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Review

China-Africa Relations: Looking Beyond Traditional Benefits

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Abstract

There has been a tremendous growth in China-Africa relations both bilaterally and multilaterally in the last three decades. Currently, Beijing is Africa's largest trading partner and the biggest developing country investing on the continent. It is taking an active and steady role in solving Africa's governance and development issues. In all these, the public rhetoric from Chinese state authorities has been that Beijing wants to see a prosperous Africa. However, China's expanding engagements on the continent indicate that it is not playing a zero-sum game. On the contrary, it is motivated by its domestic needs and global aspirations. Employing qualitative research approach, this paper thoroughly assesses the motivations for China's growing interests in Africa, impacts of the relations, and the critical lessons that African countries can learn from Chinese growth. The paper asserts that while China relentlessly pursues its interests, Africans must look beyond the existing mercantile relationship based on extraction and export of basic commodities and other traditional benefits from Beijing, and focus more on learning lessons from the ways in which China has achieved its steady trajectory of growth. It reveals that though international support is critical for developing Africa, achieving sustainable development depends largely on the toughness to design and implement sound policies at the national level. Africans need to liberate themselves from the mindset of aid and dependency. Instead, must assume responsibility for the transformation of their economies, finds pragmatic solutions to newly evolving problems, and eliminate corruption and poverty through efficient utilisation of the continent's vast resources.

Key words: *Benefits, Interests, Lessons, China-Africa relations, Sustainable development*

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century has witnessed a major shift in the relationship between African countries and the outside world. While the engagement between many African countries and Europeans are dawdling the last three decades has seen tremendous growth in China-Africa relations both bilaterally and multilaterally. The shift and China's rapidly changing role in Africa have resulted in a surge in research on the Sino-African relations not only by academics and media but also by economist and policy analysts (Yun, 2014). Research findings from scientific publications on China-Africa relations abound. Many of the existing works have sought to explore explanations on the motives for China's increasing investments in Africa (Wang, 2007; Kalu, 2012; Li and Rønning, 2013; Yun, 2014; Chen et al., 2015). A substantial number of researchers including (Alden, 2005; Tull, 2006; Schiere et al., 2011; Condon, 2012; Kaplinsky and Morris, 2009; Ayodele, 2014; Busse et al., 2016) have also skewed toward findings that highlight a win-lose paradigm while a discernable number have focused on the negative aspects or drawn conclusions on perceptions (Girouard, 2008; Bosshard, 2008; Rossouw et al. 2014; Sherling, 2014; Shinn, 2016).

Again, the methodologies used in many of these studies have focused on isolated case studies with data collected from single or few African countries ((Hellendorff, 2011; Thompson, 2012; Mano, 2016; Kabemba, 2016). In all certainty, countries are not altruistic nor do they play a zero-sum game in their dealings with others. While China is providing tangible, productive resources in Africa, Beijing invariable seeks to take advantage of these soft power approaches to secure political and economic clout on the continent. But China, as remarked by then Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, "China is an inspiration for all of us." …"What China shows to Africa is that it is indeed possible to turn the corner on economic development." Unfortunately, to date, there has not been a comprehensive, systematic, more objective analysis of the engagement and the 'inspirations' that China offers to developing countries and Africa in particular.

Thus, as Sino-Africa relationship blooms with no sign of floundering it exceedingly important to conduct a thorough and unbiased assessment China's interests in Africa, the benefits that African countries get as well as identifying the valuable lessons that African countries need to tap from China's experience and sustained trajectory of economic growth; and that is the objective of this research.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher adopted a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research approach as revealed by Snape and Spencer (2003) provides an in-depth and interpreted understanding of the social world of research participants by learning about their social and material circumstances, their experiences, perspectives, and histories. Aimed at identifying lessons that African countries can learn from China the approach is more significant for the study because of its usefulness to practitioners and policymakers (Green and Thorogood, 2004).

In the study, the comprehensive integrative review methodology as envisioned by Richard Torraco was adopted. Torraco (2005) argues that the researcher should be able to offer a new perspective, framework or way of thinking about an issue; and this was effectively addressed. This expectation is consistent with Whetten's (1989) observation that "the mission of a theory-development journal is to challenge and extend existing knowledge, not simply to rewrite it." More so, because such methodology permits the inclusion of both quantitative and qualitative research articles (Whittemore and Knafl, 2005) it helped the researcher to explore a wide variety of literature available to the study area (Hambaloyi and Jordan, 2015; Whittemore and Knafl, 2005). The study also attached high premium on credibility and reliability of data. Though publications, books and journal articles, on China and Africa relations published in the last two decades (2000) were selected for review because the period has witnessed intensified engagements among the two, articles in non-refereed journals and lay publications were excluded from the review. Over 100 publications which met the criteria above were selected regardless of the academic disciple for whom they were written. Consequently, the material used in this research includes authored books, published journal articles, newspapers, direct government reports, and periodicals.

A detailed content analysis was performed by adopting the Lasswell's (1948) model of communication, which urges that researchers question "Who? Says what? To whom? In which channel? With what effect?" to avoid excessive subjectivity. Towards this rigorous effort was made to cross-check the data and use one set of results to corroborate another. This was done to ensure the accuracy of every data presented in this research.

HISTORY OF SINO-AFRICA RELATIONS

China-Africa (Sino-Africa) engagement is not new. However, it has grown and evolved substantially over the last two decades. The origins of the present-day Sino-African relations could be traced back to 1955 when representatives from twenty-nine governments of Asian and African nations gathered in Bandung, Indonesia in what came to be known as the Bandung Conference (Asian-African Conference), 1955. Since then, the two have been in strategic and mutual partnership, supporting each other.

On May 30, 1956, Egypt (formerly United Arab Republic) became the first African state to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC). A year later the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organisation (AAPSO) was founded at the first Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Conference. China and Africa have since then become all-weather friends that understand, support and help each other. Today, with the exception of Burkina Faso, all other African states have established diplomatic relations with PRC on the basis of China's Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence – "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."

Economic relationship has also developed rapidly between the two. From 1956 to 1978, China aided Africa with billions of dollars despite the fact that its own economic situation was precarious. For instance, Kabia et al. (2016) reveal that between 1970 and 1976, China committed about US$1,815 million to Africa This included the provision of the US$400 million thirty years interest-free loan for the 1,800 km TAZARA (Uhuru) railway between Tanzania and Zambia to eliminate landlocked Zambia's economic dependence on Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and South Africa, both of which were ruled by white-minority governments (Robinson et al. 1994). This was a large sum and evidence of goodwill considering the fact that China was poorer than most African countries at the time, and the investment for the project had earlier been turned down by the British Government and the World Bank. African countries on their part played an important role in China's admission into the United Nations in 1971 as the rightful representative of China and membership of the Security Council. In the aftermath of the 2008 disastrous Wenchuan earthquake, African countries also donated more than US$60 million for the earthquake-hit people. Take Mozambique for example. It is one of the world's poorest countries but donated 40,000 RMB to China despite its own economic difficulties. This demonstrates solidarity and brotherly compassion. In the 21st century, China's burgeoning and rapidly changing role in Africa is symbolised in the creation of the multilateral platform, Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in October 2000; and the funding and completion of the US$200-million African Union (AU) headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2012. Reflecting the key tenets of China's Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, the tri-annual event (FOCAC) seeks to promote long-term stability, equality and mutual benefit between China and African countries. More so, the strategic partnership between the two is indicative of the established convention that since 1991 Africa has always been the starting destination of international diplomatic engagements by Chinese foreign ministers.

CHINA'S INTERESTS IN AFRICA

Seeing a prosperous Africa is important to China. However, this does not mean China is being altruistic nor is it playing a zero-sum game in its engagement with African countries. Indeed, China emphasises that any bilateral relationship has to be mutually beneficial. Securing access to natural resources remains the primary driver for contemporary China's presence on the continent but as has been identified by several scholars, China is focused on satisfying four broad national interests in its relations with Africa – political, economic, security and ideological. These motivations are explained below:

Political Interests

Since the foundation of Sino-Africa relations political interests has dominated theme in China's engagement with Africa. As Sun (2014) identifies China saw African countries as strategic group to rally and unite with as early as the Cold War era. Underlying China's political interests are the desire to bolster its international image and legitimacy, restoring its proper place, realise its "One China" policy, and to counter problematic international norms. These are explained below:

First, China seeks to repair its international image. China is portrayed particularly by Western media as a major violator of human right in recent history. The negative aspects of Sino-Africa relations also make the headline in most Western media coverage about China. As echoed by Ambassador Johnnie Carson, the Western view of China's presence in Africa "China is a very aggressive and pernicious economic competitor with no morals. China is not in Africa for altruistic reasons. China is in Africa for China primarily."(Taipei Times, 2010) Such pronouncements cast huge aspersions on the reputation of China. But in the Chinese culture losing face, or *mianzi*, is synonymous with loss of reputation; while open and public criticism in the Chinese social psychology maximises the potential to lose face. Hence, the drive to change perceptions about her role in Africa remains an important political agenda.

More particularly since the launch of FOCAC, Beijing has sought to repair its international image with the aim of fostering a world order that supports its economic growth path and domestic stability. For instance, in the official *China's African Policy* document China establishes that it seeks "to enhance mutual understanding and enable objective and balanced media coverage of each other". Again, continuing the Cold War context of third-world solidarity with the growth of Chinese media engagement in Africa, Beijing has gone to great lengths to emphasise the peaceful rise of Chinese power in an effort to gaining international legitimacy.

Second, China is seeking to play a more active role in the international system. China relies heavily on diplomatic support and cooperation from African countries on key issues in the international multilateral settings as it strives to establish itself as a global power. Taylor (1998) reveals that following the fall of the Soviet Union, Chinese periodical, *Chinafrica* categorically asserted that "[the] Third World countries [will] surely unite with and stand behind China like numerous 'ants' keeping the 'elephant' from harm's way." Today, the 54 African states have 3 seats on the UN Security Council; and constitute more than one-quarter of UN General

Assembly votes. This makes the continent important in China's desire to become a major global power. For instance, in October 1971, despite frustrations from the United States in the floor of the UN, African states used their numerical strength to guarantee China's readmission to the UN. Chairman Mao Zedong once said that "it is African brothers who literally carried us to the UN" (Wang 2009). Again, African states were central to the PRC's accession to the WTO in 1990. In fact, China's incentive to improve relations with African countries increased when Beijing faced with serious international political isolation and Western sanctions in the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square incident of 1989. China's Foreign Minister, Qian Qichen visited eleven African countries one month after Tiananmen. Most of these countries assured China their willingness to oppose any international interference in domestic affairs of China; and after the turmoil "the first foreign head of state to visit China, the first head of government, the first foreign minister came from Africa" (Qichen, 2006).

Third, the one-China principle has been a key political foundation for the establishment and development of China's relations with African countries and regional organisations. The one-China policy has been very sensitive to China since the transfer of Hong Kong and Macau to Chinese sovereignty in 1997 and 1999 respectively. Beginning in 1949, both the Taiwan government, the Republic of China and the mainland China's government, People's Republic of China claim, at least formally, as the legitimate and the only China – which they consider to include each other's territory. As Beijing holds that Taiwan and mainland China are inalienable parts of a single 'China' it implies that Taiwan is the third unfinished project in the reunification process. In effect, the prevention of Taiwan going independent is absolutely critical to the legitimacy of the Chinese communist regime. This explains why PRC emphasises non-recognition of Taiwan's sovereignty as part of its foreign policy objectives in its international relations. Consequently, despite its emphasis on the principle of non-interference, acceptance of the one-China is a pre-condition for its engagement with African countries; and recognition of Taiwan amounts to the severing of ties.

In return for development assistance from Beijing, many African countries have severed diplomatic links with Taipei. Until 2013 three African countries – Burkina Faso, the Gambia, and Sao Tomé and Príncipe had maintained diplomatic relations with Taiwan. But today only Burkina Faso maintains official ties to Taiwan. For instance, speaking at a joint press conference in Abuja with visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on January 11, 2017, the Foreign Affairs Minister of Nigeria, Geoffrey Onyeama reaffirmed that "the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria recognises that there is only one China in the world, that the government of the People's Republic of China is the sole legal government representing the whole of China, and that Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory."

With regard to international norms, China seeks Africa's support to counter precedents that it views as potentially dangerous domestically. Beijing considers the United Nations Commission on Human Rights as an important forum to counter Western 'hegemonism', particularly through alliances with governments in Asia, Africa, and Latin America to frustrate Western efforts to bring about a formal condemnation of China's human rights record. Hongwu (2009) identifies that support from African states helps to defeat all forms of Western-sponsored anti-China human right bills within the UN. For example, in April 1996 the votes of African countries helped to block a resolution by US and Europe to compel China to improve its human rights practices. Tull (2006), even points out that, efforts to compel China to improve on its dumping practices have been unsuccessful before of the support it receives from African countries within the UN.

Economic Interests

It is without a doubt that since mid-1990s economic interests have shadowed China's political motivations in Africa. The Chinese government is now focused on taking advantage of both domestic and international markets and resources to develop the country. Christened, Going Out" strategy (Go Global) the policy was first adopted by President Jiang Zemin in 1996 and approved in 2000 as a national strategy (Chen, 2008). The policy as captured under the CCP's 10th Five Year Plan encourages Chinese enterprises, backed by the country's foreign-exchange reserves, to acquire assets and expand business overseas.

Africa with its vast natural resources and market potentials fits well with this strategy. 22 out of the 54 African countries are classified as resource-rich. The continent possesses 12 percent of the world's oil reserves, 40 percent of its gold and between 80 percent and 90 percent of its chromium and platinum, according to a 2013 report from the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). It is also home to 60 percent of the world's underutilised arable land and has vast timber resources while China's per capita availability of natural resources is relatively low. Looking at specific countries, South Africa is the world leader in the production of manganese and platinum group metals and produces 52 percent of world's chromium; Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) produces approximately 50 percent of global cobalt and hosts about half of global reserves. The country is also in top-5 producers of copper, diamond, and tantalum; Botswana is the global leader in diamond production by value; Guinea which is the world leader in bauxite reserves is in top-5 of biggest bauxite producers; Zimbabwe is the fifth biggest producer of lithium; Morocco, the world's second-biggest producer of phosphates controls 75 percent of global phosphate reserves; Rwanda is the leader in production of tantalum while Mozambique is in the top-5 global producers of tantalum, ilmenite, and zirconium.

On the contrary, despite being the number one mining nation in the world, China is facing a rapid depletion of its local mineral resources. The country is unable to meet its annual demand for copper, zinc, nickel and a range of other raw materials. In 2003 it overtook Japan to become the world's second consumer of oil behind the United States. The World Bank (2016) further reports that between 2010 and 2014, China accounted for more than 40 percent of the world's metal consumption, more than 10 percent of demand for crude oil, more than 20 percent of agricultural crops consumption, and more than 20 percent of primary energy demand. The International Energy Agency (IEA) further projects China's oil demand to reach 12.6 mbpd with domestic production of 3.9 mbpd in 2020, implying import dependence of 69 percent. China, therefore, considers oil procurement as a matter of national security, and it must go abroad to assure consistent access to these resources. With limited access to such resources from other Asian countries, Wang (2013) reports that "Africa, which is generally friendly toward China, became the top choice for China's 'Going Out' strategy." For example, China is almost exclusively reliant on Sub-Saharan Africa for its cobalt imports and significantly reliant on the continent for manganese and chromium.

Second, China has her eyes on Africa for the continent's market potential. Although Africa ranks high in terms of natural resources, the continent is inserted in global value chains mainly as importers of finished goods due to the low level of industrialisation. While no state is in a position to monopolise Africa's trade, China has become the largest trade partner for Africa as a whole (though second to an aggregated European Union). Given the large and cheap labour force and second to the acute poverty in vast parts of Africa, Chinese entrepreneurs have confidence in the African market. It offers low-price export goods such as textiles and clothing, electronic devices and machines, which find a huge and soaring demand. Again, the rising labour costs at home and Asia's regional dynamics of structural upgrading that pushes out comparatively disadvantaged industries abroad has fueled the outward shift of labour-intensive production to Africa. Wang (2013) reasons that "as China seeks to upgrade its industrial economy and move up in the global supply chain, Africa, with its vast and untapped labour resources, is identified as the ideal location for China's labour-intensive industries." Dinh et al. (2012) reveal that Beijing's comparative advantages have been shifting in recent years. The worst hit is the manufacturing sector where they indicate that in the coastal regions for example wages rose from US$150 per month in 2005 to US$500 in 2012. The situation has pushed Beijing to transmigrate its low-end factories to countries with lower wage rates and Africa is more suitable for this. This is mirrored in the government-led construction of special economic zones (SEZs) and the rise of Chinese private investment in African countries.

In his widely read book, *China's Second Continent: How a Million Migrants Are Building a New Empire in Afric*a, French (2014) also observes that "…China's export, in effect, of large numbers of its own people who are settling in as migrants and long-term residents in far-flung and hitherto unfamiliar parts of the continent. By common estimate, Africa has received a million or so of these Chinese new comers in the space of a mere decade, during which time they have rapidly penetrated every conceivable walk of life: farmers, entrepreneurs building small and medium-sized factories, and practitioners of the full range of trades, doctors, teachers, smugglers, prostitutes…" Relocating its low-skilled jobs and labour-intensive industries China transforms its economy to capital-intensive and high-tech industries while creating jobs for its nationals overseas.

Security Interests

The increasing investment and transmigration of Chinese nationals in Africa invariably mean that internal instability in African nations is also intrinsically China's problem (Sun, 2014). This makes physical security as one of the major interests of China in Africa.

According to Zhong (2012) until recently China had depended on multilateral institutions, particularly the United Nations for the security of its nationals, missions, and peacekeeping on the continent.

However, political disturbances, military conflicts, terrorist attacks, organised crime and public security incidents on the continent have compelled the Chinese government and companies to be more proactive in protecting its growing number of citizens and assets. For instance, there have been continuous attacks on Chinese vessels by Somali pirates since 2008. In countries such as Libya, South

Sudan and Ivory Coast regional wars and conflicts have cost Chinese enterprises massively. In Nigeria, Zambia and Cameroon there were series of kidnappings and attacks on Chinese nationals in 2014; and as Nunoo (2014) reports China had to pay US$2.8 million for the release of crew members who were taken a hostage in the Gulf of Aden.

Beyond the cost the Chinese government, CPC is also mindful that the protection of Chinese nationals in Africa is linked to its legitimacy in that a failure to provide such protection would undercut the party's internal and international prestige. In a major speech on foreign affairs in 2014, President Xi Jinping underscored: "We should protect China's overseas interests and continue to improve our capacity to provide such protection" (Xinhua, 2014; Godement, 2014). As a result, since 2013 China has departed from just sending non-combat staff to deploying combat troops to Africa on a peace-keeping mission.

Ideological Interests

China has a unique economic and political development model. Politically, the 'Chinese model' does not fit well into the left-right dichotomies of liberty versus tyranny, democracy against authoritarianism, and private property as opposed to public ownership. Economically, it is neither an American style liberal market economy, nor a social market economy of European kind. It is also not a Stalinist command economy. In the Chinese model, political authoritarianism and economic capitalism are combined. According to the United Nations through the model, between 1981 and 2005, China was able to reduce the proportion of its citizens living in extreme poverty at the national level from 84 percent to 16 percent (DESA, 2009). The World Bank further attests that China has raised approximately 300 million people out of poverty without implementing the Washington Consensus model or using other external intervention.

Skeptical about Western-style democracy, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is anxious to preserve its legitimacy intact not only to avoid a repetition of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre but to maintain stability to foster further economic development. Achieving this demands the goodwill and approval of other countries. China wants its economic and political model to be popular in Africa. As Polgreen (2012) identifies, China wants to prove to some African countries that economic development and political stability can triumph over the need for a sound democratic system. Thus, the popularity of the China model in Africa would serve as an indispensable soft power for Beijing to validate its political system and mitigate its international isolation, and serve as an alternative to the Western democratic system. It is not surprising that in several regions in Africa – Southern Africa, North Africa, and Central Africa – the popularity of China's example of state-led economic growth matched or outpaced that of the United States.

Another ideological interest is China's growing ambition to become a major world cultural power and to compete with Western cultural influence. Chinese culture has not won the global appeal as its economic and scientific achievements. But the export of Chinese cultural products is a key approach for China to gain visibility on the global stage. This was emphasised by President Hu Jintao during the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2007. The teaching of Chinese to speakers of other languages has been identified as a major source. The Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China's website, for example, states that: Teaching Chinese as a foreign language (TCFL) is an integral part of China's reform and opening up drive. To promote TCFL is of strategic significance to popularise the Chinese language and culture throughout the world, to enhance the friendship and mutual understanding as well as the economic and cultural cooperation and exchanges between China and other countries around the world, and to elevate China's influence in the international community.

In Africa, this is achieved mainly through the establishment of Confucius Institutes. Starting from the establishment of the first Confucius Institute in Nairobi in 2005 they have served as symbol and vehicle for China's cultural diplomacy. By the end of 2014, it had helped in the establishment of 42 Confucius Institutes in 29 African countries, and 18 Confucius Classrooms in 13 African countries (Chinafrica, 2015). The Chinese government has also set up a series of scholarship schemes to sponsor international students and scholars to undertake studies and research in Chinese institutions of higher education. As part of their studies, students attending such schools are obliged to study the Chinese language and culture. This is a major tool for transporting the Chinese culture.

IMPACTS OF CHINA-AFRICA RELATIONS ON AFRICA

The Chinese Government has always attached great importance to Africa which African countries are more appreciative. Indeed, in 2006, the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, remarked that "China is an inspiration for all of us." He added. "What China shows

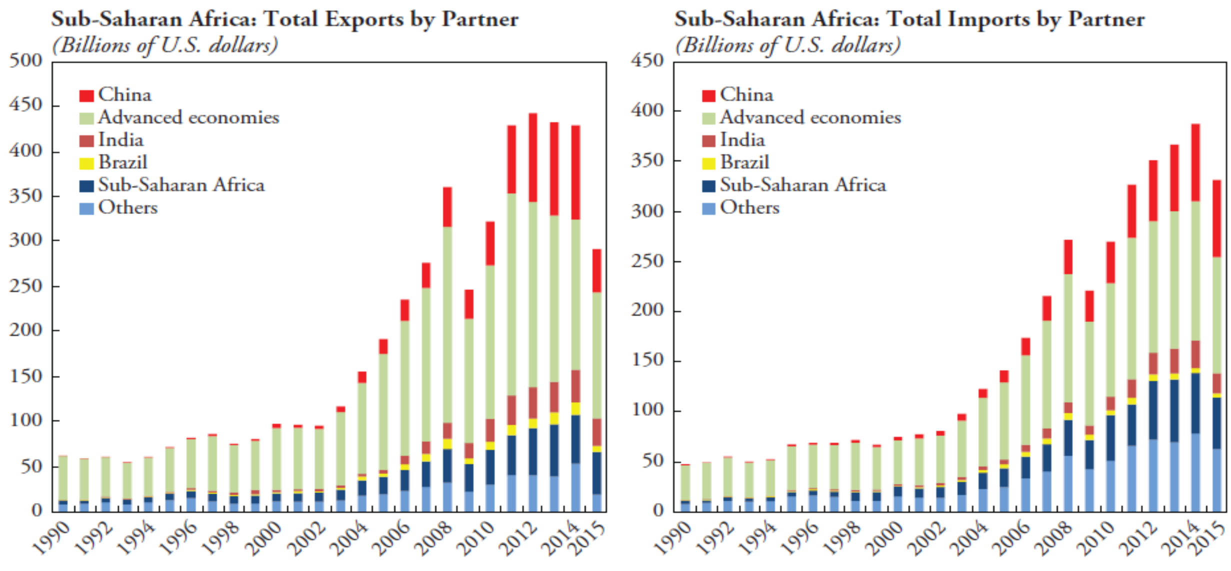

Figure 1: Sub-Saharan Africa's Exports and Imports by Partner

Source: IMF, Direction of Trade Statistics.DAC: Development Assistance Committee (DAC), part of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Wenjie and Roger (2017, p. 3

to Africa is that it is indeed possible to turn the corner on economic development" (Harsch, 2007). China's presence on the continent is heavily felt in trade partnership, overseas foreign direct investment, economic cooperation, establishment of companies, and security governance. The impacts of the activities are provided below:

Trade

There has been a major shift in Africa's trade pattern in recent years. Wenjie and Roger (2017) reveal that advanced economies accounted for close to 90 percent of sub-Saharan Africa's exports in 1995, but 20 years later new partners, including Brazil, China, and India, account for more than 50 percent, with China accounting for about half of that (Figure 1). In fact, an assessment of Sino-Africa trade volumes reveals that it was negligible before 2000. However, UN Comtrade (2016) evinces that with an average of 30 percent of annual trade growth between China and Africa in the last 15 years Beijing has become Africa's largest trading partner and stood at US$180 billion in 2015. In 2010, it overtook the United States to become Africa's largest trading partner. Pigato et al. (2015) confirm that China accounts for about a quarter of sub-Saharan Africa's trade, up from just 2.3 percent in 1985.

China offers Africa's market of 1billion inhabitants cheaper manufactured and machinery imports. Beijing's enormous demand for raw materials has also led to higher world market prices for raw materials, improving the terms-of-trade of African exporters of natural resources (Zafar, 2007). At the 2006 FOCAC Beijing summit, China pledged to achieve US$100 billion in China-Africa bilateral trade by 2010. This target was surpassed two years early in 2008 when trade reached US$107 billion. According to World Trade Atlas (2011), from 1995 to 2009, aggregate imports from Africa to China totaled US$233.3 billion, while Chinese exports to Africa totaled US$239.8 billion, a difference of US$6.5 billion, or approximately 1.4 percent of total trade activity over the same period. By 2014, China was the single largest source of sub-Saharan Africa's imports (Wenjie and Roger, 2017).

Beyond fuel and other crude materials, China encourages a broader range of African exports. In his address at the Beijing Summit of FOCAC on November 4, 2006, the Chinese President Hu Jintao pledged among others to promote exports from African low developing countries (LDCs) by increasing the number of products receiving zero-tariff treatment from 190 to 440. At the 2015 Asian-African Summit, Chinese President, Xi Jinping also promised to extend zero-tariff treatment to 97 percent of tax items from all less-developed countries that have diplomatic ties with China by the end of that year. Overall, according to an analysis conducted by the British Department for International Development, the value of African exports to China increased by an annual average of 110 percent from 2006 to 2008 (Haroz, 2011).

The Financial Times further reported in 2015 that China accounts for about 20 percent of imports in Sub-Saharan Africa and about 15 percent of its exports. Africa stands to benefit enormously from the enhance trade partnership with China. The growth has raised the market prices of certain African commodities, which in turn has led to

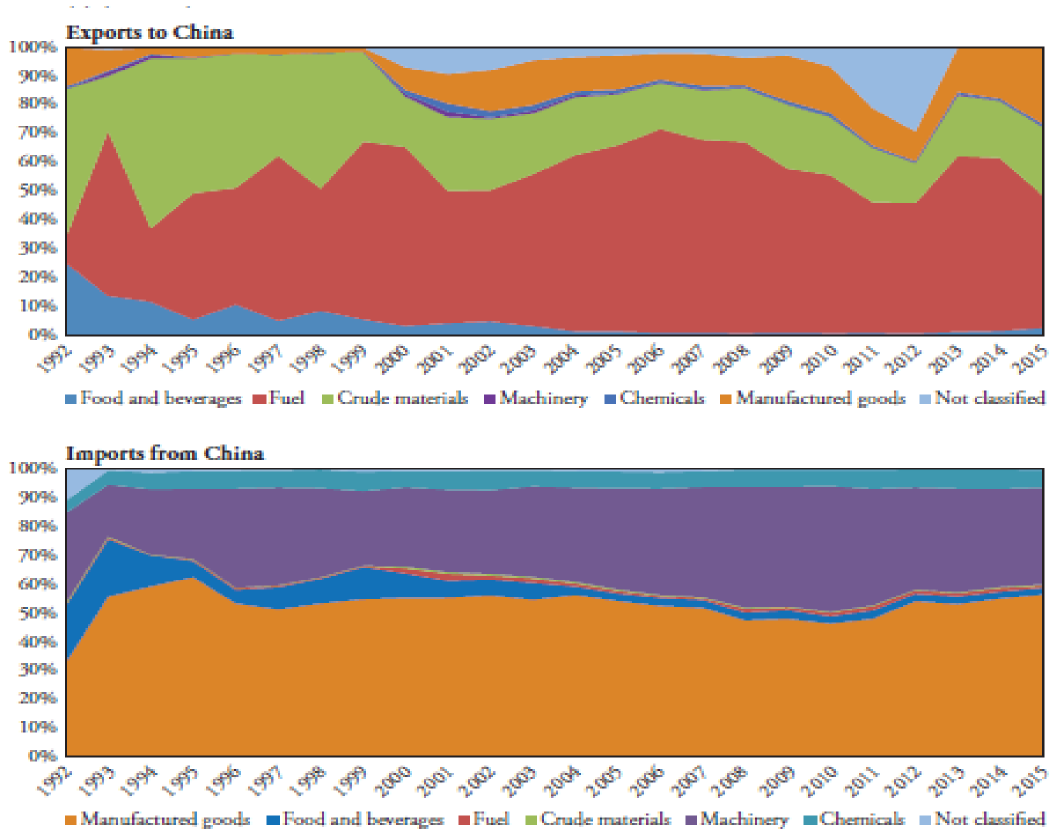

Figure 2. Sub-Saharan Africa: Exports to and Imports from China by Product Composition
Source: COMTRADE, United Nations in Wenjie and Roger (2017, p. 3)

additional revenue and economic growth for African states. Chinese traders have also brought competition to African markets and diversified its trade partners. This enables consumers in Africa to access affordable goods and amenities which in turn help to lower inflation in many countries. More importantly, the diversification has reduced the volatility of Africa's exports. This was more revealing during the 2008-2010 global financial crisis. At the same time, China actually increased its contribution to the growth of sub-Saharan African exports, allowing most of sub-Saharan Africa to sustain robust economic growth during the Great Recession (Wenjie and Roger, 2017). Local producers are also offered low-cost Chinese inputs which are important in their production processes.
But Sino-African trade has some negative impacts on the continent. Renard (2011) reveals that about 60 percent of Chinese exports are destined for just six countries: South Africa (21percent), Egypt (12 percent), Nigeria (10 percent), Algeria (7 percent), and Benin (5 percent). Again, while exports from Africa are narrowly concentrated in primary commodities, imports from China are extremely diversified. As shown in (Figure 2) fuel, metal and mineral products account for 70 percent of sub-Saharan African exports to China whereas the majority of sub-Saharan Africa's imports from China are manufactured goods, followed by machinery. For instance, except South Africa among the major exporters to China in 2012 (Angola, South Africa, the Republic of Congo, DRC, and Zambia) resource exports accounted for well over 90 percent these countries total exports to China. In fact, Pigato et al. (2016) confirms that resource exports accounted for about 84 percent of all sub-Saharan Africa's exports to China between 2008 and 2013, up from about 79 percent between 2002 and 2007, and Nigeria, the eighth largest oil exporter globally exported one million barrels of oil to China in 2015 (Malandrino, 2016).

Africa's dependence on agricultural products and natural resource exports poses another challenge to its development. The composition of African export renders the continent vulnerable to fluctuation in commodity prices as a result of trade preferences and demand. Such fluctuation in the international trade leads to instability of revenue earning of government and producers. This instability is the source of uncertainty, which leads to budget deficits, indebtedness and under-development.

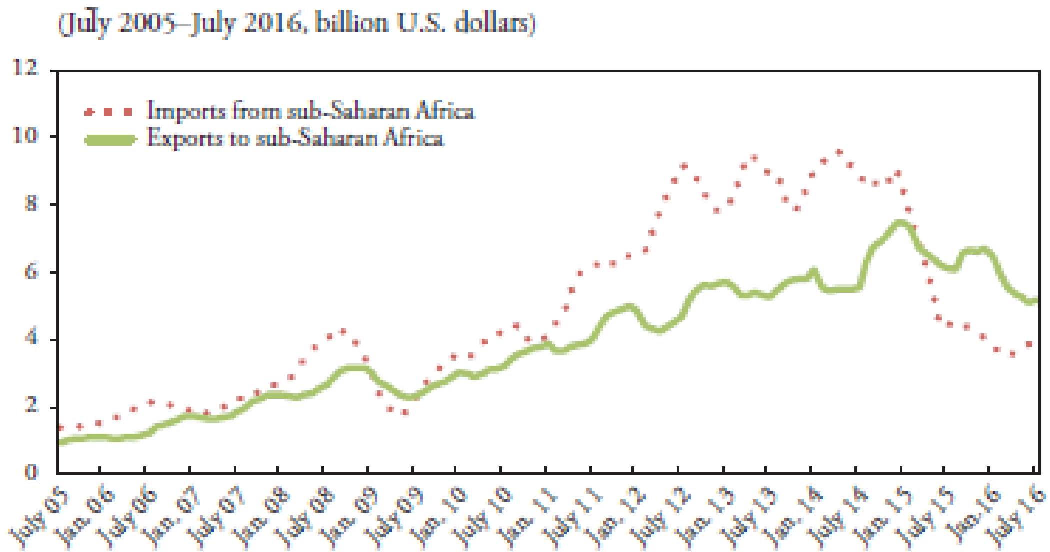

Figure 3. China's Trade with Sub-Saharan Africa
Source: IMF Direction of Trade Statistics in Wenjie and Roger (2017, p. 6)

Consider for example the price of crude oil. The price per barrel was US$ 3 in December 1998 before reaching its highest rating of US$ 145 per barrel in July 2008. It then dropped to US$ 32 in December 2008 prior to a further growth in 2009 and finally reached US$ 80 at the end of the year (Chevalier et al., 2010). As shown in (Figure 3) reduction in China's appetite for raw materials from January 2014 has resulted in a sharp swing in its trade balance with sub-Saharan Africa. Assessing the impact of dependence on commodities, Valentina Romei reported in the Financial Times in 2015 that reduced external demand and lower commodity prices caused a 13 percent contraction in Chinese imports in the 12 months to October 2015 over the same period a year earlier but China's exports to Africa continues to rise. The combination of rising imports and falling exports caused the trade balance of sub-Saharan Africa to plummet.

Again, it must be acknowledged that the flooding of African markets by cheap Chinese products threatens domestic manufacturing sector and on employment creation. Giving the abundant resource potentials of Africa, most of the consumer goods imported from China, particularly textiles and clothing, and footwear could have been manufactured locally. But as Chinese invest in everything, both small and medium enterprises across the continent have found it increasingly difficult to cope with competition brought by Chinese imports. One of the worst affected sectors is local textile industries. Because of price and innovativeness, many Africans prefer buying from the Chinese rather than from the locals. This is a major factor accounting for the closure of many manufacturing firms in Africa. An example is the closure of the Juapong Textiles Ghana Limited. In their study of 44 manufacturing industries in South Africa during 1992-2010, Edwards and Jenkins (2014) also found that labour-intensive industries and employment were the worst hit by Chinese imports.

Furthermore, there are concerns about foreigners particularly some Chinese taking over retail businesses in Africa. Evidence abounds to the fact Chinese businesses register to operate manufacturing plants in Africa but become trading companies serving as conduits for Chinese manufacturers. Consider the case of Ghana. Although Sections 17, 18 and 19 of Ghana Investment Act of 1994 (Act 478) reserve retail sector to indigenous businessmen, in their survey of Chinese investment in Ghana, Baah et al. (2009) found that Chinese companies were active in the retail sector, which in fact is reserved for Ghanaian businessmen. This situation compelled the Ghana Union of Traders' Associations (GUTA), an umbrella organisation of the numerous commodity associations in the country to organise series of demonstrations against foreigners, particularly the Chinese, from taking over the retail business in 2005 and 2007.

Foreign Direct Investment

China is a major source of foreign direct investment to Africa. Chinese FDI (also known as Overseas Foreign Direct Investment) is low relative to African GDP and FDI flows from other countries. For instance, official statistics indicate that it remains small as measured by its

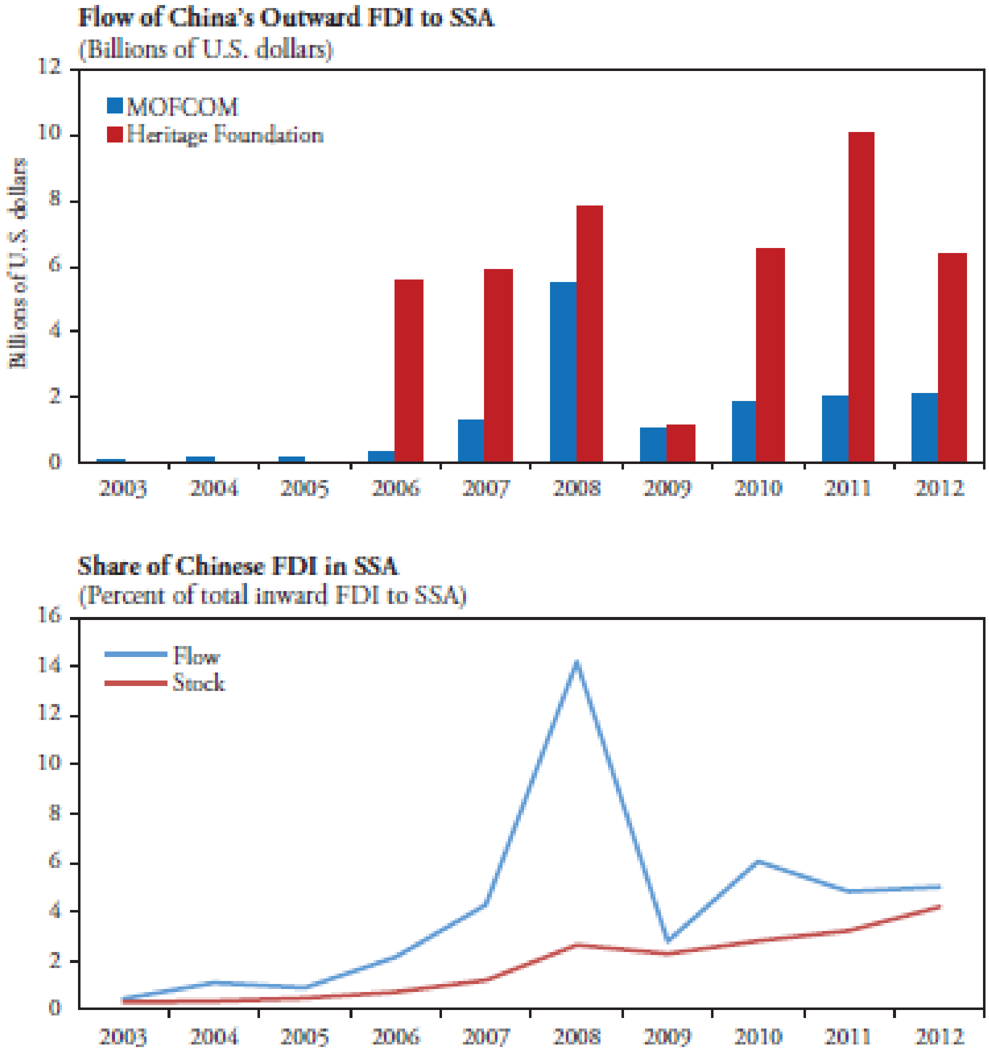

Figure 4. China's Outward FDI to Sub-Saharan Africa
Sources: UNCTAD; Ministry of Finance, China (MOFCOM); Heritage Foundation 2016; and IMF staff calculations in Wenjie and Roger (2017, p. 4)

share of total FDI to sub-Saharan Africa accounted for less than 5 percent in 2012 (Figure 4); and in 2015 China ranked 9th by capital investment and 7th by project numbers in Africa.

Nevertheless, China's outward foreign direct investment to Africa has increased exponentially in recent years. UNCTAD (2013) reveals that Beijing is the biggest developing country investor in Africa. The most recent white paper on China-Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation noted that between 2009 and 2012, China's direct investment in Africa grew at an annual rate of 20.5 percent. Investment from China reached an all-time high in 2008 at US$5.5 billion. Data from MOFCOM also indicate that FDI inflows surged from US$75 million in 2000 to US$3.2 billion in 2014 (MOFCOM 2015) while Chinese loans to sub-Saharan Africa have risen rapidly. Again, China's share of total external debt in sub-Saharan Africa has risen from less than 2 percent before 2005 to about 15 percent in 2012 (Wenjie and Roger, 2017). In fact, Chinese investment is a particularly important source of capital for certain African countries. Countries such as Zimbabwe, Mauritius, South Africa, Zambia, and Kenya are more dependent on OFDI from China. For instance, according to the World Bank, Beijing is Kenya's largest creditor, accounting for 57 percent of the country's total external debt. The presence and willingness of China to provide investment gives Africans particularly resource-rich countries the ability to renegotiate existing deals and the negotiating power vis-à-vis traditional partners. This is well epitomised by Mugabe when he launched his "Look East" policy, which intended to increase investment from Asian countries including Malaysia, Singapore, and China. He declared, "We have turned East, where the sun rises, and given our backs to the West, where the sun sets" (Meldrum, 2005).

However, like Sino-African trade and FDI from OECD countries to Africa, Chinese investment is focused on a few resource-rich countries. According to UNCTAD data, South Africa is the leading recipient of Chinese FDI on the continent, followed by the Sudan, Nigeria, Zambia, and Algeria. In 2009, these countries accounted for almost 60 percent of all Chinese OFDI stocks in Africa (MOFCOM). In terms of geographical distribution, deals tend to be more concentrated in the East and South African regions, whereas Central and West Africa, with the exception of Nigeria, have relatively fewer deals. In East Africa, countries such as Tanzania, Kenya, and Ethiopia are relatively resourced poor. However, they stand out as a popular destination for private Chinese investments because they have a relatively more developed infrastructure, including ports, and are relatively closer to China.

Again, China's aid approach is closely tied to two national objectives. The first is to secure commodities such as oil and rare earth for consumption in China. Consequently, Chinese investments in Africa are concentrated in few sectors that are of strategic interest to China. For example, in Zimbabwe, Chinese investments are found mainly in the mining of platinum, gold, diamonds, iron ore and coal. The second is to support China's own export-led domestic growth by creating new African markets for their products and services; partly because of the increased competition Chinese companies are facing in their domestic market. It is therefore not surprising that Beijing invests more in countries with a huge population.

Economic Cooperation

China's investment in Africa is more diversified. The China Economic and Trade Cooperation White Paper (2013) reveals that while energy and mineral resource exploitation remains the major part of Chinese investment on the continent, Beijing has expanded its investments in other key sectors including energy, agriculture, manufacturing, service, capability building and human resources. The report further stresses that Chinese enterprises have helped the establishment of an upstream-downstream-integrated industry chain in many African countries, thus transforming resource advantages into economic growth opportunities.

In the provision of infrastructure which is crucial for enabling GDP growth, more diversified economic and private sector activity, and providing the platform for such growth to be sustainable and inclusive, Africa has a huge deficit. Unfortunately, Western investors and aid agencies are less willing to invest in this important sector. Consider for instance, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Since the late 1970s, the agency has not funded any heavy infrastructure projects in Africa. But Chinese firms have committed huge investment in upgrading Africa's infrastructure. Currently, China finances more infrastructure projects in Africa than the World Bank. Deloitte (2016) further provides that while the share of total projects that are being funded by International DFIs has decreased, the share of funding provided by China has increased. The report reveals that China funds 12.6 percent and builds 22.4 percent of projects on the continent. In several parts of Africa, China is building railways, roads, telecommunication, government buildings, stadiums, hospitals, schools, among others. For example, China fully funded the construction of the African Union headquarters building. In Ghana the Chinese SinoHydro Corporation Ltd. completed the Bui Dam in 2008 at the cost of US$622 million in the form of concessional and commercial loans from China Exim Bank, and as part of the Belt and Road initiative proposed by China in 2013, the 756-kilometer railway linking Addis Ababa to Djibouti has been completed.

Brautigam (2011) reveals that African countries receive from China "financial aid in the form of grants, zero-interest loans, debt relief, and concessional loans as well as preferential export credits, market-rate export buyers' credits, and commercial loans from Chinese banks." For example, at the first FOCAC Ministerial Conference alone, Beijing canceled RMB10.9 billion of debts for 31 African countries. In 2015, China pledged US$60 billion in development assistance to Africa. In addition, through the China-Africa Development Fund (CADFund) Chinese enterprises are provided with equity investment capital for Chinese enterprises to invest in Africa in infrastructure, manufacturing, agriculture, livelihood, and energy mining resources. In 2016, the China-Africa Industrial Capacity Cooperation Fund was also launched to enhance industrialisation on the continent.

Unlike firms from the European Union and North America who are expected to support democracy, environmental protection, human rights, good governance and transparency, through public and, increasingly mandatory, commitments to the OECD Guidelines for MNEs (Morgera, 2011), China is more concerned with the political stability of the government than with the environment of rule of law in the domestic economy. Guided by its Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence and its official policy statement on trade and aid relationship China does not interfere in internal affairs of

African countries. Also, China's concessionary loans mostly do not carry any interest repayments, and where interest repayments are applicable the interest rate is very low. This makes Chinese loans more attractive to countries such as Angola, Eritrea, Madagascar, Zambia, and Zimbabwe – all of which have significant Chinese investment relative to their total FDI but have poor democratic records."

Chinese unconditioned aids allow African leaders to highlight their willingness to stand up to Western donors. But the approach has meant that it pays very little attention to the negative externalities that arise from its investment spending. China's willingness to invest in states regardless of their human rights records, environmental protection, social impact, and decent and accountable financial practices undermines long-standing international efforts to achieve good and representative governance, sustainable economic development and political stability. In May 2017 for instance, the United States of America withdrew Sh2.1 aid to the Ministry of Health in Kenya due to corruption and weak accounting procedures at the ministry. However, China does not subject governments to use investments in a manner that benefits the people. Alden (2014) shows that "from 2001 to 2009, China provided US$143 million in heavy weapons, plus small arms, to Sudan, and also helped Sudan build indigenous weapons factories, all at a time when government-backed militias were engaged in violent attacks on civilians in Darfur." Similarly, according to Brown (2008) "China has sold fighter jets, heavy military vehicles, and military communications equipment to the government of Zimbabwe despite President Robert Mugabe's use of the armed forces to silence political opponents." Thus, there is the fear that funding from China poses a threat to international efforts to bring economic and political sanity to impoverished and conflict-ridden communities in Africa by bankrolling corrupt and repressive regimes.

Again, while Chinese financial packages do veer away from political conditionalities except for withdrawal of diplomatic relations with Taiwan, economic conditionalities are attached to them (Brautigam, 2009). Guided by its resources and market interests loans from Chinese banks are conditioned on equipment purchases and sometimes natural resources sale agreements. For example, China Exim Bank demands that, in order to ensure the feasibility of the loan repayment, a loan be linked to a revenue source. Using what is sometimes characterised as the "Angola Model," Chinas frequently provides low-interest loans to nations who rely on commodities, such as oil or mineral resources, as collateral (Yi Yimin, 2011). In some cases, cash crops such as cocoa are used as repayment. In the case of Ghana, loan payments for the construction of the Bui Dam were backed with the supply of cocoa. In Zimbabwe, tobacco exports are sometimes used to pay off the balance on Chinese loans to state agencies.

The payment-in-kind strategy to finance Chinese loans helps to reduce the financial burdens and encourages African exports to China. However, the model offers China strategic opportunity to secure access Africa's natural resources. In Angola in 2006, USD 4 billion in such loans probably helped Chinese oil companies to win the exploitation rights to multiple oil blocks (Zhang, 2008). In 2008, the China Railway Group employed the same model to secure the mining rights to DRC's copper and cobalt mines under the slogan. Debra Brautigam (2011) indicates that between 2004 and 2011, China reached similar unprecedented deals with at least seven resource-rich African countries, with a total volume of nearly USD 14 billion. In 2017, the Government of Ghana leveraged the country's bauxite with the Chinese government that saw the latter pledge to commit over USD 15 billion to Ghana's economy.

Moreover, there is the argument that China's investment in Africa is neo-colonialist in nature. China is not only active in resource-rich African countries but many of Beijing's infrastructure investments and rebuilding are concentrated in railway and freight infrastructure. Ports such as Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; Maputo, Mozambique; Libreville, Gabon; Tema, Ghana; and Dakar, Senegal are critical nodes in China's strategy to cement global trade lanes; and Beijing is investing heavily in their expansion. This is similar to what imperial powers did on the continent in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They built railway facilities and ports so that they can send their goods to their colonies and also export from such places to their markets the things they needed. China is the number one steel manufacturer and exporter in the world.

Today, China sees the railways and freight infrastructure as investment opportunities which also create an export market for their booming steel and construction industries. Take for instance the port of Bagamoyo in Tanzania. In 2014, China pledged to invest at least US$10 billion dollars in financing to build it as part of the Bagamoyo Economic Zone. China's main interest in financing the port was to create better access to raw materials it needed to buy and to ensure easier deliveries of its exports of commercial goods to the region. This makes China's rhetoric on peace and development, and win-win cooperation with African states suspicious.

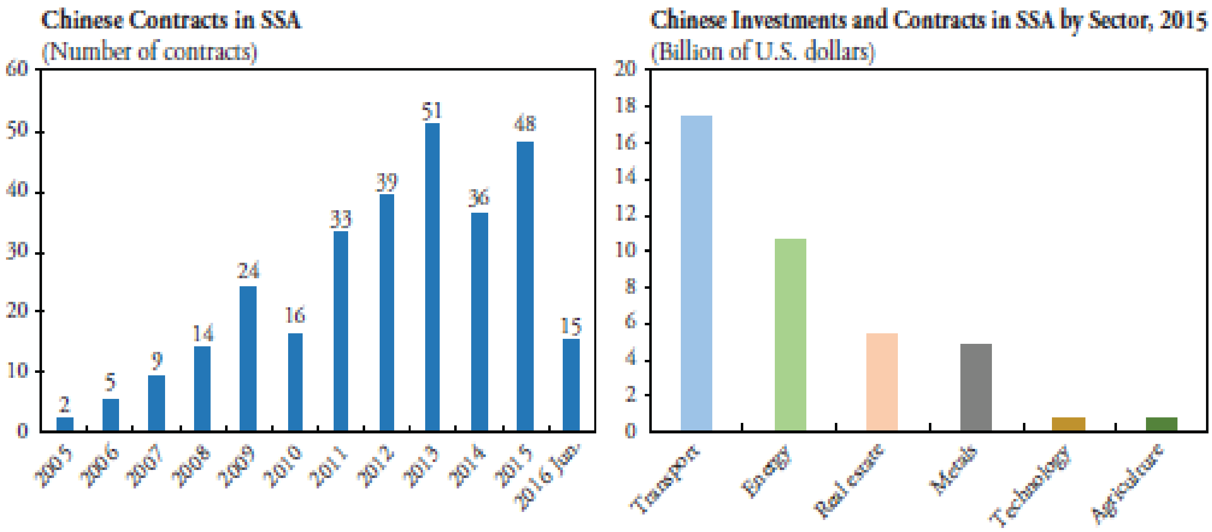

Figure 5. Chinese Investments and Contracts in Sub-Saharan Africa

Source: American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation's China Global Investment Tracker in Wenjie and Roger (2017, p. 5)

Chinese Companies in Africa

Beyond OFDI Chinese firms have also been diversifying their business pursuits in Africa. With active support from their government, both Chinese state-owned enterprises and the private sector have been rapidly expanding their business footprints in Africa. Chinese are more involved in construction and manufacturing in Africa than Western investors. Though a complete database Chinese companies operating in Africa is not available, according to China's Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM)'s registration database, there were more than 3000 Chinese enterprises operating on the continent as of January 2015. This figure was confirmed by Chinese Ambassador to Ghana, Madam Sun Baohong in July 2017 when she indicated that "Currently, more than 3,000 Chinese Enterprises are investing in Africa, with more than 100 billion dollars gross assets" (Anane, 2017).

These companies are working on contracted projects or have invested in key sectors such as energy, construction, forestry and agriculture, telecommunication, manufacturing, banking, aviation, agriculture, and mining. By 2013 about a quarter of all Chinese engineering contracts worldwide were in sub-Saharan Africa (Heritage Foundation, 2016). Most of these contracts (Figure 5) were awarded in energy (hydropower) and transport (roads, autos, ports, aviation). Deloitte (2016) further reports that in East Africa, China is the most visible builder, constructing 41.9 percent of all projects.

In Central Africa, China is the largest funder at 33.3 percent; China is also an important player in the construction sector, building half of all projects in the region. For example, the completion of the 756-kilometer railway linking Addis Ababa to Djibouti by China gives landlocked Ethiopia access to the Red Sea port in Djibouti. The completion of the 3.2 billion Madaraka Express connecting Nairobi and the port city of Mombasa as part of the East Africa Community (EAC) Rail Sector Enhancement Project is estimated to reduce the cost of freight in East Africa by 79 percent, as well as the cost of business by 40 percent and the transit time by half (Anane, 2017).

However, there are some unsavory aspects of the activities of Chinese companies in Africa. Most of the Chinese firms operating in Africa are either fully owned by the Chinese government or re substantial financial support from the China Investment Corporation (CIC), the State Asset Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC), EXIM Bank and other state banks. The activities of Chinese firms and other financial aids are embedded in Beijing's overall Africa policy – to attract investors and promote their own investment abroad – 'going out strategy'. Thus, as Chinese economic growth rests heavily on the success of its manufacturing sector, Beijing remains to focus on using Africa as a market for its commodities. For instance, Corkin (2007) reveals that Chinese contracts from the China Exim Bank require that 70 percent of projects be awarded to Chinese firms; and 50 percent of the procurement materials must come from China. This has a huge impact on the development of local construction firms and industries.

Also, there are issues with job creation. Unarguably, Chinese companies employ many Africans. For instance, it created 14,127 jobs across Africa in 2015. This made Beijing the second most prolific job creator in Africa in 2015 (fDi Intelligence, 2016). However, as a strategy to address the problem of unemployment in China, Chinese construction firms are noted for bringing in a hefty number of their own workers when many of the youth in the hosting African country cannot find jobs. This is common in countries such as Algeria, Angola, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, and the Republic of Congo. These 5 countries are responsible for more than 60 percent of all Chinese workers in Africa at the end of 2015 (SAIS, 2017). Despite African's high youth unemployment, on grounds of the need to complete contracts on time and that contract deals are not intended to be job programmes, Chinese go the extent of bringing in unskilled labour. In the construction of the African Union headquarters building in Addis Ababa, the Chinese newspaper, Xinhua reported in July 2010 that there were "nearly 200 Ethiopians and over 200 Chinese." Again, Baah (2009) shows that in the construction of the Bui Hydroelectric Power Project in Ghana, about 550 Ghanaians and 100 Chinese were hired. Similarly, in the construction of the Essipon Stadium, a total workforce of 230 (150 Chinese and 80 Ghanaians) were employed (Ghana News Agency, 2006). In both projects, the Ghanaian workers were all casual, not contractual, and worked longer than usual hours. This was a violation of Ghana's labour (Article 75 of the Labour Act (Act 651, 2003).

In telecommunication, backed by the government and supported by the China Exim Bank, China CITIC Bank and China Development Bank, Chinese telecommunication companies, particularly Huawei and Zhongxing Telecommunications Equipment Corporation (ZTE) are playing a significant role in African mobile revolution. As solutions providers, both companies have broken the monopoly of Western telecom giants in Africa, helped to bring down charges and have become the principal telecommunications providers in a number of African countries. They have also established training centres across the continent to train African technicians. Due to their massive investment, in 2012, Huawei became the largest telecoms equipment provider in Africa, and ZTE the fifth-largest (The Economist, 2012). This has created an unprecedented proliferation of mobile applications in Africa. Acknowledging the contribution of Chinese enterprises in advancing technology on the continent a Nigerian official noted that "The Western world is never prepared to transfer technology – but the Chinese do, [and] while China's technology may not be as sophisticated as some Western governments', it is better to have Chinese technology than to have none at all" (Haroz, 2011).

In African journey towards industrialisation, China has been establishing industrial capacity cooperation with Africa. For example, in correspondence with growing Chinese investment overseas, in 2006, as part of the implementation of its 11th five-year plan, and motivated by successful domestic experience, FOCAC summit in 2006 saw the Chinese government pledge to establish up to fifty overseas economic and trade cooperation zones abroad. In the experimental manner that characterises many Chinese policy innovations; Chinese companies have established seven industrial parks in Zambia, Mauritius, Nigeria, Egypt, and Ethiopia. Establishing the firms along the value chain would not only reduce transaction costs, boost the diversification of African economies and promote manufacturing but help create job opportunities for Africans. Moreover, as these firms grow, they may bring in a significant amount of foreign direct investment in the manufacturing sector with managerial know-how and accelerate Africa's industrialisation. According to Tang (2015) the five operational zones – the Eastern zone in Ethiopia, Zambia-China in Zambia, China-Egypt Suez in Egypt, and the Lekki and Ogun-Guangdong in Nigeria – had created around 20,000 jobs for Africans as of February 2015.

Notwithstanding the benefits brought to African countries, it is worth acknowledging that their establishment is as a result of the need to seek alternative production bases as labour cost rises in China. Their existence is also tied to the Chinese One Belt initiative. China's 'one belt, one road' grand plan in 2015 states, "We should explore a new mode of investment cooperation, working together to build all forms of industrial parks, such as overseas economic and trade cooperation zones and cross-border economic cooperation zones, and promote industrial cluster development" (Tang, 2015).

Besides, Sino-African partnership is advancing the development of human resources in Africa. Sino-African educational exchanges date back to 1956 but efforts towards human resources development and education have been intensified since the adoption of The Beijing Declaration and The Program for China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development in 2000.

For instance, during the third FOCAC ministerial conference held in Beijing in 2006, the Chinese Government committed itself among other decisions to "increase the number of Chinese government scholarships to African students from 2,000 per year to

4,000 per year by 2009; and provide annual training for a number of education officials as well as heads and leading teachers of universities, primary, secondary and vocational schools in Africa." Again, the FOCAC-initiated African Talents Program, announced in 2012, sought to train 30,000 African professionals in China between 2013 and 2015, and provided students with 18,000 government scholarships. Again, in late 2015, at the sixth FOCAC ministerial conference in Johannesburg, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced plans to further increase aid to post-secondary African students, with 30,000 additional scholarships; 2,000 post-graduate and doctoral slots at top Chinese institutions, and short-term, sponsored, visits to China for 200 African scholars and 500 African youths.

China's support for Africa's tertiary education sector extends beyond FOCAC: In 2009, China's Ministry of Education launched the "20+20 Cooperation Plan." The programme formulated one-to-one partnerships between 20 Chinese and 20 African higher education institutions in 17 African countries, and sought to promote capacity building and sustainable development in Africa itself. The 20+20 programme is now an integral part of the UNESCO-China-Africa Tripartite Initiative on University Cooperation, which seeks to further these partnerships as part of an effort to further build sector capacity and support a cadre of highly educated African citizens for comfortable working in China and their home countries. Under the framework of the UNESCO trust fund to support education development programmes, in particular, higher education, in Africa Beijing has also promised to provide USD US$2 million annually. Scholarship opportunities for African students to study in China have also expanded dramatically since FOCAC shifted its focus to higher education. In August 2016 for instance, eight top Chinese universities led by the Wenzhou University have agreed to collaborate with the Ghana Embassy in Beijing and Study in China Admission systems (SICAS) to offer 1,000 slots for Ghanaian students annually. Cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Chongqing, and several higher education institutions have established regional and institutional scholarships for African students (Mini Gu, 2017).

Despite helping develop Africa's human resource, China's contribution to promoting Sino-Africa educational cooperation and exchanges is influenced by Beijing's strategic 'Going Out Policy'. In 2006 the national 'Eleventh Five-Year Plan' put forward the Chinese culture going out strategy which puts more premium on transporting Chinese National Philosophy and Social Sciences aboard in an effort to sell the Chinese culture. For example, under the Beijing Declaration and Beijing Action Plan for 2013 to 2015 the two sides agreed "to continue to promote the establishment and development of the Confucius Institute and Confucius Classrooms in Africa; and encourage Chinese and African universities to carry out cooperation in regional and country studies and support African universities in establishing China research centers" (FOCAC, 2012). Again, under the framework of the China-Africa Joint Research and Exchange Program, the Center for West African Studies was established in Ghana in 2017. Among other goals, the establishment of the centre aims at enhancing China's influence in West Africa through functioning as a demonstration base for Chinese culture, function as a base for student practice and internship, and as practice base of Chinese teacher training.

Security Governance

To promote peace and security, China's role in security governance in Africa has undergone a fundamental shift in size and nature in recent time. Most significant is the adjustment of its principle of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs. Beijing has launched the Initiative on China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security, deepened security operation with the AU and individual African countries, increased its financial support for the AU peace-keeping missions, contributing more towards the development of the African Standby Force, and it is helping to train more AU peace-keepers and officials in peace and security affairs for Africa.

In the deployment of peacekeepers following the 2006 Beijing summit, China takes an active part in UN peacekeeping operations in Africa. Though more accurate statistics for China's peacekeeping mission in Africa are not available, it is a known fact that China has made a huge contribution to UN peacekeeping operations in Africa. In fact, UN peacekeeping statistics indicate that China is now the twelfth-largest troop contributor to UN peacekeeping, and since 2007 has been the top among the five permanent members of the Security Council. According to United Nations (2017) at the end of June, 2017, China had 2,469 troops, police, and experts assigned to seven of the UN's nine peacekeeping operations in Africa. These include the MINURSO (Western Sahara), MINUSCA (Central African Republic), MINUSMA (Mali), MONUSCO (The Democratic Republic of the Congo), UNAMID (Darfur), UNISFA(Sudan), UNMISS (South Sudan), UNOCI (Côte d'Ivoire), UNMIL (Liberia).

Again, Africa is the first continent to witness a transformation in China's peacekeeping mission. In 2013 China committed to send 395 peacekeeping forces including 170 non-combatant security forces to the United Nations peacekeeping mission, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali. This marked a major shift in policy for China, which has previously limited its peacekeeping contributions to engineers, medical and aid personnel. Again, in 2014 Beijing accepted to dispatch infantry battalion of 700 troops including 13 women to the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan. This also marked the first time Beijing has sent a combat unit of ground troops for the mission.

In anti-piracy, China's contribution is incredible. Piracy off the high seas off Somalia has been on the rise over the last two decades due to the absence of stable government in the country. From January 2009 to January 2015 China had sent 20 deployments of the People's Liberation Army-Navy (PLA-N) as escort task force in the Gulf of Aden as part of UN-sanctioned anti-piracy effort off the Somali coast. Besides, China has actively participated in security issues by diplomatic means. For instance, China appointed a special envoy for African affairs in 2007. Since then, China's envoys have visited and mediated between several conflicting parties.

Furthermore, Beijing has been providing military material assistance to countries involved in African Union peacekeeping missions. Alden (2014) reveals that China provided the AU Mission in Somalia US$4.5 million worth of equipment and material to combat al-Shabaab. It also offered the African peacekeeping mission in Sudan US$1.8 million in 2007. Zhou and Seibel (2015) also tell that in 2013, China donated US$ 100,000 to the West and Central African Maritime Security Trust Fund of the International Maritime Organisation. As part of security cooperation, in December 2015, President Xi Jinping announced that China will provide a total of US$60 million in free aid to the African Union (AU) to support the building and operation of the African Standby Force and the African Capacity for the Immediate Response to Crisis. He again announced at the UN in September 2015 that China offered military aid of up to US$100 million to the AU's rapid response mechanisms – the African Standby Force (ASF) and its blueprint, the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC).

However, China's enhanced security governance role in Africa and even constructing a naval base in Djibouti is not just a matter of establishing itself as a great and responsible power that contributes to international peace and security. It coincides with its interests in Africans! China wants to see stable markets in Africa and a positive trade environment to protect its national economic interests. China's seeks to protect its growing number of Chinese investment and the associated population in Africa. Consider the case of Sudan. Beijing has energy interests to defend in South Sudan, where its National Petroleum Corporation has a 40 percent stake in a joint venture developing the fields. In its anti-piracy operation in the Gulf of Aden, much of the commerce passing through the pirate-infested waters was headed to or from China.

LESSONS FROM CHINA

China's journey to its impressive rate of economic development and increase in both regional and global economic and political influence is the result of learning from different countries including Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Europe and the United State, and adopting right policies. For instance, before implementing the "2006-2020 Medium- and Long-Term National Science and Technology Development Plan" in 2006, China learned much from the experiences of South Korea, Japan, and the United States. As China learned from these countries including, Africans can certainly draw experiences from the success story of China. China's experience shows that things can be changed relatively quickly. Of course, African countries should not blindly copy China or any other model as the measures adopted in China would not have exactly the same effect if adopted on the African soil. But there are more important lessons Africans can learn from China to solve her unique development challenges beyond the traditional benefits which have been discussed above.

Leadership

Individual national leaders have large impacts on the development of a nation. Good leadership is not about age, title or a designation. Rather it about solving problems. This is the advantage China had. The quick rise of China cannot be told without the role played by Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997). Deng engineered a take-over of the Communist Party leadership in 1978 when the country was in a grinding poverty. Unarguably, Mao's wasteful Great Leap Forward embarked on in 1958 could be blamed for the plight of China. Instead of finger pointing, Deng was of the conviction that a single person should not be held responsible for the failures of the previous two decades. "We are all to blame," he said.

The situation seems different in Africa. More than fifty years after independence, most leaders on the continent do not only behave as if the problems facing their countries are natural which would be solved by their own, but these leaders continue to attribute almost every

African malaise on outside forces. This is well captured by famous Nigerian author, Chinua Achebe:

The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenges of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership.

Political parties in the opposition are not different. Rather than learning lessons from previous administration after winning an election, new governments do not only politically witch-hunt but blame them for every ill. For example, in Zaire (DRC), President Mobutu Sese Seko went to the extent of blaming corruption on European colonialism (New African, July 25, 1988). However, Mobutu and his officials blatantly looted from one of the most resource-rich countries in Africa during his reign (Young and Turner, 2013). Did Mobutu credit the west for the decision to loot Congo's treasury?

It takes a decisive ideological orientation and patriotism to develop a nation. African leaders must have national loyalty, a strategic vision, and an underlying toughness in pursuing national interests. Beyond these, there must be in existence a competent, professional and neutral bureaucracy to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of its strategies and policies in accordance with established national development goals (Nkurayija, 2011).

Creating Unique Development Model

Without a doubt, no country can progress without learning from others and seeking the support of the international community. However, a nation must be selective when borrowing foreign ideas. This is another sphere; African countries can learn a lesson from China. Unlike Mao Zedong, Deng recognised that to develop, a country must look abroad. Consequently, he opened the country wide to science, technology, management systems, and new ideas from other countries regardless of their political system. Deng was, however, not oblivious to the fact that no one-size-fits-all. He knew that each country has unique culture and personality; and that he was selective on what to learn from others. This is a major reason for Chinese unique and functional political and economic model.

Africa must know itself more than the outside world would know. The continent must develop political and economic strategies tailored to the African setting. It should not continue to blame economic models and programmes of the Bretton Woods institutions (The World Bank, and International Monetary Fund) and the United Nations of its woes and continue to depend on them for direction. There is the need to carve an African personality and development process rooted in African systems of thought and people-centredness.

Related to the above is the adoption of Western liberal democracy. No one political system can singularly address all the problems of the world. Similarly, variations in culture, history, orientation, challenges, national goals, and directive principles hinder the ability of a political system to achieve equal results in different countries. In importing Western-style democracy Africans had the option to borrow it in its entity (both letter and spirit) or to define for themselves the meaning of democracy in their own historical and cultural contexts. Africans have sacrificed the quality assurance system in their traditional political system which ensured that most competent and most popular people were selected to lead the nation for popular elections which only leads to the election of the most popular person but not the most competent. Also, in virtually all African countries democracy has been reduced to only the conduct of elections. Moreover, because of winner-takes-all politics, electoral competitions on the continent are not competitions over policies, but competitions over control of a government apparatus in order to secure, control and dish patronage to one's own.

The opposition is not different. When, and if, an opposition party finally manages to unseat a ruling government, they then also govern in the interests of their "own," purging the former incumbents and excluding them. Despite its positive virtues, Western-style democracy is characterised by divisiveness, polarisation, competition, and confrontation which are inimical to development. Recognising the adversarial nature of this kind of democracy, and more importantly seeing political system as a means to achieving larger national ends, China, has established a political model akin more to meritocracy rather than a democracy. Focusing on conscious personnel training, and selection from one level to the other, the Chinese model based on the principle of democratic centralism is capable of maintaining political stability, social harmony, and efficient policy-making and implementation.

Also, China's 'multi-party cooperation system' does not only help to avoid the waste of talented people but devoid of alteration of parties with different positions and ideologies, the country is able to formulate long-term plan for national development and ensure stabilisation of its policies. If governance is ensuring the welfare of the citizens, democracy, as adopted in Africa, must not create a small selfish money-minded few individuals who seek power to enrich themselves while the masses continue to languish in abject poverty and hunger, squalor, disease, and destitution. Rather, it should be able to align the governor's incentives with the welfare of the governed.

Neither should democracy provide a safe haven for corrupt officials in Africa. While defining for themselves the meaning of democracy in their own historical and cultural contexts, and promoting inclusive government so that they do not deny themselves the wisdom and experience of its citizens, Africans must ensure that their political systems are able to promote good governance based on institutionalised integrity, confidence, trust, the rule of law, and meritocracy.

Realigning the Economy towards a Country's Comparative Advantage

Like the human personality, every country has unique potentials. The best strategy for national development is to structure the economy toward its comparative advantage. China's success story cannot be disassociated from its ability to realign the economy towards its comparative advantage. With its population size, China possesses an obvious comparative advantage in the labour-intensive manufacturing sector. But, the Mao administration assuming that development of heavy industry was the way to catch up with the developed nations adopted capital intensive policies antithetical to the country's comparative advantage – defined by limited capital and abundant labour. This was the main reason for China's economic stagnation before 1978.

Smart to learn lessons from it earlier experiences, during the first half of the reform era (1978-92) China reversed its economic development path toward more labour intensive sectors. According to Headey et al. (2008) after the introduction of the open door policy, "massive foreign direct investment flowed in and married with China's cheap labour. As a result, both capital and labour resources were more efficiently allocated, which greatly boosted economic efficiency." Having laid a good foundation, from the early 1990s onward the Chinese economic growth path shifted to rely on capital-deepening. Today, under the twelfth five-year plan approved in 2011 the Chinese economy is shifting in emphasis from high growth to the quality, balance, and sustainability of that growth.

Africa has tremendous natural, human resources, and huge domestic market but there is a vast gap between resources and production. Consider the case of Ghana and Ivory Coast. The two countries produce nearly 60 percent of the world's cocoa but earned in 2015 they earned only $5.75 billion out of the $100 billion chocolate market (Myjoyonline, 2017). In the production of apparel and footwear, Africa has 20 percent of the world's cattle, sheep, and goats, but produce only 14.9 percent of world output of hides and skins. They have 10 percent of the world's cattle but produce only 4.5 percent of bovine hides (Boehnk et al., 2002). China is slowly losing its comparative advantages in labour-intensive industries due to increasing labour cost (Dinh et al. (2012). A sizeable opportunity thus arises for Africa as production of basic consumer goods is concerned. Mali, Senegal, and Niger have the raw potential both in terms of quantity and quality to take advantage of the relocation of apparel and footwear industries from China.

Creating Positive Investment Climate

An important economic principle is incentives matter. China has proven to be pragmatic and smart in this area. China has a legal and regulatory framework that provides the government with discretion to promote investment in specific regions or industries it wishes to develop, and to restrict foreign investment deemed not to be in its national interest or that would compete with state-sanctioned monopolies or other favored domestic firms. Take, for example, the adoption of the SEZs. Aimed at leveling disparities between coastal and inland provinces the preferential policies on the areas earmarked SEZs attracted foreign investment and technology, promoted exports, and created laboratories for broader market-oriented reforms. Foreign investments in economic and technological development zones (ETDZs) were also granted reduced rates.

Having achieved its goal of developing the coastal areas, China has since the implementation of Corporate Income Tax (CIT) Law in 2008 shifted its tax incentives from geographically oriented to industry-oriented. More so, while China became the world's top destination for foreign direct investment (FDI) in 2014, according to the United Nations Conference of Trade and Development (UNCTAD) it has maintained a more restrictive foreign investment regime to shield Chinese enterprises from the competition. Consequently, despite being a member of World Trade Organisation, foreign investment in sectors deemed important by the government, including minerals exploration, advertising, telecommunications, commercial enterprises are highly regulated; and to protect local enterprises from undue competitions the government enforces discriminating and restrictive policies. For instance, concerned foreign enterprises would be enclaves with little spillovers benefit to the rest of the economy it always had strict limits on the number of workers that foreign investors could bring into the country. Again, to promote indigenous technological innovations, since 2006, China's public-procurement policies require local industries which produce indigenous domestic products "to have a Chinese brand, use Chinese intellectual property, and have at least 51 percent Chinese ownership."

The situation is quite different in Africa. In the 1980s most African states introduced Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) supported by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) aimed at stabilizing the economy, privatisation and reforming with regard to the liberalisation of external and internal trade. However, the ERP programmes were not successful mainly because there were no such defined special zones and areas to develop the economy in a long run and the investments were mainly allocated in primary industries. More so designers of the programme had a poor perception of the African economic problem while investments were often made with little regard to efficiency. African countries, particularly southern African states such as Mozambique with strategic geographic location with extensive coastal line need to follow the Chinese way. Like China, the continent needs to build benign investment environment.

Again, to achieve a vibrant, technologically driven, and competitive trade and industrial economy, governments in Africa need to set up technology and management pools which would assembly knowledgeable and intelligent people to offer technical support to emerging companies. Also, strategies and policies including the provision of critical incentives including macroeconomic stability, political legitimacy, modernisation of investment codes and enforceability of contracts, sustainable national economic policies, and quality of public services, fighting corruption, and security and transparent judicial system are needed. Moreover, African states have to develop priority projects of wider economic impact and effective marketing strategy. For example, though the establishment of export-processing zones (EPZs) comes with cost, it may be a tool for closer integration into world trade.

Ensuring Vibrant Private Sector

Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) are a fundamental part of the economic fabric in developing countries. They are important for economic growth, job creation, and innovation, fostering entrepreneurship, competitiveness and economic and social cohesion. For these, it is without a doubt that the panacea to the country's dwindling national development is encapsulated in the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovative private sector.

Since 1978 China has introduced series of promotion regulations and measures such as the State Council on Encouraging, Supporting and Guiding the Development of Private and Other Non-Public Owned Economies enacted in 2003 and the SME Growth Project enacted in 2006 the government to support SMEs. Government agencies including the National Development and Reform Commission (NRDC), the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Commerce and the State Administration of Foreign Exchange (SAFE) have all also developed policies encouraging Chinese companies to expand overseas. To assist the private sector to expand abroad, selected state own enterprises and privately owned enterprises also enjoy favorable financing in the form of credit lines and low-interest loans. For example, through the non-state-owned economies law introduced in March 2004 today Huawei, CNPC, CNOOC, Haier, TCL, Lenovo, SAIC, and Baosteel are among the world known players.

Beyond these, for key projects financed by regional governments within the country, the State Council requires that made-in-China equipment should account for at least 60 percent of the total value of equipment purchased (Xihuan, 2006). It is not surprising that China has maintained its position as the largest export economy in the world since 2009. Africa abounds in entrepreneurs, but the most crucial factor limiting the promotion of the continent's private sector is the weakness in the physical and policy environment which inhabit effective investment. Like Ghana, in many other African countries, the environment does not encourage young people to venture into businesses. There is generally weak and inadequate assistance and protection for local businesses; and despite existing policies on financial support for such businesses, procedures and collateral demands hinder most entrepreneurs from securing financial help. For example, a survey carried out by the Nigerian Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA) showed that only 6 percent of industrialists in Nigeria have been able to access the various entrepreneurial interventions funds made available by the Central Bank of Nigeria (The Guardian, 2012).

Beyond these, indigenous companies which partner with the government to solve development problems are usually hunted down and labeled as corrupt. But economic development only remains a mirage until governmental policies and plans are focused on ensuring that private businesses are empowered to succeed. Governments in Africa have to establish a more favorable and secure investment milieu and to remove debilitating restraints on entrepreneurial activity on the continent.

Like China, Africa would also have to protect local firms from foreign competition by reviewing policy and enforcement mechanisms on local content regulations and adjust policy to favour the participation of local companies in development projects; institute tariff regimes that give competitive advantage to locally manufactured products; ban the importation of products which the country has a competitive advantage; and providing political climate adequate to capital accumulation. Decentralisation of decision making and competent public administration are also critical to reducing the burden of bureaucracy in registration and regulation.

Investing in Infrastructural Development

Investment in infrastructure is crucial for growth and development of social and economic fabric. The rapid growth of China's infrastructure investment has been an important factor sustaining China's growth. As Ren Yan reveals since 2003, China's infrastructure development has entered into the stage of rapid development on all fronts (Ren, 2013). Transport, energy and ICT infrastructures have all experienced growing reinvestment volumes. From 514.834 billion Yuan in 2004 as total investment in transport, energy, and ICT infrastructures as main infrastructures in China rose to 4,033.985 billion Yuan in 2014; and the result of the massive investment and development is huge. Li Pengfei gives a clearer account of this development. He indicates that in transportation, in 2015, the operating length of China's railway system reached 121,300 kilometers, ranking second in the world; more than half of Chinese cities with a population above 500,000 have been connected with high-speed railway network; 99.99 percent of Chinese towns and townships and 99.87 percent of administrative villages had access to roads; and 214 airports had registered by close of the year.

In energy infrastructure, China total installed generation capacity was 517 gigawatts in 2005 but by the end of 2015, China's total installed generation capacity had reached 1,507gigawatts, ranking first in the world. In ICT infrastructure by the end of 2015, the total length of optical fiber cables in China registered 24.873 million kilometers, which is over six times the level of 4.07 million kilometers in 2005 while the number of mobile communication base stations in China totaled 4.668 million, which is over three times the level of 1.398 million in 2010. Again, the number of broadband Internet access ports in China totaled 470 million, which was over seven times the level of 64.8636 million in 2006 (Li, 2017). These are the engines of China development. Consider the provision of energy for example. There is a direct correlation between economic growth and electricity supply but Africa holds the unenviable record of being one of the worst places, experiencing the longest outages. Take sub-Saharan Africa as an example. According to Castellano et al. (2015) it has 13 percent of the world's population, but 48 percent of the share of the global population without access to electricity while the sub-region has sufficient coal, gas, geothermal, hydro, solar, and wind resources. With increasing urbanisation and industrialisation, this has dire consequences on the operations of firms in Africa as they either have to lose sales or buy commercial generators.

A relentless improvement of energy policies aimed at increasing generation, transmission and distribution is needed if Africa long-term growth is to be achieved. There is the need to eliminate monopoly and introduce competition to enhance the supply of energy. According to some estimates, 17 countries in Africa are among the top 35 nations with the biggest total reserves of solar, wind, hydro, and geothermal energy. Here, China provides some useful lessons to Africa. As at 2015, the generation capacity of China's non-fossil fuels amounted to 516.42 gigawatts, accounting for 34.3 percent of total installed capacity. In the installed capacity of non-fossil fuels, hydropower, nuclear power, grid-connected wind power and solar power reached 319.37 gigawatts, 27.17gigawatts, 128.3 gigawatts and 41.58 gigawatts respectively (Li, 2017). This shows the commitment of China to invest in renewable energy. China is now the largest producer of renewable energy in the world.

The secret of China's success is that in investment, development, and operation, the central government has prioritised the supply side of infrastructure, and the attraction of private capital through public-private partnership to ensure full cost recovery. To enhance accessibility and reduce energy cost, Africa needs a transition to a clean, reliable, low-carbon energy system, which uses the most cost-effective and environmentally friendly technologies to improve economic development while ensuring competitive energy prices and high living standards.

Perhaps, the most important lesson from China in the provision of infrastructure is project completion. Infrastructural projects are considered successful when delivered within scheduled time, within budget, and the required level of quality. In Africa, these three variables are usually missed. China since 1988 has developed the Project Supervision System (PS) which encompasses every aspect of project construction supervision and management to ensure that projects are successfully completed. But in Ghana for example, due to factors including distributive politics delay in construction projects is endemic. Because the provision of infrastructure, such as roads, schools, electrification, clinics, and markets are politically popular and highly visible projects African politicians seek to deliver them in theories of pork barrel politics, tactical redistribution, and credit claiming. Yet most of these projects particularly those commenced at election-nearing seasons never get completed, leaving behind half-finished projects of no value to users and voters. New governments are voted into office and fail to continue with the policies started by the previous government. For instance, in 2007 the New Patriotic Party (NPP) began the construction of four thousand, seven hundred (4,700) nationwide Affordable Housing Unit Project but was abandoned after the National Democratic Congress (NDC) took over power in 2009 though the country has 1.8 million units housing deficit.

Tailoring Education towards the Country's Needs

One of many enabling factors in China's meteoric growth has been human capital. China is currently ranked second in the world in terms of the number of workers with a tertiary education, with a total number of 70 million. Between 2001 and 2009 for instance partly due to an increase in government spending the number of annual graduates increased by six times, from 1.1 million to 6.1 million with overall literacy standing at 92.2 percent (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2009).

China achieved this through universalizing a year-year compulsory primary and lower secondary education; and the decentralisation of educational finance and administration to local governments which began in 1986. Since 1993 Higher education sector has also been decentralised to empower the role of provincial governments in financing and administrating higher education. To facilitate the universalisation of nine-year compulsory education in the disadvantaged areas the government in 1995 introduced the Compulsory Education Project in Disadvantaged Areas.

More importantly, the Chinese education system is technical, science and technology driven. As far back as 1977, China under Deng Xiaoping believed that "China much catch up with the most advanced counties in the world …I believe we have to begin by tackling science and education." For this, in 1980, when mainland China replaced Taiwan as the Chinese member of the World Bank, given Deng's emphasis on training, the first grant China negotiated with the World Bank after becoming a member was for assistance in higher education (Vogel, 2011). To reduce reliance on foreign technologies in 2006, China launched the "2006-2020 Medium- and Long-Term National Science and Technology Development Plan" through which it establishes government-led research consortia among leading companies and universities and government-led research institutes. As of 2010, China had set up 127 national engineering research centres, 729 national-level corporate technology centres, and 5,532 provincial level corporate technology centres. Targeted national science and technology programmes which can respond to the needs of country are established by the Ministry of Science and Technology are supported with research funding from both the state and regional governments; and both state and regional governments rely on researchers at these institutions for scientific and technological research to support local economic and social development.

Africa is the world's most youthful continent. Skilled graduates are crucial for Africa to move up the value chain and achieve critical productivity increases. But there is a very real disparity between learning outcomes and the skills students need to enter the job market to contribute to the continent's growth and development. Beyond the slow development of technical, vocational and training, university education in Africa in particular which should have focused more science and technology pay more attention to the social sciences. But the nature of education in Africa is not in parallel with this modern trend and demand. Perhaps, for reason that such courses are less expensive to run. Unfortunately, in their contents, students are not taught to look beyond the state to create jobs for themselves but the colonial idea of white colour jobs.

Thus, African countries do not just need to focus on accessibility but would have to develop curriculum relevant to the daily lives of students and to propel African productivity and income growth. The continent needs to learn from China, where more than 40 percent of all tertiary degrees are awarded in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. At best, as Professor Calestous Juma of Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government suggests Africans must create innovative universities with clear visions and strategic plans that focus on practical applications and include comprehensive roadmaps for moving research from the laboratory to the marketplace.

Encouraging Saving

From household to the national level, the judicious use of a resource, saving and investment is a core ingredient to national development. As developing countries on the continent, the savings of the population is the most important investment resource for the development of the real sector particularly agriculture and manufacturing, since foreign capital is mostly invested in the production of natural resources like oil and gas. More importantly, at the national level, high levels of national savings increase the number of domestic resources available for investment and decrease the need to resort to foreign borrowing in order to cover domestic investment and consumption demand. This is another area African countries can learn an important lesson from China.

High saving of households, enterprises, and the government in China has been a long-term phenomenon. For instance, China's national saving rates since 2000 have been one of the highest worldwide, far surpassing the rates prevailing in Japan, South Korea, and other East Asian economies during the years of their miracle growth. The nation saves half of its GDP and its marginal propensity to save approached 60 percent during the 2000s (Zhou, 2009; ADB, 2009; IMF, 2009); and since 2000, there has been a surge in the country's saving rate reaching a startling 53.1 percent of the GDP in 2007. In 2015, the latest year with available data on the saving rates of all countries groups by World Bank national accounts data, and OECD National Accounts data files, the Gross savings (percentage of GDP) of China (48 percent) makes it the second country in the world with high national savings. This is twice the world average (25 percent) and that of the highest African country, Tanzania (23 percent). The high saving at households has created financial security for many Chinese families and reduced government spending on social welfares. Such resources have been available for the government to invest in infrastructure projects.

Africa is not poor. Ironically, when compared with other developing regions, Sub Saharan Africa has the lowest savings rate and it has been trending downward. While trying to address low-income levels, income per capita, inflation rate, population, real interest rate and agricultural share in GDP, African states must place greater attention on the management of resources. On the contrary, little attention is put to the expenditure side as to whether taxation is leading to efficient service delivery. Take a case in Ghana as an example. In 1999, the government of Ghana contracted African Automobile Limited (AAL) for the supply of 110 Hyundai Gallopers to the Ministry of Local Government. The vehicles were duly imported into the country in 2001 but the NPP government, which was in power at the time, decided to have nothing to do with the company. To date, 2017, the vehicles have been left at the mercy of the weather to rot away. Nigeria's situation is more despicable. It is one of the world's top oil producers. However, the country relies mainly on importation and other arrangements entered into by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, for about 95 percent of the country's fuel consumption.

Improving Productivity in Agriculture

Sustainable agricultural development is crucial for food security, social inclusion, structural transformation process and economic diversification. China's arable land accounting for just one-tenth of its vast territory per capita is only 40 percent of the world's average. Besides, the country's per-capita average of forested land, grassland, and freshwater resources amounts to just one-ninth, one-third and one-fourth of the respective world average. The already limited amount of land available for agriculture is being eaten away by ongoing urbanization and industrialization. Again the country's land tenure system does not permit farmers to own, buy, or sell land. Notwithstanding these setbacks, China is not only able to feed its more than 1.3 billion people but the country is the world's largest agricultural economy.

China's performance in agriculture does not only owe to its comparative advantage in labour cost but more significantly the role of the state administrative capacity to develop, implement policy and policy learning process has been vital in achieving the performance. There is a vertical structure from central to the local and horizontal structure from different sector organizations forms China's agricultural policy and implementation system, ensuring that strategies and policies develop in a consistent, adjustable, and adaptive way. Through water conservancy facilities as well as disaster prevention and mitigation capacity building China is able to fight against disasters and harness climate resources. Moreover, since 2005, the Chinese government implements a soil testing and fertilizer subsidy programme to promote scientific fertilisation technology.

Africa has vast agricultural potentials. For many years, it has remained an important sector of the economy most African countries. As reported by African Competitiveness Report 2015, agriculture contributes from 2.4 percent of GDP in Equatorial Guinea to 70 percent of GDP in Liberia, providing an average of around 15 percent of GDP for the continent. However, despite its huge expanse of arable land and water resources many African countries particularly those in the sub-Sahara are a net importer of agricultural products while hunger and starvation are widespread. The major reason for this is the failure of the continent to benefit from green revolution. The African Development Bank in its 2013 annual report indicates that the level of value addition and crop processing of agricultural commodities is low and post-harvest losses in sub-Saharan Africa average 30 percent of total production, meaning that the region loses over US$4 billion each year. (AfDB, 2014). It is therefore not surprising that over the last 40 years, Sub-Saharan Africa has become a net importer of agricultural commodities and staple food. In fact, UN Annual Exporter-Derived Data indicates that total agricultural imports by sub-Saharan Africa reached a record high of US$43.6 billion in 2011. Unfortunately, agricultural export revenue alone is unable to pay for agricultural imports into the region.

But no country can truly be a sovereign if it is not capable of ensuring food security for its citizens. African countries need to improve their land governance system, invest in other agriculture productivity-enhancing measures through the development of proper policies and legislation; increasing budgetary allocation to the agricultural sector; establishing agricultural sector coordination unit; reviving agricultural institutions; raising of embargo on food produce that the nation has comparative advantages to produce; and introducing postharvest saving mechanism that will minimise wastages. Other strategies include encouraging the youth to go into agriculture; mechanizing agriculture, and adding value to agricultural produce.

Creating Competitive Decentralised Governance

Decentralised governance is an important way to enhance service delivery. In principle, Chinese government structure consists of a one-party authoritarian system. However, since the introduction of the Fiscal Responsibility System in 1984, and the introduction of Tax Sharing System a decade later, China has improved the fiscal contract arrangements between different levels of governments. Consequently, provincial and local governments exercise significant autonomy in implementing national policies. Through reforms in fiscal decentralisation, the Chinese local governments have stronger incentive to mobilise and compete actively with each other to attract foreign investment.

Again, China has always had a centralised merit-based governance structure. Evaluation for promotion through the local government system is largely based on economic performance and other competence-related indicators. According to Li and Zhou (2005) for cadres, the yardstick for political promotion is based on key economic indicators which are written in their contract. They include among others economic and fiscal revenue growth rates and the ability to regulate family planning. This is an incentive for local leaders to compete with each other for superior performance.

In Africa, political appointments and promotions in the local government are usually based on favoritism, cronyism, and nepotism. Take the case of Ghana as an example. On the composition of the District Assemblies (DAs) the 1992 Constitution anticipated that the quality of Assembly members might suffer. It was therefore decided to infuse persons with expertise and experience into the DA system through the appointment of 30 percent of the membership by the President. Contrary to the spirit of the constitution the appointments have become a matter of representation of the political party in power rather than of expertise and experience, such that the Government appointees in the DAs now look like a conclave of the district executive members of the ruling political party. Expertise and experience have been sacrificed.

Promoting Innovation and Decentralised Experimentation

Reforming a vast size and heterogeneous state is a challenging mission. Local circumstance, level of development, and culture usually differ from one region to the other. This makes it less viable to adopt a new national policy without testing its success in sampled jurisdictions. History has shown that policy experimentation is a potent means to facilitate institutional innovation and economic efficiency gains, and avoid reformist leaps in the dark by injecting bottom-up initiative and local knowledge into the national policy process. As Deng Xiaoping referred to it as “crossing the river by feeling the stones”, decentralized experimentation of policymaking was the ‘magic bullet’ of policy improvement and a key to China’s spectacular economic prosperity.

The Chinese government accepts the fact the country is too large, and conditions around the country too diverse, to allow adoption of ‘one size fits all’ policy. As a result, rather than adopting the ‘big bang approach’, the country progresses on experimentation and gradualism. To do this, sub-national governments are motivated to show initiative in adapting policy locally, and creating locally-useable policy solutions within the overall scope of central policy mandates. Upon successful outcome, such policies are applied to other parts of the country. The same approached is used in testing other government programmes.

However, in Africa, many public policies turn out to be ineffective as they fail to address public problems. The reasons for this are not only because on the continent policy-making has often taken on a purely political direction but because governments usually target the wrong problems and implement the wrong solution due to poor policy experimentation. At other times, certain policies are emulated wholesale from other jurisdictions without modification because they are efficient in those countries. But little do many policy-makers on the continent pause to acknowledge that local circumstance, history, and ideologies could hinder the success of a successful policy in another country or locality.

To progress local governments in Africa must not exist as implementers of central government policies. Rather, they should be strengthened, tasked and encouraged to be initiative and innovative.

The Commitment to Fight Corruption

Corruption is a major impediment to structural transformation and sustainable development. The level of tolerance for corruption has made the social canker metastasised to afflict every fabric of the African society. It has ravaged the entire African system, causing the continent to be the most corrupt in the world. From religion to politics rich people are selected ahead of persons with integrity. Rather than punishing corrupt politicians at the polls, voters seem to display relative indifference to the moral culpability of elected officials. As a result, virtually every African sees the least of the position occupied as an opportunity to accumulate wealth while the poor citizen continues to be burdened.

There is no African country without anti-corruption reform. However, on the continent, corruption is only fought with pronouncements. Enforcement of existing laws and policies, and political will and commitment to punish corrupt individuals are the major challenges. Consider the situation of Ghana. Beyond parliamentary oversight and the existence of the Auditor-General's Department there are other bodies including the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Economics and Organised Crime Office (EOCO), the Bureau of National Investigations (BNI) and others mandated to deal with corruption, the government under President Akuffo Addo assumes that the office of Independent Special Prosecutor are needed before the menace of corruption can be effectively fought in the country. This is where Africa must learn greater lessons from China.

The Chinese political system is short of accountability and transparency. However, recognising that corruption is a bane of national development it has embarked on rigorous effort to bring the menace under control. Through the National Bureau of Corruption Prevention (NBCP) established in 2007, the country pays more attention to prevention or at least limiting. Focusing on prevention rather than punishment, the NBCP inspects anticorruption work at various levels, closing loopholes in the current system and standardizing policies for anticorruption work. Beyond prevention in its anti-graft campaign and in a bid to restore public confidence in the Communist Party of CPC rule no one is immune, not even Communist Party leaders who once seemed untouchable. Bo Xilai, a former party secretary of Chongqing municipality, Xiaoyu, a former head of China's State Food and Drug Administration, Zhou Yongkong, the former national security chief, Wu Tianjun, former security chief of Henan and several others have received various forms of punishment including execution.

Today, many Chinese officials including party members choose to commit suicide before they are interrogated by the Communist Party's graft inspectors but in Africa, the incentive to engage in corrupt practices is high because such people get protection particularly when they are members of the ruling government. Resource mobilisation would remain like fetch water into a basket if strong anti-corruption strategies are not adopted in Africa.

Limiting Environmental Damage

Environmental protection is as important as economic development. While learning from China's transformation from one of the world's poorest nations to the world's second-largest economy, it must be recognised that not every aspect of Chinese policy has worked out well. African countries must also learn from the mistakes if not the dark side of China's growth. At present, Beijing is paying the fiddler for the rapid development of the economy. The quick rise of China has resulted in deep-seated inequality and social disparities among the people. Beyond the social cost, China's the rapid economic growth has created new environmental challenges for the country including water and air pollution.

Rapid industrialisation combined with inadequate regulations developed water pollution into a major problem in China.

Meanwhile, the non-degradable and toxic chemicals in the agricultural waste, sewage and solid waste have caused serious damage to soil and underground water resources. In fact, over half of all the rivers in China are polluted, about 40 percent of China's lakes and rivers have been seriously polluted, over 80 percent of the urban groundwater is polluted, and one out of four people in in the country lack access to safe drinking water (Ragheb, 2017). With regards to air pollution, a 2006 report by the World Bank indicates that 16 of the world's 20 most polluted cities are in China. But a direct consequence of air pollution in China is acid rain, which remains a serious problem for the country, cancers, chronic lung problems, and other diseases attributed to their thick air pollution. According to research by the World Bank, the

State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) and a team of international experts, the combined economic costs and human health impacts costs of outdoor air and water pollution for China's economy amounts to around US$100 billion a year, or about 5.8 percent of the country's GDP.

Currently, a common feature of resource-rich countries in Africa is that for years the benefits of their abundant resources have been to trickle down to ordinary people. Consider the situation in Zambia. The country is blessed with abundant deposits of copper, cobalt and other minerals. Its copper production is second only to DRC and the world's sixth largest copper producer in 2011. But according to the 2015 World Hunger Index, the country is the third hungriest nation in the world while mine waste containing sulfide minerals and emissions from mining industries are causing massive environmental pollution particularly in the Copperbelt region and Kabwe in the Central Province. At Kabwe, unregulated lead and zinc mining and smelting operations have made the city one of the 10 worst polluted places in the world. Ghana is also losing arable lands and water bodies to illegal mining. In fact, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) of Ghana has reported that the country faces a looming water crisis if mining activities are not well regulated. Again, Central Africa has the physical abundance of water yet more than half of the population does not have regular access to clean water; whereas much of Central, East, and West Africa are susceptible to economic water scarcity.

CONCLUSION

Countries enhance their engagements with others for various interests. While some are more glaring others are concealed. Clearly, Sino-Africa relation is destined to flourish not flounder. However, this relationship provides both challenges and opportunities to African countries. China is providing African population with investments, loans, and an alternative path to economic development than the one offered by Western institutions. But committed to building a more prosperous Chinese society, Beijing is aggressively employing African's dependency to gain access to the continent's natural resources essential for its growing economy; to gain access to new markets for its manufactured goods; and to enhance its sphere of influence to become a global superpower. The onus thus lies on Africans to ensure that the investments from China develop more linkages than that of preceding foreign investment from their traditional partners and what China is taking from the continent. China has set a successful pace to development which African countries like other developing countries need to embrace to propel their economic and social development. No matter how other countries see the Chinese political and economic system, it has been able to transform a poor country into a global power and enhanced the welfare of its citizens within a short time. China has shown that it is important for a country to liberalise its economy to attract foreign investments albeit; it must align inward FDI flows more closely with national priorities. As Beijing highly regulate foreign investments in sectors deemed important to the state despite being a member of WTO, African countries must learn to provide subsidies and restrictive policies to protect local enterprises against undue competitions.

To benefit meaningfully from the potentials provided by their comparative advantage, Africans must effectively participate in both regional and global value chains through more pragmatic approaches. Again, while implementing business and regulatory environment conducive to attract foreign investors in economic sectors where local competence is inadequate or lacking, they need to invest more in infrastructure including reliable energy; and to enhance agricultural productivity they must adopt green vegetation and improve land governance systems. Further, realizing that the amount of money flowing out of the continent heavily outweighs what it receives through foreign aids, resource-laden African countries in particular need to design policies that ensure that they own and benefit from their abundant resources. This calls for designing and implementing legal framework that ensures that fiscal regime for mineral resource extraction, mining, and processing generate sufficient revenue for the countries; and making the conscious choice to use resource advantages and windfalls to support socioeconomic development and diversification in manufacturing and technology sectors such that the mineral wealth does not just serve as source of revenue but be able to create broad-based development and ensure that future generations are not prevented from accessing the resources or their benefits. Where possible because of their exhaustibility and the inability of African countries to mobilise local resource to fully take ownership of exploration and extraction it is more imperative to preserve strategic minerals of importance for future development, enforce production quotas or caps, and limit the number of exploration licenses.

Moreover, there have always been concerns about the sustainability of foreign assistance. Thus, there is an urgent clarion call on African countries to manage and take advantage of the OFDI, and other development finance particularly the building of transport infrastructure to accelerate the pace regional economic integration. Equally, they must be mindful and take cognisance of the dark side of China's tremendous growth. Beijing is still paying a very high price for its success – environmental degradation, food safety issues, increased income disparities and corruption. Also while borrowing from China and other countries, African countries must simultaneously take into account of their own national and local circumstances and peculiarities in policy design and reform programmes while keeping in the view that problems entrenched in the system by virtue of the existence of legacies of the African traditions and colonisation could distort the intended outcomes of the lessons learned.

Ultimately, Africans must re-examine their political systems to re-shape politics on the continent. Political leadership should not be seen as a birthright. Neither should Africans continue to entertain the one-man rule by presidents and potentates under the self-gratifying belief that only they can hold the countries together or bring development to the people. Rather, they should be learning constantly from other systems to figure out what could be done to improve governance and to ensure that governors have the incentive to satisfy public demand and welfare. On their part, instead of employing constitutional amendments, electoral malpractices, and unleashing violence to preserve their grips on power even after many years of futile reign, African leaders should focus on finding ways of making themselves more relevant to national and continental development after serving their term of office.

Conflict of interest

Author has none to declare

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