

China's Three Decades of Economic Reforms and the Transformation of China's Policy towards Africa

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Abstract

The pace and scale of China's economic transformation have no historical precedent. Since opening up to foreign trade and investment and implementing free market reforms in 1979, China has been among the world fastest-growing economies. China's foreign policy, more specifically, its African policy, has been decided by its strategy of development. The Second Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Summit held in December 2015 in South Africa makes the importance and extent to which China's relationship with Africa is changing. China's tripling of its financing commitment to US\$60 billion signaled its confidence in the economic changing prospects of Africa. The changing Sino-Africa relationship is underpinned by a shift towards a more balanced partnership that recognizes Africa's socio-economic and political priority. In contrast to most analysts' claim that China's policy changed in recent years due to its thirst for oil and other natural resources in Africa. Sino-Africa relations have evolved to the extent that African nations are taking a more assertive role when it comes to economic engagement with China such as signing trade deals, making sure that their interests are protected. It is anticipated that Africa's importance within China's foreign policy framework will continue to grow.

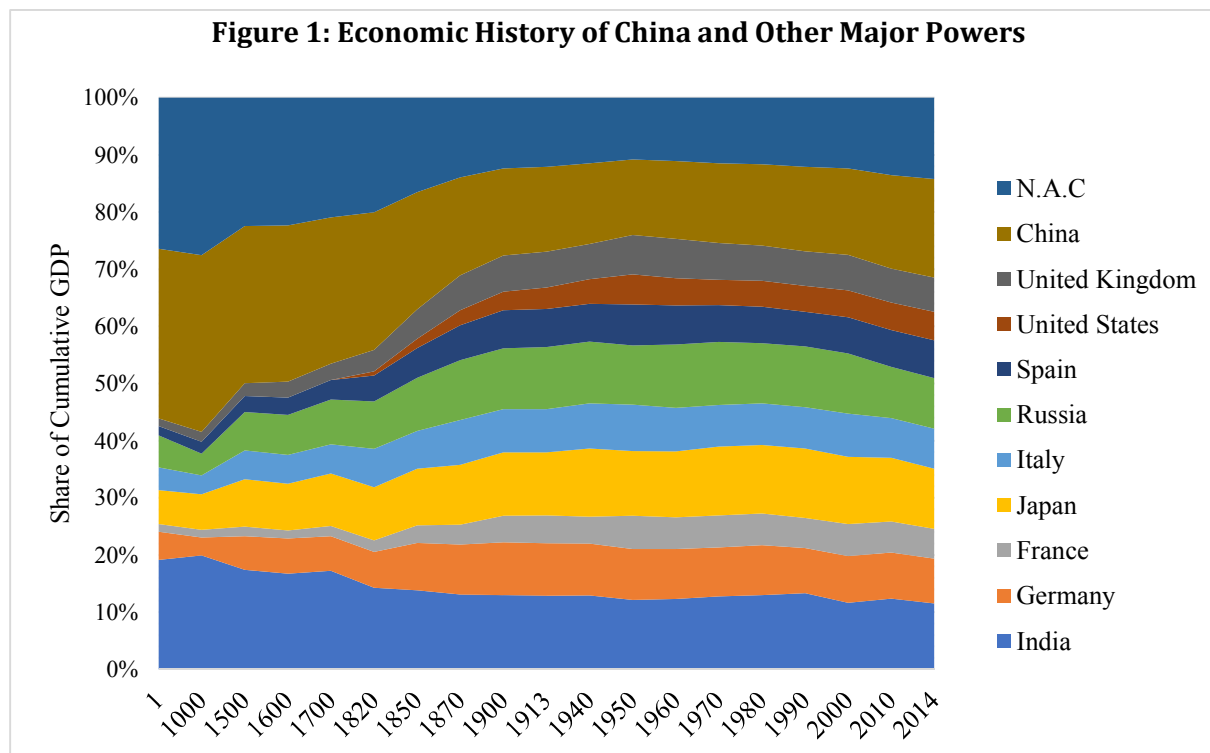
Keywords: Africa, China, Economic Reform, Economic engagement, Policy Change

1. Introduction

China's rapid rise has puzzled several individuals, including economists. The meteoric rise over the past half-century is one of the most striking instances of the influence of opening an economy up to the global market. During that period China has undergone a shift from a largely agrarian society to an industrial powerhouse. In the process, it has seen sharp upsurges in productivity and wages that have permitted China to turn out to be the world's second-largest economy. How could China with over 1.3 billion people transform itself relatively suddenly from a vastly impoverished agricultural land into a formidable economic powerhouse when so many other small countries have been unable to do so in spite of their more favorable social-economic conditions? According to Yi Wen, among several conflicting opinions that have emerged to interpret China's rise, two stand out as the most popular and provocative. Firstly, the Chinese growth is viewed as hyper-growth as an enormous government-engineered bubble. Most analysts think it is not sustainable and will collapse because China has no democracy, no human rights, no freedom of speech, no rule of law, no Western-style system, no well-functioning markets, no private banking sector, no protection of intellectual properties, no capability to innovate (other than copying and stealing Western technologies and business secrets) nor a host of several other things that Western nations have possessed for centuries and have proved essential for Western prosperity and technology dominance (Wen, 2016). Based on this opinion, the bubble will burst at the expense of China's population and environment.

Secondly, other analysts view China's remarkable rise simply as destiny. They believe that China is returning to its historical position: the Chinese had been one of the wealthiest countries and greatest civilizations (alongside India) from at least 200 B.C to 1800, the dawn of the Industrial Revolution in England (See Figure 1) it was only a matter of time for China to reclaim its historical glory and dominant the world once again. "Let China Sleep, for when the Dragon awakes, she will shake the world." The saying is attributed to Napoleon¹ and he seems to have been right because the dragon is awake. However, neither view is supported by concrete economic analysis, instead of being either on prejudice or naïve extrapolation of human history. The question now is how could a country with all those adverse elements for innovation and business be capable to grow at a double-digit annual rate for many decades and transform itself in such a short time from an impoverished agricultural economy into a formidable manufacturing powerhouse? If culture or ancient civilization is the clarification, then why it is that Greek, the Egyptian, and other great empires are not bursting into the global arena? (Wen, 2016).

¹ Napoleon and his view on China August 18, 2008. Retrieved from <http://wanderingchina.blogspot.com/2008/08/napoleon-and-his-view-on-china.html>.



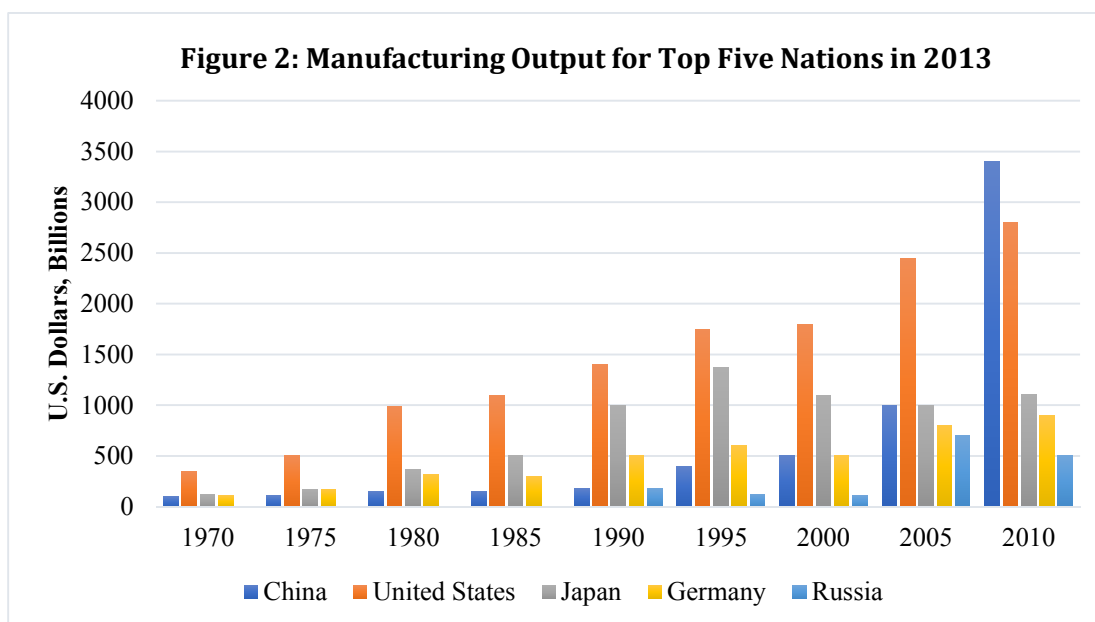
Source: Wen, 2016

Note: N.A.C represents Non-Asian Ancient Civilizations (Greece, Egypt, Turkey and Iran)

Note: The cumulative gross domestic product is that for all the nations listed and represents at least 70 percent of the total for the world at any given time, with the rest offered by smaller nations

The success of the Chinese economic reform is frequently described by experts as one of the most remarkable success narratives in modern times. Figure 2 displays the manufacturing output of top five nations globally. In the early 1970s, China produced very few manufactured products – a tiny fraction of the United States level. Around 1980, China’s manufacturing started to take off, surpassing the developed nations one by one, overtaking the United States in 2010 to turn out to be the number one manufacturing powerhouse globally. During the past decades, China’s rapidly growing presence in Africa has increasingly become a topic of debate in the international media, among policy analysts and economist. However, as China’s economy continues to grow, China will continue to see Africa as the most important part of the Third World in the Chinese government’s worldview. In spite of occasional major encounters such as the Tanzania-Zambia railway project in the late 1960s, China’s contacts with and influence on Africa remained limited until the 21st century in view of its constraints in resources and power projection capability (Larkin, 1971). Today, China leadership pursue a “major power diplomacy” based on the assumption that China is a major power and should be accorded the status of one. China’s remarkable economic growth also involves an expansion of investment and trade activities, as well as efforts to make sure a dependable supply of resources in support of its development.

Therefore, Africa is no longer an element of the abstract “Third World” concept in China’s diplomacy; it has turned out to be an important ally in international organizations, as well as an increasingly significant trade partner and supplier of energy and other resources. In this context, the Chinese and Egypt established a strategic cooperation facing the 21st century in 1999; the Chinese established a strategic cooperation with South Africa in 2004 and Nigeria in 2005 (Policy Research Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PRC, 2005). This paper provides insights into China’s economic rise, the status of the Sino-Africa relationship by offering background on the different dimensions of the links between Africa and China, and China’s African policy in the past decades by analyzing China’s economic and political interests in Africa. Arguably, China’s foreign policy towards Africa has shifted from ideological considerations to economic diplomacy and from a single form of aid to multiple channels of cooperation. Also, the paper considers the future partnership dynamics and prospective difficulties in Sino-Africa cooperation.



Sources: Wen, 2016

2. The Interpretation and Understanding of China's Development Strategies

The People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded in 1949 by Mao Zedong. Over the past sixty years, we can clearly distinguish two major phases in China's economic development: the Maoist phase (1949-1977) and the reform phase (1978-onwards). The Maoist period in China is, above all, marked by self-reliance and isolation from the world economy. The Deng Xiaoping period in China is, above all, marked by opening up to the rest of the world. China's understanding of the recent theme has changed from "war" and "revolution" to "peace" and "development". The communication between diplomacy and economy was overturned, for instance, the idea that economy should serve diplomacy was changed to that of diplomacy serving the economy (Anshan, 2007). The three decades of transformation has brought a speedy growth of Chinese economy. China opted for an indigenous solution to their economic backwardness, their economic transformation holds a special lesson for African nations. The three decades of economic transformation is nothing short of a miracle; this remarkable achievement indicates what a nation with determination, sacrifice, vision, and confidence can attain.

On the international stage, conflict or fighting is not the single means to attain success, the international relation is not a zero-sum game, and the win-win strategy does work. The miraculous growth rate of China's economy has prompted a great deal of study, particularly among economist. One of the economists is Jefferson (2008) who offers an excellent review of China's reform experience and on how the economics literature has tried to clarify that experience. One strand of other economic literature decomposes China's economic growth into labor, capital, technology, and institutional change components. Most of these quantitative studies (Lin, 1992; Fan, et al., 2004) find that institutional change accounts for a significant proportion of the observed economic growth since the reform. Additionally, the structural change from low-productivity agriculture to more productive industrial and service sectors also contributed to rapid economic growth. This part of the paper will discuss four basic types of explanation of China's remarkable economic success: (1) "comparative advantage" (and conditional convergence); (2) "incentive matter" (fiscal decentralization and realignment of incentives towards growth-maximizing activities); (3) experimentation (as an economic and political discovery mechanism); and (4) pressure and crisis as inducers of reform.

The Issue of Realigning the Economy in the Direction of Comparative Advantage Counts

No credible perspective on the Chinese economy can ignore the amazing economic gains over the past 33 years during which growth of the economy augmented sharply creating hundreds of millions of employment and raising the incomes throughout China. Some experts argue that China's rapid rise since the reform is chiefly due to the rebalancing of China's development strategy away from a central focus on heavy-industry and in the direction of more labor-intensive sectors (Lin, 2007). When the People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded in 1949, there was the dearth of capital in China and the Chinese were isolated from the international community. Influenced by the experience and ideology of the Soviet Union, in the 1950s, the central planning of industry (with an emphasis on the heavy industry) was introduced, modeled on the five-year plans of the Soviet Union. During this period, the Chinese placed the development of the heavy industry as their top priority if the country was to catch up with the developed countries as soon as possible. In order for the Chinese to attain this objective,

the Chinese government suppressed the procurement price for grains, restricted rural migration, and set up some barriers between rural and urban residents. Due to the fact that this strategy was capital intensive, it violated China's comparative advantage, which was defined by limited capital and abundant labor, and led to almost thirty years of stagnation in per capita income.

Based on the famous Heckscher-Ohlin theory in international economics, adopting the law of comparative advantage on basis of factor endowments, a nation could export more products and gain more speedy accumulation of physical capital so that it may have a sustainable growth in the economic development. As far as a labor abundant underdeveloped nation is concerned, it has the potential competitive power in the global market for labor-intensive products. Since 1978, the government of China has been pursuing the outward-looking export-oriented strategies and with the advantage of vigorous FDI activities, it could convert its potential competitive power in labor-intensive manufacturing into the actual one. Due to this advantage, the Chinese government has shifted its development strategies toward more labor-intensive sectors, to begin with, agriculture, and then progressively export-oriented rural industries. In the international context, the Chinese government possesses a clear comparative advantage in the labor-intensive manufacturing sector. There was an enormous inflow of foreign direct investment into China due to China's cheap labor after introducing the open-door policy.

As a result, both labor resources and capital were more efficiently distributed, which greatly bolstered economic efficiency. According to Krueger (1984), the author believes that the Chinese development path thus re-emphasizes the significance of adhering to comparative advantage in creating labor-intensive and export-oriented economic growth. Notably, a variation of this issue is that realignment in the direction of comparative advantage may be essential for augmented growth, but is not by itself adequate. According to Ravallion and Chen (2008), the authors debate that the Chinese post-1978 economy also profited from several social and infrastructural investments of the pre-1978 era, particularly pertaining to health, transport infrastructure, and education. Therefore, they raise a fairly standard idea of conditional convergence to clarify the Chinese post-1978 catch-up.

The issue of incentives Counts During Economic Reforms

Scholars have proposed a number of theories to explain the success of China's economic reforms in its move from a planned economy to a socialist market economy despite unfavorable factors such as the troublesome legacies of socialism, considerable erosion of the work ethic, decades of anti-market propaganda, and the "lost generation" whose education disintegrated amid the disruption of the Cultural Revolution (Calhoun, Craig; Wasserstrom, Jeffrey N. (2003). Another theory focuses on internal incentives within the Chinese government, in which officials presiding over areas of high economic growth were more likely to be promoted. Scholars have noted that local and provincial governments in China were "hungry for investment" and competed to reduce regulations and barriers to investment to bolster economic growth and the officials' personal careers. According to Easterly (2002), the author argues that the most significant principle of economics is that the issue of incentives counts. Note that several of the reforms – dismantling of the communes and replacement by household farm plots liberalization of the Township and Village Enterprises (TVEs) and the opening of the coastal regions – were radical measures introduced quite rapid at the end of the 1970s and early 1980s. In these areas, there is little to distinguish the *pace* of the reform in China with that of Eastern Europe. The dismantling of the communes in 1979 covered approximately 790 million people, or 81 percent of the population, and was effectively attained in a brief period of 30 months. Irrespective of all these developments, Lin (1990) asserts that during the planning period China's rural communes were dogged by weak incentives because of free rider problems, particularly in agricultural production. During this period, the farmers did not want to work hard for the reason that the fruits of their toil were shared among others, rather than just themselves. In the same way, the state-owned enterprises (SOEs), shirking was also reported to be a widespread problem (Xu, 2003), and several SOEs made important losses. One of the key issues of the market-oriented reform surveys on China is that the post-1978 government offer strong incentives for individual – including farmers, managers, and local officials – to upsurge investment and improve productivity.

The development of the incentive approach also had the effect of immediately resulting in a much fuller utilization of long-term investments made by the State in agricultural research and development, and other infrastructure. According to Fan, (1999) and Lin, (1992), they asserted that within the space of some years, agricultural productivity almost doubled. This development occurred as a result of the rural reform that triggered the economic growth and reduced the number of poor people in just a short period of time (Ravallion and Chen, 2008). Numerous literature has paid more attention to fiscal decentralization as the key motivating factor in China's economic growth (Cheung, 2008). During central planning, local governments had to turn in most of their local revenues to the central government, and there was no obvious rule as to how central finances were to be devolved to lower governments. China has adopted a series of fiscal reforms since the 1980s targeting at improving the fiscal contract arrangements between diverse levels of governments. After the fiscal reforms, local and upper-level governments shared fiscal revenues according to a predetermined formula. Since local

governments can keep a significant portion of the augmented local revenues, they face stronger incentives to upsurge local revenue. Strong incentives for local governments to attain speedy economic growth helps to clarify the reason China has grown so fast in spite of the well-defined property rights protection in the *de facto* legal system (Zhang, 2007). Also, the competition serves as the disciplinary mechanism by which local governments offer *de jure* protection of investors' property rights. The existence of strong growth-oriented incentives also clarifies the reason the protection of the property rights of other groups, like farmers, has been weak (Zhang 2006a). Above all, China's central government has employed both personnel policies and fiscal incentives to make sure that local governments employ their financial empowerment to augmented economic growth. Therefore, although the principle of incentives is rather universal, the particular forms employed to improve incentives in China may not be easily transferable.

The Issue of Experimentation Counts During Economic Reforms

Policy experimentation points to political-administrative procedures and initiatives that allow to discover or test novel instruments of problem-solving and thereby propel broader-based policy innovation or institutional adaptation in a given polity, economy or society. The term has come to renewed prominence in the discussion about the political processes behind China's economic rise since the beginning of Chinese economic reform policies in 1978. On the economic stage, the Chinese reformers employed more explicit experimentation¹ to promote economic learning and overcome political resistance to reform. The economic role of this policy is self-discovery in the face of uncertainty. To quote the oft-cited phrase from Deng Xiaoping in the early reform period, he stated that China's reform has been "crossing the river by feeling the stones." The political role is more pragmatic which emphasizes the vital role that experimentation can play in overcoming political resistance to reform.

Pragmatism, trial, and error, evidence-based policymaking, and experimentation with small-scale policy reforms that are later scaled up, are all key features of China's reforms. Most successful reforms have experienced pilot experiments and impact evaluations before being scaled up. Learning by experimentation is an important strategy when reformers face huge economic and political uncertainty. Due to doubt, it is difficult to judge which option is more feasible from the *ex-ante* point of view. In such cases, experimentation can be a useful tool to search for more information and for testing and updating prior hypotheses. Experiments yield information to help comprehend what works and what does not. Therefore, even failures can be helpful for the reason that they can help eliminate unfavorable options, as displayed by Luo (2008). The failure of Luo *laissez-faire* price system experiment in Hebei Province helped him come up with the idea of dual-track price reform system, which is a vital instance of an experiment where "Washington Consensus" wisdom was contradicted. The creation of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zones is another example. Shenzhen was a very small town by the border between Hong Kong and mainland China with a population of 30,000 people in the late 1970s. In 1979, Yuan Geng, director of the China Investment Promotion Bureau in Hong, proposed to set up a special industrial zone in the Shekou area of Shenzhen as a pilot for market reforms, taking advantage of the proximity to Hong Kong.

The state council quickly approved the proposal, earmarking 2.14 square kilometers for the zone and granting it special rights to test the applicability of the market economy in the zone. The industrial zone turned out to be an instant success. The investment from Hong Kong quickly filled in the limited land generating hundreds of thousands of jobs. After observing this success, in 1980 the Chinese government established a larger Shenzhen Special Zones, which encompasses 1,953 square kilometers, to carry out full fledges market reforms on a larger scale. This is the first citywide special economic zone in China. Experimentation can help control the possible disastrous consequence of the wrong choice. A vital point to note here is that, in the context of the emergence of randomized microeconomic experiments within development economic (Duflo, 2005), is that most China's experiments were not random. Specifically, experiments were frequently initiated in isolated poor areas. The Chinese government purposively initiated the household responsibility system as a pilot reform in many remote provinces so as to circumvent and minimize the potential costs of failure and lessen the political resistance.

Similarly, the Wenzhou area, which used to be a remote region in Zhejiang Province but is now one of the most dynamic regions in China, received special permission to be a pilot region for rural industrialization precisely because of its isolation at the time (Zhu, 2008). Under the special policy, Wenzhou made bold experiments in reforming town-village enterprises (TVEs) and legalizing private companies. After observing its success, most TVEs and small and medium SOEs were privatized nationwide by the late 1990s. Although such experiments were not so rigorously conducted as to include control groups, the pilots enable researchers and policymakers to observe what worked and what did not work. Another benefit of the Chinese method is that it

¹ Notably, although marginal reforms have some features of experimentation (like experiments, they maybe more reversible than wholesale reform, and they also promote learning), but they also have some distinguishing features relative to other experimental reforms.

involved an element of experimentation in macroeconomic reform, whereas contemporary randomized experiments are confined to microeconomic experiments (Rodrik 2008). Dual-track prices and special economic zones as displayed above are such examples. Such experimentation has been particularly vital in overcoming numerous major obstacles to effective reform in China, related to the nation's size, its diversity, and the history and structure of its hierarchical political system. For a large and diverse economy like China, it is very hard to derive a single one-size-fits-all blueprint for reform simply by applying textbook economic theories. Instead, trial and error processes can help discover local best practice. Though the impact of reform experiments varies between policy domains, China's experimentation-based policy process has been essential for redefining basic policy parameters.

The issue of Pressure as a Catalyst Counts During Economic Reforms

The "pressure" which stimulated the earliest reforms of the post-1978 period was the threat of economic crisis. After the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) China was on the verge of collapse under the planned economy system. More than two-thirds of the people lived under one dollar per day (Ravallion and Chen, 2008). With stagnant agricultural growth and fast population growth, food was in short supply. At the onset of the reform, it seemed China faced extremely high barriers to escaping the low-level equilibrium trap where poverty persisted. Nevertheless, one of the architects of China's rural reform was the crisis, which triggers reforms. After the end of the Cultural Revolution, most of the top leaders and the masses realized that the planned system was not a viable option anymore, even if there was still uncertainty and argument as for how next to proceed. In this situation, Chinese top leaders were more willing to listen to diverse views and permit open policy debate. In other words, the crisis offered would-be reformers with a window of opportunity to push fresh agendas. Important reforms do not come automatically and require policymakers to "seize the day" in a timely fashion.

China's joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) was one instance of the use of an external pressure to invoke and lock in reform. In the 1990s, banking reform met huge resistance for the reason that State banks did not want to give up their monopoly position. Several local governments also opposed the reform because they were afraid of losing their ability to direct credit, which made it very hard for State banks to really operate as commercial banks. Largely as a means of forcing further reforms in the banking and other key sectors, the top leaders made a bold move to enter China into the WTO. Although the WTO gave domestic banks few years window protection, in the end, most of the barriers to entry in the banking sector had to be removed such that State banks were eventually forced to compete on a level playing field. By employing external pressure from the WTO accession the government was able to induce a series of reforms within State banks. Although not complete, most Chinese banks have shed off bad loans, many major state banks have listed their stocks in overseas markets and are subject to the scrutinizing of international financial markets, and local bank branches now find it much easier to refuse loans to local officials. Therefore, the use of external pressure largely attained its implicit objectives. This section was concluded noting that all these explanations are highly compatible and complementary with each other and that together they comprise a compelling and holistic clarification of China's miracle.

3. The Evolution of China's Foreign Policy towards Africa

This part of the paper debates the evolution of China's African policy from the founding of novel China to the contemporary period, by means of three turning points: the 'Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in the Bandung Conference in 1955, the 'Four Principles of Chinese Cooperation with Africa' in 1982, and a 'Fresh Strategic Cooperation' in 2006.

'Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence' in the Bandung (Asian-African Conference) Conference in 1955

The relationship between China and Africa can be traced back to over six centuries ago. In 1415, the Chinese explorers Admiral Zheng He visited the East African Coast and brought back to China shiploads of Chinese commodities. The Chinese Admiral Zheng He led a fleet of 300 ships to Africa, which has planted friendship seeds in the hearts of both Chinese and African people since then. He reached four times the eastern coast of Africa, where current Tanzania, Kenya, and Somalia are located. Zheng He and his fleet introduced tea, porcelain, silk and advanced technology to the visited regions. This shows that China's delivering economic opportunity for Africa goes a long way. What Zheng He took away from Africa was only a giraffe. During his visit, he was able to help extend the influence of China in Africa. This visit also indicates that Africa has a natural and historical connection with the Belt and Road Initiative. However, the interaction in modern time started from Bandung Conference held in the year 1955, which was broadly regarded as a seminal event in Sino-African history. The Bandung conference in Indonesia was considered pivotal in defining a new era of China-Africa cooperation. The conference was anticipated to bolster economic and cultural cooperation of both parties and promoted the anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggle. The conference was attended by representatives of the twenty-nine Asian and African nations. It marked a decisive and crucial change in China relations with

Africa. Of the twenty-nine nations that participated in the conference, six were from African nations, such as Libya, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, and soon to be independent then Sudan and Ghana. The Chinese delegation met with several representatives of numerous African liberation movements who attended as observers. During the conference, the former Premier Zhou Enlai use the opportunity to denounce imperialism and colonialism in Africa and pledge support for the independence movement in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia.

Premier Zhou Enlai presented the *Five Principle of 'Peaceful Coexistence'*, which covered mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; mutual non-aggression; non-interference in each other's internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; and peaceful coexistence (Looy, 2006). The attainment of great diplomatic success followed the conference augmented China's interests in Africa.¹ Premier Zhou Enlai in 1963 embarked on his first ten-country tour of Africa to promote the second-Africa conference. Although few agreed on the need for the second meeting, during his visit to Ghana in 1964, he proposed the *Eight Principles* that were designed to guide China's engagement with African nations.² These principles obviously explained the Chinese intention to support African nations by the policy of economic and technical assistance. The assistance is to support African nations to gradually attain self-reliance, independent development, offer best-quality equipment and material of its own manufacturing. China significantly augmented its aid projects in the continent in the 1970s, as demonstrated in the number of African nations (See Table 1a & 1b). Additionally, the principles displayed that the Chinese government offered the aid to African nations with and string attached, at least from an economic viewpoint. Some loans did not require repayment if African nations could not afford this. Nevertheless, for China's decision-makers, the aid diplomacy had both political and ideological purposes. On the ideological level, China appeared to give backing to any revolutionary movement against imperialism, including African revolutions. On the political level, the primary drive was to compete with Taiwan and then get African to support the People Republic of China (PRC) in global recognition and to compete with the Soviet Union in the African sphere.

Table 1a: Thirteen African Nations Receiving Chinese Aid in the 1960s

<i>Country</i>	<i>Aid Agreement Date</i>	<i>Amount (US\$ Million)</i>
<i>Algeria</i>	1958	100
<i>Egypt</i>	1958	193
<i>Ghana</i>	1961	81
<i>Mali</i>	1961	148
<i>Somalia</i>	1963	220
<i>Tanzania</i>	1964	534
<i>Kenya</i>	1964	91
<i>Burundi</i>	1964	125
<i>Central African Republic</i>	1964	56
<i>Congo</i>	1964	205
<i>Uganda</i>	1965	77
<i>Mauritania</i>	1967	239
<i>Zambia</i>	1967	372

Source: Wu, 2008

¹ Followed the conference, political interactions were built between China and some African countries, including Egypt, Sudan, and Tunisia at the end of 1950s, Mali, Ghana, Somalia, Uganda, Kenya at the beginning of 1960s.

² The eight are: 1. Chinese government have persistently been providing assistance to foreign countries according to the principles of equality and mutual benefit, never regard the assistance as the grant by one sided..... 2. While providing foreign aid, Chinese government strictly respects the sovereignty of recipient countries, no strings attached and no privilege required. 3. in order to relief the burden of recipient countries, Chinese government provides economic aids in the way of interest free or low interest loan, the time limit of repayment could be delayed when it is needed. 4. The purpose of Chinese government providing foreign aid is not to make recipient countries being dependent on China, but to help recipient countries gradually develop on the track of self-reliance and economic development independently. 5. For the projects constructed through China foreign aids, Chinese government does its best to make quick effects through smack investment. Thus, the governments of recipient countries could increase income and accumulate money. 6. Chinese government provides equipment and materials made in China with the best quality, and negotiate the price in accordance with the price of international market....7. While providing technical assistance, Chinese government assures to teach recipients to fully master this kind of technology. 8. The experts who are dispatched by Chinese government to help recipient countries carrying out construction, should be paid as same as their own experts of recipient countries. They are required to not have any special requirement and enjoyment (Gountin, 2006).

Table 1b: Thirty African Nations Receiving Chinese Aid in the 1970s

Country	Aid Agreement Date	Amount (US\$ Million)
Sudan	1970	230
Equatorial Guinea	1971	18.7
Ethiopia	1971	155
Guinea	1971	161
Sierra Leone	1971	94
Togo	1972	77
Tunisia	1972	97
Benin	1972	72
Mauritius	1972	48
Nigeria	1972	3
Rwanda	1972	56
Burkina Faso	1973	92
Cameroon	1973	124
Chad	1973	77
Senegal	1973	108
Niger	1974	64.7
Gabon	1975	26
The Gambia	1975	36
Guinea-Bissau	1975	18
Mozambique	1975	116
São Tomé and Príncipe	1975	12
Botswana	1976	19.4
Comoros	1976	10.3
Morocco	1976	32
Cape Verde	1977	17.6
Liberia	1977	37.4
Seychelles	1978	8.1
Djibouti	1979	12.9

Source: Wu, 2008

Four Principles of Chinese Collaboration with Africa in 1982

The success of China in Africa has strengthened the country's status as a global superpower. Also, Africa plays a significant role in the diplomatic jostling between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of China in the United Nations. Out of the 76 overall votes backing the PRC taking over the Chinese seat from Taiwan in 1971, 26 votes came from African countries.¹ This incident led Mao Zedong to claim that "it was our African brothers who carried us into the United Nations. After the most significant objective, the United Nation seat, was attained, a mutual diplomatic recognition between China and America was established. The less intensive global environment was mirrored in China's foreign policy so that economic growth and domestic reforms instead of revolutionary objectives dominated the policy agenda. In 1982, two messages were sent by the 12th Communist Party Committee National Assembly that had implications for China's Africa policy: (i) China would pursue its independent foreign policy characterized with 'mutual benefits' in actual meaning; (ii) China would focus on domestic economic development (Li Anshan, 2007). Based on the 1982 trip to Africa, in line with these changes, the Prime Minister Zhao Ziyang provided an exclusively fresh 'Four Principles on Sino-African Economic and Technical Cooperation', which stressed on equality and mutual benefits, practical outcome, diversity in forms and common development (Onderco, 2007).² There is a notable dissimilarity when comparing the *Four Principles of the 1980s* to the *Eight Principles in the 1960s*. The dissimilarity was that

¹ "Marius Fransman, South African Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Keynote Address to the Ambassadorial Forum on China-South Africa Diplomatic Relations at 15 Years", Pretoria, South Africa, September 19, 2013.

² The Four Principles include: 1. In carrying out economic and technological cooperation with African countries, China abides by the principles of unity and friendship, equality and mutual benefit, respects their sovereignty, does not interfere in their internal affairs, attaches no political conditions and asks for no privileges whatsoever. 2. In China's economic and technological cooperation with African countries, full play will be given to the strong points and potentials of both sides on the basis of their actual needs and possibilities, and efforts will be made to achieve good economic results with less investment, shorter construction cycle and quicker returns. 3. China's economic and technological cooperation with African countries takes a variety of forms suited to the specific conditions, such as offering technical services, training technical and management personnel, engaging in scientific and technological exchanges, undertaking construction projects, entering into cooperative production and joint ventures.4. The purpose of China's economic and technological cooperation with African countries is to contribute to the enhancement of the self-reliant capabilities of both sides and promote the growth of the respective national economies by complementing and helping each other. (Brautigam, 1998:49-50).

China asked for mutual promotion of the two economies, as displayed in principle 2 and 4. Certainly, economic aid between the poor nations could not be sustained in the long term if it was only limited to a one-way flow. By that time, China was no longer interested in sustaining its position as an influential actor in Africa but was eager to develop own economic capability. In other words, Africa lost its significance in China's eyes and was marginalized as the Chinese concentration moved to its own modernization. In the era when the Chinese itself relied on external funds, there was little that the Chinese could offer for African nations.

A Fresh Strategic Cooperation in 2006

There was a pause in China-Africa relationship that lasted until Tiananmen Square event of 1989. The turmoil saw China faced with serious global isolation and Western sanction. It was six African nations (Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, and Botswana) that stepped up and saved China from the quagmire. In appreciation for the tremendous political favor, China has reciprocated by making Africa the first destination of Chinese foreign minister visit. So, after the turmoil, China intended to focus its diplomacy on the developed nations, but China was confronted with harsh condemnation of human rights and punishment exemplified by political isolation and economic sanction. These made the Chinese government aware of the insurmountable value divergence between itself and Western countries. For that reason, the only strategy for China was to look back and strengthen its ties with developing nations as a defensive mechanism. This meant a reappraisal of the role of the third world nations, including ASEAN nations and African nations, which expressed their understanding towards China's action in handling this internal problem. As part of an effort seeking political support, China's top leaders made high-level visits to Africa in 1979 (Li Xiannian), 1982-1983 (Zhao Ziyang), 1984, 1997, 2001 (Li Peng), 1992 (Yang Shangkun), 1996, 2000, and 2002 (Jiang Zemin), and 2002 (Zhu Rongji- twice). Vice-premier and the Chinese Foreign Minister, Qian Qichen visited over thirty-six African countries between 1990 and 1998. The flurry of activity we see today has deep roots and therefore laid the foundation for an intense diplomacy that continues unabated today. The trip highlighted China's intention in looking for potential political assistance from African nations. During 1996 national visit, President Jiang Zemin suggested building a long-term and stable Sino-African cooperation of all-round cooperation and relationship geared towards the 21st century.

In 2006, the Chinese government specifically published a vital white paper, *China's African Policy*, which was the first Africa policy paper of its kind in China's diplomatic history with African nations. The white paper explains Africa's strategic significance to the Chinese, which embodied China's long-term plans. Over the past decade, the policy has been carried out fully and effectively, playing a significant guiding role in the all-round development of China-Africa relations (Li Anshan, 2007). Through the white paper, the Chinese government showcase to the world that the goal of China's Africa policy is based on *establishing and developing comprehensive and new kind of strategic and cooperative China-Africa partnership and consolidating and bolstering the community of shared future between China and Africa* on the basis of advancing the fundamental interests of both parties. The white paper captures the Chinese government's attempt to further clarify China's determination and goodwill to develop friendly and cooperative relations with Africa and expound the new vision, approach and measures of China's Africa policy under the new circumstances with the aim of guiding the multi-faceted exchanges, cooperation and strategic relationship between China and Africa in the years to come. The Chinese government repeatedly addresses the issue of mutual benefit under the framework of strategic cooperation. Apparently, the gain the Chinese government is referring to does not purely refer to the political benefits in 1955-1978 or the economic interests during 1978-1989. Instead, the Chinese government established strategic objectives via pragmatic pursuits, including cultural exchanges political cooperation, and economic interactions as displayed in the white paper.

4. China's Foreign Policy towards Africa and What It Means for China-Africa Relations

China's nearly four-decade-long economic boom and its active changes of China's African policy is now a magnet for immigrants, particularly from Africa. In the past decades, large numbers of Africans have migrated to foreign nations due to numerous reasons, but small enclaves of Africans began to emerge in China after 2000. The emergence of an African enclave in Guangzhou can be attributed to an evolution of spatial dynamics at the neighbourhood level that represents a localized reaction to changing China African policy and market opportunities brought by globalization. Chinese officials, in building their contemporary relationship with Africa, have argued that they want to engage every African country as an equal. Given this promise, Marsh (2014) argues that the majority of Africans in China view their presence in China as a logical progression a "we are here because you are there" perspective. China stepping up its relations with Africa is one of the most significant developments on the African continent for decades. China recent stepping up with Africa has been visible in Africa and it has strengthened its connections with African nations based on Africa's economic potential and the need to intensify trade and investment to generate economic growth and development. That is why since 2006, which was proclaimed "Year of Africa" by the Chinese government, China's engagement in Africa has gained

significant visibility.

From Ideological Considerations to Economic Diplomacy

The idea that China would be crucial to African development is neither new nor accidental. In fact, Chinese policymakers have been aware of this notion for quite some time. China *Ya-Fei-La* Strategy, literally meaning “Asia-Africa-Latin America” was conceived during the Maoist era in the 1960s in an attempt to promote the advancement of developing country goals in a new world order (Casanova et al, 2016). Since then, China has played an active role in promoting South-South cooperation, being Africa – China cooperation a significant part of the equation. China’s role in supporting African development obviously pre-dates many years ago. Over the past decades, China has built up a strong brand in Africa. This strong brand is as a result of the changing China policy towards Africa which has affected Chinese engagement with the African nation significantly. So, in order to understand China’s engagement in Africa, we have to understand the transformation of the strategy following the Chinese opening up in 1978, and what brought about the change of its foreign policy, especially China’s Africa policy.

Over the years, China has experienced a substantial acceleration of economic prosperity coupled with the greater openness of its economy. This has led to the country becoming an important player in the world. China’s recent economic expansion is a result of its “flexigemony”, which entails Chinese players adapting their strategies to suit the particular histories and geographies of African nations with which they engage in economic partnership (Carmody and Taylor, 2011). This provides China the flexibility it needs to successfully work with diverse political regimes in different domestic contexts and, most important, to redefine the extent of its domestic involvement. China’s approach to Africa has already shifted from providing political support and the dominance of ideological consideration to sort of economic diplomacy that is focused on facilitating win-win cooperation through the market economy. Economic diplomacy does not merely involve government decisions – rather, government policy only serves the function of providing direction, offering limited support, and reducing barriers. Economic incentives serve as a fundamental driving force for globalization and modernization, economic diplomacy between China and Africa is also an important contributor to both parties’ efforts to advance along the path to modernization. Economic diplomacy between China and Africa is also an important part of developing the globalized market economy. Once referred to as a “hopeless continent,” Africa has undergone structural economic adjustments and encouraged privatization over the past decade, as opposed to the past practices of relying heavily on policy adjustments and foreign aid. Returns on investment in Africa are, in fact, among some of the highest in the world; quite simply, Africa’s economic and political reforms, its wealth in agriculture and minerals, and its economic potential have turned the continent around in the space of a decade. Compared with Western nations, one sees that the Chinese foreign policy towards Africa is relatively more unique and suitable. This is because China and Africa industrial chains and economies have proven to be highly complementary. As one of the world’s vital centers for industrial productions, China’s economic development is currently in the midst of transition and needs Africa’s energy and resources. Similarly, China can offer African nations with low-cost industrial goods and civil engineering team. The interconnection of these industrial chains will only be able to continue developing in a politically stable environment. It will be difficult for the Western nations, especially, European nations and the United States to accomplish this, for the reason that their levels of industrial development are comparatively high. African markets do not strongly favor cutting-edge technological goods, while Western nations are not especially interested in making an investment in the small risky market.

So, Africa and China’s closely integrated economic development is not merely as a result of the policies of either party. This development is more as a result of the connections and interactions between China and Africa which has led to the possibility of the global industrial chain as well as the economic diplomacy resulting from the changing China’s Africa policy. According to Anshan (2007), the author asserts that two factors caused the transformation: the transformation of Chinese strategic thinking (emphasis is shifted to the internal economy) and the judgement of the international situation (peace and development, instead of revolution and war which has turned out to be the major issues). Two significant changes followed the transformation; the initial argument is based on the fact that China foreign policy has changed from ideological considerations to economic diplomacy and the other argument is that there is a shift towards a new type of international relations from a single form of aid to multiple channels of cooperation. Historically, during the Cold War and before China’s reform and opening up, ideology had been the main factor determining China’s policy towards African nations.¹ During this period, the cornerstone philosophy of China’s policy towards Africa was that China should be the front-runner in the developing world against colonialism, imperialism, and revisionism.² This emphasis on ideology originated from the hostile external environment that forced China to seek friendly diplomatic space to

¹ Liu Guijin: China Has Not Lost Much in Its Aid to Africa, New-Colonialism Does Not Stand. Retrieved from http://news.ifeng.com/mainland/special/xipshoufang/content-3/detail2013_03/29/236442440.shtml.

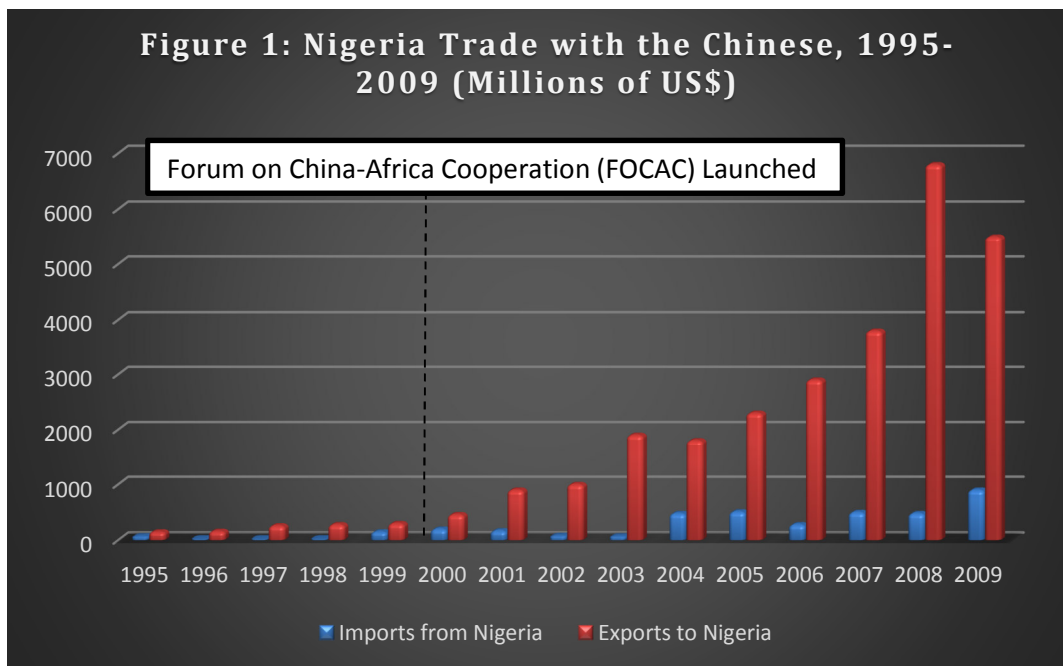
² “Selected Foreign Policy Works of Mao Zedong”, Central Document Publishing and World Knowledge Publishing, 1994, pp.403-413, 416-420, 490-492, 497-502, 526-528, 587, 588 and 600-601.

ensure its survival.¹ This Ideology-driven policy resulted in massive aid to Africa in spite of China's own economic difficulties and was gradually abandoned after 1979. Since then, China no longer employs ideology (communism, socialism or capitalism) to determine its relationship to nations in Africa (Sun, 2014). Instead, it developed wide-ranging relations with all African nations that are primarily driven by economic interests and practical political considerations, such as garnering international supporters, legitimacy, and support for the Chinese government.

The Chinese ideology cocooned the ideas of independence and nationalism, ethical values that were meant to bolster the image of the Chinese in Africa while simultaneously demonizing Western nations and their ideologies of domination based on imperialism and colonialism. The positive trends in the manner in which the Chinese government engaged Africa nations were no longer motivated by ideology. This shift from ideology reshapes China's Africa cooperation. This change can be interpreted this way: (i) the first aspect focus on the partnership of interaction that is not confined to the ruling parties alone, but also to the non-ruling parties; (ii) the cooperation between African nations and the Chinese government is no longer based on socialist ideology, but now comprises of all parties irrespective of their ideological perspectives; (iii) the cooperation between Chinese government and African leaders is no longer based on party but now encompass interaction between sub-national players like the Ministries of Finance, Trade, Foreign affairs, individual provinces, Non-governmental organization (NGOs) and multinational cooperation's (Mashingaidze, 2016).

In essence, the Chinese foreign policy towards Africa changed from the Cold war ideology to a more pragmatic and classical pursuit of economic self-interest in form of access to raw materials and the construction of spheres of influence via military assistance, investment, infrastructure financing, building capacity and trade. To help devise a coherent strategy for Sino-African relations, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) has been organized every three years since 2000 (alternately in Africa and China) to strengthen ties. The establishment of FOCAC signifies a mixture of all these pragmatic considerations and also, the several pledges made by the Chinese government indicates the Chinese commitments to this new plan. According to the Beijing Declaration adopted at the 5th FOCAC ministerial meeting held in 2012 on the theme 'Build on past achievements and open up new prospects for the new type of China-Africa strategic partnership.' One of the key objectives of Sino-African cooperation is to expand mutually beneficial economic cooperation – in trade and other economic areas. In order to see if the objective was true under FOCAC, the author gathered data from 1995-2009 on trade between Nigeria and China. The following graph below illustrates that before the launch of FOCAC trade between Nigeria and China was not growing significantly, but after the launch of the recent iteration of Sino-African relations as defined by the FOCAC Summit of 2000, Nigerian trade with China grew in 2000. This implies that the 17-year practice displays that FOCAC is not a talk shop, but an effective platform for China and African countries to enhance mutual benefit, conduct pragmatic cooperation, and strengthening China-Africa cooperation in all spheres. These underscore the significant purposes of China-Africa cooperation that of addressing both international and domestic factors associated with economic development, a departure from Africa's relations with the West. However, from the graph below, the trade volume dropped in 2002 and 2003 as a result of an outbreak of what is believed to be severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), began in the Guangdong province of China on November 16, 2002, which stop a lot of Nigerian businessmen from traveling to China, this affected the trade relations between both parties. China-Nigeria economic cooperation came in full bloom after SARS incident. The lynchpin of China's reengagement of African in this century is the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), initiated at the Ministerial Conference in Beijing in 2000.

¹ Li Anshan, "Adjustments and Changes in China's Africa Policy, Xi Ya Fei Zhou, 2006, No 8, pp.11-12.



Source: Author illustration from World Trade Atlas data, 2011

The shift from ideological emphasis also altered the strategy through which the Chinese sought cooperation with its African counterparts. The Chinese government slowly altered its strategies by greatly strengthening its interaction with African parties, and the Chinese government relations is characterized following a shift from emphasis to neutrality, from confrontation to partnership, from revolution to economic development and from isolation to worldwide engagement (Mohan & Power, 2008). The transition has helped strengthen China-Africa cooperation. High level visits have been frequent and numerous talks have been held on how China and Africa should assist each other economically to support each other in the regional and global affairs. The opening up of political and economic relations has significantly augmented China-Africa cooperation, which also turned out to a significant component in China's African policy.

Since Xi Jinping inauguration, China has adopted a more assertive stance towards China's Africa Policy by engaging directly in diplomatic negotiations and helping to deploy combat troops in conflict zones (Sun, 2014). China's role in Africa is changing from resource extractor to long-term strategic partner. Djibouti is a prime example. China has not been known for establishing a military base in Africa or even beyond its immediate sphere of influence. This is changing in recent years following China's decision to build a military base in Djibouti on the Horn of Africa. China will be able to use the base to improve the way it manages its peacekeeping operations and humanitarian efforts in Africa. China's involvement in African security is a product of a wider transformation of China's foreign policy towards Africa. China is taking on a global outlook and incorporating new concept such as the protection of overseas interests. A military base in Djibouti makes a lot of security sense to China, just as it does for Japan and the United States. In recent years, China has expanded its global and regional economic footprint. Through new institutions, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the One Belt, One Road initiative, Beijing seeks to carve out a leadership position within the global economy. As a cause and consequence, China has proven to be incredibly successful both diplomatically and commercially. As a result, Africa's economic trajectory has increasingly aligned to China's. China is the source for 21 percent of Africa's total imports, and 17 percent of Africa's total exports; China's policy banks have extended nearly \$100 billion in loans to African sovereigns and corporates; and Chinese FDI stock in Africa is close to \$30 billion (Stevens, 2017). For the moment, China's investment in Africa is distributed in 49 nations. In 2016, 11 nations reported over US\$100 million of China's direct investment flow in Africa, namely South Africa, Ghana, Ethiopia, Angola, Cameroon, Mauritania, Nigeria, Uganda, Zambia, Egypt, and Botswana, involving a total investment of US\$2.68 billion (China-Africa Trade and Economic Annual Report, 2017). In terms of development of industrial park in Africa, by the end of 2016, Chinese firms have invested a total of US\$5.38 billion in 20 cooperation zones across 15 African nations, which attracted 435 firms, generating a total output of US\$19.35 billion, contributing US\$1.62 billion in host nations' tax revenue and creating 33, 534 jobs (China-Africa Trade and Economic Annual Report, 2017). Among them, four cooperation zones, namely Suez Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone in Egypt, Oriental Industrial Park in Ethiopia, Zambia-China Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone and Lekki Free Zone in Nigeria, have received a positive evaluation by the Ministry of Commerce of China.

Given China's rising importance across Africa, China's non-financial direct investment in Africa jumped 64 percent year-on-year in the quarter. Interestingly, Djibouti – one of three African countries embedded in OBOR – saw an increase of over 100 percent year-on-year in the quarter. Still, on Djibouti, the country which is among a range of big infrastructure projects, these infrastructure projects are facilitating the regional economic growth especially Ethiopia and Djibouti. This is as a result of the fact that in a bid to keep the economy expanding at the 8 percent or more is already underway. Presently, logistically problems such as poor roads, and an old fleet of truck mean transporting goods from the capital Djibouti can take days, it is like almost transporting goods from Guangzhou to Ethiopia because of the poor road. The new railway line will cut the journey time to about 8 hours. These significant developments projects have been a “game-changer” as well as significantly improved the continent's position in the global economy, attracting economic interests from Europe, the United States, and Asia, thereby showing tremendous development potential and vitality in China-Africa relations.

A Shift from a Single Form of Aid to Multiple Channels of Cooperation

China's Africa foreign policy shift reflects new realities for African nations. The new reality has shifted China's Africa policy from political contact to exchange through multiple channels of cooperation. Africa is one of China's diplomatic ‘new frontiers’ as exemplified by new Chinese leader Xi Jinping's maiden foreign trip to Africa in 2013. For that reason, the Chinese primary concern behind China's relations with African nations is the adherence and realization of the five principles guiding China's foreign policy. However, out of the five principles, the Chinese government actions, judge via nation's visits and monetary commitments, mutual economic development ranks higher than subsequent commitments to eradicate poverty and make sure independence in African nations become a reality.

As stated by the 2011 White Paper on China's foreign assistance, China is a developing nation. Over the years, while focusing on its own development, China has been offering assistance to the best of its capability to other developing nations with economic difficulties and fulfilling its due global obligations. In the 1950s, soon after the founding of the People's Republic of China, although it was short of capitals and resources, China started to offer economic assistance and technical aid to other nations, and gradually extended the scope of such assistance. Since China adopted the reform and opening-up policies in the late 1970s, its economy has been developing speedily, with the overall national strength growing notably. The purpose of the China's assistance during this period was to ‘strengthen (the recipient nation's) self-development capacity, enrich and improve their people's livelihood, and promote their economic growth and social headway.’ The 1964 declaration of the Eight Principles for Economic Assistance to other nations offered the premises on which the Chinese government offered foreign assistance to other nations. The core principles of providing foreign assistance comprise of the guiding principles like the mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs and equality and cooperation for mutual benefit. After being carried to the United Nation by African nations, the Chinese government augmented its aid to Africa. A good example of China's commitment was the completion of the iconic construction of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway (TAZARA) (also known as *Tansa Tie Lu*); a symbol of China-Africa relations. The railway 50 anniversary was commemorated in September 2017; there is also high impact infrastructural development projects in Africa like the mega-projects inaugurated on May 31, 2017 – the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR). Another good instance in terms of assisting African nations was the support the Chinese government rendered to African political parties during their liberation struggles. With that support, Egypt turned out to be the first African nations in 1956 to receive this type of support from China (FOCAC, 2015).

African leaders proposed that traditional assistance was less efficient in ensuring self-sufficiency in Africa. For that reason, African leaders proposed and encouraged external donors to offer development aid and foreign investment that would bolster developing productivity in Africa. Following this, the Chinese government started reorienting its aid policies by trying a fresh form of assistance. For example, after realizing Africans incompetency to operate and maintain projects it had funded under the total present aid policy, the Chinese government turned out to hands-on in the operations and training of staff at the Segu Textile Plant in Mali and Aniye Sugar Plant in Togo (Mashingaidze, 2016). The issue of capacity building schemes and economic exchange programmes were meant to revolutionize the effectiveness of China's assistance as well as equip African leaders and professionals with the necessary technological management skills and experience necessary to initiate and manage development in their own nations. As stated earlier, China as a developing nation and the country identifies with African nations and considers itself as a friend to other developing nations, therefore, China is in a better position to demonstrate to its African counterparts how to successfully develop their economies. In other to proof this and strengthen its relations with African nations, China organized seminars in which the country trained African professionals as well as capacity building for African officials. A good example was the 2003 Seminar on Economic Reform and Development Strategies that attracted twenty-two officials from sixteen African nations and seven from the African Development Bank (Anshan, 2007).

China's growing and expanding engagement with Africa have assumed a prominent feature of International

Relations and discourses. China growing engagement with Africa is multifaceted, encapsulating mainly trade and related economic ties. Given China's fast economic and industrial growth, thirst and huge demand for new sources of energy and other resources have been generated, bringing China closer to Africa where the availability of these resources abound. This situates China's renewed interest in Africa in the recent years. The deepening of economic involvement in Africa is realized through a mix of aid, special concessions, debt relief, scholarships, the provision of educational and medical training personnel and infrastructural investment projects. This represents a stark departure from the past under Mao Zedong when the relationship was guided by the ideological conflict of the Cold War and especially Beijing's attempts to dislodge Moscow's influence in the Third World. Now economic pragmatism and symbolic diplomacy appear to navigate Sino-African relations. Around 3,000 Chinese enterprises are investing and developing in Africa, with cooperation areas covering agriculture, mining, construction, resources processing, manufacturing, finance, business and trade logistics, real estate, among others. China-Africa cooperation contributes to 20 percent of Africa's development for several years and was thereby acclaimed as a model of South-South cooperation by many African leaders. Education is another one interesting area of expansion. The surge in the number of African students in China is remarkable. In less than 15 years the African student body has grown 26-fold – from just fewer than 2,000 in 2003 to almost 50,000 in 2015 (MOE, 2015). According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the U.S. and U.K. host around 40,000 African students a year. China surpassed this number in 2014, making it the second most popular destination for African students studying abroad, after France which hosts just over 95,000 students.¹ This dramatic increase in students from Africa can be explained in part by the Chinese government's targeted focus on African human resource and education development. Starting in 2000, China's Forum on China-Africa Cooperation summits have promised financial and political support for African education at home and abroad in China.

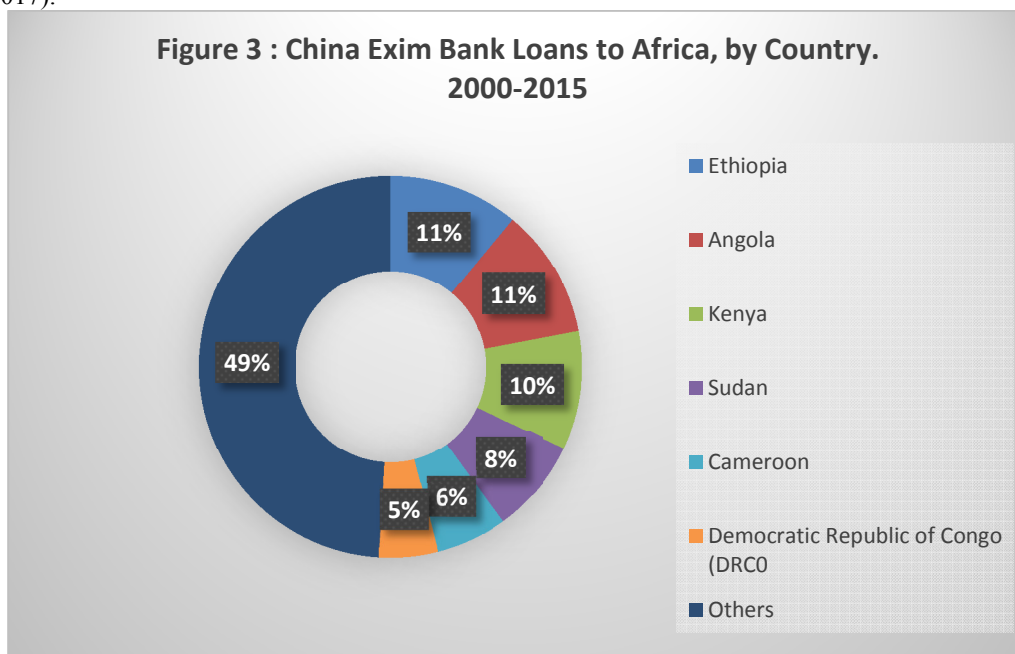
Additionally, China has helped to accelerate the development of African human resources. In recent years, the Chinese government has set up an African Human Resources Development Fund. By offering government scholarships to students, China has helped develop education and human resources in African countries. Between 2008 and 2011, there were 252 trainees from 40 different African nations participating in these programs (MOE, 2012). Between 2000 and 2012, it was estimated that no less than 45,000 African professionals took part in the short-term training in China; these programs were funded by the African Human Resources Development Foundation (King, 2013). Also, from 2010 to 2012, China ran training sessions with an overall capacity of 27,318 trainees for officials and technical personnel from 54 African nations. The training sessions covered the field of foreign affairs, agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, fishing, medicine, manufacturing, healthcare, inspection and quarantine, climate change, industry, public management, energy, and social security (Shoko, 2016). Also, Chinese medical teams, agricultural experts, and enterprises situated in Africa have trained local people in an effort to enhance local technological capabilities and upgrading China-Africa cooperation in science and technology (Tambo et al, 2016). In the 5th Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the Chinese government announced “African Talents Program” to train 30,000 African professionals in various sectors such as agriculture, industry, economic infrastructure, public facilities, education and medical and healthcare, with the intent on improving African nations' industrial and agricultural productivity, laying a solid foundation for their economic and social development, and improving basic education and healthcare.

China's aid policy in Africa underwent major reforms between 1994 and 1995. These were effected in three main ways: (i) new instruments that connected aid, trade, and investment between China and Africa were introduced and implemented; (ii) programmes that combined foreign aid with economic cooperation were developed and funded; (iii) the Chinese redefined their portfolio of tools to assist domestic restructuring. Also, the second summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Johannesburg in December 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the “10 major plans” to boost China-African cooperation between 2015-2018. This includes establishing a number of regional vocational hubs and several so-called capacity-building colleges” to address the continent's dearth of skilled workers. This will train 200,000 technicians and offer 40,000 African students with chances for professional training (FOCAC, 2012; MOFCOM, 2015; Shoko, 2016). Based on these increased numbers, the Chinese government placed particular emphasis on the ‘quality’ of its training

Also, China's investment in Africa is having a positive impact on research; one example to support this fact is China's African Talent program. The program has trained 30,000 Africans in various fields as well as given 66 African researchers the chance to do post-doctoral research in China and donated 150,000 Yuan (\$24,000) worth of research equipment to each of the 24 researchers who had returned to their home countries to work upon completing their joint research projects in China (Tambo et al., 2016). Another comprehensive example of the change in China's assistance towards the African nation is evident in how the Chinese government now applies a

¹ “Why African Students Are Choosing China.” US News, June 29, 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2017-06-29/china-second-most-popular-country-for-african-students>

win-win situation when offering assistance to African nations instead of the traditional presents. A win-win strategy entails the realization of the need to derive mutual benefits from cooperation. For that reason, the institutionalization of FOCAC meetings was a way of officializing, operationalizing and executing the win-win cooperation between both parties. Furthermore, China pays more attention to investing in “hardware projects” such as roads, bridges, and other infrastructure, which deliver tangible benefits to the local economy of numerous African nations. The Export-Import Bank of China (China Eximbank), founded in 1994, plays an important role in offering loan support to these infrastructure projects. China has provided almost 900 aid projects to African nations since 1956. The aid includes assistance supporting textiles factories, hydropower stations, stadiums, hospitals, and schools. Although China assists African nations with infrastructure which Africa needs in terms of closing the infrastructure deficit, these projects do not come cheap or free. They are funded with Chinese loan from the China’s largest financier of African loans – China’s Export-Import (EXIM) Bank. The billions of dollars China commits to Africa are repayable, long-term loans. From 2000 to 2015, China Eximbank contributed US\$63 billion in loans to Africa, largely aimed at road, railroad, airport and harbor construction. The top Africa nation recipients of China Eximbank financing from 2000-2015 are Ethiopia at US\$7.2 billion, Angola at US\$6.9 billion, and Kenya at US\$6.3 billion (EOM, et al, 2017) (see Figure 3). The largest China Eximbank commitment was a US\$3.8 billion loan (in two tranches) in 2014 to build the Standard Gauge Railway from Mombasa to Nairobi in Kenya. The second largest loan was a commitment of US\$3 billion (split between Ethiopia and Djibouti) in 2013 for the construction of the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway (EOM, et al, 2017).

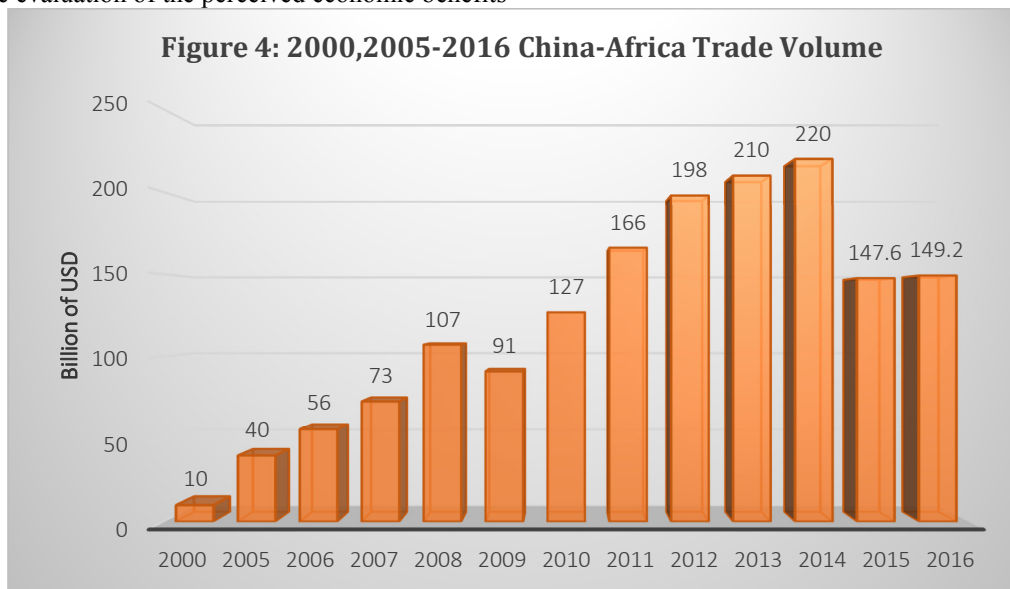


Source: EOM et al, 2017

On the part of the trade, China has surpassed the United States to become Africa's largest trade partner in 2009. The trade data portrays an obvious picture for mutually beneficial cooperation. Africa China trade figure augmented remarkably from US\$10 billion in 2000 soaring to US\$18.5 billion by 2003 reaching US\$198.5 billion in 2012; in 2014, the figure grew to \$220 billion (MOFCOM, 2015). However, the developing tale of increase in trade between China and Africa changed in 2015; from January to October 2015 the trade between both parties’ decrease to \$147.6 billion; the trade volume decreased by 18 per cent year-on-year, but in 2016, the trade volume increases to \$149.2 billion making China Africa's largest trading partner for the eighth consecutive years (MOFA, 2017) (see figure 4) However, the discourses on trade relations at times propose that the Chinese stands to profit more, as the stronger power in this partnership, such texts shy away from quantifying the profits accruing to African nations in terms of sector development, job opportunities, capacity building and access to resources (Mashingaidze, 2016). In addition, the impact of upsurges in trade figures is highest in Africa compared to China.

The Chinese government has been establishing Investment, Development, and Trade Promotion Centres in African nations. The Chinese economic interests in Africa have been based on these assumptions of the Chinese authorities. In the first place, China believed that the macroeconomic situation in Africa started to improve in the beginning of this century. The People Republic of China (PRC) embassy in Zimbabwe, for instance, made the following observation in 2000: African nations had “adopted a set of active measures to push forward the pace of privatization, open up global trade and reform based on bilateral and multilateral trade agreements”; as a result,

numerous African nations had improved their macroeconomic situation (Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in Zimbabwe, 2000). Nowadays, Africa has a gross GDP exceeding US\$2 trillion and a population of over 1 billion, with average annual economic growth rates of over 5 percent in recent years. In contrast to the Maoist era’s emphasis on Third World solidarity, China’s economic relations with most African nations are based on objective evaluation of the perceived economic benefits¹



Source: Ehizuelen, 2015, MOFCOM, 2015, MOFA, 2017

4.2. Future Partnership Dynamics and Prospective Problems in China-Africa Relations

In the 1960s and 1970s, China’s first-generation revolutionary leaders established a highly symbolic friendship with their counterparts in Africa. Their similar historical experiences of struggles against imperialism and colonialism, as well as the common challenges of upholding state sovereignty against foreign intervention and economic development, have contributed to a sense of solidarity among the Chinese and Africans. Some Chinese scholars observe that China and Africa have no historical disputes and only common interests (Kong, 2003). China’s foreign policy on Africa is clear; it is one of opening up its economy to Africa and the rest of the world. The basic objective of the opening up strategy is to expand exchange and cooperate with African nations for its development. The ‘going out’ strategy has been designed to promote economic development and to go out timely, seizing all the opportunities in order to open up and expand international market for Chinese capital, manpower resources and products. As a result, there is no question that Africa has become a more prominent issue for China in the past decade. Chinese economic activities in Africa are at an unprecedented level. However, this trend has also produced fresh challenges for China’s Africa policy. These include soaring security threats to Chinese people present in Africa, the negative impacts of the mercantilist policy of China over Sino-African relations, and the reputational risks generated by Chinese actors’ over-emphasizing economic advantages and neglecting Africa’s long-term needs. China’s Africa policy lacks a comprehensive, long-term strategic vision. This gap complicates the conflicts between China’s political agenda and its economic objectives in the continent, and between short-term benefits and long-term national interests. Bureaucratic competition within the government apparatus and the diversification of Chinese actors further undermine the general condition of China-African ties. Furthermore, China is yet to improve its bureaucratic mechanisms and procedures to adapt to the novel reality the Chinese faces in Africa. The Chinese government should create a forward-looking political risk assessment to effectively supervise China’s entities. In the Chinese to come China’s engagement with Africa is anticipated to increase. The system will adapt easy fixes for some problems, for example, by snowballing spending on training African human resources or by enhancing corporate social responsibility program for local African communities.

Nevertheless, given China’s priority of powering domestic economic growth with African resources and market potential, a more profound reexamination of China’s general strategic engagement with Africa will be needed to resolve the most fundamental difficulties in China-Africa ties. However, China is well perceived by numerous governments and even most public opinions, in spite of generating a million permanent and temporary Chinese immigrants in Africa. The partnership turns out to be more complicated when one looks at perceptions

¹ See Premier Li Keqiang’s speech entitled “Creating a better future for China-Africa cooperation” (in Chinese) at the African Union Convention Centre in Addis Ababa on 5 May 2014 <http://focac.org/chn/zt/1_1/t1152997.htm>.

beyond what African governments may want to depict. African leaders tend to have positive perceptions of the Chinese FDI; while recognizing that the Chinese firm may compete with local business and firm (Spring 2008). In 2012, there was a marked rise in dissatisfaction with the Chinese in Ghana, in spite of a continued favorability of the partnership in opinion polls, manifested by augmented anti-China sentiment amongst local inhabitants, as well as a rash of deportations of the Chinese migrants (Aidoo 2015). A survey of 1000 Cameroonians on the influx of Chinese investors and personnel into the nation revealed a deep-seated distrust of China (Spring, 2008). Nevertheless, that the same survey indicated that 92 percent of those interviewed held positive opinions of the Chinese as “good” for Cameroon’s economy as well (Rebol, 2010). According to Rebol, the author concludes that different African perceptions of the Chinese people are primarily the outcome of the different roles that China has played in Africa, irrespective of local circumstances and strategic goals (Rebol 2010).

When viewed as a provider of consumer products, critique arises as the Chinese entrepreneurs start to push out local businesses, especially retailers who in the past imported from China to resell at home. Chinese investment has been fingered by some as having low environmental, labour and safety standards, and harsh working conditions, while large-scale infrastructure projects are said to seldom employ locals. There is criticism that the Chinese investment in natural resources has made it increasingly hard for African nations to diversify their economies (Rebol, 2010). The Western media bias against China’s increasing impact in Africa equates the latter’s moves to a novel scramble for Africa’s wealth. The weight of such opinions in the continent itself is palpable given the dominance of external public view in Africa. In spite of numerous attempts to correct such a skewed story, the reality remains that these opinions are more widespread than the African government would admit. Over the last decade, China-Africa ties have been primarily dictated by China’s interest in Africa’s natural resources, and its ability to back that interest with a cash-for-resources policy. Nevertheless, it will turn out to be critical for African governments to become more strategic in their cooperation, by articulating a unified China policy. There is a sense of urgency to operate this shift. Previously, China has sought to use Africa as a raw material source to power its own growth, but at present China has emerged as an economic superpower, its interest will likely start to change, thereby limiting the effect of any resource-based leverage African nations may still hold (Songwe, 2012).

As China shifts gradually from an investment-led to a consumer-driven model of growth, its economic interests abroad will change. This offers a unique chance for African nations who possess or formulate forward-looking policies for diversifying their various economies. Numerous African nations can leverage their comparative natural resource endowment for commodity-based industrialization. Given the soaring closeness of China and the various African nations, the current structural change in China exposes African economies to risk as well as opportunities. China’s slowdown has hit commodity market hard. China, which accounts for almost half of global metal consumption, has witnessed a decline in industrial activity and consequential moderation in demand, consistent with its structural adjustment. Actually, for the first time in ten years, OECD nations have rebounded as net-source of growth for metals (World Bank, 2015). For most commodity-reliant nations though, price volatility has been more problematic than their long-run decline. Unprocessed commodities have a higher volatility than processed minerals particularly for ores and metal, with annual fluctuation in prices ranging around 3 percent for unprocessed mineral while only 13 percent for processed ores. The rebalancing in China presents transformative chances for African nations to climb higher up the value chain through greater advantage and processing of its ores. As a result, African nations commitment towards diversification of their economies would be able to weather the dropping prices of commodities, better than the past.

While current worldwide economic prediction downgrades numerous resources-rich African nations, their sectoral composition and source of GDP are transforming faster than acknowledged by numerous pundits. Over two current boom eras in commodity prices, industry and manufacturing output together expanded faster than the rest of the continental economy (ECA, 2015). For instance, the 5.1 percent growth rate experienced in 2013 by Angola, Africa’s second largest oil producer and second oil exporter to China, came mostly from construction and industry. Actually, other sectors are taking the slack, suggesting even greater potential for African economies to turn their resources advantage into a competitive engine for driving industrialization. Endowed with world-class deposits of economy-transforming minerals, Africa stands with comparative advantage to attract investment, as well as deep knowledge of processing and benefiting from the importation from China. In the past ten years, China has slashed the number of aluminum producers to 64 from more than 120 and is unlikely to remove its 15 percent export taxes (Lopez, 2016). This is just a sign of the problems a commodity-based industrialization will face from its main trading partner. But seizing emerging chances to climb the global value chain will also require overcoming continent-wide critical bottlenecks. Owing to the dearth of investment, power infrastructure remains the limiting factor for industrialization. As a result of the unreliable supply of electricity, Africa loses 3 to 5 percent of GDP annually (ECA, 2014). A transformation agenda will be hampered by the chronic shortage of electricity. Actually, if Africa were to refine all base metals alone, it will require nearly 115 percent of total electricity produced (ECA, 2013). The Chinese investments in the power sector are thus most welcome.

Against the background of a climate resilient development path, there exists an opportunity for China to back Africa's economic transformation. Africa has numerous renewable potential to produce clean energy to meet its growing needs and allow for development and industrialization (Lopes, 2014). Africa's hydropower capacity of 1.852TWh per year can satisfy its needs through power pooling and cross-border power trade. Africa has an average uniform of 325 days of bright sunlight per year, receiving 2000 kilowatt hours per square meter per year. The wind and wave power potential along the west coast exceeds 3750-kilowatt hours. The significant geothermal potential in the Eastern Rift Valley stretches to about 3700 miles in length, with a potential in Kenya alone estimated at 10,000 megawatts (Lopes, 2016). Presently, it appears that the Chinese need Africa as much as Africa need the Chinese. The cooperation looks like a Faustian bargain, whereby Africa is jeopardizing its long-term economic advantage for quick short-term fixes. Africa, in its cooperation with the Chinese, can assist in giving backing to at least six of its core interest: FDI; the reduction of debt; infrastructure development; sourcing novel technology and professionalized training; and, the sustaining of high growth rates and expansion of its trade volume so as to accelerate its economic development (Haroz, 2011).

Obviously, Africa would like to not just be a source for raw material export but would rather be a market that could profit from the Chinese technological innovation and increased outsourcing of low-tech manufacturing activities. But African leaders will not change their engagement with the Chinese if they enjoy considerable control of a state's government apparatus if public sentiment is in favour of China's investment, and if they are being personally enriched. Therefore, what Africa "hopes to get" out of a partnership with the Chinese requires a shift of current mindset as some reform-minded African governments leaders are indicating. While African nations have greater leverage in their engagement with China, thanks to their natural resources, this has not been converted into negotiating power. It is paramount that Africa obviously defines its Africa-China policy so as to align with its primary political and economic interests. China looks forward to being a steady partner to accelerate efforts to end poverty, promote industrialization and other development projects. However, African leaders need to realize that when the focus is placed on development projects such as industrialization and infrastructure development as a means of achieving structural transformation, then China looks like an obvious partner. That is the key to achieving the new continental and globally sustainable development goals: African Agenda 2063 and the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

5. Conclusion

Over the past three decades of reform, China has successfully followed a resource-intensive and outward-oriented economic development model. Since the execution of reform policies, China has progressively embraced the principles of a market-based economy. It transformed its economic structure from a state dominated, self-reliant economy towards a dynamic private-sector-led open economy. China's rapid economic growth over the last few decades has largely been driven by capital accumulation and integration into the global economy through FDI and trade. China has successfully exploited its comparative advantage in abundant cheap labour and specialized in the production of labour-intensive manufacturing goods. Improvements in technological efficiency, better reallocation of resources across sectors and structural transformation have substantially raised its productivity.

Generally, the argument in this paper has set the ball rolling for an interesting and intuitive debate on China's foreign policy. Notably, the Chinese re-emergence globally and particularly in Africa has been firmly premised on a strong ideological impetus that pushes for the establishment of a fresh global political dispensation. Ideologically, the Chinese perceive the prevalence of peace both regionally and deliberately as vital in the achievement of this novel dispensation. As a result, it highlighted the issue of peaceful development and co-existence as the basis of its conduct internationally. The five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence recognizes specific matters and areas in which the Chinese government foreign policy would identify and implement a plan of penetrating and soliciting partnerships with countries in Africa.

The paper identified and conceptualized the notion of change in a country foreign policy as a significant and central anchor of this survey. The survey established that worldwide more than domestic factors, in China's circumstances place more demands on the evolution of its foreign policy. The constructivist idea of socialization and structural changes in the global system has contributed more towards China's global behavior. As a result, China's foreign policy towards Africa has transformed from offering aid as gifts to aid provided on a win-win basis. Also, the transformation is apparent in the Chinese government assertive conduct in Africa and in how it has shifted from ideological considerations towards pragmatic considerations.

Ultimately, it is the responsibility of African leaders to devise a strategy for their relations with China; not for China to be responsible for the mutually beneficial relationship. If Africans are to stand on equal footing with the Chinese and ensure a mutual gain in this new strategic partnership, they need to join forces and channel Chinese energies and capital in directions that benefits African nations as much as they benefit China.

Developing an African Consensus is imperative. This will ensure an effective monitoring and regulatory framework put in place to oversee that investment practices are conducted appropriately and legally and most of all, that their citizens are also the beneficiaries of this partnership. Only by fashioning a collective response can Africans throughout the continent turn China's massive and multifaceted drive into Africa to their sustainable best advantage. What is important to retain is that a more nuanced view of the relationship reveals a two-way traffic indeed. The interest and urge of Africans to expand their presence in China is real, although less reported.

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