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African Studies Review / Volume 50 / Issue 03 / December 2007, pp 75 - 114  
DOI: 10.1353/arw.2008.0014, Published online: 18 October 2013

Link to this article: [http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract\\_S0002020600001542](http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0002020600001542)

### How to cite this article:

Barry Sautman and Yan Hairong (2007). Friends and Interests: China's Distinctive Links with Africa . African Studies Review, 50, pp 75-114 doi:10.1353/arw.2008.0014

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# Friends and Interests: China's Distinctive Links with Africa

Barry Sautman and Yan Hairong

**Abstract:** China's expanded links to Africa have created a discourse of how to characterize those ties. Western political forces and media have criticized every aspect of China's activities in Africa, while Chinese, with significant support from Africans, have mounted a spirited defense. This article examines several factors that make China's links with Africa distinctive, including China's aid and migration policies, the distinctive "Chinese model" of foreign investment and infrastructure loans, and the development model known as the "Beijing Consensus." It argues that particular aspects of China's links with Africa make the People's Republic of China (PRC) seem a lesser evil than the West in terms of support for Africa's development and respect for African nations.

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*Between countries, there are no friends, only interests.*

President Abodoulaye Wade of Senegal,  
paraphrasing Lord Palmerston, 2005

## Introduction

A remarkable and telling exchange on Chinese policies in Africa occurred in 2006 between the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC). A CFR report on enhancing U.S. influence in Africa had devoted a chapter to China in which

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*African Studies Review*, Volume 50, Number 3 (December 2007), pp. 75–114

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it charged that the PRC protects “rogue states” like Zimbabwe and Sudan, deploys its influence to counter Western pressures on African states to improve human rights and governance, and competes unfairly with U.S. firms in contract bids in Africa (Council on Foreign Relations 2006:49–52). These same points have been made by veteran critics of China in the U.S. Congress and by U.S. analysts who see China as a competitor (Smith 2005; Eisenman & Kurlantzick 2006).<sup>1</sup> In response, China’s foreign policy elites, which have long regarded the CFR as a “superpower brain-trust” and “invisible government” shaping the U.S. global role (Shambaugh 1993:195–97), responded by arguing that China has a “strategic partnership with Africa that features political equality and mutual trust, economic win-win cooperation and cultural exchange” (PRCMOFA 2006). The authors affirmed Africa’s desire for a more democratic international order and detailed the aid activities of the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), which convened African and PRC ministers in Beijing in 2000, Addis Ababa in 2003, and Beijing again in 2006 (see UN 2003; Liu 2004). Although the PRC paper eschews the obligation of states to vindicate the rights of oppressed people, and furthermore suggests that China is likely to follow the West in its path of forging bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) in Africa that bypass WTO (World Trade Organization) regulations (see Draper & le Pere 2005; Cockayne 2005), it is firm in its claims that the West ignores African aspirations for a more equitable international distribution of wealth.<sup>2</sup>

While the PRC paper is somewhat defensive, the CFR report, like much Western discourse, actively misrepresents China’s role in Africa. The stock notion that China practices neocolonialism in Africa and promotes corruption (Norberg 2006; Lyman 2005) is fostered by its portrayal of China as a country that is uniquely supportive of illiberal regimes, as well as its claims that Chinese activities, such as purchases of illegal African timber, are harmful to the environment. Elsewhere, China has been accused of conducting trade in Africa that is damaging to African antipoverty efforts (Widderhoven 2004), although it is rarely acknowledged that Western powers, as well as Taiwan, have long supported authoritarian regimes in Africa (*Africa Confidential* 2005; Kaplan 2005).<sup>3</sup> PRC support for Zimbabwe and Sudan is much discussed in the West (Mawdsley 2007), but little is said about U.S. support for oil producers such as Gabon, Angola, Chad, and Equatorial Guinea (Peel 2003; Max 1997) or about its intelligence and other military cooperation with Sudan (*Economist* 2005; Hari 2005).<sup>4</sup> During his tenure as Uganda’s president, Yoweri Museveni, who tried his main opponent for rape and treason and changed the constitution in order to remain in office, was a much-praised U.S. ally (*Economist* 2006; Levitsky 2002). China does purchase illegal African timber, but so does the European Union, and China does not participate at all in the biopiracy in Africa carried on by Western pharmaceutical firms.<sup>5</sup>

Nor can China’s trade relations with either Africa or the West be accused of having deleterious consequences for Africans. Only seven sub-Sa-

haran states receive a significant share (5%–14%) of their imports from China (Edwards & Jenkins 2005; Kennan & Stevens 2005). Worldwide, PRC exports compete with African exports almost solely in textiles and clothing (Kurlantzick 2006), and China, in fact, supplies African firms with most of the cloth they need to compete in their main market, the United States.<sup>6</sup> Some 60 percent of China's exports, moreover, are produced by foreign-owned firms. Inexpensive PRC-made household goods brought to Africa by Chinese and Africans do inhibit light industry and may harm the poor as potential producers. Yet machinery, electronic equipment, and "high- and new-tech products" made up nearly half of China's 2005 exports to Africa (Barboza 2006; *Xinhua* 2006a), and PRC goods, which are much more affordable than both Western imports and many local products, benefit the poor as consumers. African industrialization, moreover, was already severely damaged by Western imports following the imposition in the 1980s and 1990s of World Bank/International Monetary Fund (IMF) Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) (Melamed 2005; Woods 2006:141–78). The CFR report is thus representative of the common Western moral binary in discourses on China's Africa policies. This was exemplified by a German foundation's notice for its panel on "China in Africa" at the NGO forum of the WTO 2005 ministerial meeting, which asked, rhetorically, whether "China–Africa trade and investment relations [are] following a pattern of South–South cooperation, guided by development needs of both sides? Or are [they] just replications of the classical North–South model, where Africa's hope of building a manufacturing sector gets another beating? Will the Chinese 'no political strings attached' approach help the African development state regain posture, or is it a recipe for closed-door business with autocrats to get a competitive edge over Western economic interests?" (FES 2005).

This article focuses on two sets of China–Africa links that serve to contrast China's involvement in Africa with what the West has offered through the Washington Consensus (WC) and Post-Washington Consensus (PWC) (a paradigm that adds to WC neoliberalism a discourse of democracy, good governance, and poverty reduction [Fine & Jomo 2005]). These distinctive links stem from China's status as a developing country, its socialist legacies, and its own semicolonial history, as well as from its late entry into Africa in the midst of a decades-long decline in African fortunes associated with WC privatization, liberalization, deregulation, and austerity policies (Teunissen & Akkerman 2004; Ahmed 2004; Broad 2004). PRC leaders are usually depicted as having an instrumental approach to dealings with foreigners and are said to have interests, but no friends, abroad (Lorenz 2005). And yet in comparison with other foreign interests in Africa, China today is often perceived as the lesser evil, a perception that may allow PRC leaders to make good on their claim of including Africans among their "all-weather friends" (Liu 2005).

China, to be sure, is now a trade-driven industrial power integrated into the world system. Like other nations it practices a *realpolitik* of aggrandizing national wealth and power (Guang 2005), with policies and practices

that have been called “neo-liberalism with Chinese characteristics” (Harvey 2005:120–51). China increasingly replicates in key ways longstanding developed-state policies in Africa of disadvantageous terms of trade, exploitation of natural resources, oppressive labor regimes, and support for authoritarian rulers. In terms of its Africa policies, the PRC can hardly boast that “China is the best,” but neither is China “just like the rest.” Although commonalities between PRC and Western approaches are now fundamental, important distinctions also exist: in the distinctive “Chinese model” of foreign investment and infrastructure loans; in the so-called Beijing Consensus (BC), lauded as a model of development that takes seriously developing state aspirations ignored by the West; and in China–Africa aid and migration policies, which are seen by many Africans as serving interests other than those of foreigners and the elite.

### The “Chinese Model” of Investment

Before the 1990s, the PRC’s Africa policy was purely political: China fostered anticolonial and postcolonial solidarity (Hutchinson 1976), and such efforts were repaid through African states’ recognition of the PRC (Nwugo 1977). The symbol of China–Africa relations from the 1960s to the 1980s was the Tanzania–Zambia railway (Tazara), built by fifty thousand Chinese laborers (Hall & Peyman 1976; Monson 2004–5). China’s practice of supporting developing state initiatives and providing aid that did not enrich elites still resonates with Africans today, even though, since the 1990s, PRC activism on behalf of developing states has waned and much of what it does in Africa is now profit-centered (Chen 2001; Alden 2005).

Postcolonial Africa is often seen mostly in terms of its problems: as burdened by civil wars, epidemics, and venal regimes that aggravate endemic poverty. These perceptions led to a post–Cold War Afro-pessimism or even Afrophobia and to the downgrading of Africa as a site of interest for policymakers and investors from the developed world (Rieff 1998; *Economist* 1997; Andreasson 2005). This began to change somewhat in the 1990s, as Western leaders again began to pay attention to the continent, partly because of China’s increased presence, which grew by 700 percent during the decade. While many Africans still believe that Africa remains in many respects invisible, especially to the United States (Jaffer 2004; Pan 2006), there is no doubt that China, Britain, France, and the U.S. see themselves as competitors in the second largest continent with the fastest growing population: with 900 million people in 2005, less than one-seventh of the world’s people, Africa is projected to have nearly a quarter of the global population by 2050, and it has been estimated that Africa’s economy may double in a generation (*Ethiopian Herald* 2005; Dyer 2007).

From 2001 to 2004, Africa’s average annual intake from foreign direct investment (FDI) was only \$15–18b, despite the continent’s providing the world’s highest FDI returns, averaging 29 percent in the 1990s and 40 per-

cent by 2005. FDI flows in Africa in 2005 jumped to \$29b (of \$897b in global FDI flows), but China's FDI stock in Africa was still only \$1b of Africa's \$96b in FDI stock (two-thirds of it European—half British or French—and one-fifth North American). By late 2006, however, China's investments in Africa were pegged at almost \$8b, as pledged investments were actualized. China will soon become one of Africa's top three FDI providers. Since the 2006 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, that effort has been aided by a \$5b China-Africa Development Fund to spur PRC investment. Trade with Africa was a tiny part of the PRC's 2006 \$1.76 trillion in world trade, but had grown from \$3b in 1995 to \$10b in 2000, \$40b in 2005, and \$55b in 2006, balanced slightly in Africa's favor.<sup>7</sup> There were more than eight hundred Chinese enterprises in Africa in 2006, one hundred of them medium and large state-owned firms (*Xinhua* 2007a). The PRC accounts for only a tiny part of Africa's FDI (\$3.6b in 2004 and \$6.9b in 2005), but its firms invested \$135m and \$280m, respectively, in those years. Still, while China is the third largest trader with Africa, after the U.S. and France, its trade was well behind the United States's \$91b and represents only one-tenth of Africa's world trade, most of which remains with the E.U. and U.S.

Between the end of the last century and the beginning of this century, Africa's overall share of world trade and global FDI inflows actually declined: in the 1970s Africa received 5 percent of the former and 6 percent of the latter, but in 2005 the figures were 1.5 percent and 3 percent, respectively (AFP 2006a; *Herald* 2005; RTÉ 2005; UNCTAD 2006:40). Many PRC and African analysts contend, therefore, that increased PRC trade and investment ease Africa's dependence on the West and are mutually beneficial (*Indian Express*, 2006; Itano 2005; Li Yong 2003). The U.N. Development Program agrees and underwrites a China-Africa Business Council that promotes PRC investment in Africa (CABC 2006).

Africa is the most resource-laden continent, with every primary product required for industry, including (in 2005) 10 million (m) of the globe's 84m barrels per day (bpd) of oil production. Some 85 percent of new oil reserves found from 2001 to 2004 were on west/central African coasts, most of it light, sweet, highly profitable crude. Strong competition for African oil exists because 90 percent of the world's untapped conventional oil reserves are owned by states, and 75 percent of known reserves are in states that exclude or sharply limit outside investment in oil. According to estimates, world demand for oil may reach 115m bpd by 2030. In 2005 the U.S. imported 60 percent of its 20m bpd of oil, 16 percent from Africa. In 2006, however, U.S. imports of oil from Africa equaled or slightly surpassed those from the Middle East, with both at 22 percent of total imports (2.23m bpd). Oil today accounts for more than 70 percent of all U.S. imports from Africa.<sup>8</sup> In 2005 China imported 48 percent of its 7.2m bpd, with 38 percent of its imports from Africa (1.33m bpd). By 2025, its imports should reach 10.7m bpd, 75 percent of consumption. More than 60 percent of the output of Sudan, Africa's third largest oil producer, went to China and

supplied 5 percent of PRC oil needs. Angola and Nigeria, the next largest producers, each sent a quarter of their production to China, and in 2006 Angola overtook Saudi Arabia as China's greatest source, supplying 15 percent of PRC oil imports. Overall, however, China consumed less than one-tenth of oil exported from Africa.<sup>9</sup>

Chinese bids for resources fare well because they are packaged with investments and infrastructure loans. China preeminently invests "in long-neglected infrastructure projects and hardly viable industries" (*New Era* 2006), and its loans, typically advanced at zero or near-zero interest, are often repaid in natural resources, if they are not canceled entirely (Brautigam 2007). In Angola, China offered \$2b in aid for infrastructure projects and secured a former Shell oil block that the largest Indian company had sought (Hurst 2006:10). In Nigeria, a promised \$7b in investments and rehabilitation of power stations secured for PRC firms oil areas sought by Western multinationals (Alden & Davies 2006). Chinese companies outbid Brazilian and French firms for a \$3b iron ore project in Gabon after pledging to build a rail line, dam, and deepwater port (*China's Industries* 2007; *South China Morning Post* 2007). Its firms had \$6.3b in construction contracts in 2005 (Singh 2006) and now employ many African workers.<sup>10</sup> A Nigerian official has noted that "the Western world is never prepared to transfer technology—but the Chinese do, [and] while China's technology may not be as sophisticated as some Western governments', it is better to have Chinese technology than to have none at all" (*Financial Times* 2006a).

The notion of a specifically "Chinese model" of economic growth and foreign relations, in which trade and investment play prominent roles, is common in Africa.<sup>11</sup> African analysts contrast the PRC government's massive investment in infrastructure and support services within China with their own governments' failure to provide these prerequisites for development (UNDESA 2007:105). They also compare it to Western economic practices, which are seen as exploiting "unequal and disparate exchange" to lock in underdevelopment (Williams 1985; Raffer 1987; Srkar 2001).<sup>12</sup> The director of the U.K. Centre for Foreign Policy Analysis has observed that "the phenomenal growth rates in China and the fact that hundreds of millions have been lifted out of poverty is an attractive model for Africans, and not just the elderly leadership. Young, intelligent, well-educated Africans are attracted to the Chinese model, even though Beijing is not trying to spread democracy" (Moorcraft 2007; see also Zhang 2006). The president of the African Development Bank has said of the Chinese that "we can learn from them how to organize our trade policy, to move from low to middle income status, to educate our children in skills and areas that pay off in just a couple years" (World Economic Forum 2006).

Many Africans view China's political economy as differing from that of the West in ways that speak to Africa. China's strategy, according to a Nigerian journalist, "is not informed by the Washington Consensus. China has not allowed any [IMF] or World Bank to impose on it some neo-liberal

package of reforms.... Their strategy has not been a neo-liberal overdose of deregulation, cutting social expenditure, privatizing everything under the sun and jettisoning the public good. They have not branded subsidy a dirty word (*This Day* 2005). African analysts contend that the PRC government's investment in infrastructure and support services is made possible by China's exemption from "strictures imposed by multilateral and bilateral financiers" (*Nation* 2006). Some also note, interestingly, that China has had high growth rates and reduced poverty without adopting Western liberal democracy (*Vanguard* 2006).

Indeed, suspicion of and cynicism about the West are widespread, and African analysts agree that while China, like the West, wants Africa's oil, the West is more single-minded in its pursuit. While three-fourths of U.S. FDI in Africa has been in oil, 64 percent of PRC FDI in Africa from 1979 to 2000 was in manufacturing and only 28 percent was in resources (Ferguson 2003; WBGAR 2004:63).<sup>13</sup> According to one African journalist, "the way in which China's demand for oil is framed in Western media—in breathy, suspense-filled undertones—... smacks of racist double standards" (Wanyeki 2006; see also *Mail & Guardian* 2006). Even such U.S. allies as Museveni see Africa's virtual "donating" of unprocessed raw materials to the West as allowing a small part of humanity to live well at Africans' expense, and critics contend that Africans need investment that will permit them to sell coffee and not just beans, steel and not just iron ore. They regard China's surging demand for African exports—the PRC's share rose from 1.3 percent in 1995 to 10 percent in 2005—as aiding that effort (Goldstein 2006; Broadman 2006:11; *New Vision* 2005).<sup>14</sup> Africans also find PRC goods to be cheaper than Western imports, and often cheaper than local goods: a 50 kilo bag of local cement costs \$10 in Angola, but imported PRC cement costs \$4 (Donnelly 2005).

For many Africans, then, there exists a "Chinese model," now often labeled the "Beijing Consensus" (BC), that stands in contrast to FDI/export-led rapid industrial expansion (Li 2005; Cao 2005). It is an image of a developing state that does not fully implement WC prescriptions, does not impose onerous conditions on African states' policies, and is more active than the West in promoting industrialism in the global South.<sup>15</sup> According to one South African scholar, China has succeeded in creating "a somewhat idealistic impression of the distant partner or big brother in the East" (Whi 2006). Whether this positive view of the Beijing Consensus is warranted continues to be debated, although its accuracy may be seen as less important than the fact that it exists and plays a role in how Africans appraise the policies of both China and the Western states.

### The "Beijing Consensus" as a Competing Framework

While there actually is no clear "consensus" on the exact components of the "Beijing Consensus" (Leonard 2006), the phrase was coined by Joshua



Ramo, a former *Time* magazine foreign affairs editor and Goldman Sachs China advisor, now managing director of Kissinger Associates. The term describes PRC investments, aid, and trade that are carried on without oversight by Western states and international institutions. While the WC/PWC paradigm has more than a two-decade history in Africa (Sandbrook 2005), the BC is now seen as competing with WC/PWC instruments that were set up by the E.U., U.S. and South Africa around the year 2000.<sup>16</sup>

The Cotonou Agreement of 2000, the E.U. framework established with seventy-seven African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) states, is based on free trade (including WTO compliance and subcontinental regionalism), private enterprise, export production, FDI, austerity measures, and conditioned aid. It gives a leading role to the European Commission and individual political, rather than group and socioeconomic, rights. Poverty reduction is seen as a by-product of trade and capital liberalization and FDI secured by compliant labor. Quintennial conferences serve to renegotiate the E.U.–ACP relationship, which also includes bilateral and regional free-trade Economic Partnership Agreements. According to many, these pacts, like those negotiated by the United States, have the effect of weakening solidarity among developing states in the WTO (Nunn & Price 2004; Hurt 2003; Bensah 2003).

The U.S. African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) of 2000 provides that states may receive trade preferences if they marketize, liberalize, privatize, desubsidize, deregulate, and do not undermine U.S. foreign policy interests. Some thirty-seven African countries, many of them authoritarian, have been declared eligible. U.S. and African ministers meet every two years in an AGOA Forum. AGOA trade concessions exceed the U.S. General System of Preferences only slightly, in part because oil and minerals make up more than 80 percent of the value of African exports to the U.S. Only a few countries have gained under AGOA, mainly by exporting agricultural products, such as cut flowers, that are not plentiful in the U.S. Most other African products remain barred by competition from subsidized U.S. agriculture and nontariff health and safety barriers, even though Asian firms produce many of the goods entering the U.S. from Africa. AGOA is also a platform for FTAs between the U.S. and African regional entities (UNCTAD 2003:1–2; Rice 2004; Melber 2005; Lall 2005). Its appeal for African rulers lies not so much in the benefits that it offers directly, as in closer political ties to the U.S., which result in aid, including military training useful in quelling opposition (Hallinan 2006).<sup>17</sup>

Since 2001, neoliberal principles also have been embodied in the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). Based on the idea that integration into the world market is the single antidote to poverty, NEPAD has been endorsed by the African Union and is backed by businesses in South Africa and around the world. China, in fact, voices support for NEPAD and says it implements its principles through FOCAC (Liu 2004). But there is no doubt that NEPAD is mostly identified with Western interests.

U.S. firms in Africa act as a link between AGOA and NEPAD (Hayes 2002), and E.U. endorsements of NEPAD link it to the Cotonou Agreement (Lake 2003). U.S. leaders praise NEPAD as “extend[ing] democracy and free markets and transparency across the continent” (USWH 2003), while critics compare it to IMF/World Bank SAPs (Lesufi 2004; Adesina 2004, 2006; Bond 2005), claiming that its self-representation as “by Africans for Africans” masks the degree to which it is another mechanism for implementing developed countries’ WC/PWC frameworks. In the global South there is a sense of grievance against the policies of neoliberalism embodied in the E.U., U.S. and NEPAD mechanisms, which are seen as promoting an aggravated form of worldwide unequal exchange. At the 2000 FOCAC opening ceremony, Zambia’s president stated that developed countries

are not prepared to discuss the issues of justice and fair play concerning the international trade and commercial sector, which imposes considerable suffering and privation on developing countries.... The developing world continues to subsidize consumption of the developed world, through an iniquitous trade system. The existing structure is designed to consign us to perpetual poverty and underdevelopment.... It is unrealistic to expect support, relief or respite from those who benefit from the status quo. (Chiluba 2000)

China, by comparison, is seen as supporting initiatives by African states to address development problems not solved by neoliberalism’s corporate initiatives, and as promoting investment in infrastructure and human capital, rather than just primary products.

PRC aid comes without the strings attached by AGOA and other programs. Even Jim McDermott, the U.S. Congressman known as the “Father of AGOA,” has cautioned that “the US cannot rely solely on the private sector to help support Africa’s endeavor to develop. Private companies may invest in new manufacturing plants or mineral extracting facilities, but they usually do not drill water in remote villages, or build schools to educate young Africans. Do you know of many venture capitalists who buy malaria or TB drugs for the world’s poor to enhance their trade opportunities?” (quoted in de Figueiredo 2003). To be sure, China’s self-portrayal as Africa’s helpmate is often dismissed as propaganda designed to curry favor with African elites. To the most cynical observers the Beijing Consensus reflects little more than China’s desire to turn itself into a world leader. Some critics in Western circles hold the view that the BC is simply a more saleable variant of the PWC, or that any “consensus” not enforced by the U.S. is bound to seem attractive.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, while the PRC is seen as offering a new approach, many of the cooperative ventures between China and Africa and its leaders mirror both in form and content the institutions and frameworks of developed countries.<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, Africans who are disenchanted with Western neoliberalism regard the PRC as a plausible alternative, based on

experiences and needs that China shares with Africa (Tull 2006).

The most vocal opponents of the BC are U.S. neoconservatives, who dismiss it as “economic growth without the constraints of democratic institutions” or “economic development without political change” (Wortzel & Stewart 2005; Craner 2005). Supporters, by contrast, present it as a multi-faceted set of policies that encourage constant innovation as a development strategy (instead of one-size-fits-all neoliberal orthodoxy) and use quality-of-life measures, such as promotion of equality and environmental protection (not just GDP), in formulating the strategy. Joshua Ramo asserts that the BC opposes the hierarchy of nations embodied in the WC-related international financial institutions (IFIs) and the WTO (Ramo 2004a).<sup>20</sup> PRC leaders, he says, reject “a US-style power, bristling with arms and intolerant of others’ world views” in favor of “power based on the example of their own model, the strength of their economic system, and their rigid defense of... national sovereignty” (Ramo 2004b).

Ramo cannot be written off as “radical.” He is a member of the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations and was declared a “Global Leader of Tomorrow” by the neoliberal World Economic Forum (WEF). He is also affiliated with the Foreign Policy Centre (FPC) in London founded by Tony Blair, and his book on the Beijing Consensus has been praised by the World Bank (FPC 2005). Ramo himself claims that the BC is one “model” that exists within the neoliberal paradigm. But he also approvingly quotes an Indian sociologist who has stated that “China’s experiment should be the most admired in human history. China has its own path” (Ramo 2004c).

China’s government denies that it promotes any particular model (French 2005). Yet soon after Ramo coined the concept of a Beijing Consensus (and Klaus Schwab, the chair of the World Economic Forum, contrasted it with the WC [*Renmin wang* 2004]), a leading PRC economic journal published an article by Ramo, and Chinese television produced a program on his book (FPC 2005). His work has been circulated among the top five thousand PRC leaders. China’s leading newspaper published an article in which the economists Wu Shuqing (former head of Beijing University and now a Ministry of Education advisor) and Cheng Enfu (head of the Academy of Marxism and a proponent of the “socialist market economy” as a world model) endorsed the “theoretical scientificity and practical superiority” of the BC. Opposing it to the WC, they spoke of its “growing influence in the world, particularly among developing countries” (Wu & Cheng 2005). Other PRC works counterpose the BC and WC (Zhang 2004; Huang & Cui 2005; Wang 2005; Mao 2005), and PRC writers praise Africans’ supposed move from WC to BC (Liu 2006; 21SJBD 2006).<sup>21</sup>

To some analysts, the differences between WC and BC amount to an ideological struggle between the U.S. and China, that is, a struggle between a “neo-liberal Anglo-Saxon credo” and an Asian-derived “socially oriented” approach (Cheow 2006). A U.K. journalist has said that the WC–BC confrontation is “the biggest ideological threat the west has felt since the end

of the cold war." Expressing no doubt about which "model" will prevail, he opined that in two decades "the press will be full of articles about 'Asian values' and the 'Beijing Consensus'" (M. Leonard 2005a, 2005b). Arif Dirlik, who emphasizes the BC's lack of ideological coherence, has argued, nonetheless, that its appeal may be its acknowledgment of the desirability of a global order "founded, not upon homogenizing universalisms that inevitably lead to hegemonism, but on a simultaneous recognition of commonality and difference" (Dirlik 2006). That recognition magnifies China's soft power in Africa, the BC's main testing ground.

### **Tied and Untied Aid**

Worldwide, much aid from developed states is subject to conditions that benefit the donor economically and politically, including its security interests. From the point of view of the recipient countries, such "tied aid" "is a particularly inefficient form of development assistance because it does not help them develop their economies by creating new businesses and jobs. Instead, most of the benefits remain in the donor nations. Tied aid is also inefficient because goods and services purchased from the donor often could be available at a lower price from local producers or world markets (Hirvonen 2005:8, 12).

The popular view in the West is that it is generous with Africa, both in terms of aid monies and debt relief (IPS 2005).<sup>22</sup> Yet from 1970 to 2002, Africa received \$530b in aid and loans and repaid \$540b. The G-8 and WC-related IFIs subsequently canceled the debt of only fourteen states, and Africa's debt still stands at about US\$300b. An additional \$50b in aid was promised in 2005, but more than half was either double-counted or involved money already pledged. Debt relief and refugee-related expenditures in developed countries are also counted by them as part of increased development assistance (Hertz 2005; Hirvonen 2005; Abila 2005).

About 80 percent of U.S. grants and contracts to developing countries, moreover, is "tied"—it must be used to buy goods and services from U.S. firms and NGOs. Some 90 percent of Italy's aid benefits Italian companies and exports; 60–65 percent of Canada's aid and much of that of Germany, Japan, and France is tied to purchases from those states. A U.N. study found that such ties cut by 25–40 percent the value of aid to Africans, who are required to buy noncompetitively priced imports (IPS 2004; Pawson 2005). Actual costs of tied direct food aid transfers are 50 percent higher than local food purchases and one-third higher than the costs of third-country food (OECD 2005).

Aid from the PRC has differed from other aid programs in a number of ways, including whether the recipient or donor chooses the projects on which aid monies will be spent. China's approach is more commercial than formerly, but it still contrasts with U.S. and U.K.'s insistence on aiding only private enterprise development. For example, the 2005 report of the U.K.

Commission on Africa states that Africa should adopt the Private Finance Initiative: all major projects should be built in conjunction with the private sector (Nelson 2005). China, by contrast, continues to support state-run projects in industry and agriculture.

PRC aid to Africa, while not totally “untied,” manages to attenuate any negative consequences to the donor. PRC firms secure many contracts on projects in Africa financed by China’s soft loans. One analyst speaks of “indirect conditionalities,” an understanding that PRC firms will secure a portion of work financed by PRC loans (Kuada 2005). The \$2b credit line China extended to Angola in 2004, which was used for railroad repair, road building, office construction, a fiber-optic network, and oil exploration, was guaranteed by a contract for the sale of oil from a field that generates 10,000 bpd. The loan, originally at 1.5 percent interest but lowered to 0.25 percent, is to be recouped over seventeen years, including a five-year interest-free period. Its terms reserve for Angolans 30 percent of the value of contracts paid for with its funds.<sup>23</sup> Chinese firms also secure many contracts apart from those financed by PRC aid: in Botswana by 2005 they were winning 80 percent (UPI 2005a). A study of 505 contracts opened by African states for international bids in 2004 showed that PRC firms won 2.6 percent of the total, but these amounted to 18 percent of the value of all contracts (ADB 2005:23). In 2001, Africa-based contracts were 17 percent of all PRC contracts outside China, but by 2005 they were 28 percent and in 2006, 31 percent. In that year, PRC-won contracts ranked first in new contract value among the totality of contracts secured by foreigners in Africa (Zhu & Xu 2007). In 2006, there were more than six hundred Chinese infrastructure projects in Africa, and financing by China’s Exim Bank for African infrastructure had increased to \$12.6b, much more than the developed countries’ total infrastructure aid to the continent (*New African* 2006; White 2006).

PRC winning bids are based on low labor costs and profit margins and quick turnaround (Kurlantzick 2006). Most Western firms expect 15–25 percent profits rates; most Chinese firms expect less than 10 percent and many accept 3–5 percent (CCS 2006). In Ethiopia, some PRC firms make unprofitable bids to get a foot in the door. Lower salaries and profit margins also arise from competition among China’s state-owned firms. PRC contractors building Ethiopia’s roads seek a 3 percent profit; Western businesses seek 15 percent or more (Shinn 2005; Lyman 2005; Leggett 2005). Efficient, low-cost Chinese construction softens the image of PRC participation in the overall unequal trade and investment relationships with Africa.

Certainly PRC aid to Africa is not politically disinterested. Such aid provides numerous political benefits, such as African support on sovereignty issues and for China’s efforts to attain a “market economy status” that will enable it to better resist antidumping actions in the WTO (Ching 2005). If China were ever to directly confront Western states in international forums, African states could be counted on as allies. Yet PRC aid to Africa is not

used as a political tool in the same way that it is used by Western political actors. This approach is longstanding: Tanzania's first leader, Julius Nyerere (1974:235), commenting on the loan for building Tazara, stated that "the Chinese people have not asked us to become communists in order to qualify for this loan.... They have never at any point suggested that we should change any of our policies—internal or external." There is no evidence that China attaches political conditions to its aid, except that recipients must maintain full diplomatic relations with the PRC, rather than with Taiwan, as all but five African countries do (Mukandala 1999; Liu 2001). In contrast, during the Cold War, the U.S. and U.K. pressured Tanzania to become allied with the West and later to accept IMF/World Bank SAPs. The U.S. is now heavily involved in African politics: for example, through multimillion-dollar programs to support or undermine the governments of Angola, Burundi, Sudan, and Zimbabwe carried out by the self-described "overtly political" Office of Transition Initiatives of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USACOC 2005; USAID 2005; USAID/OTI 2005; McGreal 2002; *Christian Science Monitor* 2006). In 2003 the U.S. pressured the three African U.N. Security Council members to endorse the war in Iraq (IPS 2004).

In the end, of course, what is most significant about PRC's collaborative projects in Africa is their economic success for both parties. As one analyst explained, "Chinese aid is often dispensed in such a way that corrupt rulers cannot somehow use it to buy Mercedes Benzes.... [It] is often in the form of infrastructure, such as a railroad network in Nigeria or roads in Kenya and Rwanda. Or in the form of doctors and nurses to provide health care to people who otherwise would not have access. China provides scholarships for African students to study in its universities and, increasingly, funds to encourage its businessmen to invest in Africa" (Ching 2005).<sup>24</sup> In 2005, Sierra Leone's ambassador to the PRC, speaking of China's activities in Africa, said, "The Chinese are investing in Africa and are seeing results, while the G-8 countries are putting in huge sums of money and they don't see very much" (UPI 2005b). This difference gives China an advantage in African eyes, even when altruistic motives are discounted.

### **Draining and Gaining Migrations**

Over the past several decades, the centerpiece of PRC aid, infrastructure development, has also facilitated China–Africa migration. This has reached a level unmatched by any Western nation. China has sent sixteen thousand medical personnel to Africa to develop hospitals and clinics, and 240 million patients have been treated by Chinese health care workers (*Xinhua* 2006c). Since the 1960s, ten thousand PRC agrotechnicians have been sent to Africa and have worked on two hundred projects, including setting up farms and agricultural stations and training personnel (*Business Day* 2004a). In Tanzania, for example, the PRC-built Ubungo Farm Implements Factory

turned out 85 percent of the country's hand tools, while the Mbarali Farm produces one-fourth of the rice eaten by Tanzanians (Ai 1999). Between 2007 and 2010, China will train ten thousand agricultural technicians for work in Africa (Macauhub 2007). Some 530 PRC teachers have worked in African schools, and many Chinese train African government staff (*Xinhua* 2005; Lu 2006; Ryu, 2004; Kunda, 2005). Many more go to Africa for contract labor service—building railways, roads, telecommunications systems, hospitals, schools, and dams—or to conduct business that makes use of that infrastructure.

Africans go to China to learn how to build the infrastructure themselves or how to work in it as doctors, teachers, and officials. Some sixteen thousand African professionals were trained in China in 2000–2006; fifteen thousand will do so in 2007–9 (*Xinhua* 2006d; *This Day* 2007). From 1956 to 1999, 5,582 Africans studied at PRC universities. By late 2004, 17,860 Africans had received PRC scholarships and fifteen thousand had graduated. By 2007, more than twenty thousand Africans had graduated from PRC universities, including several political leaders.<sup>25</sup> China provided fifteen hundred scholarships to Africans in 2005 and two thousand in 2006; by 2010 there will be four thousand a year. Despite difficulties presented by widespread racism, a few Africans remain in the PRC after graduation, some engaging in China–Africa business (Leu 2007; Nyamwana 2004; Gillespie 2001:98–108, 169–79; interviews with Africans in Beijing, Shanghai, and Shenzhen, 2006; interviews in Guangzhou, 2007).

Migration patterns represent another key distinction between China–Africa links and Western connections with the continent. Africans generally perceive Chinese who work in Africa as less privileged and exploitative than Western expatriates (Wainaina 2006).<sup>26</sup> Chinese construction personnel and agricultural advisors live more like their African counterparts, in keeping with the eighth “Principle on External Economic and Technical Assistance” set out by Premier Zhou Enlai during a 1964 trip to Africa: “The experts dispatched by the Chinese government to help construction in the recipient country should enjoy the same living conditions as the experts of the recipient country. The Chinese experts are not allowed to make any special demands and ask for any special amenities” (Donnelly 2005).<sup>27</sup> Similarly, the small, mostly short-term African migrations to China are seen as benefiting Africa, while many Africans view the large, permanent migration of African professionals to the West as harming Africa's development.

A surge in Chinese migration to Africa began in the mid-1990s and accelerated in the present decade, soon rendering population estimates obsolete. (See table 1) An Ohio University (OU) database shows 137,000 Chinese in Africa, the same figure provided for 2001 by Taiwan's government.<sup>28</sup> Its estimates for thirty-four African states are now out-of-date. While some discrepancies may reflect differing conceptions of residence, the magnitude of the differences indicates a very rapid growth in Africa's Chinese communities.<sup>29</sup>

**Table 1: Number of Chinese in select African countries, c. 2001 and 2002–7**

Country	Ohio U. Database 2001	Estimate for 2003–7
Algeria	2000	8000+ (2006)
Benin	—	4000 (2007)
Angola	500	20,000–30,000 (2006)
Botswana	40	3000–10,000 (2006–7)
Burkina Faso	—	1000 (2007)
Cameroon	50	1000–3000 (2005)
Cape Verde	—	600–1000 (2007)
Congo (Democratic Rep.)	200	500 (2007)
Cote d'Ivoire	200	10,000 (2007)
Egypt	110	6000–10,000 (2007)
Ethiopia	100	3000–4000 (2006)
Ghana	500	6000 (2005)
Guinea	3000	5000 (2007)
Kenya	190	5000 (2007)
Lesotho	1000	5000 (2005)
Liberia	120	600 (2006)
Madagascar	30,000	60,000 (2003)
Malawi	50	2000 (2007)
Mali	—	2000 (2007)
Mozambique	700	1500 (2006)
Namibia	—	5000–40,000 (2006)
Nigeria	2000	100,000 (2007)
Senegal	—	2000 (2007)
South Africa	30,000	100,000–400,000 (2007)
Sudan	45	5000–10,000 (2004–5)
Tanzania	600	3000–20,000 (2006)
Togo	50	3000 (2007)
Uganda	100	5000–10,000 (2007)
Zambia	150	4000–6,000 (2007)
Zimbabwe	300	5300–10,000 (2005–7)

Sources: Ohio University 2001; Becker 2004; Chen 2003; AFP 2005; Tull 2005, f.n. 98; Sudan Tribune 2005; Xinhuanet 2007; *Daily News* (Gaborone) 2006; AFP 2006d; *Peoples' Daily* 2002; *Daily Telegraph* 2005; Weidlich 2006; Namibian 2006a; IRIN 2006b; Ren 2007; *Deutsche Presse Agentur* 2007; *Xinhua* 2007b; Tian 2007; Interviews with Chinese in Ghana, 2005, Tanzania, 2006; information from PRC embassies in Mozambique, Liberia, Ethiopia, 2006; communications with Chinese living in Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, D.R. Congo, Egypt, Malawi, Mali, Senegal, Kenya, Togo, Uganda and Zambia, March–August 2007.



The growth of South Africa's Chinese population is especially significant. The ten thousand "indigenous," or South-African-born, Chinese (SABCs) made up almost the entire Chinese population until 1980, when an immigrant community, 90 percent from Taiwan, began to form. By 1993 there were thirty-six thousand Chinese in South Africa. A decade later, the PRC Embassy in South Africa stated that there were perhaps eighty thousand Chinese residents, while South Africa's ambassador to China has said that there are more than one hundred thousand. Almost all the increase since 1993 has come from Chinese mainland migrants, as the Taiwanese community shrank by half (to 10,000) and the SABC population declined. Estimates in 2004–7 ranged from one hundred thousand to four hundred thousand legal and illegal Chinese residents.<sup>30</sup>

A Belgian diplomat in Tanzania once told a Japanese diplomat in the 1970s that his African employee had queried, "Why are there two kinds of Chinese in Tanzania? One kind wears dirty clothes, looks poor, but works very hard; another kind wears a good suit, rides in a modern car with a camera on his shoulder, and looks like an American." The African worker was conflating as "Chinese" those who had come from the PRC to build Tazara and Japanese businessmen and tourists visiting Tanzania for very different purposes (Michiaki 1979).<sup>31</sup> Only a small number of Chinese in Africa today perform service of the kind rendered by their 1970s compatriots, yet substantial differences remain between the positions of Chinese in Africa and those of citizens of developed countries. According to a South African university official, China provides low-cost technology and its people are willing to work in inhospitable places (Muekalia 2004).

In Africa, the citizens of most developed countries are managers or professionals. Some work for large multinational corporations, others are among the forty thousand NGO-employed expats (Ayodele 2003). They generally command salaries that allow a lifestyle very different from that of most Africans and even most local occupational peers. Larger Chinese communities in Africa do have well-off members, usually businesspeople. But most long-term Chinese residents in Africa are small merchants, with little capital, who sell what one Kenyan has called "down-street merchandise" (*Nation* 2005; *Post* 2005; Mayanja 2005). In Zimbabwe, Zambia, and South Africa, there are also Chinese farmers (AsiaNews 2006; Ncube 2005; Ryu 2004).<sup>32</sup> And there are also Chinese who study in Africa, mostly in South Africa. In 1999, there were only nineteen students in South African tertiary institutions, but by 2004–5 there were more than three thousand (PRCMOC 2006).

Many Chinese work in Africa under labor service contracts.<sup>33</sup> They are paid much less and live more frugally than Western expats doing comparable work. In 1992 Africa employed one hundred thousand developed country expats at a cost of \$4b per year, that is, \$40,000 per individual or nearly \$800 per week (Kollehlon & Eule 2003). Even now, Chinese wages are not nearly as high. Chinese employees (i.e., managers, engineers, and skilled

craftsmen) of one construction firm in Angola receive \$500 a month, live two to three to a room, and cook for themselves, while Europeans each rent a house and eat in restaurants. Chinese supervising African workers on construction sites dig along with them (Donnelly 2005; BBCRF 2006). China's largest contract in Africa, worth \$650m, is the building of Sudan's Merowe Dam, which in 2003–5 employed eighteen hundred Chinese and sixteen hundred Sudanese. A PRC firm won the bid because it kept expected profit margins and Chinese staff costs low. All project managers, 90 percent of engineers, and 75 percent of technicians are Chinese; locals make up 20 percent of skilled workers and all of the general laborers. Expats earn \$220–\$600 per week, Sudanese \$22–\$350 (*Xinhua* 2006f; Reina 2004). Chinese firms in Africa “reportedly provide good quality projects at a price discount of 25–50 percent compared to other foreign investors,” due not only to lower profit margins and access to cheap capital, but also to low wages and living standards for Chinese employees (Kaplinsky 2006:18–19).

While many Chinese now live in Africa, a growing number of Africans live in China. Guangzhou had ten thousand or more Africans in 2006, mainly China–Africa traders and students (*Business Day* 2006; Zatt 2007).<sup>34</sup> Beijing in 2005–6 was said to have at least six hundred Africans, Shanghai five hundred, and Shenzhen one hundred (Simpson 2006).<sup>35</sup> Most were students of medicine, engineering, or natural science, and expected to return to Africa in four or five years. That small brain gain contrasts with Africa's brain drain to the West, which originated with SAPs that required deep reductions of state expenditures. Before 1980, Africa had a dozen high-growth countries, averaging 6 percent. One-third of African states had savings rates higher than 25 percent, a level that sustained human resource development. But then SAPs curtailed state funding, including for universities, and costly expats had to replace local intellectuals. Savings rates plummeted to 10 percent, too low for industrialization or adequate education (Mamdani 2002). Now Africa yearly produces eighty-three engineers per one million people; China graduates seven hundred and fifty and developed countries one thousand (NMI 2006; *New African* 2006). Many African engineers emigrate to the West: more are in the United States than in Africa (ACBF 2004:15). From 1985 to 1990, sixty thousand African professionals emigrated. In 2000, 3.6 percent of Africans, but 31.4 percent of Africa's emigrants, had a tertiary education. By 2005, three hundred thousand to a half million professionals, including thirty thousand doctoral degree holders, had left and twenty thousand more emigrate each year to the U.S. or Europe. If the half million figure is correct, fully one-third of African professionals had left. On average, each represents a loss of \$184,000 to Africa.<sup>36</sup>

Of four hundred thousand African immigrants age 16 and above in the U.S. in 2000, 36 percent were managers or professionals. Many were brought in through the Diversity Visa Program (“Green Card Lottery”), most of whose winners are Africans. By 2005, fifty thousand Africans a year were migrating to the U.S., with perhaps four times that number entering

illegally. While such migrants send remittances home, a leading African scientist in the U.S., Philip Emeagwali, estimates that Africans there contribute forty times more to the U.S. than to the African economy (Mazrui & Kaba 2004; Herbert 2005; Roberts 2005; Manda 2004).<sup>37</sup> Others stay on after graduation from U.S. universities, which had thirty-four thousand African students in 2000–2001, 6.25 percent of the international students (Coffman & Brennan 2006). Most were graduate students, and a survey of Africans who received U.S. Ph.D.s from 1986 to 1996 showed that 37 percent remained there after graduation. The percentages staying were higher in fields that are key to development—engineering (54%), physical sciences (44%), health sciences (44%), and management (67%)—and higher also for two of the three top Ph.D.-receiving peoples, Nigerians (62%) and Ghanaians (61%) (Pires 1999). Because education levels among entrepreneurs correlate with private enterprise growth, and because human capital is a key determinant of FDI inflows, the brain drain plays a role in continued poverty in Africa (Kapur & McHale 2005:102). For example, austerity measures and faculty outmigration have collapsed Nigerian tertiary institutions, rendering the country's fifty thousand engineers severely undertrained (*This Day* 2006b).

Africa, with 14 percent of world population, has 24 percent of the global burden of disease (WHO 2006). The poaching of Africa's human resources is most apparent among medical workers, of which Africa has 1.4 per one thousand people, while North America has 9.9 (Mallaby 2004). Of Africa's estimated eight hundred thousand "trained medical staff," twenty-three thousand leave each year for developed countries. The physicians among them cost on average \$100,000 to train (Jack 2005). Their migration saves a receiving country like Britain \$340,000–\$430,000 in costs of training a doctor. Ghana, with six doctors for each one hundred thousand people, has lost 30 percent of the physicians it educated to the U.S., U.K., Canada, and Australia, all of which have more than two hundred doctors per one hundred thousand residents. South Africa, Ethiopia, and Uganda have lost 14–19 percent of their doctors. In 2001, Zimbabwe graduated 737 nurses; 437 left for Britain (Eastwood et. al 2005; Mullan 2005; Mallaby 2004). There are more Ethiopian-trained doctors in Chicago than in Ethiopia and more Beninese doctors in France than in Benin (*Daily Trust* 2004; IOM 2003).<sup>38</sup>

## Conclusion

In 2005 a PRC official working on WTO affairs, Wu Jiahuang, made a presentation to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization on industrialization, trade, and poverty alleviation through South–South cooperation (Wu 2005). He argued that China's high growth rate was fueled by Chinese savings (on average 44 percent of their income) and encouragement of foreign direct investment (half from Hong Kong and Taiwan),

which contributed 28 percent of value added to industry in 2004. He said that PRC industrial and trade growth are related, with over half of industrial exports produced by foreign investors. Wu noted that the PRC does not overprotect domestic industry: average PRC tariffs dropped from 43 percent in 1992 to 10 percent in 2005, lower than those of its trading partners.<sup>39</sup> Primary agricultural products and textile tariffs averaged 15.5 percent and 12.9 percent, respectively, while those of China's trading partners averaged 24.5 percent and 17.7 percent. China provides world-class resources and "the cheapest domestic labor," so its businesses can market the world's most competitive products, leading to greater incomes, state revenue, and social welfare. Wu called on the WTO to remove trade-distorting subsidies to farmers in the North to enable farmers in the South to sell their products at a higher price. He explained that Chinese farms are very small, averaging .7 hectares of land, compared to Europeans' 20 ha and U.S. farmers' 200 ha. Wu noted that PRC agricultural tariffs averaged 15.8 percent, compared to 23 percent in the U.S. and 73 percent in Europe. Meanwhile, state support for China's farmers was only 1.5 percent of their income, while in the U.S. it was 18 percent and in the E.U. it was 33 percent. China and other developing states were thus in the same boat in terms of needing cuts in developed world agricultural subsidies.

Wu's presentation summed up a commonly held perception of PRC practices that relates to distinct China–Africa links: China provides a model for developing states based on rapid industrialization fueled by a high level of investment and concentration on exports and, unlike the West, its low-tariff, low-subsidy regime allows other developing countries to export freely to China and compete with China in world markets. The official thus essentially argued that PRC policymakers are more consistent economic liberals than those of the West and that this greater openness fulfills the common needs of Chinese and citizens of other developing countries. Wu did not explain how China's extraordinary savings rate and its FDI inflow mainly from co-ethnics on its periphery can be duplicated by most developing states. Nor did he recognize that these states are scarcely in a position to take advantage of China's economic liberal policies by competing with PRC producers, either in their domestic market or the world. Still, one point was doubtless convincing: that China, unlike Western states, is not obstructing development in the world's poorer countries. That point, whether it relates to the Beijing Consensus or aid and migration, epitomizes the distinctiveness of the China–Africa link for many Africans.

The practices of Western states associated with past colonialism or present imperialism make PRC practices appear particularly distinctive to Africans. Most prominent among these Western practices are (1) impositions of neoliberal SAPs that have resulted in diminished growth, huge debt, declining incomes, and curtailed social welfare; (2) the use of aid to compel compliance with SAPs and the foreign policies of Western powers; (3) protectionism (despite free-trade rhetoric) in developed states that inhibits

African exports; and (4) support for authoritarian leaders (despite talk of democracy and human rights) to secure resources and combat “radicals.” In addition, Western disparagement of Africa, through an unremitting negative discourse overlaid with strong implications of African incompetence, remains prevalent (Araya 2007).<sup>40</sup> The ideas that on balance colonialism benefited “the natives,” and that Africa’s troubles have all been postcolonial, are popular among elites of the former colonial powers (Sautman & Yan 2007; Nyang 2005).

A positive image of China exists despite the prevalence among the Chinese of racist attitudes, which have been experienced both by Africans in China and Africans working alongside Chinese residents in Africa (Segal 2006).<sup>41</sup> The PRC government, with its ideology of Social Darwinism (i.e., the richer, the fitter) and characteristic representations of Africa as uniformly poor bears some responsibility for these attitudes. Still, the PRC is careful to identify Africa’s problems as the legacy of colonialism (*Business Day* 2004b; Li Xing 2003). PRC leaders have never termed Africa a “hopeless continent” (*Economist* 2000). They would never state, as a U.S. House Sub-committee on Africa member did to a Rwandan human rights activist during the 1994 genocide, that “America has no friends in Africa, only interests, and it has no interests in Rwanda” (“Ghosts of Rwanda” 2005).

PRC leaders, officially at least, celebrate Africa’s culture and achievements, and China’s sixty-five cultural agreements with forty-six African states have led to hundreds of exchanges (*Peoples Daily* 2004; *Daily Trust* 2006b). As one scholar has observed, while Africa, to the West, is a “haven for terrorists,” the “cradle of HIV/AIDS,” and a “source of instability,” for China it is a “strategically significant region” and place of opportunity (Gu 2006). China, moreover, acknowledges its political indebtedness to Africa for her support of China’s entry into the U.N. and continued backing in international forums. That contrasts with Western states’ failure to acknowledge their indebtedness to Africa for its contributions to the West’s industrialization and cultural development (see Inikori 2002).

Unlike during the Mao era, China today suggests no radical solutions to Africa’s predicament. The PRC avails itself of the historically determined disadvantages of Africa in trade (Holslag 2006), but much of what it sells to Africa is useful to developing manufacturing and providing affordable consumer goods (Soderbom & Teal 2004). Some of China’s investment in Africa, though apparently directed to non-oil sectors, is nevertheless imbricated with the continent’s harsh labor regimens in places like Zambia’s Copperbelt (Lungu & Mulenga 2005; *Times of Zambia* 2006). But China is still perceived as different in that it provides some investments of direct benefit beyond elite circles, does not insist that Africa’s political economy steer a required course, and contributes to Africa’s talent pool rather than draining it.

It is not clear whether the differences outlined here will persist over the long term. Among major powers at any given time, there are always differ-

ences in approach to subaltern states. The very process of differentiating superordinate and subordinate states and dominant and subaltern peoples tends over time, however, to make the conduct of great powers and their elites more similar than different. In a decade or two we should be able to determine whether that will be the case as well with China in Africa.

## Acknowledgment

This research has been generously funded by the Hong Kong Research Grants Council.

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## Notes

1. According to Eisenman and Kurlantzick (2006:224), in order to avoid a Chinese victory on the continent, Washington needs to convince Africans to work more closely with the U.S., E.U., and international financial institutions.
2. Both China and the U.S. are seeking FTAs with the Southern African Customs Union. Bilateral FTAs weaken poor countries' power in multilateral trade negotiations by fragmenting their coalitions, and they also harm third parties (see Bhagwati & Panagariya 2003; McDonald & Walmsley 2003).
3. See Kaplan (2005) on Taiwanese and U.S. support for Chad's authoritarian regime.
4. The U.N., E.U., Medecins sans Frontieres, and leading Darfur specialists dispute U.S. claims of genocide in Darfur (Cornwell 2005; Carroll 2004; Birchall 2006; Waal 2007). For a penetrating analysis of the politics of the claim, see Mamdani (2007). Meanwhile, China has sought, seemingly successfully, to persuade Sudanese leaders to accept U.N. troops to serve alongside African UN peacekeepers in Darfur (see Shichor 2007). The U.S. improved political relations with Sudan in 2001–5. In 2006 it initiated International Military Education and Training programs for Sudanese officers (The Twisted... 2006; AllAfrica.com. 2006).
5. See Butler (2005); WWF (2005); Commey (2003); Turner and Kim (2007); Thornton (2005:65); Greenpeace (2000); Illegal Logging (2006). Three-quarters of China's imported timber comes from the Asia Pacific. Much of the remainder is from Africa and amounted, in 2003, to 42% of Africa's timber exports. Many developed countries also import a high percentage of their tropical timber from Africa, e.g., 83% of Spain's in 2000 and 98% of Germany's in 2002.
6. The overall China-Africa Export Similarity Index is 4% (IADB 2006:8). About 85% of cloth used in African apparel exports to the U.S. is made with third-country, mainly Chinese, fabric (*L'Express* 2005; *EAS* 2006).
7. See *People's Daily* (2006); UNOSAA (2005); UNCTAD (2006a); AMplify Wharton (2003); Harsch (2003); Konopo (2005); Shinn and Eisenman (2005); Thomsen (2005); Thiong'o (2006); Press Trust of India (2007); Sutte (2005); USDOC (2006:4); Pan (2006); *China Daily* (2006a); *Economist* (2004); Dixon (2007); *Ethiopian Herald* (2007); *Christian Science Monitor* (2007).
8. See Akinjide (2005); USDOE (2004); Jaffer (2004); USDS (2005); International Energy Agency (2004); Lee (2006); *Petroleum Economist* (2006); Booker and Colgan (2006); *Wall Street Journal* (2007); *Houston Chronicle* (2007).
9. See Reuters (2005); Pan (2006); Konopo (2005); Shichor (2005); *Daily Trust* (2006a); Thiong'o (2006); IRIN (2006a); Klare (2006).
10. See APA (2006a) (PRC builders used 90% Angolan labor); APA (2006b) (PRC firm uses 80% Angolans to build 5,000 apartments); CCS (2006:64) (PRC firms use mainly African labor in construction); *Sunday Telegraph* (2006a) (PRC firms use only local labor in South Africa construction).
11. See Shinn (2005); *Daily Trust* (2005); *Daily Champion* (2006); interviews with scholars and officials in South Africa and Ethiopia, 2004; Ghana, 2005; Tanzania, 2006.
12. Studies of unequal and disparate exchange deem the concept empirically robust (Custers 2002).

13. In a half-dozen major African states, all or almost all U.S. investment is in oil, yet the U.S. officially criticizes China for focusing too much investment in Africa on raw materials (see Knight 2002; AFP 2006b).
14. Meles Zenawi, the Ethiopian president and U.S. ally, has criticized neoliberal market reforms and praised East Asia's "strong developmental states" (*Financial Times* 2007).
15. Ni (2006) (Chinese-owned conglomerate employs 20,000 Nigerians); *This Day* 2006a (PRC factories in Nigeria make 90% of country's motorcycles, as well as air-conditioners, machines, consumer electronics, telecommunications equipment); Timberg (2006) (2,000-worker Chinese-owned shoe factory in Kano, Nigeria); *AFX News*, Jan. 21, 2007 (1,100 to be employed in Chinese-owned Nigerian appliance factory); *Xinhua* (2006b) (Chinese firms employ more than 10,000 Zambians, some as managers).
16. On neoliberalism in Africa, see Harrison (2005; 2006); Ayers (2006).
17. China has military missions in, or sells major weapons to, seven African states (Pan 2006). PRC small arms are sold in many other African states (Curtis & Hickson 2006). Overall, "China's involvement in military affairs on the continent has made little headway" and "China's security and strategic role in Africa... pales in comparison to that of the United States" (DeLisle 2007). U.S. military aid and major arms go to forty-seven African states (Hartung & Berrigan 2005).
18. Mittelman (2006) has questioned whether there is a Chinese consensus on development. For a leading PRC scholar's critique of the prevailing model, see Wang (2003).
19. France has held quadrennial summits with African leaders for five decades. See *The East African* (2007). Japan pioneered the Tokyo International Conference on African Development in the 1990s; see *Japan Journal* (2005). In 2006, an India Africa Partnership Conference was held in New Delhi, while the presidents of Brazil, four other South American countries, and twenty African states summited in Nigeria; see *Nation* (2007a, 2007b).
20. On hierarchy in the IFI's and WTO, see Woods (2003:92–114) and Milanovic (2005:150–51)
21. See also the Wangfang Shuju database, <http://scholar.ilib.cn/abstract>.
22. By 2005, China had canceled debt totaling \$1.3b from thirty-one African countries. In 2007, it canceled \$1.4b more African debt (*This Day* 2007). Africa's total indebtedness to China is unclear, but as of late 2004 all developing countries together owed China \$5b (World Bank and IMF 2006:8).
23. China granted Angola additional loans in 2004–6. While official statements now place the total PRC loans to Angola at \$6 billion, "independent estimates put the total amount at \$9 billion" (Moorcraft 2007). The interest on the PRC loan to Angola can be compared with that on a 2004, \$2.35b loan to Angola by British banks at 2.5% above the base London bank rate. The mid-2004 base bank rate was 4.5%; the interest was thus around 7% (Pallister 2005; Reuters 2004).
24. Western grants often are in the form of direct budget support, paid into government treasuries, where they are more easily pilfered (*South China Morning Post* 2006; Dowden 2005).
25. Interviews with Teshome Mulatu, Speaker, Ethiopian House of Federation (Ph.D., Beijing University) and Zemedkun Girma, General Manager of Admin-

- istration Bureau of City Transport, Addis Ababa (Fudan University one-year course), Addis Ababa, July 2004. See also *Xinhua* (2007c); *People's Daily* (2000); PRCMOE (2003:13); Ching (2005); *China Daily* (2006b); Qi (2005).
26. Western analysts, in contrast, often subtly shift the focus away from the West's business and political practices in Africa by focusing on the Chinese presence. Wainaina (2006) satirically advises Western writers, "When talking about exploitation by foreigners, mention the Chinese and Indian traders." See Hilsum (2006) and Peel (2006) on Chinese workers' basic-level living working conditions in Africa.
  27. The "Eight Principles" were followed in 1983 by four principles, including the injunction that "experts and technical personnel sent by China do not ask for any special treatment" (Ai Ping 1999).
  28. The Taiwan government 2004 figure is 154,000 (Zhonghua Minguo [Taiwan] Qjiaowu Weiyuanhui 2005).
  29. The total number of Chinese in Africa has been estimated at perhaps a half million (Jeune Afrique.com 2006). Another estimate puts the number as high as two million (*Daily News* 2006). A PRC source with official links has stated that 750,000 Chinese have settled down and built careers in Africa (Zhang 2007).
  30. See *Xinhua* (2006e); Poston (1994); Chen (1996); Liu (2003); Thomas (2004); *Johannesburg Star* (2004); Wilhelm (2005); AFP (2006c); *Sunday Telegraph* (2006b); Davies (2007); O'Neill (2007); interviews with South African Chinese, Johannesburg and Capetown, June–July 2004.
  31. On Tanzania's "Friendship Mill," see Black Panther (1969:3). In the mid-1990s, the mill still had four thousand workers and received technical assistance from China. In 1997 it became a joint venture of Dieqiu Textiles of China (51%) and Tanzania's government (49%), and in 2000 it was declared an Export Processing Zone (see *Xinhua* 1997, 2000; Bagachwa & Mbelle 1995).
  32. More than ten thousand farmers from Baoding, Hebei, have moved to Africa (*China Daily* 2007).
  33. By 2005, the accumulated value of PRC firms' construction contracts in Africa had reached \$34b, with 74,000 Chinese workers involved. PRC workers in Africa are, however, a small part of the 3.2m Chinese sent abroad to work (CFF 2005).
  34. Hong Kong's Customs Service estimates eighty thousand Africans in Guangzhou (Parwani 2006). Interviewees in Guangzhou in January 2007 deemed ten thousand to be a plausible number. Nigerians are the largest group of Africans in China and Guangzhou. At least two- to three-thousand Nigerians reside in Guangdong province (Leu 2006).
  35. Interviews with Africans in these cities, 2005–6. Such figures refer to longer-term, legal residents. If shorter-term and legally problematic migrants are included, the numbers are far larger.
  36. See Federici and Caffentzis (2004); Mazrui and Kaba (2004); Makokha (2005); MacGregor (2005); Docquier and Marfouk (2004:9–12).
  37. Remittances to sub-Saharan Africa amount to US\$8b a year, i.e., about \$10 per African (Dowden 2006).
  38. Much higher figures are collected in a data set of bilateral migration flows of African doctors and nurses to nine receiving countries (Clemens 2006). Only African doctors and nurses who continue to work in these professions are included in statistics. See, e.g., Hagopian (2004). The figures would be higher



still if all emigrating health professional emigrants were included. See ECA (2006:7–8).

39. “Because China exempts so many of its imports from actually paying tariffs, much comes in duty free. Actual tariff collections relative to the value of imports are only 2 percent” (Lardy 2007). From 1820 to 1945, U.S. average tariffs on manufactures exceeded 40% (Chang 2002). Applied average tariffs on manufactures in Africa are now 12% (Nankani 2005).
40. One editorial in an African newspaper said of SAPs, “Economic liberalization, deregulation of capital movements, suppression of subsidies, privatization of valuable public assets... fiscal austerity, high interest rates and repressed demand became the order of the day... Structural adjustment programs... ended up transforming these countries into dumping grounds for over-subsidized Western agricultural surpluses and over-priced and obsolete manufactured goods” (*Namibian* 2006b). In contrast to the Western disparagement of Africa, Hu Jintao has said “Both China and Africa have a brilliant and colorful culture that has made important contribution to the progress of human civilization” (BBCMIR 2006).
41. Our interviews with Africans in PRC cities indicate, however, that it is not dangerous to be African in China, at least not in the same way it is to be nonwhite in some European countries, such as Germany (133 racial murders from 1990 to 2006) or Russia (54 racial murders in 2006 alone). See Segal (2006); Kramer (2007).