance to Africa comes in the form of concessional loan, grants and technical assistance. Most of the China Developmental Assistant (ODA) is spent on infrastructural projects, primary schools, hospitals and roads, bridges, railways, electricity dams, legislative buildings, stadiums and airports.

Chinese foreign aid expenditure have increased steadily in the past decade growing from US\$ 631 million in 2003 to close to US\$ 3 billion in 2015, with an average annual growth rate of 14%.

According to the Brooking Institution, from 2000 to 2012 China founded 1666 official assistance project in 51 african countries.

In February 2017, United Bank for Africa (UBA) PLC, a Pan- African Banking Group, and China Development Finance Institution, announced the signing of a \$100 million seven-year loan agreement to finance the development of small and medium enterprises (SME'S) in Africa. The \$100 million loan would enhance UBA's capacity to provide access to finance to small and medium enterprises (SME's) across the 19 African countries where UBA currently operates, (Thisday, 2017).

In 2012, China offered \$ US 20 billion in loans to African countries over the next three years, cementing an alliance that appears increasingly hostile to the west. Hu Jintao, the Chinese President promised the credit line-double the amount China pledged for the previous three year period in 2009 – on Thursday during the forum on China African cooperation on Beijing (Guardian, 2012).

4. MILITARY ASSISTANCE

The African continent has been plagued with insecurity and military conflicts. In military disputes like the Dafur crisis, China seeks to play a constructive role as a messenger and a mediator. Different from its western counterparts who were determined to coerce the Sudanese government, China insisted on resolving the Dafur crisis through political means.

Bilateral military exchanges between China and African states have been broadened as China seeks to build “New strategic partnership” with Africa. On one hand, exchanges between Chinese military units and their African counterparts have increased rapidly since the end of the cold war. For instance, in July 2000, a marine fleet of the Chinese People Liberation Army (PLA) paid a friendly visit to Tanzania, which was the first time a PLA fleet called on an African port since 1949 (Muekalia, 2004). In addition, China and South Africa held joint maritime exercises in 2007 and 2008 (Xu, 2010). On the other hand, China has also been providing military aid and supplies to African states, with the primary goal of enhancing the latter's capacity in peacemaking and peace building. For example Beijing started training African military personnel in marine sweeping while providing equipment needed for that purpose ever since 2007.

Many Chinese firms sell arms to many African countries. China sold 55 million dollars worth of arms to Sudan between 2003 and 2006, (Shinn, 2008). It was with the Chinese assistance that the Sudanese government built an arms factory in Khartoum at the heat of the war years in Sudan. When Zimbabwe came under western sanctions, her then President, Robert Mugabe turned east

to China for military assistance. Faced with EU and US embargo, Mugabe in 2004 bought fighter aircraft and military vehicles from China, (Eneka, 2011).

As noted by Alden (2007) military cooperation and growth of arms sales are parts and aspects of China's relation with African governments, especially those under threat owing to civil war or insurgency; China is a major supplier of small arms and light weapons to Africa. Chinese AK 47 assault rifles are common in national armies as well as among armed rebel groups such as those in eastern Congo. They also appeared in Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi and in Chad and Darfur in the Sudan.

China also provided lots of military assistance to Nigeria in her fight against Boko Haram and insurgency, in arms and ammunition, and in 2015, it was gathered that a group of Nigeria security personnel had been already dispatched to Russia for training as special forces to combat the Boko Haram insurgents who are mounting stiff challenge to the Nigeria security services. While another batch made up of Army, Police, Department to Security Service (DSS) are billed to leave Nigeria next month to join the other three batches that are already in training (Naij, 2015).

Sino – African Relation: The Way Forward:

As has been aptly demonstrated in the foregoing, China has been very much instrumental to the development of the post Cold War Africa, both economically, militarily, and even infrastructural wise. China's engagement with Africa has provided lots of opportunities for Africa, though the state owned Chinese enterprises involvement with Africa is focused on natural resources extraction, the private sector engagement is diversified across virtually every aspect of the African economy sparing across mining, petro-chemical, manufacturing, agriculture, automobile, e.t.c. This has provided enormous employment opportunities for Africans, and also improved the economy of Africa

China's engagement with Africa becomes very peculiar due to her non-attachment of conditionality to most of her development assistance. Quite unlike the west, China's engagement with Africa is driven purely by economic interest and in the spirit of south – south cooperation.

China's peculiar experience with Africa in Colonialism also places her at the strategic position to assist Africa that is yet to recover from the negative colonial legacies.

However to further benefit from this trend, it is very important for Africa to develop her internal productive capacity and move beyond being merely primary commodity producers which is priced quite cheap in the international market. China provides a market for Africa, China's large

population poses an opportunity for willing producers to market their finished goods, not just primary commodities.

China has been severally accused of providing development assistance and economic cooperation to African leaders that are known to have no single regard for rule of law. Most of the countries in African that have required military assistance from China are countries with sit tight presidents, a good example being Zimbabwe, that has received scores of embargo from EU and US. The responsibility is upon Africa to deal with this syndrome. Elected leaders should have regard for democratic ethos and ethics by not exceeding the stipulated number of years in office. Human rights should also be respected and protected.

Insecurity has become a major threat to Foreign Direct Investment into Africa. Africa has been enmeshed into various degree of insecurity, ranging from kidnapping, robbery, insurgency to terrorism. This does not provide the enabling environment for foreign investment to thrive, Africa leaders must within their capacities arrest this state of affair, which stems largely from governance failure. This will enable Africa attract more of Chinese Overseer Direct Investments (ODI). Severally, foreign workers have been kidnapped in Africa with the kidnappers demanding huge sum as ransom. This is worrisome.

The state of African infrastructure is disheartening. Bad roads, lack of electricity, etc have become part of the norm in Africa. Most foreign companies in Africa have folded and moved to other countries due to high cost of doing business in Africa. High cost of running power generator is disturbing. African leaders should rise up to tackle the power challenge that has almost become very synonymous with Africa.

In conclusion, Africa stands to benefit more from China if the former creates the enabling environment. China's economic boom should challenge Africa to rise beyond their excuses and undertake the challenge to self development which is the true hallmark of leadership. Development after all is not imported; rather it is a function of local milieu. We should rather maximize the various threats around us and turn them into opportunities for wealth creation.

China is likely to increase her development and economic cooperation with Africa in the coming years. This is even as China is fast rising to become the world largest economy.

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