Eagle vs. Dragon Show Cancelled Due to Popular Uprising: A discursive analysis of US and Chinese engagement in Africa and the silencing of alternatives.

By George Karavas[1]

Abstract

China's recent engagement with Africa has attracted a significant amount of attention among United States (US) policymakers, academics, journalists and think tanks. By exploring this commentary through an emerging dominant discourse on China's engagement in Africa, this article argues that it is interwoven with a discourse on US engagement in Africa, performing a Manichean dynamics that reflects analysis of China's engagement in Africa through a US lens. As a result, alternative discourses and insights are silenced as China's engagement in Africa is interpreted through issues counterposed to those with which the US distinguishes itself. In establishing this dynamics in the dominant discourse, its rhetorical nature is further demonstrated through alternative discourses on the effects of US and Chinese engagement in Africa. Using alternative discourses to de-center the rhetoric in dominant discourses on the benefits of free markets and the disadvantages of state led development, the US and China become perceived as both engaging in Africa through existing economic and political structures in a shared pursuit of markets and resources. The effects of US and Chinese engagement are discussed in regards to these pursuits. Giving voice to alternative discourses reveals the rhetorical nature of the dominant discourses that reflect more about US values than the implications of China's engagement in Africa.

Introduction

> *...China is a metaphor for something else: for an enormously expensive Pentagon that has lost its bearings; for neoconservatives who no longer have a Left worthy of serious attack; for American idealists in search of themselves, in a country that has lost its moral center; for an American polity that imagines itself coterminous with mankind and therefore cannot understand true difference.*   (Cumings 1999: 169).

> *The Chinese are doing more than the G8 in making poverty history. If a G8 country had wanted to rebuild the stadium, we'd still be holding meetings. The Chinese just come and do it.*

> (Quote from Sierra Leone ambassador to Beijing, Sahr Johnny, cited in Hilsum 2005).

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In 1967, representatives from Tanzania, Zambia and China met in Peking to sign an agreement on the Tanzania-Zambia Railway which would be China's biggest aid development in Africa (Yu 1975: 29-51). That same year, a report in *The Wall Street Journal* stated "the prospect of hundreds and perhaps thousands of Red Guards descending upon an already troubled Africa is a chilling one for the West" (The Wall Street Journal 1967). Such commentary is more representative of United States (US) values, which in this case involved fears about the spread of communism than about the impact of Chinese aid in Africa (Monson 2008: 199). The perception by the US of its own engagement in Africa and China's engagement in Africa has recently re-emerged as a significant category of analysis. Places where US values mix with discussions on China-Africa relations have again emerged with the attention surrounding China's recent engagement with Africa. In 2007, an article in *The Washington Times* also evoked stirring emotions over China in Africa, by stating that, "even more troubling, Chinese officials have shown a historical tendency to work with Islamist governments in order to negotiate favourable agreements to… counter US interests, especially in the Middle East. The same strategy has been employed in Africa" (Stakelback 2007). This excerpt belongs to a wider discussion on China's recent engagement with Africa that has emerged in the US, as the implications of this development capture the imaginations of policymakers, academics and journalists.[2]

As commentators in the US have sought to explain the dynamics and implications of these changes, a discourse has emerged that demonstrates concern about China's impact in Africa, partly on account of its authoritarianism and that it also represents a successful state-led model of development. In what can be called the US's China-Africa discourse, these concerns play out through familiar themes. For example, China's provision of aid to African states with 'no-strings attached' enables states to resist pressure by the US, in the

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[2] The attention accorded to China-Africa relations has developed partly in response to the number of high-level diplomatic negotiations between Chinese and African government leaders at the Forum of China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) meetings, the emergence of China as a significant aid donor and investor in Africa's oil infrastructure and its meetings, the emergence of China as a significant aid donor and investor in Africa's oil infrastructure and its increasing contribution to UN troop deployments in Africa. These issues have generated a substantial amount of literature in recent years in an attempt by analysts to evaluate the changing nature of China-Africa relations. For a review of this literature, see: Alden (2007), Alden, Large and Oliveira (2008b), Broadman (2007), Kitissou (2007), Manji and Marks (2007), Rotberg (2008), Waldon (2008), and Wild and Mepham (2006).

Dialogue e-Journal

form of conditional aid, to reform governance institutions. China's relationship with states such as Sudan and Zimbabwe are also cited as representing an inherent disregard for human rights. Without doubting the importance of these issues, reiterating such themes performs a Manichean operation by imbuing China's forms of engagement in Africa with an inherent adversity in contrast to the benevolence associated with US approaches towards Africa. The US China-Africa discourse can be read as a narrative defining China's engagement with Africa as exporting authoritarian values and state-led development strategies, contra free market principles, that are not only perceived as detrimental for Africa but as also posing a challenge to US interests in Africa.

Interwoven with the US China-Africa discourse is also a concomitant discourse defining the role of the US in Africa. In the US-Africa discourse, US approaches to Africa stand in stark contrast to China's approaches. This discourse constitutes its own set of themes that outline the US approach to Africa and derives from a mixture of humanitarian and security concerns. Humanitarian themes focus on the importance of facilitating development in Africa through promoting democracy and free trade. Security themes focus on the importance of combating terrorism and developing Africa's energy markets. More implicit is a tendency in the discourse to equate US values with African interests. In making this equation however a 'what is good for the US is good for everyone' mentality emerges, exposing a sense of missionary-like zeal in perceptions towards Africa.

Absent from these discourses then, are the reactions contained within alternative accounts of US and Chinese engagement in Africa. Such accounts exist in response to the effects of both US and Chinese engagement in Africa and can be found in social movements, local resistance and critical voices. One of the effects of US engagement, despite promoting the goals of development in Africa through democracy and free trade, has been the imposition of strict conditions upon African states by the US and the International Finance Institutions (IFIs). These conditions have left a lasting legacy of debt for many African states in addition to generating broad resistance to US models of economic development through social movements such as the African Social Forum. Critical voices have also suggested that while China has ties with authoritarian states in Africa to secure access to oil, in terms of pursuing its self-interest, this must be seen in the context of the US pursuing its self-interest in Africa through similar avenues (Sautman & Hairong 2006). These accounts are part of an alternative discourse that calls attention to wider structural forces in relation to US and Chinese engagement in Africa. In addition, the alternative discourse contrasts strongly with the way China's engagement in Africa is conveyed through the interaction of both the US-Africa and US China-Africa

discourses. The contrast between dominant and alternative discourses constitutes the subject of this paper on the basis that it illuminates gaps between rhetoric and practice in US analyses of China-Africa relations.

This paper argues that current approaches to China's engagement in Africa, as demonstrated in the US China-Africa discourse, limit the understanding of this issue to those factors prioritised by the US.[3] The dominant discourses articulate China's engagement in Africa as one directly opposed to US goals there. By epitomising US goals through the US-Africa discourse such as promoting democracy or free trade, China's engagement is portrayed as antithetical to US interests. Investigating alternative discourses silenced in the US-Africa and US China-Africa discourses questions dominant interpretations through accounts on the effects of US and Chinese engagement in Africa. Alternative accounts reveal that the US and China pursue similar interests in Africa such as securing access to markets and resources, the negative impacts of which create various forms of resistance regardless of whether it is a result of US or Chinese engagement. Based on the position that US and Chinese engagement in Africa exhibit similarities rather than purely inherent differences, the silencing of alternatives in the dominant discourses acts as a rhetorical device obfuscating an understanding of the US and China as external powers that both reinforce existing power structures in Africa.

To develop this argument the paper undertakes a discursive analysis of the dominant discourses on US and Chinese engagement in Africa for the first half, followed by an inquiry into the alternative discourses on the effects of this engagement. The analysis of key themes from the US-Africa discourse and the US China-Africa discourse focuses on points of contention used by US commentators to distinguish between US and Chinese engagement in Africa. The themes discussed in the US-Africa discourse include development, security and failed states. This is followed by a discussion on themes in the US China-Africa discourse which include China's non-conditional aid policy in Africa, China's relations with authoritarian regimes and backlashes in Africa as a response to China's engagement. As a discursive analysis, literature is sourced from a variety of key contributing US academics, policy analysts and journalists. To elucidate recurring themes from the arguments and ideas circulating within the literature, multiple sources are

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[3] The argument outlined here acknowledges the debates in the broader literature and is not an attempt to engage with such issues as China's strategy in Africa or the nature of China's resource diplomacy in Africa. In the approach adopted here, these debates are sidestepped to engage in questioning the dominant themes through which China's engagement in Africa is interpreted in the US. The importance placed on questioning the authority of dominant themes relates to the implications of how China's engagement in Africa is understood and ultimately, acted upon or responded to.

Dialogue e-Journal

analysed to discern dominant attitudes, trends and patterns of understanding within the discourses. These sources include academic publications on US-Africa and China-Africa relations, journal articles, magazine articles, newspapers, publications from think-tanks and government testimonies from various individuals

An analysis of the dominant discourses is followed by an inquiry into the effects of US and Chinese engagement as understood within alternative discourses. Those effects of US engagement in Africa that are analysed include US (and IFIs) promotion of an economic model based on neoliberal reforms, African social resistance movements that have developed as a response to such reforms and the impact of US multinational companies (MNCs) in Africa. The effects of Chinese engagement are analysed with regards to the notion of a Chinese model of development that has developed broad appeal in many African states, the impact of Chinese MNCs in Africa, and the impact that growing Chinese migrant populations have begun to demonstrate in Africa.

A Point of Departure

Previous studies that have adopted discourse analysis with regards to analyses, or representation of, China-Africa relations in the West include Emma Mawdsley's (2008) analysis of how China's engagement in Africa is portrayed United Kingdom (UK) broadsheet newspapers. In her analysis Mawdsley reveals how China has been demonised in the media through a focus on the negative aspects of China's engagement and through portraying Africa as a victim of China's 'ruthlessness' (2008: 517). In contrast, the role played by the West is cast in a comparatively positive light and as reformed in its approach to Africa, evidenced by the developmental role played by Non-Government Organisations (NGOs). By drawing attention to these representations in the mainstream media, Mawdsley makes a similar argument about the UK discourse on China's engagement in Africa to that made here about the US China-Africa discourse; in dominant discourses on China's engagement in Africa, China is portrayed negatively in Africa in contrast to the benevolence displayed by Western powers in Africa. To illustrate this point Mawdsley cites an author later identified in this paper as a contributor to the US China-Africa discourse. According to Drew Thompson (2004), "China's presence in Africa is illustrative of Beijing's efforts to create a paradigm of globalization that favours China" (Thompson 2004). Mawdsley (2008) concludes from the following excerpt that:

> Coded within this is either a naïve belief that the present structures of
> globalization are neutral and even-handed, and that China is attempting to
> malevolently subvert this situation; or that it is right and natural that the

> current paradigm of globalization does and should favour the US, because then (in the classic formulation) everyone benefits from 'benign' US hegemony.

> (2008: 525)

In making this conclusion, Mawdsley demonstrates how in another part of the West, a similar representational process to that being discussed here has occurred. The argument of this paper takes the above commentary as an introductory excerpt before starting an exploration of the US-Africa and the US China-Africa discourse. In doing so, this paper seeks to build upon Mawdsley's conclusions with an *analysis of the effects* of US and Chinese engagement in Africa via alternative discourses otherwise silenced in the dominant discourses to emphasise contrasts between rhetoric and practice.

Exploring the Discourses

The US China-Africa discourse and the US-Africa discourse both demonstrate the discursive terrain in which China's engagement is discussed. This section is dedicated to identifying the key themes that guide them. Both discourses demonstrate the presence of a US lens through which US values are projected onto interpretations of US-Africa and China-Africa relations. Though both discourses interweave on a broader level in the sense that the themes in one discourse define the meaning and importance of themes in the other by virtue of the Manichean operation discussed earlier, they are separated for analysis in this chapter to locate the contexts from which they originate. In doing so, this section is divided in two: an analysis of the US-Africa discourse followed by an analysis of the US China-Africa discourse. Each section begins with a small excerpt from the literature within the discourse that acts as a locating point from which to branch out into the discursive field of inquiry.

The US-Africa Discourse:

The US-Africa discourse consists of themes through which we can gain an insight into how relations between the US and Africa are perceived. These themes emerge from discussions on responding to Africa's underdevelopment, recognising the increasing strategic importance of Africa as a source of oil and incubator for terrorist groups and meeting the challenges posed by weak and failed states in the post-9/11 era. In a recent edition of *Foreign Policy* Jeffery Gettleman (2009), currently the East Africa bureau chief of *The New York Times*, provides a snapshot of the issues confronting one area of Africa that represents a microcosm of the challenges facing the continent today:

Dialogue e-Journal

> Nearly an entire generation of Somalis has absolutely no idea what a government
> is or how it functions. I've seen this glassy-eyed generation all across the country,
> lounging on bullet-pocked street corners and spaced out in the back of pickup
> trucks, Kalashnikovs in their hands and nowhere to go. To them, law and order are
> thoroughly abstract concepts. To them, the only law in the land is the business end
> of a machine gun.
> (2009: 69)

In this concluding excerpt from an article about the foreign policy blunders of the US in Somalia, Gettleman gives us some insight into the deeper issues facing the development of an African state devastated by poverty, terrorism and constant political instability. As an account of US attempts to subdue conflict and install social and political organisation to reorient the country towards development, it raises a number of key issues in itself. However, it is the subtext underlying this analysis that is of interest here. In this case it is a call to embrace the task at hand – helping a generation of African people catch up with the modern world. They are young and yet too mature. They have no concept of ideas about the state, governance or democracy. There is no awareness on their behalf of the extent to which they have strayed from the trajectory of development that the observing journalist has in mind when evaluating the cause and remedy of their plight. This excerpt provides an insight into US-Africa relations perceived in terms of developed and developing states in an age when an emphasis on the porous nature of national borders evokes memories of 9/11. This excerpt raises issues that will be discussed as themes in the US-Africa discourse under the following headings: development, strategic concerns and failed states.[4]

Development:

One of the core ideas in the US-Africa discourse is the conception of the US as a state imbued with a morality that prides itself on humanitarian values. Raymond Copson describes the normative basis of US aid policy as a "moral argument for a fair and just policy in Sub-Saharan Africa [that] is particularly compelling because the United States has incurred moral obligations toward the region over a troubling history of more than three centuries" (2007: 3). Added to this moral argument is the idea that the US is a world leader with "a special responsibility to inspire other wealthy countries to fulfill their own responsibilities toward the region" (Copson 2007: 5). By combining a moral argument

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[4] Another field of enquiry involves the recent establishment of AFRICOM, though for reasons of space is unable to be explored further. For a recent analysis, see Volman and Minter 2009.

Dialogue e-Journal

with America's place in the world –as leader in the UN supporting the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and architect of the IFIs responsible for managing international debt and development – the US also perceives itself as acting for a purpose larger than itself and on behalf of the international community. This connection of the moral cause in the name of global humanity is what endows the US with a sense of authority in defining what other states need to develop.

Derived from such moral arguments in combination with its authoritative position in global forums on development is also the US self-perception that it possesses an exemplary model of development. This translates into promoting a path to development for other states based on US principles that extol the free-market values or neoliberalism. Such a perception has been central to the formulation of some of recent US aid polices under the Bush Administration such as the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), the latter of which is the body responsible for dispersing the funds allocated to the MCA by the government. The MCA is described as representing a new direction in aid because demands for economic and political institutional reform were made central to the process for poor countries seeking assistance (Kessler 2004). African states can apply for aid available from the MCC through an eligibility process based on meeting criteria on governance issues such as transparency and accountability. MCA principles are for "countries serious about governance and development… venal governments should get cut off" (Diamond 2008: 12). But in addition to isolating governments resistant to such changes, the new direction in US aid policy is also about promoting an economic model.

In an article published in *The New York Times*, members from the MCC Board of Directors argue that the incoming Obama Administration should continue to support the MCC principles on the basis "that poor countries assume primary responsibility for their own development" (Craner et al. 2008). The aim of the MCC then involves "building its program around independent measures of policy performance" (Craner et al. 2008). To explain how the eligibility process works, former chief executive of the MCC Paul V. Applegarth states that governments are "rated on 16 criteria– corruption, political rights, education expenditures and days it takes to start a business, among others – that are assembled by independent groups, such as the World Bank, World Health Organisation and the Heritage Foundation" (Kessler 2004). For Applegarth, the problem with Africa's underdevelopment is the lack of financial sectors and capital markets, without which Africa cannot hope to expect economic growth (Applegarth 2004: 23). Such arguments fit neatly within broader US economic principles of free-market ideology and it is through

these that we can see how delivering aid to Africa is also about extolling the virtues of the market. Removing obstacles to the development of free-markets such as transparency and accountability are analogous to the provision of aid. The outcome of these ideas on the value of the free-market is described in arguments about the way the private sector is best equipped to deliver aid and create conditions of good governance that facilitate economic development (Rucker 2008; US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations 2008; Ward 2008). As Marina Ottaway (2001) argues, such approaches to development entail a strong move away from state-led development in order to enable the private sector to instigate market growth.[5] By underwriting the strength of the US economic model with humanitarian goals, US interests also come to be described as being in Africa's interests.[6]

Strategic Concerns:

Within the US-Africa discourse, Africa represents a region important to the US in terms of its capacity as an oil producer and a place conducive to the creation and operation of existing terrorist groups that must be contained. In the manner that US and African interests are connected in the theme on development, arguments based on strategic concerns in the discourse display a similar tendency. To start with, the strategic focus of the US-Africa discourse is neatly captured in a report published in 2005 by the Council on Foreign Relations entitled *More than Humanitarianism: A US Strategic Approach Toward Africa* (Lyman and Morrison 2005). Partly in response to the attention Africa received during the time of the *Live 8* concerts, the authors pointedly expressed that such

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[5] Additional arguments on how US aid policy should be provided can be found in the debates between Jeffery Sachs (2005) and William Easterly (2006). Sachs is an avid supporter of the MDGs and the current institutional frameworks through which aid is provided. In contrast, Easterly argues that US aid fails to be properly distributed to poor countries on account of the bureaucratic complexity that stifles the effectiveness of aid agencies. Though both authors represent opposite ends of the debate on providing aid they both support market-orientated economic growth and neoliberal approaches embodied in the broader framework of US aid policy.

[6] In an article on the nature of change in US aid policy implemented by the MCA, various media such as *The Washington Post*, *The Financial Times* and *The Economist* all published articles at the time President Bush announced the creation of the MCC in 2002 that were supportive of the neoliberal economic model on which it was based. Hook argues that the changes to US aid policy meant that the MCC acted "as an institutional repository for its neoliberal founding principles [and that] the MCC endures despite subsequent research findings that challenged the empirical link between performance-based aid allocations and economic growth" (2008: 163). Another initiative launched under the Bush Administration included the Presidents' Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Part of the controversy that surrounded the program was due to its unilateral approach that neglected existing global initiatives such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM). Despite this, as President Bush was ending his presidential term in 2008, Laurie Garrett, a senior fellow for global health at the Council on Foreign Relations, stated in *USA Today* that PEPFAR was a US aid policy that would "go down as the major positive legacy of [Bush's] eight years" (Wolf 2008). These sentiments were also echoed in an article by Stolberg (2008) in *The New York Times*.

Dialogue e-Journal

events "reinforced an outdated view of Africa" (Lyman and Morrison 2005: 6). The authors of the publication were referring to the strong emphasis that was placed on Africa with regards to humanitarian issues at the expense of other issues such as security concerns. A crucial point that underscored arguments in subsequent chapters of the book demonstrates how US interests are also definable as African interests. For example, Lyman and Morrison (2005) argue that recognising the strategic importance of Africa's energy resources and the role of China in Africa ensures that "humanitarian interests would be better served by a more comprehensive US approach toward Africa" (2005: 6). This dynamic in the discourse is also evident in discussions on the importance of oil and the threat of terrorism.

Diversifying the US supply of oil by gaining access to other sources outside the Middle East is crucial to ensuring US energy security, which Goldwyn and Ebel define as having "access to diverse, affordable supplies of oil and gas" (2004: 11).[7] However, gaining access to Africa's oil supply is fraught with dangers that persist in oil-producing regions due to the inability of various governments to provide security. Therefore, it is in the perceived interests of the US and Africa that African states make improvements to their governance structures and the US be able to purchase the resources and provide the region with the resultant wealth. Goldwyn and Ebel are explicit on this point:

> As the region adds approximately 2 to 3 million barrels per day to world markets in the next five years, that expansion could bring prosperity or disaster to a fragile region and to complex and expanding U.S. interests there. If these nations achieve greater stability, invest wisely, improve governance, and respect the rule of law, the benefits will be felt throughout the entire surrounding region. At the same time, vital U.S. interests in regional stability, counterterrorism, human development, and promotion of democracy and human rights will be advanced.
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> (2004: 9)

US and African interests are also linked through arguments on terrorism in Africa. At present the US continues to remain engaged in fighting terrorism the Middle East and Africa. The geographical proximity of Africa to the Middle East plays a role in this theme of the US-Africa discourse by signaling a strong vulnerability in Africa where the conflict could easily spread. According to Morrison and Lyman, Africa already displays symptoms that perpetuate terrorist activity, including "weak state partners, deep economic marginality and alienation, ethnic and religious fissures… and fragile

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[7] This point is also made by Cohen (2003).

Dialogue e-Journal

governance" (2004: 104). Combined with these factors are ongoing conflicts and hostilities between states in the Horn of Africa and concerns that Al Qaeda's networks in the region could also spread to West Africa or to eastern states such as Kenya –a US ally (Scarborough 2008). Sudan is already central to many analyses on the terrorist threat (Kaplan 2007). Osama bin Laden has reportedly made Sudan a strategic base from which to continue orchestrating the operation of Al Qaeda (Perry 2007; Pham 2007).

At the root of these concerns with terrorism in Africa, is the existence of a large Muslim population. Herman Cohen states that this population is considered to practice a moderate form of Islam that "eschews the medieval rigidities and bigotry prevalent in the Persian Gulf", and he goes on to say that "if only a tiny percentage can be subverted by the extremists, the dangers to mainstream African interests could be significant" (2003: 23). Such potential is discussed by Robert Rotberg (2007) with regards to Nigeria as radical Islamic group's posses the potential to negatively influence more moderate Islamic groups and threaten regional stability. Nigeria is seen as particularly vulnerable because the country is roughly divided between Christian and Muslim populations yet should radical Islam inflame the situation, there is a potential for an escalation of hostilities (Morrison and Lyman 2004: 106).

Failed States:

Similar to the portrait of Somalia described by Gettleman (2009), another vision of Africa's volatility and underdevelopment is given in *The Coming Anarchy* by Robert Kaplan (1994) who also provides an insight into how US-Africa relations are interconnected:

> Africa may be marginal in terms of conventional late-twentieth-century conceptions of strategy, but in an age of cultural and racial clash, when national defense is increasingly local, Africa's distress will exert a destabilizing influence on the United States.
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> (1994: 34)

While Kaplan provides an account of Africa through Huntington's lens of conflicting civilisational identities, his argument also emphasises the role of the US in ensuring stability in Africa. Such a diagnosis raises the issue of failed states and their central relevance to US security concerns. The 2002 US National Security Strategy outlined weak states as characteristic of the West African region and constituting a danger to US

interests because such countries face internal unrest and potential outbreaks of violence (Lyman 2009; Pham 2007). Africa remains a continent of fragile states where weak governments remain vulnerable to internal unrest (Lyman 2009). What becomes an emerging issue within this theme is the building of an argument through which to intervene in Africa – to have a presence, to justify intervention. One argument is that if weak economic and political structures are allowed to persist, then foreign aid comes to be seen as "nothing more than a cow to be milked" therefore requiring more involvement by international actors to implement "new institutional frameworks… especially the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund" (Ellis 2005: 136). Central to this notion is the idea that strong states are successful because they have pursued US values. Because promoting US values in Africa is central to the vision of establishing liberal democracies, signs of weak leadership become a concern for the US. These are signs currently evident in the authoritarian tendencies demonstrated in coups and flawed elections in numerous states (Cooke and Morrison 2009; Dugger, Barboza and Cowell 2008). Such weaknesses in African state structures can also indicate deficiencies in other areas such as peacekeeping forces. This translates into a limited ability to respond to regional conflicts and the likelihood of the US being called upon to respond – a situation which has been argued as something requiring action by the US before a situation escalates – which demands "vigorous outside participation" (Lyman and Morrison 2005: 9).[8] The combination of responding to issues of aid and promoting US values are outlined in the recent initiative of the US to centralize US military command in the region through AFRICOM. The goals of this new US military command are to deal with terrorism in Africa, focus on the intersection of security and development issues (such as assisting in the aid programs described above) and building a response to the recent emergence of China (Davis 2009; Dowd 2008; McFate 2008; Mills and Herbst 2007; Patterson 2007). New unified commands such as AFRICOM have been described as "the prisms through which the Pentagon views the world" (McFate 2007: 10). In the US-Africa discourse, AFRICOM is described as incorporating the themes discussed above by serving US ideological, humanitarian and security goals

This concludes the analysis on the US-Africa discourse and has outlined the key themes of development, security concerns and failed states. The following section discusses the US China-Africa discourse.

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[8] A similar argument is also made by Ottaway, Herbst and Mills (2004).

Dialogue e-Journal

The US China-Africa discourse

The following excerpt is by Joshua Kurlantzick (2008b) who occupies a prominent position in the US China-Africa discourse as a contributor based at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and as the author of *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power is Transforming the World* (Kurlantzick 2007). The excerpt published in 2008 by *Time*, provides a useful entry point in the discourse through which to investigate the themes that characterise the US perception of China's engagement with Africa:

> In nations like Angola and Chad, Chinese aid has allowed venal governments to ignore multinational donors seeking conditions to ensure that governments buy bread, not BMW's. In a world where easily recoverable oil is dwindling and the price has hit record highs, competition for untapped offshore petroleum in West Africa could spark conflict, with Chinese and Western firms jockeying to build new infrastructure, control ports and woo political leaders. Through its training programs for African technocrats, many of whom return from China amazed, Beijing could indeed promote its authoritarian development model to a continent where democracy still has shallow roots.

> (Kurlantzick 2008b).

This passage conveys some of the key narrative tropes of the US China-Africa discourse. Its pertinence lies in its ability to bring to an analysis of China-Africa relations powerful examples on issues such as the morality of providing aid, the seriousness of international competition for scarce resources and the implications of a clash of values between two different models of development. By condensing these issues into overarching themes for the purpose of identifying their presence throughout the wider literature, the following lines of enquiry emerge: China's aid policy, China's economic competition with the US and how China's impact in Africa has bred localised forms of resentment.[9]

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[9] In discussing the themes of the US China-Africa discourse it is acknowledged that this does not represent a single, collective and unified group of perspectives and differences of opinion exist between them on some issues. One area of difference includes the issue of whether to interpret China's engagement with Africa as an opportunity that the US should respond positively to, or whether this development represents a threat. For discussions on China's engagement in Africa presenting an opportunity for the US, see Gill, Huang and Morrison (2007). For a discussion on how China's engagement in Africa is represents a development perceived as a threat for the US, see Rogers (2007).

Dialogue e-Journal

Aid

China's provision of aid and soft loans to African states plays a key role as a conceptual anchor in holding down a broader view of China's engagement in Africa. The centrality of China's aid policy to the US China-Africa discourse stems from a fundamental difference between Chinese and US conceptions of how and why aid is provided. Unlike the US approach of providing aid on a conditional basis, China's aid policy rejects imposing conditions on states based on a strong respect for state sovereignty and a preference for non-interference in the domestic affairs of states. In practice China's aid policy is described as keeping business separate from politics (Lyman 2005). Within the US China-Africa discourse, China's business-only approach amounts to a policy based on self-interest, masked by a thin guise of offering support to African states and antithetical to the humanitarian goals prescribed by US aid. The difference between Chinese and US forms of aid is clear. The US adopts humanitarian goals. China adopts goals based on self- interest. By establishing this distinction at the outset, China's self-interest in Africa becomes a central tenet of its aid policy.

China's broader motives in Africa are then discernable within the US China-Africa discourse based on the notion that self-interest is central to China's aid policy. On one hand China seeks to distinguish itself from US aid. According to Gill, Huang and Morrison, China perceives "Western development approaches as overly moralizing, bureaucratic, conditional, and grounded in a corrosive and short-sighted skepticism. In contrast, Beijing…provide[s] development aid with "no political strings attached'" (2007: 6).[10] From this view, China is portrayed as seeing the West as hindering the aid provision in Africa while its own condition-free policy is touted as being more beneficial. On the other hand China's aid policy and its contrast with US aid in Africa serves an instrumental purpose as a "public relations tool" (Eisenman and Kurlantick 2006: 221) by allowing China to be seen as tackling debt in Africa when in fact, it is used to promote its own interests. Chinese aid may not make the same demands as US aid however, conditions are attached in other ways such as ensuring China receives rights to extracting natural resources, Chinese companies receive contracts for infrastructure projects and African governments cease recognition of Taiwan (Lyman 2005; Copson 2006). By keeping a conception of Chinese aid tied to notions of self-interest central to the US

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[10] Robert Rotberg (2008a) also provides an account of why China seeks to distinguish itself from the US: "There is a profound Chinese disdain for Africa and Africans, and an underlying contempt for do-gooding Western notions of how Africa should be nurtured. For this reason, among many others, China supplies small arms and other weapons – sometimes aircraft – indiscriminately and in defiance of UN strictures" (2008a: 12).

Dialogue e-Journal

China-Africa discourse, other aspects of China's engagement in Africa are consequently framed in these terms. Issues such as China's relations with African authoritarian states and the disruptive effect China's aid policy has had upon traditional donor and recipient relations that are seen as undermining US efforts in Africa, tend to dominate analyses of China in Africa and become analogous to the US China-Africa discourse.

The "venal" governments referred to in Kurlantzick's excerpt also refer implicitly to Zimbabwe and Sudan as the two states that have been most frequently cited in the US China-Africa discourse (Kurlantick 2008b).[11] Self-interest also underpins China's relationship with other authoritarian states and is understood as one of mutual assistance. China provides military support to states faced with restrictions in return for preferential access to markets and natural resources in addition to using its position on the UN Security Council to shield states from international actions or criticism.[12] The conceptualisation of China's authoritarian influence in Africa became a part of official government discourse in 2006 when the US Treasury Department issued a statement labeling Chinese lending practices to poor countries as that of a "rogue creditor" (Phillips 2006). Situating the image of China as an authoritarian state befriending African states with similar credentials has spurred other arguments that portray China's influence in Africa as an affront to the established liberal order there.[13]

China's aid policy has not been limited in its appeal to authoritarian governments, as the extent of China's warm reception from a variety of African governments has also been perceived as driving a "wedge" between China and traditional donors (Kurlantick 2006: 5).[14] The repercussions from this development are three-fold. Firstly, China's aid reduces US leverage over African states as in the case of the Angolan government refusing to meet demands set out by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on the basis of a US$2

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[11] See also, Copson (2006); Eisenman (2005); Lyman (2005); Rogers (2007); Rotberg (2008a); Shinn and Eisenman (2005); Shin (2008); Swan and Christensen (2008); and Vines 2007.

[12] Two cases that are often cited refer to China's attempts to block UN Security Council resolutions in Darfur and China's provision of weapons to Zimbabwe during its last election when the opposition faced severe repression (Eisenman and Kurlantzick 2006; Kurlantzick 2006; and Rogers 2007).

[13] The notion that one of the largest authoritarian states is consolidating relationships with smaller like-minded outposts throughout Africa has encouraged imaginative arguments. Arthur Waldron argues that there is "a strategic purpose behind China's outward investment. Admittedly 'strategic purpose' is very difficult to define. But briefly I [Waldron] would take it as meaning creating a China-centered community, mostly of small and medium sized states, that could serve as a counterweight to the emerged or emerging powers of the West, Japan, India and so forth" (2008a: 7). See also an argument by Robert Kagan regarding the possible formation of "an informal league of dictators" (2006).

[14] Kurlantzick also states that "China's expanding presence could undermine donor coherence and strengthen some of the continents worst regimes" (2006: 1). Lyman refers to China as altering "the international role" (2005) played by IFIs.

Dialogue e-Journal

billion soft loan from China. Secondly, there is the danger of establishing a trend in which other states might emulate China's success of non-conditional aid.[15] Thirdly, the US could be forced to weaken its position on democracy, governance and human rights to remain competitive with China. In 2006, US oil companies in Equatorial Guinea convinced the US government to open a new embassy in Malabo, forcing the US to "upgrade" its relationship with the Obiang government which has also been criticised for possessing authoritarian characteristics (Vines 2007: 215).

Through the scenario described above in which there is a gradual erosion of democracy and human rights in Africa resulting from China's engagement in Africa, it is also perceived as posing a challenge to the US. By combining those aspects of China's involvement discussed above – including China's self-interest, its ties with authoritarian states and its disruption of the traditional donor-recipient relationship – China's position in Africa amounts to one construed as fundamentally at odds with US engagement. As such, China is explicitly described as "a clear challenge to America's stated commitment to promoting good governance in the region" (Economy 2008: 2). Stephanie Giry argues that by summarising the key areas where potential exists for the US and China to clash over resources and market share, "Beijing's tactics should worry Washington – not to mention average Africans" (2004: 23).

Chinese Economic Competition:

Kurlantzick's (2008b) excerpt also describes the possibility of conflict erupting between Chinese and Western companies competing over resources and influence in Africa. However, China's increases in oil imports are not significantly higher than the growth rate for other regions of the world (Broadman 2007: 82). There is little doubt about the concerns of economic competition in Africa, but another factor that emerges from such concerns, is a critique of the Chinese state-led model of development. This suggests that it is not competition that is entirely the issue per se, but rather the US fear of an alternative model of development establishing itself in Africa. The Chinese state-led model of development stands in stark contrast to the Western free-market model

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[15] During the time when Angola was in the process of negotiations with the IMF, the Angolan government reportedly stated that other countries such as Brazil and India were also prepared to negotiate on terms similar to China (Lyman and Morrison 2005: 51). Similarly, Kurlantzick (2008a) also suggests that the new state capitalists – which include China, the UAE and Russia – represent the emergence of authoritarian nations as increasingly significant commercial powers. Goldwyn (2008) argues that other countries such as Russia and Malaysia are also beginning to make deals with African states and must be engaged with by the US in order that they understand the importance of maintaining standards on governance.

Dialogue e-Journal

promoted by the US and the IFIs, the differences of which were argued by Robert Wade (2001: 126-130; 1997) as significant to the causes and outcomes of the Asian Economic Crisis in 1997.[16]

China's authoritarianism is drawn upon as being a key factor in how Chinese companies have spread throughout Africa. Due to China's lack of civil society, there are no domestic challenges and no political ramifications that have deterred Western companies from investing in states such as Sudan in the past (Thompson 2007: 52). By lacking this characteristic of democratic societies, China is "unencumbered by principles, [and] Chinese companies are free to go where many Western firms cannot" (Giry 2004: 22).[17] Another issue stemming from this critique on the domestic origins of the Chinese state is also provided in regards to the links between companies and the state which could become "an invitation for rapacious governments" to take advantage of an economic model that facilitates corruption (Kurlantzick 2006: 5). As Gill and Reilly explain, the Chinese state-led approach is a model of inefficiency and

> because of its complex bureaucratic structures, China will inevitably face problems in Africa and these are likely to continue to get worse. Indeed the government is now struggling to address tensions from these 'internal contradictions.'
>
> (2007: 45)

Lyman argues that because Chinese companies are also supported by state banks, they "do not have to be profitable if they serve overall Chinese objectives" (2005). At the heart of such critiques, is a display of faith in the market-led model of the US that is opposed to state-led development.

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[16] The reaction of the IFIs to the Asian Financial Crisis is argued by Wade (2001, 1997) as representing a response by the West to use opportunities presented by the crisis to bring the Asian state-led development model into line with the dominant Western free-market. Wade (2001) argues that "a central aim of US economic policy since the Second World War has been the worldwide acceptance of free-market ideology—the belief that the free flow of goods, services and capital is to the mutual benefit of all" (2001: 126). See also; Wade and Veneroso (1998).
[17] See also; Copson (2006).

Dialogue e-Journal

Backlashes

The resentment displayed towards China in Africa from various sources such as worker protests or criticism from civil society groups, serves to illustrate in the US China-Africa discourse key points of distinction between the impact of the US and China in Africa. In one way it serves to demonstrate the supposed 'reality' of Chinese engagement. Two examples discussed here include economic impacts of Chinese investment and issues surrounding labour practices at Chinese-owned companies. For example, in contrast to the initial fervor that surrounded the widely publicised meetings between Chinese and African state leaders between 2003 and 2006, there have been significant protests over the impact of trade imbalances between China and Africa forcing the loss of thousands of jobs in the African textile industry (Lyman 2005). Many African textile factories could barely compete with Chinese imports and were forced to shut down. The growing number of Chinese migrant communities in Africa is also cited as having negative impacts in Africa since the "Chinese often establish their own restaurants, small hotels/dormitories, and stores to serve the needs of the Chinese workers, thereby limiting the value of the new labor to the local economy" (Economy 2008: 3). This has also led to "fears the [Chinese] diaspora is remitting nearly all of its money back to China rather than reinvesting it into local economies" (Eisenman and Kurlantzick 2006: 221). In the accounts reported by Serge Michel, the Chinese presence is compared to being "like the devil" (2008: 45).

The labour practices at Chinese-owned companies are also mentioned in terms of their adverse impacts. One commonly cited example involves an incident in 2006 at a Chinese-owned mine in Chambishi, when an explosion led to the deaths of forty-one Zambian workers.[18] The resultant outrage in the local community led to the creation of a political platform at the following elections based on the adverse impacts of the Chinese presence in Zambia. In the following local elections this incident led to protests against the Chinese through various demonstrations throughout Zambia that were considered an important reason why Hu Jintao, on a visit to Zambia in 2007, skipped a planned trip to the copper mining region in the country over concerns of protests. Kurlantzick argues that "in nations with strong civil societies like South Africa, there is a growing realization that many Western firms train local workers and understand how to operate in a free political environment" (2008b). In a 2008 testimony by James Swan to the US Senate Foreign

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[18] This incident is cited by Economy (2008); Michel (2008); Polgreen and French (2007); Swan and Christensen (2008); and Vines (2007).

Relations Committee, the desire from Africans for Western economic models is explained:

> While welcoming increased Chinese engagement, Africans have also signaled the importance of business practices that reinforce African Union and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) principles on good governance. Chinese labor, environmental and quality-control standards have drawn extra scrutiny from many Africans.
>
> (2008: 8)

As these examples demonstrate, such images that are cited throughout the US China-Africa discourse act as instances from which to extrapolate about the broader nature of China's engagement in Africa. This concludes the section analysing the US-Africa and the US China-Africa discourses. The next section will look at the effects of US engagement in Africa.

The US in Africa

This part of the paper investigates narratives within the alternative discourse on US engagement in Africa and the effects of this engagement. The aim is to provide alternative discourses with a voice outside of the US-Africa discourse and demonstrate the importance of their role in contributing to a broader understanding of US engagement in Africa. In contrast to the US-Africa discourse, alternative discourses reveal that US engagement in Africa has not been as benevolent as conveyed in the US-Africa discourse. This section begins by situating US engagement in Africa within a broader historical context of colonialism and external intervention. The remainder of this part is divided into three sections. These will look at the effects of neoliberal policies imposed upon African governments through the IFI's, the emergence of broad-based social movements in response to the perceived failure of neoliberalism as a development model, and the implications of US MNCs in Africa.

Situating US-Africa Relations

To understand how US-Africa relations can be perceived outside of the US-Africa discourse, alternative narratives place the US in a wider socio-historical context. In his article on African perceptions towards the US, Sulayman S. Nyang, chairman of the African Studies Department at Howard University in Washington D.C., argues that:

Dialogue e-Journal

> One must state categorically that the slave trade and the Middle Passage
> are two symbolic and concrete realities that have defined the perceptions
> of black intellectuals and activists over the last 300 to 400 years.

(2005: 918)

This passage provides a crucial entry point into understanding a defining aspect of US-Africa relations. It illustrates how an alternative discourse perceives more continuity than departure with US-Africa relations based, for example, upon Africa's past relationship with colonial powers and its present economic marginalisation in contemporary world trade forums and meetings. At the centre of these perceptions is the view that the dynamics once driving foreign powers to exploit Africa's human and natural resources, persist in the contemporary period. For example, Issa G. Shivji, a Tanzanian public intellectual involved with NGOs for fifteen years, gives an account of the historical narrative based on these dynamics in which the US is situated. Shivji relates a history of subjugation that begins with European contact five centuries ago, followed by the slave trade and colonialism up to the contemporary period of globalisation in which "the neoliberal package boils down to further deepening the integration of African economies in the world capitalist system, thus reproducing essentially colonial and neocolonial economic structures" (2007: 1).[19] Though this account does not explicitly name the US, the latter's involvement is still strongly implied as a proponent of neoliberalism demonstrated through the IFIs involvement in Africa. The historical narrative that Shivji outlines then speaks to US engagement in Africa as analogous to that of the preceding colonial powers.

To provide a clearer explanation of how the US exhibits dynamics in its engagement with Africa similar to that of colonial powers, a useful description can be found in analyses of US and Africa relations in the wider context of North-South relations. Through an account of US expansion into Central and Latin America during the nineteenth and twentieth century, Slater describes the characteristics of US imperial power as displaying an

> enduring invasiveness or desire and capacity to penetrate other societies
> and cultures…the will to impose on the other a set of values, imaginations
> and practices, which are deemed to be superior…[with a] lack of respect
> for the other, being manifested in subordinating modes of representation.

(2004: 52)

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[19] For a complete explanation, see Shivji (2007: 1-26).

Central to these characteristics is an underlying mentality that encouraged US expansion with a sense of moral obligation and fervent belief in spreading the values of American civilisation for the benefit of all peoples. Doctrines such as 'Manifest Destiny', which professed an inherent superiority in American values and notions of progress, imbued the US mentality and civilising mission in its expansion with an unyielding sense of conviction (Slater 2004: 52). From such characteristics, parallels can be drawn with the civilising mission of colonial Europe in Africa.

It is on this point of pursuing a Westernised civilising mission or form of development, that a crucial aspect is revealed in the dynamics of relationships between the colonising and the colonised. Stefan Andreasson makes the connection between US aspirations to facilitate development in Africa and the European civilizing mission by drawing upon dynamics that exist in the "relationship between the developers and those who are to be developed" (2005: 974). He argues that it was as a result of the very process adopted by the US and colonial powers of defining themselves as developed, that non-Western others were perceived as still developing. This involved a process in which positions of authority and hierarchy were established (Andreasson 2005: 974). This process facilitated hierarchical relationships of power and also provided a justification for external intervention in Africa. As Slater argues, in the case of the US, intervention was "based on the presumption of Occidental supremacy and a belief in the benign diffusion of such power" (2004: 113). By drawing on the parallels between US and European imperialism and demonstrating underlying principles guiding the US moral justification of intervention in Africa, a conceptual framework can be outlined for interpreting the role played by US economic policymaking in Africa.

The US Development Model in Africa: A Neoliberal Project

By drawing upon the framework outlined above, two aspects of the US-Africa discourse can be exposed as examples of the US civilising mission and a presumed superiority. These are moments where the justification for US intervention is deployed in the name of pursuing development in Africa by promoting the US model of development. Defined by the application of neoliberal policies through the IFIs, the US model is presented as the exemplary model to which African governments should adhere. Firstly, the moral justifications for the US pursuit of development in Africa can be located in explanations of Africa's underdevelopment. Such explanations can be found in excerpts, such as Gettleman's (2009: 69) referred to earlier, that portray Africa as a continent in which violence and anarchy are inherent characteristics. Robert Kaplan's (1994) well known

Dialogue e-Journal

piece, *The Coming Anarchy*, which argued that Africa's governance problems and perpetual violence posed a threat to which the US must respond to preserve order and stability, provides another example. For Andreasson, it is within such "Kaplanesque travelogues depicting the inherent chaos and terror of the Dark Continent" that explanations exist for the causes of Africa's underdevelopment (2005: 973). Such accounts also make the implicit assumption that the US model of development provides the solutions.

This point raises the second issue regarding the notion that the US provides an exemplary model of development for African states to follow. Contemporary efforts by the US and IFIs to promote development are centered on the pursuit of consolidating neoliberalism in

Africa. This is despite the evidence that such neoliberal approaches to development in Africa have failed to improve the standard of living for the majority of people in Africa. For example, in spite of decades of applying neoliberal policies, Africa remains the only region in the world that has not improved in terms of human development indicators (United Nations Development Program 2006). In addition, many African states are off track in meeting the MDGs (MDG Steering Group 2008).[20] However, as stated in a report from the MDG Steering Committee which includes the World Bank and the IMF, the principles of neoliberalism are central to the development strategy:

> In combination with sound economic policies to promote private sector development and increased participation in trade, these results [provided the full recommendations of the report are implemented] will reduce barriers to progress, take countries closer to achieving the MDG's and lay the foundation for robust economic growth.

(2008: 4)

This excerpt illustrates the US approach to development in Africa through the IFIs pursuit of neoliberal policies. Such policies have been most visible in the form of the conditions attached to loans, aid and debt relief.

Conditions imposed by the IFIs reduced the role of government as service providers and attempted to transform them into engines of economic growth. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the IFIs responded to debt crises affecting African governments with policies

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[20] For a brief discussion on African states recent progress in meeting the MDGs, see UNDP Poverty Group 2004.

Dialogue e-Journal

intended to foster economic and political reforms and remove obstacles that prevented economic growth.[21] During the 1980s, conditional loans dispersed by the IFIs were delivered in the form of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). SAPs were designed by the IFIs to be conditional on the basis that reforms in economic and political institutions were necessary to ensure that aid contributed to economic growth through trade liberalisation policies. In practice, SAPs meant reducing the size of the state and reducing its capacity for interfering with market processes. The reforms entailed a mixture of conditions aimed at reducing government expenditures, introducing user-pays systems and introducing the privatisation of state-owned companies (Bond 2003: 23). These policies set in motion trends in African governance that became characteristic of the IFIs intervention in Africa. The effects of attempting to meet the conditions can be illustrated in examples that include privatising water supplies and thereby restricting access to large numbers of people, but mostly the poor, lowering the capacity of hospitals by reducing staff numbers and supplies due to cuts in governments budgets and forcing domestic agricultural industries to compete with subsidised agricultural markets in the US.[22] The focus on solely economic factors by the IFIs also limited their concerns regarding the political ramifications of their policies and as a result many authoritarian governments received financial support from the US. The disparities that existed between the enrichment of the state elites though IFI-lending and the persistent poverty of the general populace invoked claims of "criminality" towards the imposition of conditions that led to the poor paying for debts incurred by the rich (Hoogvelt 1987). The perceived effects of US supported IFIs reducing the capacity of governments to provide vital social services and keep authoritarian governments in power led to widespread protests, riots and resistance.

The result of austerity measures imposed upon African governments created protests as a response to government cutbacks on wages, subsidies on food and fuel and public services (Riley and Parfitt 1994: 140-70).[23] In addition, the level of resistance grew to

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[21] Bond provides a detailed argument about the causes of debt crises as resulting from both internal and external factors. For a full discussion, see Bond (2003: 3-30).

[22] These effects have been described through various accounts of privatisation of African state utilities. For an analysis of the privatisation of providing access to water, see Bayliss (2003). For an account of the implications that competition that the cotton industry in Mali and Burkina Faso have experienced, see Akinwande (2007). For a discussion of the privatisation of water in Ghana, see Whitfield (2006). For an account of Kenya's healthcare crisis due to IMF reforms, see Ambrose (2007). For an analysis of how neoliberalism has impacted upon reforms in Zimbabwe, the DRC and South Africa, see Moore (2001).

[23] On a global level, riots and protested emerged as common response to the changes in government service provision as a result of austerity policies imposed by the IMF. Between 1976 and 1992, 146 austerity protests occurred in 39

such an extent that a 'wave' of democracy swept across the continent which absolved many entrenched authoritarian leaders of their power. However, as both Abrahamsen (2000: 112-37) and Riley and Parfitt (135-70) have argued, the culmination of these protests, creating change throughout Africa, were not the result of the IFIs' conditions facilitating a desire for multiparty democracy, but a result of their negative impacts upon people's standards of living that created the momentum for such changes.

In response to the resistance generated towards the IFIs, the SAPs were modified to reduce the adverse social impacts, or 'shock' effects, they produced (Bracking and Harrison 2003: 1308). To adopt a more 'human face', the concept of ownership was developed to be seen as giving control over the implementation of policy reform to African governments and respond to criticisms of the SAPs as imposed in a top-down manner and provide a degree of participation from local constituencies.[24] The new orientation towards giving ownership to African governments was deployed through Poverty Reduction Strategy Programs (PRSP). However, PRSPs did not venture beyond the assumption that neoliberal polices were the only acceptable option for development. For Abrahamsen, the image of the IFIs reaching out to African governments with a genuine intention towards empowerment acted as a mirage:

> If taken literally this call for empowerment has far-reaching political consequences, in that it implies a challenge to local as well as national power structures. If people were enabled to hold those in power accountable, they might demand more services and a more just distribution of income, and thus put into question the whole gamut of existing socio-economic arrangements.
>
> (2000: 57)

Furthermore, the notion that including civil society organisations into the implementation process of PRSPs creates more participation ignores the links between NGOs and the liberal agenda of the IFIs and creates a form of surveillance in which the decisions of governments remain monitored (Fraser 2005: 332). The new direction taken by the IFIs in implementing neoliberal polices appears as more of a continuation of pursuing

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countries. Walton and Seddon (1994) define austerity protest as "large-scale collective actions including political demonstrations, general strikes, and riots, which are animated by grievances over state policies of economic liberalisation implemented in response to the debt crisis and market reforms urged by international agencies" (1994: 13-14).

[24] Adopting a "human face" is a reference to a 1987 report by UNICEF that strongly criticised the negative social impacts of SAPs. See, Cornia, Jolly and Stewart (1987).

Dialogue e-Journal

neoliberal policies in Africa rather than the rhetorical suggestion of it as being progressive. Harrison (2005: 1309) has argued that this direction by the IFIs represented a shift in the previous SAPs aims at reducing the size of the state. As part of the new aim of giving government a sense of ownership over policymaking, the goal amounted to giving the state a role to "ensure the conditions for people to act socially in a market-conforming fashion" (Harrison 2005: 1310). This approach has also underwritten the most recent attempts to instill a sense of ownership among African leaders as demonstrated through facilitation of the New African Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

NEPAD is based on the notion that African governments can take ownership over governance by taking responsibility for instituting what are deemed by the IFIs to be responsible measures towards facilitating economic growth. Despite this new approach many of the fundamentals of neoliberalism remained in place. African leaders requested changes to trading regulations at each G8 meeting between 2002 at Kananaskis, Canada and 2005 at Gleneagles, Scotland (Smith 2006: 13). The requests which entailed changes such as a "market access, agricultural subsidies, reduction in tariffs, fair trade and increased foreign aid" (Smith 2006: 13), were met with the response that problems facing African states were governance related – hence the necessity of instituting the reforms as advocated by the IFIs. Touted as embodying the spirit of African leadership based on ownership and self-empowerment, NEPAD has undermined previous attempts towards continental initiatives towards development (Lesufi 2006: 70). NEPAD has also been understood as representing an expression of neoliberalism which has led critics to argue that neoliberalism has already presented Africa with serious obstacles to development in addition to entrenching the position of elite circles that have remained in power over decades.[25] For Patrick Chabal, NEPAD represents a "continuation with, rather than a break from, the type of relations that have guided the continents engagement with the international community since independence" (2002: 462). Another part of the NEPAD process is the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) which has been adopted to promote governance, yet despite calls from NEPAD for untied aid, accession to the APRM is being used by some sectors of the international community as a condition for receiving aid (Rocha 2007: 25).

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[25] Loxley argues that NEPAD "does not challenge conventional wisdom in any significant way, while at the same time committing Africa to police itself on implementing neo-liberal economic policies" (2003: 127). Melber (2002) also makes the argument that NEPAD does not confront the existing political structure facing many African states and this factor may prove to be a key obstacle for the objectives of NEPAD.

Dialogue e-Journal

Harrison's (2005) argument neatly concludes the themes of this section in that neoliberalism acted as a project to the extent that it was pursued primarily by the US and the IFIs embodied with its policies, to maintain a level of intervention in African economies. For Harrison, "neoliberalism works to illuminate important aspects of the ontology of certain agencies, which collectively express a global project of economic and other policy initiatives based in the desirability of free-market social relations" (2005: 1305). The reforms represented attempts by the IFIs to establish neoliberalism in Africa as a sociopolitical project that acted as a process of "social engineering" (2005: 1306). These accounts of US engagement in Africa remain silenced in the US-Africa discourse and they present an alternative perception to how the US is perceived in Africa. It is through this side of US engagement that broader social movements have resultantly become established in Africa.

Seeds of Change: Resistance and Social Movements

Resistance movements have developed in opposition to the impact of policies based on the US economic model on Africa. In contrast to the depictions in the US-Africa discourse of the US development model providing the necessary benefits of development to Africa, there has been substantial resistance to the effects of neoliberal polices. Originating from the protests and riots that resulted from the effects of the SAPs during the 1980s, groups that were once separated and focused on individual struggles against neoliberal policies such as privatisation and economic liberalisation, have since evolved to form part of broader movement that is more closely aligned around a collective set of goals. As more groups developed the perception that they had a common agenda, a "mass consciousness" began to develop that is evident in contemporary movements such as Jubilee South, a campaign focused on the cancellation of Africa's debt; and the African Social Forum (ASF), an African offshoot of the World Social Forum.[26] As E. Osei Kwadwo Prempeh argues, "the African Social Forum can be properly understood as a new and emergent form of counter-hegemonic praxis and politics against imperial globality which is expressed in the form of neoliberal globalisation" (2006: 82). One of the most significant impacts for these social movements is that they question the logic of the US-Africa discourse in which neoliberalism is perceived as beneficial for Africa. Such movements represent the current state of a movement that developed out of smaller localised forms of resistance.

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[26] For information on Jubilee South, see: http://www.jubileesouth.org/. For information on the African Social Forum, see: http://www.africansocialforum.org/english/index.html.

Dialogue e-Journal

Prempeh argues that groups that emerged in protest to the trade liberalisation and privatisation policies of SAPs, involved local civil society groups such as the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee, the Anti-Privatisation Forum in South Africa and the Nigerian Labour Congress (2006: 78). In 1999, leading church and social movement organisations signed the Lusaka Declaration after a three day conference that initiated a process for the creation of an "African Consensus". The declaration was based on the notion that the conditions placed on African states had a devastating impact and often increased hardship for the majority of people. Following this conference, the "African Consensus" was taken to the Dakar 2000 Summit on Debt. The result was "The Dakar Declaration for the Total and Unconditional Cancellation of African and Third World Debt". The declaration made the following account of debt and its role maintain its position in the global economy:

> Countries of the North owe Third World countries, particularly Africa, a manifold debt: blood debt with slavery; economic debt with colonization,and the looting of human and mineral resources and unequal exchange; ecological debt with the destruction and the looting of its natural resources; social debt (unemployment; mass poverty) and the cultural debt (debasing of African civilizations to justify colonization).

(2000)

These declarations have been the voice of African resistance that has developed in response to the imposition of neoliberalism as pursued through the IFIs and promoted by the US.

Enter the US Corporation

US MNCs in Africa demonstrate not only the effects that such companies have had in Africa, but also serve to add to the alternative discourse a critique of US companies with regards to resistance and adverse effects. This critique also contests silences within the US-Africa discourse regarding the role of US companies used to describe the adverse impact of Chinese companies, as described in the US China-Africa discourse, which appears then as an inherent characteristic of China's engagement in Africa. There are a number of examples of poor corporate social responsibility in Africa by US companies. US oil producing company Chevron has met with resistance in the Niger Delta region where oil platforms are located. In 1998, two protesters were killed on an oil platform. The following year Nigerian troops were transported with Chevron's assistance to attack

Dialogue e-Journal

villages in the Niger Delta (Pegg 1999: 477; Bassey 2007: 136).[27] In 1999 US pharmaceutical companies lobbied the US government to force the South African government to repeal legislation enacted to allow the purchase of cheaper generic drugs (Bond 1999). In 1997, an example of developing countries losing rights under the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) legislation involved the US pharmaceutical company Phytera, which signed an agreement with a Swiss University sharing Zimbabwean genetic resources to the exclusion of the Zimbabwean government and traditional leaders "affected by this bio-prospecting" (Commey 2003: 15). As an omission of the nature of MNCs in general, the US China-Africa discourse silences those critiques of US corporate engagement in Africa discourse at the cost of making poor corporate social responsibility appear as a characteristic feature of China's engagement with Africa.

This chapter closes by returning to Nyang (2005: 930), who recalls Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana and a strong proponent of the Pan-African movement. According to Nyang, Kwame sought to intervene in the middle of the Vietnam War much to US President Lyndon Johnson's annoyance, in the hope of finding a diplomatic solution to the conflict and that "if the author of the CIA exposé, *In Search of Enemies*, is to be trusted, then we could say that Johnson was implicated in the overthrow of Nkrumah's government" (2005: 930). Such an event only adds to the African collective memory of US engagement in Africa.

China in Africa

In the US China-Africa discourse, China's impact in Africa was discussed in relation to three themes that capture characteristic aspects of China's engagement. These themes included China's non-conditional aid to African states, China's economic competitiveness based on the support it receives from the Chinese state, and backlashes against the Chinese presence in Africa. As these themes have guided the dominant discourse on China's engagement in Africa, so too have they silenced alternative ways of understanding. This chapter provides an account of the effects of Chinese engagement in Africa with a consideration of broader structural and socio-historical contexts. Divided into three sections, it is by no means an exhaustive list, but provides a contribution

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[27] Chevron was cleared in a court case in 2008 over the deaths of two protesters on an oil platform in Nigeria in 1998. *The Wall Street Journal* reported the results of the court case as "a high-profile blow to the fairly new legal theory that multinational companies can be sued in US courts and held accountable for alleged human-rights violations overseas" (Gold 2008).

Dialogue e-Journal

towards a critical understanding of some aspects of China's engagement in Africa. These sections include a discussion on conceptualising a Chinese model of development in Africa and its influence, the impact of Chinese MNCs and the emergence of Chinese migrant communities in Africa.

A Chinese Model: Divergence and Convergence

A key thread to the themes discussed in the US China-Africa discourse involves the level with which China is exerting its influence in Africa. China's level of influence is regarded as a concern because its economic model and modernisation serve as a powerful example to African governments that development is possible without political liberalisation. Among the commentators in the US China-Africa discourse, the meetings between Chinese and African leaders at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) conferences served as a strong illustration of China's appeal.[28] Due to the perceived antithetical nature of China's engagement in Africa as perceived in the dominant discourse, there is a strong concern about the implications of how China's appeal in Africa will develop.

There is little doubt that China takes advantage of opportunities to develop relations with authoritarian regimes, allowing it a form of leverage with other states simply due to the absence of US involvement. However, by portraying the purely antithetical and divergent nature of Chinese engagement in Africa, the discourse precludes ways in which to perceive both Chinese and US engagement in Africa as converging in the self-interested pursuit of access to markets and resources. In addition, such a focus on China's engagement in Africa prevents understanding the ways in which China might be perceived differently by African leaders and people.

To seek alternative perspectives on Chinese engagement in Africa, it is helpful to give prominence to the historical origins of China-Africa relations in the contemporary period. This helps to shed light not only on the way China seeks to distinguish itself from the US, but also on conceptions in Africa of China as an alternative to the US. Intertwined with the history between China and Africa, over a period in which they developed strong ties,

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[28] The establishment of FOCAC also signalled a committed initiative between Chinese and African heads of state to maintain strong diplomatic relations. From the comments of individuals from various African governments, China was warmly welcomed. With the new engagement between China and Africa symbolised by the unprecedented level of diplomatic contact culminating in the meetings of the Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (FOCAC), it did indeed appear that not only was the Chinese model contrary to US interests in Africa, but it also received a wide audience. See Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (2006).

Dialogue e-Journal

is also the selective emphasis by both Chinese and African leaders on particular historical moments as a part of a contemporary narrative of engagement (Alden and Aves 2008: 48). Through the importance of such meetings as the Bandung Conference in 1955 and the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation in 1957, China developed its support with Third World struggles and "drew on 'missionary like' convictions of its righteousness in assisting Africa" (Mohan and Power 2008: 28). By 1970, China's support for Africa's anti-colonial struggles and liberation movements culminated in the largest Chinese aid project in Africa: the construction of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway, demonstrating China's activism on the international stage (Yu 1975). Also known as the 'Great Freedom Railway', the Tan-Zam Railway project symbolised China's intention to liberate Africa from depending upon transport routes through states with colonial regimes and promote freedom from the neo-colonialism and neo-imperialism of the Soviet Union and the US (Monson 2008: 217).[29] The spirit of such endeavors between China and Africa can be seen in the FOCAC declarations today.[30]

In addition, the notion of a Chinese alternative to the US has also emerged recently in the shape of the 'Beijing Consensus' (Ramo 2004). As Arif Dirlik notes, the Beijing Consensus has evolved to symbolize a wider dissatisfaction with the imposition of neoliberalism (as evident in the shock therapies administered by the IFIs to Southeast Asian states during the Asian Financial Crisis and to Russia and other eastern European states following the end of the Cold War), and embodies the hope that alternatives exist to counter the domination of Western powers (Dirlik 2006). These origins along with the contemporary connotations attached to China's development through the Beijing Consensus, illustrate how China diverges from US approaches to Africa.

With regards to China's recent engagement with Africa, however, the ideological focus plays less of a role as economic issues have taken priority (Large, Oliveira and Alden 2008a: 6). The reasons for this shift in China's Africa policy are due to multiple factors that involve the end of the Cold War and the retreat of the superpowers, China's economic liberalisation and importantly, the need to secure access to natural resources vital to China's rapid industrialisation (Payne and Veney 1998; Taylor 2006; Tull 2006).

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[29] Monson (2008) also describes reactions to the project in the US at the time from an article in *The Wall Street Journal*: "The prospect of hundreds and perhaps thousands of Red Guards descending upon an already troubled Africa is a chilling one for the West" (1967).

[30] The Chinese leadership sought to invoke the spirit of partnership in addressing the issue of "a huge gap between the rich North and the poor South" in which "the injustice and inequality in the current international system are incompatible with the trend towards world peace and development" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China 2006).

On a domestic level the seed of change for China's reform and outward orientation – and the reason why China exhibits a level of convergence with the US in its engagement with Africa – were sown with the opening up of China's economy to economic liberalisation under Deng Xiaoping during the late 1970s. By slowly incorporating market-orientated reforms, China embarked upon a massive restructuring of its domestic economy transforming its governance institutions while facilitating tighter interconnections with foreign powers and the global economic system. China has raised the standard of living in its country but at the cost of widespread "environmental degradation, social inequality and eventually something that looks uncomfortably like the reconstitution of capitalist class power" (Harvey 2005: 122). In addition, domestic changes have also led to one of the largest human migration movements in history as people have moved from the poorer rural areas to the rapidly developing coastal provinces. China seeks closer integration into the global economic system which, in regards to Africa, means engaging with Africa through the existing economic structures to take advantage of access to markets and resources. On this level, China adds to the economic competition faced by African exporters in global markets, reaffirming Africa as a provider of primary commodities while preventing the possibility of indigenous management of such resources and the hope that African producers might benefit from the profits of their exports (Holsag 2006).[31] Despite notions of Third World solidarity and state-led development, China does not seek to overturn the existing economic architecture to trade with Africa. Beyond this orientation of China's engagement in Africa, China also lacks any hegemonic potential to rival the US. Despite its size and relevance to international forums on global issues, China does not carry the same ideological support of the US nor can it claim a status as a key architect of global institutions such as the IFIs (Schoeman 2007). In the US China-Africa discourse the image of China as undoing the gains made by Western democracy and rights in Africa neglects the implications of China's contribution in other ways, such as through UN troops and its desire to be increasingly seen as responsible power in the existing international order (Harman 2007). Despite China's glacial pace towards embracing free market reforms, China still seeks to engage with Africa through the existing political and economic structures. As a result, China's approach does not constitute an alternative in terms of addressing the structural constraints that perpetuate Africa's current economic position. In this sense, China's engagement with Africa demonstrates that it is a rising economic power that does not seek to change existing structures through which Africa is engaged in the global economy.

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[31] For an account of China's adverse impact on African industrial exports in Sub-Saharan Africa, see Kaplinsky 2008.

Chinese Companies in Africa: A Well Worn Path

China's MNCs were discussed in the US China-Africa discourse as having an adverse impact in Africa. They were considered as such on two accounts. These included a low level of corporate social responsibility (CSR), as demonstrated by the protests against labour conditions in Africa, and a critique of their inefficiency based on their affiliations with the Chinese government.

As an example of the labour conditions at Chinese-owned companies, an often repeated example involved the case of the Chambishi mine accident. Though demonstrating the need for China's companies to display better CSR, the reference of this incident also conveys the assumption that China lacks those standards of corporate practice, as exists in the US. By citing the responses from such protests in the US China-Africa discourse, it was also suggested that African workers preferred Western corporate standards. That such instances are specific to Chinese companies in Africa is alluded to by Reilly and Na: "Chinese companies pursuit of profits may lead them to operate in ways that generate local resistance, potentially undermining China's broader diplomatic and economic objectives" (2007: 147). The example then also serves to illustrate a seemingly inherent characteristic attributed to Chinese MNCs rather than a being a characteristic of MNCs regardless of their country of origin.[32] As discussed in relations to US MNCs in Africa, workers demanded appropriate labour standards regardless of the nationality of the company.

Similar to US MNCs, Chinese MNCs have also demonstrated adverse impacts on labour rights and environmental aspects. One of the common criticisms of Chinese companies is that many of them have invested in regions troubled by conflict and weak in terms of government regulations on corporate behavior. Some of the notable areas include Chinese oil companies investing in Sudan, in the Cabinda province in Angola and in the Niger Delta.[33] In Zambezia province in Mozambique, Chinese logging companies have engaged

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[32] In addition to the forty-nine miners who died at the Chambishi mine accident, other accidents at Mopani Copper Mines (Switzerland), First Quantum (Canada) and ZCCM Investment Holdings PLC (ZCCM.ZM) (Zambia), claimed more than twenty deaths in 2005 (Range 2005).

[33] On Chinese companies in Sudan, see Askouri (2007). According to an advertisement from the Save Darfur Coalition's Divest for Darfur Campaign, a number of investment firms including JP Morgan and Franklin Templeton among others, have been requested to withdraw their investment s from the CNPC that is involved in exporting oil from Sudan (Hight 2007). On Chinese companies in Angola, see Peoples Daily Online (2006), Human Rights Watch (2004). On Chinese companies in the DRC, see Chan-Fishel (2007: 145). Commenting on the Chinese presence, Moise Katumbi, governor of Katanga province stated, "Katanga is not a jungle. They worked as if it was a jungle". In regards

Dialogue e-Journal

in "a deforestation process often referred to as 'the Chinese takeaway'" (Lemos and Ribeiro 2007: 65). Through the manipulation of regulations with licensing, reporting the number of logs exported and the influence of political connections, Chinese companies have been involved in facilitating illegal logging. In Zimbabwe to pay for the government's debt, there is a concern that the economy has been opened up to Chinese investment to the extent that "it is questionable whether he [Mugabe] has not simply replaced Western colonialism with Chinese imperialism" (Karumbidza 2007: 95). Chinese companies have also been involved in projects on dam constructions that have led to the displacement of local villages and communities.[34] It is clear "that Chinese companies are quickly generating the same kinds of environmental damage and community opposition that Western companies have spawned around the world" (Chan-Fishel 2007: 148).

In relation to Chinese connections to the Chinese government and the broader notion that a coordinated strategy is in operation, observers in the US China-Africa discourse have argued that Chinese MNCs follow a strategy connected to state interests and part of broader foreign policy initiatives. Chinese MNCs are central to broader state policy objectives which in the case of China's Africa policy, has involved securing access to oil, increasing trade and investment and strengthening diplomatic ties (Reilly and Na 2007: 134). However, the connection between state interests and corporate interests are not specific to China as the example of French companies in Africa (Alden and Davies 2006: 84). In this case, the interests of French oil companies and the French state developed a convergence in interests that resulted in French troops being deployed to Africa to suppress resistance against authoritarian governments. Instead of demonstrating unique Chinese characteristics, the largest of China's are being groomed for the Fortune 500 (Alden 2007: 40). Chinese MNCs are in fact following the lead of the major players in international markets by following Western examples. According to a report on Chinese MNCs, while they are not the most efficient companies, they are on the path to becoming strong competitors in international markets. It shows that Chinese companies are learning from their Western counterparts about the value of research and development for innovation and seeking new markets (Chan 2006; Corkin 2006). Chinese companies are pursuing trends that are familiar to MNCs in general, and in considering the adverse of

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to labour practices, he stated that, "they didn't pay their people. They didn't respect anything. We have already written to them to ask them to give severance pay to their staff and to pay the tax due to the government" (Quoted in Jopson 2009).

[34] On the Mpanda Nkuwa dam in Mozambique, see (Lemos and Ribeiro 2007: 66). On the Merowe dam in Sudan, see Askouri (2007: 78).

China's MNCs compared to others, the goal here is not to dispute this, but suggest that Chinese companies follow paths outlined by US and other Western MNCs. To suggest where this trend may be headed, recent events in the Niger Delta where China has secured oil deals with the Nigerian government prove illustrative. In 2006 the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) detonated a car bomb in the port town of Warri as a warning to China that it should avoid becoming involved in the area (BBC News 2006). This was followed by nine Chinese workers being kidnapped in 2007 at an oil company compound in southern Nigeria (Xinhua News Agency 2007). The question arises then as to whether Chinese companies will follow the path of US companies such as Chevron in the Niger Delta. In contrasting comments of Chinese MNCs made in the US China-Africa discourse, it appears that the discourse omits reference to the behaviour of the US or other companies in Africa that, upon consideration, demonstrate that there is nothing inherently Chinese about the effects of Chinese companies in Africa.

Chinese Migrant Communities in Africa: Devils and Popularity

Chinese migrant communities in Africa play an important part in China's engagement by demonstrating the effects of socio-economic forces at the local level. There are multiple complexities involved with Chinese migrant communities which should be considered in relation to negative perceptions that characterise the Chinese presence in Africa in the US China-Africa discourse. It is within these complexities that the dialectics of China's engagement with Africa can be revealed and demonstrated through ways in which Chinese migrants have become interconnected with local social, economic and political networks. Providing clearer articulations of what such interconnections reveal defuses the negatives perceptions of China's presence in Africa depicted in the US China-Africa discourse.

In the US China-Africa discourse, the Chinese presence in Africa is portrayed through examples of China's negative effects. The oft-cited case of the accident at the Chinese-owned mine in Zambia enabled a negative perception of the Chinese presence.[35] Other accounts cite local African perceptions in which Chinese migrants are described as being "like the devil" (Michel 2008: 45). In addition to such accounts, there is little doubt regarding the increasing visibility of Chinese people on the local level. The total number of Chinese migrants in Africa varies depending on the sources of data but from those that are available, the most pertinent figures demonstrating migratory patterns have shown

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[35] US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs 2008, Polgreen and French (2007), Wines (2007), US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs (Swan) (2008).

Dialogue e-Journal

rising numbers "between two-and-thirty fold increase [s] between 2001 and 2006" (Mohan and Kale 2007: 10). Such a significant rise of numbers has partly contributed to the sense of alarm and resentment at the growing Chinese presence in Africa.

The increasing visibility of Chinese migrants in Africa does not need imply the irrelevance of socio-economic contexts. Nina Sylvanus's ethnographic study in the marketplaces of Lome, Togo, revealed how the local African traders also referred to Chinese people as "devils"; "they're not honest; they'll sell to everyone" (2007). For Sylvanus's study, the focus was on analysing "local representations of "Chinese devils" that circulate in the market with Togo's recent conjuncture of democratisation and market reform" (2007). In connection with these observations is an analysis that draws a connection to market dynamics in which competition from Chinese traders has minimised the advantages once enjoyed by local traders. The market may be filled with Chinese imitations of African print copies, but it was African traders who had travelled to China in an earlier period with a blueprint in search of a cheap producer. The unintended consequence has been that Chinese traders have now moved directly to the Lome marketplace. In this example, negative perceptions of China are a product of economic competition. In addition to this, perceptions of Chinese migrant communities also differ between African leaders and local people.

In Namibia, the friction between the attitudes of locals and government leaders is more pronounced where China has overtaken South Africa's reputation as the perceived imperialist in the country. As Greg Dobler argues, "social unrest is increasingly formulated along a new indigenous/ exogenous divide" (2008: 244). In his case study of the Chinese migrant community in Oshikango, Namibia, Dobler investigates the relationships that developed between the towns elite with Chinese investors who developed a mutual interest as links were connected to towns in China. As both parties benefited through mutual interest, there was little critical inquiry into the broader impact of Chinese investment as resentment continued to develop on the local level. Dobler argues that "both sides tried to shield the cooperation from outside criticism by linking Chinese investments even more strongly to development – without reference to its real impact on the Namibian economy" (2008: 253). In this case, the connections between the elites in the township and Chinese investors demonstrated a relationship of convenience, yet on the local level, resentment continued to develop.

To illustrate the extent to which such resentment can be connected to socio-economic contexts, the example of Chinese migrant communities in Cape Verde is insightful

(Carling and Haugen 2008). Cape Verde is one of the few places where there has not been a significant level of resentment generated towards Chinese communities. In a 2005 survey held in Cape Verde on the popularity of immigrants from Asia, eighty-five percent responded favourably to the suggestion that they made a positive economic contribution to the country. A number of factors have been important in considering the positive impact of Chinese communities such as there were no negative economic impacts from Chinese migrants including job losses or impacts from Chinese imports on the manufacturing sector. Local conditions, such as limited corruption, were also important as it tended to reduce the possibility for Chinese communities to become associated with the negative impacts. As Carling and Haugen (2008) argue, "the variety in local markets and social and political contexts across the continent precludes sweeping conclusions about the impact of China's growing presence in Africa" (2008: 337). Broader perceptions of the presence of Chinese migrant communities in Africa are evidently connected to socio-economic conditions rather than to stereotypical images such as those portrayed in the dominant discourse on China's engagement with Africa.

As these examples illustrate, there are a variety of complexities involved in issues of Chinese migration in China. The insight from these analyses suggests that further investigation into the structural factors that facilitate these complexities is required. This section on Chinese migrant communities concludes the chapter on China's effects in Africa.

Conclusion

> *If one day China should change her colour and turn into a superpower, if she too should play the tyrant in the world, and everywhere subject others to her bullying, aggression and exploitation, the people of the world should identify her as social-imperialism, expose it, oppose it and work together with the Chinese people to overthrow it.*
>
> *(Deng Xioping: Speech at special session of the UN General Assembly,1974)*

Central to this paper is the question of interpretation and the issue of how US perceptions shape Chinese and US engagement in Africa. Through an analysis of the US-Africa discourse and the US China-Africa discourse alongside each other it was revealed that a Manichean dynamic perpetuated a series of themes that were counterpoised to each other. This paper argued that US engagement became perceived as being for the benefit of Africa while China's was perceived as detrimental as reflected through the existence of a

Dialogue e-Journal

US lens. As a result, this tended to limit an understanding of China's engagement in Africa by silencing alternative discourses. When explored, alternative discourse revealed that in contrast to the differences between US and Chinese engagement in Africa as conveyed through the dominant discourses, instances emerged demonstrating similarities. The US and China clearly exhibit different models of development but despite this, in the pursuit of markets and resources, both countries engaged in Africa through the existing political and economic structures. In addition, US and Chinese MNCs also demonstrated the similar capacity to have adverse impacts. As these factors also served to draw attention to wider structural forces of globalisation, the examples of forms of resistance and migrant communities demonstrated the complexities involved with the engagement of external powers in Africa.

The argument put forward here also raises a number of issues. As the alternative discourse reveals similarities between US and Chinese engagement in Africa, the real question regarding China's engagement is not whether it is authoritarian or pursuing a state-led model of development. Without intending to understate the importance of such issues, the argument raised here suggests that existing political and economic structures are of greater concern in discussions on the role of external actors in Africa. Not only does this question defuse the rhetoric of China's adverse impacts in Africa as portrayed in the US China-Africa discourse, but it also implicates the US for its continued engagement in Africa. For if the continued orientation of Africa's economies as primary commodity suppliers continues at the expense of the development of localised industry, or if external powers continue to engage with Africa through existing political and economic structures, then it is unlikely that improvements will arise in the conditions Africa currently faces. Such a conclusion comes as a result of exploring the gap between rhetoric and practice in how China's engagement with Africa is understood by giving a voice to alternative discourses that at once reveal the complexities of the issue and the importance of interpretation.

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