

The Middle Kingdom's Dream: *Understanding and
Reframing China-Africa Relations*

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“Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.”

Arundhati Roy

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Introduction

This thesis is born out of my personal reflections on the way I was shaped by my environment. I grew up in a multitude of intersections between the East and the West, the Global North and the Global South. I was born in Los Angeles on the same day Hong Kong was returned to China after the 99-year lease under the British in 1997. I then moved to Hong Kong until 2007, and then to Beijing right before the 2008 Olympics until the end of high school. My parents as well as all of my extended family are Taiwanese, but were part of the community who fled the communists from mainland China. I say this to show that my personal identity, now more than ever, has always seemed to be enmeshed in the tendrils of international politics.

I used the Middle Kingdom in the title because it is a direct English translation of what China calls herself *zhongguo* 中国, and is an attempt to emphasize the agency that the Middle Kingdom has. Further, the Middle Kingdom is a term that aligns with the philosophies and traditions that China has that impacts China's current stances today. The term 'China' is used throughout this thesis because this thesis is written for a contemporary audience.

This thesis is about challenging the dominant narrative script of countries in the modern world, the script that I grew up in. I grew up with adoration for the United States of America as well as the West in general from afar, a common belief all over Asia and much of the world. A belief that America and the West is where people can live good lives, and with that, my life that I was given by my family was not good enough. The American Dream is heavily criticized in parts of the United States, but it is only the images of Hollywood, the sounds of rock and roll artists, or the missionary schools that are seen around the world. For me and for many others, it is only

after being in the United States of America, and living in it, do we begin to start seeing how this Dream fails so many, and is built on so much structural oppression.

At the same time, internationally the United States of America criticizes intervenes in many foreign countries in the name of their Dream, for it is the belief in the West that their way of life is the *objectively* good life. The media as well as my western education in Hong Kong and Beijing had subtle tones of the ‘China Threat Paradigm’ that further muddled my own understanding of the self. China (and the Global South) has always been the subject of study, of critique, of exotification. As Pan writes: “By envisioning a linear process of historical development with [the U.S] at its apex, the United States places other nations on a common evolutionary slope and sees them as inevitably traveling toward the end of history that is the United States.”¹ A ‘modern country’ is equal to the idea of a westernized city and any place that has not ‘caught up’ went from being ‘primitive’ in colonial times, to ‘under-developed’ in modern times. So I witnessed this rapid development in China, and saw the desperate anxiety, yearning and ambition to mimic Western development over a century in two decades.

In the post-Cold War context China’s rise to power was considered a threat by U.S international relations specialists. However, as Pan argues the “China threat” argument in mainstream U.S. international relations literature is derived, “primarily from a discursive construction of otherness.”² Due to the fact that the U.S cannot understand China in their terms, since China rose to economic power not through becoming a democratic country for example, and China does not neatly fit in their paradigm of evolution in countries China is automatically labeled as threatening. This reductionist representation comes at the expense of China being

¹ Pan, Chengxin. “The ‘China Threat’ in American Self-Imagination: The Discursive Construction of Other as Power Politics.” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, vol. 29, no. 3, 2004, pp. 305–331., doi:10.1177/030437540402900304.

² *ibid.*

understood as a multifaceted country. And more importantly it does not allow for an understanding of difference.

As I was learning and researching this topic I saw how quickly the media, think tanks and many academic circles were quick to judge and mislead people about this relationship. As Solange Chatelard, producer of the Al Jazeera film *King Cobra and the Dragon* writes:

“It appears that the aim of the game for commentators and newly proclaimed experts is to determine whether China is a coloniser, a competitor, or a collaborator, alternatively all three simultaneously, in its engagement on the African continent... As a result, readers are regularly served a concoction of unsubstantiated enquiries and misleading diagnoses which are often more effective in relaying national stereotypes than in casting innovative light on new and complex social phenomena.”³

It seemed that people were more interested in judgment than understanding: instead of asking questions about how the China-Africa relationship is *different* from what we have seen in global history, given that it is an unprecedented South-South relationship in terms of scale and financial backing, it seems that people are more concerned with seeing how China-Africa has in fact similar to Western history (i.e. colonization or imperialism) and thus is judged in that way. These tendencies reflect the Orientalist attitudes expressed by Edward Said:

³ Chatelard, Solange Guo. “When China Met Africa.” *When China Met Africa - Books & Ideas*, Books & Ideas, booksandideas.net/When-China-met-Africa.html.

“The Orient and Islam have a kind of extra-real, phenomenologically reduced status that puts them out of reach of everyone except the Western expert. From the beginning of Western speculation about the Orient, the one thing the orient could not do was to represent itself. Evidence of the Orient was credible only after it had passed through and been made firm by the refining fire of the Orientalist’s work.”⁴

As Said writes, “the one thing the orient could not do was to represent itself.”

Which is to say it seems that actions in the East can only be legitimate if it is explained through the Western lens, through the Western language and through ‘Western rationality.’ Thus China’s unique approach to global engagement is both mysterious and explained away by stating that it is in fact, simply an earlier stage in Western development (colonialism). Ironically, this has meant that China is criticized with the same critics the West has with its own history. However, this irony is often lost in the complicated layers of history and political desires because the history of China is not widely taken into account in the globalized and colonized modern. As Chatelard stated above, the continuous repetition of this narrative script mostly feeds into general national stereotypes without actual analysis of the relationship.

This thesis aims to challenge the dominant narrative script and present an alternative point of perception on the relationship and China’s role in the world today. I believe that there is a need to shift the dominant narrative for several reasons. First, it reinforces antagonisms between the East and the West, the Global North and the Global South, and more specifically the US and China. By a continual reinforcement the

⁴ p. 283, Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. W. Ross MacDonald School, Resource Services Library, 2006.

notions of politically harmonious relations, of cooperation and of mutual support between these countries is considered an impossibility on the political level. Second, these dominant perceptions actively shape the lives of people involved, and have caused many negative consequences on people's lives. In the West the news about China-Africa relations might not be as influential to day to day operations. But the soft power of the West is still the dominant narrative script in the world, and it continues to fragment the East and Global South and encourages antagonism towards each other. Finally, understanding this relationship with only the dominant script neglects the more complicated and interesting truth of the relationship is and more importantly *what it could be*. With any issue, there are multiple layers of truth embedded within it. This thesis acknowledges that the China-Africa relationship, and in general, China's global governance strategies has and will have many failures, mistakes and wrongs. It is not to prove that this relationship is in fact perfect, but rather to understand and reveal what China – or the Middle Kingdom -- in fact dreams of.

To tell the story of the Middle Kingdom's *dream* has the power of providing an alternative script. An alternative narrative has the power to change political relations by re-imagining and re-understanding how countries can relate to one another. This thesis is an interdisciplinary reflection born out of my specific experiences growing up in China, working with the Gates Foundation and Irene Sun, and academic readings in the field of Political Science, Peace and Conflict Studies, International Relations and my major Philosophy. The thesis is motivated not by an analysis of economic development or policies although this is heavily important to the thesis. It is both a reaction to the wider opinions about the China-Africa relationship presented as well as an effort to provide an

understanding of China's vision of the future, and, thus, her dreams. This thesis approaches the relationship from a much more philosophical perspective. It aims to understand and ask whether or not the China-Africa relationship not only represents a new economic and political relationship but also shows the beginnings of China's vision of a new global norm. If it is violence that characterizes colonialism and imperialism, the relationship that has in many ways established our current global world order, then what can China's global vision offer an alternative, or is it a repetition of the same kind of violence? I argue throughout this thesis that not only is it peaceful, its dreams are for harmony for the world and it is actively de-colonial.

At its core, this thesis aims at providing an understanding of the Middle Kingdom's unique cosmos; presenting a history and a culture that is different, and offering a Dream that stems from the Middle Kingdom.

Research Methods

The research for this thesis is rooted in literature from political science as well as post-colonial theory. There are a few works that particularly shape and guided the writing of this thesis such as the books: *Orientalism* by Edward Said, *The Next Factory of the World* by Irene Sun, *Revolution and China's Foreign Policy* by Peter Van Ness, *Dead Aid* by Dambisa Moyo and *The Dragon's Gift* by Deborah Brautigam. Said's work was used primarily as a text to guide how I wrote and thought about the comparison of the East and the West and gave me a way to understand why there are so many misconceptions about the China-Africa. Van Ness was used to understand and dive deeply into the unique history of China in the 50's, the politics of Third Worldism, to provide context for China's current relationship with the ex-Third World. Sun's

work as well as my experience working on the book with her was my way of accessing the different stories and personal lives of factory owners and workers in Africa. Moyo's work was primarily used to provide context for western aid, as well as provide statistical information about how China's aid model differs. And finally Brautigam's work was essential to the entirety of the thesis, as *The Dragon's Gift* also dispels current misconceptions on the relationship and provides a comprehensive dive into what the China-Africa relationship actually is. Coupled with these books are many academic writings by Aime Cesaire, Frantz Fanon, Francis Fukuyama, and more that provide evidence as well as are stepping stones for my arguments and analysis.

In this thesis I encountered many issues as it is limited in scope but touches on many regions on the world: the West (Western Europe and United States), China and the entire African continent. Examining the relationship between China and an entire continent with 56 countries, is difficult for it is hard to draw conclusions from specific examples countries or sectors. In many ways, this task is impossible for each country, and each sector, is undergoing a different experience within this relationship. Thus, one can understand the evidences used in this thesis as stories that elucidate a large pattern. Since this thesis is looking at the larger picture, and in a sense, trying to capture overarching trends rather than specific cases of economic/political developments, each piece of specific evidence is connected to a presentation of a larger pattern or trend. This is true too as I compare the Western approach and the Chinese approach.

Key Terms and Definitions

I understand colonization as an oppressor-oppressed relationship and in this thesis refer specifically to the history of western colonization. European powers took political control of African land and imposed cultural norms and an economic system that continued to deplete their

resources with mercantile policies. More than to describe the specific activities the colonizers did however, I also use the terms “colonial” or “colonizer” in a theoretical sense. As Frantz Fanon writes in *The Wretched of the Earth*, to colonize is to create a systematic negation of the other, a determination by the colonizer to constantly define themselves against those they colonize. A colonial regime is one that actively disregards the native population’s political and economic existence and actively attempts to assimilate the native population in a social environment to the colonial type.⁵ Fanon writes extensively about how the colonizer seeks to define the native population’s pre-colonial period and then paint it as barbaric in order to subordinate a people. As Chinua Achebe states in a TED talk Europeans characterize all of pre-colonial Africa as “one long-night savagery” with Europeans being the people who ‘brought light’ to the continent. At its core, colonialism is an intentional stripping of a people’s sense of self by actively providing an alternative narrative: that the colonized people are subordinate and inferior. This is the power of narrative.

As Aimé Césaire states in his essay *Discourse on Colonialization*: “Colonization equals Thingification.” The colonizer transforms social relations into that of their function; only the relations of domination and submission stand. There were economic advances, diseases cured, improved standards of living, but one cannot ignore the: “societies drained of their essence, cultures trampled underfoot, institutions undermined, lands confiscated, religions smashed, magnificent artistic creations destroyed, extraordinary *possibilities* wiped out.”⁶ Colonization then, is not simply the political and economic domination of one over another, but at its core is a

⁵ Fanon, Frantz, et al. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Kwela Books, 2017. p.182

⁶ Césaire, Aimé. “Discourse on Colonialism *.” *Postcolonial Criticism*, 2014, pp. 73–90., doi:10.4324/9781315843452-2. p.22

destruction of a way of life, and a people's identity: a constant devaluing of one culture, people, and land in favor of another.

Neo-colonialism is thus this mindset without necessarily the political, economic or cultural imposition. Most examples of neo-colonialism in this thesis will refer to economic structures that are imposed on an oppressed state that often lead (unintentionally) to its underdevelopment or deterioration. Neo-colonial policies would refer to the imposition of economic constraints or political pressures to conform to a Western norm. Most of these policies are economic policies; however, there is also an implicit continuation of the belittling and superiority underlying modern eras. Despite independence, policies still 'look down' at ex-colonial cultures and peoples, and this informs the way in which they are studied, written about, and interacted with. Imperialism is closely tied to the practices of neo-colonialism. Imperialism is discussed in the context of the U.S specifically in this thesis. The U.S is not a colonizer of other countries but a strong intervener. Often this will be discussed because China positions herself directly against U.S imperialism.

Finally, soft power is a term used to describe a country's ability to shape the preferences of others through appeal and attraction. In other words, the country's ability to shape the narrative associated with it. Usually this refers to media attraction and does not necessarily require the direct endorsement of the state. Hollywood for example is one of the ways where the US dominates soft power, since Hollywood films and images are popular internationally. Educational programs, and journalistic activities are all part of soft power. State-sponsored or not, soft-power describes the ways in which a country's perception (and a country's preferred narrative of the world) is disseminated and how it persuades and therefore shapes global perceptions.

Structure

The first chapter begins by outlining the way the China-Africa relationship is perceived by Western media, as colonial, neo-colonial or imperial, and pointing to the historic practices of colonization and neo-colonization by the West. The first chapter evokes doubt to the arguments made in Western media, and points at the contradictory and ironic criticisms that are founded. The problem with these stereotypes is that they are explained through the Western lens without room for understanding a different country, a different history, and a different culture. Without these frameworks of understanding difference, Western media outlets and scholars are stuck in repeating and enforcing the same stereotypes that is not only ironic, but actively hurts and influences people on the ground.

Chapter 2 explores the philosophy of governance and historical foreign policy stances that China held. It looks at the philosophical and cultural grounding of China's understanding of global governance, revealing a fundamentally different understanding of the role of governance. Then it explores the historical relationship of China and the African continent, and China's positioning as a radical communist revolutionary that wanted to fight for the oppressed nations of the world. Not only did the relationship commence at a time where China was still quite poor herself, China's position was as one that was definitively against U.S imperialism and the colonial powers of the West. The chapter ends by a cursory overview of their first infrastructure project in Tanzania, one that sets the tone for their relationship with the African continent until today.

Chapter 3 examines the current relationship with the African continent as well as China's larger ideological and global initiative: The Belt Road Initiative (BRI). With the historical framework in mind from Chapter 2, the lineage of ideals can be traced in the official Chinese

rhetoric as well as the practices that China is doing in the African continent today. Not only do we see how the anti-hegemonic principles of development still informs the way in which China engages with the continent we also can see how China's engagement on the global stage is an attempt to re-structure international relationships with their ideals of harmony and mutual cooperation.

Finally, Chapter 4 deepens the analysis by first showing how China's script is being disseminated, and what that official script has been and second what the cultural cooperation that China values can look like. China's media are directly linked to the government and they act as the mouthpiece of the government. Tracing the history of their unique soft power development in Africa and how they attempt to shape the views on China reflects their ideology: China wants, in essence for the African countries to recognize China's shared history and sense of solidarity as people. Although the West obviously has had many similar educational programs, as well as cultural programs to promote connection, the difference lies in the history and message. Thus, instead of criticisms and spectacular attention-grabbing headlines from the West, China's news media is full of optimistic and congratulatory messages that emphasize successes and friendly relations. China also uses education as a way to increase their soft power, by introducing more people to the Chinese language and culture through Confucius Institutes. They also establish friendly relations with universities across the continent, now with 54 different institutes. This echoes the US and many Western countries such as France who have many kinds of programs such as these all over the world.

This thesis concludes with a look at the artistic exchanges that are occurring both encouraged by the government as well as organically. In colonial times there was no real artistic exchange, rather the arts of the oppressed were stolen and looted. Today, the West still keeps

these looted items in its museums and showcases them as artifacts from the Orient or Africa. For a long time, oppressed countries were not understood to have culture, but only these strange and exotic items that were interesting to purchase and consider disinterestedly by the general Western public. There was little *exchange* because the power dynamics were so one-sided. Art, however, is where we can get the real stories from people that are separate from scripts that the media follow. Art is where we can find the multifaceted nuanced and truthful stories that can better give us a sense of what it means for the the African continent and China to be connecting. The very fact that so much artistic exchange is both encouraged and occurring because of China's commitment to creating community shows how markedly different this international relationship is from colonial-imperialist ones. The reason that China's stance can be understood as actively de-colonial is because of how the history specifically shapes the cultural and people-to-people exchange. It is the respect for different cultures that has been missing in the colonial world, and China dreams of this kind of multi-culturalism where economic and political policies and structures are simply a means to the end of a "Community of Common Destiny."

Chapter 1: Western Media's Dominant Narrative Regarding China-African Relations

“The largest hurdles to meaningful research on China-Africa relations are the distortions and exaggerations that infiltrate the media and the perpetuation of stereotypes.” – Ruth Simbao

The relationship between China and the continent Africa has received much attention: from lengthy academic articles, to radio shows, to documentaries, to news headlines, to whole organizations erected to study the relationship. Yet, the perception of the relationship, especially in the West, is riddled with anxiety about their own place in the world, and a fear of a culture and people that are not understood. As the US and China continue to engage in increasing tariff wars and as China has become one of the main targets of the Trump administration's rhetoric and policy we see China balances on a contradiction: on one hand it is at the precipice of the 'developing world,' on another, it is a highly developed country threatening to change the global stage. The China-African relationship is portrayed with the same amount of anxiety and confusion, and the question that appears time and time again is whether or not this a new type of colonialism or imperialism. The word colonialism or imperialism in regards to the China-African relationship has appeared in publications *The New Yorker*, *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *Forbes*, *Washington Post*, and countless academic articles. Regardless of what the conclusions of these articles are, the association has been made clear: China, the West's threat, is a threat to the world.

The rudimentary facts of the China-African relationship are astounding: within the span of 20 years, China surpassed the US as the continent's largest trade partner in 2009. Just nine years after, in the 2018 Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) China announced that it

would invest \$60 billion dollars in financial support for African development. For many academics and politicians this seems too good to be true. The question of just *why* China would do so, is where the claims of colonialism and imperialism come in. The claim that China is doing investing simply because they believe the “win-win partnership” for both China as well as African countries is met with skepticism, and much anxiety from the West.⁷ With decades and decades of foreign aid from the West, neo-liberal policies inspired by the Washington Consensus in the name of humanitarianism, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) focused on lifting the African continent out of poverty and whatever hot topic disease was at the time, how is it possible that China – who now has become a global powerhouse—wants to become a trade partner with what was the West’s outlet of guilt and shame? In this section I will explore first how China has been perceived and what evidence has been used for the neo-colonialist/imperialist argument whilst raising doubts about these claims. Then I will offer a hypothesis as to why this perception holds a place in the dominant narrative and the convoluted problem of the West’s strong soft power.

China’s Motivation as Portrayed by the West

In 2014, the then secretary of state Hilary Clinton visited Lusaka, Zambia and warned against the “new colonialism” as China expands their ties with the region. “We saw that during colonial times it is easy to come in, take out natural resources, pay off leaders and leave,” she said. She advocated, in contrast, for the approach of the US’s pointing at the US’ s efforts to

⁷ Larmer, Brook. “Is China the World's New Colonial Power?” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 2 May 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/05/02/magazine/is-china-the-worlds-new-colonial-power.html?action=click&module=RelatedCoverage&pgtype=Article@ion=Footer.

improve political and economic governance as a different approach to African growth.”⁸ She stated that although African states can learn from Asia on how governments can help support economic growth, Beijing was not a good political role model. “There are more lessons to learn from the United States and democracies,” she stated.⁹ Clinton’s warning shows the simplistic view that so many have, that democracy embodies “good governance” and that China is bad governance. Many posit that because China has gained monetarily so rapidly now they need to expand outwards the same way Europeans did. Professor of Economics in New York University Mourdoukoutas states quite straightforwardly: “The reason Chinese corporations are in Africa is simple; to exploit the people and take their resources. It’s the same thing European colonists did during mercantile times except worse. The Chinese corporations are trying to turn Africa into another Chinese continent.”¹⁰ Mourdoukoutas is an academic amongst many who believe that China’s booming investments, millions of Chinese migrants in the continent, as well as cultural ties come with the same motives Europeans had in the 19th century: conquest and exploitation. So in this way even China as a colonizer is painted in light of China as ‘behind’ the West.

China, as the current “them” that the US faces, is now painted in every way possible as a threat to the world. Trump’s administration released a New Africa Strategy in December 2018 where it is clear that the US’s primary concern is to ensure that they are properly competing with China in the African continent.¹¹ The strategy paints “a picture of China as a “predatory nation”

⁸ Quinn, Andrew. “Clinton Warns against ‘New Colonialism’ in Africa.” *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 11 June 2011, www.reuters.com/article/us-clinton-africa/clinton-warns-against-new-colonialism-in-africa-idUSTRE75A0RI20110611.

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ Mourdoukoutas, Panos. “What Is China Doing In Africa?” *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 6 Aug. 2018, www.forbes.com/sites/panosmourdoukoutas/2018/08/04/china-is-treating-africa-the-same-way-european-colonists-did/#140e96f3298b.

¹¹ Paquette, Danielle. “Trump Administration Unveils Its New Africa Strategy - with Wins and Snags.” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 19 June 2019, www.washingtonpost.com/world/trump-administration-unveils-its-new-africa-strategy--with-wins-and-snags/2019/06/19/c751be4c-91f5-11e9-956a-88c291ab5c38_story.html.

that uses “bribes...[and] opaque agreements”. It claims that China’s “investment ventures are riddled with corruption, and do not meet the same environmental or ethical standards as U.S. developmental programs.” The U.S National Security Advisor John R Bolton states: “In short, the predatory practices pursued by China and Russia stunt economic growth in Africa; threaten the financial independence of African nations; inhibit opportunities for U.S. investment; interfere with U.S. military operations; and post a significant threat to U.S. national security interests.”¹² To the U.S. because China is a threat to *them*, the African continent becomes a matter of importance – thus the main concern is not the development of African countries, but how to compete with China.

The issue with these sweeping geopolitical statements in the U.S rhetoric is that it whittles the issue down to being “for” or “against” China and by extension “for” or “against” the U.S. This leaves little room for understanding and learning about the actualities of the relationship and of potential collaboration. Furthermore, Western media is pervasive in the African continent, and these skeptical anxieties have led to the propagation of stereotypes impacting the relationship between Chinese and African peoples on the ground. As Garth le Pere writes, “the phobia and threat perception about China in Africa are largely products of Western-inspired hypocrisy and arrogance, which are increasingly finding echoes among Africans themselves.” It is Western soft-power that has the grips on most media attention around the world. According to Zhao Shulan a scholar who did an eight-month study on Zambia’s media, “Zambia’s international news is almost entirely reprinted from BBC or CNN and other Western

¹² Bolton, John R. “Remarks by National Security Advisor Ambassador John R. Bolton on the The Trump Administration’s New Africa Strategy.” *The White House*, The United States Government, 13 Dec. 2018, www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-national-security-advisor-ambassador-john-r-bolton-trump-administrations-new-africa-strategy/.

major media” and thus the elite class “is completely under western countries’ control from economic development to knowledge about the outside world” resulting in a bias imported from the West in Zambia.¹³ Often Westerners forget that their criticisms, often exaggerated or factually incorrect, have real consequences on people’s lives abroad.

The Council of Foreign Relations (CFR) begin their backgrounder on the issue: “Over the past few decades, China’s rapid economic growth and expanding middle class have fueled an unprecedented need for resources.”¹⁴ The narrative is one-sided and all of China’s actions are painted as for controlling either land or obtaining natural resources.¹⁵ CFR continues the article alluding to the one-sidedness of this relationship: “Economic ties between China and the African continent have deepened as China’s economy has thrived.”¹⁶ This sentence implies a correlation between the relationship directly with China’s personal wealth. Again emphasizing the notion that China’s *wins* are always at the *cost* of the African continent. This mindset that the relationship is a zero-sum game denies China to be considered more truthfully, and with more complexity.

China has stated that they are aiming for a “win-win partnership” a relationship that can benefit both the African continent and the Chinese country. They have attempted to build this trust in a multitude of ways, the most obvious being the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). Right now the Forum On China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) has 53 out of the 56

¹³ p.203, “Media, Education, and Cultural Relations and Ties with Chinese Communities in Africa.” *China and Africa: a Century of Engagement*, by David Hamilton Shinn and Joshua Eisenman, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.

¹⁴ Albert, Eleanor. “China in Africa.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-africa.

¹⁵ Alessi, Christopher, and Beina Xu. “Council on Foreign Relations, ‘CFR Backgrounders: China in Africa,” April 27, 2015.” *USC Annenberg*, 27 Apr. 2015, china.usc.edu/council-foreign-relations-cfr-backgrounders-china-africa-april-27-2015.

¹⁶ Albert, *ibid*.

African countries involved. It is a conference for discussion and evaluations of the official relationship between China and African countries. The logo [Fig. 1], is composed of a red ‘c’ on the left and the whole image together forming an ‘a.’



FOCAC Logo

The green stands for peace and development while the red symbolizes vitality and prosperity. Their objectives are listed as such “equal consultation, enhancing understanding, expanding consensus, strengthening friendship and promoting cooperation.”¹⁷ This forum has been in the works since 2000 and serious official relations began in the 50s which will be discussed in a later section.

Even if one were to be skeptical of official language, it is plain that many African governments have begun to trust China. The African Union asked China to build their headquarters and China donated \$200 million and construction lasted from 2009-2012 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This construction includes both traditional African art and modern pan-African symbolism with a main tower that is in reference to the Sirte Declaration adopted by the African Union when they were founded in 1999. The attention to the art showing the respect paid the culture, as well as the fact that this is a gift that can serve the African Union should at least ask critics to reconsider the suggestion that China is in African simply to “take resources.” If that is so, why place so much emphasis on tending to relationships?

¹⁷ “About FOCAC.” *FOCAC Mechanisms*, www.focac.org/eng/ltjj_3/ltjz/.

It is important to note that Western media has attempted to deface any indication of positive political relations as well. In January 2018 allegations that China has been spying on the African Union by bugging the Headquarters came out in *Le Monde*, a French newspaper. The article in *Le Monde* was published on the eve of the summit held in the AU and was a clear attempt to incite doubt about China-Africa relations. Despite denials from top African officials, including the head of the African Union Commission Moussa Faki Mahamat, and Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn¹⁸ claiming “I don’t believe it” Western media continue to judge both Africans and the Chinese. The CFR wrote a blog that states: “African states have failed to deal with China in response to the bugging in a manner that bolsters their autonomy”¹⁹ despite the fact that in the same article they understand that the bugging itself is an unconfirmed fact and are simply allegations. Again, instead of understanding or listening to both China and African statements, the Western media continues to circulate unconfirmed information to continue promoting a stereotypical picture of China as a coercive power. They also humiliate Africans by implying that they are simply being manipulated and do not know what is best for themselves and shame China for resembling too much like their past selves.

Below are overviews on the main arguments of the dominant script, followed by an as well as a historical overview of Western colonialism and neo-colonialism in relation to development.

¹⁸ “AU Spying Report Absurd: China.” *ENCA*, 29 Jan. 2018, www.enca.com/africa/au-spying-report-absurd-china.

¹⁹Fidler, Mailyn. “African Union Bugged by China: Cyber Espionage as Evidence of Strategic Shifts.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, 7 Mar. 2018, www.cfr.org/blog/african-union-bugged-china-cyber-espionage-evidence-strategic-shifts.

Western Paranoia: China's "Debt-Trap Policy and Exploitation of Natural Resources"

The most popular critique from the Western media is that China is engaging African countries in a debt-trap policy. It is true that there are many exports to China that are raw materials such as mineral fuels, lubricants, and related materials, it also exports iron ore, metals and other commodities as well as small amounts of food and agricultural products. The imports from China range from machinery, transportation, communications equipment as well as manufactured goods. China, the critics posit, is on the hunt for oil to fuel their growing population and market and is thus only interested in Africa to fuel such. Although China relies mostly on coal energy, it is also the second importer of oil worldwide. Angola is an example where China is receiving a raw commodity in return for their investments in infrastructure.²⁰ Angola's economy is largely based on its crude oil and was China's third largest source of oil in 2016, and has now moved paying its debts to China with this commodity.²¹ This example been used to make the argument that China is creating a "commodity debt-trap" by offering to lend and build much-needed infrastructure in countries and having these nations accrue large amounts of debt which allows them "to set the terms of future engagement, whether that's determining the mode of repayment or demanding rights to use the infrastructure."²²

Angola is Africa's second-largest oil producer, and since diplomatic ties with China have been established since 1983 China has invested and loaned \$60 billion dollars: "Every Angolan owes \$754 to China," a local newspaper *Expansão* posts on their front page.²³ At the end of

²⁰ Albert, Eleanor. "China in Africa." *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-africa.

²¹ Pandey, Erica. "China's Debt-Trap Diplomacy Is Spreading across Africa." *Axios*, 14 May 2018, www.axios.com/china-debt-africa-djibouti-kenya-angola-belt-and-road-initiative-c65b82fa-48a6-4140-bb01-bc19580a16c9.html.

²² *ibid.*

²³ "Opinião: Angola's Debt to China ." *Expansão*, 2018, expansao.co.ao/opinioao.

2017, Angola's debt to China was \$21.5 billion – about half its external debt.²⁴ This idea of owing is painted as terrifying and implying future dependency. But the fact is, these are investments directly towards African development right now and are visible all across the continent. Much of the language of debt is inherited from the IMF and WB. Thus the debt-trap policy theory is entrenched in the idea of Western debt, which is often characterized by higher interests, and associated with years of stagnant development. Since China is directly investing in the development infrastructure this is markedly different from the usual understanding of debt.

There is no evidence that China would “demand rights to use the infrastructure” nor do they have any plans to gain political sway. The fact that this is a trade, monetary or infrastructural investment for a commodity, seems to be missed. Even if this is not an equal trade, although this is hard to assess, it does not seem fair to dismiss all trades as ‘traps’ based on what is simply skepticism of the large amount of money flowing into Africa from China.

Western Paranoia: China's “Military Expansion”

China has not sought out administrative control nor have any practical reasons to seek this. They have begun to assume a larger global security role as they have begun to become more involved in international affairs; which critics use as an argument to state that it is akin to the beginning of colonial control.

In 2017, China built its first military base overseas in Djibouti. This base is expected to project China's power in the Horn of Africa and the Indian Ocean. This move has quickly shocked the Western powers because it is a move they have never seen before by China. It is

²⁴ Chazan, Yigal. “Angola's Debt Reliance on China May Leave It Short-Changed.” *Subscribe to Read | Financial Times*, Financial Times, 13 June 2018, www.ft.com/content/fb9f8528-6f03-11e8-92d3-6c13e5c92914.

important to note that journalists often neglect to mention Djibouti's *Camp Lemmonier* a United States Naval Expeditionary Base, the United States' only permanent military base in Africa. Furthermore, Djibouti has also been home to French forces since the 19th century. Italian, German, and the Spanish have also been active in the country as well.²⁵ John R Bolton complained about the military base because of how close it is to *Camp Lemmonier* who is fighting "violent terrorists organizations in East Africa."²⁶ Instead of concern for Djiboutians it is a concern for the U.S's own base. This anxiety is again simply an anxiety about China in general.

Similar to other African nations, China's economic footprint in Djibouti is "outsized and unmatched."²⁷ In the past few years China lent Djibouti around \$1.4 billion dollars, which is more than 75 percent of their GDP. The number of Chinese infrastructure projects in Djibouti is again astonishing and unprecedented in scale and size. Such as the Ethiopian-Djiboutian electric railway that was completed in 2017, which was a \$4-billion-dollar project financed by Chinese banks and executed by Chinese construction companies. Or, the water pipeline system that will transport drinkable water from Ethiopia to Djibouti which cost around \$300 million dollars to the Export-Import Bank of China. As Economy states: "the amount of money poured into these projects is all the more astounding considering that Djibouti is a country with less than one million people, a GDP below \$1.8 billion, and almost no natural resources." At the end of 2016 China owned 82% of Djibouti's foreign debt.²⁸ To Bolton, this seems like evidence that China will soon want to take control of Djibouti's port.

²⁵ Economy, Elizabeth. "China's Strategy in Djibouti: Mixing Commercial and Military Interests." *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, 13 Apr. 2018, www.cfr.org/blog/chinas-strategy-djibouti-mixing-commercial-and-military-interests.

²⁶ Bolton, John R. "Remarks by National Security Advisor Ambassador John R. Bolton on the The Trump Administration's New Africa Strategy." *The White House*, The United States Government, 13 Dec. 2018, www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-national-security-advisor-ambassador-john-r-bolton-trump-administrations-new-africa-strategy/.

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ *ibid.*

Opponents to China have made the claim that this relationship is a dependency reflective of the colonial era of more a subtle kind. As Brahma Chellaney, an analyst who works with the Center for Policy Research, a think tank in New Delhi says, “John Adams said infamously that a way to subjugate a country is through either the sword or debt. China has chosen the latter.”²⁹ An opposition leader in Djibouti Dahmar Amad Farah states: “It’s a relationship with the regime, not the country” hinting at the administrative corruption in both African leaders and Chinese administration. Scholars point that sovereignty has the potential to be threatened because of these asymmetries present in the trade.

China as a security threat is an interesting argument because it posits that China is going to try and gain sovereignty through the debt that it acquires. Not only is this unrealistic, it neglects to see how China is first and foremost developing necessary infrastructure for Djibouti. As of now there is no real evidence for China making this kind of move. It seems that in the West every instance of power is an instance of violence, but this is not necessarily the case for China. These conjectures reveal a blindness to China’s ideological motivations which we will explore in later chapters as well as hypothesis that is taken as fact impacting policy decisions.

Western Paranoia: China’s “Population Takeover”

The numbers associated with the economic investment often overshadows another statistic that is equally interesting: the number of Chinese immigrating to the African continent. As discussed in the introduction, one of the defining features of colonialism is the settlement of foreign populations. An estimated number of one million Chinese people are now in the African

²⁹ Abi-habib, Maria. “How China Got Sri Lanka to Cough Up a Port.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 25 June 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/06/25/world/asia/china-sri-lanka-port.html.

continent and the numbers have increased exponentially over the past six to eight years.³⁰

Numbers are difficult to confirm because many are temporary workers on three to five year contracts by both state-owned enterprises or private Chinese companies. There is also a growing population of people choosing to start their own businesses in Africa. The colonialist charge is that the Chinese have less space and increased competition in China and thus need a new land to relocate its population. Journalists frame this as an intentional effort to dominate the continent without sending soldiers.

However, these immigration stories are more signs of globalization and economic development than they are of intentional colonial expansion. French's book *The Second Continent* depicts some of the lives of these immigrants, and one of his characters Hao's story is one of a failed businessman looking for a venture to succeed. His business in China lost money, his business attempt in Dubai had gone badly and thus he moved to Africa to buy land and hopefully develop a better future.³¹ In the last 30 years China has seen probably one of the largest rural to urban migrations at around 140 million people and a projected rise. Thus, it is true that competition in Chinese cities are increasingly rising, and emigration has rose along with it. However, it is imperative to note that unlike the European powers, the Chinese immigrants are not enjoying the same rights as citizens and are not settling with administrative control but rather are workers and businessmen. The most radical difference between the Chinese and the foreigners from colonial powers of the past is that the Chinese do not employ slaves, and segregate themselves in bourgeoisie quarters, although Chinese people are known to stick to themselves because of language barriers and cultural familiarity. Rather, the Chinese that do

³⁰ Park, Yoon Jung. "One Million Chinese in Africa." *SAIS Perspectives*, SAIS Perspectives, 12 May 2016, www.saisperspectives.com/2016issue/2016/5/12/n947s9csa0ik6kmkm0bzb0hy584sfo.

³¹ French, Howard W. *China's Second Continent: How a Million Migrants Are Building a New Empire in Africa*. Vintage Books, a Division of Random House LLC, 2015.

migrate to Africa are often lower to middle class people, looking to improve their lives, just like everyone else.³² This is an example of globalization more closely aligned with China's history of development. Emigration of the Chinese have increased to all continents of the world and is rather part of the aftermath of large economic growth than a systematic means of conquest.

Western Paranoia: China's "Stealing of Land and Food"

There is a growing fear that China is buying up the land in Africa to grow food to feed the Chinese people and that the Chinese are sending their own people to farm as well. This is because China is a large, densely populated country where food security could be considered a concern. China has around 9% of the world's arable land with around 22% of the world's population. Africa on the other hand is not a densely populated continent with much arable land that is not intensively used. Critics see these statistics and immediately think that the direct correlation is present, and in fact these fears have spread to high level officials. In 2011 for example, Chancellor Angela Merkel's top advisor Günter Nooke told Merkel that Somalia's famine was due to China's purchasing of land in East Africa for industrial farming.³³ Accredited media outlets as well as think tanks suggested that the Chinese have purchased an alarming 6 million hectares of land, equating to around 1 percent of African arable land. As Deborah Bräutigam the former director of the China Africa Research Initiative and a leading expert who recently published a book called *Will Africa Feed China?* writes, not only is simply untrue, for after research she has found that the total amount of land acquired by Chinese investors equaled to 240,000 hectares (4 percent of what was allegedly stated), most of the stories she found

³² Sun, Irene Yuan. *The next Factory of the World: How Chinese Investment Is Reshaping Africa*. Harvard Business Review Press, 2017.

³³ Downie, Edmund. "German Official Blames China for Somalia's Famine." *Foreign Policy*, Foreign Policy, 29 July 2011, foreignpolicy.com/2011/07/29/german-official-blames-china-for-somalias-famine/.

echoed that of globalization rather than colonization.

The Chinese who are going to Africa are looking for business opportunities. There has been much attention to the idea of Africa rising and companies from all over the world have begun investing in Africa for oil, mining, resources. When it comes to agriculture they have been going since the early 1990s. The early investments for example are in Zambia who produce for local markets, everything from chicken eggs, to wheat, to maize is produced for markets in Lusaka. Brautigam, in her research talked to a Chinese farmer in Zambia and when she asked him whether or not they are planning to export food to China he responded that “Zambia is a landlocked country, if we were to export to China we will be losing money.”³⁴ Much of the considerations are thus pragmatic, Chinese people are in Africa the same way Chinese people are in many other continents of the world, looking for a better life for themselves. To put it in context, Africa is by and large a food deficit continent. They import around 10 million tons of rice each year. It does not follow that China would go to Africa to produce rice, because the continent is already importing their rice from Asia.

Again, statistics and facts are being warped in almost a myth-making fashion. As Deborah Brautigam states in an interview, many headlines often circulate information that are from events that do not happen. This is because the process of investment and discussing projects are long and projects that are being discussed are exciting but often peters out due to practical reasons. However, the headlines only capture the initial excitement, which often includes a huge monetary sum investment. Deborah Brautigam researched 60 cases to find that most of these

³⁴ Brautigam, Deborah. “Deborah Brautigam Discusses Her Book ‘Will Africa Feed China?’” *US*, 23 Mar. 2016, china.usc.edu/deborah-brautigam-discusses-her-book-will-africa-feed-china.

headlines represent investments that did not happen, yet the media continues to circulate and continue to promote a stereotype to fit the Western view of China. The truth is, China is most interested now in subcontract-farming, which does not involve the acquisition of land. Africans do the production and China provides training and better seeds to increase their production and yield and then they buy the product. We see this in the tobacco sector and the sesame seeds. African farms and farmers are already producing these products and are simply gaining training and support as well as new customers from China.

Western Paranoia: China's "Human Rights, Environmental Standards and Overall Bad Governance"

Finally, there is the argument that China does not promote good governance because of their non-interventionist policy. "Good governance," the same notion that Clinton referred to in 2011, is basically the promotion of Western democratic ideals. The critics state that China is allowing African governments who violate international standards human rights to go unchecked and corruption is leading to a new class of elites in the African continent. According to one news article, "China is easier to do business with because it doesn't care about human rights in Africa – just as it doesn't care about them in its own country."³⁵

An example that is often used is Zambia's Collum mine. Zambia has one of the most substantial Chinese populations with at least eighty thousand Chinese people in a country of fourteen million. In 2005 at least fifty Zambians were burned to death in a Chinese owned

³⁵ Malone, Andrew. "How China's Taking over Africa, and Why the West Should Be VERY Worried." *Daily Mail Online*, Associated Newspapers, 18 July 2008, www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1036105/How-Chinas-taking-Africa-West-VERY-worried.html.

copper mine.³⁶ In 2012 protests against the Chinese coal mine Collum led to the death of two Chinese factory owners. This coal mine has been cited as unsafe and hazardous. Miners also were frustrated by the annual wage raise of just a single *Zambian kwacha* (equivalent to around twenty cents).³⁷ Collum coal mine is the only extracting and processing coal in Zambia, and since its opening had clashes with the government. The *Zambian Environmental Management Agency* issued several citations due to air and water pollution. The mine owners paid the fines but never invested in more environmentally friendly equipment. It was during this time that Zambia's former president Michael Sata won his elections in part based on anti-Chinese rhetoric, reflecting the frustrated sentiment of the *Zambian* public then. The Collum coal mine closed down after the continuous riots and violence.

This case represented in the media often do not linger on the fact that the two Chinese factory owners were murdered and that many of those who died in the mines were also Chinese. The poor working standards are not generally *due* to the Chinese, but due to the fact that most mines are re-opened from colonial eras, and many of them are hazardous because of how old they are and also of how they were designed previously. These conditions are harsh and are harsh for the Chinese as well who are trying to do business there.

The general stereotype enforced is that the Chinese do not have any standards for human rights or the environment, and only have money in mind. This stereotype, is what Clinton referred to in 2014 and is largely resonant today with the justifiable criticisms by the West and

³⁶ Okeowo, Alexis. "China in Africa: The New Imperialists?" *The New Yorker*, The New Yorker, 18 June 2017, www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/china-in-africa-the-new-imperialists.

³⁷ Okeowo, Alexis. "China in Africa: The New Imperialists?" *The New Yorker*, The New Yorker, 18 June 2017, www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/china-in-africa-the-new-imperialists.

especially the US on the Muslim Uyghirs and Hong Kong. This stereotype blocks reporters and scholars to investigate the wide range of Chinese people engaging with businesses in Africa. It is also an unfair judgment to claim that a country does not care about its people in the same way that the Western powers do and therefore is ‘bad’. Of course there are some people whose top priority is money, but that is true in every country and especially true for Western states. To state that the Chinese do not understand environmental standards would also to ignore the fact that China has been the highest investor in renewable technology for the last decade. To compare, China committed around 758 billion US dollars between 2010-2019 while in second the US committed 356 billion US dollars.³⁸

In short the West wants to blame the Chinese for the same mistakes that it has made. However, it is unfair to assume that China is making the same mistakes, because China has a very different history, and therefore has a very different starting point and method of development. What I am arguing in this thesis is that they not only have different mistakes, but have a different end-goal entirely.

Western History: Colonialism and (Under)Development

In many ways, all of these fears are reflective of the West’s fear and acknowledgement of their own history. Colonialism by Western European powers was disempowering and dehumanizing, especially for the African continent and China. As Aime Cesaire wrote in *Discourse on Colonialism*, “Colonization equals Thingafication,” as in a process of turning subjugated peoples into objects. It is a process of not only claiming sovereignty of foreign lands,

³⁸ Mead, Leila. “Renewable Energy Investment to Surpass USD 2.5 Trillion for 2010-2019, UNEP Report Finds: News: SDG Knowledge Hub: IISD.” *SDG Knowledge Hub*, sdg.iisd.org/news/renewable-energy-investment-to-surpass-usd-2-5-trillion-for-2010-2019-unep-report-finds/.

looting precious items, it is an *erasure* of other ways of life.³⁹ To provide some context I will first briefly outline the priorities and methods in how colonial powers developed their colonies in Africa by focusing on the railway development in East Africa.

In the 1880s Germany entered east Africa, and by 1891 declared the region a part of German East Africa (GEA) which is modern day Tanzania. Their rule ended after World War I when the British captured the holdings. During the German period, as with most colonizers in Africa, Germans considered how to develop their colonies. The building of transportation and infrastructure was a part of colonial history especially when colonial businesses were expanding in the African region for they needed a way to export the goods. Thus Germans considered three potential railroads to promote German colonial development. As Monson argues in her book on the construction of this railway, the projects of development constantly pit settlers against the local African peoples. The Germans built two railway lines, one in the north and one in the center of the region, both of which connected German traders and businesses. They had many debates about extending the central line into the South which was never built. The southern line most distinctly pitted local African farmers against German settler farmers because settlers lived in the highlands and local farmers lived further south.⁴⁰ The priority in the building of these railway lines are for the benefit of the German settlers, and often this led to major complications for local African peoples.

During the British rule starting in 1920 they imagined a new railway system which they

³⁹ Cesairé, Aimé. "From Discourse on Colonialism *." *Postcolonial Criticism*, 2014, pp. 73–90., doi:10.4324/9781315843452-2.

⁴⁰ p. 18 Monson, Jamie. *Africa's Freedom Railway: How a Chinese Development Project Changed Lives and Livelihoods in Tanzania*. Indiana University Press, 2009.

called the “Imperial Link.” Debates and journals ensued in front of the Tanganyika Railway Commission (the name for Tanzania during the colonial era). Again the priorities and the discussions did not include any local African governing voices. The main problem faced for the “Imperial Link” is the question of how to connect the European settlers who lived across the region as well as how to ensure natural resources and produce are properly connected to ports. Those involved in the conversation about the development were British engineers, scholars, businessmen and governing officials as well as representatives from different settler communities. The actual construction of the railway systems were built with British engineers and explorers, as well as troops of African slaves.⁴¹

After independence in Tanganyika in 1961 and Zambia in 1964, the infrastructure left behind became complex problems for the Zambian and Tanzanian people because of how fragmented it left the countries. Newly independent countries revisited the original plans proposed by the German and British for a Southern rail in Tanzania. A link between Tanzania’s Eastern-most city, Dar es Salaam to Zambia the neighboring land-locked country would be both “materially and symbolically liberating, because it would end the division of Africa into competing spheres of influence.”⁴² The President of Zambia then, Kenneth Kaunda exclaimed, “Every time there is a communication network between African countries, that is a step nearer the end of our continent’s balkanization on which imperialism has fattened itself.”⁴³ Kaunda proposed the TAZARA railway project which would connect Tanzania’s eastern most city to Zambia.

⁴¹ Brigadier E.M Jack, *Railway Development in the Tanganyika region*

⁴² p. 21 Monson, Jamie. *Africa's Freedom Railway: How a Chinese Development Project Changed Lives and Livelihoods in Tanzania*. Indiana University Press, 2009.

⁴³ “Uhuru Railway Opens Today,” *Tanzania Daily News*, 23 October 1975

For Zambia, a landlocked country, the need to end this “balkanization” was especially important. They were dependent on Southern Rhodesia (modern day Zimbabwe) because of the colonial development of their railways. Zambia’s railways were developed as an integral facet of a larger network driven primarily by British South African mining interests between 1890 and 1909. The British South Africa Company had a monopoly over both mineral and railway concessions at the time, and Zambia’s railway development reflected interest mining revenues. Thus, when the British took over the Rhodesias after 1923 all of the railway systems, including that in Zambia, was consolidated under the management of a larger company: Rhodesia Railways. It operated all the railway lines in Southern Rhodesia as well as Zambia and actively discouraged the development of alternative routes for other trade, namely the copper trade in Zambia. Due to the constitutional arrangement of the British company Rhodesia Railways, it placed limits on Zambia’s ability to create railway projects without paying a penalty to Rhodesia Railways.

According to a legal memorandum in 1965, “Zambia’s free participation as a partner in TAZARA would have required an amendment to the constitution of the Higher Authority of Rhodesia Railways.”⁴⁴ In 1965, the diplomats from the British government responded that they did not “view favorably” the link between the two countries. The problem eventually was resolved in 1966 when the Maxwell Stamp report, a leading economic consulting agency from London, concluded that a “Tanzania-Zambia railway would not in fact divert revenue from the Rhodesian line.”⁴⁵ Again, showcasing how the West still constrained the newly independent

⁴⁴ p. 22 Monson, Jamie. *Africa's Freedom Railway: How a Chinese Development Project Changed Lives and Livelihoods in Tanzania*. Indiana University Press, 2009.

⁴⁵ Minutes of Meeting of Zambian Ministers with the Rt. Hon. Mrs. Barbara Castle, British Minister of Overseas Development, 25 April 1965, NAZ MFA 1/41/16. Ngila Mwase, “The Tanzania-Zambia Railway: The Chinese Loan and the Pre-Investment Analysis Revisited,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 21, no. 3 (1983): 537.

states, as well as prioritized their own economic ventures more than the actual development of Africa.

Thus, it is evident that during the colonial era, the main priorities are for the economy and livelihoods of the European settler communities and European businesses. Little regard was paid to the Zambian populations, and the few who did debate for Zambian farmers were also European voices. The exclusion of African populations in the conversation on railways as well as the development priorities for European powers is what characterizes the colonial era of development. Thus many countries in Africa faced a large problem after independence, where their infrastructure from railroads to buildings to roads in general were not built with the long-term African social and economic needs in mind.

Western History: Neo-colonialism and (Under)Development

There is also a real relationship between neo-colonialism and development. After liberation these countries still had to rely on the West to develop, and often there are colonial “hangover” policies which are policies that continuously oppress the African peoples. This is true with the Rhodesia railways which will be explained in this section. The history of aid and its ties to neo-colonialism is worth diving into. Here I will briefly provide some context as to what foreign aid in the African continent has been.

Since the establishment of the IMF and WB in the wake of World War II, foreign aid has occupied center stage in the development of the global financial system. It is since then that aid has begun flowing in the African continent from primarily the west. In Dambisa Moyo’s book *Dead Aid*, she outlines how each decade brought a new aid structure that worsened the conditions for the African continent. In the 90’s foreign aid went from specifically focused on

uplifting poverty to calling into question of governance: specifically, the connection between democracy and economic development was established by the Washington Consensus. The Washington Consensus is a 10-point economic policy package that became what was considered the “standard” in aiding developing countries created for the IMF, World Bank and the US Department of Treasury.⁴⁶ It rests on “ensuring macroeconomic stability, cutting subsidies, deregulating markets, privatizing national companies, and liberalizing trade.”⁴⁷ In the broadest sense of the idea, the Washington Consensus characterized not only how aid was to be distributed, but how the loans should shape the policies of the country: “the World Bank pledged continued aid support, with the proviso that aid monies must also target governance reform, with the aim of improving the civil service and government bureaucracy (through teaching skills, transparency and institution reform.”⁴⁸

The program established from these principles was the Structural Aid Programs (SAPs) which specifically aimed to stabilize fiscal imbalances. They are understood as programs that have undermined sovereignty because much of the point of SAPs is to dictate a country’s economic policy. Money from SAPs are also specifically not allowed to be used in the social sector, such as for education, health or development precisely because they are meant to be used only for freeing the economy and promoting democracy. As President Paul Kagame of Rwanda rightly lamented, “While more than US \$300 billion in aid has apparently been disbursed to our continent since 1970, there is little to show for it in terms of economic growth and human development.” Moyo underscores, aid has only served as a way for the west to continue

⁴⁶ Moyo, Dambisa. *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010.

⁴⁷ Sun, Irene Yuan. *The next Factory of the World: How Chinese Investment Is Reshaping Africa*. Harvard Business Review Press, 2017. p.22

⁴⁸ Moyo, Dambisa. *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010. p. 23

maintaining a level of control over the African continent, encouraged corruption and continuously contracted the economy. Kagame continues to state “The primary reason [for this phenomenon] is that in the context of post Second World War geopolitical and strategic rivalries and economic interests, much of this aid was spent on creating and sustaining client regimes of one type or another, with minimal regard to developmental outcomes to our continent.”⁴⁹

Even though each sub-region, country and even city differ in reaction to SAPs, they are on the whole agreed to have been a drastic failure that has kept developing countries in poverty, and dependent to OECD countries. Its programs led to developing countries to reduce spending on health, education and development, and have in the worst cases led to economic collapse. This is in one facet because spending was dictated to only be for opening the market and promoting democracy. Another facet is that the IMF donors kept exchange rates in their favor, demanded an increase in exports (which were mostly raw commodities) leading less circulation of money within their economy for the development of other sectors, the same tactic used during colonialism.⁵⁰ Even the former World Bank chief economist is privy to the failures of the Washington Consensus and the dealings of the IMF and WB.

“The IMF is not particularly interested in hearing the thoughts of its client countries on such topics as development strategy or financial austerity. All too often, the Fund’s approach to developing countries has had the feel of a colonial ruler. A picture can be worth a thousand words, and a single picture snapped in 1998, shown throughout the world, has engraved itself in the minds

⁴⁹ Perry, Alex, A conversation with Rwandan Paul Kagame, September 27 2007, TIME

⁵⁰ Shah, Anup. “Structural Adjustment-a Major Cause of Poverty.” - *Global Issues*, www.globalissues.org/article/3/structural-adjustment-a-major-cause-of-poverty)

of millions, particularly those in the former colonies. The IMF's managing director, Michel Camdessus, a short, neatly dressed former French Treasury bureaucrat... standing with a stern face and crossed arms over the seated and humiliated president of Indonesia. The hapless president was being forced, in effect, to turn over economic sovereignty of his country to the IMF in return for the aid his country needed. In the end, ironically, much of the money went not to help Indonesia, but to bail out the colonial power's private sector creditors.”⁵¹

The above quote reveals how these aid programs from the West have been so tied to the same colonial mindset of the past. President Suharto, the Indonesian president aforementioned, was bowed down to sign a treaty that continued to create a dependency with the IMF, as well as benefitting and creating a gain for Westerners.

It is thus important to stress that China does not have an “aid” sector in this way because the CCP actually claims the idea of aid is condescending to foreign countries, their actions are still being understood as “aid.”⁵² Many Chinese private as well as state-owned companies are engaging in activities that to the west seems very aid-like yet they also have commercial purposes.⁵³ For example, the line between whether or not a Chinese built commercial road from a Chinese mine to a port using subsidized credit from a Chinese bank is unclear. Furthermore, China⁵⁴ is not part of the traditional “aid club” within the Organization for Economic

⁵¹ p.40-41, Stiglitz, Joseph E. *Globalization and Its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2018.

⁵² Chazan, Yigal. “Angola's Debt Reliance on China May Leave It Short-Changed.” *Subscribe to Read | Financial Times*, Financial Times, 13 June 2018, www.ft.com/content/fb9f8528-6f03-11e8-92d3-6c13e5c92914.

⁵³ Moss, Tod. “The Sad Story of African Rising and Their Romance with the BRICS.” *Africa in World Politics: Constructing Political and Economic Order*, by John W. Harbeson and Donald S. Rothchild, Westview Press, 2017.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*

Cooperation and Development (OECD), since as aforementioned, China still straddles the in-between of developing and developed. Thus it is important to note that the Chinese do not treat their relationship with the African continent as one of a donor-aid receiver relationship at all. In fact, according to the Chinese Ministry of Finance the Chinese the budget categories that are relevant to foreign affairs are named: “Foreign aid”, “Overseas agencies cost”, “International Organizations contributions”, “Foreign affairs – miscellaneous” and “Foreign cooperation and exchange.”⁵⁵ Foreign aid includes specifically medical teams that are sent abroad, as well as technical assistance during disasters. Yet, time and time again if China is portrayed in a slightly more positive light, it is because the article suggests that China is becoming competition for Western aid donors, giving Africans more agency. Thus scholars and journalists who laud or criticize Chinese aid are missing a glaring point: this is not the same kind of “aid” that the international arena is familiar with.

Conclusion

As Simbao writes, “A critical place to begin is to delink from the blatantly propagandistic scripts of the U.S. that patronizingly tell Africans what they should think of China as a state, and by extension, what they should think about Chinese people.”⁵⁶ The dominant script is not only inaccurate in portraying the facts about the relationship, they are also spreading stereotypes that negatively impact those who live within these relationships. The relationship between China and

⁵⁵ “Data: Chinese Foreign Aid to Africa.” *China Africa Research Initiative*, www.sais-cari.org/data-chinese-foreign-aid-to-africa.

⁵⁶ Simbao, Ruth. “Reaching Sideways Beyond Bandung: Audacious Solidarities and Contingent ‘China-Africa’ Scripts in Contemporary Visual Art (超越万隆的侧向接触: 当代视觉艺术中的无畏团结与偶然的『中非』剧)” *人間思想 (Thoughts in the Human World)*, vol. 10, no. 思想第三世界 Thoughts on the Third World, Nov. 2019, pp. 15–51.

Africa is much more complex, nuanced and historic than these headlines and media outlets capture.

The anxiety that is presented in the Western media and scholarly research is interesting because at once China is a misunderstood ‘other’ yet at the same time they are painted as an ‘evil’ because they are too much ‘*like us*,’ as in, 19th Europe century and what the US continues to do today. In many ways, this phenomenon is a continuation of the West’s attempt at understanding the East. In Edward Said’s *Orientalism* he traces how Western scholarship on both the “Near and Far Orient” has been a way academics can explain away the unknown: “[The Orient’s] foreignness can be translated, its meanings decoded, its hostility tamed.”⁵⁷ China’s actions of gifting and interest-free investment is “irrational” in comparison to the Washington Consensus. To “decode” the \$60 billion dollars in investments that China has pledged, these critics posit that China is simply doing what the West themselves did in the attempt to ascertain power. China is in a strange situation: they are both too different and too similar. This hypercriticism sheds light on how clouded the research on China is and how difficult it is to find research and information about the China-Africa relationship.

The claim that China is a new colonizer rests on these charges aforementioned. Western critics see their high investment and loan projects as a “debt-trap” which is understood to cause dependency and exploit natural resources. They also see the gaining political holds such as in Djibouti and land acquisition as threats to African people. They fear the increasing amount of Chinese immigrants in the continent as a sign of turning Africa into ‘China’s Second Continent.’ Finally, there is also the general criticism of the Chinese, claiming that they have a long history

⁵⁷ Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. p.103 W. Ross MacDonald School, Resource Services Library, 2006.

of exploiting laborers, violating standards for working conditions as well as paying little regard to environmental standards. This is what Clinton alludes to in her visit; China is not a good moral example. Contempt, anxiety and fear continues to be what frames research and reporting on China in Africa. These media headlines represent the real anxiety felt by administrations impacting real policies such as represented by the New Africa Strategy by the U.S. This blocks the potential for more global cooperation and peace, and introduces more hostility that impacts real lives on the ground.

In Chapter 4 I will deepen the analysis by revealing what China's script using her soft power tools are, and also showing what their vision of cultural relationship can look like. Already there are emerging exchanges that show a different vision of peace and international relations. To seriously understand China's relationship with the African continent, we must stray away from being confined by this dominant narrative alone. We cannot continue to ignore all of Chinese and African claims and impose a Western judgment on both. I will in the next section dive into China's unique history and attempt to understand how they see themselves, instead of how China's actions appear to be to the West. As Simbao writes, "responsible research that does not automatically take sides, but that strives for social justice for *all* human beings is critical."⁵⁸ In the next section we will explore China's historical relationship with the African continent, and framework for foreign policy and unique framework for development assistance.

⁵⁸ Simbao, Ruth. "Reaching Sideways Beyond Bandung: Audacious Solidarities and Contingent 'China-Africa' Scripts in Contemporary Visual Art (超越万隆的侧向接触:当代视觉艺术中的无畏团结与偶然的『中非』剧)." *人間思想 (Thoughts in the Human World)*, vol. 10, no. 思想第三世界 Thoughts on the Third World, Nov. 2019, pp. 15–51.

Chapter 2: China's Philosophy on Global Governance and China's History with Africa

Irony is lost on those who do not learn from history. On November 28 1960, China marked "Congo Day" to celebrate solidarity between the Chinese and Congolese people. The New York Time's coverage on the Chinese media stated: "The [Chinese] article said the United States was [swallowing up the Congo] by exporting development and assistance capital to impose economic control 'while it exercises military and political control under cover of the United Nations.'"⁵⁹ This critique by the Chinese quoted in the *New York Times* is a clear parallel of the critiques that China is receiving from the West now that was mentioned in the above section.

In this section we will first begin by exploring China's philosophical and theoretical understanding of global governance. This is so we can clearly situate in China's different sense and history of what it means to be an international actor. Then we will explore the history of China Africa relations and understand the position of China during the 1960s. Then, we will dive into China's first infrastructure project in Africa, the TAZARA railway. Through this example, we will see how China's ideological stances manifest in practice. This section is aimed at showing the history that China emerges from, one that is starkly different than any Western country.

⁵⁹ "New York Times Front Page." *New York Times* , Nov 29. 1960.

Chinese Understanding of Global Governance

China's sense of the world and therefore sense of global governance comes from a sense of self derived from their unique history. Due to many factors, including China's massive land-mass without much to compare around her, Ancient China had never needed to conceive of connecting with the rest of the world, for it believed itself to be the Middle Kingdom, and thus the center of the world. They developed, for more than 5000 years in almost complete isolation, without any material or cultural equal nearby. Thus "the Chinese were not only incapable of grasping the specific concept of the nation-state, which was a product of the Renaissance and the Reformation in Europe, but was incapable of recognizing the existence of distant—but equal—national or racial entities."⁶⁰ Believing themselves to be the Middle Kingdom, and thus the center of the world, they were a nation without diplomats until the late nineteenth century. They believed that China was 天下 (*tianxia*, Under heaven) with the task of 大同 (*datong*, Great Unity). This Great Unity, a task mandated by heaven, can be understood as Ancient China's sense of global governance. It places harmony at the center, a utopia that can be connecting the entire world with laws enforced by Chinese wisdom. Thus those who did interact with Ancient China were neither ambassadors nor traders but "tribute-bearing envoys," for they understood only that these were gifts from afar for the Chinese emperor.⁶¹

Thus the widespread impression that China's rise means that the Chinese elite is ready to assume, alongside the US and the Western powers, a major responsibility for addressing the great transnational challenges of our time in the same way is quite misguided. Again this conclusion is reached through the Western lens that was aforementioned that explained Chinese

⁶⁰ Robert , Elegant S. "China's Next Phase." *China's Next Phase*, 1967.

⁶¹ *ibid.*

actions and motivations through the West's own philosophy and history. When Europe came to power they colonized to supplement their needs and interests. When the US rose to power they established a global governing structure, the United Nations as well as an imperial foreign policy agenda. However, the truth is that in Chinese political thought, both in contemporary thought and ancient thinking, there has been no tradition or recognition of potential duties beyond the borders of its state, there were only ideological beliefs of connecting other peoples in a utopian harmonious world.

In the advent of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Chinese government labelled international law as a bourgeois product that was definitively western in nature.⁶² The Chinese preach self-reliance and the call for a larger role for the Chinese to play in global governance is viewed by the Chinese elite as an implicit call to interfere in the affairs of other states, which the Chinese have little interest in.⁶³ To better understand what exactly this idea of self-reliance means both for how the CCP thinks of themselves within their borders as well as in relation to others, it is important to dive into the ideological influences that shape this understanding.

“Confucianism teaches that leaders should learn to become 君子 (*junzi*, gentleman) so that they know how to achieve best governance through exemplification and rectification of relationships. This requires that leaders show selfless benevolence and govern in such a way that harmony is achieved. In the PRC history, every time the Chinese Communist Party examines its own wrongdoing, the blame is usually laid on the inadvertent abortion of self-ethics. In

⁶² Wu, Pan Jun. “Chinese Philosophy and International Law .” *Asian Journal of International Law*, p. 238.

⁶³ Shih, Chih-yu, and Chiung-Chiu Huang. “Preaching Self-Responsibility: the Chinese Style of Global Governance .” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 2013.

theoretical terms, interference presumes a purpose, which inadvertently implies a separate self in cadres, to the effect that cadres and the masses are not in unity. In practical terms, being selfless indicates the deduction of levies and conscriptions, along with budgetary control.”⁶⁴

What this translates to is that the Chinese government in the hopes of creating unification and harmony above all else. Intervention implies that there is a population that is *not* acting according to a prescribed *should* from the intervener. Thus intervention is fragmentary to society for it implies that there is an ‘us’ versus ‘them’, a superior that needs to impose their views on an inferior subject. Thus, because it is a one-party state, all critiques are directed at the self, and all wrongdoings are meant to propel self-improvement. Instead, for example, in a two-party or multi-party systems where all blame is put on the other. To China, this is counter to the harmonious peace that they aim for.

This resentment against intervention is very much engrained in Chinese internal governance as well as international politics. During the Korean War the UN imposed sanctions on China which furthered China’s severe distrust of international intervention. Interventionism in the name of international organization without the consent of the targeted region incurs immediate suspicion from Beijing.⁶⁵ Beijing rather insists on the use of persuasion, cooperation or otherwise instead of direct action to address global problems. “From the official Chinese perspective, global governance, humanitarian or otherwise, always runs the risk of declining into

⁶⁴ Shih, Chih-yu, and Chiung-Chiu Huang. “Preaching Self-Responsibility: the Chinese Style of Global Governance.” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 2013.

⁶⁵ Yu, Keping. *Democracy Is a Good Thing: Essays on Politics, Society, and Culture in China*. Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2009.

imperialism unless local consent is acquired in advance.”⁶⁶ Thus this is why the Chinese have always been cautious of foreign aid, never failing to note that civic organizations and non-governmental agencies that join national governments in resolving global issues – such as the Washington’s US Treasury with the IMF and World Bank targeting aid policy with the Washington Consensus—carry a western and liberalist underpinning.

Therefore, the rhetoric around global governance has typically lacked specific references on what or how China envisions as global governance. Instead, it surrounds more on how China should *respond* to the external call for global governance. Of course, the CCP as well as Chinese intellectuals are not monoliths – there are some that embrace globalization, some that suspect it and still others that question Chinese qualification to take part – but narrators seem to share the concern over how China should adjust its internal configuration to fulfill the role as a responsible country in the modern era.⁶⁷ Again, it is central to the Chinese ideology to focus on creating a governing structure that exemplifies what it is they stand for than it is to impose what it is they stand for on their population. Self-reflections dominate the Chinese literature on global and domestic governance.

In terms of involvement with the UN and international peacekeeping efforts, the Chinese have evolved from “resistance in the beginning and through a period of alienation, testing and hesitation, to conscious participation.”⁶⁸ Beijing has adapted to the evolving international context, as well as their own experiences and self-image. It is significant to note that Beijing is

⁶⁶ Shih, Chih-yu, and Chiung-Chiu Huang. “Preaching Self-Responsibility: the Chinese Style of Global Governance.” *Journal of Contemporary China*, 2013, p.357,

⁶⁷ *ibid*

⁶⁸ Bates Gill and Chin-hao Huang, *China’s Expanding Role in Peacekeeping: Prospects and Policy Implications*, Policy Paper 25 (Stockholm: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, November 2009); Jing dong Yuan, ‘Multilateral intervention and state sovereignty: Chinese views on UN peacekeeping operations’, *Political Science* 49(2), (1998), p.275-295

one of the highest contributors to the UN peacekeeping efforts both via funding as well as manpower. This is in many ways because Beijing learned by the end of the 20th century that Beijing's own participation may generate the multilateral characteristic that opposes unilateral interventionist strategies as exemplified historically by the U.S in the UN. They hope to lead by example. Often, China has been perceived as a threat to human rights standards and have been internationally criticized for implicitly endorsing human rights violations by not interfering with international affairs. This criticism is echoed in the critiques presented above on the China-African relationship, where their non-interference policy is understood as an endorsement of 'bad governance.' Again, if we understand this with the Chinese lens it is precisely because the Chinese view intervention as a barrier to harmony for it suggests a superior 'us' – the knowers of good governance – and the inferior 'them' – the proponents of 'bad' governance. The Chinese stand by their strong belief that states even if they are understood as 'failing' should be allowed to resolve their internal conflicts on their own and humanitarian intervention must have their prior consent. Unless the Chinese are directly involved in the state in question, for example if the state in question borders China. Thus, Beijing's unique style of governance is through self-governance; they monitor themselves first. Their involvement on the international stage in the United Nations reflects this as they prefer to provide manpower and money to direct efforts than to shame or humiliate other governments by intervening.

A final note on how the Chinese views themselves on the global arena is that they feel a great sense of shame. The loss of both the First Opium War and the Second Opium War in the 19th century, leading to the opening up of China's borders to foreign trade as well as the loss of Hong Kong to the British is still a humiliating defeat. To provide context both the Opium wars began because the Chinese wanted to stop the massive import of the addictive drug Opium which

was causing economic and social decay in Chinese society from the British. In many ways, they feel their history to be misunderstood; the era of Mao with the Great Leap Forward and the Culture Revolution is seen as a disaster that is clear example of the failures of the socialist program. They've felt wronged by the US's pro-Taiwan stance in the advent of the UN. And they've felt, in many ways, that after their struggles in the 20th century, they were forced to adopt a new global capitalist economic system starting in 1978 because of failures and consistent ridiculing from the West that was fundamentally counter to their own value structures. With this in mind, it follows that the Chinese govern with a unique attitude. With these theoretical frameworks in mind, I will now delve into the lineage of China-African relations so that later on we can see the continuation into today's policies.

Chinese Understanding of Third Worldism History with Africa

Almost an entire century after the Berlin Conference, where the European powers divided up the African continent and claimed their own colonies, China along with Indonesia, helped spearhead the Bandung Conference in 1955. This marked the first large-scale international platform that definitively set the Chinese official agenda as one for the 'Third World.' It was held in Bandung, Indonesia and attended by 29 African and Asian nations. The Bandung Conference aimed to "promote social, cultural, political, and economic cooperation and most especially to strongly oppose colonialism and assist in the struggle for national independence."⁶⁹ China-Africa relations began in this way, with China hoping to become the leader of the 'Third World Countries' to spread its radical liberation ideology. The newly formed People's Republic of China (PRC) was steeped in Maoist ideology hoped to unify the countries through anti-

⁶⁹ Addis, Amsalu K., and Zhu Zuping. "Criticism of Neo-Colonialism: Clarification of Sino-African Cooperation and Its Implication to the West." *Journal of Chinese Economic and Business Studies*, vol. 16, no. 4, 2018, pp. 357–373., doi:10.1080/14765284.2018.1521593.

imperial rhetoric. Maoist revolutionary thought and its implication for a global revolution was what dominated Chinese official rhetoric. The Chinese saw colonial countries on the verge of independence as ripe for revolutionary connection and believed they were well suited to lead and assist these efforts given their own recent history of revolutionary struggle.

The core principles of the Bandung Conference were “political self-determination, mutual respect for sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, and equality.”⁷⁰ These principals were what were central to the countries involved because most were emerging from colonial rule. To the African and Asian countries who sought to be able to arise from oppression, non-interference represented an opportunity at peace. To provide contextual comparison, Stephen Kinzer, prominent scholar of US foreign policy states: “All foreign policy decision by the United States come down to one word, all choices boil down to one word, and it is intervention.” American interventionism is not only an action, but the defining starting point in US foreign policy, the question Kinzer states for US foreign policy is simply “how should we intervene? And with what tools?”⁷¹ Thus, the Bandung Conference and its spirit represents those countries that are situating themselves as primarily against US imperialism.

The Bandung conference led to subsequent organizations and conferences such as the Afro-Asian People’s Solidarity Organization Conference (AAPSO) in Cairo, Egypt in 1957-1958. At this conference as well as subsequent ones, it became evident that China saw its particular communist struggle as one that was necessary and applicable to liberation movements across the Third World.⁷² AAPSO represented countries that were considered in the ‘Third

⁷⁰ *U.S. Department of State*, U.S. Department of State, history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/bandung-conf.

⁷¹ “The History of U.S. Intervention And The ‘Birth Of The American Empire’.” *NPR*, NPR, 24 Jan. 2017, www.npr.org/2017/01/24/511387528/the-history-of-u-s-intervention-and-the-birth-of-the-american-empire.

⁷² Neuhauser, Charles. *Third World Politics: China and the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, 1957-1967*. East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1970.

World' at the time and was attended by governments as well as national revolutionary leaders or anti-imperialist parties. During the conference, China, again, single-mindedly aimed to promote unification against US imperialism and suggested that all actions should be subordinated to this task. Chu Tzu-chi, the Chinese representative at the first conference, stated: "It is imperative for the Asian and African peoples first of all to oppose and end colonial rule, liquidate the control and bondage of the imperialist forces of aggression, and completely wipe out its influence in all fields before they can obtain a solution to the social problems facing them and achieve a social program."⁷³ For China, Africa was a continent full of potential to spread the Maoist revolutionary plight. This is because at the time many African nations were confronting their colonizers and rising against their leaders in the hopes of national liberation. China saw their own history, as a loser of the First and Second Opium War which led to the carving of Hong Kong to the British, as a shared history between members in the Third World and aimed to promote solidarity across the Third World. This was the focus set in their foreign policy agenda.

"During the period of 1956-1965, Chinese foreign policy with regard to the underdeveloped areas can perhaps best be seen as an attempt to foster united fronts on two, somewhat analogous, levels: first, a national united front within each of the individual countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, based on a patriotic appeal and attempting to unite as many diverse groups in the society as possible to oppose a real or imagined foreign, imperialist enemy; and second, an international anti-imperialist united front comprised, in turn, of the countries and peoples of all the underdeveloped world plus the socialist camp and all others willing to join."⁷⁴

⁷³ Neuhauser, Charles. *Third World Politics: China and the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, 1957-1967*. East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1970. p.28

⁷⁴ Ness, Peter Van. *Revolution and Chinese Foreign Policy: Peking's Support for Wars of National Liberation*. University of California Press, 1973. p.56

On the first level, the Chinese held the view that the patriotic united front should take different forms. In some countries it was against the local government; and in other cases it was led by the government. For example, in the case of Peru the Beijing understood their government as a puppet of imperialism and thus encouraged a united front against the Peruvian government. On the international level, the Chinese belief was strong and bold, believing that the Third World countries are comparable to “peasants” of the world, and thus their revolution was a global peasant revolution. In 1965, the then Defense Minister Lin Biao wrote in his article “Long Live the Victory of the People’s War” that details the theoretical implications of this position.

“Taking the entire globe, if North America and Western Europe can be called ‘the cities of the world,’ then Asia, Africa and Latin America constitute ‘the rural areas of the world.’ Since World War II, the proletarian revolutionary movement has for various reasons been temporarily held back in the North American and West European capitalist countries, while the people’s revolutionary movement in Asia, Africa and Latin America has been growing vigorously. In a sense, the contemporary world revolution [as compared with domestic revolutions in developing countries] also presents a picture of the encirclement of cities by the rural areas. *In the final analysis, the whole cause of world revolution hinges on the revolutionary struggles of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples who make up the overwhelming majority of the world’s population*”⁷⁵

⁷⁵ PR, 1965, no.36, p.24 (emphasis added)

During the early 1960s the African continent was undergoing a rapid and widespread process of decolonization. Zhou Enlai, the first premier of the People's Republic of China then, went on a famous tour of newly independent Africa countries and stated that "revolutionary prospects are excellent in Africa."⁷⁶ Africa in the mid-1960s was clearly the most politically unstable, potentially explosive as well as vulnerable to external influence. In 1961, the secret People's Liberation Army journal *Kung-tso t'ung-hsun* declared that "The center of the struggle against colonialism is in Africa; the center of the battle between East and West for the intermediate zone is in Africa; hence, Africa has become the focus of contemporary world problems."⁷⁷ The reason for this conclusion is fairly obvious: new states were being established in the continent almost daily, and independent governments were struggling to form nations.⁷⁸ By the end of 1965, China had established diplomatic relations with seventeen African governments. The Chinese officially broadcasted encouragements of the national liberation struggles in the African continent in their domestic media outlets and in Beijing increasingly introduced celebrations and widely broadcasted rhetoric about the need for Afro-Asian unity. The Chinese media also printed articles and updates on the revolutions abroad, and created propaganda posters in which people were in solidarity with other Third World countries. Thus, it is evident in this rhetoric that the beginning of Chinese African relations was marked not as a continent that needs 'aid' but as a continent that could be unified with China through a common struggle, a movement that they too were in. In general, they saw themselves and all those in the Third World as part of a shared community with a shared history of struggle against imperialism.

⁷⁶ Monson, Jamie. *Africa's Freedom Railway: How a Chinese Development Project Changed Lives and Livelihoods in Tanzania*. Indiana University Press, 2009. p.27

⁷⁷ Kung-tso t'ung-hsun, No17 April 25, 1961, p.22

⁷⁸ Ness, Peter Van. *Revolution and Chinese Foreign Policy: Peking's Support for Wars of National Liberation*. University of California Press, 1973. p.139

This sense of shared history is the dominant connecting point how they understood as why the community must come together. This is cultural as well because China, with their 5000 years of history, has been one of the most diligent and meticulous record-keepers of their own history. China's sense of history is not simply that history "repeats herself" and that time is "circular" as many Westerners have often posited, but rather that in understanding history one can learn the truth. Thus with this mind, it is more interesting to consider how Beijing considered events to be allegorical counterparts to their own history. Beijing published in the official *Bulletin of Activities*, No. 17 (April. 25 1961):

At present some parts of Africa are going through experiences similar to what we experienced in China 60 years ago in the Boxer uprising. Some of the events are like those which occurred during the Hsin-Hai revolution, while other resemble what happened around May 4th. We have not yet begun the Northern Expedition and that of the War of Resistance against Japan, and we are still far from the events of 1949 in China.

It is curious to mention that China also aligned themselves with all oppressed peoples, including the black people of the United States. China felt that her history was that of the oppressed, and that because history sheds light on a united truth, those who have experienced oppression will be those who understand how to relate to one another differently, how to respect one another differently, and how to fight the common enemy.

“It is our primary task at present to form the broadest and most genuine international united front against US imperialism. This front includes the broad masses of the American Negroes and the American people, all the oppressed peoples and oppressed nations of the world, and all the countries and peoples subjected to US imperialist aggression, control, intervention or bullying, *but it absolutely must not include the flunkies and accomplices of US imperialism.*”⁷⁹

China then was positioned themselves as the fighter for the historically oppressed, and saw history as the way in which Africans (as well as other oppressed peoples) could come to understand one another.

The Fading Spirit of Revolution in the Third World

However, despite the optimism in the revolutionary spirit as well as the displays of mutual China-African support, the Chinese did not achieve the level of influence they strove for amongst the Third World countries and ultimately their hopes of spreading the Maoist revolution failed. By the end of 1965, their global aspirations took a sharp turn and basically came to an end as argued by Peter Van Ness. There are a number of factors that contributed to this. One large reason is the split with the Soviet Union, which started in 1956 and ultimately ended in 1966. China and the Soviet’s interpretations of Marxism diverged and the process of de-Stalination led by Soviet statesman Kruschev posed as a problem for Mao who both admired Stalin and had many Stalinist policies and practices in China.

⁷⁹ Ness, Peter Van. *Revolution and Chinese Foreign Policy: Peking's Support for Wars of National Liberation*. University of California Press, 1973. p.215

In both the Bandung Conference as well as the AAPSO conference, the Chinese and Soviet Union delegations came head to head. These clashes with the Soviet Union did not lead to a more united front against US imperialism. Rather, it alienated China and during meetings with countries from the Third World and only deepened a divide between the two socialist camps. As the Cold War brewed and heightened in intensity the Sino-Soviet split fragmented the ‘united front’ that China hoped to establish. Mao in the mid-1960s conceived of three categories in the world, China, Soviet Union and the US, instead of the bipolar world presented in the Cold War. Mao viewed the US and the Soviet Union as having many commonalities especially in Africa. He regarded both as “expansionists, profit-seeking imperialists in Africa”⁸⁰ The Chinese saw the US as mostly using economic principals and the Soviet Union using militaristic ideals to expand in Africa.

The volatile nature of the African continent during this time also placed China in a dilemma. At first they were fully prepared to interact with non-communists as well as non-radicals in the social sense. As the 1960s went on it became clear that except for Algeria and for some time the Congo, the struggle for African independence was brief and not especially arduous. Thus newly formed African states were not in the hands of revolutionary liberation organizations, but were rather states caught in a web of diplomatic relations. Thus, to the disappointment of the Chinese, many radical or revolutionary organizations they attempted to support became oppressed by Western powers. By the time of the third Afro Asian People’s Solidarity Organization conference in Moshi, Tanganyika (Tanzania) in 1963, much of the

⁸⁰ Monson, Jamie. *Africa's Freedom Railway: How a Chinese Development Project Changed Lives and Livelihoods in Tanzania*. Indiana University Press, 2009. p.34

revolutionary fervor that accompanied independence in various African states had diminished.⁸¹ These new states were more concerned with issues of political and economic stability more than ideology and thus were more willing to recognize the maintenance of good relations with the West in helping with these issues.

Furthermore, newly independent African nations were becoming skeptical of all foreign interventions. Once they were self-governing, “the anti-imperialist and revolutionary tenor of Chinese foreign policy could be more discomfiting than inspirational for the new African leaders.” China’s support, media and push for the “revolutionary prospects” only added to the anxiety.⁸² The grand revolutionary fire that fueled China’s involvement in Bandung and AAPSO had petered out and China entered a new stage of their own.

China’s Isolation Period

China then entered a tumultuous time on their own, and with the advent of the Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution, their foreign policy stances took a sharp turn. The Cultural Revolution primarily concerned itself with how China could maintain their successful communist party revolution. By August 1967, many of China’s cultivated relationships with other countries deteriorated rapidly. China called back most of their government-sponsored activities abroad so that they could return to China for re-education. This is in large part because of a major shift in Chinese priorities, where in 1965 the priority for relations were mainly the commitment to the anti-imperialist international front, by 1967 the propagation of Chinese

⁸¹ Neuhauser, Charles. *Third World Politics: China and the Afro-Asian People’s Solidarity Organization, 1957-1967*. East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1970. p.40

⁸² Monson, Jamie. *Africa’s Freedom Railway: How a Chinese Development Project Changed Lives and Livelihoods in Tanzania*. Indiana University Press, 2009. p.27

Maoist ideology and revolutionary model was given the highest priority even if jeopardized Chinese economic or political relations abroad.⁸³ The Cultural Revolution spiraled into a violent uprising as Red Guards marched across the countryside in the name of Mao. Anti-foreignness in all senses was called for in the name of national unity, thus attacks and rallies against foreign embassies and ambassadors ensued adding to China's already faltering foreign relations.

The advent of the Cultural Revolution marked an end to China's blatant revolutionary zest amongst the Third World. She was preoccupied with the revolution internally that ended up killing an estimated amount of 50,000 to 2,000,000 people. Once she closed off relations then re-opened again in the 1980s the world had changed drastically; the Cold War had changed its nature and have largely been about the USSR and the US.

TAZARA: The First China-Africa Infrastructure Project

There was, however, one large infrastructure project that brought China-Africa relations in the mid 20th century to the international stage during this tumultuous time. This railway project, TAZARA, is how China set the tone to their relationship with Africa, where China established the values and priorities which they have continued until today. The principals and the history to this project gives a precocious view to what is going on now. In this section, I will dive into the history of how this project came to be, and also seeing how the Western colonial projects differ from China's infrastructure project.

As aforementioned in the previous chapter, the TAZARA railways connecting Tanzania to Zambia was met with many hurdles from the British Rhodesia Railway companies. However,

⁸³ Ness, Peter Van. *Revolution and Chinese Foreign Policy: Peking's Support for Wars of National Liberation*. University of California Press, 1973. p.253

the vision continued to manifest and the Rhodesia Railway problem subsided when the British decided that it would not harm their own business prospects. The TAZARA railway became a symbol of hope by the new government that could rectify the negative colonial legacies of colonial development planning. The Southern region of Tanzania was full of potential and was majorly underdeveloped. The vision of TAZARA included the hope to stimulate development and pass through iron ore and coal deposits as well as potential agricultural and livestock areas. There were sugar production and rice production and ranching that was also proposed along the route. Similar dreams were placed on the TAZARA railway on the Zambian side.

More than just a focus on economic development however, the TAZARA railroads represented the hope to politically liberate the entire southern African region. They would be breaking free from the hegemony of the southern African mining interests, and Zambia could “provide inspiration for those fighting against white settler and Portuguese colonial rule in Rhodesia, Mozambique, Angola and South Africa.” They thought that the railway could also assist Zambia and Tanzania in their support for these liberation struggles. Zambia would no longer be subject to border closings in retaliation to supporting these anti-colonial forces, because they would have their independent outlet to the sea. Furthermore, the railway envisioned could also be used to ship supplies to support anti-colonial struggles, such as military supplies or produce. As these plans were being drawn, the World Bank and the United Nations continued to issue survey reports delineating how the TAZARA railways were not economically viable or feasible adding more barriers to the dream.⁸⁴

However, the TAZARA railway found newfound urgency when the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) occurred in Southern Rhodesia, where the white settlers

⁸⁴ Monson, Jamie. *Africa's Freedom Railway: How a Chinese Development Project Changed Lives and Livelihoods in Tanzania*. Indiana University Press, 2009. p.27

voted to become a sovereign state in 1965. Due to this, there was an international boycott to Southern Rhodesia in 1966, which meant that Zambia could no longer rely on them for their transportation and supplies. For example, Rhodesia's oil pipeline was blockaded by the British navy and thus they relied on emergency airlifts for oil into Zambia from US, British and Canadian military aircraft. Faced with the then President of Zambia, Kaunda and the then President of Tanzania Nyere, accelerated their process of looking for international assistance for the building of TAZARA. In 1965, the British consulting agency Maxwell Stamp alongside a Canadian aerial team spent 150,000 Pounds to create a report that could provide information about the design and construction of the railway and could be circulated to governments and donors to understand the economic feasibility and cost. They asked many Western powers who gave them the same answer, which was that they needed to understand the economic feasibility of the project first.⁸⁵

At the same time, China had already expressed interest in helping to construct the railway when then President of Tanzania Julius Nyere, directly sent a request from then Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda for help on the railway in February 1965. Julius Nyere was known to greatly admire Mao's collectivization strategies and applied these ideas later as part of the Ujaama villigization scheme.⁸⁶ It was said that at the time both the governments in Zambia and Tanzania were hesitant to make the request to China because they understood China to be poor at the time.⁸⁷ China, however, was enthusiastic and sent a team to conduct an initial survey.

⁸⁵ Monson, Jamie. *Africa's Freedom Railway: How a Chinese Development Project Changed Lives and Livelihoods in Tanzania*. Indiana University Press, 2009. p.27

⁸⁶ Neuhauser, Charles. *Third World Politics: China and the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization, 1957-1967*. East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1970.

⁸⁷ Monson, Jamie. *Africa's Freedom Railway: How a Chinese Development Project Changed Lives and Livelihoods in Tanzania*. Indiana University Press, 2009. p.27

In early 1967 the report by Maxwell Stamp was finished and was circulated to only a few interested parties because of miscommunication. However, in that same year in September 1967 China had already signed an agreement to support the railway. China also agreed to an interest-free loan for the construction of the railway which would follow after the initial survey and design phase. This was met with immediate criticism and panic in the Western media and political stage, much like the current reaction today. Many countries and organizations who were looped into the Maxwell Stamp report – which had many technical complications and issues – felt that they were blind-sided. Critics claimed that China handled the agreement coyly and were in general extremely uncomfortable with the prospect. In a way, it represented China's first large-scale demonstration of their views, and represented a threat to both the US and the Soviet Union. China was critical of them both, believing that the US expanded in Africa under the guise of economic aid and the Soviet Union under the guise of military aid. For China the focus was on friendship rather than economics or military expansion. This theme was apparent even in the way they named and built infrastructure; wherever there was Chinese aid, "friendship roads, friendship ports and friendship buildings sprang up."⁸⁸

Thus, the Chinese-African relations began in this way which has many parallels to the current relationship. The international governing boards of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and the United Nations had underdeveloped the African continent as delineated in the previous chapter. Yet they continue to want to be the only ones with spheres of influence in the region, and China's involvement threatened their power. China has come in without the same motivations – not economic nor militaristic – but with a strong ideological package, which threatens the West. By completing a project rejected from the West they took it as an opportunity

⁸⁸ Star Raft, Philip Snow.

to demonstrate their different approach to development assistance and to expose the faults in both the West and the Soviet Union.

The Building of TAZARA Representing China's Anti-Hegemonic Ideals

The TAZARA project was built entirely from China's ideological motivations and with China's political climate at the time, shows China's hard-grit and intensity when it comes to their ideological beliefs. As stated earlier, China was hitting a low point in diplomatic relations with Africa as well as encountering difficulties at home. The project was at a high cost as well as diverted technical expertise away from home at a time they were needed. Thus this project was immersed in ideology, a way to demonstrate their support for what they believe is the just struggle against the colonial and imperial powers. In 1963-1964 during Zhou Enlai's visit to Africa he wrote the "Eight Principals Governing China's Economic and Technical Aid to Other Countries." It states in the very first principal that "Through such aid the friendly new emerging countries gradually develop their own national economy, free themselves from colonial control, and strengthen the anti-imperialist forces in the world. This is in itself a tremendous support to China." Their aim was to help liberate the other economy away from foreign dependency.

Their ideological zeal was also reflected in the way workers were employed during the construction of the railroad. During China's first survey they sent a team of twelve railway technicians accompanied with nine Tanzanian scouts. They carried their own equipment on their backs and marked territory with bamboo sticks with red flags. They were quickly ridiculed by the Kenyan press (a news outlet for the white settler community) who used this image as an example of the incapability of Communist aid. However, they set the tone for hard work ethic that would characterize the entire process. For comparison, the European adventurers always

traveled with large retinues and always employed large troops of servants, porters and guides. They never carried their own equipment, and in fact many were carried themselves. As stated by Monson: “The field survey party that studied the same route in 1950-51 under the direction of Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners included one assistant engineer and three surveyors (all Europeans) accompanied by fifty-six African porters and servants. And the Anglo-Canadian survey team and produced the Maxwell Stamp report in the mid-1960s conducted much of their survey of the proposed railway line from the air.”⁸⁹

The Chinese method of conducting the survey directly reflects the eighth principal written by Zhou Enlai which states: “The experts dispatched by the Chinese Government to help in construction in the recipient countries will have the same standard of living as the experts of the recipient country. The Chinese experts are not allowed to make any special demands or enjoy any special amenities.” During the construction of the railway itself, Chinese workers worked extremely hard and finished their projects ahead of schedule, hoping to inspire African workers through their model behavior. They studied Mao’s Little Red Books in order to be inspired and be unafraid of the harsh conditions. They worked side by side with African workers, and although their tasks were different and there were different ages and experiences in the group many Africans did work very closely with their Chinese counterparts. They describe the experience as one between elders and juniors where the Chinese technicians mentored the young African men. The Tanzanian prime minister Rashidi Kawawa stated after the construction was complete: “the Zambian and Tanzanian workers had received the best kind of training during TAZARA’s construction, and this could now be applied to other development work.”⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Monson, Jamie. *Africa's Freedom Railway: How a Chinese Development Project Changed Lives and Livelihoods in Tanzania*. Indiana University Press, 2009. p.37

⁹⁰ “Tanzania, Zambia Celebrate Railway Completion,” NCNA, 24 October 1975

The theme of solidarity and friendship was broadcasted all over China. There was a book of poems written by the Chinese railway technicians called *Rainbow of Friendship* published in 1975 that had both poems about the construction as well as prints showing Africans and Chinese people toiling side by side. There were also many news reports that showed conveyed the heroism and the dangers that both the Chinese and Africans had to face together. There were even cultural performances where a skit included Chinese actors undertaking an imaginary visit to Tanzania to visit the railway. They describe the beauty of the country, the hot sunshine and the friendliness of the African people to the Chinese audiences at home.⁹¹

For China and the Chinese this project was a way in which to demonstrate and showcase their ideological beliefs they expressed in both the Bandung conference and the subsequent Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization (AAPSO) conferences. They want to be show their genuine struggle against imperialism, and denounce all exploitation against people. The TAZARA railway was constructed between 1967-1975. This was during the same time as China's politically tumultuous Cultural Revolution, and at a time where China was not prosperous. It represents China's hardcore ideological zeal, and both the work ethic by the workers and the way in which the Chinese conduct themselves on the ground mark a break from the previous colonial powers' methods of doing things. As stated in their fourth principal: "In providing aid to other countries, the purpose of the Chinese Government is not to make the recipient countries dependent on China but to help them embark on the road of self-reliance step by step." For the Chinese, economics is a pragmatic means to a much greater end, which is by nature ideological and one that strives for a struggle against imperialism.

⁹¹ "Crosstalk" recording by Ma Ji and Tang Jiezhong, <http://www.haoting.com/hao123/126.htm>.

Conclusion

In this chapter I showed and argued that China has a unique sense of global governance that is markedly different from the Western conception of global governance. Through understanding their historical relationship with the African continent we see how this philosophy manifests in their attempts at unifying the African and Asian countries of the Third World in the fifties. In the first infrastructural project between China and Africa, the TAZARA railway is China's first large-scale infrastructure project, we see how China's beliefs and ideals manifest in practice when it comes to development assistance.

In many ways the TAZARA railway was the initial way in which China learned that development assistance could be a way they develop political relationships. During this time many foreign leaders such as Julius Nyerere visited rural China and were impressed by their rapid development. By focusing on the mutual respect in their anti-hegemonic development assistance principals and emphasizing work ethic and mutual learning and growing the TAZARA railway represented an ideological project at the apogee of China's own ideological zealotry, during the Cultural Revolution.

Now the question that remains is how do these values in the past translate to the China that we see today? China after the 1980s went through rapid economic growth and change in their own internal understanding of socialism and emphasis on Mao's thought. This period also marks the time when most confusion about modern China arose. China was and remains undefinable, a developing country who receives aid from the OECD countries or a developed country? Capitalist or communist? This thesis unfortunately does not have the scope to analyze this period, however in this thesis I understand this period to be China's way of using modern

tools (capitalist structures, modern infrastructure) to implement their own goals. China's rapid development was pushed forward so anxiously and ambitiously because there is another, larger goal in mind. This larger goal will be the focus on the next section, which is what we see in China today. In the next section we will dive into the rhetoric around the One Belt One Road policy outlines and then at how China's relationship with the African continent now seems to be the beginning, a first step towards this larger ideal.

Chapter 3: Understanding China's Actions as Rooted in History

“We are not very comfortable with the word donor... The recipient's hand is always below the donor's hand.” – Deborah Brautigam quoting a Chinese official

The question that remains is how the history that shaped China's relationship with Africa connects with policies today. Have they, through their own development in the last 30 years abandoned their entire ideological program to now become the imperial force they once despised? In many ways China has changed the most drastically in the last half century, breaking the norm of what a developing country, a communist country, and a Third World country could become. The last 30 years in China is a topic that warrants much more research and time dedicated to it that I do not have. However, this time can be understood as China building the resources it needs for the project that they hope to engage in now: the One belt One Road Initiative or the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI).

In this section I will first be exploring the linkages of their global governance stance in the 50s to the One Belt One Road Initiative or the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI). Then I will give a brief overview of the landscape of the activities in the African continent showing the wide range of sectors covered, the multiple ways in which this differs from traditional aid, and how China's encourages and uplifts cultural and people-to-people exchange. This landscape is vast and complex: everything from government-government economic/infrastructure projects and natural resource investments, to the messy cross section of the state and private investments, to cultural exchanges (both private and state-sponsored), to natural signs of globalization where a populations of Chinese people are shaping and forming their own communities. The China Africa relationship is one that crosses all strata of class and sector. This fact alone already

distinguishes China from any other Paris Club or OECD country's relationship with the continent. For as mentioned above, the primary concern with Western developmental assistance has been via economic development through top-down approaches, and colonial development characterized by top-down approaches and the erasure of culture. Because of the wide variety of people interacting, from farm workers to factory workers to fashion curators to medical professionals to artist China's interaction with the continent is more akin to an open dialogue than a systematic approach.

I will first explore and argue that there is a direct linkage between China's historical stance – that of anti-hegemonic development – to the current Belt & Road Initiative (BRI). This section will outline the theoretical understanding of what Belt Road Initiative is, and how, it presents a program that has a distinctively Chinese sense of international relations. I will begin by introducing what exactly constitutes their Belt Road Initiative (BRI) and how their current foreign policy approach links to their previous foreign policy ideals. Then I will examine the way in which China-Africa relations are in fact the beginning of this massive project with how they have built government-government relationship and political community, and how it differs from other international organizations and previous approaches to governmental relations. I will then give brief overviews on the different kinds of projects and actions they have been conducting with the continent, from the state sponsored projects, to the private investment landscape, to the small to medium enterprises (SMEs) that are part of the landscape of globalization. I will then pose some potential issues of the relationship, which exist and reinforce the notion that this thesis is not to blanket the relationship as one that deserves no critique, but to frame and better understand the multi-faceted, layered and different approach and ontology China has.

The Chinese Notion of Friendship and the Belt Road Initiative

In 2013 Premier Xi Jinping visited Kazakhstan to announce the beginning of the New Silk Road Economic Belt and the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI).⁹² All great movements and changes in global political landscapes come with ideological and philosophical thoughts. For China, keeping tradition and history alive is of the highest importance. Premier Xi Jinping's speech highlights this importance as he begins with the historical anecdote of the relationship between Central Asia and the Middle Kingdom: "Over 2,100 years ago during China's Han Dynasty, a Chinese envoy Zhang Qian was sent to Central Asia twice with a mission of peace and friendship. His journeys opened the door to friendly contacts between China and Central Asian countries as well as the Silk Road linking east and west, Asia and Europe." This opening is reminiscent of the idea of "shared history" that was so very prominent in the thinking of their foreign policy approach in the 50's as mentioned above. To China, this shared history, one of mutual respect and mutual prosperity is what *motivates* the BRI.

One of the most blatant and apparent differences between the colonial regimes and imperial countries and China's approach is China's deep respect for the cultures of different people. As we know, most colonizers in the past have looted sacred items, fetishized the 'Other' and placed all their own fantastical vices in the image of the Orient, as well as appropriated artistic and cultural symbols for their own purposes. Most importantly, there is a sense of looking down at the colonial countries as those who are 'uncivilized' and 'primitive.' Colonizers have always assumed that because the country is not modern, there is no wisdom, culture, or philosophical development within the said country. As Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie notes, they thought of Africa as one "black

⁹² They are considered part of one initiative

savagery.” Thus it is significant how, within the speech in 2013, Xi Jinping praises Kazakhstan’s culture by referring to a multitude of cultural and historical references, from the great Kazakh poet and philosopher Abay Qunanbayev, to a story of a Kazakh student who have been donating blood twice a year in China for Chinese people with the same blood type, to citing a Kazakh proverb “The history of the land is the history of its people.”⁹³ In China, the custom of showing a deep respect for the other in relationships is rooted in Confucian ideology. Respect is shown by the willingness to learn and be humble in all aspects of one’s life. To bow down to the ‘Other’ is the way in which people show sincerity and develop trust. This kind of respect is present in relationships with African countries as well, for example, their emphasis on building infrastructure aligned with cultural history for the African Union in Ethiopia with traditional African art as inspiration instead of, for example, how colonial-style buildings were erected before.

To compare, US high level speeches often only highlight economic relationships as a reason for the relationship. In 2016 for example, Obama invited President of Mexico Pena Nieto to the White House gave a speech that opens: “The United States values tremendously our enduring partnership with Mexico and our extraordinary ties of family and friendship with the Mexican people. Mexico is our third-largest trading partner. We sell more to Mexico than we do to China, India, Russia combined... [this trade] supports over a million jobs right here in the United States.”⁹⁴ Thus, from these two speeches one can see the obvious different in priority, and different ways of revealing country to country friendship. The U.S is one that believes friendship comes *from* material exchange, whereas China’s speech reveals that friendship comes from mutual

⁹³“XiJinPing's Speech in Kazhakstan .” *Promote Friendship Between Our People and Work Together to Build a Bright Future*, 2013, www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1078088.shtml.

⁹⁴ “Remarks by President Obama and President Pena Nieto of Mexico in Joint Press Conference.” *National Archives and Records Administration*, National Archives and Records Administration, obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/07/22/remarks-president-obama-and-president-pena-nieto-mexico-joint-press.

understanding and respect of cultures and economic development and exchanges comes after the relationship. In other words, China views economic development as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. The more important end, for China, is the relationship.

China holds a unique place for linking the developing world together because China is the only ‘developing country’ to also rapidly become the second largest economy in the world. In other words, they are still a recipient of donations as well as now one of the largest givers.⁹⁵ Much of their ideas and influence for the BRI is thus derived from reflections of their own experiences as a recipient of aid, as well as their own unique road to development that upheld their own values.⁹⁶ Thus even as a modern economy and a modern country, one must understand that China is *not* simply “westernized” and therefore modernized. In many ways The Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) highlights Eastern wisdom, and is still a direct reaction to global patterns dominated by Western forces, again recalling their reactionary programs highlighted in the previous section. According to the statistics by the World Bank, only 13 of 101 middle-income countries rose to the ranks of high-income countries between 1960 and 2008. Most developing economies, especially in the African continent, remain “trapped” and have been so for a long time.⁹⁷ To China, they believe that this is because of the blind faith placed in Western structures and theories that post ‘modernization means Westernization.’ “When formulating national policies, these countries mechanically imitated the Western development model and failed to assess development theories that were in line with their unique national conditions, failed to formulate a modernization strategy suitable for their countries’ realities, and failed to follow a

⁹⁵ I use the word “givers” here intentionally because they do not, as highlighted in the quote above think of themselves as donors

⁹⁶ Brautigam, Deborah. *The Dragon's Gift: the Real Story of China in Africa*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

⁹⁷ Moyo, Dambisa. *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010.

path of effective development.”⁹⁸

Therefore, the BRI is a program aimed to reform a way of not just interacting between countries, but a completely different approach to reaching the global goals of sustainable development and mutual understanding in a global world. Unlike how historically great nations rose to power with a “winners take all” strategy, BRI champions the win-win strategy with all of the countries that it interacts with. “The belief is that the flame will be highest when everyone picks up firewood, and the thinking is that development is good only when everyone develops together.”⁹⁹ China is determined to achieve peaceful development, again echoing their governance priority on harmony above all.

The initiative aims to link almost 70 different countries across the path of the Silk Road and integrate China’s opening and reformation with the common development of all of mankind, using development as the greatest common denominator. If we understand China’s global perspective in the 50’s as one of attempting to unite through a perspective of “shared history” as highlighted in chapter 2, then the BRI’s stance and their overall defining goal in their foreign policy is the building of a “Community of Common Destiny.”

In the last two years, this concept has risen to be the core of China’s diplomacy and outlook on the world: 人类命运共同体 “Community of Common Destiny for mankind” (CCD). Premier Xi Jinping used this term on many international occasions, the first being in the 2017 inaugural Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. In 2017 Xi was the first Chinese Premier to attend the World Economic Forum in Davos and he introduced the concept of CCD noting that: “mankind has become a community of common destiny that one is inseparable from

⁹⁸ Liang, Haoguang, and Yaojun Zhang. “Inclusive Development: Innovation of the Belt and Road System.” *The Theoretical System of Belt and Road Initiative*, 2019, pp. 73–77., doi:10.1007/978-981-13-7701-3_14. p.5

⁹⁹ *ibid.*

the other, and their interest is highly intermingled and interdependent” (Xi 2017). Then the 55th session of the UN Commission for Social Development passed a resolution entitled ‘Social Dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development’ which China led.¹⁰⁰ It called upon the international community to support Africa’s development “to create a shared future, based on our common destiny.” The People’s Daily, lauded this resolution as the first UN resolution that ‘demonstrates wide recognition of this concept of community of common destiny by UN member states and represents China’s enormous contribution to global governance.’¹⁰¹ This concept has become Premier Xi Jinping’s most notable and important concept that defines this era of Chinese global politics.

The CCD is an idea that encompasses and embraces different strengths and differences from the countries it involves. It aims to transcend petty differences of ethnicity, national interests, and ideological disputes to launch a new voyage to build a community of common destiny for all mankind. Furthermore, it reflects China’s staunch view that when one is rich, one must be especially generous and bear more responsibility. This recalls their visions of themselves as the Middle Kingdom, for once one is self-sufficient, one must begin to lift those around them in harmony. The BRI is a vision of a structure where “people are given both fish and the means of fishing.”¹⁰² With this framework in mind, we turn our attention once more to China’s activities in Africa to see how practices on the ground reflect these markedly Chinese theoretical frameworks.

¹⁰⁰ Zhang, Denghua. “The Concept of ‘Community of Common Destiny’.” *Asia and The Pacific Policy Studies*, 30 Oct. 2017, pp. 196–207.

¹⁰¹ Yin, Li. “Xi’s World Vision: a Community of Common Destiny, a Shared Home for Humanity -.” *People’s Daily*, en.people.cn/n3/2017/0115/c90000-9167028.html.

¹⁰² Liang, Haoguang, and Yaojun Zhang. “Inclusive Development: Innovation of the Belt and Road System.” *The Theoretical System of Belt and Road Initiative*, 2019, pp. 73–77., doi:10.1007/978-981-13-7701-3_14. p.5

Government-Government Relationship Building

The Forum of China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) had its first summit in 2000, attended by more than 80 ministers from China and 44 countries out of the 54 and representatives from 17 international and regional organizations. It occurs every three years, and the last summit in 2018 was attended by every African government, with most countries sending their prime ministers or presidents, revealing how deep the connection already is.¹⁰³ This summit is also a ministerial conference and the location alternates between Beijing and an African country every three years, emphasizing equality and friendship. That last three ministerial conferences were in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Sharm-el-Sheik, Egypt, and Johannesburg South Africa (2003, 2009, 2015) where the rest of the years were in Beijing (2000, 2012, 2018). China African relations is, even structurally, a relationship that is characterized by an open forum where leaders of all countries involved are invited to the same platform in Beijing.

In 2018, the theme of FOCAC was titled “China and Africa: Toward an even Stronger Community with a Shared Future through Win-Win Cooperation.”¹⁰⁴ Xi started off with an ancient Chinese proverb, “根之茂者其实遂，膏之沃者其光晔” which translates to “Only deep roots can yield fruit; only filled with oil can a lamp burn bright”. This proverb refers to how only communities with a sense of history, with preparation and with suffering can blossom. It also provides the deep sense that China and Africa’s destinies are interconnected is presented. The speech dives into the priorities of the China-Africa relations from the focus of joint responsibility, promoting further political dialogue, shared cultural prosperity, common stability

¹⁰³ Tiezzi, Shannon. “FOCAC 2018: Rebranding China in Africa.” – *The Diplomat*, For The Diplomat, 5 Sept. 2018, thediplomat.com/2018/09/focac-2018-rebranding-china-in-africa/.

¹⁰⁴ Shaban, Abdhar Rahman. “Handful African Presidents Not Attending 2018 FOCAC Summit in China.” *Africanews*, Africanews, 3 Sept. 2018, www.africanews.com/2018/09/03/handful-african-presidents-not-attending-2018-focac-summit-in-china//.

and security, and the environment. China's official rhetoric emphasizes again and again its place as a developing country: "China, the world's largest developing country, and Africa, the continent with the largest number of developing countries, have long formed a community with a shared future. Indeed, we share a common stake." This 'common stake' to China, is the ability for developing countries to develop with one another and account for their diverse cultural backgrounds, their unique history, and to give the developing nations an alternative path to developing from the hegemonic imposition of Western standards.

Solidarity to and from institutions in the continent mark this relationship as distinct and reciprocal. Recently in the 33rd annual African Union summit African foreign ministers released a press release delineating their unanimous sympathy and support for the Chinese government and people who are battling the outbreak of the new coronavirus. This has led to inter-governmental action as well as grassroots support.¹⁰⁵ Equatorial Guinea for example donated \$2 million dollars to China and the government of Ghana has sent 10,000 pieces of N95 masks to Wuhan. Furthermore, there was a rally held in the capital of Kenya, Nairobi where over 1,000 students from 10 primary and middle schools gathered to show their support for China and Wuhan.¹⁰⁶ Governments also express fear for their own people who travel to and from China or students who are studying.

In April of 2019, Beijing hosted over 5,000 delegates from across the world to discuss the BRI at large. In March, Italy became the first Group of 7 Country to sign up for the BRI and during the forum, Austria, Switzerland and Singapore signed up for the third-party market cooperation. Japan, France, Canada, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy and Australia have

¹⁰⁵ Bo, Xiang. "AU Expresses Solidarity with Virus-Fighting China." *Xinhua*, 2 Feb. 9AD, www.xinhuanet.com/english/africa/2020-02/09/c_138767996.htm.

¹⁰⁶ 孙晓宇 . "Africa Friendship Valuable as Gold." *China*, global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202002/17/WS5e4a5ad3a31012821727825c.html.

already signed the document agreeing to help build infrastructure in developing countries as well.¹⁰⁷ The goals that were said echoed many of the goals that were said about the African continent in FOCAC as well such as supporting developing countries and “bridges for exchanges and mutual learning among different cultures, deepen people-to-people and cultural cooperation in various areas, and facilitate multifaceted people-to-people exchanges.”¹⁰⁸ Thus we can see how China-Africa relations is a facet to China’s larger goals.

Brief Landscape of Government Structures that can be Considered “Aid”

As emphasized above, China’s approach is different to the traditional approaches to aid. They state in their official stance that these loans and financial interactions with foreign developing countries are not to make money but to use money as a means to a policy objective. As one Chinese diplomat in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated “we have to coordinate with the Ministry of Commerce because they have China’s commercial interests in mind, but they also have to take our views into account because foreign aid is for policy objectives, not to make money.”¹⁰⁹ In terms of institutional bodies involved, there is an estimate of “anywhere between twelve and twenty ministries and agencies [that] have some kind of role on foreign aid.”¹¹⁰ This has been a headache for scholars to access and understand what exactly constitutes the China-Africa relationship. When it comes to state-sponsored projects in Africa there are three large government bodies that fund these projects. The Ministry of Commerce is the body who issues grants, zero-interest loans and coordinates with China Eximbank on concessional loans. China

¹⁰⁷ Li, DanDan, and Miao Han. “Xi Jinping’s Second Belt and Road Forum: Three Key Takeaways.” *Bloomberg.com*, Bloomberg, 27 Apr. 2017, www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-04-28/xi-jinping-s-wins-and-losses-at-his-second-belt-and-road-forum.

¹⁰⁸ “The Belt and Road Forum .” *The Belt Road Forum*, 2019, www.beltandroadforum.org/english/n100/2019/0429/c22-1391.html.

¹⁰⁹ Brautigam, Deborah. *The Dragon’s Gift: the Real Story of China in Africa*. Oxford University Press, 2011. p.110

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*p.116

Eximbank is one of the central most important banks in the China-Africa relationship. It was established in 1994 as a policy bank and thus has more political implications to their loans. According to an Eximbank official “the bank operates on a break-even basis: not making a profit, but not requiring regular subsidies.”¹¹¹ Eximbank’s concessional loans, loans that usually have much longer grace periods as well as having interest rates that are below the market, are what are often considered under the foreign aid category. The mission stated for the concessional loans are to “promote economic development and improve living standards in developing countries.”¹¹²

Then there is the China Development Bank (CDB) who does not give development aid. It offers non-concessional loans, and operates based on market principles. For example, in 2008 the CDB financed the Great Wall Apartment complex in Nairobi, Kenya. Working together with CDB’s partner, the Development Bank of Kenya, they created an apartment complex that could be sold to Kenyans of moderate income and finance their purchase through fifteen-year mortgages with the Development Bank of Kenya.¹¹³ These are the kinds of win-win programs that the CDB believes in. However most of CDB’s activities are focused on Chinese government or state-owned companies within China; only around 3 percent of their activities occur overseas, although that has been changing. By the end of 2007 the bank had only sponsored thirty projects in the continent, for a total of \$1 billion dollars.¹¹⁴

The CDB launched the China-Africa Development Fund (CADF) in 2007. The CDB is

¹¹¹ *ibid.*,p.112

¹¹² *ibid.*,p.114

¹¹³ *ibid.*,p.115

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*,p.116

much larger than Eximbank and CADF, an equity fund, expects to provide over \$5 billion dollars in finance for ventures launched by Chinese firms.¹¹⁵ The CEO emphasized that this is not a “foreign aid” bank but rather a market-based fund. The “first few projects funded included a glass factory in Egypt, a gas-fired power plant in Ghana (a joint venture with Ghanaian firm), and a chromium processing plant in Zimbabwe”¹¹⁶ At first the CADF was criticized because it limited participation to only Chinese companies with their African joint-venture partners, however, China believed that this kind of large-scale foreign investment is simply a shortcut to development. It dedicates anywhere from \$5 million dollars to \$50 million dollars on each project ranging in sectors such as agriculture and manufacturing, infrastructure and related industries such as electric power, energy facilities, transportation and urban water supply, natural resources such as oil, gas and minerals and industrial parks.¹¹⁷ Although equity funds have been established by the industrialized companies in the West there are no real counterparts to the CADF in terms of scale, direct equity to companies, and such large-scale promotion of Chinese companies to enter the African market.

Thus we can see from these structures that the border between state-sponsored activity and private investment is quite blurry. The state encourages private companies through the equity fund, as well as sponsor their own projects. However, what underlies these funds is the principles of mutual benefit (also benefiting Chinese companies and traders), as well as not framing it as “aid” but rather, emphasizing the market-based information for guidance. The sentiment is that China must “export development” and use their own recent experiences of urbanization, and

¹¹⁵ *ibid.* p.93

¹¹⁶ *ibid.* p.94

¹¹⁷ Chen, James. “China-Africa Development Fund (CADFund).” *Investopedia*, Investopedia, 29 Jan. 2020, www.investopedia.com/terms/c/china-africa-development-fund.asp.

poverty alleviation to guide their interactions in Africa and promote their own Chinese company's prosperity. The underlying theme that courses throughout all these activities however, is that China is exporting their development strategies. Over the course of the past few decades China has economically developed and now is exporting these ideas, tools and *things* (commodities) to a continent that is also trying to develop. Most of their large-scale products surround critical infrastructure, from essential government buildings, to railroads, to telecommunication networks, to nuclear power plants.

The Medical Sector a Good Example of Unique State Work

Critics have both stated that China is doing too much or doing too little as aforementioned in Chapter I. Either taking too much of the continent, or not providing enough for the diversifying and promotion of local economies. These critics come at all these different, and hypocritical fronts precisely because of the wide range and diversity of the relationship. The exchanges and interactions cover an extremely vast array of sectors which counter the dominant narrative that China's main interactions are simply for natural resources. With China's unique structure for loans and unique theoretical approach, the line between state and private enterprises blurs. There is a spectrum of work that range from completely state-sanctioned to semi-state approved to completely private.

The medical sector for example reflects this complicated landscape. The Chinese government provides an estimate of around \$150 million dollars to the health sector in the African continent annually since 2014. These funds go towards the building of hospitals, the donation of medical supplies as well as grant funds and staff. They also provide critical assistance during disease related emergencies. They played major role in the Ebola crisis of 2014-2015 in West Africa where China sent military medical teams to provide disease

prevention and control and provided direct clinical help in both Sierra Leone and Liberia. One of the major viruses that China has pledged to combat in the continent is malaria. China had shown intensive work ethic that mirrors their language in their ideals and policies. Despite China's own difficulties between FOCAC III and FOCAC IV including the major Wenchuan earthquake of 2008 and financial crisis during the time, China was still able to build 30 anti-malaria centers on time.

The flagship medical assistance program is the Chinese Medical Teams (CMT). Chinese medical assistance started in 1963 when 100 medical professionals landed in Algeria to aid in the aftermath of the war with France. Since then CMTs have been continuously deployed to the continent, which has had more than 20,000 Chinese medics stationed abroad, with most stationed in Africa. CMTs are teams that pairs a Chinese province with a "sister" country. For example, Uganda is covered by Yunnan province and Tanzania is covered by Shandong province.¹¹⁸ This again reflects their emphasis on relationship-oriented development, where this kind of pairing is meant to spur mutual understanding and more relational ties. As of 2017 CMTs consisting of more than 20,000 medical professionals to 41 African countries have provided health care for over 270 million patients.

These programs are organized under the Ministry of Health who finds medical specialists from each Chinese province and usually pairs the province up with a country who needs development assistance. Then the Ministry of Health provides up to six months of training in languages, international relations and cultural studies before the unit departs. These units are deployed in cyclical fashion usually with a 2-year cycle. Each unit is comprised of doctors, nurses, a leader, translator and chef. Again, reflecting China's anti-hegemonic view on assistance

¹¹⁸ Wang, Long, and Joshua Bateman. "China's Medical Aid in Africa." – *The Diplomat*, For The Diplomat, 15 Mar. 2018, thediplomat.com/2018/03/chinas-medical-aid-in-africa/.

where all work should be provided by the Chinese themselves.¹¹⁹ Often these professionals would also have Chinese Traditional Medicine. In Namibia's capital, Windhoek the Katutura State Hospital has its very own Acupuncture Department.¹²⁰ CMT units have been highly regarded in the continent, Tanzanian doctors for example described the CMT's as "the backbone in the hospitals", "quite skilled" and "like magic when doing surgery."¹²¹

Since the program began in the 1960's, it is directly relevant to the values delineated in the last chapter. After a visit with Mao Zedong to President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania in 1965 (the same meeting where the TAZARA railway was first pitched), Zhou Enlai stated: "Now we have several dozen CMTs abroad, yet it is not enough. CMTs should not only cure the disease, but also help training work... Our assistance is to make the country be able to stand up."¹²² Thus since then, most CMT's hold public lectures, free training courses and instruction in operation procedures. These programs would be based on how severe the medical crisis in the country. In Algeria up to 2008 the CMT "presented more than 20 training courses, gave more than 30 public lectures, and trained more than 300 medical personnel who are all now backbones of local medical institutions."¹²³ In Tanzania CMTs were known to teach acupuncture using their own bodies, allowing Tanzanian medical students to have direct contact. In Liberia, where the prolonged conflict has left a high need in medical assistance, the efforts have been particularly strong in teaching local medical personnel.

¹¹⁹ Chen, Shu, et al. "Chinese Medical Teams in Africa: a Flagship Program Facing Formidable Challenges." *Journal of Global Health*, Edinburgh University Global Health Society, June 2019, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6394880/.

¹²⁰ Ndalimpinga, Lita. "Feature: Chinese Medical Team Providing Quality Public Health Services in Namibia." *Xinhua*, www.xinhuanet.com/english/africa/2020-02/16/c_138789087.htm.

¹²¹ Chen, Shu, et al. "Chinese Medical Teams in Africa: a Flagship Program Facing Formidable Challenges." *Journal of Global Health*, Edinburgh University Global Health Society, June 2019, www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6394880/.

¹²² Li, Anshan, and Funeka Yazini April. *Forum on China-Africa Cooperation: the Politics of Human Resource Development*. Africa Institute of South Africa, 2013.p.73

¹²³ *ibid.* p.73

The CMT programs as well as the direct medical assistance shows the way in which the Chinese government kept their values for technical assistance outlined in Chapter II. There are no shortcuts for the Chinese professionals, and there are no lavish settings or preferential treatment. The medical assistance teams live humbly, work hard, and often face extremely difficult situations. This has not gone unnoticed by African countries who have often praised and consider this front one of the strongest facets of the China Africa relationship. For example, the Zambian Minister of Health Chitalu Chilufya said that his “government appreciates the professional, ethical and hardworking culture of the Chinese medical team that have been coming to the country since 1978.” Some doctors have even mentioned that patients have shown gratitude with song and dance in clinics.¹²⁴

At the same time there are many private clinics opening in small towns and larger pharmaceutical companies investing in the African continent which both have nothing to do with the state. The medical professionals are either CMT doctors who decide to stay after their unit, or simply medical professionals who are looking for a better life abroad. Now, Chinese Traditional Medicine is on the rise across the continent and many who are trained look at the continent as an opportunity.¹²⁵ Furthermore, many different NGO’s that are separate from the government continuously promotes the investment climate of the African continent to private pharmaceutical companies with exhibits and events. For example, the CPhI, the largest global pharmaceutical conference event hosted worldwide with a China exhibition in Shanghai annually continuously

¹²⁴ *ibid.* p.73

¹²⁵ “Chinese Medicine Is on the Rise in Africa.” *The Economist*, The Economist Newspaper, 18 Nov. 2018, www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2018/11/08/chinese-medicine-is-on-the-rise-in-africa.

has speakers that promote Africa as a potential investment area to wide ranges of private pharmaceutical companies.¹²⁶

Thus the landscape of the medical aid sector reflects the multi-layered and complex dynamics between state and private activities. What is clear however is that China is committed on all fronts to the development of the health sector in Africa, and has shown resilience and continued efforts. The win-win aspect in this front is the most apparent, for these programs directly save lives while strengthening local relationships.

Infrastructure Projects

The most visible signs of the China-Africa relationship have been the large infrastructure projects as mentioned in Chapter I. This is often lumped into the argument that these projects are a scheme for debt-trap diplomacy without describing what kinds of projects are being pursued. These large-scale major infrastructure projects are all essential infrastructure projects, building transportation and government buildings, which undoubtedly is, if not good, at least useful to the continent. After TAZARA mentioned in Chapter 3, at least five African countries have had their railway systems funded by the Chinese: Kenya, Ethiopia, Angola, Djibouti, and Nigeria. For Kenya, the Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway was the largest project since independence.¹²⁷ The railways are an example of China fulfilling a demand; in general, it is China's stance that whatever it is that they do must be a direct request or need from the African government. To recall that is because they have a strong non-interventionist

¹²⁶ When I was working at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Beijing, I worked specifically on creating a presentation for the largest pharmaceutical companies in China to invest in the African continent.

¹²⁷ Tubei, George. "10 Massive Projects the Chinese Are Funding in Africa - Including Railways and a Brand-New City." *10 Massive Projects the Chinese Are Funding in Africa - Including Railways and a Brand-New City*, 25 Sept. 2018, www.businessinsider.co.za/here-are-150-million-rand-projects-in-africa-funded-by-china-2018-9.

policy. Thus other than the large transportation projects, they also have help funded a myriad of large-scale essential public facilities for the governments of Africa such as the African Union (AU) Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2012 which the Chinese government fully funded costing around USD 200 million. In March 2018, the Chinese government signed a memorandum with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Beijing will be funding a new headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria, which will cost an estimate of USD 31.6 million. Furthermore, China has agreed to build parliament buildings in Zimbabwe, Congo, Malawi, Guinea-Bissau, and Lesotho. China is also rebuilding parliaments in Gabon and renovating one in Sierra Leone.¹²⁸

Telecommunication routes are also one of the largest forms of investment and contribution that China has given to the continent. From 2005-2012, the telecommunications sector accounted for 34% of the Chinese investments in Sub-Saharan Africa.¹²⁹ The major telecommunication provider Huawei has been in the African market since 1998. Since then, it has laid thousands of kilometers of optical fibers across the continent. It is understood that “up to 70% of the continent’s IT spine is built by Huawei with a combination of Chinese grants and loans.”¹³⁰ Chinese companies, most specifically Huawei and ZTE both provide cheap smartphones (some of them under \$20 USD), help develop physical infrastructure, as well as establishing 4G and 3G broad-bands. Huawei has been involved in the construction of mobile

¹²⁸ Campbell, John. “China to Build New ECOWAS Headquarters in Abuja.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, 11 Apr. 2018, www.cfr.org/blog/china-build-new-ecowas-headquarters-abuja.

¹²⁹ Jiang, Yang, et al. *China’s Overseas Investment in Critical Infrastructure: Nuclear Power and Telecommunications*. DIIS, 2016.

¹³⁰ Moore, W. Gyude. “African Countries Should Stay Loyal to China’s Troubled Huawei—Regardless of Trump.” *Quartz Africa*, Quartz, 27 May 2019, qz.com/africa/1629078/africa-will-stay-loyal-to-chinas-huawei-regardless-of-trump/.

networks in some 40 African countries.¹³¹ They collaborate with both governments as well as local companies, again reflecting the complicated relationship between states and private enterprises. In West Africa Huawei manages the Orange Group's network and is one of their leading suppliers.¹³² In 2017 Ethiopia signed a \$700 million mobile network deal with Huawei for the construction of 4G broad-bands in Addis Ababa and 3G networks across the rest of the country. Huawei has helped more than double the number of subscribers in Ethiopia, and Huawei phones have only grown exponentially more popular in Ethiopia as well as across the continent.¹³³ Huawei also provides national security equipment for example in Uganda, Huawei has built 11 monitoring centers used to "fight crime." These infrastructures include cameras equipped with facial-recognition technology.¹³⁴

These large-scale projects have all been met with widespread skepticism. As mentioned in Chapter I, the Chinese are often accused of surveillance and spying on the African continent. The Council of Foreign Relations for example claim that "African passivity over the apparent Chinese compromise of AU data is discouraging, and their growing relationship likely will not help those promoting democracy and good governance."¹³⁵ Accusations of spying and surveillance, and denouncements of poor privacy legislation for networks have all been remarked by various scholarly groups such as the Danish Institute for International Peace. Interestingly

¹³¹ Parkinson, Joe, et al. "Huawei Technicians Helped African Governments Spy on Political Opponents." *The Wall Street Journal*, Dow Jones & Company, 15 Aug. 2019, www.wsj.com/articles/huawei-technicians-helped-african-governments-spy-on-political-opponents-11565793017.

¹³² Clémentot, Julien. "Chinese Tech Giant Huawei Wins Support in Africa." *The Africa Report.com*, The Africa Report, 11 June 2019, www.theafricareport.com/13764/chinese-tech-giant-huawei-wins-support-in-africa/.

¹³³ Maasho, Aaron. "Ethiopia Signs \$700 Mln Mobile Network Deal with China's Huawei." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 25 July 2013, www.reuters.com/article/ethiopia-mobile-huawei/ethiopia-signs-700-mln-mobile-network-deal-with-chinas-huawei-idUSL6N0FV4WV20130725.

¹³⁴ Parkinson, Joe, et al. "Huawei Technicians Helped African Governments Spy on Political Opponents." *The Wall Street Journal*, Dow Jones & Company, 15 Aug. 2019, www.wsj.com/articles/huawei-technicians-helped-african-governments-spy-on-political-opponents-11565793017.

¹³⁵ Campbell, John. "China to Build New ECOWAS Headquarters in Abuja." *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, 11 Apr. 2018, www.cfr.org/blog/china-build-new-ecowas-headquarters-abuja.

enough, these stories are often about how African governments have the ability to correspond with Huawei technicians for the spying on their own people with heavy implications that China is also spying on the continent for long-term needs. The *Wall Street Journal* wrote an article centered around internal political spying within Uganda and Zambia, however continues to imply the notion that Beijing is spying in the continent. A digital surveillance expert was interviewed and stated: “the big question has been whether Chinese companies are just doing this for the money, or whether they’re pushing a specific kind of surveillance agenda.”¹³⁶ Despite the article admitting to no evidence on whether or not Beijing has any influence in this at all, this notion is still emphasized within the article.

Again as stated in Chapter 1, the West is confused about why China would fund these projects as an act of good will and can only create an answer that claims that the Chinese are coercive or spying on the African governments.¹³⁷ Not only is this insulting to the Chinese, it is another instance of demeaning the African continent and its people for not knowing what is best for them and implying that they are being duped. Time and time again, the African governments are turning to China to fund essential projects for the African governments to govern themselves. From transportation, to communication lines, to whole special economic zones and to all these different official buildings it has become clear that no matter how you spin it, the Chinese are making an impact to African lives and the African governments are choosing to trust them. If for a moment, we cease to judge the effects of the relationship and simply look at the results, it is

¹³⁶ Parkinson, Joe, et al. “Huawei Technicians Helped African Governments Spy on Political Opponents.” *The Wall Street Journal*, Dow Jones & Company, 15 Aug. 2019, www.wsj.com/articles/huawei-technicians-helped-african-governments-spy-on-political-opponents-11565793017.

¹³⁷ Campbell, John. “China to Build New ECOWAS Headquarters in Abuja.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, Council on Foreign Relations, 11 Apr. 2018, www.cfr.org/blog/china-build-new-ecowas-headquarters-abuja.

undeniable that these projects are a positive for the African people and governments and more importantly that the African people *want* and are requesting these collaborations.

Manufacturing

As delineated in the book *The Next Factory of the World* Chinese factories and people are re-invigorating a once failing manufacturing sector in the continent. Much like the other industries conveyed above, this all begins with a mixture of different kinds of relationships, a mixture of state sanctions, private enterprises and simply personal relations. In the past few decades China's economy has begun to shift their own priorities from primary to tertiary sectors. Everyone recalls a time where most global commodities were labeled "Made in China." This has begun to shift as China's economy becomes more technologically advanced, and less reliant on their own manufacturing industries.

As an economy that has just emerged from its own industrialization, China has a vast amount of resources, skills and technical equipment in China. As author Irene Yuan Sun argues in her book, factories often travel with the industrialization of nations: "The shift toward working in factories, running factories, and owning factories is a macroeconomic process that has transformed China over the past generation and is on the cusp of unleashing great changes in Africa as well." Often, western critics point at Chinese factories opening in the continent as a new form of exploitation, especially exploiting lower human labor costs. Despite the irony, considering how many factories still exist in China today manufacturing for Western companies, there is a larger point to be drawn from the nature of manufacturing. It is an industry where everyone moves to earn their next buck. Many Chinese people for example, learned how to begin their own factories by starting off as working in factories owned by Taiwanese people, who had

learned from Japanese ones. The trajectory of manufacturing is one that isn't self-generative. It is a chain of human connections and human beings who learn from one another and who are simply surviving amongst large geo-political changes.

As Mr. Sun, a Chinese man who started a factory in Nigeria states: "The train of development – which station first and then which station you need to go through – we Chinese know exactly what the path is. Nigeria needs to learn from China! For Africa, the Western path is unwalkable."¹³⁸ To Mr. Sun and many Chinese people like him – poor, rural men with little education who worked their way up, from factory worker to factory owner, the path to development and growth is simple: learn to make things, make things then sell them. Contrary to popular belief in Western media, most of these factories have to employ African workers and do bring many jobs into the market. They also train African workers to become managers, simply by virtue of the nature of manufacturing work (just like how Mr. Sun did it).

These factories that are now opening up all across the continent range in size, type and item. From flip flops, to glassware, to plastic goods, to T-Shirts, manufacturers are appearing and the Chinese are helping to shape the landscape of this new wave of industrialization, as a practical approach of using existing knowledge for practical business ventures in an emerging market.

'China Shops'

There are also many Chinese people who are landing in Africa simply because their family or friends have told found an opportunity for them. These people are those who simply

¹³⁸ Sun, Irene Yuan. *The next Factory of the World: How Chinese Investment Is Reshaping Africa*. Harvard Business Review Press, 2017.

move to the continent for better opportunities, to try their luck somewhere new.¹³⁹ Most of these Chinese find themselves in new and unfamiliar places because of family members and friends. In an investigative piece on the Henan Chinese population in Senegal, Mr. Zhu Haoming who started off selling artificial flowers is part of the vast network of Chinese people who are simply working hard to live in the new continent. Mr. Zhu stated: “This is how life is for us... We have to leave home to make a living. If you find a good place, you end up pulling in your friends, even if it’s on the others side of the world.”¹⁴⁰ These relationship circles, a strong Chinese characteristic that is also the reason to the many Chinatowns around the world, are what predominantly bring people to the African continent.

These kinds of stores, often called ‘China Shops’ range in size and content with items often manufactured in China such as most dominantly clothing, food and basic household goods. Everything from bedazzled women’s shoes to toothbrushes. They often cater to the local Chinese populations as well as African populations. These convenience stores have risen in sharp numbers over the last few years, to provide a sense of scale, as of 2017 there were 200 Chinese-owned shops on the street in Dakar, Senegal there are 200 Chinese owned shops on Boulevard du General de Gaulle.¹⁴¹ These kinds of shops have emerged in virtually every single country across the continent. These Chinese people are mostly of working class backgrounds and have the basic business acumen as Mr. Zhu did when he got to Senegal: “I realized that China had lots of stuff and the people here needed stuff, so it was a good match.”¹⁴²

¹³⁹ French, Howard W. *China's Second Continent: How a Million Migrants Are Building a New Empire in Africa*. Vintage Books, a Division of Random House LLC, 2015.

¹⁴⁰ Jacobs, Andrew. “Chinese Merchants Thrive in Senegal, Where People 'Needed Stuff'.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 23 May 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/05/23/world/africa/chinese-merchants-thrive-in-senegal-where-people-needed-stuff.html.

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*

¹⁴² *ibid.*

These China Shops are often competitive with other Africans who go to China, in particular GuangZhou, to bring back these same kinds of goods. Many of these African traders would go to China once or twice a year to put in order of goods and return with containers full of everything from cloth, to electronic parts. Within the country too, Chinese wholesalers would also sell to local traders who would bring the goods back to more rural areas. In some countries, for example in Ghana, there are issues of crowding out local manufactured goods with the flooding of these cheap products from China. In Ghana the industry that suffered the most is the textile industry, where locally woven textiles have been driven out by Chinese replacements.¹⁴³ The complaints of poor quality goods, “shoddy electronics,” and overall cheap manufactured goods are also pervasive across the continent. Often traders complain that the Chinese are “crooks” or that the quality of the goods are simply shams.¹⁴⁴ More than a systematic way of demeaning, diminishing or maliciously forcing these goods into the African markets however, this is reflective of the fact that China learned to produce vast quantities of cheap goods which was how they rose to rapid economic development in the last 30 years.

These China Shops show that China is not an elitist power-house where the rich are entering the African continent as a way to extract resources. They show that in fact, Chinese people are simply adapting to changing global environments by doing what they need to survive.

Conclusion

In this chapter I explored how the current global governance stance of China relates to the historical lineage outlined in Chapter 2. I argued that one can see echoes in the Belt Road

¹⁴³Lee, Margaret Carol. *Africa's World Trade Informal Economies and Globalization from Below*. Zed Books Ltd, 2014.

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.*

Initiative with the historical visions of uniting the developing world with an anti-hegemonic stance. This is significant because not only does it challenge the dominant script presented in Chapter 1, it shows how there is an alternative narrative that China understands herself to be acting upon. China has another understanding of what international relations could look like, and what global partnerships could be.

In Chapter 2 I outlined the different philosophical premises that China has when it comes to conceptualizing global governance and international relations. With this framework in mind, I outlined in this chapter how these concepts manifest in practice, and how ultimately the power in these relations are different from the colonial oppressor-oppressed relationship. China is not a rich powerhouse where everyone lives a bourgeoisie lifestyle the way the Europeans were in colonial times. They do not, for example, employ slaves or have a clear disparity between the wealth and lifestyles between the Chinese peoples and the local populations. Chinese development happened in the last 30 years, so people who are wealthy just became wealthy in this lifetime, and what is often neglected in the discussion about China is that most of the population is still rural. By giving a brief overview of the main sectors in the China-Africa relationship, I hoped to show that in fact, the visions and the plans are *for* win-win initiatives between two developing economies. Whether or not each project is successful comes down to the infinitely different personalities and goals of the individual. But on the whole, we can see that the vision aligns with their actions, and that China still believes in their vision of harmony, mutual prosperity and anti-hegemony. China's dream, and how they understand themselves as, is to build this "community of common destiny."

Chapter 4: China's Soft Power and People-to-People

Power

In this thesis we began with examining the perceptions of China-Africa relations in Western media and comparing the criticisms of China with the realities of Europe and America's past and present actions in colonial development and neo-colonial aid. We then delved into the histories of China and Africa and their position in the 50's to highlight the unique history that China has emerging into the 21st century. Then we looked at how this history and historical stance on global governance connects to China's current program the Belt Road Initiative (BRI) and how its relationship with the African continent reflects its beliefs and ideologies. We looked briefly at China's ideological stances and then at the current landscape of her activities. Of course, it is difficult to summarize all the different aspects of the policies and economic reforms that stretch across the entire continent as well as across an entire range of sectors. The point is not to provide a summary but a sense of what the landscape is: vast and with a high range of activity and people-to-people exchange. Again, this is not to say that there is nothing to criticize when it comes to China's governance. There is much to criticize. But the criticism should come with the context of what it is they aim to do, and the larger picture of where it is China comes from and what their overall mission is. Thus we come to the final chapter of the thesis which will delve more on what sets the BRI apart from any global initiatives prior to it an emphasis on culture and people relations. This is because even though we understand the historical and ideological motivations behind their economic and political relations with the African continent these are fronts that have been emphasized by the West as well during colonial development periods as well as aid programs. Much of the discussion as outlined in Chapter 1 centers

economic development and political democratization (Washington Consensus, IMF, World Bank). However, China has a third priority other than economic development and political friendliness that truly sets the BRI apart, and that is their strong positioning on cultural exchange and people-to-people learning. It is these programs that truly showcase BRI as a new program that reframes how international relations are conceived, for it reveals that the economic and political relations are a means to an end, not an end in itself. China's vision of a "community of common destiny" is that of a multicultural community of mutual understanding and mutual learning.

In this chapter we will first begin with revealing the very real bias in Chinese media to compare with the media bias presented in the first chapter. Afterwards we will briefly explain Chinese cultural values on respect, humility and elegance. The traditional cultural values and way of relating to one another, with its roots in Confucianism, is something that highly influences the way in which Chinese government officials act on the international stage. Then we will go into their education strategy and how the scholarships as well as development of Confucius Institutes across the continent play into their BRI. Finally, we will look at the artistic exchanges that are occurring across the continent as well as in China. Showing how the arts is treated with respect as a way of showing respect to each other, and how this compares with looted artifacts from colonial times in the West and how in general the West treated the arts from the African and Asian continent.

China's Soft Power and Own Media Bias

It is incontrovertible that every media has a bias, whether they like to believe it or not. In the United States the news prides itself for being objective by presenting a range of perspectives

and having a free-press. Thus there is much good scholarship that unearths the China-Africa relations from various angles such as Deborah Brautigam, Jamie Monson, Irene Sun and Ruth Simbao. However, by and large the media in the West paints a wholly negative view on China and that is undeniably following a dominant script. For example, during the coronavirus outbreak of 2020, the *Wall Street Journal* printed an article titled “China is the Real Sick Man of Asia” starting with the sentence: “The mighty Chinese juggernaut has been humbled this week, apparently by a species-hopping bat virus.”¹⁴⁵ The rest of the article dives into perceptions of the Chinese economy and criticisms of China’s response to the virus. It is shamelessly tone-deaf to the crisis and looks at this crisis as if it were proof that China is not strong (or clean). The reference to the “bat virus” is direct jab and cruel joke again conflating rumor with fact as with articles referenced in the beginning about China’s land-grabs in the African continent. It is no surprise that China is painted so negatively in the Western media, but it should be understood that this *is* precisely because of China’s stance against the imperial and colonial West. There is much energy poured into different ways to criticize China, and because it is about a foreign communist country that is now also rich, with more fervor and shamelessness than ever before. As Li Yang wrote from the *China Daily*, “As the sleeping dragon awoke toward the end of the last century, the West felt uneasy. And when it took off on the road to rapid economic development, the West’s unease began turning into fear, giving rise to the “China threat” theory which is bandied about so rampantly across the world today.”¹⁴⁶ Western media is used to instill a fear of China and this has influenced Taiwan, Hong Kong as well as the African continent greatly. By offering large quantities of criticism and instilling doubts, Western media plays an

¹⁴⁵ Mead, Walter Russell. “Opinion | China Is the Real Sick Man of Asia.” *The Wall Street Journal*, Dow Jones & Company, 3 Feb. 2020, www.wsj.com/articles/china-is-the-real-sick-man-of-asia-11580773677.

¹⁴⁶ Yang, Li. “China Threat’ Theory Is Absurd.” *‘China Threat’ Theory Is Absurd*, 2010, www.chinadaily.com.cn/cndy/2010-09/02/content_11244548.htm.

extremely non-trivial role in changing how China is perceived in the rest of the world. It is again, an intervention; however, it is not an intervention with “truth.” It is insulting again, that the West assumes that their opinions are the golden standard. As African economic and political scholar Amsala K. Addis states: “In fact, the government of Africa and its society have the ability to address the issues of Sino-African relations. Africa has the history and the tools to build successful and peaceful political and economic entities based on its own values and norms without being imposed upon by external powers, and Africa did so prior to colonial rule and can do the same in the future.”¹⁴⁷

China has four main media outlets: Xinhua, Central China Television (CCTV), China Radio International, and *China Daily*.¹⁴⁸ In this chapter I will only explore two, Xinhua and CCTV to give a sense of China’s media influence and activities in the continent. Xinhua is the largest news agency in the world and is the central mouthpiece of the CCP. It has 13 African bureaus in English, nine in French and two in Portuguese and has developed the largest network of news agencies on the continent.¹⁴⁹ They have been operating in the African continent as early as 1961 and had offices in Accra, Ghana; Dakar, Senegal; Conakry, Guinea; Rabat, Morocco and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The early Xinhua reports centered on themes that reflected the CCP’s global governance stance outlined in Chapter 2: “African repression under colonialism; the anticolonial struggle in Africa; Beijing’s support for African peoples’ struggle against colonialism; China as a model for oppressed nations; peaceful and friendly relations between China and African countries.” Again this is a direct echo of China’s positioning in the middle of

¹⁴⁷ Amsalu K. Addis & Zhu Zuping (2018) Criticism of neo-colonialism: clarification of Sino-African cooperation and its implication to the west, *Journal of Chinese Economic and Business Studies*, 16:4, 357-373, DOI: 10.1080/14765284.2018.1521593

¹⁴⁸ Xiaoling Zhang, Herman Wasserman & Winston Mano (2016) China's expanding influence in Africa: projection, perception and prospects in Southern African countries, *Communicatio*, 42:1, 1-22, DOI: [10.1080/02500167.2016.1143853](https://doi.org/10.1080/02500167.2016.1143853)

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*

the 20th century. Their views were radical and they had state pamphlets distributed across African countries to encourage CCP revolutionary slogans and Mao Zedong works. A sense of their tone can be seen from this quote:

“All oppressed nations and peoples will sooner or later rise in revolution, and this is precisely why revolutionary experience and theories will naturally gain currency among these nations and peoples and go deep to their hearts. That is why pamphlets introducing guerilla warfare in China have such a wide circulation in Africa... and are looked upon as precious things even after they are worn and come apart and the print has become illegible through rubbing. The influence of ideas knows no state boundaries. No one can prevent the dissemination among the people what they need.”

Here we see the reflection of their sentiment of shared history, of the importance of decolonial revolution in the African countries and how intensely China believes in the need for spreading their ideology. This fervor and intensity was met with a mixture of admiration and fear from the African people. The Chinese came off too strong, and often this confused and pushed off their African counterparts. Afterwards, during the Cultural Revolution which began in 1966 China called back their journalists and shut down most of their offices all over the world. Their broadcasts at home became more radical and their relationships with foreign countries more constrained, except for the TAZARA project as mentioned in sections above. After the Cultural revolution, in the 1980s they adopted a softer and more cooperative stance. To give a sense of how government funding fell, Xinhua had seventy-two journalists in 1979 and in 1984 they had only forty-eight.

When China decided to open their doors, Xinhua also gained more attention from China. Xinhua's domestic and international subscribers increased from "1,876 in 1994 to 3,400 in 1998, and 16,060 in 2002."¹⁵⁰ The way Xinhua and Chinese news agencies networks work is having journalists and researchers stay continuously in the area. This is in direct opposition to many Western news services, who give very little attention to African countries unless there is a crisis.¹⁵¹ The reporters from Xinhua are often transferred around Africa allowing them to build "extensive regional contact networks." Xinhua is both a public news agency as well as an agency that creates "internal reference" reports. These reports "provide proprietary information and in depth analyses for senior government officials, business executives and media leaders." The way these reports are differentiated (between public and private) is highly political. The Propaganda Department of the CPC Central Committee is what monitors which reports are chosen to be for public consumption and which for private reference. Thus, China's strategy and as well as understanding of how to use their media is not covertly about their own ideological program, it is explicitly so. This is because the value of the free press is not as important as the harmony of the one party. China has now understood soft power as one of the main tools in promoting their views.

Now, Chinese news media play a big role in communicating and shaping the perception of China and they are struggling to shape perceptions away from Western media biases. Xinhua reporters are considered one of the most "well-connected and informed foreigners on the continent" because they often work closely with African governments' official news agencies. This is also because of China's efforts in bringing together and promoting exchanges and

¹⁵⁰ "Chapter 7: Media, Education, and Cultural Relations and Ties with Chinese Communities in Africa." *China and Africa: a Century of Engagement*, by David Hamilton Shinn and Joshua Eisenman, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. p.198

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*

relationship building between Xinhua and African media. China hosts delegations to bring the heads of African official news agencies to China. For example, in 2007, the heads of agencies in Senegal, Togo, and Benin visited China and met with the President of Xinhua Tian Congming. The Beninese News Agency (ABP) director general Yaovi Hounkponou, described the experience with Xinhua where he visited Beijing, Tianjing, Shenzheng, and Guangzhou a “win-win” cooperation.

China furthers these relationships between China and African agencies that reflect their overall ideological stance of building friendly relations mentioned in Chapter 3. Technology and personnel training in journalism is how these news agencies are beyond just simply news agencies, they are in fact, much more like the Chinese Medical Teams (CMT)’s mentioned in Chapter 3. In 2005 after Ma Shengrong the Xinhua News Agency’s vice president stated that “Xinhua will further exchanges and cooperation with African news agencies” the agency expanded cooperation and information sharing with at least a dozen African news agencies. This includes “human resource training, technology and management” echoing the way in which their medical teams are dispatched in the continent. They even donated computer systems for Zimbabwe’s state-run Herald in 2007. They also have a cooperation agreement with *Kenya Times* giving them access to unlimited use of Xinhua’s pictures and stories.¹⁵² Journalist training programs, seminars, technology management, are all ways in which China has been connecting with the African continent. In 2008 for example the China Foreign Affairs University sponsored the “fourth training program for twenty-two African journalists.”¹⁵³ On top of that the Information Office of China’s State Council and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs jointly host

¹⁵² “Chapter 7: Media, Education, and Cultural Relations and Ties with Chinese Communities in Africa.” *China and Africa: a Century of Engagement*, by David Hamilton Shinn and Joshua Eisenman, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. p.198

¹⁵³ *ibid.* 206

many training seminars for African press officials in Beijing. The workshop in 2009 included over seventy African media officials from twenty-seven African countries.

The state, the media and the “aid” all blur in China’s way of acting, because they do not have the same divisions the West emphasizes. Thus Xinhua represents this blurry and distinctive way in which China’s soft power strategy operates: it is a public news agency, a publisher, an agency that creates internal reports, an agency that sometimes hosts trainings, as well as hosts and sends delegations. Xinhua uses three pillars to approach their news and China-Africa relations: “China as a peace-loving country, using per capita figures to downplay China’s economic successes, and highlighting China’s developing country status.” This is clearly media bias, fit with an entire Propaganda team; however, the difference is that it is not masking itself as ‘objective news.’ Rather, China’s approach to media is clearly the state’s approach to media, and there is no real separation from the state. This kind of government backing is how Xinhua became the world’s largest news agency. In 2005 it had 8,400 employees this is especially significant if you compare it to something like Agence France-Press who has 2,000. These numbers have swelled since then and Xinhua’s presence is prominent on the African continent. Now for news stories on China in the African continent, 31 percent comes from Xinhua, followed by Reuters 29 percent. There is a strong rhetoric and ingrained phobia for any semblance of propaganda in the West. This leads to a blind faith in Western media outlets, celebrated for their ‘objectiveness.’ However, outside of the Western countries these news media outlets are met with the same skepticism. After a journalist training program in 2008 Gideon Nkala of Botswana’s *The Reporter* newspaper published his personal account of his experience in the training program. Nkala reported: “[The instructor] made the whole class burst into laughter when he said, with a straight face, that a new entrant into Chinese street lingua for

anything that is untrue and fabricated is now called CNN. ‘If someone is telling a lie in China, we now say you are CNN.’”

At the same time CCTV, China’s main television channel, has also created programs that follow similar ideological stances. They also have developed strong relations with multiple African authorities. In 2010 for example, Togolese authorities and CCTV officials agreed that “radio Lome and Togolese Television would broadcast China’s French language reports. The agreements also provides technical and material assistance for modernization of Togo’s state-owned radio and TV stations.”¹⁵⁴ CCTV concentrates on longer audio/video content that promotes China Africa relations and educating both the Chinese on the African continent as well as Africans on Chinese culture. It should be noted that although the state still has much influence both in Xinhua and CCTV, China’s stance and state-controlled media has loosened by a lot since the beginning of the twentieth century. Due to the changing politics, China now embraces much more pluralism and CCTV’s previous stance as only a tool for ideological ideas has weakened considerably.¹⁵⁵

CCTV creates many serialized documentaries on the China-Africa issue. For example, CCTV-9 one created a series called 非洲纪事 *African Chronicles*. The 9-episode series goes through an emotional narrative of China’s engagement with Africa. Each episode is set in a different country and recounts a different tale. Each episode dives into a specific aspect of the relationship for example, episode two and three are on Chinese Medical Teams. The first episode begins with a Chinese professor Ge, who feels an overwhelming sense of nostalgia when he arrives in Africa. This nostalgia is both a reflection of a societal statement as well as a political

¹⁵⁴ “Chapter 7: Media, Education, and Cultural Relations and Ties with Chinese Communities in Africa.” *China and Africa: a Century of Engagement*, by David Hamilton Shinn and Joshua Eisenman, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.

¹⁵⁵ Chu, 2007

statement. In post-reform China, nostalgia is recurrent resulting from the loss of a cohesive ideology.¹⁵⁶ On another level, this nostalgia highlights the government's continued emphasis of a shared history (and therefore common destiny) between the two populations. Through using audio/visual and emotional evocations, the documentary series attempts to reveal the emotional aspect of the relationship: one of shared struggle under (forced) modernization. At the end of the episode Ge summarizes the engagement and reminisce on the revolutionary years. He uses the expression 'emotional bond' 情结 three times reflective of the broadcasts from his generation where the emphasis was the 'emotional bond with Africa.'¹⁵⁷ Again, enforcing and recalling China's ideological stance.

CCTV's documentary series (one of many) as well as Xinhua's network shows that China's media is a direct mouthpiece of the CPC. The bias is thus blatant and obvious. However, they are in line with the CPC's ideological stances aforementioned and show how China is using every possible media outlet to gain the favor, as well as represent themselves the way they want to. In this sense, it is quite different from the way Western media is biased, for Western media outlets are definitively separate from government structures and advocate for non-biased reporting. Thus, it should be criticized and understood with this context in mind.

Education

China has put extensive efforts into creating educational programs that created inter-personal relationships between the Chinese people and the African peoples. Before the Forum on China African Cooperation (FOCAC) and thus the more recent phase of the China-African

¹⁵⁶ Giovanna Puppini (2017) Making space for emotions: exploring China–Africa 'mediated relationships' through CCTV-9's documentary African Chronicles (Feizhou jishi 非洲纪事), *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 29:1, 131-147, DOI: 10.1080/13696815.2016.1268952

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.* p140

relations, there were smaller attempts at bridging educational gaps. Educational programs attempted to begin in the 1950's and early 1960's, and like all the other programs from this time, were seriously damaged during the Cultural Revolution. Relationships were re-established beginning in the 1970's and by the 1990s the training programs and educational programs began to pick up momentum leading to the 2000's where education programs under the Forum for China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) became exponentially larger. To give a sense of scale in 2003 China had around 1,793 students from the African continent, and by 2016 there were 61,594 students. The greatest number of students come from Ghana, Nigeria, and Tanzania. Currently, China is the second most popular destination for studying abroad from the African continent, with the first being in France (which hosts around 90,000). To compare the United Kingdom and United States hosts around 40,000 African students each.¹⁵⁸

China places a deep focus on education because of their ideological stance. They believe that their relationship with Africa is essentially a “win-win” cooperation, one that is mutually beneficial for both the Chinese and the African peoples. Therefore, education places a huge role in ensuring African people's self-reliance, as well as develop trust of the Chinese people. At the inaugural FOCAC in 2000 specific targets for educational cooperation were set, including the introduction of scholarships for long-term degrees, the posting of Chinese teachers in Africa and the development of relations between Chinese and African universities. This marked the beginning of an era where educational ties are really at the forefront of China-Africa relations and is quite pivotal for the relationship.

Students are attracted to go to China for studies for a number of reasons. One facet is the comparably cheaper prices for education. For those not on government scholarships, each student

¹⁵⁸ “Is China Both a Source and Hub for International Students?” *ChinaPower Project*, 12 Mar. 2020, chinapower.csis.org/china-international-students/.

will have to pay on average around \$5000, whereas going to North America or the United Kingdom the average would be around \$15,000 per year. They also go because of the quality of educational programs, and business opportunities in a rising economic power. Many students are also motivated to learn more about China because of cultural interests, especially Kung Fu. Interestingly enough Kung Fu movies are ways in which young African kids are first exposed to the Chinese language.

A large factor is also the Chinese government scholarships. In the 2015 FOCAC summit China pledged 30,000 government scholarships to African countries. In the 2018 FOCAC summit, China pledged to give 50,000 government scholarships and 50,000 training opportunities through seminars and workshops. Students study everything from business management, engineering to Chinese language studies.

Vocational trainings are also an extremely pertinent part of the relationship which we have touched on in previous chapters. In the second FOCAC summit held in Addis Ababa in 2003 for example, China agreed to sponsor over “300 courses for 10,000 African professionals in areas such as economic management, agriculture, education, science, technology, and medical treatment between 2004 and 2006,”¹⁵⁹ In the 2009 FOCAC summit China promised “to train another 20,000 professionals, offer 5,500 Chinese government scholarships to African students, build fifty schools, and train 1,500 African principals and teachers.”¹⁶⁰ Vocational trainings however are not limited to the sector of education and stretch across science, technology, education, agriculture and infrastructure. Much of these efforts lie with China’s Ministry of Education (MOE) and these programs in Africa correspond with the larger Belt Road Initiative

¹⁵⁹ “Chapter 7: Media, Education, and Cultural Relations and Ties with Chinese Communities in Africa.” *China and Africa: a Century of Engagement*, by David Hamilton Shinn and Joshua Eisenman, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. p. 212

¹⁶⁰ *ibid.* 213

education plans.¹⁶¹ An example of a specific training program is the Lu Ban Workshop designed by the Tianjing Government. Lu Ban is the name of the father of Chinese architecture from the 4th century BCE. The program is designed to involve two-way exchanges and mutual recognition of differing academic qualifications. The line between higher education as well as vocational training is beginning to blur. In 2017 Zhejiang Normal University set up the China-Africa Business Institute which was the first school to combine training of professionals and personnel with academic research and business counselling.¹⁶²

Another huge emphasis is on youth development and youth entrepreneurship centers in business and technology. China said that it will support a program that will train 1,000 Africans young Africans to promote specifically technological entrepreneurship.¹⁶³ Bridging the gap of technology training has been one of China's greatest successes in their educational relations with Africa. In FOCAC Summit 4 in 2006, both the Egyptian and Sudanese representatives "thanked China for narrowing the gap in technological know-how through its joint training and education programs."¹⁶⁴ Thus China's efforts in strengthening education is clearly a mammoth program with impacts across sectors, and borders that are actively shaping their image and their people's relationships to one another.

Finally, one of the largest and most visible initiatives on the continent is the establishment of Confucius Institutes. These institutes exist all over the world and focus on providing an education in the Chinese language and culture. In the United States there are around

¹⁶¹ King, Kenneth. "China–Africa Education Cooperation: From FOCAC to Belt and Road." *ECNU Review of Education*, 2019, p. 209653111988987., doi:10.1177/2096531119889874.

¹⁶² Nakazzi, Esther. "China Ramps up Support for African Higher Education." *University World News*, www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20180907083412817.

¹⁶³ *ibid*

¹⁶⁴ "Chapter 7: Media, Education, and Cultural Relations and Ties with Chinese Communities in Africa." *China and Africa: a Century of Engagement*, by David Hamilton Shinn and Joshua Eisenman, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. p. 213

90 Confucius Institutes hosted in different universities. As of 2019 there are 54 different Confucius Institutes across the African continent according to Hanban (the Chinese language Council and headquarters of Confucius Institutes).¹⁶⁵ However, not every country has them, only 33 countries across the African continent have Confucius institutes, South Africa has five and Kenya has four.¹⁶⁶ The way in which these Institutes are established is through a direct partnership with a host university, creating a direct relationship between academics and establishing a network of faculty and resources. Confucius Institutes are also under the Chinese Ministry of Education, and they are, similar to the Chinese Medical Teams, paired up with a Chinese University who sends professors. In regards to Kenya for example, the Confucius Institute's deputy dean stated that they planned to "root the [Confucius] Institute into African soil by means of integrating it into [the] Kenyan education system."¹⁶⁷ The Institute hosted by Kenyatta University opened in 2009 with Chinese language and culture professors that came from Shandong Normal University. In its first semester in 2009, the Institute only had six students. The second group had seventy, and they hosted a summer program to attract more students in the next year. That same year five Kenyatta Students had a year-long scholarship to attend Shandong Normal University to learn Chinese. The Confucius Institutes allow for travel opportunities and often the Chinese government will fund supplies as well as airfare for the journey.

These Confucius Institutes are heralded as centers where China can provide her sense of history (shared history) with the African people in an intimate environment. Stories of Chinese

¹⁶⁵ *ibid*

¹⁶⁶ "Telegraph Spark Branded Content Marketing - Live Portal." *The Telegraph*, Telegraph Media Group, 31 Oct. 2018, www.telegraph.co.uk/china-watch/culture/confucius-institute/.

¹⁶⁷ "Chapter 7: Media, Education, and Cultural Relations and Ties with Chinese Communities in Africa." *China and Africa: a Century of Engagement*, by David Hamilton Shinn and Joshua Eisenman, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. p. 216

characters and idioms and ancient Chinese calligraphy are all supposed to be part of the program as a way to re-orient the African continent towards the East instead of the West. However, despite these ideals, on the ground these centers operate in a much more practical manner where students and teachers are simply concerned with daily life. In Egypt the Confucius Institute at Suez Canal University opened in 2010. It was paired with faculty from the Hubei Electric Power University. It began offering Chinese courses for personnel from the Chinese-owned electrical appliance company where thirteen employees underwent elementary Chinese training as well as specialized vocabulary for the air conditioning industry.¹⁶⁸ In Tanzania the Confucius Institute hosted by University of Dar es Salaam a field researcher reveals the many different practical reasons why people are enrolled in the night class: “her father ...convinced her to take the class because he travels to China frequently and wanted his daughter to know the language so that she can contribute to the family business.”¹⁶⁹ Peoples’ reasoning for being in these classes range from the hopes of new opportunities to a good skill to learn for idle youth. In the classroom, history, international relations and politics are rarely discussed. The class is treated like any other class; most of the time a chore, and a means to an end. Thus more than the high ideological ideals that guide the programming and bureaucratic planning, it is practical everyday reasons that are driving African peoples to want to learn Chinese. These Confucius Institutes are attempts to help these practical demands.

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.* 217

¹⁶⁹ Amy Stambach & Aikande Kwayu (2017) Confucius Institutes in Africa, or How the Educational Spirit in Africa is Re-Rationalised Towards the East, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 43:2, 411-424, DOI: 10.1080/03057070.2017.1298290

Cultural Exchange

In many ways economic, political, media and education cooperation is foregrounded by the cultural exchanges that occurred between the African continent and China. Cultural links once used to be the only ties that China would have with an African country. The vast diversity of interpersonal links is what make contemporary China Africa relations so unique on the global stage today, and what truly distinguishes the China-Africa relations from other international relations. Cultural exchange happens both formally via the government, semi-formally via networks for artists and informally via daily interactions. The latter category, because of my lack of field research, is not going to be thoroughly described. However, everything from sheer exposure to different Chinese medicinal practices, to fashion sense, to new manufactured materials, to different foods have been shaping cultural exchanges on the ground. Every instance of a 'China Shop' in rural Africa, or a new Chinese factory, or the development of Chinese medicine are cultural exchanges and personal relationships. These daily interactions are occurring in millions of ways that this thesis does not have the scope to account for.

Not all of these interactions are necessarily positive. There are many instances of personal tensions that occur, from on-site training and education problems to different laws and cultural misunderstandings. For example, in the Confucius Institute in Tanzania, teacher Senping did not have a good grip on actually teaching the Chinese language and most of his students did not pass the standardized test nor get a chance to go to China.¹⁷⁰ Complaints about different work ethics are common. Huawei's provincial-level Human Development Corporation complained about the difficulties in teaching in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia where trainers complained that

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*

trainees did not retain any information.¹⁷¹ There have also been issues of labor protests. In Equatorial Guinea in 2008, four hundred Chinese workers were deported for protesting against their company (a Chinese company). This is because of the laws in Equatorial Guinea where protesting is strictly illegal. Instances of racism born out of ignorance are commonplace, especially considering how much of the populations on either side are interacting with a different culture for the first time. As mentioned in chapters before, many of these Chinese companies, especially factories, are started by those who have little education and who have not learned much about how to interact with the outside world. These Chinese bosses can be extremely racist and have little knowledge of the political nor racial history. For example, a Kenyan worker in a Chinese motorcycle company in Ruiru Kenya recorded his boss comparing him to a ‘monkey.’¹⁷² Anti-Chinese rhetoric is also commonplace. For example, in 2010 during a soccer match a riot broke out between the African onlookers where they ended up attacking Chinese businesses in Lubumbushi in the Democratic Republic of Congo. They chanted “Chinese go home” referring to the referee who was actually Japanese.¹⁷³ However, what is important to note is that all of the racist tendencies that occur come from ignorance and misunderstandings. They are not systematic nor are they embedded in the infrastructure of the political interactions. Rather, they come from lack of education and exposure on the individual level, varying significantly from person to person.

¹⁷¹ Giovanna Puppini (2017) Making space for emotions: exploring China–Africa ‘mediated relationships’ through CCTV-9’s documentary African Chronicles (Feizhou jishi 非洲纪事), *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 29:1, 131-147, DOI: 10.1080/13696815.2016.1268952

¹⁷² Goldstein, Joseph. “Kenyans Say Chinese Investment Brings Racism and Discrimination.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 15 Oct. 2018, www.nytimes.com/2018/10/15/world/africa/kenya-china-racism.html.

¹⁷³ “Chapter 7: Media, Education, and Cultural Relations and Ties with Chinese Communities in Africa.” *China and Africa: a Century of Engagement*, by David Hamilton Shinn and Joshua Eisenman, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. p. 224

Formally, cultural exchanges between China and the African continent began in 1955 in Egypt. There representatives of both governments came together to sign Summary of Talks on Cultural Cooperation, the first cultural agreement between China and an African country. This cultural agreement and subsequent government actions reveals the way in which cultural exchange is highly respected on the agenda with China-Africa relations then and continues to be so today. A year later, all seventy-six members of China's Culture and Art Ensemble visited Egypt and Sudan upon invitation. In 1958, twenty different delegations visited other countries and established cultural exchanges with Uganda, Angola, Nigeria, Somaliland, Ghana and Morocco. High-level exchange is one of the way sin which China maintained these cultural relationships. In 1958 for example, fifty African delegations went to China. Delegations include a wide variety of groups and involve many different departments. They include acrobats, youth delegations, sports teams, theater troupes, and other various artistic groups. These delegations stretch across and involve different Ministry's for example Ministry of Sports, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Culture of various African countries have all been involved. The China-Africa People's Friendship Association (CAPFA) was developed in 1960 and these activities developed under its supervision.

During the 1980s, China's approach mirrored their Chinese Medical Team programs, and they initiated a "sister-cities" 友好城市 program. The first was in 1982 when Hunan's Changsha established a sister-city agreement with Brazzaville, Congo. From then on at least sixty-nine more agreements have been established, and now FOAC has strengthened and changed the shape of these relationships. CAPFA states "Sino-African friendship has extended to the grass-roots level and entered the households of common people."¹⁷⁴ Their main goal has been to ensure

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*

that the cultural relationship develops so that on the grass-roots level people-to-people exchange can be ameliorated. This same sentiment carries on today with a more advanced way of programming under the FOCAC.

Under FOCAC along with the CAPFA is the development of the Afro Sino Cultural Exchange Association that is headquartered in Kenya. Chairperson Franklin Asira stated in 2019 “The idea behind the initiative (association) was to trickle all the way down to the grassroots so that the common you and me will actually share in the beauty of cultural exchange.”¹⁷⁵ The hope is that by better understanding the different customs in the continent as well as from the Chinese tradition, people on the ground will be able to learn to dispel myths and stereotypes propagated by Western colonial rhetoric. To foster real connection, the Chinese believe in the need for respect towards each other’s values, customs and way of understanding beauty. China led a team of artists and scholars to learn from Kenyan landscapes and artists culminating in a joint art exhibit. Kprop Laga, the Director of Culture in the Ministry of Sports, Culture and Arts in Kenya said that “Sino-Kenyan cooperation in performing and visual arts, museums and archives has enhanced cultural diplomacy between the two countries.”¹⁷⁶ These artists who learn from one another are beginning to create works that are both reflective of the shared struggle that the Chinese government is speaking of as well as reflecting on the lived experience of the China-Africa relationships.

In 2018, the association pledged to open five chapters across the African continent, the first called the Southern African Development Community was launched in 2019 in Harare,

¹⁷⁵ *SADC Chapter of Afro-Sino Cultural Exchange Association Launched in Zimbabwe*, 5 May 2019, www.focac.org/eng/zfgx_4/rwjl/t1660821.htm.

¹⁷⁶ 刘玄逸 . “Chinese Artists' Visit to Kenya Breaks New Ground in Cultural Diplomacy.” *Chinese Artists' Visit to Kenya Breaks New Ground in Cultural Diplomacy - Chinadaily.com.cn*, www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201804/14/WS5ad16df9a3105cdcf651844e.html.

Zimbabwe. It was launched along with an exhibit under the second Belt Road Initiative Afro-Sino Art Exchange where over 120 works were exhibited by both African and Chinese artists. The theme for the exhibit was titled “South Meeting the East: A Tale of Two Communities.”¹⁷⁷ The new community’s structure is also reflective of how China believes in integrating these new infrastructure and programs with pre-existing structures. The Southern African Development Community is led by the Director of National Arts in Zimbabwe, Nicholas Moyo, and is deputized by a Chinese entrepreneur Steven Zhao.¹⁷⁸ These state-sponsored exhibits and cultural events range in size and type. From film festivals such as “Chinese Movie Week 2008” sponsored in Nigeria to China’s National Cultural Bureau hosting the “2008 African Culture Focus” held in Shenzheng. In 2009, “734 Chinese artists from twenty provinces attended twenty-seven festivals and celebrations in African countries while 370 African artists from twenty-one African countries performed at the International Art Show in China.”¹⁷⁹ Thus it is clear that these state-sponsored cultural exchanges are not only a huge priority for the Chinese government, but a huge part of the China-Africa relations. The belief is that the stronger the cultural relationship, the stronger the economic, political and social relationships. This is also why these artistic exchanges also carry heavy political undertones. In fact, this is made quite explicit by China and in 2009 China hosted sixty-one African delegations to speak on “Cultural Policy Discussion,” and “Creative Thinking in Painting.”¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ 林虹 . “Zimbabwe to Host Belt and Road Afro-Sino Exhibition.” *Zimbabwe to Host Belt and Road Afro-Sino Exhibition - World - Chinadaily.com.cn*, www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201904/26/WS5cc2f280a3104842260b8a20.html.

¹⁷⁸ *SADC Chapter of Afro-Sino Cultural Exchange Association Launched in Zimbabwe*, www.focac.org/eng/zfgx_4/rwjl/t1660821.htm.

¹⁷⁹ “Chapter 7: Media, Education, and Cultural Relations and Ties with Chinese Communities in Africa.” *China and Africa: a Century of Engagement*, by David Hamilton Shinn and Joshua Eisenman, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. p. 221

¹⁸⁰ *ibid.*

Cultural Exchange: A high priority for the party

There are, however, many artistic programs and exchanges that are occurring that exists in between the state and the people. There are many galleries, schools and people who are fostering this relationship in a much more organic fashion, creating alternative narratives that showcase people to people relationships. These artworks, exhibits and performances are reflecting on the political relationship, providing a way to mend the flaws, as well as enhance mutual understanding. In 2016 the Institute in Asian, African and Latin American Culture and Art was formed in the Nanshan Campus of China Academy of Art in HangZhou. This represents a shift towards de-linking the art world that is predominantly Euro-centric and a part of the global North. In June 2018 they hosted a symposium titled “Thinking the Third World Today: Art, Translation, and the Media.” In the conference they asked how they can revitalize the Bandung Spirit, recalling the Bandung conference of 1955 as described in previous chapters. The art world today, one that is also largely trying to delink from a global North perspective, is emblematic of the kind of political shift that this thesis discusses; a shift away from dominant epistemologies.¹⁸¹

Literature, poetry, song, dance, and the visual arts are what allows for the imagining that allows people to find agency and resistance from multiple sides without the often dichotomous approaches from politics. In fact, grass-roots connections are actually encouraged by the Chinese government as well as the programs that they started. This is because the Chinese government recognizes how artistic practice is what can actually change and shift epistemologies; it seems from China’s political ideals and their programs this is China’s ultimate goal. There are many

¹⁸¹ Simbao, Ruth. “Reaching Sideways Beyond Bandung: Audacious Solidarities and Contingent ‘China-Africa’ Scripts in Contemporary Visual Art (超越万隆的侧向接触:当代视觉艺术中的无畏团结与偶然的『中非』剧)” *人間思想 (Thoughts in the Human World)*, vol. 10, no. 思想第三世界 Thoughts on the Third World, Nov. 2019, pp. 15–51.

artists who are engaging with multi-culturalism in a different way and who are revealing and reflecting on this dynamic relationship, showing us what China's dream can look like.

One artist from Sierra Leone, Mariatu Kargbo is based in China and has taken China by storm. She is known as the “Luminous Black Pearl” – pearls in Chinese culture indicate joyous beauty and prosperity. She has millions of Chinese fans, and was the main lead performer in the FOCAC conference in 2018, performing for all the top officials of China. She first arrived in China in 2004 because she was invited to compete in the Miss Kite Beauty Pageant held in Weifang Shandong and sponsored by the local government. Over 100 countries participated and she was amongst the first three to go on stage. She wooed the audience by performing a popular Chinese song called ‘xiaowei’ where she changed the lyric to sing about Weifang.¹⁸² In 2009 she participated in Miss World, where she won Miss World Talent for performing a traditional Chinese ‘change face’ 变脸 performance. ‘Change face’ is a performance that consists of mastering an ancient technique of changing the entire mask on one’s face in the middle of the performance. In 2013 CCTV did a special on celebrating Sino-Sierra Leone relations and she was invited to perform. The host said that these traditions in Chinese culture are often passed down from generation to generation, to men not to women, to family not to foreigners. She asked, how did you who is a woman and a foreigner find someone to teach you? Kargbo responded, in fluent mandarin, that “first it is because of serendipity, and second because of love. When I first met him I told him that I really loved China. And he responded why do you say that everyday what do you mean by it? I told him I am about to perform on the Miss World stage, and I want to bring China’s culture and China’s art on the world stage. He told me that I moved him

¹⁸² Ofori, Oral. “Mariatu Kargbo; Black-Chinese from Sierra Leone.” *TheAfricanDream*, 10 Mar. 2017, www.theafricandream.net/mariatu-kargbo-black-chinese-from-sierra-leone/.

deeply, and that I will teach you, but you must study hard and learn diligently because on the Miss World stage you cannot misrepresent Chinese culture.”¹⁸³ Kargbo performs this traditional Chinese art-form with beats and music from Sierra Leone, creating a kind of multicultural synthesis that is emblematic of China’s dream.

Kargbo reveals how these grassroots meetings are simply human relations that can in turn symbolize friendship. Cultural exchange is based on human interactions, and her mastery of ‘change face’ is a trickle-down from these larger policies that allow for these serendipitous moments to arise. The Miss Kite competition for example, is another cultural program that the state sponsors in the hopes of bringing talent to China. In many ways Kargbo is an extreme example, but one that shows what a poster child for China’s cultural exchange initiatives look like. Kargbo released a song in February 2020 boosting Chinese morale to combat coronavirus called “Go, China.” The video begins with an intense montage of scenes from the news of coronavirus before going into a soft pop-tune singing, “Go, China, Go Wuhan!” She sings, “In the moment of the country’s difficult times, I am here to be a companion to go through it with you/ we come from different places, with one shared dream.”¹⁸⁴ The video cuts to shots of African children holding rallying signs stating “Go China, Go Wuhan!” revealing the transcontinental solidarity. This echoes China’s global governance ideal of having a common destiny and indicates that these ideas have taken shape on the individual level. Mariatu Kargbo is a pop-artist truly believes in China-Africa relations. She was featured on the cover her *Salone Jamboree*, a Sierra Leone arts and entertainment magazine with the caption “Mariatu Kargbo

¹⁸³ Mariatu Kargbo. “Mariatu Kargbo CCTV 4 Chinese change faces.” *YouTube*, 27 Jul. 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCjud-QZj7s>.

Translation is my own

¹⁸⁴ Team, Tencent VFE. “暖心！黑珍珠玛丽亚为打赢‘战疫’加油_腾讯视频.” 暖心！黑珍珠玛丽亚为打赢“战疫”加油_, v.qq.com/x/page/c3071oo8v3v.html. *Translation my own.*

Joins Coronavirus Fight: we have a duty to come together to fight this global enemy.” She also released a personal heartfelt video in her Facebook, stating that her heart was saddened by all the “fake news” and that people should not take this time of Coronavirus to point fingers but to help a friend in need.



Magazine Salone Jamboree featuring Mariatu Kargbo

Kargbo is an interesting person because she truly is emblematic of China’s hope: to find artists that can be celebrating multiculturalism and who understand what it means for China to be relating to Africa. Instead of the need to choose one presentation over the other, which many artists struggle with when they become part of another country, there is a fluid borderless exchange, one that promotes a harmony of having both. Her show on CCTV as well as her presentation in general, referring to herself as the Black Pearl of China, reveals someone who is distinctly from Sierra Leone and who is also someone well-versed in Chinese culture. The

Chinese government also invited her to perform in the 2017 New Years Festival Gala, the most watched television program in China.

There are many other artists who are less avid about declaring their love for China, but still displaying the kind of multiculturalism offered by the China-Africa relations. “The arts... hold important potential to unscript the dominant narratives and “push back” at some of the generic stereotypes in the dominant “China-Africa” discourse.”¹⁸⁵ Many contemporary artists offer a new lens for how one is to reflect on the relationship, and the very fact that they exist showcases the way in which this relationship is much more layered and dynamic than the media presents it as being.

In 2019 Centre Pompidou hosted an exhibit named *Cosmopolis #2: Reshaping the Human*. The exhibit featured many artists reflecting on the geo-political relationship, one of which by He Xiangyu called *Terminal 3*. He documents the life of young Ethiopian students studying at the Wuqiao Acrobatics school in Hebei Province with video. Shots of intense training coupled with scenes of quiet prayer in the local mosque gives a sense of how multilayered the geopolitical relationship is. These students are part of a delegation sent by the Ministry of Culture and Sports from Ethiopia. Some become trainers for Chinese students, and shots of older Ethiopian women assisting Chinese children in intense backflips reveal how the relationship of power between China and Africa is one of balance. Students are also teachers, and teachers also students as they learn together the intense moves for the final acrobatics performance. Another video installation is by French artist Françoise Knoetze as part of his Core-Dump series. The series goes through different cities to explore how ideological notions of progress efface the

¹⁸⁵ Simbao, Ruth. “Reaching Sideways Beyond Bandung: Audacious Solidarities and Contingent ‘China-Africa’ Scripts in Contemporary Visual Art (超越万隆的侧向接触:当代视觉艺术中的无畏团结与偶然的『中非』剧.)” *人間思想 (Thoughts in the Human World)*, vol. 10, no. 思想第三世界 Thoughts on the Third World, Nov. 2019, pp. 15–51.

historical and contemporary importance of Africa. In the Core-Dump Shenzhen video, Chinese myth is mixed in with an African legend. It shows how the Chinese and African traditions communicate with one another, and how both cultures interact with technological development as well as local superstitions. This kind of cultural reflection shows how ex-colonized countries, or the culture in the Global Southern have in common, one that is entrenched in more traditional belief systems and cultural values.

Finally, a performance art piece that truly reveals the difficulties posed by the international media (and information) overload about the relationship is Beijing artist Hua Jiming's performance titled *Walking into Africa in a Chinese Way* as part of a performing arts festival in Cape Town, South Africa. This performance art piece reveals the crux of this thesis, that the media is suffocating the relationship and it is individuals who are bearing the brunt of these attacks. This art piece is inspired by the Buddhist practice of walking as meditation, and thus represents a "calm, balanced approach to life that embraces endurance."¹⁸⁶ This performance featured Hua Jiming wrapped from head to toe in newspapers from both cities Beijing – where he is based – and Cape Town. On the first day he walked through CBD and on the second day he walked to the top of Table Mountain. Wearing the newspapers, we see a symbol of how the individual body is subsumed by the media. He was met with Sinophobic cries, "Foreigner! Foreigner! Kung-Fu! Kung-Fu!" linking the threat of 'foreigners' to the stereotype of the Kung-Fu master. This is curious because as art historian Simbao points out, Chinese men are often either considered effeminate and weak compared to white masculinity, or exotically hyper-masculine as represented by Kung-Fu. This either-or stereotype reveals the essence of the problem; it is a paradox that parallels of China's relationship with Africa. "The

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.* 16

contemporary Chinese presence in Africa tends to be portrayed as ‘Manichean binary’ ... and questions in the media are framed in an ‘either/or mentality.’”¹⁸⁷ Simbao also points to the fact that walking’s repetitive nature reflects the repetitive nature of stereotyping. Due to the fact that stereotypes are facts that cannot be proven, they must be “anxiously repeated” in order to keep the “unstable fact in place.”¹⁸⁸

Hua Jiming also spontaneously stuffed his mouth full of flyers that street vendors handed out along the way, gagging on them as a way to symbolize the violent ways in which stereotyping affects the human body. By enduring through this performance he shows how there needs to be a mindful way of relating China and Africa. The performance directly resists the simplistic stereotype of Chinese entry in Africa as a neo-colonial and economically aggressive undertaking. His mindful walking at once calls forth the peaceful Buddhist indication of reverence for the land, and at the same time the newspapers on his body shows how this walk is covered by the media’s suffocating extremities and headlines. These headlines cover the individual actions, which is simply one foot in front of the other. China’s vision since the 1950’s as outlined in this thesis until now is of one lineage. China has endured humiliation on the global stage: from losing the two opium wars, to constant belittling by the West as an aid receiver, and throughout attempting to keep the Chinese values despite the pains of rapid modernization on the Chinese people themselves. However, these large ideals do not equate to a giant dragon stamping on the African continent. Rather, this relationship is made up of millions of different ways of encountering that are about the individual putting one foot in front of the other.

Conclusion

¹⁸⁷ Simbao, Ruth. “Walking into Africa in a Chinese Way.” *Afrique-Asie*, 2011.

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*

In this chapter we began with looking at ways in which China promotes its own image through their own scripts and their media outlets. They are clearly skewed in China's favor, but the difference is that they are explicitly so, showing us what and how China sees herself in the global arena. This is another script, another view on how China sees themselves. We then looked at the way in which the state sponsors cultural exchange programs before diving into different artistic exchanges that have occurred and are occurring. We finally looked at specific artists and pieces that reflect on this relationship showing ways in which people are absorbing and relating to one another through cultural practice and traditions, offering alternative scripts to both China's and the West's. It is these artists that are interacting with one another that reflect the more truthful daily interactions of the China-Africa relations. What we see is not only alternative scripts, but what a possibility of human to human friendship can look like for the relationship between countries. What China is offering a possibility of exchanges on the individual level that can enact and inspire state change. These alternative narratives reveal the possibility of a world where the states interact with one another *for* the goal of these people to people interactions to take place. Mariatu Kargbo from Sierra Leone is an example of how government sponsored events lead to individuals becoming artists who try and uplift relationships between peoples.

We end with an image of Hua Jiming's art piece *Walking into Africa in a Chinese Way*, for it shows the complex dynamics that this thesis attempts to grapple with. The intimate nature in which walking through a place shows us how personal this relationship is, and how layered this relationship becomes. Hua Jiming, with the many newspapers plastered onto his body, shows us that the stereotypes that are propagated are not just stories on the news, they are harmful to real bodies, to real relations, and and a barrier to cooperative development.

Conclusion

In our world today, where the colonial context is becoming more consciously rejected and where the ex-colonial powers becomes more inward looking, from Brexit to Trump's America First policy, there is a real need to understand China and her dreams who is actively reaching outwards and beyond her borders to connect with others. This thesis aimed at giving a thorough understanding of what exactly China dreams of and how difference from the dominant global norm does not automatically deserve to be demonized. It is imperative to note that it is the dream that is my main goal of outlining and have only provided a cursory overview of the specificities of the Chinese activities in the African continent. Due to the scope of the phenomenon, I had to give up details in exchange for the larger picture. This thesis shouldn't be read as a blind endorsement of all of China's actions and policies. Rather, it is an analysis of China's vision forward and way of perceiving herself, a view that is not only unpopular, but almost non-existent in dominant narratives that are presented in the media and literature.

For the title I chose to use the term "Middle Kingdom," the direct translation of what China is called in Chinese "中国" because this dream is so rooted in the historic culture that extends beyond the modern period. As outlined in this thesis, Chinese traditional philosophy is not only linked but prevalently present in their stances and actions today. Thus because of the ideological nature of Chinese culture, policy and action must be understood in context of the different cultural context. In other words, economic action cannot be judged without context, which is often what the Western media does. The scope of this thesis did not allow for a thorough survey of the problems that have risen because of this relationship, nor has it explored potential problematic implications of specific programs. Rather, by understanding what exactly China is fighting *for*, and why they are in the African continent, we can better see how in fact,

many dreams are similar and congruent with one another. My goal is to shed light on this possibility, because I believe by connecting those with the same dreams through mutual understanding we can strive to build a more harmonious and peaceful world.

When I was in Paris in the fall of 2019, I witnessed one of the largest transportation strikes in recent years and saw how young French people came together in solidarity and in protest. I was moved by the culture of striking in Paris, and have never seen such massive mobilization in such frequency and organized fashion. However, I also saw the disconnection and the confusion present in the people. The strike was about the transportation worker's retirement plan (and the fear that it would change, along with other public workers plans). Yet there were flags waved for animal rights groups, feminist groups, a Hong Kong flag next to a Communist hammer and sickle, and even a group of men called the "Black Block" who travel from Germany just to fight the Parisian police. People were both drinking beers as well as crying in anger for photos. They were starting loud cheers as well as breaking windows of banks and ATM's (which were also covered in anticipation). Seeing the Hong Kong flag next to a communist flag during the time of the Hong Kong protests in the streets of Paris for a worker's transportation strike made me realize how confused the West is when it comes to communism and specifically the question of Chinese communism. Socialist/communist ideals are now at once a 'goal' in the young left circles of Western society, as well as the enemy in *other* places (Hong Kong). We have reached a time where anti-capitalist and anti-colonial mindsets are prevalent in those who emerge from oppression within Western societies, yet the stereotypes and propagandist scripts by the West about China prevents people to realize the de-colonial nature of China's foreign policy stances. Instead the Western media has attacked China for the *same* evils that they have committed, missing the irony.

In many ways, this was how I was drawn into this topic in the first place. These are not simply two ideological worlds that I conceptualize, but two worlds I embody. Uncovering the history of China-Africa relations, and how it relates to the Belt Road Initiative today allowed me personally to understand my own criticisms towards the American and Eurocentric education I received in China. I see now how the oppressed peoples in America and Europe can connect with the Chinese, and quite literally how Chinese politics actively stood against imperialism and colonialism. As discussed in chapter two, the united front that China was attempting to establish included “the broad masses of the American Negroes and the American people, all the oppressed peoples and oppressed nations of the world, and all the countries and peoples subjected to US imperialist aggression, control, intervention or bullying.”¹⁸⁹ In the middle of the 20th century, China believed her dream to encompass all oppressed peoples. In this thesis, I argue that the current Belt Road Initiative derives from this same lineage, with similar philosophies guiding their actions. It is the less radically fervent and violent, matured, and more practical version of their Third Worldism ideals, one that still is about uplifting the spirits of the developing world and creating a context that is based in the frameworks created by and for the Global South.

In the first chapter I gave an overview of what the Western media sees in China’s actions pointing out that the criticisms are in fact the same flaws they have understood about themselves. By outlining the scripts that are commonly used in describing the China-Africa relations I shed light on how these are propagating both harmful stereotypes as well as clouding research with fear and anxiety. In chapter 1 instead of arguing that the points are wrong, I simply raised doubts by pointing at the weaknesses in the arguments. Then in the second half, I explored the relationship between colonialism and neo-colonialism with development in Africa. This history,

¹⁸⁹ Ness, Peter Van. *Revolution and Chinese Foreign Policy: Peking's Support for Wars of National Liberation*. University of California Press, 1973. p.73

one that is uniquely that of the West, emphasizes the fact that colonial and neo-colonial development programs designed by ex-colonial and U.S policy makers have in fact underdeveloped the continent for decades. In the colonial times, it is because white settler communities often build infrastructure that benefit their own communities. In more recent aid programs and infrastructures, I argue that this is neo-colonial because of the imposition of Western norms, such as through the Washington Consensus. Colonial and neo-colonial programs continue to belittle the developing country and continue to propagate an inferiority complex. Thus not only are the criticisms made towards China often inflated by stereotyping, they are informed ironically by the West's own realizations of their own wrongs.

The second chapter dove into the philosophy and history of China's foreign policy stances and relationship with the African continent. The aim is to provide a sense of what China's unique history means and correlates with their foreign policy actions. First I painted a picture of what China's sense of global governance is, emphasizing that even the premise is different than in the Europe and the U.S. I showed the philosophical roots of China's understanding of political relationships, and the end goal of politics as harmony. Their complex history has led them to have a fluctuating involvement in the international stage; going through isolation, ambivalence with the UN, to involvement and the creation of their own initiatives. At every turn China's priority has been to stay true to their ideology, to hold true their belief in the harmonious world, and to be standing up for the oppressed peoples. I then gave a brief history of the Third World spirit that China had in the 1950's and how they first established connection with African nations. The Bandung Conference, the conference where 29 African and Asian countries convened in Indonesia, was the first way in which China established herself firmly as a country fighting for the oppressed nations. Their vision of a united front against U.S. imperialism

and the colonial powers was put forth and established during this time. It was their revolutionary spirit that propelled their relationship with African countries, as they attempted to both inspire and support liberation fronts in the continent. They continued to emphasize the connection with Africa as a connection through a sense of “shared history,” a sense of togetherness because of a similar history of oppression and invasion. It is important to note this because this is the kind of energy that China has when it comes to their friends. While China was going through their period of isolation and their own struggles they still managed to build their first infrastructure project in Tanzania and Zambia, called the TAZARA railway. This project not only reveals to us China’s priorities as a friend of the oppressed, but as a government that values ideologies over practicalities. This is why it is so necessary to understand China’s ideologies when trying to understand their actions.

After better understanding the context in which China emerges from, Chapter 3 discussed the current initiatives between China and Africa as well as their current umbrella initiative the New Silk Road or Belt Road Initiative. This chapter looked at the rhetoric that the Chinese government uses when it comes to the Belt Road Initiative at large, which is a program that intends to link more than 70 countries across Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. If the relationship with the Third World countries and specifically the African continent in the 50’s can be defined by their belief in a shared history, then the relationships they hope to form by their initiative can be characterized by the phrase the “community of common destiny.” The “community of common destiny” is central to the party’s commitment to the international community now. By understanding the Belt Road Initiative, we see how the current initiatives in the African continent can serve as a gateway to understanding the program at large, as well as see the ideological lineage from their stances in the 50’s. The different political infrastructures

that China has created to facilitate the relationship with African countries such as the Forum of China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and the way in which loans are disbursed all indicate a marked difference from the neo-colonial practices from the West. A cursory survey of the different kinds of activities that China is doing in the continent, keeping in mind the vast diversity that the thesis cannot account for, shows how the practice aligns with their ideals.

Finally, as a recall of the first chapter, Chapter 4 examines China's own use of the media, their approach to expanding soft power in the African continent as well as cultural exchanges occurring on the ground with and without the encouragement of the state. China's relationship with the media is blatant, the news channels are explicitly the mouthpiece of the government. It thus aligns quite closely with the party's views which often encourage and celebrates the relationship between China and Africa. Another initiative the chapter explores is the Confucius Institutes which is also part of China's general soft power expansion. These serve as a way for foreigners to learn Chinese language and culture and exist all over the world. Despite the high-level intentions of shaping opinions on China, most of institutions are filled with students who have their own practical need for the class. They are not zealously ideological propaganda programs, but serve as a medium for those who want to learn about China or the Chinese language. Finally, we turn to the cultural exchange programs that are facilitated by the state, tracing its history and emphasizing how important it is on the Chinese political agenda. This is because the "Community of Common Destiny" is built upon the basis of mutual respect for each other's culture. In the end of the Chapter I highlight several different artists and artistic movements that reflect on the relationship between China and Africa. This kind of reflection, one that is unscripted and separate from the state and political economic frameworks offer a different way into understanding how people-to-people interactions come down on the level of

individuals. It is the existence of this kind of cultural exchange, one without the imposition of a cultural superiority/inferiority complex that is often associated with the ex-colonial countries.

I end on the image of Hua Jiming's performance art piece *Walking into Africa in a Chinese Way* because it reflects the heart and reason behind this thesis: the media, these stereotypes are not only blocking the ability for scholars to do thorough research they are impacting people's lives on the ground. The Western media is still within the lineage of colonialization; and it is still violent. The largest difference between China and the colonial powers in entering the African continent is that China respects culture, bows their head, has anti-hegemonic ideals, and does not come in as a superior but rather a friend. As outlined in the thesis, colonization is disempowering not only because of the economic and political gains and imbalances, but because of the belittling and condescension that first and foremost strips away the culture, the very way of life, of the oppressed peoples. Colonization is a frame of mind that the world has not rid itself of yet. As Cesaire writes "Colonization equals *Thingafication*" it is seeing people as tools *for the colonizer*. The New Africa Strategy mentioned in Chapter 1 by the U.S. in 2018 still has this kind of rhetoric. The people of Djibouti and the African continent at large are simply more tools that can be used and mobilized to compete with China. The goal for the U.S. is to win; to help, aid, or collaborate are *for* winning. Cesaire quotes a French philosopher in his article *Discourse on Colonialism* where we see how it is both the Chinese and the Africans who get lumped into categories of work for the white man:

"Nature has made a race of workers, the Chinese race, who have wonderful manual dexterity and almost no sense of honor; govern them with justice, levying from them, in return for the blessing of such a government, an ample allowance for the conquering

race, and they will be satisfied; a race of tillers of the soil, the Negro; treat him with kindness and humanity, and all will be as it should; a race of masters and soldiers, the European race. Reduce this noble race to working in the *ergastulum* like Negroes and Chinese, and they rebel.”¹⁹⁰

This is the frame of mind that we, as a global community, are emerging from. Thus more than ever, it is important to pay attention to the China-Africa relations, for it shows the first signs of an actively de-colonial world, one where the oppressed peoples of the world can connect and reimagine their own kind of future. In recent media frenzy, China was berated by the Western media for being racist towards Africans in GuangZhou, a city where most African migrant workers live. They often conflated the individual actions of landlords with the state and tried to pit the state forcing people to quarantine and get tested as an oppressive act – despite the fact that the ultimate goal is the health and well-being of the entire community. The media easily manipulates facts and weaves a narrative to correspond with their own conceptual frameworks about race amongst other topics. This dangerously influences people’s mindsets on the ground, and even effects political relationships. However, the media can only go so far, and we can only see how China handles this new bout of critique, one step at a time, just like Hua’s performance.

This thesis is an attempt to bring attention to this vast possibility, this vast dream, one that reaches out to so many, and one that is in fact, quite uplifting. If there was a research opportunity, I would hope to continue researching the artistic reflections on the China-Africa relations. For not only does this offer the nuanced, unscripted views on the relationship, it can be a platform in which mutual respect is shown, criticisms and questions raised, and multi-

¹⁹⁰ Cesairé, Aimé. “From Discourse on Colonialism *.” *Postcolonial Criticism*, 2014, pp. 73–90., doi:10.4324/9781315843452-2.

culturalism flourishing. It is symbolic to note that in the West where art from the African continent or China are actually looted during colonial warfare. It is thus not only ironic to call China a neo-colonial or neo-imperial force; it misses the entire point of their dream, one that positions themselves as actively de-colonial and anti-imperial. I hope that by writing this thesis, I can clarify some of the misconceptions about China, the fears associated with it, and invite others to dream with her too.

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