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**NAVAL
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THESIS

**CHINA'S MARITIME SILK ROAD:
AN ANALYSIS OF INFLUENCE ON EGYPT,
ALGERIA, AND MAURITANIA**

by

Jonathan R. Formanek

December 2021

Thesis Advisor:
Second Reader:

Jessica R. Piombo
Robert E. Looney

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington, DC, 20503.				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE December 2021		3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's thesis
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE CHINA'S MARITIME SILK ROAD: AN ANALYSIS OF INFLUENCE ON EGYPT, ALGERIA, AND MAURITANIA			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Jonathan R. Formanek				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A			10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE A	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) How has China's influence in Egypt, Algeria, and Mauritania impacted the ambitious Maritime Silk Road along the MENA and West Africa regions? Chinese influence is present in each country. These three countries offer challenges to any influence activity regarding economic, military, diplomatic, and cultural domains. They also provide opportunities for China to grow economically in the region. Scholars suggest China takes advantage of instability in African countries, secures footholds throughout Africa, and establishes robust trade routes through the Mediterranean Sea. How does China approach the effects of stability and security challenges, specifically in Egypt, Algeria, and Mauritania? Chinese business, military, diplomatic, and cultural outreach practices might undermine Western interests. Using referent power, China appeals to countries seeking mutually attainable goals and bilateral agreements for Chinese economic gain. Chinese influence combines interactions in multiple domains (e.g., trade policy, diplomatic visits, military excises, and educational opportunities) to increase its economic output in all three countries, protect its trade routes and increase Chinese prestige and influence on the world stage. A study on the three different countries may provide insight into variations on influence activities and their effectiveness to influence each country individually.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS Maghreb, Belt and Road, One Belt One Road, influence domains, China, Egypt, Algeria, Mauritania			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 109	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	

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INFLUENCE ON EGYPT, ALGERIA, AND MAURITANIA**

Jonathan R. Formanek
Lieutenant, United States Navy
BSME, Norwich University, 2013

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(STRATEGIC STUDIES)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
December 2021**

Approved by: Jessica R. Piombo
Advisor

Robert E. Looney
Second Reader

Afshon P. Ostovar
Associate Chair for Research
Department of National Security Affairs

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ABSTRACT

How has China's influence in Egypt, Algeria, and Mauritania impacted the ambitious Maritime Silk Road along the MENA and West Africa regions? Chinese influence is present in each country. These three countries offer challenges to any influence activity regarding economic, military, diplomatic, and cultural domains. They also provide opportunities for China to grow economically in the region. Scholars suggest China takes advantage of instability in African countries, secures footholds throughout Africa, and establishes robust trade routes through the Mediterranean Sea. How does China approach the effects of stability and security challenges, specifically in Egypt, Algeria, and Mauritania? Chinese business, military, diplomatic, and cultural outreach practices might undermine Western interests. Using referent power, China appeals to countries seeking mutually attainable goals and bilateral agreements for Chinese economic gain. Chinese influence combines interactions in multiple domains (e.g., trade policy, diplomatic visits, military excises, and educational opportunities) to increase its economic output in all three countries, protect its trade routes and increase Chinese prestige and influence on the world stage. A study on the three different countries may provide insight into variations on influence activities and their effectiveness to influence each country individually.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADS	approved destination status
AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AU	African Union
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CI	Confucius Institution
CHEC	China Harbor Engineering Company
CITIC	China International Trust Investment Corporation
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CSP	comprehensive strategic partner
DOTS	Direction of Trade Statistics
EEZ	economic exclusion zone
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FLN	Front de Liberation Nationale
FOCAC	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
GNA	Government of National Accord
GPC	great power competition
HA/DR	humanitarian aid/ disaster relief
IA	influencing agent
IED	improvised explosive device
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
LNA	Libya National Army
MINURSO	United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara
MINUSMA	United Nations Multi-Dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MOU	memorandums of understanding
MOOTW	military operations other than war

MENA	Middle East North Africa
NWMA	none war military activities
OOF	other official flows
ODA	official development assistance
PANPA	Port of Friendship
PKO	peacekeeping operations
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PLAN	People's Liberation Army Navy
PME	professional military education
POLISARIO	Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro
PSRE	Economic Support and Recovery Plan
PCSC	Complementary Growth Support Program
SEZ	special economic zone
SSA	security sector assistance
UCAV	unmanned combat aerial vehicle
UAV	unmanned aerial Vehicle
UN	United Nations
WTO	World Trade Organization

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I need to thank my wife Sandra for supporting me through this endeavor and whose help was critical in achieving a work-life balance, including the addition of our two beautiful children. I look up to you always.

I would also like to acknowledge my advisors, Dr. Looney and Professor Piombo, for their relentless push for self-improvement. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for your continued faith in my ability to achieve success.

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I. INTRODUCTION

As the United States progresses through the next decade, national security strategy predicts an ever-increasing focus on great power competition (GPC). Some ideas derived from this concept are strengthening Indo-pacific partnerships and materializing military build-up in the South China Sea. However, GPC lies not in a single theater of operation, but along the periphery, often in unexpected regions; therefore, the U.S. should anticipate the effects of GPC around the globe.

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to a 2020 DOD Annual Report to Congress, China's presence on the African continent has increased exponentially over the past two decades using military operations other than war, protecting Chinese interests in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region.¹ How does China use its influence to engage with African countries? Might China's engagement through economic, diplomatic, or military means impact the ambitions of the Maritime Silk Road? What are China's interests in the region, and might they conflict with U.S. policy? This thesis examines China's behavior through specific activities designed to strengthen its relationship in Egypt, Algeria, and Mauritania through a framework determining if China is successfully influencing these countries by their responses to China's actions.

B. METHODOLOGY

The approach applies concepts of influential power to an index of activity areas, correlating China's interests to influence activities and ultimately observing the responses of each country. These activities are under four domains of influence: economic, military, diplomatic, and culture. The four domains measure power, derived from sources such as the Lowy Institute Power Index and Bertram H Raven's analysis on social power, specifically, Raven's article on *The Bases of Power and the Power/Interaction Model of*

¹ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2020* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2020), 125, <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Sep/01/2002488689/-1/-1/1/2020-dod-china-military-power-report-final.pdf>.

*Interpersonal Influence.*² The Lowy Institute Power Index identifies eight areas, the domains mentioned above, plus defense networks, future resources, and resilience.¹ These other areas of influence are undoubtedly critical to the analysis presented here. However, applying Raven's concepts to defense networks might not be as clear as an economic influence, nor might the other categories relate to China's initiatives in a specific country. Therefore, the four domains addressed in this thesis narrow the search window to a reasonable degree. Nevertheless, a framework of influence begins to take shape by identifying China's activities through the four domains and correlating Raven's power mechanics concepts. In other words, China's influence is traceable by knowing China's interests with the target, monitoring activity, and finally observing a response from the targeted state.

Before moving any further, the framework and concepts need defining. Raven defines several bases of power, which this thesis refers to as power mechanisms for simplicity. Power mechanisms apply to states or groups of people acting on one another. There are always at least two parties operating under this framework, although they are not limited to two. Generally, there is always an influencing agent (IA) and the target. Their roles are self-explanatory: the IA applies power mechanics to the target, and the target responds. Certain conditions meet to qualify as an IA. First, the IA must wield power, backed by resources such as its economy, military, political will, or diplomacy.

On the other hand, the target is the state consisting of other entities, and outside actors attempt to influence these entities by manipulating levers of power. According to Dr. Rachel Sigman et al., levers of power are groupings such as social groups, economic sectors, religious institutions, and political factions within a state that can be sources of leverage to influence the target government.³ This thesis identifies China as the IA, advancing its Maritime Silk Road by influencing state actors in Egypt, Algeria, and

² Bertram H. Raven, "The Bases of Power and the Power/Interaction Model of Interpersonal Influence: Bases of Power," *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy* 8 no. 1, (November 2008): 1, 5. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1530-2415.2008.00159.x>.

³ Rachel Sigman et al., *U.S. Influence and Levers of Power in AFRICOM Countries* (Monterey, CA; Naval Postgraduate School Department of National Security Affairs. 2019), 18.

Mauritania, representing the targets encompassing levers of power specified in each chapter.

Merging these two perspectives, one can argue that an IA initiates an influencing activity by applying power mechanics to non-state sources of power, with the ultimate goal of shaping the activities of the target state. Understanding power mechanics helps measure the success or failure of influence activities. Failing or waning influence often occurs when the power mechanic mismatches to a lever of power. For example, if an IA selects a heavy-handed power mechanic, a power lever may reject growing influence. However, China effectively courts nations around the world through influence activities. This framework can identify patterns of selected power mechanics to levers of power and gauge the success or failure based on that knowledge.

Legitimate power is a crucial term throughout this thesis. Raven refers to legitimate power as a target's compliance with social norms at the most basic level.⁴ Three subcategories of Raven's definition apply to China as an IA. They include the position of power, power of reciprocity, and power of responsibility. For example, China engages Mauritania from a place of power because each country recognizes China as a dominant trading partner or because China's status in the UN can heavily influence the target. Alternatively, Mauritania might be affected by China's legitimate power of reciprocity because China's actions are gracious and therefore require a favor in return. Finally, China applies legitimate power of responsibility, positioning itself as a leading member in UN Peace Keeping Operations (PKOs) in regions associated with the target states that require help. These definitions are referred to as legitimacy through the thesis, amplifying information specifying the subcategory.

There are other, more overt, and explicit tools available useful to an IA. Coercive power allows the IA to employ threats against the target. However, coercive power implies the target perceives the IA's legitimacy. Furthermore, the IA requires resources to back up coercion. This thesis did not find China employing a significant level of coercive power,

⁴ Raven "The Bases of Power and the Power/Interaction Model of Interpersonal Influence: Bases of Power," 4.

but an example of legitimacy and resources could be China's willingness to influence a target via sanctions economically. The target must perceive a legitimate threat, loss of funding, etc., and China must have the economic or diplomatic resources to enact the embargo. Otherwise, coercion is ineffective.

The opposite of coercive power, of course, is reward power. Raven notes that reward is not necessarily a physical gift, although it certainly can be. Recognition by the IA offers its form of reward. But, again, this concept is insufficient without an impression of legitimacy. In this case, the target recognizes the legitimate power, most likely position of power, the IA holds. Its recognition might elevate the target's prestige. For instance, China's recognition of Egypt elevates Egypt's status to a strategic partner level, the first among Arab nations.

The last central power mechanic discussed throughout this thesis is referent power. When referent power is successful, the outcome is that the target attempts to emulate the IA, ostensibly to experience the same successes as the IA, from the IA's perspective. The target might also notice other marks experiencing success through IA partnership and wishes to conform to IA standards to achieve a similar outcome. An IA achieves successful referent power by balancing legitimate positions and encouraging the target to achieve similar goals. If there is too much emphasis on position and the target may preserve a threat. Alternatively, if the target becomes so successful that the IA is no longer necessary for its success, the IA loses its influence. This mechanism is complicated as other powers such as reward and reciprocity may provide motivation referent power to exist. Among the power mechanisms discussed, it is the only one where the target voluntarily engages with the IA first.

The last concept extracted from Raven's work addresses the choices for bases of power or power mechanics. Why does China choose to act with legitimate power of position but not coercion? China's strategy is primarily economic via the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) along the Maritime Silk Road, a financial path along a seaway connecting strategic choke points and seaports from China to Europe through the Suez Canal. Using coercive power would send the wrong impression to new and existing customers in BRI projects. Raven suggests IAs determine coercion is inefficient from a costs/benefits

perspective. Power mechanics such as coercion or reward, when used alone, require significant amounts of time and effort to survey the effects of those actions. Time is money, and if China is to meet its end through an economic route, coercive power seems highly self-defeating. An example of this is China’s hands-off domestic affairs policy. Ensuring the target’s internal politics remain status quo allows China to focus on its goals.

Now consider the four domains from the perspective of power mechanics. Derived from the Lowy Institute Asia Power Index, the domains divide into activities from Table 1 referenced from Dr. Sigman et al.⁵ Observations from each part, as seen in Table 1, consider multiple activities as possible influences used to achieve an outcome.

Table 1. Influence Activities⁶

Domain	Influence Activity
Economic	Trade Activity/Policy Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)
Military	Presence Operations Security Sector Assistance (SSA)
Diplomatic	Recognition Official visits Behavior in International Organizations
Cultural	Immigration and Travel Policy Educational Opportunities Cultural linkages

The economic domain encompasses deliberate activity aimed at trade policy and foreign direct investment (FDI). As an example, China has goals to increase trade, and specifically its export trade to emerging markets. Simultaneously, China expresses interest in diversifying its energy and mineral supply to decrease vulnerability in a global economic downturn. These goals are achieved by applying a legitimate position of power as a global

⁵ Adapted from Rachel Sigman et al., U.S. Influence and Levers of Power in AFRICOM Countries. 5–8.

⁶ Rachel Sigman et al., 10.

economy through the economic domain and negotiating trade agreements with a target such as Egypt.

Next, the military domain offers an IA an opportunity to increase its influence using presence, operations, and security sector assistance (SSA) programs. Following the assumption that China's maritime silk road is a strategic necessity, such a route would require assured protection. Therefore, China conducts influence activities in the military domain through a growing presence, continued operations, and assistance of nations bilaterally and through UN PKOs. Meanwhile, China's military proficiency expands through continuous engagement with partner nations. A military partnership is a reward, a recognition of mutual importance, and a commitment to cooperation via training, increased presence, or operations.

Continuing to the diplomatic domain, an IA's recognition of the target's government, diplomatic presence, alliance, official visits, and international support give the IA a variety of activities to perform with a target. As an example, China marks official visits to Egypt as significant events between strategic partners. A member of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), Egypt is involved in a complex international forum designed by China to foster bilateral relationships between African countries. FOCAC itself is a tool to engage other international organizations such as the Africa Union (AU). Finally, China's influence in the UN is covered extensively through this thesis. Its diplomatic activity through international organizations such as the UN leads to several examples of China's legitimate power of responsibility and referent power from the target's point of view.

Lastly, the cultural domain allows the IA to employ a range of activities, including immigration, cultural linkages, and education initiatives. For example, Chinese leaders employ cultural power in communicating with Egyptians when they refer to each other as ancient civilizations accomplishing many feats of engineering and surviving throughout the centuries as reasons to celebrate their commonality. Another example is China's use of Confucius Institutes throughout Mauritania and Egypt to engage the local populations through traditional Chinese teaching. Thus, cultural activities tend to impact the people of a country significantly.

Finally, as the final piece of the framework, the target activities address the correlation between power mechanics concepts and the influence domains. After the IA selects a target and conducts an action, the target responds. Either the target accepts the activity or regrets it. These responses are associated with the IA's choice in power mechanisms. Why might a target refuse further influence? If China acts with referent power but is too heavily imposing itself, the target may reject influence. Alternatively, the target has no need for help in the domain chosen or does not wish to emulate China's example. Through power levers, other entities influence the target, including its population, economic sectors, and socio-political strata. The shift in levers of power can disrupt China's influence. There are cases where China attempts an activity in the economic domain appealing to the political elite but is then rejected by fishermen or a local population. These are unintended consequences from the perspective of the IA. Nevertheless, they are failures of influence policy. This might happen through bad policy, fishing rights guaranteed to Chinese companies could anger the working-class fishermen and can put the fate of the agreement in jeopardy.

C. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The purpose of this section is to understand the historical significance of China's current role as an IA. China's legitimate and referent power is not new. Through diplomatic, cultural, and economic ties, China has longstanding relationships with Egypt, Algeria, and Mauritania. Sino-Algerian relations date back to Algeria's *Front de Liberation Nationale* (FLN) in 1958 during Algeria's war for independence from France, when China was the first country to recognize the government's legitimacy. Common communist ideologies strengthened diplomatic ties.⁷ Once the FLN achieved independence, Algeria consolidated political power under one party. China embraced the communist revolution as proof of communism's success and displaced Russia as the primary communist ally, gaining greater access to Algeria. In the case of Egypt, strong diplomatic relations started around the same time in 1955 when Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai met Egyptian President

⁷ John Calabrese, "Sino-Algerian Relations: On a Path to Realizing Their Full Potential?" (Middle East Institute. 2017), <https://www.mei.edu/publications/sino-algerian-relations-path-realizing-their-full-potential>.

Gamal Abdel Nasser. Unlike Algeria's relationship, Egypt centers around both nations' ancient civilizations. Half a century later, China advances Egyptian diplomatic messages, including shared identity as ancient civilizations, to appeal to Egypt.⁸ Likewise, Mauritania's connection to China started in 1965 with diplomatic relations and quickly became a recipient of Chinese aid in 1969. By 1970, all three countries received assistance under a new Chinese policy that sought African recognition of China's Maoist government in exchange for support.⁹

China's presence on the African continent has rapidly developed over the past several decades. Based on historical knowledge, this thesis assumes that the targets recognize China as a legitimate economic partner, a potential ally, and a role model. The focus of this thesis turns to the new millennium, as China focuses on consolidating influence activities to achieve strategic economic goals. In 2000, China established a recurring diplomatic summit, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), specifically to enhance relationships and to build economic trade, cultural and diplomatic ties with African partners.¹⁰ These efforts allowed China to become Africa's major trading partner, and in 2009 China overtook the U.S. as Africa's largest trading partner.¹¹ In addition, China's People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) has since 2008 conducted goodwill visits with several warships to strengthen diplomatic relationships. Nearly a million Chinese citizens reside in African countries today.¹²

⁸Kyle Haddad-Fonda, "The Rhetoric of "Civilization" in Chinese—Egyptian Relations" (Middle East Institute, 2017), <https://www.mei.edu/publications/rhetoric-civilization-chinese-egyptian-relations>.

⁹ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "China's Role in Africa: Special Report Weekly Review" (Washington, D.C.: GPO, February 25, 1972), 3–5.

¹⁰ Larry Hanauer et al., *Chinese Engagement in Africa: Drivers, Reactions, and Implications for U.S. Policy* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2014), 20, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR521.html.

¹¹ Khan Moshin et al., *No Arab Spring for Algeria*, (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East, 2014), 1,4, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/No_Arab_Spring_for_Algeria.pdf.

¹² Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2020*.

D. SCOPE

Egypt, Algeria, and Mauritania represent various power levers, economic strengths, and governance types. From East to West, Egypt and Algeria represent the MENA region. Egypt lies on the geographically strategic choke point, the Suez Canal, connecting the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. Algeria and Mauritania belong to the Maghreb region, an economically depressed area of North Africa and the poorest on the continent. The selection and variation of target countries allow one to study how China engages in each country and how each target reacts. This study proves that China uses power mechanics through influence activities in every domain to one degree or another in each country. However, this thesis is finite, and applying the framework excludes other measures presented by bodies outside the framework.

Furthermore, it is imperative to recognize that these countries are influenced by many more agents, including but not limited to the U.S., European nations, domestic and international terrorist organizations, neighboring countries, international organizations, sudden economic fluctuation, or even natural disasters. They also affect the target's response to China's influence. While these factors are acknowledged, the results of this analysis consider China's influence to dominate power lever choices, and success or failure relies upon China's intentions.

E. FINDINGS

Highlights from research provide context when reading about influence in each chapter. The most important finding is it is difficult, if not nearly impossible, to directly correlate Chinese influence to outcomes including stability, economic success, or reform. Instead, one must identify the channels made by China's influence activity and connect those to power levers. Doing so leads research to outcomes that may be influenced by China, but not China alone.

Other top-level insights from research conducted within each chapter include China's use of similar power mechanics in each country. Furthermore, though diverse economically, militarily, and culturally, each country has a common political structure. A relatively authoritarian government sits atop the socio/economic/political system in each

country. While there are varying degrees of democratic practices, China focuses on maintaining healthy relationships with this lever of power. Then China focuses on establishing a robust, economically advantageous relationship. All other means of establishing connections with different levers of power through influence activity in any domain hinges on increasing China's economic growth.

According to UN Comtrade data and the World Bank, China is increasing its export trade to each country, a part of a more significant effort across the globe. Each country wishes to emulate the success gained from more significant Chinese trade. Important events such as the 2011 Arab Spring caused massive suffering and economic turmoil among some targets. A successful referent power example is Egypt's 2030 revitalization plan, which mirrors China's investment interests in the country. These interests include expanding port facilities, investing in infrastructure, and achieving a higher standard of living for the general population.

China captures the interests of significant levers of power, such as political leaders, military officers, and industries, through FOCAC and the establishment of country strategic partnerships (CSPs). FOCAC addresses the issues of individual countries through bilateral agreements over three years. Preferring bi-lateral deals, China can acquire trust and confidence via legitimate power to individual targets.

There are exceptions to the top-level findings, but they are minimal. For instance, China's primary objective is to strengthen the maritime silk road via activity in the economic domain. China also relies on the military domain for reasons other than direct influence over the target. In other words, China's second goal is to protect its long-term economic investment, regardless of achieving a target's interests. For example, Egypt is without question the most strategically consequential partner in this study. Though economic outcomes are the ultimate Chinese objective, a lack of military presence could jeopardize those goals.

China's actions provide a case for successful trends used across multiple countries. In essence, Chinese influence in these three countries is multicollinear, creating different responses from several power levers across domains. In general, there is a positive response

to Chinese activity when referring to economic influence. The multicollinear phenomenon benefits China's diplomatic engagements, which tend to enhance the target's status among neighboring nations. These actions then increase cultural activities and, most notably to China, increase economic trade and investment. China utilizes its military power to gain access to diplomatic and economic prospects. However, China rarely uses military force to enhance its influence. Exceptions to this rule include military presence, investment security, citizen protection, and counterterrorism. Domestic political disruption, the removal of heads of state, and increasing economic reform cause disruptions in all domains. Unemployment and China's access to a target's national resources cause concern among lower power levers such as fishermen and the youthful unemployed. China's interest in certain investments causes backlash, which sometimes influences high power levers such as a parliament, specific election, or state-owned company.

Specifically, China's presence in the economic domain continues to grow in Algeria, Egypt, and Mauritania. Some similarities among them include power levers, strong governance, and a history of trade. Economic relations have normalized through several decades; therefore, China's referent power is a mutual financial benefit for all parties. Across these countries, there are varying levels of extreme poverty as well as ambitious, unemployed youth. Also, government officials generally do not appear to be influenced by lower classes; however, each country is experiencing economic and political reform levers. There are some exceptions to the rule.

In the case of Algeria, China's economic engagement might be preventing a more substantial wave of economic reform because the Algerian government provides subsidies to the unemployed based partially on trade policy with China, disrupting the balance of power with the ruling elite. Also, the private enterprise remains stagnant while state-run enterprises receive most of the Chinese investment. Some of the lower classes in Algeria see this as the government snubbing Algeria's unemployed to benefit financially. In some cases, Chinese nationals provide the labor again, leaving Algerians unemployed. In addition, Algeria's energy company, Sonatrach, and Egypt's state-run Telecom, millions of dollars' worth of direct investment, further add to the perception that leaders prefer China's investment above all else.

In looking at Mauritania economically, an examination of China's investment port infrastructure reveals that political changes to Mauritania's government lead to the project's disruption. Likewise, the resignation of President Ould Abdel Aziz allowed parliament and the local population affected by the construction of the port to speak out against China's activity. However, a 2019 AID DATA reports a \$396 million ODA loan funded by the Export-Import Bank of China allows China Communications Construction Company Ltd access to building the Port of Friendship (PANPA).¹³ The local population expressed concern that China was using the project to expand its fishing fleet and could cause overfishing of Mauritania waters. Furthermore, ethnic divisions drove what some saw as a benefit to a few Mauritanian elites and a loss to poor fishers, a perfect example of influence in one domain affecting an outcome from another. Thus, Chinese investment may not sway a weak or shifting government when parliament and constituency collaborate against it.

F. ORGANIZATION OF THESIS

The chapters are divided into three main sections, addressing economic, military, and diplomatic/cultural domains. Each chapter addresses the specific influence activities, displayed in Table 1. conducted by China in Egypt, Algeria, and Mauritania. In addition, every chapter will focus on framework criteria, China's actions, and target state reactions, ending with an analysis of China's influence in the domain. Finally, a conclusion addresses the future of Chinese influence in the region.

¹³ Axel Dreher, Andreas Fuchs, "Aid, China, and Growth: Evidence from a New Global Development Finance Dataset" (Working Paper, AidData, 2017), http://docs.aiddata.org/ad4/pdfs/WPS46_Aid_China_and_Growth.pdf.

II. ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES

Upon research and analysis, it is clear that China's strategic goal starts and ends with achieving more significant economic influence along its Maritime Silk Road. China's ability to expand and protect its global economy in Egypt, Algeria, and Mauritania means China must actively promote its legitimate power as a solid and viable long-term trading partner. This chapter identifies Chinese economic activities. These activities are determined to be successful, unsuccessful, or progressing by analyzing the target country's response. There are rare but punctuated instances of unsuccessful results. Observations of these occurrences involve measures of instability among power levers. Therefore, China will favor continuing status quo relations and attempt to move past the issue. China's behavior and criteria remain consistent among the three countries, utilizing trade policy and FDI in various sectors to advance Chinese wealth.

A. CRITERIA

China successfully attracts power levers by applying legitimate power, including referent, reciprocity, and responsibility. These are criteria that identify China's approach to each country to acquire a target's compliance. Furthermore, Chinese practice seeks to advance mutual benefits where good outcomes for China lead to cascading success for trading partners. Thus, referent power, the target's wish to emulate success, or reciprocity, the feeling or perceived feeling to engage and meet the same objective, aid China. Understanding that China is an established investor, sending Algeria \$52 million, Egypt \$105.7 million, and Mauritania \$4.7 million as economic aid since 1970,¹⁴ one can connect financially essential tasks leading to other domains favoring Chinese activity.

China confronts power levers directly, including heads of state, government officials, and powerful state-run businesses. They accept China's economic activity because of a mutual benefit. In this case, their country's economic progress and their status as a successful ruler are paramount objectives for power levers. For example, some

¹⁴ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, "China's Role in Africa: Special Report Weekly Review," 4.

investments provide work for a population, or a new trade agreement offers financial security to a country's energy sector. If these endeavors are successful, national leaders have a better chance of staying in power because their people are pleased. As a result, they continue to gain strength to wield domestic power or have the legitimate backing of China.

Accepting China's economic activity sometimes alienates other lower-tier power levers such as the working class, the unemployed, a specific sector of workers, or even a youthful population. These are consequences of indirect economic influence. In addition, these levers might protest government actions if they result in, or are perceived to result in, negative impacts on people's livelihood. China addresses these reactions by cooperating with the targeted states' economic reform or cultural outreach to influence lower-tier power levers. Often, the national burden of domestic unrest or loss of labor in the marketplace is acceptable to higher-tier power levers because Chinese economic activity provides enough significant resources.

B. CONTEXT

China's Maritime Silk Road is a string of pearls connecting strategic ports following the BRI from Egypt, Algeria, and Mauritania, connecting to Europe through North Africa across the Indian Ocean. Therefore, establishing a long-term holistic strategy in all three countries studied in this thesis is critical to China's success. In other words, economic success predicates military, diplomatic, and cultural means of influence.

As an IA, China ensures complete control over investments and dominates the competition. China gains the target's favorability by providing reciprocity and increasing Chinese investment with further cooperation.¹⁵ Egypt, Algeria, and Mauritania choose similar economic infrastructure investments through Chinese FDI, potentially increasing their debt considerably. Greater engagement with China may exhaust the target economy with extreme debt or deplete resources from local economies. Here, this thesis finds that some power levers push back against Chinese influence activities. Not all countries accept

¹⁵Agatha Kratz, Allen Feng, Logan Wright, "New Data on the "Debt Trap" Question." Rhodium Group, April 29, 2019, <https://rhg.com/research/new-data-on-the-debt-trap-question/>.

China's influence in all domains, all the time setting the stage for discovering how influence affects the target.

C. TRADE POLICY

Trade policy is at the forefront of China's ultimate strategic goal to grow its economy. This section reveals why trade policy is so important for China and examines the outcomes of China's trade decisions. China maintains a similar policy as in previous decades: a hands-off approach in domestic affairs, a skeptical eye towards unfavorable conditions, and an aim to maximize the most significant amount of economic benefit from a target. China's economic engagement is diverse, extending beyond financial aid into technology, manufacturing, energy, and commercial fishing sectors. China aims for long-term engagement providing enticing incentives to Egypt, Mauritania, and Algeria, exchanging larger shares of African markets, and diversifying Chinese access to energy and natural resources.

Export services to China in Figure 1 illustrate the progression of trade in a positive trajectory for each country in this study. Data collected from 2005–2019 on export services reveal impacts of global phenomena on trade with China. The 2008 financial crisis and the Arab Spring are noticeable points of waning export services.

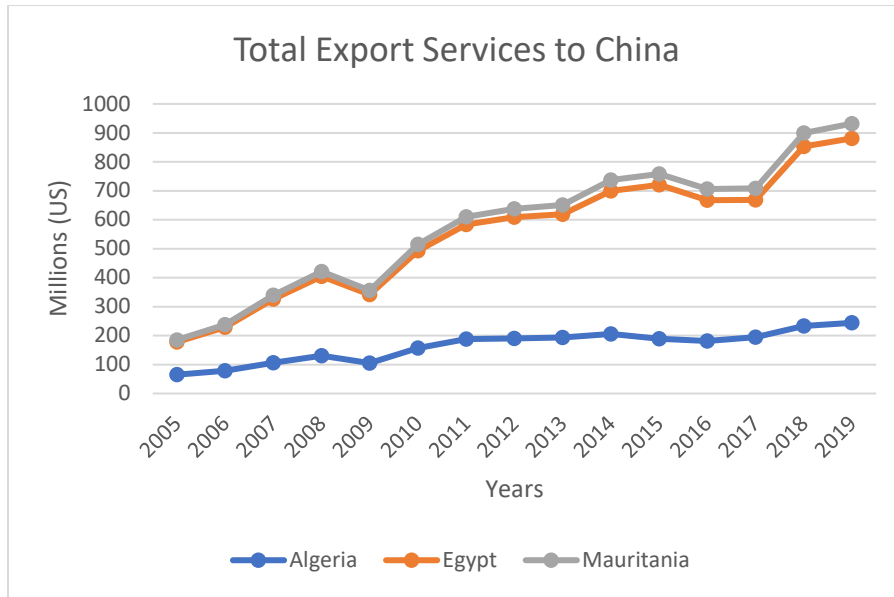


Figure 1. WTO Data Comparing Service Exports¹⁶

Johns Hopkins Data on total imports from Africa in Figure 2 is consistent with Figure 1's WTO data, showing dips in trade over major global events but overall rising. Furthermore, effects from international events were brief, taking only 2 to 3 years to return to normal. The total sum of imports never decreased until after the Arab Spring. Instead, gains rose slowly over the periods between 2007 and 2008, peaking in 2013. Recent years present a question regarding the slight dip in total value.

¹⁶ Source: Johns Hopkins China-Africa Research Initiative (object name China Import Export from African Countries) accessed June 28, 2021. <http://comtrade.un.org/data/>.

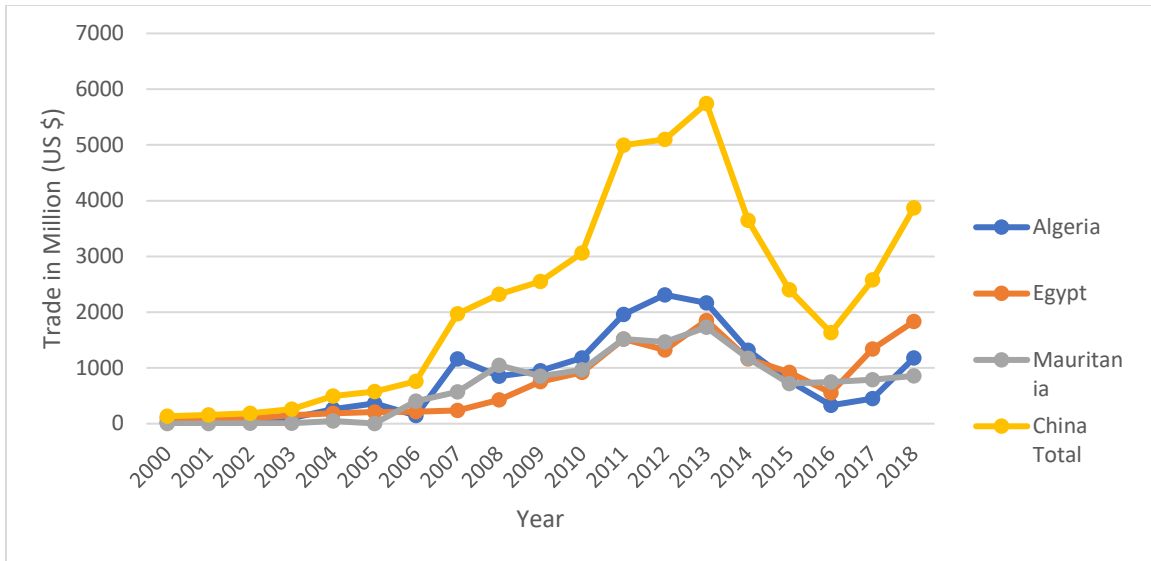


Figure 2. Chinese Imports from Target Countries ¹⁷

Chinese exports continue to rise, demonstrated in Figure 3, regardless of international strife. However, after 2015 there was a considerable drop in total export trade, which matches the fall in import trade from Table 1. China's relatively stable growth in export trade suggests that, although target countries experienced a decline over short periods, China gained popularity by providing surplus exports. Furthermore, China continues to grow export trade well after these events. It is worth noting, according to François Lafargue, China is overtaking once-exclusive European markets.¹⁸ China's approach in North Africa relies upon maintaining an indispensable partnership focusing on raw material imports through the early 2000s.¹⁹

¹⁷ Source: Johns Hopkins China-Africa Research Initiative (object name China Import Export from African Countries; accessed June 28, 2021). <http://comtrade.un.org/data/>.

¹⁸ François Lafargue, *The Economic Presence of China in the Maghreb: Ambitions and Limits*, (Paris: Fondation Pour La Recherche Stratégique), 2018, 7, <https://frstrategie.org/sites/default/files/documents/programmes/observatoire-du-monde-arabo-musulman-et-du-sahel/publications/en/294.pdf>.

¹⁹ Dr. David F. Gordon et al., *Beyond the Myths – Towards a Realistic Assessment of China's Belt and Road Initiative: The Development-Finance Dimension*, (Washington, D.C.: The International Institute for Strategic Studies,) 2020, <https://www.iiss.org/blogs/research-paper/2020/03/beyond-the-myths-of-the-bri>.

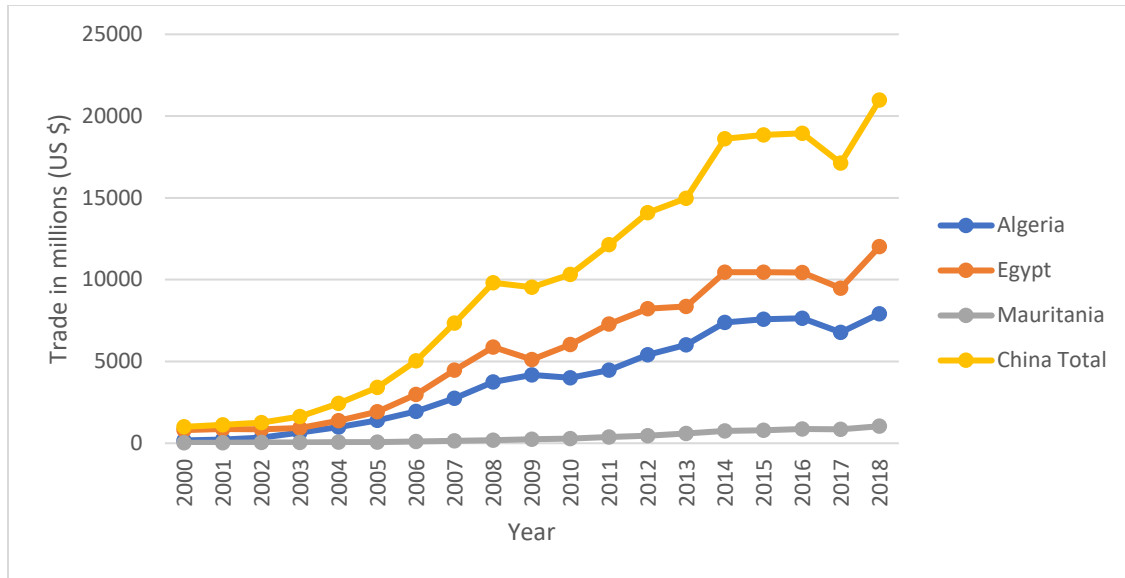


Figure 3. Chinese Export Trade²⁰

Recent data reveals that Egypt leads import and export trade among the three target countries. There is a pattern across domains that China takes tremendous effort to increase influence in Egypt.

1. Sino-Egyptian Influence and Reaction

This section identifies trade policy influencing Egypt as a line of effort to achieve the strategic goal of economic security. Therefore, economic relations with Egypt must remain strong and flexible to accommodate both countries' ambitions. Utilizing its position of power, China understands the desires of Egyptian power levers. Referent power best achieves positive outcomes. Egypt's response is taken into account to complete the process of observing influence to a target's reaction.

Data on China and Egypt's modern trade relationship contrasts import and export trade in Figure 4 using UN Comtrade Data. A similar study on bilateral trade from 2000–

²⁰ Source: Johns Hopkins China-Africa Research Initiative (object name China Import Export from African Countries; accessed June 28, 2021). <http://comtrade.un.org/data/>.

2008²¹ suggests this works well because China represents the most prominent Asian market. However, Egypt desperately wants to diversify its trade partnerships not to be reliant on Western nations alone.

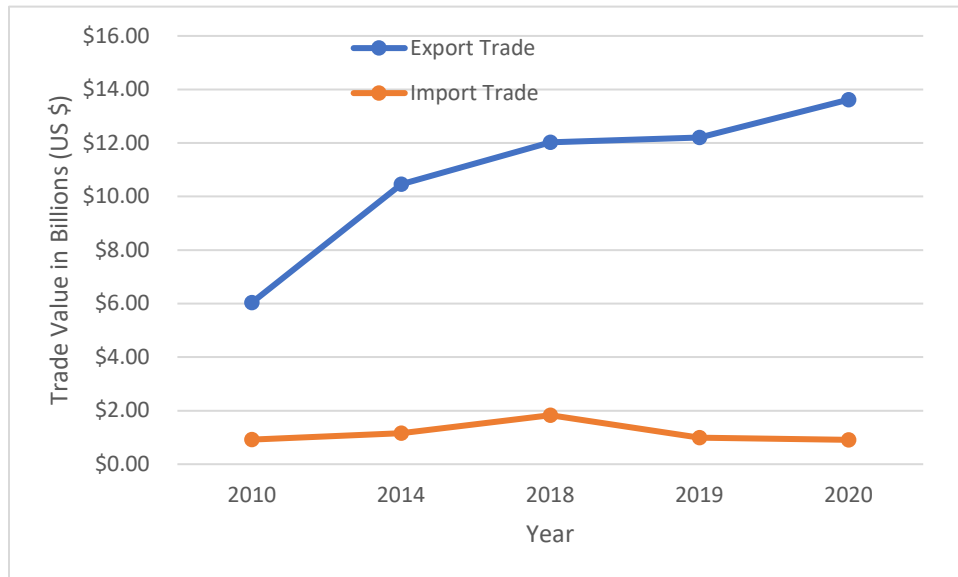


Figure 4. Chinese Import and Export Trade Data with Egypt²²

From 2010 to 2020, China has seen a consistent increase in exports to Egypt, barring the Arab Spring period. Since 2011, Egypt has imported at least 11 percent of Chinese goods.²³ Meanwhile, Egypt continues to have demining exports to China. IMF trade data indicates Egypt imports double the amount of Chinese goods than its next closest partner, the U.S., in Figure 5. According to Ann Alves, a study from 2011 suggests Egypt is among the top five oil producers of Africa at 750 thousand BPD, second only to Algeria,

²¹ Abu Hatab Reda et al. “Exploring Egypt-China Bilateral Trade: Dynamics and Prospects,” *Journal of Economic Studies* 39 no. 3 (July 2012) 318–19, <https://doi.org/10.1108/01443581211245892>.

²² Source: Johns Hopkins China-Africa Research Initiative (object name China Import Export from African Countries); accessed June 28, 2021, <http://comtrade.un.org/data/>.

²³ Larry Hanauer et al., *Chinese Engagement in Africa: Drivers, Reactions, and Implications for U.S. Policy*, 49.

producing 1.7 million BPD.²⁴ China’s interest remains to increase its energy imports and diversify in foreign energy markets.

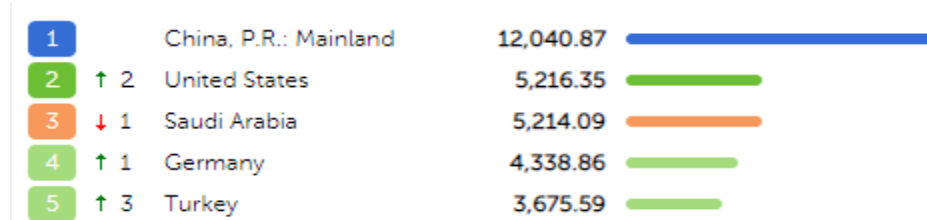


Figure 5. Egypt Partner (Millions, U.S. \$)²⁵

Evidence that suggests Egypt’s reaction is that it simply accepts a trade deficit. Even if so drastically uneven, Egypt still benefits from trade, providing an export outlet other than the west. Egypt has leverage in trade agreements with western countries because it has other options, such as China. Secondly, and most importantly for China, FOCAC provides an opportunity to exercise legitimate and referent power. As a method to increase bilateral trade, China has advanced activity through FOCAC, China’s Swiss Army knife of influence. Egypt’s admission in 2012 represents an opportunity for Egyptian businesses to access reliable and sustainable Chinese investments. China uses its position of power to limit the potential effects of trade manipulation from western powers.²⁶ A RAND report by Larry Hanauer and Lyle J. Morris suggests China prefers tri-annual bilateral agreements. China uses cooperation to reach the political elite and economic tycoon power levers. FOCAC provides Egypt a platform to boost its Chinese relationship and an opportunity to negotiate trade policy as needed. Note that Egypt is part of China’s Special Economic Zone (SEZ) program as well. SEZs “help China’s economic restructuring, allowing less competitive and labor-intensive industries that are becoming increasingly

²⁴ Ana Cristina Alves, “China’s ‘Win-Win’ Cooperation: Unpacking the Impact of Infrastructure-for-Resources Deals in Africa,” *South African Journal of International Affairs* 20, no 2 (Jul 2013), 214, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10220461.2013.811337>.

²⁵ Source: “International Monetary Fund Direction of Trade Statistics (DOTS)” IMF, <https://data.imf.org/>.

²⁶ Larry Hanauer et al., *Chinese Engagement in Africa: Drivers, Reactions, and Implications for U.S. Policy*, 24.

more competitive in the Chinese domestic market, such as textiles, leather goods, and building materials, to move offshore.”²⁷ In other words, China is looking for cheaper alternatives to purchased goods and larger markets for Chinese products. FOCAC facilitates the expansion of SEZ programs across Africa.

However, there are cases where Egypt’s reaction shifts to a negative response to influence. For example, Egypt has rejected trade policy on specific commodities such as steel imports in favor of domestic production. In 2016, the Egyptian Ministry of Trade announced a 17 percent anti-dumping duty on Chinese steel, intended to promote domestic production,²⁸ correlating with a \$ 1 billion dip between 2016–17. The Egyptian government, the power lever used by China to make trade policy, favored domestic policy. This policy protects Egyptian workers from cheaper Chinese goods.

2. Sino-Algerian Influence and Reaction

Algeria shares an economic relationship with solid indications of a large trade deficit compared to China’s exports. Algeria also suffers from narrow product exports, in this case, petroleum. China again uses its position of power to influence Algeria because it is the dominant Asian market and a leader in the global market. China directly seeks petroleum imports from Algeria as a way to guarantee Chinese reserves.

Algeria is unique in that from the end of the 1990s civil war, known as the Black Decade, to the 2011 Arab Spring, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika achieved stability within Algeria using domestic petroleum production to create wealth. Bouteflika converted revenue into welfare for the Algerian people. However, experts worry this model may be unsustainable because the market is vulnerable to oil price fluctuations. With fluctuating oil prices, Algeria teeters on edge, facing economic collapse. Khan, Mohsin Khan, and Karim Mazran present an article “No Arab Spring for Algeria,” highlighting

²⁷ Larry Hanauer et al., Chinese Engagement in Africa: Drivers, Reactions, and Implications for U.S. Policy, 60.

²⁸ “Economic Policy; Egypt Imposes Temporary Antidumping Duties on Imports of Rebar from China, Turkey, Ukraine, - Minister,” Interfax: Ukraine Business Weekly, June 16, 2017, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/economic-policy-egypt-imposes-temporary/docview/1914746806/se-2?accountid=12702>.

Algeria’s increasing GDP, in Figure 6. It stabilized the political system and shifted towards a better economy with predictable growth. Sino-Algerian relations would only grow with Chinese migration.

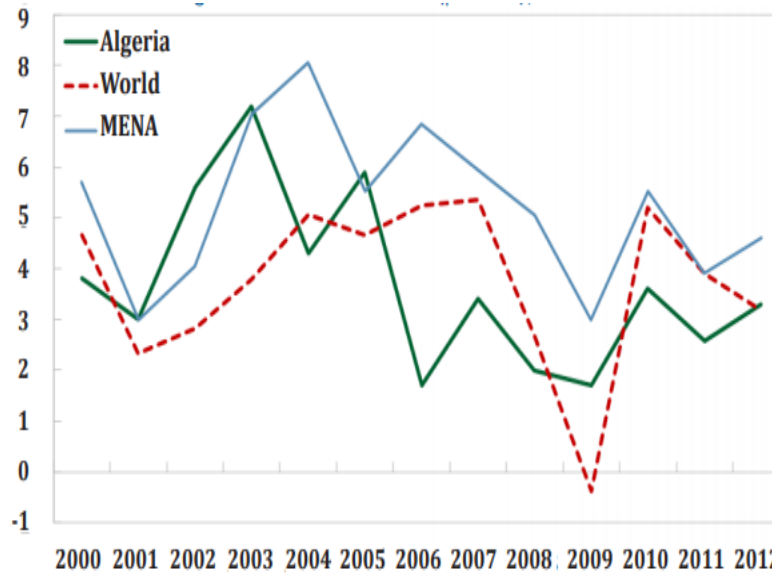


Figure 6. Algeria Real GDP Growth Compared the MENA and the World²⁹

China remains the largest customer for Algeria’s petroleum and natural gas-based economy because other mature markets such as the European Union (EU) have collapsed. Europe’s interest in renewable energy requires Algeria’s limited export economy to find any need, relying heavily on China.³⁰ China provides an opportunity to maintain Algeria’s economy. Thierry Pairault, author of a HAL paper *China’s Economic Presence in Algeria*, considers the totality of recent influence activities such as political, diplomatic, cultural, migratory, human, and economic relations all drastically changed in modern ties.³¹

²⁹ Source: Khan Moshin et al., *No Arab Spring for Algeria*, (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East, 2014), 5.

³⁰ François Lafargue, *The Economic Presence of China in the Maghreb: Ambitions and Limits*, (Paris: Fondation Pour La Recherche Stratégique), 2018, 7, <https://frstrategie.org/sites/default/files/documents/programmes/observatoire-du-monde-arabo-musulman-et-du-sahel/publications/en/294.pdf>.

³¹ Thierry Pairault, “China’s Economic Presence in Algeria.” Occasional paper, HAL, 2015. <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-01116295/document>.

Perrault’s perspective suggests Algeria’s export move was logical. Just as European markets pulled away from Algeria, China stepped in.

According to UN Comtrade Data, between 2000–2020, Algerian exports to China increased gradually, and Algeria’s trade deficit is considerable with China in Figure 7. However, like Egypt, Algeria’s reaction to the trade deficit seems to be a status quo mentality. Although, in 2006, China launched a North Africa tour, Li Changchun, representative of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), pledged to revise unspecified trade agreements.³²

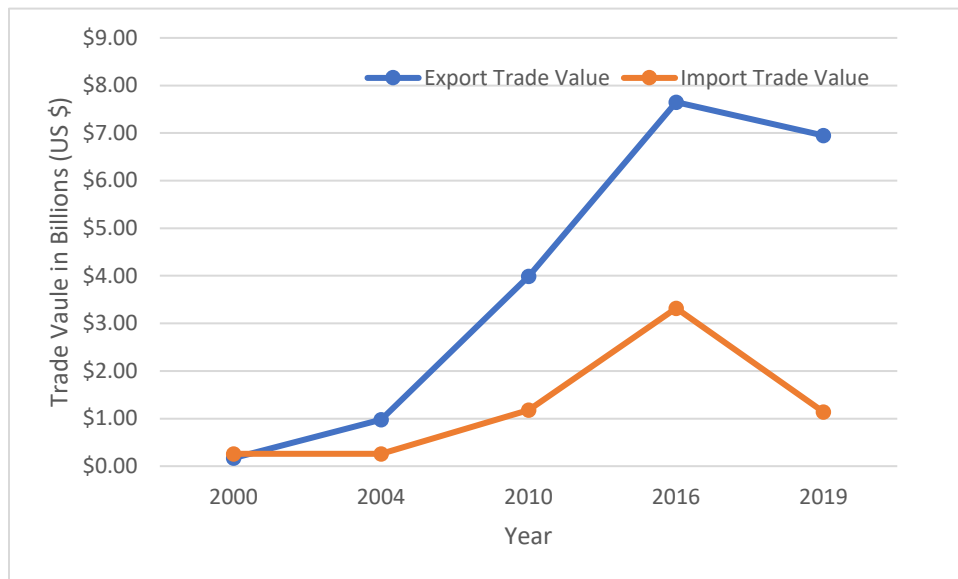


Figure 7. China Total Commodity Trade with Algeria³³

Now consider a 2015 study, Figure 8, where Algeria’s import of Chinese goods consisted almost entirely of manufacturing and machinery equipment. Algeria’s power levers accept the current nature of Chinese trade policy because they receive goods that support Algeria’s modernization.

³²“China, Algeria to Explore New Ways for Cooperation,” Xinhua News Agency-CEIS, March 23, 2008, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/wire-feeds/china-algeria-explore-new-ways-cooperation/docview/452152834/se-2?accountid=12702>.

³³ Source: Johns Hopkins China-Africa Research Initiative (China Importing from African Countries UNComtrade data from 1992–2018 July 19, 2020), <http://comtrade.un.org/data/>.

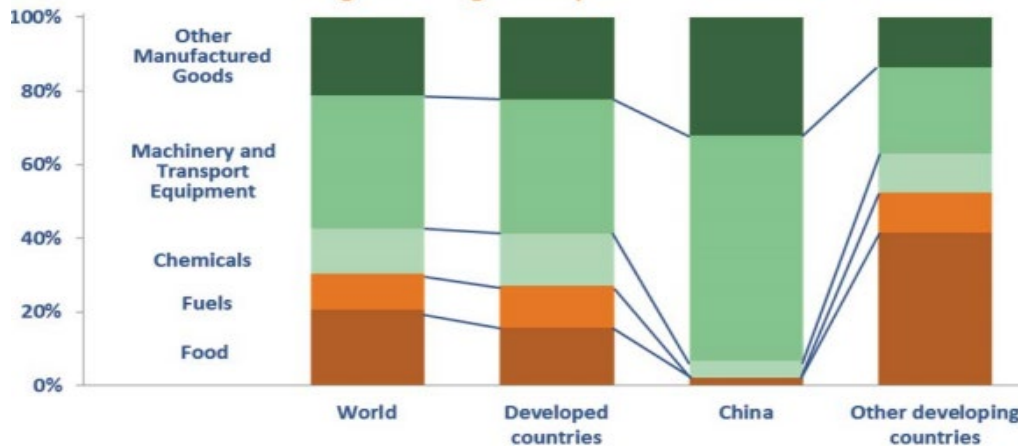


Figure 8. Algeria's 2012 Imports³⁴

As recently as 2017, the latest IMF trade summary on Algeria shows consistent data with a \$10 billion difference between imports and exports between 2008–2016.³⁵ China's confidence in Algeria's stability allowed the country to become a member of FOCAC in 2018. This achievement should increase trade, yet recent data shows China's exports to the country are declining. Perhaps the relationship is evolving.

There are adverse effects to trade. Algeria's domestic textile economy is in jeopardy. According to a study, the Chinese textile export industry's projected growth will surpass most North African countries in the next decade. Chinese imports will be so cheap and abundant that Algerians will not compete, straining a local industry.³⁶ As a result, Algeria has become more and more reliant on China.³⁷ China may be stunting Algerian economic progress as Algeria looks to diversify its exports away from a single product.

³⁴ Source: Thierry Pairault, "China's Economic Presence in Algeria."

³⁵ International Monetary Fund. Middle East and Central Asia Department, *Algeria 2017 Article IV Consultation—Press Release; Staff Report; and Statement by the Executive Director for Algeria*, (IMF Staff Country Reports. Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund,) 2017, 10, <https://doi.org/10.5089/9781484302668.002>.

³⁶ Ianchovichina, Elena, Maros Ivanic, Will Martin, "Economic Growth in China and India: Challenges and Opportunities for the Middle East and North Africa," in *Trade Competitiveness of the Middle East and North Africa: Policies for Export Diversification*, ed. by Lopez-Calix, Jose R, Peter Walkenhorst, Ndiame Diop, (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2010), 192, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/2466>.

³⁷ Haim Malka, *Beyond Algeria's Presidential Election*, (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2019), 5, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/beyond-algerias-presidential-election>.

Algeria's power levers, mainly government leaders like Bouteflika, accept the risk of the collapse of its domestic textile industry and an export economy based around a fluctuating price of hydrocarbons. Under Bouteflika, the petroleum industry expanded hydrocarbon production, accounting for a third of Algeria's GDP, 65 percent of government revenue, and 98 percent of exports as of 2014.³⁸ However, government subsidies remain secure, and Algeria receives technology and machinery in exchange for its trade deficit. At each suggestion of China's promise for trade, Algeria mentions its commitment to China's UN leadership role or the One China Policy.³⁹ These verbal commitments highlight a linkage between diplomatic and economic domains and one of China's strategic goals.

3. Sino-Mauritania Influence and Reaction

Establishing Mauritanian trade represents the geographical end of China's maritime silk road. Mauritania is an economically depressed state. As a result, there are far fewer data available on Mauritania than any other country in this study. In the farthest reaches of West Africa, China intends to secure energy through petroleum reserves while planning to invest in future drilling operations in the Sahelian strip.⁴⁰ According to multiple sources, including an IISS report on China's development and finance, nearly a quarter of Mauritania's export economy relies on Chinese markets.⁴¹ However, UN Comtrade data in Figure 9 shows China's export to import gap closing towards the end of 2019, nearing \$1.2 billion.

³⁸ Khan Moshin et al., No Arab Spring for Algeria, 6.

³⁹ "Chinese Premier meets Eight African Leaders 6 November," BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific, November 8, 2006, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/wire-feeds/chinese-premier-meets-eight-african-leaders-6/docview/460945957/se-2?accountid=12702>.

⁴⁰ Christophe Perret, *Africa and China*. Economic Series. ECOWAS-SWAC/OECD, 2006, 12, <https://www.oecd.org/swac/publications/38409391.pdf>.

⁴¹ Judd Devermont et al., *Innocent Bystanders Why the U.S.-China Trade War Hurts African Economies*, (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2019), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/innocent-bystanders-why-us-china-trade-war-hurts-african-economies>.



Figure 9. China Total Commodity Trade with Mauritania⁴²

A sizeable amount of Mauritania’s gross domestic product (GDP) in Figure 10 comes from primary oil and minerals. This data is consistent with a World Integrated Trade Solution data pull from 2017, showing strong Mauritanian mineral exports. While not necessarily a single export country, Mauritania relies upon relatively volatile resources to support itself.⁴³ However, China has also increased imports of Mauritanian fish products over the past two decades, indicating Mauritania’s ambition to use its natural resources, other than minerals, to diversify its export economy.

⁴² Source: Johns Hopkins China-Africa Research Initiative (object name China Import Export from African Countries; accessed June 28, 2021). <http://comtrade.un.org/data/>.

⁴³ World Integrated Trade Solution, (Mauritania Product Exports and Imports to China 2007; March 13, 2020), <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/MRT/Year/2007/TradeFlow/EXPIMP/Partner/CHN/Product/all-groups>.

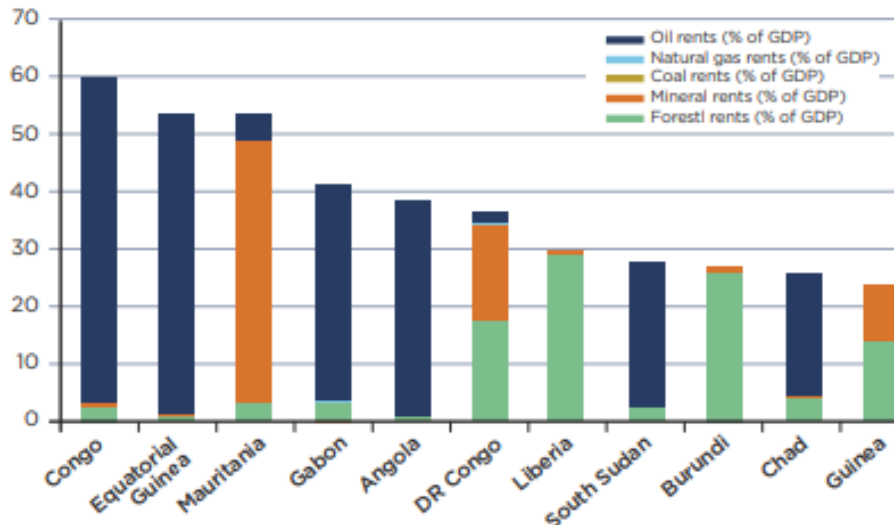


Figure 10. Mauritania Primary Resources, World Bank 2013⁴⁴

As early as 2008, the Mauritanian government expressed support for a One China policy.⁴⁵ Mauritania is not a FOCAC member yet. But the willingness to diversify its economic output with China may provide the necessary security to stabilize the economy over the long term, making Mauritania an attractive partner.

D. FDI/LOANS

Through FDI and loans, China invests in Egypt, Algeria, and Mauritania in energy extraction, infrastructure, and agriculture, among other markets. In addition, China's economic presence solidified by several decades of communication infrastructure investment throughout the entire continent. Partnerships between Chinese and domestically funded state-run businesses dominate the telecommunications sector in all three countries. All influence supports China's goal to directly improve upon the maritime silk road. Jordan Link, a journalist for *The Washington Post*, found that "Huawei was the contractor for eight different types of projects in Africa: mobile-network development, government e-services

⁴⁴ Source: Pierre Bossuet et al., "Sub-Saharan Africa: Sunny in the East, Cloudy in the Centre" (Research paper, Panorama Group COFACE Economic Publications, 2015), <https://www.coface.it/content/download/118629/1811561/file/Panorama+Global+Country+Risk+-+June+2015.pdf>.

⁴⁵ "Backgrounder: Basic facts about Mauritania," Xinhua News Agency-CEIS, March 25, 2008, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/wire-feeds/backgrounder-basic-facts-about-mauritania/docview/452139469/se-2?accountid=12702>.

backbone projects, general telecommunications development, surveillance, light rail ICT, submarine cables and equipment purchases.”⁴⁶ Many of Link’s examples apply to one or more target states.

1. Sino-Egyptian Influence and Reaction

According to John’s Hopkins China Africa Research Initiative 2020 data, China invests just over \$4 billion in loans in Egypt across many sectors, including telecommunications, infrastructure, and banking.⁴⁷ As early as 2008, China transitioned its support to include manufacturing and infrastructure. Meanwhile, the average income of an Egyptian rose.⁴⁸ This section focuses on loans that are published and have the most available data.

China initiated telecommunications investment as early as 2002, signing an MOU to draft policy for future cooperation.⁴⁹ In 2007 Chinese and Egyptian officials announced telecom and information technology (IT) cooperation involving shared technology and investing in Egypt’s telecom network. The announcement touts the launch of new projects led by Huawei and ZTE, Chinese telecom giants.⁵⁰ In return, Egyptian officials boast the number of Egyptian jobs available because of the deal. Finally, the Egyptian government stresses the excellent relationship with Chinese companies, expressing inspiration and enthusiasm from recent visits to great cities like Beijing and Tianjin. Both parties reiterate

⁴⁶ Jordan Link, “How Huawei could survive Trump,” *The Washington Post*, June 10, 2019, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/06/10/what-do-we-know-about-huaweis-africa-presence/>.

⁴⁷ Deborah Brautigam et al., *Twenty Years of Data on China’s Africa Lending*, China Africa Research Initiative, (Washington, DC: Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, 2020), <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5652847de4b033f56d2bdc29/t/605cb1891cb0ff5747b12167/1616687497984/BP+4+-+Acker%2C+Brautigam+-+20+Years+of+Data+on+African+Lending.pdf>.

⁴⁸ Alden, Chris, Faten Aggad-Clerx, “Chinese Investments and Employment Creation in Algeria and Egypt,” Working Paper, African Development Bank, 2012), 3, <https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/Brochure%20China%20Anglais.pdf>.

⁴⁹ “Egypt and China sign MOU on Telecommunication,” Info – Prod Research (Middle East), October 06, 2002, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/wire-feeds/egypt-china-sign-mou-on-telecommunications/docview/457351716/se-2?accountid=12702>.

⁵⁰ “Egyptian Top Official Hails Egypt-China Cooperation in Telecom, IT Sectors,” Xinhua News Agency-CEIS, December 17, 2007, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/wire-feeds/egyptian-top-official-hails-egypt-china/docview/452198987/se-2?accountid=12702>.

the nature of the agreement is bilateral and fluid. This example illustrates China's use of reciprocity and referent power. The power lever is Egyptian government officials and the average Egyptian citizen.

In 2016, Egyptian President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi announced a multiphase urban revival plan in Cairo. China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC) leads the project. The budget continues to grow, adding light-rail public transportation, projecting total costs beyond 1.2 billion dollars (US).⁵¹ Investments in 2018 include a 1210km 500 kV transmission line project following a 4G Network and transmission system national upgrade as a collaborative effort between Huawei Technologies and Vodafone Egypt, Orange, and Telecom Egypt.⁵² Financing is through the Bank of China and China Export & Credit Insurance Corporation. Nearly a decade after initial investments, China continues collaborating with Egyptian companies. It is worth noting that Chinese infrastructure reaches primary Egyptian well-being by improving hospitals and clinics in cities.⁵³

Future projects include a 2019 MOU between China and Egypt state commitment to port infrastructure. President Sisi and Egyptian military officials see this opportunity to invest in a naval port. They have had several meetings with Chinese officials concerning diplomatic measures. John Calabrese from the Middle East Institute offers insight into this new Sino-Egyptian agreement envisioning an expansion of the Egyptian Navy. This effort involves infrastructure development for the Abu Qir Naval Base. His Excellency Commander in Chief Vice Admiral Ahmed Khaled Saied, Egyptian Navy, and Chinese counterparts made considerable efforts to formalize the deal during the COVID-19

⁵¹ "Egypt Economy: China Expands Investment Footprint in Egypt," EIU Views Wire, January 2, 2020, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/wire-feeds/egypt-economy-china-expands-investment-footprint/docview/2331918107/se-2?accountid=12702>.

⁵² Reuters Staff, "Egypt Launches 4G Wireless Frequencies," September 28, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/egypt-telecoms-4g-id>.

⁵³ Larry Hanauer et al., Chinese Engagement in Africa: Drivers, Reactions, and Implications for U.S. Policy, 81.

pandemic. The project represents two phases worth \$730 million.⁵⁴ China gains access to a deep-water port in the Eastern Mediterranean by committing resources to this project and is another example of reciprocal power. As a result, both countries gain considerable economic and military leverage potential.

Not all projects produce results. For example, in 2016, a private Chinese company, China Fortune Land Development Company, left the second phase of a development project worth \$ 20 billion, U.S. Ramifications for either Egypt or China are unclear. However, since 2016, Egypt has continued to accept investment from China. The risk is worth the reward for Egypt.

2. Sino-Algerian Influence and Reaction

China surpasses the previous lead investor, France, by the mid-2000s. China's investments include telecommunications, energy, infrastructure, and the automotive industry. Former Chinese president Hu Jintao visited Algeria in 2004 during a FOCAC summit promising a \$1.7 billion (US) bilateral agreement. Here, the Algerian government mentions investing in the conservation of resources, IT, and farming industries.⁵⁵ Johns Hopkins Database 2020 data collection states loans total \$ 9 million.⁵⁶ The value and number of loans correlated to other data sets such as AID DATA stating in 2002 as ODA for government development and civil society and were interest-free. Recently China supported a \$100 million manufacturing project.⁵⁷ China also invests nearly \$550 million to revitalize the automotive industry, textiles, construction, and electronic industry.⁵⁸

⁵⁴Marcus Hand, "Hutchison Ports Inks Agreement with Egyptian Navy for \$730m Container Terminal," Seatrade Maritime News, August 31, 2020, <https://www.seatrade-maritime.com/ports-logistics/hutchison-ports-inks-agreement-egyptian-navy-730m-container-terminal>.

⁵⁵ "China Supports Algeria's WTO Admission Efforts – PM," BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific, November 6, 2006, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/wire-feeds/china-supports-algerias-wto-admission-efforts-pm/docview/460944463/se-2?accountid=12702>.

⁵⁶ Deborah Brautigam et al., Twenty Years of Data on China's Africa Lending,

⁵⁷ Axel Dreher, Andreas Fuchs, "Aid, China, and Growth: Evidence from a New Global Development Finance Dataset," 119.

⁵⁸ Jean Claude Berthelemy, "China's Engagement and Aid Effectiveness in Africa" (Working Paper, African Development Bank Group, 2011),29, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/6429074.pdf>.

China invests in telecommunications through Algeria Telecom, a primary broadband service provider in the country. As part of the Algerian government's strategy to achieve nationwide service, Algeria telecom partners with ZTE in a two-phase project. As of 2014, phase one develops the Algerian company's ability to launch LTE services.⁵⁹ Phase Two plans to reach businesses and communities alike to complete the project's vision.

China National Petroleum Corp (CNPC), with the help of SONATRACH, an Algerian energy company, discovered oil in 2006 at a site known as Bloc 438B. It is revealing to note that CNPC owns 100 percent of the site.⁶⁰ SONATRACH is a concessionary partner to the undisclosed agreements. Additionally, in 2012, China increased FDI committing to hydrocarbon production.⁶¹ Furthermore, SONATRACH signed another contract with Chinese Petroleum Engineering and Construction Corporation (CPECC), upgrading a refinery in Algiers, adding 35 percent capacity to production upon completion.⁶² Finally, as recently as 2019, Algeria and China cooperated to leverage renewable energy technology. At this conference, Algerian government officials attended a seminar in China that promoted resources. Chinese official Zhou Jianping, head of the provincial natural energy research institute, refers to Algeria as a critical BRI energy partner.⁶³ Scientists consider Algeria's unused surface area to be an opportunity to harness

⁵⁹ "China: ZTE Signs Deal with Algeria Telecom to Build LTE Phase II Project," MENA Report, March 7, 2015, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/trade-journals/china-zte-signs-deal-with-algeria-telecom-build/docview/1661163033/se-2?accountid=12702>.

⁶⁰ "Sonatrach, China's CNPC Make Oil Discovery in Algeria," Dow Jones Institutional News, November 19, 2009, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/wire-feeds/sonatrach-chinas-cnpc-make-oil-discovery-algeria/docview/2199720437/se-2?accountid=12702>.

⁶¹ International Monetary Fund. Middle East and Central Asia Department. Algeria: 2012 Article IV Consultation, (IMF Staff Country Reports. Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.5089/9781589067479.002>.

⁶² "China: Sonatrach Inks Agreement with CPECC," MENA Report, November 9, 2016, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/trade-journals/china-sonatrach-inks-agreement-with-cpecc/docview/1837477263/se-2?accountid=12702>.

⁶³ "NW China Province Trains Talents in Renewable Energy for Algeria," Xinhua News Agency-CEIS, September 3, 2019, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/wire-feeds/nw-china-province-trains-talents-renewable-energy/docview/2283249273/se-2?accountid=12702>.

solar or wind energy. And Algeria's commitment to diversify its energy production strengthens the economy.⁶⁴

In 2018 Chinese companies Citica and SONATRACH agreed to invest in a phosphate plant near the Tunisia border.⁶⁵ Algerian officials claim nearly 3,000 Algerian jobs because of these agreements. As of 2019, China commenced with a \$6 billion phosphate extraction plant⁶⁶ China owns a large portion of the investment. Citica holds a 49 percent stake in the Algerian phosphate plant worth \$6 billion.⁶⁷ In this case, China starts investing via energy and grows its relationship with SONATRACH by diversifying in different commodities and associated infrastructure.

In 2016 President Bouteflika signed an MOU for an Algerian port expansion project with the China State Construction Engineering Company (CSCEC), China Harbor Engineering Company (CHECH), and the Algerian Port Authority. According to the MOU, Chinese authorities control port operations for the first 25 years. As recently as January 2019, China Harbor Engineering Company (CHEC) signed a \$ 445 million LNG terminal upgrade and expansion of Port of El Hamdania in Cherchell, Algeria.⁶⁸ However, the Government of Algeria (GoA) halted construction in April 2019, possibly due to the national Hirak protest movement. If completed, the port represents the second largest deep-water port in Africa, providing access to trade throughout the Mediterranean Sea.

⁶⁴ A. Stambouli, "The Prospect of the Sahara Solar Energy Research Centre in Algeria as the First Stage of the Sahara Solar Breeder Initiative and a Proposal for the Second Stage," *Current Politics and Economics of Africa* 10 no. 4, (2017): 428, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/prospect-sahara-solar-energy-research-centre/docview/2190032359/se-2?accountid=12702>.

⁶⁵ "Companies from Algeria and China Sign an Agreement for the Exploitation of Phosphates: Algeria China," *EFE News Service*, November 26, 2018, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/wire-feeds/empresas-de-argelia-y-china-firman-un-acuerdo/docview/2137531737/se-2?accountid=12702>.

⁶⁶ Haim Malka, *Beyond Algeria's Presidential Election* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2019): 2.

⁶⁷ Reuters Staff, "Algeria Signs \$6 Billion Deal with China to Build Phosphate Plant," November 26, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-algeria-energy/algeria-signs-6-billion-deal-with-china-to-build-phosphate-plant-idUSKCN1NV1Y3>.

⁶⁸ Haim Malka, "Beyond Algeria's Presidential Election" 2–4.

Furthermore it is anticipated to expand to 23 terminals handling 25 million tons of cargo a year.⁶⁹

Since 2010, Algeria has made steps to curb the issue by negotiating contracts such as Algerian's Fandi Motors and Shaan xi automobile manufacture to consider the employment of 1,200 Algerians. In addition, Algerian officials in 2018 Algerian Industry Minister Youssef Yousfi proposed Chinese auto manufacturers bring manufacturing capability to Algeria to increase cooperation in building national automotive expertise. Furthermore, the investment would enable the country to diversify its economy, moving away from solely hydrocarbon reliance.

In nearly every case, China's influence incorporates a public announcement involving officials from both sides congratulating one another on greater cooperation. In addition, China uses optics to promote two things. First, commend Algeria's position on the One China policy, touting its success. Secondly, since Algeria recognized China, China mentions its anniversary, close to the 50th, 55th, and 60th. Though these promotions are diplomatic or cultural, they coincide with a new investment, which could benefit from promoting China's international policy.

China's influence affects the outcome of the Algerian livelihoods, including lower power levers such as Algerian workers. An Algiers news article states nearly 35,000 Chinese workers operate through 50 Chinese firms in Algeria as of 2010.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, Algeria's unemployment remains steady at 24.7 percent, rising to 26.7 percent in 2017 among young workers.⁷¹ Moreover, the unemployment rate among youth suggests that the Algerian government favors current investment with China and the status quo of Algerian energy subsidies over economic reform. Jean Berthelemy's working paper,

⁶⁹ "Algeria's El Hamdania Port," International Trade Administration, March 29, 2020, <https://www.trade.gov/market-intelligence/algerias-el-hamdania-cherchell-project>.

⁷⁰ "Chinese construction firms Dominate Projects in Algeria," Daily Commercial News, January 25, 2010, <https://canada.constructconnect.com/dcn/news/others/2010/01/chinese-construction-firms-dominate-projects-in-algeria-dcn037229w>.

⁷¹ "Algeria: Unemployment in Algeria Increases to 10.5%," Asia News Monitor, January 17, 2017, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/algeria-unemployment-increases-10-5/docview/1858759576/se-2?accountid=12702>.

China's Engagement and Aid Effectiveness in Africa, highlights unemployment in Algeria as an influential factor compelling national governments to sign deals with China. Politicians overlook the effects of unemployment and the consequences of debt-servicing conditions. The relation between unemployment and Chinese investment is only a correlation. Note that even Algerian officials tend to promote Algerian welfare and job creation. The only adverse reaction to China's influence is the national Hirak protest movement.⁷²

3. Sino-Mauritanian Influence and Reaction

Mauritania is among the top 50 countries with debt to China. However, loans to Mauritania remain low interest. An IMF report recording 2016 financial data found publicly guaranteed external debt to China exceeded \$ 45 million or 27 percent of GDP.⁷³ From 2010 -2014, Chinese loans to Mauritania represent three unallocated loans totaling \$ 50 million.⁷⁴ Chinese President Xi Jinping met with Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz in Beijing in 2015 to promote international cooperation between the two countries. President Xi expressed China's gratitude for Mauritania's "firm support on issues concerning China's core interests and major concerns."⁷⁵ As recently as 2019, Mauritanian officials celebrated a Memorandum of Cooperation between the two countries. According to the document, Mauritania promotes investment in the fisheries sector and mining and energy and port infrastructure.⁷⁶

⁷² "Algeria's El Hamdania Port," International Trade Administration, March 29, 2020, <https://www.trade.gov/market-intelligence/algerias-el-hamdania-cherchell-project>.

⁷³ International Monetary Fund. Middle East and Central Asia Department. Islamic Republic of Mauritania: Request for a Three-year Arrangement under the Extended Credit Facility-Debt Sustainability Analysis (IMF Staff Country Reports. Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2017) <https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/002/2017/369/article-A002-en.xml?rskey=05tP50&result=43>.

⁷⁴ Deborah Brautigam et al., *Twenty Years of Data on China's Africa Lending*,

⁷⁵ "China, Mauritania Presidents Vow Stronger Ties," *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific*, September 14, 2015, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/wire-feeds/china-mauritania-presidents-vow-stronger-ties/docview/1711532116/se-2?accountid=12702>.

⁷⁶ "China, Mauritania to Institutionalize an Investment Day," *Agence De Presse Africaine*, February 1, 2019, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/wire-feeds/china-mauritania-institutionalize-investment-day/docview/2174267001/se-2?accountid=12702>.

In 2008 China renewed hopes of energy investment with the development of offshore and onshore hydrocarbon findings. CNPC invests in oil exploration. Members of the CCP met with Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi to discuss further investment in oil and other sectors. China's attention in Mauritania hydrocarbon has the potential to elevate Mauritania to "a middle-ranking oil producer," according to Neil Ford in *African Business*.⁷⁷

AID DATA reports a \$396 million ODA loan for PANPA built by the China Communications Construction Company Ltd and funded by the Export-Import Bank of China.⁷⁸ This particular project has been in development for nearly a decade. The theoretical port upgrade allows Mauritania to achieve its offshore energy potential, increase trade, and lift people from poverty through job creation. The port project consists of a naval port, quay wall, and a 70 plus vessel shipyard. In addition, China gains potential military access through this deal. Creating a deep-water port allows Chinese shipping and warships access to the Atlantic Ocean, extending the Maritime Silk Road further.⁷⁹

However, while the country may benefit from offshore oil and increased port usage, many believe this will decimate the fishing industry. Tom Bayes considers input from the West African region: "in interviews from Nigeria to Mauritania, discussion of a Chinese presence in the Gulf of Guinea most frequently raised the issue of large scale, illegal overfishing by Chinese trawlers, a major source of discontent in the region with a significant impact on local livelihoods and thus security."⁸⁰ Conversely, a 2015 agreement gave Mauritania \$100 million (US) to improve the fishing sector. Poly Technology Inc (PTI), the Chinese regional operator, intends to construct a processing plant for fishing, producing 100,000 tons of goods per year. Mauritania's officials, for their part, promote

⁷⁷ Neil Ford, "Mauritania Bounces Back," *African Business*, May 2008, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/magazines/mauritania-bounces-back/docview/220424509/se-2?accountid=12702>.

⁷⁸ Axel Dreher, Andreas Fuchs, "Aid, China, and Growth: Evidence from a New Global Development Finance Dataset."

⁷⁹ Intissar Fakir, "Mauritania's Economic and Social Ambitions Collide: The Story of Diawling Park" (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, August 11, 2020), <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/08/06/mauritania-s-economic-and-social-ambitions-collide-story-of-diawling-park-pub-82424>,

⁸⁰ Tom Bayes, China's growing security role in Africa: Views from West Africa, Implications for Europe, (Berlin, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2020): 63 https://merics.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/Chinas%20growing%20security%20role%20in%20Africa_WEB%20version.pdf

the outcome suggesting the project creates 2,500 jobs in construction and over 30,000 jobs in downstream operation when the plant comes online. Nevertheless, the Mauritanian fishing economy is the most documented example of a power lever, Mauritania fishers, as a strong voice against China's involvement,

Reactions conflict with Mauritania's economic progress. Chinese economic activity receives outcries from lower-tier power levers in Mauritania and NGOs regarding the location and extent of construction in the area. Intissar Fakir, editor in chief of Sada in Carnegie's Middle East Program, points to the environmental struggle between Mauritania's economic future and the Diawling National Park. The park was originally part of a 1991 project to reestablish the local ecosystem lost to hydroelectric dams along the Senegal River.⁸¹ He notes that located 40 miles south, working-class people, such as fishermen and many others in poverty who live off the river and coast, see the move by the government as a political benefit for the elite. In his words, President Ould Abdel Aziz is a corrupt politician, accepting unclear Chinese contracts with Mauritanian fishing grounds and port construction loans.

E. ANALYSIS

This section uses the influence framework. This chapter identified China's influence in the economic domain, specifically trade policy and investments, actions, and the target's reactions given, if known. Raven's power mechanic concepts identified how China incentivized cooperation and how the target responded. In most cases, China forms a mutual relationship. Each target wants a part of China's success, referent power, emulating what works. China also uses reciprocity, where China or the target wants compensation. An excellent example in all cases is the imbalance in trade policy. All marks have a significant trade imbalance but remain staunch supporters of Chinese policy due to favorable outcomes.

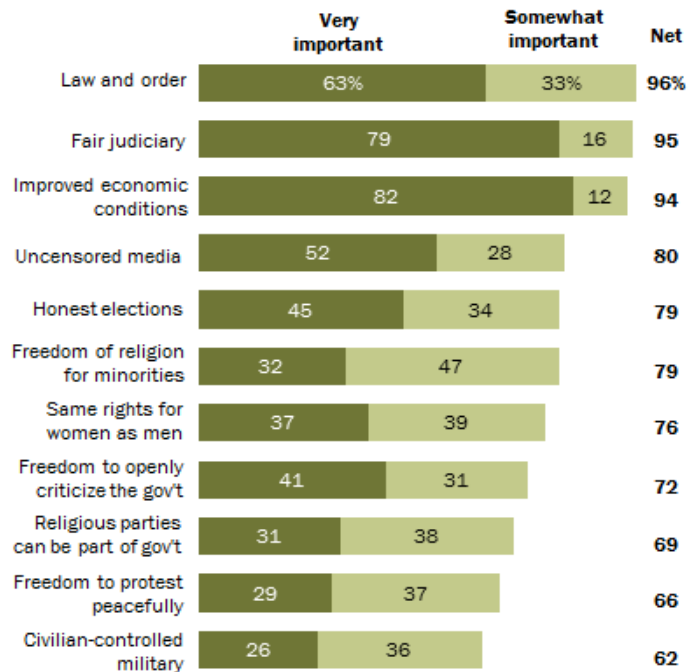
⁸¹ Intissar Fakir, "Mauritania's Economic and Social Ambitions Collide: The Story of Diawling Park."

Interestingly, there are some similarities between China and each target. For instance, all three countries tend to have authoritarian domestic policies. China chooses to address economic issues through government power levers such as state-run enterprises, e.g., Egypt and Algeria. The activity presented substantiates the phenomenon whereby Chinese investment activity creates some effect in the diplomatic and cultural domains.

Consider governmental power lever mandates in Egypt. In the past decade, the country moved from a period of turmoil and, as the Arab Spring subsided, moved to vote in new elections. According to a PEW Research poll, improved economic conditions and law and order were among the top priorities on Egyptian's minds regardless of the candidate, as shown in Figure 11. While there is no evidence to suggest that China's influence caused the vote in either direction, one could make the argument that Egypt's major power levers, newly elected politicians, were mandated to find a solution to economic hardship.

Law and Order, Fair Judiciary and Improved Economy High on the List for Egypt's Future

How important is ___ for Egypt's future?



Source: Spring 2014 Global Attitudes survey, Q104a-k.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 11. Egyptian Outlook after 2013 Election Source: PEW Research⁸²

Algeria has a growing number of unemployed youths. Subsidies created by petroleum production may not be enough to keep the balance of power with the ruling elite. China's economic engagement may be a double-edged sword, providing economic diversity avenues while simultaneously stunting domestic employment. At the same time, Chinese employees grow. Again, this is a correlation, not causation. Indeed, the Algerian government could provide domestic reform to incentivize employment. However, it can be said, at this point, that the ruling elite is satisfied with China's presence due to the current project benefits seen with Chinese investment. The Secretary-General of the Algerian National Liberation Front states at a FOCAC summit, "We hope China would play a bigger

⁸² Source: Pew Research Center. "One Year after Morsi's Ouster, Divides persist on El-Sisi, Muslim Brotherhood," May 21 2014, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2014/05/22/one-year-after-morsi-ouster-divides-persist-on-el-sisi-muslim-brotherhood/egypt-report-20/>.

role in the international and regional affairs.”⁸³ The Algerian government also expanded finance laws to ensure Algerian companies maintain most shares in joint ventures.⁸⁴ Algeria’s government recognizes China’s influence. They understand its effects on the population and are willing to change their position to accommodate the unemployed while maintaining good relations with China. Haim Malka suggests in a CSIS report that Algeria’s stability rests on the political elite who operate outside the public eye. However, they remain risk-averse and feel responsible for steering the country on a safe and steady path to improve Algerian livelihood.⁸⁵

Mauritania has the best example of an adverse reaction. The Mauritania fishing example will be explained in detail in a subsequent chapter, as it relates more to a negative cultural impact and an economic fear among local workers. The fishing sector investment through PTI is in the hands of Mauritania’s parliament. That power lever is feeling pressure from China and its people, who protest its signature. China may have acted on the wrong power lever by not considering adverse reactions from the local fishing industry.

China operates with either a target company or a Chinese-run company which can cause troubling practices. For example, Algeria’s SONATRACH has a troubled history. Created by the government in the 1980s, the company aligns with governing elite. Government and public alike recognized corruption limited the potential benefit the company had on the country. Reform in the 1990s allowed SONATRACH to assess foreign firms’ profits based on risk to the company and contribution from the investor.⁸⁶ This fact helps explain why China can profit from its investment because it provides the technology on behalf of the Chinese firm. As recently as 2021, Algerian authorities have alleged Ould Kaddour, the former head of SONATRACH, is facing corruption charges in the United

⁸³ “China’s Li Changchun Discusses Further Cooperation with Algerian PM,” *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific*, March 24, 2008, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/wire-feeds/chinas-li-changchun-discusses-further-cooperation/docview/460845822/se-2?accountid=12702>.

⁸⁴ Chris Alden, “Chinese Investments and Employment Creation in Algeria and Egypt” (Working Paper, African Development Bank, 2012): 10–12, <https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/Brochure%20China%20Anglais.pdf>.

⁸⁵ Haim Malka, *Beyond Algeria’s Presidential Election*.

⁸⁶ Entelis, John P. Entelis, “Sonatrach: The Political Economy of an Algerian State Institution,” *The Middle East Journal* 53, no. 1 (December 1999): 23, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4329281>. JSTOR.

Arab Emirates. Yet again, despite its reputation Poly Technology, a Chinese company known for bribery and money laundering won the contract.⁸⁷ Other African nations have stopped the company; however, Mauritania did not question the contract until Aziz left office. Arguably, China overplayed its hand in this situation by trusting in a single power lever, now ousted from its position. Even in Egypt, China's Fortune Land Development Company left a \$ 20 billion project stranding workers and other Egyptian investors relying on the employment and benefits of Egyptian economic progress. Finally, a report for The Heritage Foundation alleges the CCP's level of control over private enterprise requires internet companies to cooperate with the Chinese government to track users and eliminate anonymity.⁸⁸ In addition, several government buildings constructed by Chinese firms in Mauritania and Algeria have Chinese Communist Party (CCP) surveillance and intelligence priorities.⁸⁹ However, outside this report, there is no substantiating evidence provided by a target country claiming Chinese surveillance or any other adverse reaction based on these allegations.

⁸⁷ Intissar Fakir, "Mauritania's Economic and Social Ambitions Collide: The Story of Diawling Park."

⁸⁸ Joshua Meservey, *Government Buildings in Africa Are a Likely Vector for Chinese Spying*, (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 2020): 5, <https://www.heritage.org/asia/report/government-buildings-africa-are-likely-vector-chinese-spying>.

⁸⁹ Joshua Meservey, *Government Buildings in Africa Are a Likely Vector for Chinese Spying*, 11.

III. MILITARY SUPPORT

China's presence in Egypt, Algeria, and Mauritania achieves elements of military domain activity: investment security, citizen protection, UN influence, and economic or diplomatic domain support. Supporting each target helps China obtain a legitimate global platform to project policy.

A. CRITERIA

As an IA, China acts with a light footprint and standoff methods to prevent escalating conflict, emphasizing strategic economic objectives with the target. China asserts influence with various behaviors. These behaviors include exerting legitimate power, power of reciprocity, or referent power on a target. All three countries see China's legitimate power as a means of military assistance based on China's support in roles through military presence. China's strategic objective of increasing and protecting the BRI and Maritime Silk Road includes selling arms and military equipment, inserting its military in a target's domestic counterterrorism conflict, and promoting China's legitimate power and prestige. As China participates in military activity, each country reacts, generally welcoming support.

An increase in military partnership through a broad range of security activities indicates China's acknowledgment of extremist threats and instability, both of which undermine China's interests. Following the creation of FOCAC in 2000, China's military forged stronger relationships by the end of 2012. The 2018 FOCAC Action Plan included a renewed pledge of Chinese defense and security assistance funding to African countries holding a weeklong forum with military representatives.⁹⁰ In addition, the latest 2019 FOCAC conference commits the Chinese to support African countries in building "smart

⁹⁰ Tom Bayes, China's growing security role in Africa: Views from West Africa, Implications for Europe, 18–20.

cities” and enhancing the role of ICT in safeguarding public security, counter-terrorism, and fighting crime and work with the African side to uphold information security.”⁹¹

A primary focus for the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) presence is to counter transnational terrorism in Africa. In his testimony to the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, Judd Devermont described China as has over 2000 troops supporting UN PKOs and attaché roles ⁹² As of 2015, China leads as a Security Council member in personal contributions, including over 3,000 soldiers total with 37 UN Military Experts on Mission.⁹³ Therefore, support for counterterrorism initiatives against forces such as AQIM is essential to protect its interests and bolster its credibility as legitimate power. When confronted with terrorist activity, China does not engage unilaterally. Instead, China relies upon international cooperation through PKOs to help achieve the Chinese objective. Again, this elevates China’s voice as counterterrorism experts. In addition, China speaks to the world with authority in this matter. Again, according to Judd Deferment’s statement to the committee, by participating in UN missions, China increases favorability among target state power levers, including the poor, working-class, military, and government officials. China has gone so far as to push for leading the UN PKOs.⁹⁴

China further solidifies itself as an IA through the significant amount of military equipment sold to each target state. China often considers its actions as military aid. A lack of sufficient arms and equipment are often gaps in a country’s ability to support itself. Western powers can seem reluctant to provide essential military equipment. China gains an opportunity to increase its favorability by providing the equipment necessary for Egypt, Algeria, and Mauritania. Again, like in the economic domain, reciprocity shows a mutual goal of stability. China invests in relatively stable countries where it can protect Chinese

⁹¹ “Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Beijing Action Plan (2019-2021),” September 12, 2018. http://www.focac.org/eng/zywx_1/zywj/t1594297.htm.

⁹² U.S. Congress. U.S. – China Economic and Security Review Commission. *China’s Strategic Aims in Africa*. May 8, 2020.

⁹³ Marc Lanteigne, *The Role of UN Peacekeeping in China’s Expanding Strategic Interests*, (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2018): 3–5, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2018/09/role-un-peacekeeping-chinas-expanding-strategic-interests>.

⁹⁴ U.S. Congress. U.S. – China Economic and Security Review Commission. *China’s Strategic Aims in Africa*. May 8, 2020.

treasure. Furthermore, sales of larger military equipment such as aircraft and anti-mine clearance equipment build credibility in China's technology and power.

Upon receipt of equipment, China typically facilitates training, offering yet another opportunity for China to engage in military presence in the target country. According to a Saferworld report, "much of the assistance China provides to African governments to finance military infrastructure development is in turn spent on Chinese companies who implement the projects."⁹⁵ In other words, military activity enables the influence cycle to continue from military to economic domains. A glance at China's arms sales from the past two decades shows a steady commitment to each country. According to a Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the trend indicator value (TIV) averages 150 million in Chinese small arms exports year over year from 2000–2019.⁹⁶ Thus, China remains committed and relevant to the target's security plan.

B. MILITARY PRESENCE AND OPERATIONS

China considers Egypt a comprehensive strategic partner (CSP), emphasizing a goal-driven relationship focused on mutual areas such as stability, economic progress, and security. Adel Abdel Ghafar and Anna L. Jacobs describes the goal of CSP relationships as "political trust, dense economic ties, cultural exchanges, and good relations,"⁹⁷ highlighting many influence domains, noting the relationship is not exclusively military. Instead, the relationship between domains underscores China's ability to create partnerships to enable the growth of Chinese markets and diplomatic influence.

⁹⁵ Thomas Wheeler et al., "China's Growing Role in African Peace and Security," Working Paper, Saferworld, January 2011): 39, <https://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloadfile.php?filepath=downloads/pubdocs/Chinas%20Growing%20Role%20in%20African%20Peace%20and%20Security.pdf>.

⁹⁶ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (TIV of arms exports from China, 2000–2019; August 20, 2020), <https://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/values.php>.

⁹⁷ Adel Abdel Ghafar, Anna L. Jacobs, *Beijing Calling: Assessing China's Growing Footprint in North Africa*, (Washington, DC: Brookings Doha Center, 2019): 4, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Beijing-Calling-Assessing-China%E2%80%99s-Growing-Footprint-in-North-Africa_English-1.pdf.

1. Sino-Egyptian Influence and Reaction

Since the early 2000s, China's military presence in Egypt has increased steadily, recovering through the instability of the Arab Spring. Egypt's geography, encompassing the Suez Canal, a choke point for global maritime traffic, and China's Maritime Silk Road, make it necessary for China to engage with the country successfully. Moreover, military cooperation is required to further China's strategic economic ambitions making Egypt the most important partner among the three countries in this study.

China promotes bilateral engagement through FOCAC summits to leverage military presence and training. In addition, China participates in the sale of arms and equipment, conducts exercises, assists in counterterrorism and security, provides humanitarian aid. For example, a 2010 White Paper by Larry Hanauer and Lyle J. Morris notes that China established "mechanisms for defense cooperation meetings with Egypt."⁹⁸ A decade later, China and Egypt maintain a bi-national defense committee created by China to communicate international and regional security issues. These efforts enable the two countries to grow without forcing China to agree to a full-fledged alliance.⁹⁹ Instead, bilateral agreements allow China to operate without international interference and can remain neutral in domestic disputes.¹⁰⁰ Domestic neutrality offers target governments' power levers an option to cooperate with China over western countries that may require domestic reform.

a. Military Sales and Counterterrorism

Demand for arms and equipment provides insight into Egypt's reliance on China. As early as 1999, China committed to military sales of 80 K-8 trainer aircraft valued at \$347 million and enabled Sino-Egyptian training. Stockholm International Peace Research

⁹⁸ Larry Hanauer et al., *Chinese Engagement in Africa: Drivers, Reactions, and Implications for U.S. Policy*, 64.

⁹⁹ Chin-Hao Huang, Olawale Ismail, "China." in *Security Activities of External Actors in Africa*, ed. Olwale Ismail, Elisabeth Skons, 15–37 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): 24 <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/sipri2014issk.pdf>.

¹⁰⁰ John Calabrese, "Towering Ambitions: Egypt and China Building for the Future" (Middle East Institute, 2020) <https://www.mei.edu/publications/towering-ambitions-egypt-and-china-building-future>.

Institute shows specific Chinese arms sales, Figure 12. China encounters steep competition in Egyptian military purchases. According to a SIPRI factsheet, Egypt’s primary source for military supplies came from Russia, France, and the U.S. from 2011–2016. Egyptian imports increased over 130 percent during this period.¹⁰¹ From 2011–2016 China either chose or was unable not to sell. China’s actions show some proof that it will stay out of conflict while still conducting minimal investment. The TIV represents the military capability of a sale. During the Arab Spring, the TIV was near zero.

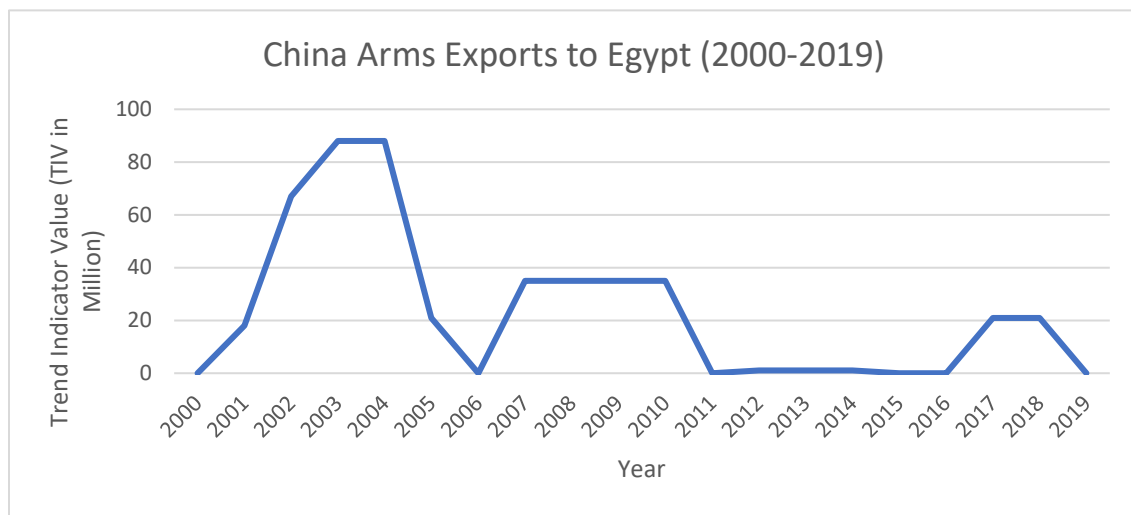


Figure 12. Arms Exports to Egypt ¹⁰²

History supports the evidence that China recedes until stable conditions form in a target state. From January 25, 2011, to February 11, 2011, Egypt experienced an uprising that led to instability lasting several years. Egyptians attempted to hold democratic processes, briefly electing Mohammed Morsi as president. He remained so until July 2013, when Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi won and brought order to chaos.¹⁰³ Since 2017, Egypt has

¹⁰¹ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. “Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2020,” 2021. https://sipri.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/fs_2103_at_2020.pdf.

¹⁰² Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (TIV of arms exports from China, 2000–2019; August 20, 2020) <https://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/values.php>.

¹⁰³ Adel Abdel Ghafar, *A Stable Egypt for a Stable Region: Socio-Economic Challenges and Prospects*, (European Parliament: Directorate-General for External Policies, 201): 20, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/603858/EXPO_STU\(2018\)603858_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/603858/EXPO_STU(2018)603858_EN.pdf).

experienced economic progress, and in 2018 a referendum solidified Al-Sisi's extended presidential term to 2030.¹⁰⁴ These conditions created the environment necessary for China to return.

Meanwhile, Al-Sisi's reforms, aimed at preserving the government, required an influx of equipment and support to bring economic progress and domestic security. Again, referent power may be the prevailing reason. Egypt's stability and promising economic recovery coupled with insurgents threatening Chinese objectives create the conditions for renewal in arms sales.

China provides relatively cheap military hardware. According to a SIPRI Fact Sheet, China sells unmanned combat aerial vehicles (UCAVs) to many Red Sea countries, including Egypt.¹⁰⁵ Chinese sales of the Wing Loong I, Wing Loong II, and CH-4 UCAVs since 2015 give Egypt an attack and reconnaissance capability.¹⁰⁶ In addition, China capitalizes on aircraft and major equipment component purchases, including YJ-203 Ku-Band RADAR and Blue Arrow-7 guided munitions counter-terrorist activity.¹⁰⁷

Egypt struggles with insurgent threats. Egypt's leadership, including Al-Sisi's, understands the situation, providing a holistic plan out to 2030¹⁰⁸ which addresses economic, security, and political reforms. But, again, the Egyptian government and the public want security reform. So, again, China's influence is appealing and readily available. Some of the most significant challenges within the country, stated by Tamra Cofman Wittes, a Senior Fellow Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institute, in testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, stem from ongoing insurgent

¹⁰⁴ Alessia Melcangi, Giuseppe Dentice, "Challenge's for Egypt's Fragile Stability," *Atlantic Council* July 3, 2019, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/challenges-for-egypt-s-fragile-stability/>.

¹⁰⁵ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. "Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2018," 2019. https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/fs_1903_at_2018.pdf.

¹⁰⁶ "Who Has What: Countries with Armed Drones." *New America*. 2020. <https://www.newamerica.org/international-security/reports/world-drones/who-has-what-countries-with-armed-drones/>.

¹⁰⁷ John Lake, "Egypt inducts armed Chinese drones" 29 April 2019, <https://www.arabianaerospace.aero/egypt-inducts-armed-chinese-drones.html>.

¹⁰⁸ Alessia Melcangi, "Challenge's for Egypt's Fragile Stability."

operations in the Sinai Peninsula backed by the Islamic State.¹⁰⁹ Ansar Beit al-Maqdis operated out of the peninsula and grew into a security threat in the years of turmoil. Egypt's Sinai operations in 2018 sought the defeat of the ISIS-backed forces, but without a long-horizon approach, Egypt's security forces cannot sustain operations indefinitely.¹¹⁰

To the west, Egypt faces Libya, where the Al-Sisi regime recognizes Khalifa Haftar and the Libya National Army (LNA). However, Turkey, a Mediterranean competitor, backs the opposition, the Government of the National Accord (GNA). Under the pretext, Turkey receives access to Libya's economic exclusion zone (EEZ) in the Mediterranean Sea. Haftar's inability to gain the initiative on the battlefield strained Egypt's relationship with Libya.¹¹¹ Moreover, Al Sisi's leadership is at stake for backing what many Egyptians believe is a defunct Libyan government. A weakened Egyptian image may encourage international and domestic terrorists and reinstate Muslim Brotherhood, eradicated by Al-Sisi as an existential threat.¹¹²

There are other instances of terrorist activity that affect the Sino-Egyptian relationship. In 2015, Al Shabab terrorists attacked Chinese personnel in the Jazzeer Palace Hotel in Somalia. The location serves the Chinese and Egyptian embassies. The attack claimed the lives of Chinese officials.¹¹³ China used the tragedy as an opportunity to acknowledge the necessity of greater cooperation between security forces and increase training of law enforcement. In 2017, Egypt saw a significant increase in insurgent activity targeting tourism, Chinese Christians, and investments in the Sinai Peninsula.

¹⁰⁹ U.S. Congress. House of Representatives. Hearing on Egypt: Trends in Politics, Economics, and Human Rights, September 9, 2020.

¹¹⁰ Adel Abdel Ghafar, "Order from Chaos: Egypt's Long-term Stability and the Role of the European Union," Brookings Doha Center, March 1, 2018, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/03/01/egypts-long-term-stability-and-the-role-of-the-european-union/>.

¹¹¹ Alessia Melcangi. Giuseppe Dentice, "Libya's Crisis is a Tough Puzzle to Solve for Egypt," Atlantic Council, June 18, 2020, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/libyas-crisis-is-a-tough-puzzle-to-solve-for-egypt/>.

¹¹² Reuters Staff. "Special Report: How Cairo is Taking the Fight to Sinai Militants." February 4, 2015. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-sinai-militants-specialreport/special-report-how-cairo-is-taking-the-fight-to-sinai-militants-idUSKBN0L80XM20150204>.

¹¹³ Scot Murray Tanner, James Bellacqua, "China's Response to Terrorism." (Working Paper, CAN Analysis Solutions, 2016): 214, https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Research/Chinas%20Response%20to%20Terrorism_CNA061616.pdf.

In comparison, low-intensity conflicts threaten Chinese cultural outreach, specifically tourism, and legitimate Chinese power and economic interests. However, China does not react to these instances directly. Instead, China continues to rely on equipment and training for Egypt's military. Thus, China may not consider Egypt's issues harmful to economic growth or other interests at a strategic level.

b. Exercises

Chinese–Egyptian military drills signify cooperation that allows China and Egypt to take advantage of the international media spotlight. Egyptian military officials can utilize joint cooperation as a messaging tool. Optically, it indicates what Egypt means to China's long-term strategy. Chinese training often invokes pomp and circumstance, stressing the cultural importance of a Sino-Egyptian partnership.

Chinese State Councilor and Minister of National Defense Wei Fenghe met with Egyptian Military Chief of Staff Mohamed Farid Hegazy in 2018 to promote their CSP and enhance strategic communication and joint exercises.¹¹⁴ China provided a training exercise centered around demining against the insurgents. These interactions on the ground give Egypt helpful knowledge and experience. China extends influence through safe PLA interaction, reinforcing the CSP concept of achieving Egypt's mutual goal of stability.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, other Arab and African countries see the training and want to be a CSP, an example of China using referent power.

c. Maritime Security

China's military activity allows Egypt to show off an exclusive partnership with the Arab world and announces China's increase in naval presence in the Mediterranean Sea. From 2003–2016 Egypt conducted three known combined exercises with the PLAN

¹¹⁴ Arab Finance. "China, Egypt to Boost Military Exchanges, Cooperation." 2018. November 26, 2018. <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/wire-feeds/china-egypt-boost-military-exchanges-cooperation/docview/2137383833/se-2?accountid=12702>.

¹¹⁵ Thomas Wheeler et al., *China's Growing Role in African Peace and Security*, 80.

and welcomed three ports of call by PLAN warships and 32 senior-level meetings.¹¹⁶ Egypt receives the greatest attention in this area among the three target states, including significant naval visits from the PLAN.¹¹⁷ Egypt is also one of the few countries invited to observe Chinese naval drills. As recently as 2019, PLAN operated in Egyptian waters, including the Chinese warship ship Xi'an to conduct bilateral exercises with Egyptian warship Arafat.¹¹⁸ The activity included cross-deck liaisons from both countries receiving instructive training showing goodwill towards Egypt, revealing how important China holds maritime security in the region.

2. Sino-Algerian Influence and Reaction

China's ambitious support for Algeria's revolution resonates with its relationship today, being repeatedly celebrated at anniversaries of the CCP party or Algerian independence, both recognized by each other. China's activity includes arms sales, counterterrorism, and military education.

a. Equipment Sales and Counterterrorism

China's arms exports to Algeria as a TIV metric indicate insignificant sales relative to other aspects of influence (Figure 13), according to a Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. In a separate database on arms transfers, the same research institute identifies Algeria as one of the top four Chinese arms imports in 2012, accounting for \$814 million worth of sales.¹¹⁹ The military capacity of these sales was most likely low, therefore unnoticeable in Figure 13. On the other hand, Algeria received considerable

¹¹⁶ Allen, Kenneth Phillip C. Saunders, and John Chen *Chinese Military Diplomacy, 2003–2016: Trends and Implications*. Institute for National Strategic Studies 2017, 62.

¹¹⁷ Thomas Wheeler et al., *China's Growing Role in African Peace and Security*, 34.

¹¹⁸ Hassanin Tayea, "Egypt, China hold Naval Drills in Mediterranean Sea." SEE EGY. August 21, 2019. <https://see.news/egypt-china-hold-naval-drills/>.

¹¹⁹ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (TIV of arms exports from China, 2000–2019; August 20, 2020) <https://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/values.php>.

military assets, including procuring 3 C-28A frigates, in 2013.¹²⁰ Algeria also accepts UCAV assets like those sold to Egypt.¹²¹

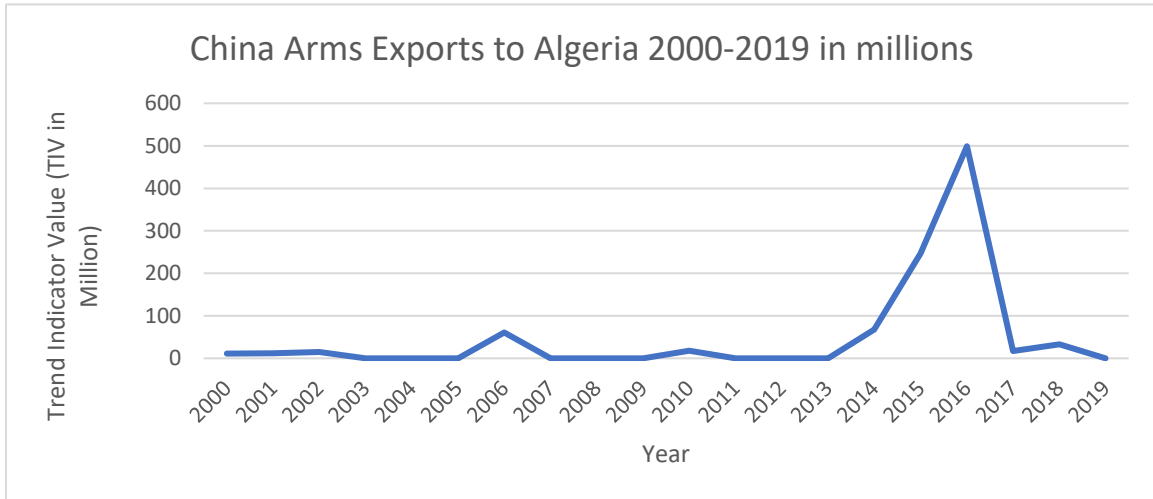


Figure 13. Chinese Arms Exports to Algeria ¹²²

According to a RAND Report by Timothy R. Heath, China seeks only to provide what is necessary to maintain or increase its position and allow China to secure its investments in the country.¹²³ Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika’s control derives from his ability to appeal to political opposition. Applying incremental political reform and reminding Algerians of the 1990 era civil war ensures the public prefers stability. Bouteflika’s strength offers Algerian’s food, employment opportunity, and housing at roughly 14 percent of Algeria’s GDP, based on sales from oil.¹²⁴ Again, this allows China

¹²⁰China Power, “How Dominant is China in the Global Arms Trade?” (China Power Project; June 28, 2021) <https://chinapower.csis.org/china-global-arms-trade/>.

¹²¹Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. “Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2018,” 2019. https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/fs_1903_at_2018.pdf.

¹²² Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (TIV of arms exports from China, 2000–2019; August 20, 2020) <https://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/values.php>.

¹²³ Timothy R. Heath, *China’s Pursuit of Overseas Security*, (RAND Cooperation, Santa Monica, CA: 2018), 23.

¹²⁴ Khan Moshin et al., No Arab Spring for Algeria, 1, 4.

to engage with a relatively stable country. Power levers, such as the president, have direct control and can engage with other lower-tier power levers to promote China's influence.

However, China and Algeria share a common threat in Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Islamic State of Iraq, and Syria (ISIS) aligned group in Algeria. AQIM protested China's treatment of Uighur Muslims in China back in 2009.¹²⁵ AQIM threatened Chinese workers living in Algeria and targeted several projects in Algeria and elsewhere in the Maghreb. Even with threats from AQIM, sparked by the Xinjiang riots, China is unwavering. China's stance has the potential to sour the relationship. However, China's internal population consists of millions of Muslims who may be sympathetic, if not devoted to the cause. Thus, China identifies pockets that might funnel aid to Chinese domestic terrorists and undermine China's legitimate power. These pockets are an issue to consider but outside the scope of this thesis. Instead, China's commitment to Algerian stability and the larger African Union (AU) elevates these problems to the global stage at the UN. China is a supportive voice for the AU, advocating for peace missions and increased UN response.

b. Military Education

China offers professional military education (PME) training to Algeria through the Party-Army Model. As the name implies, the idea, established in 2013, standardized domestic military and political fragments within China, providing a baseline education in Chinese politics and ideology to Algerian military service and political party members. The end state is military/political reform, ensuring the survivability of the CCP. China exports this model to African countries, addressing young officer candidates through military academies, command, and staff colleges. Algeria sends officers and staff to PLA political schools such as Kunming National Cadres Academy, Pudong Cadre College, and PLA Nanjing Political College run by the CCP. According to an Africa Center for Strategic Studies article by Paul Nantulya, Algeria remains "exposed to the Chinese model on party-

¹²⁵ Yun Sun. "China and the Rising Terrorist Threats in Africa: Time for U.S.-China Cooperation?" Brookings. September 10, 2014. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2014/09/10/china-and-the-rising-terrorist-threats-in-africa-time-for-u-s-china-cooperation/>.

army relations.”¹²⁶ Students learn concepts including Maoist ideology and the military’s role in supporting the ruling party.

While China openly remains neutral to domestic issues, this is one area where it can influence internal affairs by aligning young up-and-coming military leaders to CCP doctrine if the target state is willing to participate. Thus, Nantulya concludes that while the Chinese Party-Army Model is not perfect, leaders who see value in its use, sustaining a one-party government’s rule, continue to participate.¹²⁷ Furthermore, participation is not mandatory, so this form of influence is unique in the military domain among the other targets.

c. Chinese Prestige

China flexes legitimate power through military prestige, attempting to increase favorability of highly publicized military presence events, including port visits and senior-level meetings. China chooses interactions like those in January 2018, showcasing two warships from the 27th Chinese naval escort during a for a four-day friendly port visit to Algiers.¹²⁸ China’s behavior paints a picture of its Maritime Silk Road protection. A port visit to Algeria may seem insignificant, but it is a more extensive proof of concept. Great power competition necessitates significant military movement. Just as Egypt participates in maritime security exercises, China’s naval presence sends a message, China’s expanding military plays an essential role in strategic objectives across the globe.

3. Sino-Mauritanian Influence and Reaction

China’s behaviors remain consistent, applying equipment and arms sales opportunities and establishing economic/military linkages. In this case, China adds PKOs through UN support to the list. Mauritania’s main concerns are threatening extremist

¹²⁶ Paul Nantulya, “China Promotes Its Party-Army Model in Africa.” Africa Center for Strategic Studies. July 28, 2020. <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/china-promotes-its-party-army-model-in-africa/>.

¹²⁷ Paul Nantulya, “China Promotes Its Party-Army Model in Africa.”

¹²⁸ Adel Abdel Ghafar, Anna L. Jacobs, “Beijing Strengthens Its Presence in the Maghreb,” Brookings Doha Center. September 9, 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/beijing-strengthens-its-presence-in-the-maghreb/>.

groups along porous borders. The country cannot achieve economic progress with instability. Mauritania also faces internal issues regarding discrimination among several ethnic groups as well as de facto slavery. These issues may not be related to China's influence but may affect power lever choices. For example, the joint military and commercial seaport venture, PANPA, near N'Diago, disrupts the local population but provides a strategic opportunity to build a large seaport.¹²⁹

a. Arms and Military Equipment

Throughout the West Africa region, including Mauritania, China lobbies for purchases of military market sales and sends procurement teams to identify market needs.¹³⁰ A SIPRI arms database indicates Mauritania received nearly 45 percent of all arms sales from China over the past two decades.¹³¹ Sporadic increases in TIV, Figure 14, show periods of larger military capacity purchases. Bayes offers data indicating China sold \$78 million worth of arms as the number one supplier to the country after 2008.¹³² Although autocratic leader Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz faced opposition during the Arab Spring, protests were primarily nonviolent, calling for political and economic reform.¹³³

¹²⁹ Matthew Green, "Plundering Africa: Voracious Fishmeal Factories Intensify the Pressure of Climate Change." Reuters. October 20, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/ocean-shock-sardinella/>.

¹³⁰ Tom Bayes, China's growing security role in Africa: Views from West Africa, Implications for Europe, 37.

¹³¹ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (TIV of arms exports from China, 2000–2019; August 20, 2020) <https://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/values.php>.

¹³² Tom Bayes, China's growing security role in Africa: Views from West Africa, Implications for Europe, 33.

¹³³ Peter Dorrie, "The Arab Spring You Haven't Heard about – in Mauritania." Waging Nonviolence People Powered News & Analysis, May 23, 2012. <https://wagingnonviolence.org/2012/05/the-arab-spring-you-havent-heard-about-in-mauritania/>.

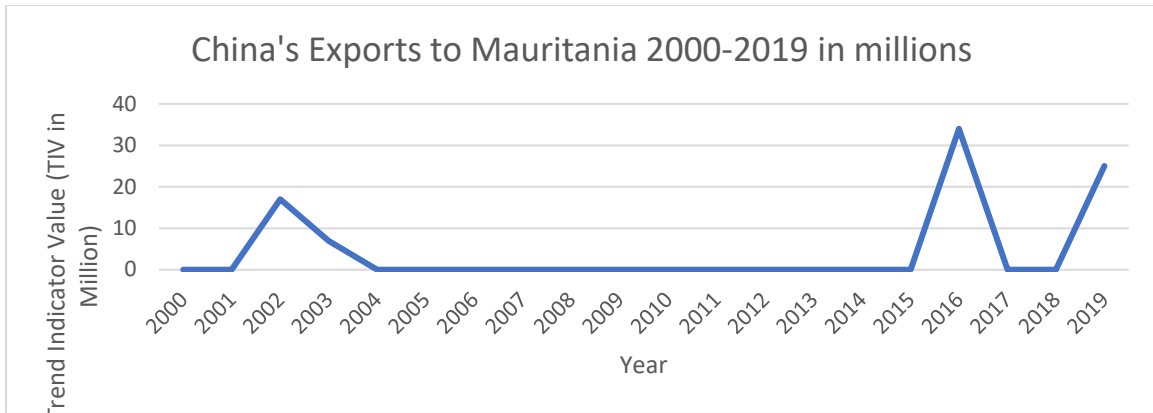


Figure 14. Chinese Arms Exports to Mauritania¹³⁴

Regardless of arms purchases, Mauritania is willing to pay for larger military equipment. Mauritania procured two offshore shore patrol vessels and a handful of transport aircraft within the last decade.¹³⁵ In 2010, China provided a \$1.5 million donation to 2010 Mauritania to upgrade military engineering equipment and associated training.¹³⁶ Such generosity might generate favorability towards China and show increasing confidence in the use of Chinese equipment. These assets are helping to secure borders and economic resources. Transport aircraft provide rudimentary aerial surveillance actively used to track extremist groups such as Boko Haram. Mauritania defends 754 kilometers of precious coastline with patrol vessels to protect Mauritania fishers and new offshore energy prospects.¹³⁷ Based on necessity, Mauritania and China may be experiencing referent power, cultivating a mutual relationship. Mauritania wants economic progress like China has and will do as it needs to achieve that goal.

¹³⁴ Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (TIV of arms exports from China, 2000–2019; August 20, 2020).

¹³⁵ Bayes, 37.

¹³⁶ Chin-Hao Huang, Olawale Ismail, “China.” in *Security Activities of External Actors in Africa*, 25.

¹³⁷ Anouar Boukhars, “Keep Terrorism at Bay in Mauritania,” African Center, June 16, 2020, <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/keeping-terrorism-at-bay-in-mauritania/>.

b. Peace Keeping Operations

China shines as the UN partner of African countries. This study addresses China's support for PKOs and focuses on UN missions relevant to the target states. Two UN missions near Algeria and Mauritania borders, United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and United Nations Multi-Dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) provide China the opportunity to prove its ability to wield military diplomacy. Moreover, China's participation in UN operations MINURSO and MINUSMA shed light on China's willingness to support international efforts aligned with China's economic goals.

Violent extremist groups exist throughout the region, including Boko Haram. MINUSMA offers constant reinforcement in peacekeeping efforts in West Africa and generates stability in the area. Mauritania shares a vast border with Mali and has a vested interest in the strength of the region.

(1) MINURSO

Established in 1991, MINURSO, by Security Council resolution 690, addressed Mauritania's shared border between Morocco, Algeria, and Mauritania amidst the 1988 dispute between the settlement of Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro, Frente (POLISARIO). However, the transition period between governments continued to stall, past 2016 requiring an updated resolution 2285, shifting the UN's role in assisting civilian protection through the addition of military and police personnel.¹³⁸

By providing a limited amount of military support, China can partner with several countries, boosting its international image but also disbursing the weight of a PKO onto many shoulders. In addition, China's shared commitment aligns with other targets in this study, such as Egypt, Figure 15. Among the top four contributors, showing proof China is

¹³⁸ Anna Theofilopoulos, "United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)," in *The Oxford Handbook of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, Edited by Joachim A. Koops, Thierry Tardy, Norrie MacQueen, and Paul D. Williams (Oxford University Press, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199686049.013.33>.

attempting to lead or provide substantially more resources than other countries, especially compared to competitors like Russia.¹³⁹

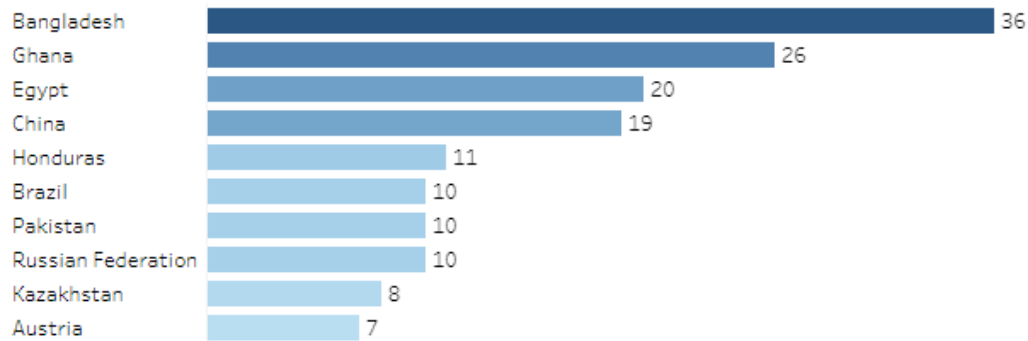


Figure 15. UN Troop Contributions¹⁴⁰

Mauritania accepts missions like MINURSO to stabilize the country’s perimeter through UN Security outposts along the shared border. International cooperation allows Mauritania to focus on internal security and revitalize the economy.

(2) MINUSMA

Established in 2013, MINUSMA addresses instability in the Sahel, a desert region shared by Mali, Mauritania, Algeria, and particularly the instability of Mali. The area is vast, containing terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaeda. China continues to provide a more significant number of troops as opposed to experts, Figure 16. Again, China is among the top ten contributors of personnel and shares that accolade with Egypt.

¹³⁹ Anna Theofilopoulos, “United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).”

¹⁴⁰ Source: Anna Theofilopoulos, “United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).”

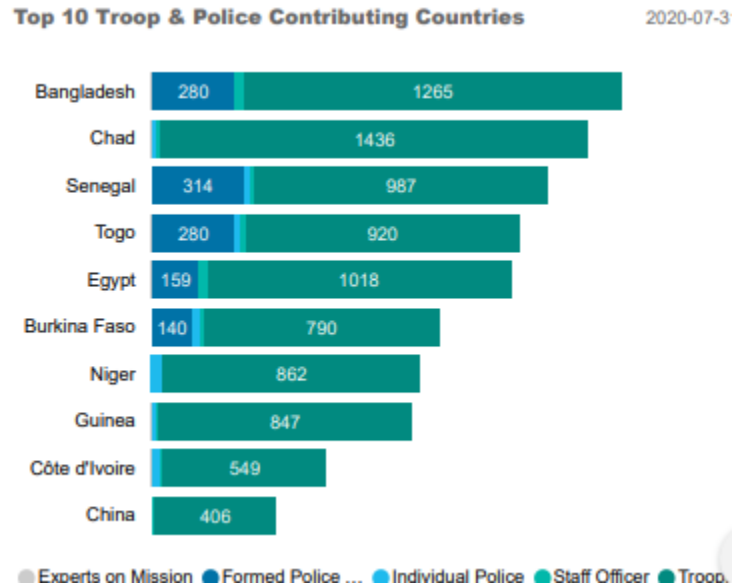


Figure 16. China and Egypt Troop Contributions¹⁴¹

Both UN peacekeeping missions offer insight into China’s eagerness to be a part of international operations. However, there are no accurate indicators from Mauritania for or against China’s UN PKO engagements. All that can be said is Mauritania has accepted Chinese military exports in recent years.

C. ANALYSIS

The influence framework identifies China’s military domain through arms and equipment exports, counterterrorism assistance, training, and maritime security. Raven’s power mechanic concepts shed light on how China incentivizes cooperation and how the targets responded. All three countries share a need for affordable military equipment and enhanced stability against extremism. Furthermore, there are no adverse reactions aimed at China’s military outreach.

Although the Chinese slowed military influence during the Arab Spring, it expanded its economic influence. Erin Cunningham said while other investing countries

¹⁴¹ Source: “United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali,” United Nations Peacekeeping, 2020, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/minusma>.

fled, Chinese companies invested in affordable goods like clothes and cheap electronics. As a result, Chinese commodities exports to Egypt hit \$7.28 billion, surpassing the U.S.¹⁴² Although China courts military assistance with Egypt, subsequent visits by Chinese officials involved expanding political ties and securing economic deals. This concept fits nicely with the Saferworld report, which suggests that the military is not an end but merely a course of action to obtain more excellent economic status.¹⁴³ In addition, China is expanding its maritime presence, correlating to the length of the Maritime Silk Road. Port visits and military exercises prove the concept for protecting Chinese economic power and normalizing PLAN operations in the Mediterranean Sea. This line of effort has been prevalent throughout the past two decades.

Chinese UN support is more than an outreach to Mauritania. Both missions MINURSO and MINUSMA, represent more significant efforts from China attempting to influence the UN through increased involvement. China's growing involvement in UN missions suggests a more significant strategic objective. According to Thomas Wheeler, "consolidation of military ties is simply one dimension of China's wider diplomatic relations with Africa, which serves to strengthen ties with governments on the continent and reinforces China's political weight on the international arena, especially within the UNSC."¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Erin Cunningham, "Is China 'Buying' Egypt from the US?" *The World*, September 05, 2012, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2012-09-05/china-buying-egypt-us>.

¹⁴³ Thomas Wheeler et al., *China's Growing Role in African Peace and Security*, 41.

¹⁴⁴ Thomas Wheeler et al., *China's Growing Role in African Peace and Security*, 62.

IV. DIPLOMATIC AND CULTURAL SOFT POWER

This chapter focuses on the relationship between soft power influence activities in the diplomatic and cultural domains. Several examples from other domains reappear here to address both intentional and unintentional effects of actions in the economic and military domains. Influence activity in the diplomatic and cultural domains increases the odds of success in economic and military domains. China accesses power levers, including diplomatic and political figureheads often having close connections with military officials. These outcomes are not mutually exclusive. For example, when China first recognized Algeria as an autonomous state, China focused on “state-to-state relations with any government willing to recognize Mao’s regime as the sole legitimate government of China.”¹⁴⁵ Regime recognition became the blueprint for Chinese influence in the region, leading to economic aid and further international, mutual diplomatic support.

A. BEHAVIOR AND CRITERIA

China’s soft power measures not only secure its strategic economic objectives but magnify China’s appearance in affairs on the world stage, ultimately increasing prestige. China’s favorability rises through reciprocity. FOCAC and UN public engagements help drive China’s popularity. Often, diplomatic relations spark cultural activity, including immigration reform, education, cultural appreciation, and societal and religious bonding, and both the target and the IA benefit from these engagements. Recognizing a nation’s sovereignty suggests a willingness to exercise legitimate Chinese power. Using official meetings such as FOCAC, a tri-annual summit held in a different country generates goals addressing education and tourism, among other economic and military functions. Chinese visits reinforce cultural linkages and ideological similarities. Finally, China’s increasing involvement in the UN suggests an ambition to gain influence far beyond the three target states in this study: Egypt, Algeria, and Mauritania.

¹⁴⁵ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, “China’s Role in Africa: Special Report Weekly Review” (Washington, D.C.: GPO), 4–6, February 25, 1972.

China often bypasses official alliances in favor of bilateral partnership agreements. Instead, China chooses to act through FOCAC, offering bilateral support to individual countries. Founded in 2000 at Beijing's first Ministerial Conference, FOCAC provided alternative forms of investment partnership by applying Chinese solutions to Chinese problems. Opening access to larger markets for China's goods and allowing China's expansion along the BRI, including the maritime silk road, is the primary reason for FOCAC's existence. In addition, these summits provide a platform for the Chinese government to meet with African heads of state and discuss matters about the economic and military domain. Their objective is to agree upon future endeavors aimed at mutual gains.

Chinese soft power creates divisive effects on target states. While diplomatic activity elevates the status of the state and typically coincides with increased economic cooperation, cultural tactics vary in appeal towards power levers in different socio-economic roles within a target state. Here, the example of Algerian military officer training from Chapter 3 may indicate coordination between military and cultural domains, bringing Algerian officers in line with Chinese Confucius teaching through educational programs and training. China benefits by teaching Algeria's officers and forging lasting relationships within that power lever. These relationships may last, providing China a connection to the country via the military domain. Algeria benefits by providing its officers with seemingly prestigious honors and opportunities. These include education but also access to China's military.

Feedback from the working-class, unemployed youth and specific economic sectors allow China to address multiple power levers. From the perspective of the lower-class power levers, China is taking advantage of a malleable corrupt government to gain leverage. Still, all three countries have ambitions to increase diplomatic ties and, in some cases, cultural cohesion. For China's influence to succeed in moving policy forward, China must maintain its status in appealing to different power levers. China may not control every situation with every power lever, but investments will fall apart if it loses too much influence due to negative perceptions.

Alternatively, this thesis considers if China intentionally negatively impacts any target state through alienation via restricted immigration, restricting delegation or diplomatic talks, and restricting visitors from target states to China. On the contrary, China's behavior in Egypt, Algeria, and Mauritania present China as offering an opportunity with no strings attached.

B. DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION AND OFFICIAL VISITS

Chinese diplomatic influence encompasses recognition and official visits. Recognition includes the target state addressing China's stance on an issue that matters to China but may not affect the target state. Conversely, China recognizes the concerns of target states by supporting them via international messaging to include UN support. Official visits tend to coincide with specific messages. This thesis looked at several already in other domains such as MOU announcements for investments, the Mauritania PANPA project specifically, along with their Egyptian projects.

Furthermore, many Egyptian and Algerian military activities commence with diplomatic engagement via official visits. Key to these visits is the messages portrayed via public news outlets. News of these events aims to strengthen China's and the target's image within the country and internationally. Thus, since the 1950s, China has continued to maintain diplomacy to perpetuate its goal of supporting its strategic and economic objectives.

1. Sino-Egyptian Diplomacy

In 1955, when Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai met Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, both leaders emphasized each other's ancient civilization and culture. In essence, both countries represent antiquity, the Egyptian pharaohs, and Chinese Dynastic civilizations. Today, China uses the same link to ancient civilization to appeal to Egypt on

several matters.¹⁴⁶ As a result, China reevaluated its relationship with Egypt as a FOCAC partner and in 2009 held FOCAC in Sharm El-Sheik, Egypt.¹⁴⁷

Since Al-Sisi's rise in 2014, he visited China six times and met President Xi Jinping seven times, signing 25 bilateral agreements, mainly on energy and transport issues.¹⁴⁸ Here, diplomatic outreach translated to economic growth. Each visit by the Egyptian leader punctuates the importance of China's relationship. As late as October 2020, Egypt continues to recognize issues that do not personally affect the country's well-being. Problems with China's overtaking Hong Kong causes several states to make statements or align with western countries or China. Egypt maintains support for China in its affairs.¹⁴⁹

This thesis considers the adverse effects power levers have on China's influence. Egypt's Al-Sisi oppressed journalists and political prisoners as a response to the Arab Spring uprising. The characteristics of target states might weaken China's affiliation with these countries. However, this does not seem to sway China, which adapts by maintaining a rule of limited domestic interference, maintaining bilateral agreements, and remaining clear of alliances that could further tie down the Chinese government to take a severe position on the matter.

2. Sino-Algerian Diplomacy

China's common ground with Algeria stems from its similar communist political ideology. Diplomatic engagement with Algeria commenced when China supported the FLN in 1958. Strongly opposed to French colonial rule, the FLN fought a revolution until 1972.¹⁵⁰ During this time, China exploited several opportunities simultaneously. First, supporting an anti-colonial force like the FLN helped legitimize China's revolutionary

¹⁴⁶Kyle Haddad-Fonda, "The Rhetoric of "Civilization" in Chinese—Egyptian Relations."

¹⁴⁷ BRICS Policy Center. "The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)," 2013. <http://www.bricspolicycenter.org/download/6186/>.

¹⁴⁸ Kyle Haddad-Fonda, "The Rhetoric of "Civilization" in Chinese—Egyptian Relations"

¹⁴⁹ Eric Olander, "Score Keeping: Which African Countries Aligned with China at the United Nations on Xinjian and Hong Kong.." The China Africa Project. October 13, 2020. <https://chinaafricaproject.com/2020/10/13/score-keeping-which-african-countries-aligned-with-china-at-the-united-nations-on-xinjiang-and-hong-kong/>.

¹⁵⁰ John Calabrese, "Sino-Algerian Relations: On a Path to Realizing Their Full Potential?"

struggle. Second, by supporting the revolutionary cause, first countries like the former Soviet Union were pushed out, allowing China to shape a relationship without interference. Third, China offered limited support in the form of economic and military aid.¹⁵¹ Finally, as Algeria began to settle, creating a monopolistic system, Algeria's authoritarian figures absorbed pro-communist Algerian ideology. As a result, China's commitment to Algeria swayed over the next few decades. Since 2000, Algeria's economic reform known as the Economic Support and Recovery Plan (PSRE) 2001–2004 and Complementary Growth Support Program (PCSC) from 2005–2009¹⁵² allowed China to engage with the country looking for increasing investment.

Further recognition includes Algeria's acceptance into the WTO. Chinese representative Wen Jiabao celebrated the rich and longstanding relationship with government officials including, "Algeria's contributions to resuming China's legitimate status in the United Nations. Furthermore, China appreciates Algeria's adherence to the one-China policy."¹⁵³ Here Chinese diplomats state clearly two goals during the 2006 engagement. China wants legitimate status in the UN, garnered by other countries' support, and Algeria recognizes Taiwan as an illegitimate government and a territory of China. Neither of these issues is of grave importance to Algeria. They do not affect Algeria's sovereignty and should have no pressure on Algeria's power levers. However, recognizing China's legitimate power has economic, military, and diplomatic benefits for Algeria. From this official visit, Chinese officials conclude the following: "maintain high-level exchange and increase political mutual trust; expand the substantial cooperation especially in infrastructure, agriculture, and energy for mutual benefit; thirdly, intensify the exchange

¹⁵¹ John Copper, *China's Foreign Aid and Investment Diplomacy, Vol. III*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) 92. ProQuest.

¹⁵² John Calabrese. "Sino-Algerian Relations: On a Path to Realizing Their Full Potential?"

¹⁵³ "China Supports Algeria's WTO Admission Efforts – PM," BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific, November 6, 2006, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/wire-feeds/china-supports-algerias-wto-admission-efforts-pm/docview/460944463/se-2?accountid=12702>.

on humanitarian issues to carry out the traditional friendship; and lastly, strengthen coordination to safeguard the common interests.”¹⁵⁴

China operates outside of a formal alliance in Africa by utilizing a different form of collaboration. One way is FOCAC, but another is CSPs. Algeria falls under a CSP with China. Unlike FOCAC, a three-year agreement opens to most African countries, a CSP calls out a region or state to emphasize mutual goal-driven issues, including stability, security, and economic partnership.¹⁵⁵ These goals align with the messaging provided in the previous official visit in 2006. A Global China paper by Ghafar suggests that CSPs engage in multiple domains, “political trust, dense economic ties, cultural exchanges, and good relations.”¹⁵⁶ Again, China is offering its apparent high-status influence in legitimate and referent power to Algerian power levers. China gains a more significant economic foothold while advertising its exclusive club to other would-be partner nations

3. Sino-Mauritanian Diplomacy

Mauritania’s position has not changed since 1965.¹⁵⁷ However, in 2000 China increased investments based on infrastructure projects as well as commodity extraction.¹⁵⁸ In 2005 former Chinese president Hu Jintao and former Mauritanian President Maaouya Ould Sid’Ahmed Taya celebrated their country’s 40th anniversary of friendship and

¹⁵⁴“China’s Wu Bangguo meets Algerian Assembly Speaker in Algiers,” BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific, November 5, 2008, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/wire-feeds/chinas-wu-bangguo-meets-algerian-assembly-speaker/docview/460806444/se-2?accountid=12702>.

¹⁵⁵ Adel Abdel Ghafar, Anna L. Jacobs, *China in the Mediterranean: Implications of Expanding Sino-North Africa Relations*, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institute, 2020), 2, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/FP_20200720_china_mediterranean_ghafar_jacobs.pdf.

¹⁵⁶ Adel Abdel Ghafar, Anna L. Jacobs, *China in the Mediterranean: Implications of Expanding Sino-North Africa Relations*, 4–6.

¹⁵⁷ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, “China’s Role in Africa: Special Report Weekly Review” (Washington, D.C.: GPO, February 25, 1972), 3–5.

¹⁵⁸ Kristian Girling, “An Arab Country on the Edge of the African World: Mauritania and its Geopolitical Position—China, the West or the Rest?” Medium, May 21, 2017, <https://medium.com/@k.girling/an-arab-country-on-the-edge-of-the-african-world-mauritania-and-its-geopolitical-position-china-95964ec6b64d>.

cooperation. Unlike similar messages to Algeria or Egypt, China does not specify broader commitments, except that China remains committed to strengthening relations.¹⁵⁹

In this study, Mauritania stands out as an example of a humanitarian crisis in the international spotlight. Mauritians are affected differently by Chinese economic activity. Chinese cultural outreach attempts to garner support from lower-tier power levers that face negative impacts. A joint military and commercial seaport venture, PANPA, planned since 2009, near N'Diogo, angered the local population along the Senegal River. Local populations of Maymouna people fear this will ruin their livelihoods. These people rely on fishing and agriculture nourished by the nearby river. The Chinese fishing industry continues to build fishing factories along the shoreline, leading some experts to believe that the local catch is threatened.¹⁶⁰ Many Mauritanian ethnic groups remain silent, fearful of speaking out. Brahim Bilal Ramdhane, President of the Sahel Foundation for Human Rights, points to racial injustice as a significant challenge because of Chinese port projects.¹⁶¹ The PANAP project disrupted the ethnic society of Mauritania. The Beydan, country elites, are profiteering from projects such as this. The Afro-Mauritians and Haratine suffer from economic exploits and are raising their concerns to the government. This is an example of China's investment strategy conflicting with lower-tier power levers. Workers and marginalized groups protest the program and have some international support.

These issues compound other longstanding conflicts. For instance, the Haratine of Mauritania faces de facto slavery. John Campbell for the Council on Foreign Relations suggests that over 45 million people are still subject to slavery.¹⁶² Moreover, China's

¹⁵⁹ "China, Mauritania Mark Diplomatic Ties," China Internet Information Center News, July 20, 2005, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.libproxy.nps.edu/reports/china-mauritania-mark-diplomatic-ties/docview/190586276/se-2?accountid=12702>.

¹⁶⁰ Matthew Green, "Plundering Africa: Voracious Fishmeal Factories Intensify the Pressure of Climate Change," Reuters, October 20, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/ocean-shock-sardinella/>.

¹⁶¹ Intissar Fakir, "Mauritania's Economic and Social Ambitions Collide: The Story of Diawling Park."

¹⁶² John Campbell, "The State of Slavery in Mauritania," *Africa in Transition* (blog). October 14, 2016, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/state-slavery-mauritania>.

project may undermine the ability of poorer Mauritians to sustain their livelihoods, perpetuating an already exhausting situation.

C. UN ENGAGEMENT

China cooperates through the UN, opting to stay out of unilateral conflict and align with AU issues. These missions signal China's commitment to its strategic matters through counterterrorism, PKOs, and medical assistance, leading to stability in the region. Chinese influence relies on reliable investments backed by stable governments in Egypt, Algeria, and Mauritania. Stable governments have security and can manage terrorist activity.

China establishes itself as a significant supporter of UN operations and contributes critical personnel for UN peacekeeping operations. China's progression of increasing involvement in the UN shows how valuable Chinese status in the UN means for China. Chinese activity in UNPKOs has a favorable impact on the recipient and participant nations. China's most significant increase in contribution peaked in 2018 to raising annual contributions to over 10 percent since 2012. This increase coincides with China's efforts to establish a Chinese official as the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations head.¹⁶³

China's participation in MINURSO and MINUSMA highlights China's diplomatic influence by appealing to the international community on behalf of Mauritania and Algeria's recipient countries. Although the missions technically operate in Morocco/Western Sahara and Mali, respectively, what matters is the impact Mauritania and Algeria receive from the success of the PKOs. Furthermore, in Chapter 3, China actively participates with other influence targets such as Egypt, which share a mutual goal of a stable West Africa. The MINURSO mission provides a transition period for Western Sahara to choose independence or integration with Morocco. With no clear resolution, an updated measure in 2016 extended the period to October 2020. However, recent statements made by the Trump administration, including recognition of Morocco's claims over the

¹⁶³Marc Lanteigne, *The Role of UN Peacekeeping in China's Expanding Strategic Interests*, (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2018): 2, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2018/09/role-un-peacekeeping-chinas-expanding-strategic-interests>.

region, have upset bordering nations like Algeria¹⁶⁴ and may jeopardize further PKO operations. There have been several claims Morocco has harassed UN forces along the Western Sahara border.¹⁶⁵

The more significant diplomatic objective is increasing China's exposure to the world stage in the UN to gain influence over many countries. In particular, China seeks out countries like Egypt, Algeria, and Mauritania to acknowledge Chinese foreign policy in the UN. A Saferworld Report on China suggests a One China policy regarding Taiwan is part of the economic and aid benefit towards partners.¹⁶⁶ In other words, the international consensus of a One China policy is a critical strategic objective. If other African nations recognize this, greater favorability may overpower countries that do not recognize One China. Recognition of One China is consistent with academic statements by David Shinn, who considers the more tremendous implications of China's effect on international politics. In his testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, Shinn states that developing countries consider China an ally on the UN Security Council, especially in the Maghreb.¹⁶⁷ In turn, these countries support China's position on international disputes such as Taiwan. However, regardless of opinion on the political form, China is not bound by law to facilitate or encourage democratic practices. Therefore, having China's veto power in the UNSC is a critical piece of diplomatic influence.¹⁶⁸

D. TRAVEL, IMMIGRATION AND CULTURAL LINKAGE

China seeks stable countries to expand tourism for Chinese citizens. Furthermore, Chinese projects allow Chinese citizens to work in the target country as Chinese firms

¹⁶⁴ Sudarsan Raghavan, "U.S. Recognition of Morocco's Claim Over Disputed Region Threatens more Tension." Washington Post. December 11, 2020. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/western-sahara-morocco-israel-trump/2020/12/11/cd4176b2-3b81-11eb-aad9-8959227280c4_story.html.

¹⁶⁵ Reuters Staff, "Algeria Rejects Trump's stance on Western Sahar," December 12, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/algeria-westernsahara-usa-idUSKBN28M0MZ>.

¹⁶⁶ Thomas Wheeler et al., China's Growing Role in African Peace and Security," 9.

¹⁶⁷ U.S. Congress. U.S. – China Economic and Security Review Commission. *China's Strategic Aims in Africa*. May 8, 2020

¹⁶⁸ Thomas Wheeler et al., China's Growing Role in African Peace and Security," 11–13.

establish themselves; laborers inevitably absorb local culture while exporting their own. These actions of travel reforms result in cultural immersion.

1. Chinese Tourism

China uses overseas tourism as a form of cultural and economic form of influence. China controls its citizens' travel for tourism by maintaining its foreign county standard known as the Approved Destination Status (ADS). ADS is designed to protect Chinese citizens by authorizing access to certain countries. According to an article written by Shawn Arita et al. for *Tourism Economics*, China's ADS coincides with other forms of influence such as FDI or diplomatic leverage.¹⁶⁹ Ten percent of China's overseas tourism travels to the African continent since 2014.¹⁷⁰ Egypt and Algeria are the only countries listed as ADS of the three countries studied in this thesis. Approved in 2002, Egypt saw a 20 percent increase in Chinese tourism since 2004.¹⁷¹ A 2005 survey found Egypt among the top three destinations by Chinese citizens, third only to Germany and Austria.¹⁷² Close to 400,000 Chinese tourists visited Egypt in 2017.¹⁷³ A Middle East Institute Study found all tourism to Gulf Cooperation Council countries rose and by 2018 over 450,000 tourists visited Egypt."¹⁷⁴ A rise in tourism suggests that the target state recognizes the importance of new forms of revenue. Furthermore, China has carefully selected this country as a

¹⁶⁹ Shawn Arita et al., "Impact of Approved Destination Status on Chinese Travel Abroad: An Econometric Analysis," *Tourism Economics* 17, no. 5 (October 2011): 987, <https://doi.org/10.5367/te.2011.0076>.

¹⁷⁰ BRICS Policy Center. "The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)," 2013. <http://www.bricspolicycenter.org/download/6186/>.

¹⁷¹ Shawn Arita et al., "Impact of Approved Destination Status on Chinese Travel Abroad: An Econometric Analysis," *Tourism Economics* 17, no. 5 (October 2011): 989–991

¹⁷² Yu-Wen Chen, Niall Duggan, "Soft Power and Tourism: A Study of Chinese Outbound Tourism to Africa," *Journal of China and International Relations* 4 no. 1, (May 2016): 48, <https://doi.org/10.5278/ojs.jcir.v4i1.1514>.

¹⁷³ Adel Abdel Ghafar, Anna L. Jacobs. *Beijing Calling: Assessing China's Growing Footprint in North Africa*. Washington, DC: Brookings Doha Center, 2019. https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Beijing-Calling-Assessing-China%E2%80%99s-Growing-Footprint-in-North-Africa_English-1.pdf.

¹⁷⁴ Yasser Elnaggar, "China's Growing Role in the Middle East," Middle East Institute, January 9, 2020, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/chinas-growing-role-middle-east>.

partner to influence the future. In places like Algeria or Egypt, it guarantees the continued flow of China’s cultural influence along the Maritime Silk Road.

2. Labor and Immigration

China exports culture through Chinese laborers, presenting opportunities for cultures to intermingle - though at times this may cause tension between laborers and domestic populations in target states. In addition, Chinese economic activity grants Chinese firms contracts and employs Chinese workers instead of locals. Table 2 identifies the Chinese laborers with available data; Algeria in Egypt shows increasing immigration whereas Mauritania is stable.

Table 2. Chinese Workers (contract and labor services)¹⁷⁵

Year	Algeria	Egypt	Mauritania	Total Number of Workers
2009	49631	646	1402	51,679
2011	40537	1041	2178	43,756
2012	36562	1082	1900	39,544
2013	48679	993	1512	51,184
2014	71542	185	1569	73,296
2015	91122	2302	1436	94,860

In the case of Algeria, the addition of nearly 50,000 Chinese workers makes it the largest concentrated Chinese population in Africa. According to 2018, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies on Chinese Immigration demonstrates that Chinese workers across Africa tallied over 200,000, with Algeria accounting for nearly 30 percent.¹⁷⁶ In addition, Chinese culture infuses into the region by setting up Chinatowns,

¹⁷⁵ Source: Johns Hopkins China-Africa Research Initiative (object name contract project and labor services November 8, 2020), <http://comtrade.un.org/data/>.

¹⁷⁶ Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies China Africa Research Initiative (object name Chinese, worker; March 13, 2020), <http://www.sais-cari.org/data-chinese-workers-in-africa>.

speaking the minority language, and influencing the local economy. An African Development Bank economic brief on China's relations between Egypt and Algeria considered side effects of Chinese economic engagement claiming, "North African industry has experienced the fallout associated with Chinese competitiveness in manufacturing within their domestic market and in third-country markets contributing to unemployment."¹⁷⁷

Algeria has a large unemployment population, particularly among youthful laborers. The mindset of Algerians has been consistent since President Bouteflika's first election in 1999. Aging Algerians recall a violent time of civil war where 200,000 citizens perished during the Black Decade. With an authoritarian autocracy, Algerians prefer security and stability and accept payouts from the government as subsidies. Moshin Khan and Karim Merzan, writing a report for the Atlantic Council, agree that Algeria faces an era of potential upheaval. Even as the status quo remains, the youthful demographic of the country is increasing. A generation without knowledge of or personal experience from Algeria's history may push for more significant reform. Experts predict a greater calling for a diversified economy, not as Algeria relies on Chinese trade. If the youthful population remains unemployed, Algeria may face another Arab Spring. Unemployment remained around 40 percent in 2013 and was high among MENA nations.¹⁷⁸ Figure 17 suggests that unemployment remained stagnant over a decade of increasing Chinese investment and remains at about one-third of the population among youth.

¹⁷⁷ Chris Alden, Faten Aggad-Clerx, "Chinese Investments and Employment Creation in Algeria and Egypt" (Working Paper, African Development Bank, 2012): 5–9. <https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/Brochure%20China%20Anglais.pdf>.

¹⁷⁸ Moshin Khan, et al., No Arab Spring for Algeria, 7,

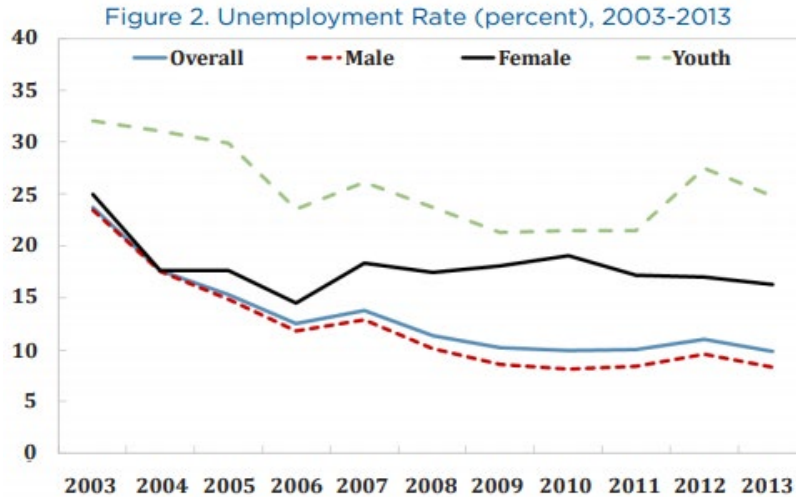


Figure 17. Algeria’s Unemployment Rate 2003–2013, IMF 2014¹⁷⁹

As early as 2009, former Algerian minister Abdelkader Bengrine pressed local authorities to respond to a rise in illegal Chinese immigration. Algeria’s labor laws favor illegal immigration, according to Bengrine. Starting in the 1990s with an increase in Chinese construction firms, today Chinese firms receive easy access to permits, employing Chinese laborers. There are other issues of nationalists fighting against Chinese laborers.¹⁸⁰ Here is an example of lower-tier power levers such as Algerian laborers organizing against Chinese firms accused of favoring Chinese labor and causing unemployment.

E. EDUCATION AND INFORMATION SHARING

Education reaches the civilian psyche. Through FOCAC, China organizes Chinese higher educational outreach through Confucius Institutions and programs. China also uses the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, to

¹⁷⁹ Source: Moshin Khan et al., No Arab Spring for Algeria. 8–11,

¹⁸⁰ “Former Algerian Minister Urges Action on Chinese Workers,” BBC Monitoring Middle East, August 06, 2009, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/wire-feeds/former-algerian-minister-urges-action-on-chinese/docview/458604259/se-2?accountid=12702>.

establish cooperative African institutions.¹⁸¹ For example, China offers the “African Talents Program,” under the UNESCO trust fund, across the continent to train African professionals in various sectors and provide government scholarships. China also encourages Chinese language teaching and chooses to support African countries to establish Confucius Institutes.¹⁸² Egypt and Mauritania are the only target states in this study with established Confucius institutes. Interestingly, Algeria considers strict tourism and educational restrictions and chooses not to host a single institute or classroom.¹⁸³

There is debate over the use of Confucius Institutes as foreign policy tools. However, Maddalena Procopio, writing for *African East-Asian Affairs*, claims that learning the language and understanding the culture is soft power.¹⁸⁴ Indeed, cultural emerge should lead to popularity among a target population. During the 2009 Sharm El Sheikh FOCAC summit in Egypt, Confucius Institutes were a focal point of Chinese cultural outreach, agreeing to three years of educational support.¹⁸⁵ Figure 18 depicts China’s overall favorability during the same timeframe is decreasing. The PEW Research data only represents a possible correlation and not causation. This data dates to the same period discussed in Chapter 2. Egyptian voters polled in 2013 the most critical issues were economic reform, law and order, and fair elections. China’s cultural initiative does not directly impact these issues. Furthermore, China’s cultural similarities, mainly because both countries represent ancient cultures, is a Chinese bumper sticker used to advertise a growing bilateral relationship. It is possible the average Egyptian does not share this sentiment.

¹⁸¹BRICS Policy Center. “The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC),” 2013. <http://www.bricspolicycenter.org/download/6186/>.

¹⁸² BRICS Policy Center. “The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC),” 2013. <http://www.bricspolicycenter.org/download/6186/>.

¹⁸³Dalia Ghanemm Lina Benabdallah, “Algiers and Beijing have Improved their Economic Ties, but Algeria can Certainly Benefit More,” Malcom H. Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center, November 18, 2016, <https://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/66145>.

¹⁸⁴ Maddalena Procopio, “The effectiveness of Confucius Institutes as a tool of China’s soft power in South Africa,” *African East-Asian Affairs* 0 no. 1–2, (June 2015): 103. <https://doi.org/10.7552/0-1-2-155>.

¹⁸⁵ Falk Hartig, “The Globalization of Chinese Soft Power,” in *Confucius Institutes and the Globalization of China’s Soft Power*, ed. R.S. Zaharna, Jennifer Hubber, Falk Hartig, 57–60 (Los Angeles, CA: Figueroa Press, 2014): 53.

Percent of Egypt responding Favorable, all years measured.



Figure 18. China's Favorability in Egypt¹⁸⁶

The first Confucius Institute in Africa was established in Cairo, teaching the Chinese language. A second school stands at Suez Canal University. From 2007–2015 enrolment grew from a few dozen to over 1,500 students, according to an interview by the Director Chinese Language and Literature Department at Cairo University. This phenomenon perpetuated, forcing non-Confucius Institutes to amend their curriculum and offer Chinese as a second language by 2009. It is worth noting that as of 2018, China continues its Confucius Institute on multiple campuses.¹⁸⁷ Furthermore, Chinese companies provide opportunities to partake in Confucius Institute events designed to build collaboration between Egyptian and Chinese counterparts. An interview of an Egyptian Engineer in February 2018 clearly states that a main Chinese goal is to establish 20 Chinese firms along the Suez Canal region while investing in cultural partnerships.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ Source: Pew Research Center (Global Indicators Database. August 15, 2020) <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/database>.

¹⁸⁷ "Interview: Confucius Institutes Enhance China-Egypt Ties: Director," Xinhua News Agency-CEIS, April 29, 2016, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/wire-feeds/interview-confucius-institutes-enhance-china/docview/1785740949/se-2?accountid=12702>.

¹⁸⁸ "Feature: Confucius Institute in Egypt Contributes to Career Development, Cultural Exchange," Xinhua News Agency-CEIS, February 25, 2018, <http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/wire-feeds/feature-confucius-institute-egypt-contributes/docview/2007827150/se-2?accountid=12702>.

Most recently, Mauritania accepted a Confucius Institute at the University of Nouakchott. China considers this a concrete result of the Belt and Road Initiative and the eight major initiatives of the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.¹⁸⁹ Director of the Confucius Institute, Zhang Jianguo, suggested this move would increase ties with the Chinese Embassy in Mauritania and called for support from academia around the country to support the cause for cultural education. Such education is coveted anywhere in Africa, bringing prospects of better-paying jobs even through Chinese companies.

F. ANALYSIS

China cultivates its diplomatic engagements as a status symbol, utilizing referent power. All target states want some of that recognition and success. For example, having successful diplomatic recognition and presence elevates Egypt, Algeria, and Mauritania because China's global voice is powerful in the UN. In addition, China can use FOCAC and the UN to gain favorability among all levels of the power lever.

Cultural soft power shows unique aspects of China's influence, including a more significant presence of lower-tier power levers. Often, the conflict with political and economic power levers and react negatively to China's presence or engagement. Confucius Institutes aim to educate youthful Egyptians and Mauritians. Experts remain divided over the effectiveness of Confucius Institutes as an influence tool. Pew Research on China's popularity in Egypt contradicted the rage among students attending Confucius education. Pew may represent more people than those who favor Chinese education. If influence is working in China's favor, it may take a generation of learning in an Institute to realize the benefit fully. FOCAC remains a crucial tool to advance Chinese education through the triannual summit and other domain projects.

Algeria rejects Confucius Institutes and other forms of Chinese education. As a result, Algerian youth remain at odds over employment opportunities despite government efforts addressing the issue. However, Algeria does support cooperative formal military

¹⁸⁹ "First Confucius Institute in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania Unveiled," Hanban News, July 8, 2019, http://english.hanban.org/article/2019-07/08/content_779667.htm.

education, sending officers to schools in China. There they receive similar education as one might in a Confucius School. However, this may be overlooked for the benefit of gaining valuable military knowledge and advancing Algeria's desire to increase its military capability.

There remains conflict in Mauritania. Those who can attend the Confucius Institutes at the University of Nouakchott, Mauritania, praise its benefits to develop the country further. Yet, several lower socio-economic classes oppose China's economic influence because their way of life is being destroyed through overfishing, pollution, and the destruction of natural habitats.

However, in all cases, Chinese engagement remains at arm's length when discussing domestic issues. In these instances, staying neutral is difficult, considering domestic violence and regime transition could jeopardize expensive investments and Chinese trade and military-strategic access. But China fears being dragged into what it perceives as senseless conflict and prefers to act in numbers when necessary to engage. Using the UN, China can partner with multiple nations. China never has to ally with a country because FOCAC can attract Egyptian, Algerian, and Mauritanian diplomacy, trade, military, and cultural goals in almost all cases.

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V. CONCLUSION

This thesis asked if China's influence in Egypt, Algeria, and Mauritania impacts the Maritime Silk Road. China's influence aims to create channels within a country's domain to create favorable outcomes, thereby laying the foundations for further Chinese influence.

China engages boldly with all three countries, active in the public's eye through economic and diplomatic engagement. China seizes opportunities through FOCAC, and more minor bilateral channels aimed at showing China's power. While China engages with each country through different domains, it remains unclear that any specific engagements may lead to instability in any one country. What is clear is that not every country or power lever is in agreement with China's actions. Consider the growing voice in Mauritania against the PANAP deal or Egyptian's decreasing favorability for China. These factors alone misalign lower-tier and upper-tier power levers, which can lead to internal conflict. There may be a perception that China's influence is growing in the region. But looking at each country, a limited but diverse selection, China's growth is uneven throughout domains and across power levers. Consider Confucius Institutes and their function. First, they are rejected by Algeria. Second, though promoted in Egypt, they do not seem to create the positive effect China is looking to develop in the cultural domain.

China uses opportunities such as Europe's recession from African petroleum in the early 2000s as an opportunity to gain reserves for itself as well as other trading footholds. China's trade influence causes an imbalance between export and import trade but does not prevent any country studied from continuing to trade based on the trade deficit. More importantly, although China appears to have displaced European countries in this domain, when referring to military sales and Egypt, specifically, China is still behind the West and Russia. This is indicative of China's influence leading to an alternate outcome. This thesis cannot show that China's activity led to this outcome; rather, the outcome differs from what China would want, more Chinese military sales.

China's tools to gain influence include its FOCAC, SEZs, bilateral agreements, and UN positions. All enable China to be in a positive spotlight, showing legitimate and referent power, in other words, something to emulate. China's true aim is to continue economic growth, building the Maritime Silk Road as a component to BRI through Europe.

Further analysis should be conducted, specifically in the cultural domain, to study the impact of China's influence further. There are several other factors that this thesis acknowledges but cannot take into complete account. As mentioned previously, other European countries hold various degrees of influence in the same studied target states. Their impact is not measured and may have a more significant effect on China's ability to influence. Neighboring countries are also substantial influencers not studied in this thesis. Information on China's influence within those countries would prove valuable to build a larger picture of China's progress in building the Maritime Silk Road.

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