

A Chinese Scramble for Africa?

Is China¹, neo-colonising the African continent?

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¹ Throughout this thesis the word China will refer to the People's Republic of China, not to be confused with the Republic of China (Taiwan).

Abstract

The unparalleled economic growth of China during the latter 20th century and early 21st century, has led to the country becoming a great power and perhaps on the fast track to even becoming a superpower. This growth has come mainly in the form of manufactured goods, which need vast amounts of energy and resources to produce, most important of which is oil. Today China is a net importer of oil, and is having to look further afield to find more reserves. This has led to China turning her attention to Africa, which is renowned for its vast untapped natural resources. China also sees Africa as an unexploited consumer market. China's sudden interest in Africa has raised alarm in some quarters. Some are even labeling her actions on the continent as neo-colonialist, this thesis is designed to review if this indeed is a fair accusation. After looking at each aspect of neo-colonialism in turn, as well as comparing Europe's actions, both historically and contemporary on the African continent, this thesis concludes that despite some questionable elements relating to the so called no strings attached approach on the continent, it is still unjust and even sensationalist to name China neo-colonialist.

Key Words: China, Africa, neo-colonialism, dependency theory, conditionality, development aid, development assistance, no strings attached, Sino-African. , trade

Words:

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List of Abbreviations:

| | |
|--------|--|
| ACP | African, Caribbean and Pacific |
| AU | African Union |
| CPC | Communist Party of China |
| CPC-ID | International Department of the Communist Party of China |
| EEAS | European Union External Action |
| EU | European Union |
| FDI | Foreign Direct Investment |
| IMF | International Monterey Fund |
| JAES | Joint-EU African Strategy |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| NGOSs | Non-Governmental Organisations |
| NPC | National People’s Conference |
| ODA | Official Development Assistance |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development |
| SAPs | Structural Adjustment Programs |
| SEZs | Special Economic Zones |
| UN | United Nations |
| WTO | World Trade Organisation |

1. Introduction

Napoleon, the great early 19th century French military and political leader, was said to have remarked on China by stating the following; “*China is a sleeping giant. Let her sleep, for when she awakes she will astound the world*” (Burnell and Randall, 2008 p. 67). Napoleon’s premonition seems to have been proven remarkably accurate. Ever since Deng Xiaoping’s first reforms and the steady opening to the rest of world of the Chinese economy from roughly 1978 onwards, the country has seen unprecedented growth. Since the reforms the average growth in real terms has been roughly an astounding 10% on average per year (IMF, 2013a). Economic growth has been so dramatic that China now holds the position of having the world’s second largest economy (IMF, 2013b). It is worth noting that during the period of China’s remarkable economic growth, most of Africa and especially sub-Saharan Africa, until fairly recently at least has more or less economically stagnated (New York Times, 2007).

China’s growth has led to an ever increasing thirst for oil to fuel Chinese production. Though domestic reserves are pretty extensive, China has now become a net importer of oil, rather than its previous position as a net exporter (Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, 2004).

Africa is seen by many as the last continent, where an abundance of raw materials and fossil fuels are yet to be harnessed (The East African, 2010), so naturally China has turned her focus there. According to Le Monde diplomatique (2005) trade between China and Africa increased by a staggering 700% during the 90’s, clearly illustrating the increased links between the two geographical regions.

An abundance of recent newspaper and magazine articles have had eye catching headlines such as: *How China's taking over Africa, and why the West should be VERY worried* (Daily Mail, 2008). This headline was to be found in the Daily Mail, not exactly known to be a bastion of calm, rational and non-sensationalist journalism. But even more respected and rational news outlets such as The Guardian have ran a number of articles with headlines such as “*China’s economic invasion of Africa*” (The Guardian, 2011a). It is not just the media who are making such claims or having raised such concerns. Whilst in office Former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton accused China of showing traits of “*new colonialism*” on the African continent (Bloomberg, 2011). A number of prominent African leaders have also raised concern. Former South African President Thabo Mbeki, also whilst in office, warned the African continent to guard against a “*colonial relationship*” with

China (BBC News, 2006). Much of this speculation towards China's intentions in Africa is not aided by Beijing's infamous opaqueness, as will be discussed at length later.

2. Research Question

The glaring question is then, are such accusations valid? or at the very least are such concerns justified? Are we seeing a 21st century version of Europe's 19th century Scramble for Africa?, This thesis reviews if this is the case, in a nutshell are we in fact seeing a Chinese Scramble for Africa?

3. Theoretical and Analytical Framework

This thesis follows a very logical and systematic path. Before conducting the main analysis, a solid foundation is set. This is done in three steps. First the theory of neocolonialism is clearly researched and defined. Logically to answer the main inquiry of this thesis a set definition has to be decided upon. Once this has been set in place, a short but comprehensive review of historical Sino-African relations is provided. Looking, exclusively at Sino-African relations would to a certain degree be flawed without providing any comparative example. Therefore this paper will be peppered with examples both historical and contemporary African and European relations. Sources used will be secondary in nature, the few books that deal with the subject matter will be used, as well as various other sources such as online journals, newspaper articles etc.

3.1 Limitations of Material

As is explained at greater length later in this thesis, defining what is aid, development aid, investment and the like is problematic, and it appears different scholars use different means to tally China's involvement in Africa. As I am not trying to determine how much aid China is giving to Africa, nor say how many loans have been given, instead simply if China can be fairly accused of neo-colonizing Africa, I would argue that a rather loose methodology is acceptable if not even preferable, given the aforementioned clandestineness of the Chinese government's workings. The thesis may also appear to be to a certain extent, unscientific and lack in empirical inquiry. I would argue though that the theory of Neo-colonialism still provides a solid foundation and that the thesis is conducted in the spirit of the Social Sciences, and not for example in the more traditional and rigid natural sciences, providing more room interpretation and subjectivity.

3.2 Neo-colonialism

Much like many terms in the social sciences, neo-colonialism is a term, which is both controversial and hard to definitively define. As Menell (2010) states; “*Neo-colonialism is a convoluted term endowed with significant rhetorical power*” The term could be said to have first have been coined, or at the very least cemented by Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana’s first president following independence in 1957. In 1965 Nkrumah published; *Neo-Colonialism, The Last Stage of Imperialism*. In the introduction to the seminal work, Nkrumah (1965) explains neo-colonialism as follows;

“The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political policy is directed from outside.”

Nkrumah goes on to explain, the forms by which neo-colonialism can take. At the most extreme is a garrison of troops on the ground. But most often control is executed through economic or monetary means (Nkrumah, 1965). As an example Nkrumah explains;

“The neo-colonial State may be obliged to take the manufactured products of the imperialist power to the exclusion of competing products from elsewhere.”

In slightly more recent times academics the likes of Noam Chomsky and Jean-Paul Sartre have used the term, in works such as “The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism” (Chomsky, 1979) and “Colonialism and Neo-colonialism” (Sartre, 1964) respectively.

The very term itself; neo-colonialism, i.e. new colonialism would suggest that some form of colonialism had preceded it and that it has since taken a different, slightly nuanced shape. This would lead one to assume the continuation of former colonial powers influences over a former colony. How then could such a theory be relevant to contemporary Chinese policy in Africa, as China has never been viewed as a coloniser of Africa? But as Nkrumah already stated in 1965;

“Where neo-colonialism exists the power exercising control is often the State which formerly ruled the territory in question, but this is not necessarily so. For example, in the case of South Vietnam the former imperial power was France, but neo-colonial control of the State has now gone to the United States”

Clearly highlighting that the neo-coloniser, does not necessarily have to have a previous colonial history in the give state or region.

The Oxford Dictionary offers a more precise and clear definition of neo-colonialism, it is as follows:

the use of economic, political, cultural, or other pressures to control or influence other countries, especially former dependencies.

(Oxford Dictionaries, 2013)

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary has a definition along similar lines;

the economic and political policies by which a great power indirectly maintains or extends its influence over other areas or people.

(Merriam-Webster, 2013)

The Oxford Dictionary definition, is simple, yet lists the various means used by the dominating state to control the colonised state, the main pressures being economic, political, cultural. It seems logical to look at each of these aspects in turn to determine if China is in fact acting as a neo-colonialist in its dealing with Africa.

3.3 Dependency Theory

Neo-colonialism is also much linked to dependency theory. As Menell (2010) states “*The term (Neo-colonialism) can also imply a mercantilist model for economic relations: decolonised states remain dependent upon the exportation of raw materials to fuel growth in the developed world*”

Dependency theory, was born during the post war years by a number of economists, chiefly from South America. The theory is based on a so called world system approach. Essentially, according to the theory, resources flow from the so called “periphery” or “southern” of poor and underdeveloped states, to the “core” or “northern” of richer and more powerful states. Due to structures and dependency, this status quo will be impossible to break according to dependency theorists, and underdeveloped states will remain in their current state (Greig *et al*, 2007). Economists often term this type of relationship as *dumping*. Harking back to Nkrumah (1965), as seen above he states that neo-colonialism is often manifested in fact that “*State(s) may be obliged to take the manufactured products of the imperialist power to the exclusion of competing products from elsewhere*”, very much in line with the concepts of dependency theory and dumping.

3.4 Trade, Aid, Development Aid, Development Finance

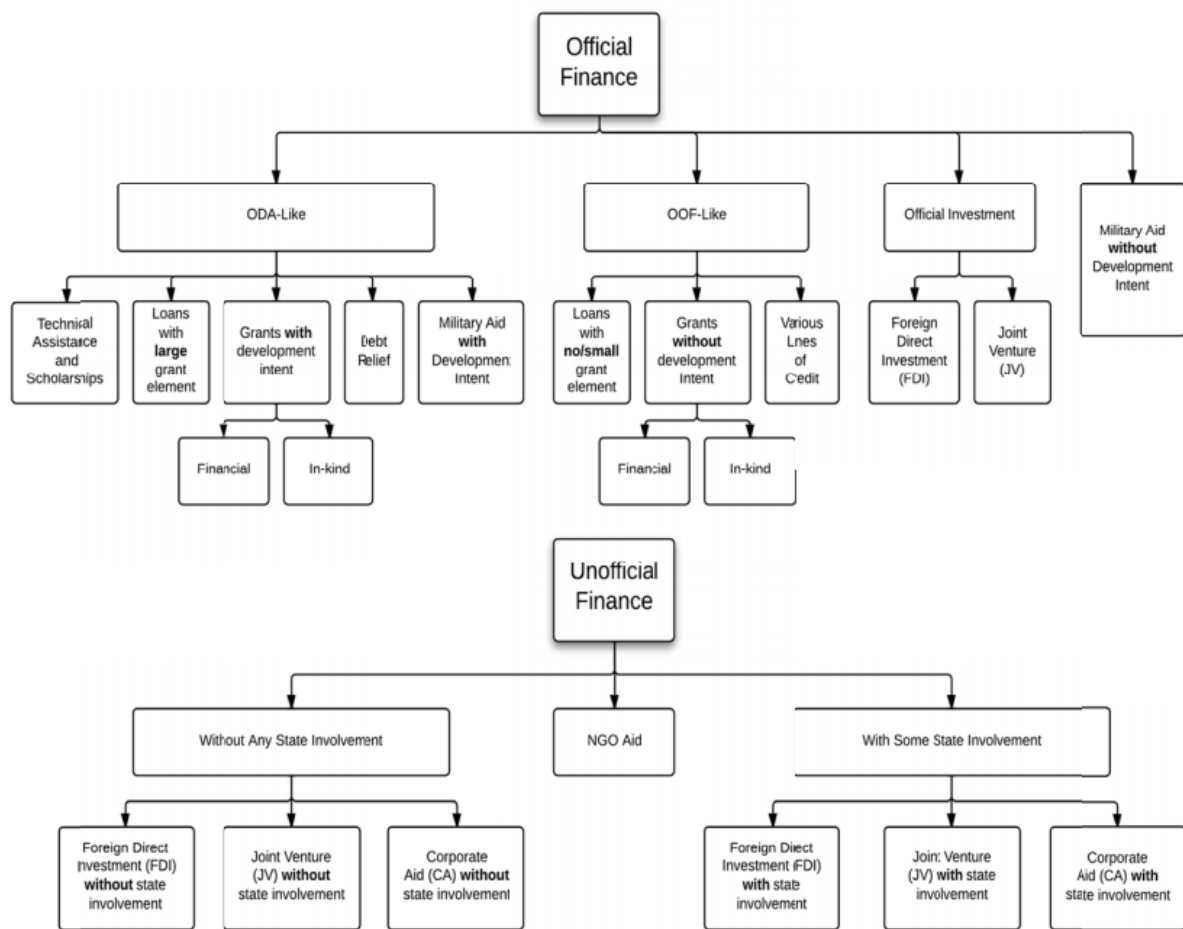
Before diving into any analysis it is important to note that the link between trade and aid is often rather ambiguous. Brautigam (2009, p. 13) states “*defining what counts as “foreign aid” should be fairly straightforward. It is not*”. This conundrum arises, because one has to ask, what should be considered foreign aid? To serve as an example should funds from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) be included? how about military aid? or subsidies given to foster exports or investment?, perhaps even low interest loans? Members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have attempted to create a standard definition. This definition is called Official Development Assistance (ODA). The official definition of ODA by the OECD is as follows:

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, 2003).

This then is essentially what constitutes what is often termed official aid, in the West at least, this is where it becomes rather problematic, due both to the fact that China is not a member of the OECD and the very secretive nature of the Chinese Government. Therefore such a narrow, definition should not and will not be taken here when trying to determine if China is indeed acting as neo-colonial power in Africa. As Kurlantzick (2007) argues, when we are assessing Chinese aid and assistance we need to look beyond traditional definitions of aid. Below is a representational overview of what AidData (2013a), counts as development aid, it serves to highlight the complexity of creating a definitive definition.

Figure 1. Components of Chines assistance

Figure 1. Chinese Official and Unofficial Finance



This though, seems to be the most comprehensive data set available on China and its economic dealings with Africa, and therefore will be used in most cases in this thesis. As Strange *et al* (2013) states, they “...have, in effect, designed a taxonomy that is compatible with OECD-DAC categories and definitions, but also flexible enough to accommodate the unique attributes of Chinese development finance”.

4. Analytical Chapter: China and Neo-Colonialism in Africa

4.1 Historical Background

China's engagement with Africa is actually nothing new. Reports of contact between the Chinese and Africa go back as far as the 9th century (Rotberg, 2008, preface). The first substantial and definitive engagement between China and Africa though came during the first half of the 15th century. Under the guidance of Admiral Zheng He, The Ming Dynasty of China sailed numerous fleets across the Indian Ocean and onto the East coast of Africa. According to Chinese archives the fleets were huge. Including ships five times larger than Portuguese ships sent out for exploitation later in the 15th century and according to McNeill (1982, p. 44) would have been capable of crossing the Pacific Ocean and reaching the Americas if they had attempted to do so. Worth noting here is that these fleets were not sent out to colonise Africa, but were trading voyages. The Chinese took back to China mainly African medicinal compounds, and a perhaps a giraffe or two to entertain the emperor! Not a single slave or centimetre of land was taken (Brautigam, 2009, p. 23). This is much in contrast of course to the later actions of Europeans on the continent. This sudden flourish of links between China and Africa ended suddenly. Historians debate as to the reason why, explanations include Chinese domestic politics or simply, as the Dynasty was so large, nothing of particular interest was found on the East coast of Africa, that couldn't be found in China or at least a comparative substitute (O'Brien and Williams, 2007, p. 48). In conclusion, during this flourish of interaction between China and Africa, there was no slave and master or donor and beggar.

Moving to more contemporary times, China's 20th century aid program began in very ad hoc fashion. It is important to look at this period though, as it could be said to have laid the foundations of how China, even today deals with Africa. Following the Chinese Civil War Mao Zedong established the communist People's Republic of China, whilst the nationalist were forced to the Island of Taiwan and established the Republic of China. Whilst many nations recognized the People's Republic as the China which should have a seat in the United Nations (UN) Security Council, the United States refused. This, along with the fact that the rebels from North Korea were communist, meant naturally that the Chinese leaned to the side of the North Koreans, rather than the Americans and South Koreans in the Korean war of 1950. Grain, medicine, cotton and other

important industrial materials were sent from China to North Korea during the war to help China's North Korean comrades (Brautigam, 2009, p. 30).

In 1954 China's first premier, Zhou Enlai, during negotiations with India over Tibet, introduced Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, they were as follows:

1. Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity
2. Mutual non-aggression
3. Non-interference in each other's internal affairs
4. Equality and mutual benefit
5. Peaceful coexistence

(Brautigam, 2009, p. 30)

These principles may appear irrelevant to mention in relation to China's current relations with Africa, but in fact could be said to have laid the foundation for China's aid and foreign policy strategy the following 50 years up to and including the present day. These principles were cemented in 1982 at the Twelfth Assembly, when the party defined foreign relations on the basis of; independence, complete equality, mutual respect and non-interference in others' internal affairs (Anshan, 2008 p. 23).

Aid and trade during the Maoist era was based primarily on ideological foundations, namely communism. The first official recipients of Chinese aid, were based on ideological interests. China wanted to show solidarity with leaders in Africa who showed revolutionary and socialist leanings. One such leader was Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, who, as mentioned previously is said to have coined the very term neo-colonialism (Idun-Arkurst, 2008).

Political ideology was not the only factor which played into which newly independent African nation's received aid and support from China. Recognition that the People's Republic of mainland China, was the "legitimate" China, instead of Taiwan was also fundamental, as is also the case today, which will be examined more late.

Slight alarm over of Chinese motives in Africa from Western governments, came already as early as during the winter of 63 and 64, when as Brautigam (2009 p. 32) points out Zhou Enlai made a very visible tour of ten newly independent African nations. During this period China established herself as the first developing country to have an aid program on the continent (Brautigam, 2009, p. 33).

As Brautigam (2009 p. 34) goes on to state strategic diplomacy continued to be the main driving force behind China's aid. As always trying to get recognition for the People's Republic as the legitimate China, as well as trying to garner some influence in the bipolar Cold War world. By 1973 China was in fact giving aid to 30 African countries, clearly a substantial number.

The Maoist China period was also characterised for colossal vanity or so called prestige projects probably the best example being the TAZARA railway. The TAZARA Railway links the Tanzanian port of Dar es Salaam, with the copper mining town of Kapiri Mposhi in Zambia. This rail link stretching a monumental 1,860km (Tanzania Zambia Railway Authority, 2013) was originally proposed by Sir Cecil Rhodes and was later declared infeasible by the World Bank. China though, finished the project in 1975, two years ahead of schedule (Brautigam, 2009 p. 40).

Also of note around the time of Mao and Zhou Enlai was the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement, essentially a group of states not wishing to align with imperialist, perhaps even neo-colonialist powers. Most of Africa, as well as China became members, insinuating perhaps already the rather problematic and paradoxical nature of accusing China of being a Neo-colonialist, more of which will be discussed later.

Anshan (2008, p. 22) identifies three periods of China's policy towards Africa, following the establishment of the People's Republic. They are as follows; normal development, a transitional period and finally a period of rapid development. The first period, namely normal development was during the period from 1949 until 1977. This period as mentioned previously was based rather much on ideological grounds. The second period namely, the transitional period stretched from 1978 until 1994, the period in which China opened to the world. Finally the contemporary period, starting in 1995 and counting until the present day, the period during which China became a fully-fledged great power.

Today's official policy towards Africa was cemented in a 2006 official paper entitled; "China's African Policy". This policy clearly has its foundations in the aforementioned Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and explicitly states so in the foreword to the paper.

The general principles of the policy though are worth mentioning and are as follows:

- *Sincerity, friendship and equality; by which is essentially meant the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence (as noted above)*

- *Mutual benefit, reciprocity and common prosperity; By which is meant that China wishes to support African countries' attempts to foster economic development and nation building*
- *Mutual support and close coordination; By which China means to strengthen cooperation with Africa in the UN and other such multilateral institutions.*
- *Learning from each other and seeking common development; Here China claims to desire to draw upon experience in the areas of governance and development. This is also where cultural aspects are pinpointed, with a wish to strengthen exchange and cooperation in the areas of education, science, culture and health.*

Also noted in the official paper is the importance of the observance of the one China principle, in fact this is mentioned directly after listing the four key aspects of China's African policy, showing the importance of this issue to the Chinese.

(People Daily, 2006)

How China proposes to facilitate such relations is also discussed in the paper, and is subdivided into four respective fields; the political, economic, the scientific, cultural, health related and social, and finally peace and security.

Of course, this kind of official government document could be perceived as a lot of hot air and it is therefore vital to discover if the Chinas' regime actually adhere to these values.

Now that Neo-colonialism theory and the historical background of Sino-African relations has been provided, a sound foundation has been put in place and it is now time to dig deep into the analysis of if China is currently acting as a neo-colonialist on the continent of Africa. This analysis will be done in as a systematic fashion, looking in turn at each element which makes up the very definition of neo-colonialism, according to primarily the oxford dictionary definition. They are, as mentioned previously; economic, political, cultural and other.

4.2 Economic:

4.2.1 How Much?

When looking at the various definitions of neo-colonialism economic factors prove always the most prominent. As mentioned previously Kwame Nkrumah also sees economic factors as paramount to the very meaning of the term, neo-colonialism. Also as discussed previously dependency theory,

much linked to neo-colonialism, is a fully fledged economic theory and will also be of importance here.

According to the BBC (2007) in 2005 China had a total investment of \$1.6 billion in Africa in 2005. Obviously this data is dated and investment has far from slowed down, to serve as an example, between 2004 and 2010 China's foreign direct investment (FDI) in South Africa alone was \$5.8 billion. (CNBC, 2012). As to where China invests her money could be revealing to her intentions there. Most recently China has committed herself to investing a colossal \$68 billion in aid and development projects, during the period 2000-2011 (AidData, 2013b). It is important to note, that this data is though, is far from definitive, this is due to the fact that China is very secretive when it comes to foreign aid and development activities. That being said, AidData seem to have created the most comprehensive data set yet, especially in light of the difficulty doing so with a lack of official data. AidData's (2013c) methodology was to instead wade through thousands of media reports. This methodology was termed *media-based data collection*.

Only \$13 billion, of the \$68 billion, could be counted as official development aid, using roughly the aforementioned OECD definition of ODA as a basis (AidData, 2013b). This highlights, rather starkly how secret in nature of much of China's dealings with Africa are when it comes to development finance. China, herself makes no secret of their lack of transparency, China recently, rather blazingly stated that transparency "*...should apply to north-south cooperation, but that it should not be seen as a standard for south-south cooperation*" (The Guardian, 2011b). If looking simply at trade, China has trade worth \$166 billion with Africa in 2011. For comparisons sake, during the same year the EU had trade with Africa worth \$567 billion and the US \$447 billion (China Daily, 2012). Though it may seem that the EU and US are still leaps and bounds ahead of China in terms of being a trading partner with Africa, a sobering fact is that China's trade value with Africa jumped a staggering 83 per cent, and is it to grow at such a ferocious pace (China Daily, 2012).

4.2.2 Loans

A large proportion of China's development aid for African countries comes in the form of loans from the China's Eximbank. China's Eximbank was founded in 1994 and provides concessional loans. In fact the Financial Times (2011) states that China has lent more money to developing countries during the period 2009 thru 2011 than the World Bank, though it has to be noted these loans were not given exclusively to Africa, and included massive loans to the likes of Russia,

Venezuela and Brazil. Loans work on the premise that China gets access to oil, in the country receiving the loan, as the three aforementioned countries hint at.

A great example linked to China's Eximbank, as to why African nations are more and more willing to deal with China for development aid, instead of using the more traditional Western channels, is shown by the case of Angola. Angola had been ravaged by civil war from 1975 to 2002, leaving the country's infrastructure and public finances in ruins. The country turned in desperation to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for much needed capital. Suddenly in 2004 Angola termed the IMF's conditionality clauses for any possible loan as "humiliating" and was instead offered and took a \$2 billion loan from the Chinese Eximbank, to be repaid over 12 years at an interest rate of 1.5%. Access to oil for the Chinese was of course part of the deal (Lee and Shalmon, 2008 p. 119). There is perhaps no finer example as to why countries are leaping at the chance to work with China instead of the West.

4.2.3 Recipients

Next we turn to where and on what this vast sum of money is indeed being spent. Here data gathered by AidData (2013b) is invaluable. Ghana, Nigeria and Sudan are the countries who receive the largest amounts of Chinese development aid, fitting with the hypothesis that China is only interested in states with vast natural resources, Ghana for example is estimated to have 660 million barrels of proved reserves of crude oil, whilst Nigeria and Sudan are estimated to have 38 billion and 5 billion respectively (CIA World Fact Book, 2012).

4.2.4 Special Economic Zones

China is well known for its Special Economic Zones (SEZs), essentially sanctioned cities, provinces or regions, with more free market orientated economic policies, as well as more lax government regulation. Many of these zones have proved unquestionably successful. The most successful are to be found in the Guangdong province, the city of Shenzhen being probably the most famous. China is now exporting this development model to Africa, in an attempt to recreate its success. The first SEZs in China were established in 1978, as one of the approaches to gradually open up the Chinese economy to the rest of the world. The mechanisms to attract investments often include elements such as, preferential tax holidays, low tariffs, preferential fees on land use, access to cheap but trained labour force, and flexible business management. An example of SEZs which China have created in Africa include; Chambishi in Zambia, an area rich in copper. There are also plans for

SEZs in Mauritius, Tanzania, Nigeria and Egypt (Davies, 2008 p. 137). Davies (2008 p. 137) describe them as the future growth nodes of Africa.

Special Economic Zones, have also been used by the West, and have come under a high degree of criticism coming primarily from the left. The main criticisms, as pointed out by the Rakhine Thahaya Association (2012), are as follows; 1. Land acquisition, with peasants living on the land where the SEZ is to be setup often reluctant to relinquish their land and may be displaced with little compensation. 2. Land prices skyrocketing, due to “zone fever” again often displacing local peasants. 3. Loss of agricultural land. 4. Misuse of land for real estate. 5. Labour abuse, as often migrant workers have little to no rights. 6. Social structure damage, due to rapid urbanization. 7. Uneven growth, aggravating regional disparities. 8. Inequities, as incentives make for an uneven playing field. 9. Relocation, companies relocate because of the tax concessions and little net activity is gained. 10. Revenue loss, of millions of dollars. Elements of SEZs are very reminiscent of certain aspects associated with how neo-colonialists operate.

4.2.5 Simply Oil?

The accusation that China is only interested in natural resources in Africa, be it oil, minerals, or other, is one of the most recurring allegations made by the media. More notable though international institutions such as the European Parliament believe that China “*seems confined to resource rich-countries (or “resource-cursed”) countries, bypassing a large number of other African nations*” (European Parliament, 2008). But are such accusations fair? Brautigam (2009 p.278) notes that China has an aid policy with every single sub-Saharan African nation (that of course follows China’s one China policy), much in contrast with traditional Western aid donors where certain states are clearly favoured and get visibly preferential treatment. Be it Commonwealth members in the case of the United Kingdom or African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries in the case of the EU.

Though China is undoubtedly interested in Africa’s resources, there is also a desire to tap into the ever growing consumer market to be found across Africa, in other words, to “do business with Africa”. This is underlined by the fact that in 2012 China exported around \$80 billion in goods and services to the continent (Standard Bank, 2012). Importantly, it is not just a one way street, with cheap imports simply flooding the African market and undercutting domestic producers. China became Africa’s largest export destination in 2012 (The Times of South Africa, 2012).

Unsurprisingly Africa’s exports to China are dominated by natural resources as well agricultural

goods, i.e. from Africa's primary sector, whilst imports are mainly value-added products, this status quo simply relates to the current factor endowments of each respective region. Anger is though bubbling under the surface in some quarters of Africa, for example in Zimbabwe, "made in China" goods, are labelled as "zhing zhong" goods, a term, aimed at mimicking Chinese speech in a derogatory fashion, which highlights both the dissatisfaction with the quality of some cheap Chinese imports, as well as the fact that many domestic producers are being undercut (Rupp, 2008 p. 69). This would very much be in line with how a neo-colonialist would act, as well as being an example of dependency theory.

What's rather ironic, is that it's not as though Europe isn't also most heavily involved in the primary sector and most notably the energy sector of Africa, highlighting a degree of hypocrisy, as one Nigerian diplomat stated "*The Chinese are trying to get involved in every sector of our economy, If you look at the West it's oil, oil, oil, and nothing else*" (Brautigam, 2009 p.279). On top of this exports from Europe or the USA to Africa are highly controversial due to the accusation that exports are undercutting domestic farmers, through the pricing policy of dumping, as has been highlighted extensively by NGO's such as Oxfam International. They explain the practice of dumping in simple terms: "*Rich countries dump subsidized produce on developing countries, driving down the price of local produce, with devastating effects on the local economy . This unbalanced playing field has made many poor farmers even poorer, or forced them off their land completely*" (Oxfam International, 2013).

4.3 Political

Separating politics from economic factors is perhaps foolhardy, as the links between the two are profound. As Nobel Prize winning economist Milton Friedman (2002 p.8) pointed out in his seminal work *Capitalism and Freedom*; "...*there is an intimate connection between economics and politics...*" but nevertheless a separation of the two will be attempted here.

As mentioned previously, before the reforms of the late 1970's in China much of the trade and development links China made with Africa were politically and ideologically based, primarily with an anticolonial and revolutionary slant. Reviewing if the political element of neo-colonialism is still relevant will be the next task, the analysis will be complemented by the two case studies of Sudan and Zimbabwe.

4.3.1 Potential gains from strong bilateral relations

According to the notoriously conservative U.S. think tank, the Heritage Foundation (2007) *“Across the planet, China is aggressively seeking new friends and allies and proving to be a less demanding alternative to the more scrupulous relationships nations must have the U.S. and Europe”*. The use of the word “aggressively”, sounds very predatory and in line with how a neo-colonialist would act. Again highlighting the fear of China’s dealings in Africa of some in the West.

Having friendly relations with a large number of African nations helps China in international institutions such as the UN and World Trade Organization (WTO), giving obvious international political and economic gain. State to state relations between China and Africa is the responsibility of the International Department of the Communist Party of China (CPC-ID). Between 1978 and 1990 China created ties with dozens of African political parties (Eisenman, 2008. p.232). According to Eisenman (2008 p. 235) the CPC, has five primary methods of political outreach to Africa, which are reviewed in the preceding chapter.

4.3.2 China’s Political Outreach

Hospitality:

The number of political outreach activities, is substantial between China and Africa, to serve as an example, between the years of 1997 and 2006 there were conventions with over 60 distinguished African party chiefs (Eisenman, 2008 p.235). These meetings are conducted to strengthen political ties, to metamorphose them into more long term bilateral cooperation on issues of mutual interest (Eisenman, 2008 p233). The Chinese are renowned for their hospitality, they woo African leaders and delegations, which as Eisenman, (2008 p.236) states is based upon *“(…)its intoxicating mix of contemporary and traditional hospitality”* and that *“CPC-ID hosting techniques are derived from centuries of Chines tradition and can be traced back to the teachings of Confucius”*. Overall, China’s rhetoric of being equals and first-rate hospitality, has won hearts and minds of African elites. Of course, this is in great contrast to historical, arrogant, ties between Africa and Europe, and perhaps some of that attitude still reverberates today in contemporary relations.

Cadre Training:

The Chinese have funded cadre training of hundreds of African personnel, in areas ranging from diplomacy all the way to medical treatment (Eisenman, 2008 p.237). Again all based upon the notion of equality and mutual respect. This is all done to help foster and strengthen interpersonal relationships, especially with respect to the future generation of African political leaders.

Information Management:

The CPC gathers information about African nations and sends it back to China. The CPC also through creating links with African political parties, attempts to improve its image as well as influence (Eisenman, 2008 p238). This has been termed as “perception management”, It is achieved through the use of facts, statistic and other such material, aimed at creating a better understanding amongst the Africa political elites, of China’s policies and aims (Eisenman, 2008 p238).

Opposition Party Outreach:

The CPC, is of course most active in nurturing relations with African political parties in the position of power. But opposition parties are by no means ignored, as Shambaugh (2007) explains “*By maintaining ties with nonruling parties, the ID (CPC-ID) has been able to keep track of domestic politics in various nations and to establish contacts with a wide range of politicians and experts who subsequently staff governments after they come to power*”. Of course, this is only the case in African democracies, as dealing with opposition parties in dictatorships would not be in line with China’s desire not to meddle in internal affairs.

Inter-parliamentary Exchanges:

The aforementioned political outreach is primarily conducted by the CPC-ID. But the National People’s Congress (NPC) also has an important role. The NPC conducts exchanges with over a dozen African parties. The NPC, conducts much of its political outreach in harmony with CPC, this is no surprise as China is a one party state. As Eisenman (2008 p.242) states though, “*While the CPC-ID’s mandate to increase exchanges with ruling African parties is quite clearly defined, the NPC’s international exchanges in Africa are fewer in number but can be more diverse in character*”.

It is worth reiterating that any political outreach is linked to China’s desire to be seen as the only true legitimate China, the so called “One China Policy”.

4.3.3 Military Intervention

Direct military intervention, in Africa, has been almost none existent, this is cemented by China’s foreign and security guidelines, known as the “24 character strategy” created by Deng Xiaoping, which states that China should “*observe calmly; secure our position; cope with affairs calmly; hide our capabilities and bide our time; be good at maintaining a low profile; and never claim*

leadership” (Dreyer, 2007). Despite this China does offer military assistance and training to a number of African nations. As well as this in 2008 China had 1,457 military peacekeepers, observers and police active in 7 UN peace keeping missions in Africa (Shinn, 2008). China may become more military active on the continent, especially if vital ports of entry or shipping lanes become blocked, and hamper access to markets.

Whilst China has so far been relatively invisible when it comes to having a military presence on the continent, Western military intervention in Africa has recently increased substantially. France recently conducted both, Operation Unicorn in the Ivory Coast, as well as Operation Serval in Mali. These actions by France have been named as both imperialist and neo-colonist by various sources such as a recent a recent interview with Senegalese novelist and intellectual Boubacar Boris Diop in The Guardian (2013). Most noteworthy though has been the Wests intervention in Libya, with NATO responding to the 2011 Libyan Civil War. Moreover in 2007 the United States established the United States Africa Command, underlining the increased military presence of the West on the African continent (United States Africa Command, 2013). One can’t help but recall the words of Nkrumah in Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism (1965), where he explained the most extreme form of neo-colonialism as being when the “...troops of the imperial power may garrison the territory of the neo-colonial state...”

Comparing China’s current political engagement with Africa with Europe’s past colonial political arrangements shows in stark contrast how China is following a policy of equality and mutual respect. There was no mention from the European colonisers, of equality and mutual respect during the 19th century scramble for Africa, and most certainly not during the previous Atlantic slave trade. To state that China is acting in a similar political fashion to West historically would be disingenuous to say the least, if not outright ridiculous.

Modern China, laid the moral high ground, early on, by heavily condemning Western colonialism and imperialism during the 20th century. This was especially true during the Mao years (Shinn, 2008 p.157). This context means that China has to use a much different tact, than that used by Europe, both in the past and as well as the present.

It seems clear China does not have any direct control over any nations in Africa, as the former European colonial masters exercised. It is though worth remembering that according to the founder

of the term neo-colonialism that troops on the ground is not a necessity to fulfil the definition of the term, more important are economic and other subtle political factors (Nkrumah, 1965).

4.3.4 Hampering of good governance and allowing corruption?

China has been extensively accused of hampering progress in fostering good governance in Africa. This is due to the fact that development aid comes with no specific demands, unlike the West (discussed more at length later) which may for example demand free and fair elections as a precondition for any assistance. Of course China herself not being a democracy, it would be odd to say the least if she were to demand free and fair elections in any given African state as a precondition for development aid or trade deals.

On Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, China is listed at a lowly 80th for the most transparent nations on Earth. Meanwhile Sudan, one of China's main partners in Africa, is listed at number 173 (Transparency International, 2013). Most other African nations also have lowly positions. This clearly does not bode well for corruption in China's dealing with the continent. Sudan and Zimbabwe are two of the countries where China's action has been most criticised and this will be reviewed in the preceding paragraph.

4.3.5 China and Sudan

Probably the most controversial country in which China is heavily active, is Sudan². Until very recently Sudan was the largest country in Africa by land mass. As mentioned previously Sudan is estimated to have around 38 billion barrels of oil. In recent times, the country has been ravaged by conflict, with the War in Darfur being the most infamous, with excess deaths, being estimated at around 298,000 and perhaps as many as a staggering 462,000 (The Lancet, 2010). Many too have been displaced and have been forced to become refugees. This whole sad situation led to an arrest warrant in 2008 by the International Criminal Court on charges of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes against Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir (International Criminal Court, 2009). Despite this, in 2007, to serve as an example, China purchased 40% of Sudan's total oil output, making for 6% of all Chinese oil imports that year (Bloomberg Businessweek, 2008). On top of this China has been selling over \$100 million worth of arms to the Government of Sudan during the period between 1996 and 2003 alone, which was the period building up to war (The Washington Post, 2004). It is more or less infeasible that the Chinese Government was not aware

² Since 2011 Sudan has been split into two respective countries, the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan. Sudan here refers largely to the joint state before the recent split.

that these weapons would be used by the Sudanese Government against its population, and could only serve to fuel conflict in the region.

Europe (in the form of the E.U.) in comparison has not traded and even created an arms embargo, during this turbulent period in Sudan's history, this is because Europe works by the concept of conditionality. Conditionality is the use of incentives in exchange for compliance, i.e. the traditional idiom of carrot and stick. Sudan has not met these basic conditions, and therefore is in a sense ostracised when it comes to having relations with the EU, China on the other hand has perused it's so called no strings attached policy when dealing with Sudan. Meaning they don't become involved in any fashion in domestic affairs, including controversially the War in Darfur. This has led to loud criticism by numerous NGOs. To serve as example the Save Darfur NGO, is pushing hard for China to take action against the Sudanese government, they have stated "*China is Sudan's closet economic, military and political partner, making it the government most able to pressure Sudan to end the atrocities it commits in Darfur(...)*" (Save Darfur, 2013)

Brautigam (2009, p.282) contends that indeed some of these accusations are justified, but that China and her relationship to Sudan is changing, with China taking a tougher stance. As Evans and Steinberg (2007) commented in a comment piece for the Guardian; "*...there is reason to believe that Beijing is shifting in Sudan from being an obvious part of the problem to a significant part of the solution...*"

4.3.6 China and Zimbabwe

China's dealings with Zimbabwe have also come under heavy scrutiny. Under the so called leadership of Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe has suffered terribly. With human rights abuses common place and probably most famously, the almost comical, (if it wasn't so tragic= inflation of the currency, which was estimated to be 6.5 sextillion per cent at the end of November 2008 (Hanke and Kwok, 2009). Put bluntly Zimbabwe is not a country which needs to have its government propped up and supported by a foreign great power. China though has bilateral relations with Zimbabwe, whilst at the time the West has cut ties and placed sanctions. Mugabe does not seem worried by the West's actions as can be seen by the following remarks of his: "*We have turned East, where the sun rises, and given our backs to the West, where the sun sets*" (The Guardian, 2005). In monetary terms according to Brautigam (2009, p288) development aid to Zimbabwe has been rather modest, especially when compared for example to the aforementioned Sudan. As the

Economist Intelligence Unit (2008) notes links between China and Zimbabwe; “*do not appear to have been translated into hard cash*”.

Despite this the Daily Mail in 2010 ran a rather excitable article entitled: “*Mugabe’s darkest secret: An £800bn blood diamond mine he’s running with China’s Red Army*” (Daily Mail, 2010) The article goes on to claim that China’s military is protecting a diamond mine in Zimbabwe, where workers are treated appallingly. The article furthermore claims that the Zimbabwean military has been trained in torture techniques by the Chinese military. Though the article is lacking any hard evidence, it goes to highlight the kind of damaging accusations being put towards China. The example of China’s involvement Zimbabwe does though, raise some interesting questions, if indeed the Zimbabwean Government is conducting such gross human rights violations against the nations people, and is being propped up by the Chinese, does this constitute a form of colonialism? In essence, can a foreign power be labelled colonialist if the government of that country is also applying oppressive economic and political pressure on its people?

Again though, the weight of history, also weighs heavy in the sphere of politics, it is hard for the West and especially Europe to demand that China severs all relations with Sudan and Zimbabwe when in the not so distant past, European states invaded and plundered numerous African nations. As Brautigam argues throughout her book *The Dragon’s Gift* (2009), perhaps China is just being opportunistic and it’s hard to push China to change, when there is little, to no evidence that West’s sanctions, embargos, or even military intervention in the likes of Iraq, Afghanistan or even more recently Libya, have led to more stability for the peoples of those respective nations.

4.4 Cultural

The Cultural arena is perhaps the least analysed or reviewed by scholars as well as by the media. Though it is clear why colonialism as well as neo-colonialism includes such a dimension. Looking back at colonial history, the European colonisers had a certain notion of the so called “white man’s burden”. The “white man’s burden” was a sense in the minds of the European colonisers, that they had a moral duty to “educate” and civilise” the poor inhabitants of the “dark continent” of Africa. This was probably most manifested in the form of Christian missionaries. In more contemporary times, terms such as “McDonaldization” and “Americanisation” have taken root in the academic discourse to reflect the emergence of a new universal homogenous cultural, stemming from ever greater globalisation, such terms are often seen as modern manifestations of colonial influence.

4.4.1 Defining Culture

The problem with cultural aspects is that the very term culture is so broadly defined, and can include all types of components. Prominent Dutch researcher Geert Hofstede offers one of the most commonly used definitions of culture. He defines two types of culture they are as follows:

1. *The first, most common meaning is “civilization”, including education, manners, arts and crafts and their products. It is the domain of a “ministry of culture”*
2. *The second meaning derives from social anthropology, but in the past decades it has entered common parlance. It refers to the way people think, feel and act. Geert has defined it as “the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from another”. The “category” can refer to nations, regions within or across nations, ethnicities, religions, occupations, organizations, or the genders. A simpler definition is “the unwritten rules of the social game”.*

(Hofstede, 2013)

Primarily though, as this thesis deals more with issues relating to the social sciences and not say anthropology, a more fundamental definition of culture is most fitting. The most reoccurring elements that make up definitions are as follows; religion, media, education and language (Jervis, N 2006) these then will form the analysis for the basis here.

As mentioned previously, much of the cultural realm of past European colonization included a strong religious element. As China has no official state religion such matters are almost insignificant in Sino-African relations.

4.4.2 Confucius Institutes

In the educational realm China has taken significant measures in educating large numbers of Africans. Pledges made at the 2006 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation included the announcement that 5 000 Africans every year would be trained in programs, in areas ranging from economics and trade to water pollution technology (Brautigam, 2009 p.119).

Probably the most entrenched example of China promoting its culture, as well as a form of educational institutions is the establishment of so called Confucius Institutes in Africa. Confucius Institutes are educational associations to be found across the globe. The aim of the Confucius Institutes is to provide the following services:

1. Develop Chinese language courses for various social sectors;

2. Train Chinese language instructors for local institutions and providing them with Chinese language teaching resources;
3. Establish local facilities for holding of the HSK Examination (Chinese Proficiency Test) and for the administration of procedures for the Certification of the Chinese Language Teachers;
4. Provide information and consultative services concerning Chinese education, culture, economy and society;
5. Promote research about Contemporary China.

(Confucius Institute Online, 2011a)

In total there are 26 Confucius Institutes or Confucius classrooms in a total of 19 countries on the African Continent (Confucius Institute Online, 2011b). China's Confucius Institutes can be seen as a form of Chinese soft power, i.e. to gain power or influence, through the use co-opts rather than coercion (Nye, 1990). Some controversy though has been pointed towards Confucius Institutes, for example Steve Mosher (2012), in testimony presented to the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations House Committee on Foreign Affairs, entitled "*Confucius Institutes: Trojan Horses with Chinese Characteristics*". In the presentation Mosher goes on to claim rather than simply the trivial purpose of promoting the Chinese language and creating friendly relationships with the rest of the world, Confucius Institutes instead have the goals of increasing China's popularity, reputation and influence in nations across the globe (Mosher, 2012). He goes on to state that Confucius Institutes, have a "*politicized mission*". As mentioned in Mosher's presentation, James Paradise (2009) goes as far as to state, Confucius Institutes may be viewed as Chinese "*Trojan horses*" and are "*part of a broader soft power projection in which China is attempting to win hearts and minds for political reasons*". This is all rather condemning rhetoric, and perhaps it is a little overboard and highlights the paranoia in some quarters of the West relating to China's activities in Africa.

4.4.3 Other Culture

The Chinese are also immersing themselves in African culture by actually visiting the continent in larger and larger numbers. To serve as an example, 132,334 Chinese tourists visited South Africa in 2012, which is triple the amount who visited the country in 2009 (BBC, 2013)

The China Internet Information Center, an official government controlled website with Chinese news in English outlines, the main features of cultural exchange and cooperation between China

and Africa. According to the news article by 2000 China had bilateral cultural agreements with all African states. The 6 recurrent features in these agreements are as follows:

First: high-level exchanges visits are frequent, with China and African countries sending governmental cultural delegations to visit each other.

Second: Performance and art ensembles visit each other frequently, past examples include The National Ballet of China visiting Africa and the National Dance Ensemble of the Republic of Congo visiting China.

Third: The scale of art exhibitions exchanges expand with increasingly richer contents. For example China and Africa held over 100 art exhibitions of different genres and scale (data as of 2003).

Fourth: China and Africa cooperate on training of artists and performers.

Fifth: China establishes cultural centers in Benin and Mauritius.

Sixth: Special theme activities are undertaken, for example China and African countries have held culture days, weeks and months, movie weeks and book fairs to promote cultural exchange.

Finally China and African nations have conducted exchange and cooperation in fields such as education, sports, films and TV, books, the press and publishing.

(China Internet Information Center, 2003)

A more curious recent development is that a Chinese soap opera has been translated into Swahili, and is broadcast in much of Eastern Africa. (CCTV, 2013). The above examples seem more or less harmless cultural exchanges, to build friendships and creating a better understanding of each other's cultures. They could scarcely be seen as a form of neo-colonial control or pressure from China.

Kapchanga (2012) believes that one of the major challenges in relation to culture, yet has great ramifications to for economic matters too, is the fact that Chinese culture is closer related to Anglosphere, primarily in the East and South of Africa, but as he states is "clouded" by the more French influenced West Africa, as well as the Arab nations of the North. Simply the fact that English is much more popular language to learn for Chinese students, rather than say French or Arabic highlights the cultural issues which can prove to be problematic. Kapchanga (2012) believes for this very cultural reason, China can be as discriminatory in its investments.

A view of China's cultural intentions in Africa, is offered by the Higher and Tertiary Education Minister of Zimbabwe, Mr Stan Mudenge, who believes a cultural invasion of Africa by China, is a myth, which as he states is "(...)peddled in certain interested non-African quarters with a known history of culturally and political dominating Africa." (China Internet Information Center, 2009). Perhaps ironically though, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe made a decree that the teaching of Mandarin at the University of Zimbabwe should be mandatory for any student enrolled at the university, but this is more an internal pressure from the Zimbabwean Government, rather than coming externally from China (Rotberg, 2008 p.3).

Looking overall at the actions of the Chinese in the realm of culture in Africa, it is clear that there is nothing on the scale as Europeans actions on the continent during colonial times, where missionaries attempted to civilise the population, by introducing say Christianity, or the Western judicial system.

As BBC reporter James Melik (2012) states; *The relationships between Africans and Chinese, either in Africa or China, are full of conflicts and subtleties*"

Importantly, Rupp (2008, p.77) believes that the Chinese have no interest or intent to change Africans into "Chinamen". There is also often a clash of cultures, again as Rupp states, "*social relations between ordinary Africans and Chinese are marked by a tension between mutual admiration and mutual loathing*"

4.5 Europe and (neo)-colonialism

4.5.1 Historical and Contemporary relations

For comparative purposes it is also useful to look at Europe, particularly in the form of the European Union (EU) and its relations with Africa, this will be done in the preceding section.

Intuitively the term (neo)-colonialism refers primarily to European nation states, as it was these very nations who colonized the continent during the 19th century. Therefore a large body of literature is available on the subject. When Kwame Nkrumah first coined the very term neo-colonialism, he was predominantly, though not exclusively referring to a continuation of the West's manipulation of the African continent, but simply in a more colluded fashion.

Europe's history on the African continent is well known, the Atlantic slave trade is one of the most glaring blemishes on European history.

The so called Bretton Woods system has also been a hallmark of relations between the West and Africa. With the establishment of the World Bank and IMF, both of which have been accused by dependency theorists, as institutions with the core aim of creating a continuing hegemonic relationship between the West and Africa.

If we examine contemporary relations between Europe and Africa, it is generally performed more and more on a pan-European basis, in the form of the EU, rather than the traditional individual nation state. Relations between the EU and Africa, are historically governed by two key frameworks, first there was the Lome Convention in 1975, which laid foundations for relations with the so called ACP countries: the African, Caribbean and Pacific, this was superseded in 2000 by the Cotonou Agreement in 2000 (European Union External Action, 2013a). The main objectives of the agreement are stated to be the reduction and eventual eradication of poverty in Africa, as well as the gradual integration of African, Caribbean and Pacific States into the global economy, whilst at all times adhering to the aims of sustainable development (European Commission, 2012).

Most recent, with the creation of the EU's European External Action Service (EEAS) in 2010, in preparation for the so called Joint-EU Africa Strategy (JAES) was imagined in 2007, more focus was placed on Pan-African relations, i.e. relations with the African Union (AU). The four main aims of the strategy are:

1. Improving the Africa-EU political partnership
2. Promoting:
 - Peace, security, democratic governance and human rights
 - Basic freedoms, gender equality
 - Sustainable economic development, including industrialisation
 - Regional and continental integration
 - Ensuring that all the Millennium Development Goals are met in all African countries by 2015
3. Effective multilateralism
4. A people-centred partnership

(European Union External Action, 2013b)



The JAES and especially the EEAS are both very much in their infancy and therefore, the Cotonou Agreement is still the flagship documentation EU and African relations.

Most importantly, as mentioned previously, is the EU’s use of conditionality, more of which is discussed below.

4.5.2 Comparing China and Europe

Below is a rather simple overview of Sino-African Relations, compared with European and African relations, for comparative purposes:

Figure 2 China and Europe comparison

| |  China |  Europe |
|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Historical Ties | Some trade links during the 15 th Century. Ideologically based links in the 20 th Century. | Slave trade starting in the 16 th century. Full blown colonialism during the 19 th and early 20 th century |
| Contemporary Economic | No strings attached. Trade with Africa worth ~\$166 billion in 2011 (China Daily, 2012). | Conditionality. Trade with Africa worth \$567 billion in 2011. (China Daily, 2012). |
| Contemporary Political | Some political outreach by the CPC to African political parties. But no conditionality. | Strong cooperation between African and European Union. Political demands, such as good governance and free and fair elections through conditionality. |
| Contemporary Cultural | The emergence of Confucius Institutes on the continent. | Still a strong influence, remnants of past colonial ties, through organisations such as the British Commonwealth and French Francophonie. |

As mentioned previously, the flagship document relating African and European relations is the Cotonou Agreement, the flagship document on Sino-African relations is the official paper named “China’s African Policy”, as discussed above under the section “historical background” of this

thesis, comparing these two reveals perhaps, some of the reasons African states are starting to look East and are strengthening ties with the Chinese.

As mentioned previously Europe uses the concept of conditionality. The concept is covered by Article 96 and 97 of the Cotonou Agreement. Article 96 deals with human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law. Article 97 deals with corruption, enshrining the principles by which receivers of development aid and trade links have to adhere. This is in stark contrast to China's policy, which though wishes to foster aspects such as mutual respect, does not have any explicit demands placed on receivers of assistance.

In essence, the two respect approaches could be viewed as no strings attached vs. conditionality, the question is, which one of the two approaches is most in line with neo-colonialist theory?

4.5.3 SAPS

Structural adjustment programs (SAPs) should also be given a mention here, though not directly conducted by the European Union, they are part of the standard Western so called Washington Consensus actions with developing nations. SAPs, are another form of conditionality, though this time conducted by the IMF or World Bank for loans. SAPs are aimed at solving macroeconomic problems in the country requesting the loan. Often the condition for any loan is ruthless cutting of public expenditure. SAPs have been heavily and repeatedly criticized, and often blamed for making a country's situation worse, due to forcing governments to reduce spending on things such as, health, education, and infrastructure (Shah, 2013). Such policies could be seen from a dependency theory (and thereby neo-colonial) perspective, as purposefully, keeping poor nations poor and reliant on the West. As George (1990, p143) states;

“Debt is an efficient tool. It ensures access to other peoples’ raw materials and infrastructure on the cheapest possible terms. Dozens of countries must compete for shrinking export markets and can export only a limited range of products because of Northern protectionism and their lack of cash to invest⁹ in diversification. Market saturation ensues, reducing exporters’ income to a bare minimum while the North enjoys huge savings. The IMF cannot seem to understand that investing in (... [a]) healthy, well-fed, literate population (...) is the most intelligent economic choice a country can make”

If this is indeed the case, surely there is no better example of controlling in a detrimental fashion the economic and thus political system of a foreign country by an external force, i.e. neo-colonialism.

5. Executive Summary

5.1 Conclusion

At its most fundamental neo-colonialism is the use of economic, political and cultural pressures to control or influence other countries. Here the thesis will conclude by briefly looking at each element in turn, yet again, but in a much more concise fashion, a kind of checklist to finally be able to draw a conclusion if in fact China is acting as a neo-colonialist force in Africa.

In the economic realm China has become a massive player on the continent, spending over \$68 billion on projects there, though Chinese trade with Africa still pales in comparison to Europe and the US. The fact is though that the Chinese are investing heavily in Africa and this trend is predicted to continue. What is most important relating to Chinese development aid, investment, trade deals and loans to Africa, is that they never come with any preconditions, the “no strings attached” approach.

In the political realm China does not interfere with the domestic politics in the country or region within which China is assisting with, but has actively tried to create ties with African political parties. The fact that China never interferes has led to some degree of criticism especially in respect to Sudan and Zimbabwe, where China has been blamed for propping up and even assisting tyrannical regimes. As a developing one party state, it has to be said that it is rather hard for China to push for democracy and free and fair elections in African nations.

In the cultural realm, China is actively trying to encourage cultural exchanges, to develop strong connections and affinity between Africa and China, as well as develop respect for each other’s cultures. This is especially important as the Chinese and the vast array of African cultures can be very different, and there is little historical interaction between the two regions. Probably the most visible example of China promoting its culture in Africa is the setting up of Confucius Institutes across the continent. Some in the West see this trend as a sly means of China trying to impose her culture on the continent, but this seems alarmist to say the least.

In conclusion, sensationalist media relish the use of eye catching and sensational terms such as neo-colonialism in relation to china’s recent surge of interest on the African continent, perhaps without even fully understanding the very nature of the term. As the above analysis has shown, it would be a stretch by any measurement to claim that China is neo-colonizing Africa. Europe’s colonisation of

Africa, was both ignorant and at times brutal³. Put simply, China has no colonial hangover, like Europe. China herself can still be characterised as a developing country⁴, which creates a level of mutual affinity, thus avoiding any possible air of a condescending attitude, in the possible interpretation of donor and beggar. As Brautigam (2009, p.11) states, wealthy nations have over the last sixty years, tried, various forms of development, including economic, social, sustainable, people-centred to name but a few, and none yet have proved to be the silver bullet, to the fix the woes of underdevelopment in Africa. As Brautigam (2009, p.11) also states, Chinese assistance is much simpler, and has changed far less often, not bowing to the current dominating ideological whims of the time. It is inherently modeled by its own, successful experience of development. Which, with its mixture of state control and capitalism, appears to fly in the face of the constant mantra of Western economists, pushing for free market capitalism and liberalisation as the only feasible economic model for development. That is not though to say that China has not used capitalism effectively As Junbo (2007) states; *“Though China is not a colonialist, it is a successful capitalist in Africa”*.

As stated previously, viewing China, as a possible neo-colonialist of Africa, is, after reviewing the current situation at least, both sensationalist and alarmist, at most China could be described at times as being a rouge donor. Much of the mistrust and suspicion relating to China’s activities in Africa, seem to stem from the secrecy in much of China’s actions there, as the country is a one party state, with a notorious lack of transparency. Labeling China by any stretch colonialist seems to be jumping the gun slightly as, as recently as the latter half of the 20th century China backed many anticolonial liberation movements, in the form of weapons, training and funds (Rotberg, 2008).

China is of course no saint, and clearly has an agenda behind every move they make on the African continent. The criticism of their no strings attached approach is at times justified, though China has appeared to notify this, and for example has taken a tougher stance against Sudan. Perhaps though China’s approach towards Africa should be embraced as being new a model of relations between a Great Power and Africa. The fact is, relations between the traditional great powers, be it France, Great Britain or the USA and Africa have fundamentally failed to create prosperity⁵. First in the form of explorative colonial relations and later in the form, of forced neo-liberal development/aid

³ See for example Belgian Congo, as well as many other examples:
http://www.yale.edu/gsp/colonial/belgian_congo/index.html

⁴ The International Monetary Fund, classifies China as a developing economy:
<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2012/01/pdf/text.pdf>

⁵ Prosperity in the Western sense of GDP growth

programs born from the Bretton Woods system. Though some success stories are to be found in countries embracing western neo-liberal models, ironically primarily in Asia, such models have definitively failed most of Africa, and most profoundly in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Perhaps then it is time for a paradigm shift, a new form of engagement, one based on mutual respect, not based upon mistrust stemming from the very recent past, an engagement that is neither patronising nor paternalistic. Namely the model China is trying to foster, perhaps the media and others should embrace this new model and hope it can break years of stagnation in areas of the continent. China is also unique from the West by the fact that they do not separate between development aid or assistance and trade deal, making it very hard to analyse her actions in Africa using the traditional Western definitions. Perhaps it is time for what *The Economist* (2011) has termed “Aid 2.0”, and an end to the Washington Consensus, perhaps even the emergence of a Beijing Consensus. Also worth pondering is the possibility that the media is focusing on China in Africa too intensely, whilst other nations are also increasing their role on the continent. India for example is starting to show an ever greater presence in Africa (*One India News*, 2013). Africa has clearly strengthened her bargaining position substantially, with China and a few other players now so active on the continent, African countries don't have to simply accept Western loans, aid or development cash, but can now shop around and play China and the West off each other, to her own advantage. And it is often the case that aid and trade deals stemming from China are most attractive to African nations as they don't come with demands such as conditionality or SAPs. Surely such choice is the very opposite of neo-colonialism.

To conclude, China is becoming a bigger player, year on year, and perhaps will be even considered a super power in the not too distant future. It is only logical, that as China becomes, richer and more powerful she will begin to increasingly, to flex her muscles and develop her foreign policy as well as relationships with nations across the globe. For the moment though, China is still playing catch up with other powers. It's almost universally accepted that we also do not live in a mercantilist world, where if one nation gains, another loses, i.e. the zero sum fallacy. We now live in a truly, interlinked world where globalisation is an unstoppable force. As Rupp (2008, p.83) states “*Relations between African states and China can be best characterized as postcolonial interdependency*”. For this fact, alone, perhaps journalists and politicians alike should refine from using terms such as colonialism when referring to contemporary Sino-African relations.

5.2 Reflections

The most interesting observation gained from conducting this thesis, is the clear feeling of, *you are damned if you do, and you are damned if you don't*. On the one hand, if Europe demands conditionality, it is accused of being paternalistic and patronising by trying to force a Western system of law and governance on African nations. On the other hand, if China does not involve itself in the affairs of nations, it is accused of abetting human rights violations. This forms a clear juxtaposition in how best to deal with Africa. Having said that, it may be a “no strings attached” approach but at least it’s not the rope of the noose or the leather of the whip! both literally and figuratively speaking. Also of note is that the very term neo-colonialism seems to some degree out dated and used by the left as a means to inject excitement and controversy into their arguments. The world is a very different place than when the European powers met at Berlin in 1884-85 to partition the continent of Africa. A country annexing another, never mind a whole continent is more or less unimaginable, especially when one recognizes that the principle of self-determination is so enshrined in international law.

5.3 Further Research

More exhaustive analysis of how much and where China is spending her cash in Africa is needed. Such research is greatly hindered by the fact, as previously mentioned that the Government of China is so secretive. Though more research has to be conducted in this area, much praise has to be given to the recent painstaking work by AidData.

It would also be interesting to produce a critique of Europe, ask the question of if it is instead Europe where the finger of should pointed in terms of neo-colonisation. Especially when one looks at the use of conditionality, which could be seen as both controlling, as well as patronising. Also the recent increase in military intervention on the continent could be interesting in this regard, especially France’s recent missions in former colonies. Aspects of this were reviewed briefly, but a more comprehensive analysis could prove thought provoking.

Finally, a clearer universal means of comparing countries/regions assistance in a country/region should be considered, as at times, with the various definitions and components of definitions it sometimes feels as though one is comparing apples and oranges.

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