China’s Foreign Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa through Material and Ideational perspectives

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ABSTRACT

The recent Chinese engagement in Africa has been on the focal point of a heated debate not only within the academia but also in the public dialogue as it has paid generous attention by the international media outlets sometimes in the wrong direction, though. This paper is aiming at shed a light on the factors which led to the contemporary Sino-African approach. More specifically, this will take place by analyzing the today's Chinese foreign policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa by taking into account not only the apparent and highly debated material forces but also the underlying ideational ones. This study strongly demonstrates the view that Sino-African relations in order to be studied thoroughly should incorporate both concepts.

Keywords: China, Sub-Saharan Africa, foreign policy, (neo-)realism, constructivism, economic interests, power, norms, identities.
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ABBREVIATIONS

AfDB        African Development Bank
AIDS        Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AU          African Union
CNOOC       Chinese National Offshore Oil Company
CNPC        Chinese National Petroleum Company
CPC         Communist Party of China
EU          European Union
FOCAC       Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
GDP         Gross Domestic Product
IFI          International Financial Institutions
IMF         International Monetary Fund
MNC         Multinational Company
NGO          Non-Governmental Organisations
NOC         National Oil Company
OECD        Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
PRC         People's Republic of China
SOE          State-owned enterprises
UN         United Nations
US           United States
1. INTRODUCTION

China's increasing economic and political involvement on the African continent is a demonstration of the remarkable shift in country’s foreign policy over the past two decades. In particular, nowadays Chinese engagement in Africa takes place in a multifaceted form and it ranges in fields such as burgeoning trade and investment by Chinese State-owned enterprises (SOEs) which is financed by China's policy banks, official provision of development assistance and recently, peacekeeping operations by Chinese forces participating under United Nations (UN) framework to be some of the prominent. High level ministerial meetings both bilateral and multilateral (under the framework of The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)) set the stage and give impetus to the Sino-African approach which is labelled by both parts as a win-win situation.

For Africa's part, Chinese involvement is arguably the most momentous development on the continent since the end of the Cold War. During that ideological period despite the fact that China's role in the continent was by no means insignificant compared with Soviet let alone Western one. Alden argues that 'the end of the Cold War and since the mid-1990s, the emergence of China as a significant political force in Africa has instigated a transformation in the continent's traditional international relations orientation'. For much of the past thirty years Africa has been considered as a developmental failure plagued by bad governance, economic decline (macroeconomic instabilities, resource curse), acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), environmental degradation and conflict. Since lately, China's engagement with Africa has turned the attention of scholar community (among others), and watchers are debating the nature and scope about the Chinese motives in the region.

Alden has attempted to illustrate the nature of the Chinese deepening presence in Africa as well as to predict potential outcomes of this. He proposes a typology which is divided into three contrary views which perceive China as.

1. 'Development partner', namely, China's involvement in Africa is part of a long-term strategic commitment to transmit its development experience to the continent and a desire to build effective cooperative partnerships across the developing world.

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2. 'Economic competitor' this interpretation holds that China is engaged in a short-term 'resource grab' which, like some Western counterparts, takes little account of local needs and concerns, whether developmental or with respect to issues like human rights.

3. 'Coloniser' which emphasises that China's new engagement in Africa is part of a 'long-term' strategy aimed at displacing the traditional Western orientation of the continent by forging relationships with African elites under the rubric of south-south solidarity.

1.1 Problem Area

Drawing upon the second and third typology, it can be clearly assumed that Chinese recent involvement in Africa is driven by materialistic incentives such as geo-economic interests, predominantly objecting to exploit the rich in natural resources and raw materials African territories. At the same time China competes with the West over the control them as well as of the African markets. Despite the fact that the relevance of the abovementioned observations is not negligible, on the contrary, it should not be underestimated the factor which perceives the China in Africa as a development partner. Actually, China has long-lasting historical ties African countries for more than fifty years. These are based on their mutual memories on colonialism and mutual beliefs as developing regions. Chinese leadership often stresses these common features between both entities; 'China is the biggest developing country and Africa, the country with the largest number of developing countries' showing in this way its solidarity and its willingness to cooperate with Africa in order to achieve prosperity and development. Consequently when we focus on today's Sino African relations we have to take into account both the material and ideational factors.

Broadly stated, the overall ambition of this study is to make an attempt to analyse today's Chinese foreign policy toward Africa. More specifically, the aim is to understand the dynamics and developments of Chinese presence in the continent. The empirical focus intends to give an overview of Chinese foreign policy and its current interests in Africa as well as the evaluation on to what extent Chinese foreign policy is driven material and ideational forces. Therefore the final goal of that paper is to give an answer to the following overarching research question:

*How can the material and ideational forces explain today's Chinese foreign policy in Africa?*

In Chapter Two the methodological part will try to explain 'how we are going to answer the research question'. Chapter Three presents the theoretical perspectives which will guide us throughout the project. Chapter Four is devoted to a brief view on Chinese Foreign Policy
principles, norms and goals. The next Chapter gives a thorough historical overview of Sino-African relations from 1949 until today. Chapters Six and Seven as the core empirical parts of that study highlight the main material and ideational forces which encompass today's Sino-African engagement. Finally, the current paper is closing by drawing conclusions and outlining the potential future perspectives of Chinese presence in the continent.

2. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to present the methodological pathways and tools which ground on that paper. In the first place, the methodological framework starts by establishing the main working questions, which are derived from the research question. Later on, it is presented the case study and the time frame of our research. Afterwards, it will take place the description of the origin of the empirical evidence as well as of the types of data which certify and consolidate the empirical hypotheses. This chapter will be followed by the introduction of the chosen theoretical considerations which will accompany the analytical part. Lastly, the current chapter will close with the methodological limitations and some clarifications.

2.1 Working Questions

In order to answer the research question in a rational way, it is essential to deal it into smaller working questions. The paper will address these queries separately in different chapters. In the end, the conclusion will try to give answer to each of those questions by providing simultaneously an elucidation to the fundamental research question. The working questions which have been established and direct us to the empirical part of are the following:

i. How have the Sino-African relations been developed?
ii. Which part of the Chinese foreign policy is guided by material forces?
iii. How the ideational content of Sino-African relations can be explained?

2.2 Case study and time frame

This work focus on illustrating the Chinese engagement in Sub-Saharan African countries, therefore we take into granted that when we are referring to Africa we mean the Sub-Saharan African states. We follow the definition of "Sub-Saharan Africa" as used in UN

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5 Algeria, Egypt, Western Sahara, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, are excluded.
Statistics Division.\textsuperscript{6} We incorporate in our empirical attention Sudan and South Sudan despite the fact that under UN's categorisation both belong to Northern Africa.

That paper aims at outlining the contemporary Sino-African relations taking into account the most recent empirical work. Nonetheless in order to understand the changing dynamics in China's approach to Africa, it is necessary to place it in the context of Chinese foreign policy from the inception of the Communist Party government in 1949 to the rediscovery of Africa in the contemporary period.\textsuperscript{7}

\subsection*{2.3 Data - Empirical Selection}

The empirical attention of that study concentrates on the fields in which Chinese engagement is evident and can offer us reflections on how material and ideational forces are formed and function. Indicatively, we are going to take into account historical and current economic and political factors and considerations which is proven that play a role in the configuration of the Sino-African relations today.

Much of the content analysis comes from official Chinese documents like the "White Paper on China's African Policy", the "White paper on China's peaceful development" as well as official credentials from the FOCAC meetings. There is also consulted secondary qualitative literature from journals, textbooks and fieldwork research reports all based on scientifically correct empirical evidence. These empirical material is straightforwardly related with the context of Chinese engagement to Africa as well as with the Chinese Foreign Policy. Apart from academic works there is used empirical quantitative and qualitative evidence from reports and surveys conducted by OECD agencies, and African Development Bank (AfDB). All the abovementioned material is written in English-language, including the official documents.

\subsection*{2.4 Theory Selection}

The study will use a social constructivist and rationalist approach in order to understand and make sense of the stated empirical problem. We will follow the examination of both strengths and weaknesses of each theoretical perspective regarding the Chinese foreign policy toward Africa.

We assume that the rationalist approach is useful because it considers that material forces (such as power and economic interests) play a major role in the configuration of the

\textsuperscript{6} Statistics Division United Nations \url{http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49regin.htm} (Retrieved 25/04/2012)

international system and as a result the recent Sino-African engagement. Furthermore, in the theoretical part will be presented the main agreements and disagreements within rational perspectives, namely between neo-realism and neo-liberalism in order to have a thorough image about the rationalist point of view. On the other hand, constructivism spotlights the importance of ideational forces like norms, identities, values and belief systems as a crucial variables for the comprehension of relations between international actors. From this perspective, different perceptions of the nature of international relations strongly impact on policy decisions of decision-makers.

We strongly believe that each theoretical concept alone is inadequate for a comprehensive understanding of China’s strategy in Africa today. Each of these theoretical schools captures different aspects of reality and identifies different causal mechanisms to be crucial. While sometimes they are considered as competing approaches, these different theoretical perspectives supplement each other. Therefore, we deduce that only a combination of material and ideational factors can deepen our understanding of China’s behaviour toward Africa.

2.5 Delineations and Limitations

Discussing about the Chinese engagement in Africa has its limitations, as when we are talking about both China and Africa we are required to generalise. Africa is not a homogenous continent, as different historical, cultural, economic and political factors have effect on the security situation in each African state a fact which definitely has repercussions in its relationship with China. On the other hand, China is not a monolithic entity as it is presented by many sides. In a globalising world, China's foreign economic policies are put into practice by an increasingly diverse set of actors under pressure from a wide variety of interest groups and constituency demands. However, if we were to summarise what Chinese foreign policy is, we might it connect it to the key domestic concern of the Communist Party of China (CPC), namely "promoting China's economic development while maintaining political and economic stability".

As far as the theory selection is concerned, we have chosen two main International Political Economy/International Relations theories the rational theory mainly expressed by Neo-Realism and Constructivism. We selected those two theoretical perspectives instead of more contemporary Global Political Economy theories, because we deem that despite the fact that the demarcation line between markets and states on foreign policy decision making especially nowadays is obscure, in final analysis the states will have the last word.

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9 ibid
It is worthy to mention that despite the fact that focus of that study is in Sub-Saharan Africa some data in Chapter regarding trade and energy incorporate African countries on the whole. Last but not least, it should be acknowledged that a serious limitation is the use of exclusively English language sources.

2.6 Research Design

![Flowchart Diagram]

**Research Question:**
How can the material and ideational forces explain today's Chinese foreign policy in Africa?

- **Social Constructivism**
- **Rational Perspectives (Neorealism)**

- **Ideational Forces**
- **Material Forces**

- **Chinese Foreign Policy Principles**

- **Historical Background of Sino-African Relations**

- **Sino-African Relations Today**

- **Ideational Forces**
- **Material Forces**

- **Conclusions**

- **Future Perspectives**
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In that chapter will be established and discussed the main theories and concepts used in the analysis of that paper. The setting and the discussion of the theories is of vital importance as they constitute the basis under which the analytical part will be unfolded. There are used two theoretical concepts which both can contribute in order to reach accurate assumptions, the rationalist approach and the social constructivism perspective, whereas we approach and define the terms of foreign policy and aid which will be also used during the analysis.

3.1 Defining and Analysing Foreign Policy

The word "policy" is defined as "prudence or wisdom" in the management of affairs. Policy is directly connected with the work of government administration. It helps define goals and directs the activities of governments and agencies. 10 According to Britannica Encyclopedia, the objectives of foreign policy is to guide the activities and relationships of one state in its interactions with other states.11 The essential task of foreign policy is to dictate how a country will conduct itself with respect politically, socially, economically and militarily regarding other countries. A country's foreign policy, mainly represents the self interest strategies of the state and how the state safeguards its national interests and achieve its goals within the sphere of international relations. Foreign policy define the goals and activities of governments specifically that of foreign ministries when dealing with other countries. Since the national interest are of great importance, foreign policies are designed by the government build on a high-level decision making process. Foreign policy is handled by foreign ministers, ambassadors and the head of government.

The national interest of the state can be accomplished through peaceful negotiation and cooperation with other states and nations or it can be done through the use of exploitation and intimidation. The tool used in foreign policy is diplomacy through which manifestations such as war, alliances and international trade are related to.12 The managing of foreign relations requires carefully considered policies that are part of the foreign interest and concerns of each government.13 Today's foreign policy, is due to the complex level of globalization and transnational activities, more or less forced to deal or interact with non-state actors as well. 14

14 http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-foreign-policy.htm. (Retrieved 12/05/2012)
The factor of foreign policy has always been important to history. Historically, foreign policy is rooting in ancient times dating back to the plains of the Africa where tribes presumably interacted from time to time without engaging in all-out-war. The first recorded formal agreements made by ancient political communities can be stated back to 1390 BC, along with records of the first quasi-diplomatic activity as far back as 653 BC. During the medieval era, kings all over Europe gained power by subordinating the barons and defying the Emperor and the pope. They became the protectors of state sovereignty against any internal or external threats. This creation of kingdoms transformed peasants into the "people" or citizens and the king became the supreme authority over all the people in the country. This important change in political transformation became the beginning of the modern era. The change from medieval to modern basically involved the construction of the independent territorial state. During this transformation, war became a key international institution for resolving conflicts between sovereign states.

The historical turning point starting with the end of the medieval era and the beginning of the modern international system and foreign policy can be defined by the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) and the peace of Westphalia that brought an end to it. In 1919, the Treaty of Versailles was created as a result of the end of World War I which became an important factor in foreign policy and international relations. After the World War I, the League of Nations was founded as an intergovernmental organization whose principal mission was to establish and maintain world peace. The League of Nations was a forerunner for the United Nations. Today, the United Nations channels official claims and foreign policy actions from different countries and acts as an international forum for foreign policy.

3.1.1 Material versus ideational forces

According to Holsti (1988), traditional scholarship in Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) posits that a state derives its foreign policy from an assessment of spatial factors and material endowments (or their absence) in conformity with a broader set of societal values. Though these materialist factors and societal values are surely crucial to setting the parameters of

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16 Ibid, p 15.
17 Ibid, p 16-17.
foreign policy choice, this traditionalist approach does not fully account for ideational forces
such as norms, beliefs and identities to be at the heart of the foreign policy process.

In fact, it is pretty helpful to emphasize the contrast between a materialist view held by
rationalists (neo-realists and neo-liberals) and the ideational view held by constructivists. According to Tang Kising\(^{20}\) and Alexander Wendt,\(^{21}\) the material world of international system is comprised at least by the following dimensions: the geographical environment of the state, the total power of the state, the international structure (i.e., the distribution of power), the relationship between the state and other states, and the nature of the international system. Whereas the ideational world consists of the following: ideologies, culture, beliefs, habits, and memories.

According to the materialistic point of view, power and national interest are the driving forces in international politics. Power is ultimately military capability, supported by economic and other resources. National interest is the self-regarding desire by states for power, security or wealth.\(^{22}\) Power and interest are seen as ‘material’ factors; they are objective entities in the sense that because of anarchy states are compelled to be preoccupied with power and interest. In this view, ideas matter little; they can be used to rationalize actions dictated by material interest. In the ideational view held by social constructivists ideas always matter. ‘The starting premise is that the material world is indeterminate and is interpreted within a larger context of meaning.’\(^{23}\)

3.2 The position of Neo-Realism

Mainstream IR scholarship ontology today, accepts individualistic and materialist conclusions about the states system. It is dominated by Theory of International Politics, Kenneth Waltz’s powerful statement of 'Neorealism,' which combines a micro-economic approach to the international system (individualism) with the Classical Realist emphasis on power and interest (materialism).\(^{24}\)

3.2.1 From classical realism to neo-realism

According to Hans Morgenthau, men and women have a common "will to power".\(^{25}\) Morgenthau viewed this as being extremely evident in politics and especially international


\(^{22}\) ibid, p. 93


politics: "Politics is a struggle for power over men, and whatever its ultimate aim may be, power is its immediate goal and the modes of acquiring, maintaining, and demonstrating it determine the technique of political action". The mind of a realist sees humans as being preoccupied with their own well being in their competitive relations with others. They see themselves setting in the driver seat with no intention of being taken advantage of. Realists aim to have the advantage which is relevant regarding people but also including international relations with other countries.

The approach to realism contains different views of theoretical thoughts. The axiomatic conclusions behind this differ on a string of a variety of matters. An aspect that divides classical realism and neo-realism lies on the consideration of how states pursue power. For classical realists the concept of power is due to the nature of humans. Neo-realists tend to emphasize on the concept and pursuit of power which is related to the structure of the international system. The concept of power from a classical realist point of view is that it leads to the end of things, whereas power from a structural realist perception revolves around the definition that power is the means to an end, which evidently is all about survival.

3.2.2 Waltzian Neorealism

According to Waltz, the basic feature of international relations is that there is a decentralized structure of anarchy between states. All states are basically the same, everyone has to collect taxes and conduct foreign policy. The main difference is in regard to the greatly varying capabilities. According to Waltz: "the structure of a system changes with changes in the distribution of capabilities across the system's units". The explanation is that international change occurs because the balance of power shifts accordingly when great powers rise and fall. Waltz argues that 'states in order to ensure their survival must maximise their power, particularly their military power. Because such power is - zero sum - an increase in the military power of one state necessarily producing a decrease in the relative power of another - Waltz argued that states are 'defensive positionalists'. For Waltz the struggle of power is an enduring characteristic of international relations and conflict is endemic. In such a world, he argued, cooperation between states is at best precarious, at worst

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A balance of power between states can absolutely be achieved but the notion of war is always a possibility.  

There are two types of power related to states- the first one is related to military power, and secondly, a covert type of power focused around the socio-economic factors that is combined with the establishment of military power. The specific degrees of power (material force) is connected to wealth, technology, geographical location, and the size of the state's population. In neo-realism, states are different but only in regard to their greatly varying capabilities.

The theory of neo-realism denies the possibility of social evolution through ideational changes. Social evolution according to a realist point of view is all about material factors. Neo-realists in general do not consider cultural differences to be of any importance, because states are considered to react the same way since the ground purpose of their means are the same. As mentioned above neo-realists view states to be similar except for some minor details concerning power status. This aspect makes it beneficial in terms of analyzing nations, since they are all aligned in their search for the same and because they all react the same way. Waltz relates to this by saying "National politics consists of differentiated units performing specified functions. International politics consists of like units duplicating one another’s activities".

A main observation by Waltz is the distinction between bipolar and multi-polar systems. His notion is that bipolar systems provide a better protection and guarantee to peace and security because they are more stable systems than multi-polar. In short, the core of neo-realism is the idea that no authority is above and beyond the great powers. In an international system there is no guarantee that one great power will retain from attacking another, because it is in the interest of great powers to be and remain as powerful as possible in order to protect itself. Waltz’s main argument is that "the great powers manage the international system".

Neo-realism can be divided into two strings the defensive and offensive realism. These theories are especially described by John Mearsheimer. When describing the power relations between great powers, Mearsheimer uses the analogy of an iron cage because great powers

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33 ibid, p.85
are forced to fight each other for power in order to survive. The intention of an offensive realism state is to threaten and decrease the security of other's intentionally whereas a defensive realism state does not seek security by intentionally diminishing the security of other's.

### 3.2.3 Neo-realism and Neo-liberalism

Neo-liberal theory embraces three elements of neo-realism: a) the importance of international anarchy in shaping state behaviour, b) the state as the most important actor in world politics and c) the assumption of states are essentially self interested.

However, the core debate between neo-realists and neoliberals is often characterised as a debate between those who think that states are preoccupied with relative gains versus those who think that states are more interested in absolute gains. More specifically, the neo-realists are sceptical about international cooperation as if states are worried about relative gains they will forgo cooperation if they fear that their gains will be less than those accrue to others. Neo-liberals on the contrary, deny that relative gains calculations pose such an obstacle to international cooperation, in this way, neo-liberals characterise states not as defensive personalists, as neo-realists do, but as "utility maximizers", as actors that will entertain cooperation so long it promises absolute gains in their interests.

In spite of these differences, neo-realism and neo-liberalism are both rationalist theories; they are both constructed upon the choice-theoretic assumptions of microeconomic theory. According to Reus-Smit three such assumptions stand out:

First, political actors such as states are assumed to be atomistic, self-interested and rational. Actors are treated as pre social, in the sense that their identities and interests are autogenous. In addition, actors are also self-interested, concerned primarily with the pursuit of their interests. And they are rational capable of establishing the most effective and efficient way to realize their interests within environmental constraints they encounter.

Second, actors' interests are assumed to be exogenous to social interaction. Individuals and states are thought enter social relations with their interests already formed. Social interaction is not considered an important determinant of interests.

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40 ibid, 191-192
41 ibid, 192-196
Third, and following yet again from the above, society is understood as a strategic realm, in which individuals or states come together to pursue their pre-defined interests. Actors are not therefore, inherently social they are not products of their social environment, merely atomistic rational beings that form social relations to maximize their interests.

3.3 The response of Social Constructivism

"Realism is essentially a material explanation of political behaviour...Without them(i.e., ideas), you cannot see change in history, and therefore you tend to see international politics as a very static game"\(^{42}\).

Despite the dominance of materialist and individualist approaches to international politics, there is a long and varied tradition of what might be constructivist thinking on the subject. According to Wendt, "a constructivist overview underlies the classical international theories of Grotius, Kant, and Hegel and was briefly dominant in IR between the World Wars in the form of what IR scholars now call 'Idealism'."\(^ {43}\) In the 1980s ideas from these and other lineages were synthesized into three main ideas of constructivist IR theory: a modernist stream associated with John Ruggie and Friedrich Kratochwil,\(^ {44}\) a post-modernist stream associated with Richard Ashley and Rob Walker,\(^ {45}\) and a feminist stream associated with Spike Peterson and Ann Tinker.\(^ {46}\)

The differences among and within these streams are significant, but they share the view that rational theoretical perspectives are 'undersocialised' in the sense that they pay insufficient attention to the ways in which the actors in world politics are socially constructed.\(^ {47}\) More specifically, they all agree on 'three core ontological propositions' about social life (international system), propositions which they claim illuminate more about world politics than rival rationalist assumptions.

First, to the extent that structures can shape the behaviour and identities of social and individual actors (states), constructivists hold that ideational structures are as important as material structures. In contrast to neo-realists that emphasise the material structure of the balance of power and Marxists stress the material structure of the capitalist world economy.\(^ {48}\)

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44 Ruggie (1983a, b), Kratochwil (1989)
Second, constructivists argue that understanding how non-material structures condition actors' identities is important because identities inform interests and in turn, actions. Constructivists also argue that understanding how actors develop their interests is crucial for explaining a wide range that rationalists ignore or misunderstand. To explain interest formation, constructivists focus on the social identities of individuals or states. As Wendt has quoted, 'identities are the basis of interests'.

Third, constructivists conceive social structures - for instance institutions, multilateral or bilateral relations between states - as mutually constituted through reciprocal interaction where within them, its members define their interests and identities. In other words, as Reus-Smit conceives that 'as a realm that generates actors as knowledgeable social and political agents, the realm that makes them who they are'.

In fact, the revival of constructivist thinking about international politics was accelerated by the end of the Cold War, which caught scholars on all sides off guard but left orthodoxies looking particularly exposed. Mainstream IR theory simply had difficulty explaining systemic changes like the end of the Cold War, or structural change, like the transition from feudalism to capitalism. It seem that these difficulties stemmed from IR's materialist and individualist orientation, such that a more ideational and holistic view of international politics might do better.

Constructivism was introduced to IR by Nicholas Onuf (1989) who coined the term. It gathered a larger following among scholars with a series of influential articles and a book by Alexander Wendt (1987, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1999). Wendt represents the mainstream variant of IR constructivism and he is engaged with a dialogue with rational (neo-utilitarian) approach. According to Jackson and Sørensen (2010: 169) 'Wendt’s analysis is systemic; it focuses on interaction between states in the international system and disregards the role of domestic factors.' According to Wendt 'the two basic tenets of 'constructivism' are: (1) the structures of human association are determined mainly by shared ideas rather than material forces, and (2) that the identities and interest of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than by nature'.

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Wendt argues that, ‘the character of international life is determined by the beliefs and expectations that states have about each other, and these are constituted largely by social rather than material structures.\textsuperscript{55} This does not mean that material power and interests are unimportant, but rather that their meaning and effects depend on the social structure of the system, and specifically on which of the ‘cultures’ of anarchy is dominant. Wendt suggests three major ideal types of anarchy: Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian.\textsuperscript{56} In the Hobbesian culture, states view each other as enemies; the logic of Hobbesian anarchy is ‘war of all against all’. States are adversaries and war is endemic because violent conflict way of survival. Hobbesian anarchy, according to Wendt, dominated the states system until the seventeenth century. In the Lockean culture, states consider each other rivals, but there is also restraint; state do not seek to eliminate each other, they recognize the other states’ right to exist. Lockean anarchy has become a characteristic of the modern states’ system after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. Finally, in a Kantian culture, states view each other as friends, settle disputes peacefully and support each other in the case of threat by a third party.\textsuperscript{57} A Kantian culture has emerged among consolidated liberal democracies since the Second World War.

Constructivism asks questions such as why and how do states change preferences, interests and hence behaviour?

Here lies the concept of socialisation, namely the ‘causal link’ between norms, identities and changes in the behaviour of states. This is a key concept of constructivism, which uses sociology to offer insights into the social construction and context of international relations. The explanatory power of social identities, kinship affiliation and the appropriateness of norms are important if one aims to understand and explain the motives and behaviour of agents.\textsuperscript{58} Exactly, this focus on social processes, changes and the influence of norms sets constructivism apart from other theories of international relations, such as neo-realism which sees the preferences of agents as static and based on material incentives.

John Ruggie\textsuperscript{59}, argues that, ‘neo-realism and neoliberal institutionalism treat the identities and interests of actors as exogenous (of the interaction) and given’, in other words, states know who they are and what they want before they begin interaction with other states. For

\textsuperscript{56} ibid, 257
\textsuperscript{57} ibid, 257
constructivists, it is the very interaction with others that ‘create and instantiate one structure of identities and interests (endogenous) rather than another; structure has no existence or causal powers apart from process’. According to Rousseau, ‘a shared sense of identity can reduce and in some cases eliminate perceptions of intergroup threat’.

3.3.1 Critique on Social Constructivism

Critics of social constructivism argue that constructivism loses balance and it is problematic in describing global system's structure and evolution.

Firstly, Tang Shiping supports that "it tends to overemphasize ideas and deemphasize material forces (e.g., power, geography, and technology). As Wendt has put it explicitly (1999: 309): 'The most important structures in which states are embedded are made of ideas, not material forces'. As a result, social evolution has now become mostly, if not purely, ideational: “Ideas all the way down. Such a position, however, is simply untenable because the fact that “material circumstances . . . affect the intellectual evolution and policy choices of political decision makers is not in dispute".

Secondly, neo-realists are sceptical about the importance that constructivists attach to norms, in particular international norms. Such norms surely exist, but they are routinely disregarded if that is in the interest of powerful states. At the same time, offensive neo-realists like Mearsheimer are not ready to accept that states can easily become friends due to their social interaction. Such a goal may be desirable in principle, but not realizable in practice, because the structure of the international system forces states to behave as egoists. Anarchy, offensive capabilities, and uncertain intentions combine to leave states with little choice but to compete aggressively with each other. For realists, by trying to infuse states with communitarian norms is a hopeless cause.

A final critique comes from Tang Shiping who argues: 'whereas neorealists like Waltz emphasize only selection at the level of state survival and deemphasize (social) learning, constructivism now emphasizes social learning (especially positive learning) and deemphasizes selection, both at the level of learning and at the level of state survival. At the learning level, constructivism emphasizes positive learning, while neglecting the fact that

64 ibid, p. 173
learning is essentially an evolutionary process in which selection through negative learning plays a fundamental role'.65

4. SETTING THE STAGE

4.1 Chinese Foreign Policy throughout history

Prior to the modern era, China was the regional hegemon with a proud history of imperial dominance. China termed itself the ‘middle kingdom’ (zhong guo) and its emperor was the ‘son of heaven’ (tian zi).66 China since the ancient times has been closely guided with the values of Confucianism. Unlike Europe, where several sovereign countries with relatively equal capabilities were constantly competing for power, China used to be "world empire" without rivalries in East Asia. China’s political and cultural influences were very strong in both the neighbouring countries such as Japan, Korea and Vietnam and on the northern nomadic tribesmen the Mongols.67

However, Chinese empire underwent a major blow during the 19th century when West and Japan controlled a big part of Chinese territory rendering practically China to a protectorate. At the receiving end of colonial aggression by Japanese and Western powers, both of whom ‘inferior barbarians’ in Chinese cosmology, gave Beijing an ambiguous attitude of ‘admiration and indignation' towards Japan and the West.68 This sense of injustice suffered by the Chinese people, termed the ‘Century of Humiliation’, is still the dominant factor that propels Beijing’s foreign relations.

Based on the above reasoning, Chinese history and Confucianism values of a harmonious world (hexie shijie) have been adopted to China's foreign policy perspective.69 This concept is conceived as providing one of the sources for the reconstruction of the present Chinese national identity, which will rejuvenate the Chinese nation.70 Since the early 20th century, Chinese elites (both nationalist leaders like Sun Yet-sen and communist leaders such as Mao Zedong, Deng Xiaoping, and Jiang Zemin) have repeatedly urged for the “rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Yan Xuetong, director of the Center for International Studies at Qinhau

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69 Dellios, R., (2009) 'China’s harmonious world (hexie shijie) policy perspective: How Confucian values are entering international society'- Invited paper presented at the 2560th anniversary conference and the fourth congress of International Confucian Association (ICA), p. 2
University, identified two rationales for the Chinese elites to assert this rejuvenation. “First, the Chinese regard their rise as regaining China’s lost international status rather than obtaining something new. Second, the Chinese consider the rise of China as a restoration of fairness rather than as gaining advantages over others.\textsuperscript{71}

This rejuvenation of China has become more evident than ever during the last three decades. The economic reforms of the post-Maoist era (after 1978) under the pragmatic leadership of Deng Xiaoping have paid handsome dividends to the country.\textsuperscript{72} In fact Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has grew more than 9 per cent on annual basis since early 1980s placing China as the world’s second biggest economy leaving third its traditional competitor Japan. This high economic growth allows more resources available for military modernization (one of the four modernizations envisaged by former premier Zhou Enlai early in 1975), and the Chinese military is steadily growing stronger now.\textsuperscript{73}

\textbf{Graph: Chinese GDP Growth rate from 1990}

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Year} & \textbf{GDP, current prices, billion \$US} & \textbf{GDP, current PPP dollars, bil.} & \textbf{Real GDP Growth, \%} \\
\hline
1990 & 390.3 & 910.3 & 3.8 \\
1991 & 409.2 & 1029.0 & 9.2 \\
1992 & 488.2 & 1203.5 & 14.2 \\
1993 & 613.2 & 1401.8 & 14.0 \\
1994 & 559.2 & 1618.6 & 13.1 \\
1995 & 727.9 & 1832.8 & 10.9 \\
1996 & 856.1 & 2054.7 & 10.0 \\
1997 & 952.6 & 2285.3 & 9.3 \\
1998 & 1019.5 & 2492.2 & 7.8 \\
1999 & 1083.3 & 2721.6 & 7.6 \\
2000 & 1198.5 & 3014.9 & 8.4 \\
2001 & 1324.8 & 3358.9 & 9.3 \\
2002 & 1453.8 & 3701.1 & 9.1 \\
2003 & 1641.0 & 4157.8 & 10.0 \\
2004 & 1831.6 & 4697.9 & 10.1 \\
2005 & 2256.9 & 5364.3 & 11.3 \\
2006 & 2712.9 & 6239.6 & 12.7 \\
2007 & 3494.2 & 7529.9 & 14.2 \\
2008 & 4520.0 & 8214.4 & 9.6 \\
2009 & 4980.5 & 9065.9 & 9.2 \\
2010 & 5930.4 & 10128.3 & 10.4 \\
2011 & 7298.1 & 11300.0 & 9.2 \\
2012 & 7991.7 & 12387.0 & 8.2 \\
2013 & 8777.2 & 13679.7 & 8.8 \\
2014 & 9641.9 & 15094.1 & 8.7 \\
2015 & 10581.1 & 16670.1 & 8.7 \\
2016 & 11599.0 & 18368.4 & 8.6 \\
2017 & 12718.9 & 20346.1 & 8.5 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

Source: OECD (2012)

\textsuperscript{71} ibid, p. 284
Under all these changes, China’s role in the present world is re-conceived and its national identity reconstructed by Chinese leaders and their intellectual followers into the following four faces: China as a socialist country with Chinese characteristics, as a sovereign state in the strict Westphalian sense, as a developing country in the globalization era, and as a potential responsible world power on the international arena. Nevertheless, it is quite surprising the fact that China denies unequivocally to be characterised as a superpower, even today being the second world economic power.

4.2 Foreign Policy Today: The White paper

The Information Office of the State Council, China's cabinet, on September 2011 published a document, called "the White paper on China's peaceful development". It is the most recent official document which illustrates in general terms the aims and strategies that China will pursue so as to achieve its developmental goals. The White Paper declares that, foreign policy plays a central role so as China to manage its targets. Not accidentally the biggest part of this document is devoted in presenting and outlining the prospective foreign policy that China will follow so as to reach its goals.

According to the White Paper 'the overall goal of China's pursuit of peaceful development is to achieve modernization and common prosperity for its people'. China in order to fulfil its goal has adopted and implemented since 1970s a three-step strategy for achieving modernization. 'The first step was to double the Gross National Product (GNP) of 1980, the second step was to redouble the output of 1980 and achieve initial prosperity by the end of the 20th century, both targets have been met. The third step aims to make the per capita GNP reach the level of that of the medium-developed countries, by 2049 the 100th year anniversary of CPC. The central goal of this three-step development strategy is to improve people's material and cultural lives, and make the people rich and the country strong.' It is evident that Chinese objectives are based on a strong material basis, being driven by its active participation in global economy, and subsequently it could be surmised that China's foreign policy will be adhered to a materialist pathway. Actually, Chinese model is based on high growth rates of its economy, which in order to be sustained, China has to ensure its energy supply security and sustainability as well as the price and non-price competitiveness of its enterprises and output.

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74 ibid, p. 289
75 Chinese Government's Official Web Portal 'Full Text: China's Peaceful Development'
76 ibid
77 ibid
The White Paper refers that Chinese strategy has been guided by the philosophy of peaceful rise (heping juequi) and it has as a current task and long-term objective to build a harmonious world. Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao has declared that the country's ascent in the international hierarchy would not come at the cost of any other country, will not stand in the way of any other country, nor pose a threat to any other country.\(^7^8\) Its foreign policy is accompanied with values such as peace, common development and prosperity, equality, self-respect, trust and coordination to be some of them. According to White Paper, "politically, all the countries in the world, whether big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, are equal members of the international community and should receive due respect of the international community", whereas, in terms of security, "use or threat of military force should be avoided".\(^7^9\) In this way, we can argue that Chinese worldview is demonstrated by Kantian values.

4.3 The principle of non-interference

Clearly stated, Chinese foreign policy is paying distinctive attention on respect of sovereignty among states, apparently being influenced by its semi-colonial experience by Western powers and Japan during 19th and early 20th century. It is quite astonishing that the White Paper even from its first page by making a special reference to the “Century of Humiliation” (bainian guochi), the period from the beginning of the first Opium War in 1839 to the prevalence of the CPC in the Chinese civil war in 1949. During this time China’s effective territorial control shrank by a third, its millennia-old imperial system collapsed, and the country was riven by internal uprisings, invasion, and civil war.\(^8^0\) That specific historic period seems to exert a substantial impact on China's self-image and simultaneously on the way it is conceiving the outside world until our days.

Therefore, it is no coincidence that Chinese foreign policy has been strictly guided with the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence (see in the next chapter). Actually, China's principle of 'non-interference' on sovereignty of other states is a cornerstone of China's conception of statecraft and international relations as a whole.\(^8^1\) It is frequently stressed in

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discourses of Chinese officials and it takes a prominent place in the policy documents.\textsuperscript{82} Undoubtedly, the principle is informed by China’s own desire that other countries should not interfere in its internal affairs, for instance human rights treatment in its autonomous regions of Tibet and Xingjian Uyghur. The principle is historically rooted in China’s experience of humiliation by Western powers in the 19th century and was thus established as a main pillar, when Beijing built up its foreign policy. The principle of non-interference continues to be an important element of the self-image of China when is projecting to the outside world and it is part of its concept of creating a ‘harmonious world’.

5. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SINO-AFRICAN RELATIONS

Many view China in Africa as a latecomer, however, it is not true. Actually, the China-Africa contacts have a long history behind it, even though from the official Chinese side are stressed and exaggerated showing eternal continuity. According to Alden and Alves, throughout history and up to 1949, "China-Africa contacts may thus be said to have been more a result of transnational trade flows with other merchant civilizations, namely the Arabs and Persians, and later a side effect of the international framework than a specific Chinese foreign policy endeavor".\textsuperscript{83} Nevertheless Chinese and Africans had direct interaction which can be dated back to the early 15th century China was under Ming Dynasty (1368 - 1644). That period, the stupendous fleet of emperor Zhang He (1405 - 1433) accomplished naval expeditions in Eastern Africa (Kenya and Somalia) which did not have any exploitative or colonial context against Africans.\textsuperscript{84} For this reason, when the People’s Republic of China was established in 1949, not only did China had no negative record on the African continent but it also benefited from an important leverage due to a common past under the hardship of western imperialism.\textsuperscript{85} Since then, though the official rhetoric of continuity speaks otherwise, the fact is that from the opening of official ties with the first African countries during mid-

1950s, China's engagement with Africa has been episodic, shifting from periods of intense activities in the 1960s and early 1970s to outright neglect for much of the 1980s.86

5.1 The Maoist Era

The Chinese state as we know it today was founded in 1949, when Chinese civil war was over (1927-1949) and the Communist Party of China (CPC) managed to capture the control of the mainland from the Chinese Nationalist Party, Kuomintang (KMT). China’s policy towards Africa under Mao Zedong's leadership was ideologically motivated, providing support for national liberation movements as well as direct state-to-state aid, most noticeably for Tanzania.87 Furthermore, China’s foreign policy aimed at winning recognition as the sole voice of China, the "One-China-policy", directed against Taiwan. The battle for diplomatic recognition between Beijing and Taipei has been a cornerstone of Chinese foreign policy since the declaration of the PPC in 1949.88

After Mao Zedong's ascend in power, Beijing was isolated from the international scene and mainly saw its relations with African governments as a means to expand its political influence. Moscow under Khrushchev, had severed ties with Beijing, while Washington did not recognise China (until 1979) and had an embargo against the country.89 As a result, Africa in the Cold War was seen primarily by Chinese leaders as a terrain of ideological competition with the Soviet Union and the United States as well as the remaining European influences.90 Generally, Beijing’s ambitions in Africa were defined by Cold War politics based on zero-sum competition.

The first official approach between China and Africa took place in 1955 with the occasion of the Asian–African Conference in Bandung which became the seminal platform of the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM).91 The 29 countries92 represented in the Conference showed their concerns about the tension between US and China, whereas they collectively opposed to the colonialism, especially French influence in North Africa, was another important topic of the conference.93 Nasser's Egypt was the first African country which established official diplomatic ties with China in 1956.

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92 From Africa participated 6 states, Ghana, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Libya and Sudan

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During late 1960s, the decolonisation process of Africa had largely completed and the newly independent states became members of UN.\(^{94}\) Chinese officials recognized that, with their numerical advantage in the UN General Assembly and anti-colonial perspective, African states held the key to removing the Republic of China (ROC or Taiwan) from its official status as occupant of the coveted permanent seat on the UN Security Council.\(^{95}\) Indeed, African states were instrumental to Beijing's strategy of voting the Republic of China out of the permanent seat in the UN Security Council in 1971. China secured the UN seat with the support of 26 African states (34 per cent of General Assembly votes). By 1976, 39 states had recognised the government in Beijing and only eight continued to maintain diplomatic ties with Taipei.\(^{96}\) Today, four African countries still recognise Taiwan instead of China, these are Burkina Faso, Gambia, São Tomé and Príncipe and Swaziland.\(^{97}\)

The early period of Sino-African interaction was based on "the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence" which had been already introduced by then Prime Minister Zhou Enlai in 1954 during negotiations with India over the Tibet issue. The Five principles are:\(^{98}\)

i. mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity
ii. mutual non-aggression
iii. non-interference in each other's internal affairs
iv. equality and mutual benefit
v. peaceful co-existence

Development assistance was a major tool of China's foreign policy toward Africa during 1960s and 1970s. Zhou Enlai during his tour in ten African countries in 1963-4 put forward the 'eight principles for China’s aid to foreign countries' a framework which was the backbone (together with the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence) of Chinese foreign policy towards the Africa during that period. These are the following\(^{99}\):  

a. The Chinese Government always bases itself on the principle of equality and mutual benefit in providing aid to other countries. It never regards such aid as a kind of unilateral aims but as something mutual.

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\(^{94}\) Former Portuguese colonies (Angola, Cape Verde, Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe) achieved independence in 1975 except for Guinea Bissau which gained in 1973, Comoros, Seychelles and Djibouti got independent in 1975, 1976 and 1977 respectively.  
b. In providing aid to other countries, the Chinese Government strictly respects the sovereignty of the recipient countries, and never attaches any conditions or asks for any privileges.

c. China provides economic aid in the form of interest-free or low-interest loans and extends the time limit for repayment when necessary so as to lighten the burden of the recipient countries as far as possible.

d. In providing aid to other countries, the purpose of the Chinese Government is not to make the recipient countries dependent on China but to help them embark step by step on the road of self-reliance and independent economic development.

e. The Chinese Government tries its best to help the recipient countries build projects which require less investment while yielding quicker results, so that the recipient governments may increase their income and accumulate capital.

f. The Chinese Government provides the best-quality equipment and material of its own manufacture at international market prices. If the equipment and material provided by the Chinese Government are not up to the agreed specifications and quality, the Chinese Government undertakes to replace them.

g. In providing any technical assistance, the Chinese Government will see to it that the personnel of the recipient country fully master such technique.

h. The experts dispatched by China to help in construction in the recipient countries will have the same standard of living as the experts of the recipient country. The Chinese experts are not allowed to make any special demands or enjoy any special amenities.

The first African recipients of Chinese aid were socialist regimes which took power in Ghana, Mali and Guinea in 1960, something which was reflecting ideological interests.\(^\text{100}\) The most sensational outcome of Chinese development assistance in Africa was the construction of TAZARA railway which linked Zambia's Copperbelt with the Indian Ocean's coastal port Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. During that period, Tanzania under Julius Nyerere a great admirer of Mao’s collectivisation strategies, belonged to non-alignment movement and thus was one of the closest allies of China. The construction completed in 1975, having had a major political significance as it broke the economic dependency of Zambia (ex North Rhodesia) from white-ruled - under Ian Smith - Rhodesia (today known as Zimbabwe).\(^\text{101}\) It is worthy to note that by the mid 1970s, China had a greater number of aid projects in Africa than did the


United States. Nonetheless, that development lost momentum during 1980s when the socialist picked up modernization program under Deng Xiaoping.

5.2 A Decade of Neglect (1979-1989)

China’s endeavours in Africa during the Cold war were limited by what it had to offer in material terms as it was still a developing state and lacking proven successful expertise. Its technical and economic assistance, though valuable, could not compete with the US or the Soviet Union, which was the determining factor for failing to get influence over the continent in the long run. With the demise of Mao and the advent of economic reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping, this enterprise was postponed for at least more than one decade.

After 1978, Chinese foreign policy was largely influenced by 'the Four Modernizations' which required massive foreign investment and technology. African states were unable to contribute to Beijing's internal reforms, due to its failure to open up to the international economy and its marginal role in global affairs. Though remaining friendly to Africa, China focused on improving trade links with the US, Western Europe and Japan. Africa's failure to develop its economies efficiently and open up to the international market militated against Chinese policy aims, and the increasing extraneous role the continent played in global (read: superpower) geopolitics resulted in a halt to closer Chinese involvement. Essentially, Beijing not only viewed Africa as largely immaterial in its quest for modernisation but also saw the rationale behind its support for anti-Soviet elements in the continent was no longer valid. More limited Chinese engagement in Africa during the 1980s reflected the reorientation of Chinese aid in Africa during the 1980s when its political philanthropy developed into more commercially oriented involvement.

That shift became apparent during Premier Zhao Ziyang’s Africa tour to 11 countries in 1982-83. That visit aimed at launching a new African policy framed by China’s new developmental priorities and global interests. Zhao reaffirmed China’s support for African liberation struggles, the consolidation of African political independence, South-South co-operation and third world unity. But the changes brought by the new Africa policy were

summarised in the ‘Four Principles on Sino-African Economic and Technical Cooperation’, announced by the Chinese Premier in Tanzania at the end of this tour. This statement differed substantially from the ‘Eight Principles for Economic and Technical Cooperation’ announced by Zhou Enlai in its 1963/64 Africa tour, diverging from the Cold War ideological framework.\textsuperscript{108}

5.3 The Post Tiananmen revival

Despite the decade of neglect in their relations during 1980s. Sino-African approach gained impetus anew during the early 1990s. According to Ian Taylor, an event and two processes - one within Africa and the other within China - came together to stimulate the current closer involvement of Chinese actors in Africa.\textsuperscript{109}

First, the events of June 4, 1989 in and around Tiananmen Square meant that Beijing underwent a major re-evaluation of its foreign policy toward the developing world. Tiananmen Square resulted in (an albeit temporary) crisis in China's relations with the West, including an arms embargo imposed by the US and the European Union (EU), and persistent Western criticism of China’s human rights record.\textsuperscript{110} Isolation was further bolstered by collapse of the Soviet Union which positioned China as the remaining communist power.\textsuperscript{111} Therefore, developing world was effectively elevated in Chinese thinking to become a cornerstone of Beijing's foreign policy in an effort to build coalitions and shield itself from Western criticism.

As far as the macro-processes are concerned. Firstly, as Africa's economic reform programs gained momentum in 1990s, Beijing began to believe that the macroeconomic situation in Africa was taking a favourable turn with resultant opportunities for Chinese commerce. This analysis was based on the belief that the African countries have adopted a set of active measures to push forward the pace of privatisation, opening up international trade and reform based on multilateral and bilateral trade agreements. China has sought to take advantage of these developments in Africa and has officially encouraged joint ventures and economic cooperation at multiple levels. Additionally, Africa is perceived by both Chinese

\textsuperscript{108} ibid, p. 52
government and by Chinese companies to be rich in natural resources, particularly in crude oil, nonferrous metals and fisheries.\textsuperscript{112}

The above then links up with the second macro-process. Through the 1990s world trade grew about twice as fast as world output and FDI flows grew twice as fast as trade.\textsuperscript{113} The process of the economy was stimulated by the introduction of new technologies that shrunk distances and speeded up transactions. This new framework established economic diplomacy as a tool to promote and protect national interests and became an important strategy for conducting foreign policy. China began to follow a more liberal economic (under socialist characteristics) pathway by introducing reforms experiencing an unprecedented economic thriving. The economic diplomacy of China started to make its first steps overseas through investment and trade by further regional and global engagement. China's status as a developing country and its history of exploitation by European powers, together with the fact that it does not attach any particular conditions to its financial aid gives it a good reputation among the African elites.\textsuperscript{114}

The new strategy was capped by a dramatic increase in visits by top leaders to Africa, where they explained and marketed the new program of aid and economic cooperation. Three Chinese vice-premiers fanned out to visit a total of 18 African countries in 1995. Chinese premier Li Peng visited Morocco that year, and the following President Jiang Zemin travelled to six African countries, the first time a Chinese president had ever visited Africa.\textsuperscript{115} According to Alden the new Sino-African relations from mid 1990s onwards are defined by \textit{strategic economic interests}. This was confirmed during Chinese president Jiang Zemin tour of Africa when he presented a Five Points Proposal which established the terms of a new relationship with Africa on a non-ideological footing.\textsuperscript{116} This is emphasized:\textsuperscript{117} a) reliable friendship, b) sovereign equality, c) non-intervention, d) mutually beneficially development and e) international cooperation. The trend of high-level visits intensified during 2000s showing that Africa is high on the agenda of Chinese foreign policy.

\textsuperscript{114} ibid, p.165
5.4 The Years of FOCAC

The culmination of Sino-Africa rapprochement during 1990s gave birth to the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), which was formally founded in 2000. Weping He argues that, "FOCAC from a historical perspective must be seen as a continuation of the spirit of the Bandung Conference".\(^{118}\) However, economic matters have been the strongest component of the forum since its establishment. According to its official website, FOCAC is part of the spirit of the 21st century to maintain peace, to seek stability and to promote development, which is what all countries want. The website states that the Forum is established by China and a number of friendly African countries with the main purpose of being a mechanism for collective consultation, dialogue and cooperation between the developing countries. FOCAC aims to promote cooperation in a wide range of fields: political

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affairs, peace and stability issues, multilateral cooperation, economic and social development.\textsuperscript{119}

The first High-level Ministerial meeting within FOCAC was held in Beijing in 2000. That meeting concerned itself with two major areas: how to promote and establish a just and equitable new international order, and how to further strengthen co-operation between China and Africa on economic and social development. Two important policy documents were published during that meeting, the Beijing Declaration and the Programme of Cooperation on Economic and Social Development. In 2003 the summit took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In 2006 the summit once again took place in Beijing the most recent event took place in Sharm El Sheik, Egypt in November 2009.

\textbf{5.4.1 FOCAC High Ministerial meetings of 2006 and 2009}

On the 4th and 5th of November 2006, a Chinese delegation including the government and 41 Heads of State met in Beijing with 48 African countries to participate in the third FOCAC summit meeting.\textsuperscript{120} In short, the summit was a platform for the enhancing of the South-South cooperation and a call for a North-South dialogue and the World Trade Organizations to resume the Doha Round of negotiations. A number of commitments were made during the summit in 2006. The FOCAC III summit in 2006, followed the publication of China’s Africa Policy and was used to publicize the Sino–African relationship to the world. One of the major results of FOCAC III was a list of eight development pledges to China’s African partners including\textsuperscript{121}: 1) the doubling of aid, 2) provision of preferential loans and buyer credits, 3) establishment of a development fund, 4) building of the AU conference centre, 5) debt cancellation, 6) unilateral market access, 7) opening of new trade and economic cooperation zones and 8) training of African professionals.

In the same manner FOCAC IV generated eight pledges that resembled the challenges of the previous agreements. They include: (1) climate change cooperation; (2) technology transfer; (3) a further US$ 10 billion in concessional loans and cancelling of debts; (4) zero-tariff treatment for 95 per cent of products from ‘poorer’ countries; (5) further development of agricultural cooperation; (6) increased focus on malaria prevention and treatment; (7) education through, amongst others, constructing fifty schools and training teachers; and (8)

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{119} FOCAC official website \url{http://www.focac.org/eng/tdla/dscbzhjy/DOC32009/1280369.htm} (Retrieved 25/04/2012)
  \item \textsuperscript{120} Jansson, J. (2009), 'FOCAC: A briefing paper by the Centre for Chinese Studies Prepared for World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). Centre for Chinese Studies, University of Stellenbosch. p. 1
  \item \textsuperscript{121} Kragelund, P. (2011). 'Back to BASICS? The Rejuvenation of Non-traditional Donors’ Development Cooperation with Africa'. Development and Change, 42 (2), p. 597
\end{itemize}
increased collaborative research\textsuperscript{122}. These pledges by no means consist only of aid. They combine aid, trade and investment measures, and most are best described in terms of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) concept ‘other official flows’ (OOF), comprising funds from governments that do not meet the criteria for ‘official development aid’.\textsuperscript{123} Although, it seems that during the Sino-African cooperation under the FOCAC framework the Official Development Assistance (ODA) from China to Africa between 2001 and 2009 presents a significant almost fourfold increase from $303 million to $1390 million, but still it can't be compared with US or European ODA which for 2007 were around $5 billion and $12 billion respectively.\textsuperscript{124}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure3.png}
\caption{China's annual African aid disbursements}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{122} ibid, p. 598
\textsuperscript{123} In 1969, DAC adopted the concept of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and defined it as: "Flows of official financing administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as the main objective, and which are concessional in character with a grant element of at least 25 percent (using a fixed 10 percent rate of discount). By convention, ODA flows comprise contributions of donor government agencies, at all levels, to developing countries ("bilateral ODA") and to multilateral institutions. ODA receipts comprise disbursements by bilateral donors and multilateral institutions. Lending by export credit agencies— with the pure purpose of export promotion—is excluded". (OECD, 2009)
6. MATERIAL FORCES BEHIND CHINESE ENGAGEMENT

China's tremendous economic growth has as immediate effect the growing need for natural resources and raw materials.\textsuperscript{125} The Chinese average income level per capita achieved a rise over 400 per cent between 1980 and 2000.\textsuperscript{126} In addition its population has risen and will keep on rising, along with the demand for material goods for its output and consumption needs. Due to its geology and climate China's domestic production can not cope with this increasing demand. This development inevitably has attracted lots of awareness on how able China is going to sustain itself.

Africa's abundant and relatively unexploited natural riches such as energy resources, non-ferrous minerals and timber as well as agriculture and fisheries offer the Chinese a unique opportunity to lock in through formal or informal means a steady supply of key resources serving in this way its economic interests.\textsuperscript{127} After the start-up of Going-out strategy in early 2000s the Chinese companies have developed a multidimensional role in African markets. Chinese SOEs operate in sectors ranging from natural resources extraction, manufacturing, to construction of infrastructure taking at the same time advantage of cheap finance via mainly export credits by the Chinese banking system. Last but not least, Chinese development assistance seems to be really close related with the ever-increasing Chinese commercial interests in the continent.

6.1 Africa and China's Oil Security

China's exceptionally robust economic growth in 1990s and 2000s has stimulated huge upsurge in demand for oil. Between 1995 and 2005, China's oil consumption doubled.\textsuperscript{128} The projections estimate that Chinese demand for oil will increase by 156% between the years 2001 and 2025.\textsuperscript{129} It is worthy to mention that China became a net importer of oil products in 1993\textsuperscript{130}, and net importer of crude oil in 1996\textsuperscript{131}. Thus, Chinese public authorities have initiated strategies in order to secure and diversify the oil supply from overseas and as a result to lessen the pressure from the escalating oil demand.

\textsuperscript{130} Burke, C., Jansson, J. and Jiang, W. (2009). 'Formulation of energy policy in China: Key actors and recent developments'. Centre for Chinese Studies, University of Stellenbosch. p.2
Africa owns approximately 8% of the world oil reserves and 11% of the world oil production.\textsuperscript{132} As a result today, Africa for China is set to become a more important source of oil, partly as a strategic offset to dependence on the Middle East.\textsuperscript{133} Indeed, nothing symbolised Africa's importance to the Chinese economy so succinctly as Angola becoming China's largest foreign supplier of oil, passing Saudi Arabia in 2006. Already in mid 2000s, over 31 per cent of all of China's oil requirements are sourced from Africa.\textsuperscript{134}

Since mid 1990s, Chinese oil companies, initially CNPC, have entered into an array of overseas oil investments.\textsuperscript{135} In Africa, Chinese NOCs made their first appearance in 1996, when CNPC purchased a 40% stake in the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company in Sudan\textsuperscript{136}. Since then, CNPC has started operations in 5 African countries\textsuperscript{137} whereas all Chinese NOCs (Sinopec and CNOOC the other two major ones) have been involved in various deals with the majority of the nineteen African countries that produce oil or have confirmed oil reserves.\textsuperscript{138}

\textsuperscript{137} CNPC worldwide http://www.cnpc.com.cn/en/cnpcworldwide/ (Retrieved 20/05/2012)
6.2 Sino-African Trade

Of the wide range of Chinese activities in Africa, the incremental Sino-African trade transactions provide the most powerful evidence of China’s emerging economic interests in the continent. The three major sections in the Sino-African economic relationship are: China's drive for resources especially oil but also minerals and food; new export markets for its products; and new investment opportunities for its companies.¹³⁹

Trade between China and Africa began to accelerate from 2000. In fact, bilateral trade surged from $11.58 billion at the end of 2000 to $93.6bn in 2009.¹⁴⁰ At the start of last decade, China only represented the 4.1 per cent of Africa's trade but at the end of 2009 its trade with Africa had more than tripled to nearly 14%.¹⁴¹ This happened at the expense of the two dominant world trade powers the EU and the US. Both saw theirs share on bilateral trade with African countries between 2000 and 2009 to shrink from 53.5 to 44.5 per cent for EU and from 16.1 to 13.1 per cent for the US.¹⁴²

**Figure 5: Sino-African Trade (1995-2009)**

![Source: World Trade Atlas](image)

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¹⁴¹ ibid, p.99
¹⁴² ibid, p.99
6.2.1 Chinese Imports from Africa

Fossil fuels and raw materials represent roughly the 4/5 of Chinese imports originating from Africa. According to Carmody, from 2000 to 2003, China accounted for the vast bulk of increased global demand for aluminium (76 pct.), steel (95 pct.), nickel (99 pct.) and copper (100 percent). At the same time Africa holds "42% of the world's share of bauxite, 38% of its uranium; 42% of the world's reserves of gold; 73% of its platinum; 88% of diamonds. The continent also has enormous reserves of non-ferrous metals, like chromite (44%), manganese (82%), vanadium (95%) and cobalt (55%)."\(^{143}\)

The table below, shows that 10 African countries takes up 76% of all trade relations with China. Angola is China's major trading partner with 21% of the entire market of the Sino-African trade. It shows that 50% of the trade relations with these 10 countries is based on natural resources specifically oil exports to China whereas the other 27% is related to manufactured goods and the 2% agriculture.

**Figure: China’s top 10 African trading partners between 2006 - 2010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Economic type</th>
<th>Average annual trade, 2006-2010 (US $ million)</th>
<th>Share in total China-Africa trade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>Oil export</td>
<td>16.827</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>Diversified economy</td>
<td>166.86</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>Oil export</td>
<td>6.445</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>Oil export</td>
<td>5.774</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>Diversified economy</td>
<td>5.384</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>Oil export</td>
<td>4.155</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>Oil export</td>
<td>4.154</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of the Congo</td>
<td>Oil export</td>
<td>3.241</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>Diversified economy</td>
<td>2.548</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>2.097</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weight of top ten trading partners in total China-Africa trade</strong></td>
<td><strong>76%</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Yong (2011)\(^{144}\)

From the same table, it is getting clear that the lion share of the Sino-African trade relations is built upon China's demand for natural resources which is fuelled by Chinese economic growth and its deep concern for energy security. Overall, five oil and mineral exporting countries account for 85% of Africa's exports to China.\(^{145}\)

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\(^{143}\) Carmody, P. (2010). ‘Globalisation in Africa: Recolonization or Renaissance?’ London: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc, p.4

\(^{144}\) Yong, Lu (2011) “China’s Trade Rush with Africa”, available from: [http://www.focac.org/eng/zfmx/820242.htm](http://www.focac.org/eng/zfmx/820242.htm) (Retrieved 03-05-12)

6.2.2 Chinese exports to Africa

The main Chinese exports to Africa are manufactured goods (such as electronics, textiles and apparels) and machinery and transport equipment. Together, they comprise the 90.3 per cent of China's exports to Africa.¹⁴⁶ Manufactured exports to Africa consist of either intermediate inputs for products assembled in Africa and shipped to third markets (US-EU), or capital goods (machinery-equipment) destined for African manufacturing sectors; some are non-durables, which compete with domestic manufactures in Africa.¹⁴⁷ As China's economy has taken off, the search for more and more markets for Chinese exports has intensified. Africa is seen as a useful and profitable destination, and Chinese imports into Africa - mostly low-cost and low-quality goods-have taken over the marketplaces in most African countries, as any visitor will attest.¹⁴⁸ This development creates a big problem for African economies and output as cheap Chinese goods which have overwhelmed African markets compete directly and in many cases in unequal terms with the domestic ones.

6.3 The Drivers and Instruments of Chinese Economic Engagement

As we underlined in the previous Chapter, Chinese in their economic engagement with the African countries combine aid, trade and investment. China's prolonged period of high growth rates which is based primarily on its export capacity has resulted in accumulating large trade surpluses with most of its trade partners. These trade surpluses are reflected in massive Foreign Exchange Reserves which according to the Chinese Central Bank were estimated in approximately $3.3 trillion in March 2012.¹⁴⁹ This is another reason why it is considered as an important investment partner by many African countries. The burgeoning Foreign Exchange Reserves enables Beijing to offer African countries concessional loans and other preferential credits.¹⁵⁰

Furthermore the Chinese Forex Reserves are used for the financing the Chinese SOEs wishing to operate overseas participating in Going out strategy. The China Eximbank occupies a central role in Beijing's engagement with African governments China's strategy of 'going global'. It was established in 1994 as government owned institution whose principal activities are to support the expansion of Chinese business by providing financial export credit

and international loans for overseas construction and investment, and offering official lines of credit.\textsuperscript{151}

The Chinese government has established eleven Trade Promotion Centres around the continent and Chinese are actively encouraged to see Africa as trade and investment destination. Over 800 Chinese companies are doing business in 49 African countries with 480 involved in joint ventures with African firms.\textsuperscript{152} Except for the energy resources which undoubtedly are the most important focus of Chinese involvement in the continent, there are other forms of resource-based commercial engagement with Africa play an important part in shaping trade and investment ties, among these commercial logging in Equatorial Guinea and Liberia, cotton and sisal plantation agriculture in Tanzania, the rehabilitation of transport infrastructure in Botswana, new investments in textile manufacturing in Zambia and Kenya and the installation of sophisticated telecommunication systems in Djibouti, Namibia and Sierra Leone.\textsuperscript{153}

Linked to these investments are projects aimed at improving the physical infrastructure of these countries especially road and port facilities, which enhance the attractiveness of Chinese ventures to African governments as well as improving the export efficiency of these enterprises. Chinese companies have often successfully outbid their Western or Southern counterparts,\textsuperscript{154} through the traditional strategies of linking investment to tie in projects and providing lower labour costs in the form of less costly managerial staff and by introducing their own contract workers. Some of these ventures are promoted and managed by not only high profile Chinese multinationals but also by small and medium enterprises.\textsuperscript{155}

6.4 Chinese Development Assistance

Foreign aid policy comprises one of the fundamental instruments of Chinese foreign policy toward Africa. Chinese aid policy goals are set by its political leaders. In particular there are two institutions which are responsible for the aid distribution the Ministry of Commerce and the China Eximbank. Brautigam argues that China gives aid to Africans for three reasons:\textsuperscript{156}

a) strategic diplomacy,

\textsuperscript{152} Broadman, H., G. et al. (2006)."Overview" in Africa`s silk Road: China and India`s New Economic Frontier. Washington, DC: The World Bank, p. 6
\textsuperscript{154} Brazilian, Indian, Southafrican companies
b) commercial benefit

c) as a reflection of society's ideologies and values.

An important difference between the Chinese and Western aid is that societal interest
groups such as NGOs play a minor role in shaping China's role. Whereas private and semi
private commercial interests are a growing factor in the determination of Chinese assistance
particularly at the provincial levels. However, in China state interests (political, commercial
and bureaucratic) overwhelming the societal influence on aid. Western donors for a long
time perceived the African state as an obstacle to socio-economic development, often
circumventing it and its elites by channelling aid through NGOs. This sharply contrasts with
the state-centred concepts of Chinese who, unlike Western countries, agree to finance
grandiose and prestigious buildings that African leaders highly appreciate for their own
political reasons. This kind of grandiose projects as well as infrastructure projects are
regarded as out of fashion among the Western donor community, which is preoccupied with
the reduction of poverty.

Chinese development assistance primarily takes the form of development projects, as they
are perceived to produce quick and tangible results. Likewise, we know that while Chinese
development assistance is intended for both productive and social sectors, the majority of the
assistance is channelled into infrastructure projects including roads, power plants and
telecommunications. Since most infrastructure projects are public sector works, China
conceives its investments as goodwill projects to woo the sympathies of African state leaders.
This enables China to gain political influence, which often open the doors for commercially or
strategically more attractive business in other sectors, for example to win tenders for oil and
mining concessions.

6.4.1 Non-interference and (usually) no strings attached.

According to Brautigam, 'China does not claim to know what Africa must do to develop.
China has argued that it was wrong to impose political and economic conditionality in
exchange for aid, and that countries should be free to find their own pathway out of
poverty'. However, Jakobson and Knox argue that, 'Chinese aid is not unconditional' as
some may believe. Support by the recipient country for China's "One China" position ruling

157 ibid., pp. 15-6
continent Embrace'. London: HURST Publishers Ltd. p.121
159 Kragelund, P. (2011). 'Back to BASiCs? The Rejuvenation of Non-traditional Donors’ Development
Cooperation with Africa'. Development and Change, 42 (2): p. 598
continent Embrace'. London: HURST Publishers Ltd. p.121
out Taiwan’s independence is a near absolute requirement to receive aid. Thus, aid provision is an important factor in China’s ability to limit Taiwan’s formal and even informal relationships around the world.\footnote{Jakobson, L. \\& Knox, D. (2010). ' New Foreign Policy Actors in China'. Stockholm: SIPRI Policy Paper 26, p.10} Kragelund comes to confirm the aforementioned observation as "we do know that countries that exchange diplomatic ties with Taiwan for China can expect to be rewarded with large increases in development assistance".\footnote{Kragelund, P. (2011). 'Back to BASICs? The Rejuvenation of Non-traditional Donors’ Development Cooperation with Africa' Development and Change, 42 (2), p. 598} It is also common from Chinese side to link grants or concessional loans to resource deals by major Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs).\footnote{Jakobson, L. \\& Knox, D. (2010). ' New Foreign Policy Actors in China'. Stockholm: SIPRI Policy Paper 26, p.11}

### 6.4.2 Tied Chinese Aid

The use of Chinese firms and Chinese-sourced materials, has been a consistent component fact of China's aid programme. Here lies a criticism against Chinese development assistance offered to African countries in form of investment and loan packages. Which means that they often stipulate that contracts be awarded to Chinese companies. Since Chinese aid often comes in the form of loans and grants leverage to insist on such provisions is robust.\footnote{Taylor, I. (2009). 'China's New Role in Africa'. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p.22}

Prestige projects such as aid buildings and stadiums, have also played an important part in securing agreements with the African governments. Examples of this include the construction of an extension to the building housing parliament in Uganda, new offices for the ministries of foreign affairs in Angola and Mozambique, presidential palaces in Harare and Kinshasa, and stadiums in Sierra Leone and the Central African Republic. This form of symbolic diplomacy has great appeal to African elites who welcome the opportunity to replace colonial era public buildings, as well as being a vivid demonstration of Chinese largesse.\footnote{Taylor, I. (2009). 'China's New Role in Africa'. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p.22}

Another reason that Chinese aid is welcomed by African leaders is the fact that the focus on building infrastructure has been largely ignored by Western donors in recent years. According to a Western diplomat "China is able to build a railway before the World Bank would get round to make a cost-benefit analysis."\footnote{Alden, C. (2007). 'China in Africa'. Zed Books Ltd. p. 23} Undoubtedly, Chinese willingness is highly appreciated by African leaders. Lastly, Chinese companies with aid experience in Africa have an important advantage in securing contracts over other engineering companies in

\begin{footnotes}
\end{footnotes}
that they are prepared to undertake projects at a very low tenders as a means to ensure future contracts.\textsuperscript{168}

\textbf{6.5 Angola: Competing with the West}

A good example of Chinese pragmatic engagement with Africa is Angola. Angola being an oil producer and OPEC member which after decades of civil war, rapid post-conflict reconstruction became the government’s priority in the early 2000s. As a result, it began to seek partners in the international community that could help to make this happen. At the end of the war the IMF and many Western donors wanted Angola to adopt a staff-monitored programme (SMP) demonstrating good performance against certain criteria (transparency with oil revenues, tax reforms, trade liberalisation etc.) that would lend credibility to Angola’s economic policies and open the way for a donor conference to raise funds for national reconstruction today seems willing either to fill the gap of Western donors and IFIs or even challenge them.\textsuperscript{169}

The Angolan government taking advantage of the high international oil prices refused to come into terms with the conditionalities and announced in 2003 that they no longer sought to conclude an agreement with the IMF.\textsuperscript{170} It was in this context that China sought to offer Angola a $2bn oil-backed infrastructure loan (which guarantees China a supply of 10,000 barrels per day) with far fewer conditionalities (tied loan one of them) and a preferential interest rate at 1.5 percent.\textsuperscript{171} In this manner, Angola succeeded in starting its urgent need for reconstructing its infrastructure. At the same time, China managed to ensure an alternative source of energy resources which is necessary for fuelling its economic growth, as well as its construction companies took advantage undertaking a big part of the infrastructure projects.

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{168} ibid
\textsuperscript{170} ibid, p. 869
\end{flushright}
7. IDEATIONAL FORCES BEHIND SINO-AFRICAN RELATIONS

Materialist point of view argues that China's engagement in Africa can be attributed to economic and commercial interests or balance of power on the global level. On the contrary, there is also an alternative notion supporting that Chinese foreign policy toward Africa is dictated by ideational forces such as mutual identities, beliefs and norms which have been formed historically resulting from the more than fifty years interaction between the two entities. As constructivists argue that system of shared ideas beliefs and values also have structural characteristics that they exert a powerful influence on social and political action. According to Alden 'the emphasis on self-interest mingled with shared experiences and developmental aims is seen to be the common project that encapsulates the rationale for a renewed engagement between China and Africa. 172

'Nowadays Sino-African relations have as a point of convergence shared values and norms such as the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, mutual development and benefit all them under the framework of 'south-south cooperation'. Nevertheless, there are occasions in which China's disposal seems to diverge even slightly from some of the above mentioned norms (non-interference principle), something which became evident in case of Darfur during 2006-2008.

7.1 South-South Cooperation: A Collective identity Construction?

Historically, China and Africa were used to classify each other as parts of Third World during the Cold War under the anti-imperialistic camp of Non-Alignment Movement, whereas they share common experiences such as colonialism. Weping He, argues that "China has always regarded Africa as its most reliable ally in the international struggle. China's non-aligned foreign policy and its national commitment to socialism imply a promise that China will stand firmly and support the countries of developing world". 173 Alden and Alves believe that "the use of history by Chinese foreign policy makers is clearly aimed at drawing lines of continuity that paper over these shifts and breaks in Africa policy that have been the experience of all external powers engaged in Africa. In this context, the evocation of solidarity politics is carefully employed to suggest a shared sense of identity as fellow third

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world states whose interests and outlooks on the prevailing international system have remained unaltered over the last 50 years".174

Today, under the motto of South-South cooperation, the Chinese leadership has established a comprehensive discourse on the principles of its relations with Africa. The Chinese government highlights the common grounds and the common interests in Sino-African relations. According to Hackenesch, "this discourse aims at creating a common Sino-African identity in order to plaster differences in bilateral relations with regard to conflicting interests or contradictory practice to principles. African countries are designated as 'friends' or 'brothers', sharing similar historical experiences as both sides have been colonised by Western powers. China’s discourse is thus deeply rooted in and often refers to the perceived history and long tradition of Sino-African relations – emphasising continuity".175 It is becoming obvious in the White Paper on China's African Policy issued in 2006, which declares that: "sincerity, equality and mutual benefit, solidarity and common development—these are the principles guiding China-Africa exchange and cooperation and the driving force to lasting China-Africa relations".176

Chinese often point out that they treat African countries all equal and would not differentiate, for instance, between strategically more or less important countries. As far as development assistance is concerned, although the amounts might differ, China is providing aid to all African countries which have diplomatic relations with China. It also appears to be the case that China ‘ensures that visits by senior leaders to Africa include countries that do not have natural resources’.177 Even countries like Ethiopia with only limited natural resources, have seen their trade with China double from US$ 150 million in 2003 to US$300 million in 2005.178 According to Beijing, equality in Sino-African relations inevitably results in a 'win-win situation' for both sides. This stand is embedded in a discourse which posits China not only as an appealing alternative to the West, but also as a better choice for Africa.179

7.2 State Sovereignty and Positive Learning

As we saw in Chapter Four, mutual benefit and respect of sovereignty is a repeating buzzword used by Chinese in their official documents as well as on their relations with African countries. As Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao restated, 'in cooperating with Africa, China is not looking for selfish gains. We are committed to two principles: equality, benefits both ways and the non-interference in internal African affairs'.\(^{180}\) This is explained by the shared history of imperialism and colonialism when both China (during the Century of Humiliation) and Africa had suffered at the hands of Western states. Given the increasingly ambivalent relations between African countries and the former colonial powers, China makes a point of stressing its distinctiveness from Western countries and their policies when approaching its African counterparts.

What makes the Chinese stance on sovereignty, so particular in regard to Africa is the fact that perhaps nowhere else in the world has state sovereignty been more eroded than on that continent.\(^{181}\) This was largely the result of Western-prescribed policies - the notorious Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) - through International Financial Institutions' (IFIs)\(^{182}\) in the 1980s and 1990s. According to Kragelund, "the ‘adjustment era’ of the 1980s drastically changed the aid relationship between the donors and recipients".\(^{183}\) By tying development assistance to (macro)economic and political (good governance) reform, Western donors sought to impose or support structural change in Africa's aid-dependent countries. Although not consistently carried out, the imposition of economic and political conditionalities progressively undermined the sovereignty of African states and put their governments under considerable stress.\(^{184}\)

Nowadays, Chinese are taking seriously into account African nations' sensitivity into sovereignty issues and they follow a different from the Western strategy when they engage with development assistance initiatives in Africa. In particular, they combine the aforementioned foreign policy norms with their positive learning from their developmental experience the years of modernisation since late 1970s. More specifically, they are adopting the example of Japanese resource-backed development loans in China, with which Chinese boosted initially their economy by getting new infrastructure and technology from Japan.

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\(^{181}\) ibid, p. 118

\(^{182}\) The IMF and the World Bank, also called the Bretton Woods institutions, lending their name from the area in New Hampshire, US in which they established in 1944.


repaying it with shipments of oil and coal.\textsuperscript{185} The same takes place today in many parts of Africa with natural riches (see Angola case, in previous chapter) where Chinese benefit from African raw materials and resources but at the same time Africans are taking advantage of infrastructure and production capacity building, both vital assets for their modernisation and future prosperity. Hence, the Chinese involvement in development assistance initiatives in Africa can be seen as the manifestation of a win-win game.

7.3 Darfur: A Normative Change?

The excluded and sanctioned by international community - due to North-South civil war (1983- 2005) - Sudanese regime has been one of the most intimate economic partners of China in Africa over the last two decades. Sudan is providing 60 per cent of its oil output to the Chinese market,\textsuperscript{186} being China's third largest trade partner in the continent after South Africa and Angola in 2005. While, Chinese oil company CNPC has invested billions of dollars in the downstream and upstream oil sector of the country. Problematically, the vast majority of Sudan's oil is found in the Upper Nile (which today is part of the newly independent South Sudan) where the largely non-Muslim Dinka and Nuer people live.\textsuperscript{187} Oil has thus been an integral part of the long-standing dispute between the Arabic north represented by the official Khartoum government under Omar al-Basir and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement / Army (SPLA/M) based in Yuba currently capital city of Southern Sudan.

According to Taylor, certainly Khartoum has used hard currency generated by Chinese investment in Sudanese oil fields to finance conflict in the southern part of the country.\textsuperscript{188} The same applies for Darfur conflict which led to a serious humanitarian crisis where more than 200,000 people killed across the area, and at least 2.2 million others forced to flee their homes, since local rebel groups began fighting Sudanese government forces and allied Janjaweed militia in 2003.\textsuperscript{189} The Darfur atrocities caused substantial damage to China's international reputation, due to Beijing's stance - as late as 2005 - to hamper and undermine the efforts for a resolution to the crisis by abstaining consistently from UN Security Council


\textsuperscript{188} ibid, p. 122

\textsuperscript{189} UN News Centre. (2007) "UN actions to end Darfur 'genocide' too little, too late" \url{http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=24063&Cr=general&Cr1=debate} (Retrieved 21/05/2012)
meetings. Initially, China was following its well-established foreign policy principle of non-interference (also typical with its engagement with the African countries) underestimating the conflict and the political risk. However, in the case of Darfur became evident the contradiction of Chinese double identity as a developing country and a great power. Steinvig argues that China was in front a dilemma between identities, economic pursuits and social acceptance.

China from 2006 onwards started undertaking a more active role for finding a solution in the Darfur issue. In fact, Beijing welcomed and supported the Darfur Peace Agreement of May 2006. According to Daniel Large, "more involved diplomacy was first evident in behind the scenes encounters, as when President al-Bashir attended the FOCAC meeting in Beijing in November of the same year. Most notably, this was seen later in November 2006 when the Chinese Ambassador to the UN Wang Guangya helped to broker a compromise deal in Addis Ababa on the "Annan plan" calling for an expanded UN-African Union (AU) peacekeeping role in Darfur. Wang Guangya after the peacekeeping agreement declared: "Usually China doesn't send messages, but this time they did. It was a strong message that the proposal from Kofi Annan is a good one and Sudan has to accept it". Similarly, President Hu Jintao stated to its Sudanese counterpart in February 2007, that "Darfur is a part of Sudan and you have to resolve this problem". Undoubtedly, these facts demonstrate the Chinese government’s gradual move away from its principle of non-interference.

This behavioural change of China toward Sudan and the international community has different explanations. China’s identity as a developing country in an African context means that it is very receptive to the social influence and signals coming from the group of African countries. Actually, most African countries which during 2004 shared the same views with China on Darfur issue started change their position in 2006 as the conflict worsened and the reputation of the AU and the safety of the AU-led African Mission to Sudan (AMIS) were placed in jeopardy by Khartoum’s unwillingness to cooperate. Changes in the perception of its African partners on how the conflict should be solved may consequently also have had a
decisive effect on China's taking into account the fact that Beijing could no longer justify rejecting Western criticism of its reluctance to put pressure on Sudan.\textsuperscript{197} The shift in Chinese stance can be also explained by the anti-Chinese campaign in the West linking Chinese support to Khartoum regime with 2008 Beijing Olympics referring to them as "Genocide Olympics".\textsuperscript{198} In fact, that campaign was supported by Hollywood celebrities and it had also broad coverage by media something which definitely had a negative impact on Chinese image internationally.

8. CONCLUSION

Before, sum it all up, let us first recall the research question: How can the material and ideational forces explain today's Chinese foreign policy in Africa?

In the first place, the material forces are definitely an apparent driving factor behind the contemporary burgeoning Chinese engagement with Africa. In particular, Chinese tremendous economic growth has spurred a dramatic increase in its demand for natural resources such as conventional fuels and non-ferrous minerals. As a result Africa a region rich in natural resources is fitting perfectly to China's needs. This trend is reflected in the approximately tenfold rise in Sino-African trade during the previous decade of 2000s where minerals dominate the bilateral trade transactions. Furthermore, Africa is regarded as an ideal destination for investment by Chinese large and middle-sized SOEs. In fact, Chinese firms have an ever-increasing presence in the region, investing in sectors ranging from construction and agriculture to telecommunications and textiles to name a few. Actually Chinese promote the extroversion of their companies far from China in order to find new export markets something which in many cases has negative impact on domestic African production and export sector. Not accidentally then-South African president Thabo Mbeki declared in 2006, "China cannot just come here and dig for raw materials and then go away and sell us manufactured goods".\textsuperscript{199}

As far as Chinese foreign policy is concerned, strategic considerations instigated a more active and globally-oriented foreign policy and, by extension, the search of allies, primarily in the southern hemisphere, on whom Beijing could rely in the pursuit of its national and international interests. From the African side, Beijing's rising political and economic interests

\textsuperscript{197} ibid
provide African countries with a rare opportunity to lessen their dependency on Western states and donor organizations by allowing them to diversify their relations with the outside world. The need to expand and strengthen China's bilateral relations with Sub-Saharan Africa was part of this strategy.  

The establishment of FOCAC, as a Chinese initiative in 2000 is deemed by some as a vehicle with which China tries to launch its multifarious political and economic strategies on the continent. However, FOCAC is considered by both China and the African states as a political platform that ensures and consolidates South-South cooperation under the spirit of "win-win cooperation". Chinese leadership's generous promises toward its African counterparts during 2006 FOCAC meeting, concerning aid, trade, debt relief, developing African infrastructure and production capacity seem to be all on track.  

As Alden acknowledges, "China is indeed Africa's partner and, in many ways, the continent's most enduring one. From the outset of establishment of CPC to the present day, the Chinese government has pursued a foreign policy that has conformed to the interests and needs of Africans to a greater degree than any other country". There are ideational factors operating as part of what is styled 'win-win cooperation'. According to Tull, "politically, since helping China gain admission to the UN, African states have supported China (including in the years following 1989) in different multilateral settings". China in turn styles itself as leader of the global South and champion of a progressive 'new international political and economic order featuring justice, rationality, equality and mutual benefit' and 'safeguarding legitimate rights and interests of developing countries'. Efforts to work with and speak for Africa as part of the global South are intertwined in China's emerging role in international affairs.  

Finally, as we argued in the previous chapters both material and ideational forces play a vital role in defining the Chinese engagement to Africa. Definitely we should not overestimate one factor against the another.

204 ibid, p.8
9. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

China's presence in Africa undoubtedly has room for further expansion both in economic and political fields. As long as, the dynamism of Chinese economy continues on today's pace there is no doubt that the already well-entrenched economic bilateral ties will be upgraded, challenging straightforwardly the Western economic interests in the region on the mid-term. However, politically the following no-strings-attached policy by Chinese potentially will be confronted with serious challenges in the future. Especially, if we consider the fact that most African states seem to abstain from reforms toward good governance and human rights respect. Hence, it is more than certain that China will receive tight pressure from the international community (similar with the case in Darfur) to undertake a more constructive role in order African elites to be complied with the international standards. This possible development will challenge anew the Chinese foreign policy principles testing its capacity on what extent wants to be a responsible stakeholder in the continent.

As we saw in Chapter Seven, Chinese leadership portrays itself, at least to African audiences, as a developing nation in order to underline the convergence of interests between China, 'the biggest developing country and Africa, the country with the largest number of developing countries' at the same time as stressing its attachment to 'South-South- solidarity'. However, simultaneously China is the second biggest world economy currently and according to IMF's Euromonitor report before 2020 is going to surpass US and to be the largest economic power.205 According to Hackenesch, "today, as China is developing from a regional to a global power and international expectations vis-à-vis China’s international responsibility are growing, the principle of non-interference is de facto coming under visible strain. In addition, with increasing Chinese investments in Africa, the necessity to protect investors – and Chinese citizens in partner countries – equally increases". 206

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