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CHINA AND NEO-COLONIALISM IN AFRICA: A NEW DILEMMA IN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

Morgan Ogbonna

Department of History and International Studies, Babcock University

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***Corresponding author:** Morgan Ogbonna
Department of History and International Studies, Babcock University

Abstract

In recent decades, China has emerged as a dominant economic and political actor in Africa, significantly shaping the continent's development trajectory. While its engagement is often framed as mutually beneficial, offering investments in infrastructure, energy, and resource extraction, critics argue that it reflects patterns of neo-colonialism. This paper examines China's role in Africa, exploring how its economic policies, lending practices, and bilateral agreements mirror historical colonial dynamics, despite China's official non-interference policy. It delves into the impact of Chinese investments on African economies, assessing the extent to which they contribute to sustainable development or exacerbate debt dependency and economic inequality. This new dilemma in African development challenges the continent's quest for sustainable and inclusive growth. The paper argues that while Chinese involvement offers short-term gains in infrastructure and economic growth, it risks perpetuating dependency and undermining long-term development goals. Additionally, the paper addresses concerns about environmental degradation, labor rights violations, and the erosion of local industries. By analyzing case studies from various African countries, this study illuminates the complexities of Sino-African relations, arguing that while China presents opportunities for growth; its engagement also poses significant risks for African sovereignty and long-term development. The paper concludes by proposing frameworks for African countries to navigate this new dilemma in their development paths, ensuring that foreign partnerships support their autonomy and equitable growth. This abstract highlights the central themes of China's involvement in Africa and the debate over whether it represents a form of neo-colonialism in the context of African development.

Keywords: *Neo-colonialism, Belt and Road Initiatives, BRICS, Underdevelopment, New World Economic Order.*

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INTRODUCTION

After the Second World War, the imperialist trends of the eighteenth and nineteenth century began to decline. Through collective struggles, the Africans achieved independence from the whites. But though they attained freedom, they could not imagine the fact that it was just a treacherous exchange of power between the out-going masters and few of their faithful heirs. In the colonial period, the European rulers propagated that as the Africans had no culture and history of their own, it was their holy duty to civilize the native Africans. Thus, they regarded themselves superior to Africans whose culture they considered inferior, uncivilized, and savage. In the name of spreading civilization, they dominated, oppressed, tyrannized and persecuted the native Africans not only economically and politically, but also culturally. When the Europeans left, the Africans got political freedom, but the foul practice of imperialism did not end. It appeared in a new form namely neocolonialism which the scholars had branded as the worst form of imperialism (Collier, 2008, p. 11). This camouflaged imperialist practice is turning Africa into a museum of acute poverty, hunger, corruption and famine. The paper aims at elucidating the effects of neocolonialism in Africa from the perspective of the Chinese pursuit of their interest in Africa and how they have been able to triumph using their influence. Until recently, China had diplomatic relations with 50 of the 54 African states. The other four – Burkina Faso, Sao Tome and Principe, Eswatini and The Gambia – maintained relations with Taiwan. However, Beijing has been actively reaching out and trying to win them over, too (Ayodeji, 2011, p. 5). Imperialism laid the initial stage for the domination of African continent by the European powers in the 18th and 19th centuries. The situation resulted in the invasion of Africa which John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson conceived as making Africa a 'sphere of influence' on which Europe could build an economic empire with or without 'a formal, legal control by one government over another country'. At best, the motive behind European Imperial conquest and eventual colonization of Africa resulted from 'economic motives primarily and prestige motives secondarily'. The implication is that colonialism of Africa was designed to aid the survival and extension of Capitalism for the development of the metropole and the strengthening of her industrial complex and markets through the invasion and overrun of weaker territories particularly Africa where opportunities abound for the creation of new settlements to explore their potential economic resources and commerce (Amin, 2004, p. 115). A venture into neo-colonial experiences cannot be divorced from the goals of European imperialism and the study of the colonial state in Africa. This is because Neo-colonialism is prevalent in Africa unlike other continents and it can be described as an advanced stage of colonialism because it exist in forms of the cultural, educational, industrial and technological subjugation of a former colonial territory and the further economic domination of the independent states by the former colonizer in the absence of an institutionalized political structure and direct military presence for the physical control and direction of the state ideology and economy by a superior power or former colonizer over her former and liberated colonies. Neo-colonialism is constituted by the evolution and perpetuation of a process whereby the existence of international diplomacy and protocols of state relations through an entrenched constitutional government and emerging political leadership at independence provides for a market structure cum capital and investment of the new state and the agenda for national development working in favour of the former colonizer (Amin, 2004, p.101). This is enhanced through continuous tying to the apron strings of the former colonizer in determining the current and future roles and relationship of the former colony, in world politics and economy (Braugitan, 2010, p. 54).

Definition of Neo colonialism:

The term 'neocolonialism' was first coined by Kwame Nkrumah. For Kwame Nkrumah, "neocolonialism represents the final stage of imperialism. Neocolonialism is the worst form of Imperialism: for those who practice it, it means power without responsibility, and for those who suffer it, it is exploitation without redress"(Iweriebor, 1997, p. 45). Predominantly Neocolonialism has no definite definition. It has western, Asian and African versions of the definitions. Encyclopedia Britannica, the Worldwide accepted knowledge book where Sandra Halperin defined neocolonialism, "as the control of less-developed countries by developed countries through indirect means"(Fuji & Mockizuki, 2006, p.28-47). Sandra Halperin has explained the 'indirect means' as the developed countries are dominating underdeveloped or developing countries indirectly by using colonial exploitation rules. For example, in the contemporary world, the African underdeveloped or developing countries are being viewed that their independence was a one kind of farce (Khan etal, 2018, p. 67). He critiqued this capitalist system as 'neocolonialism'. We will elucidate the neocolonialism effects in Africa from the modern Chinese perspective and the pursuit of their interest.

Belt and Roads Initiatives (BRI)

The Belt and Roads Initiative (BRI) is a major strategic component of China's "go global" policy announced by the President Xi Jinping in 2013. The initiative has its roots in the ancient Chinese philosophy of "Silk Road Spirit", which advocates promoting peace, cooperation, openness, inclusiveness, mutual learning, and mutual benefit among all civilizations. BRI is often considered a game-changer that will connect the land-locked economies of Asia, Europe, and Africa. The "Belt" consists of vibrant networks of roads and railways that will connect the Western part of China to Western Europe via Central Asia, Iran, Turkey, Russia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans. Besides, linking Eurasia by land, the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" is proposed to connect China with South Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe through a strip of seaports through the South China Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Mediterranean Sea[6]Currently, all of Beijing's foreign policies, including its Africa policy, are designed with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in mind, launched by President Xi Jinping in September 2013. Beijing sees the implementation of this initiative as a means to accelerate economic development of China and the other countries involved, as well as a guard against the challenges and threats to China's interests in the Indian Ocean. The African continent is also involved in the Belt and Road Initiative (Smalley, 2014, p. 4). One of the major problems facing Africa today is its poor infrastructure, which hinders the development of trade between the countries and creates obstacles to integration. China has both the experience and the financial muscle to take part in the solution. According to a report from Baker Mckenzie and the Economist Corporate Network titled "Spanning Africa's Infrastructure Gap: How development capital is transforming Africa's project build-out", the total funding allocation for Africa-based infrastructure initiatives over the period from 2009 to 2014 was around USD 328 billion (USD 54 billion per year), and the contribution from Asia-based sources from China, was especially significant: in 2013 alone, it reached USD 13.4 billion, and in 2009-2014, according to the Infrastructure

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Consortium for Africa (ICA), it amounted to almost USD 60 billion (Sirkin etal, 2008, p. 87). According to Zhao Changhui, Chief Risk Analyst at the Export-Import Bank of China, over the next decade, Chinese investment in Africa will reach at least USD 1 trillion, and the Export-Import Bank will become China's main source of investment in African infrastructure (75%) (Zakaria, 2008, p.13). Africa's participation in the Belt and One Road Initiative will help it develop infrastructure and will open ways for Beijing to explore its potential in the construction sector. It will boost China's economic growth, which has been decelerating in recent years, and while yielding much benefit to African countries. The second advantage of China's Belt and Road Initiative for Africa, according to Chinese experts, is that it offers an opportunity to move Chinese labor-intensive industrial enterprises to the African continent, ensuring output growth, new jobs, and higher wages. As part of the initiative, China is undertaking ambitious efforts to industrialize peripheral and semi-peripheral countries, where in many cases the manufacturing sector is created virtually from scratch in agro-industrial parks and special zones for industrial cooperation (Chubarov & Kalashnikov 2018, p.45). North Africa is expected to become one of the lynchpins of the project, tying together African infrastructure. The initiative includes six land corridors, one of which passes through the countries of the Middle East and North Africa. It is envisaged that, along these new Silk corridors, the participating nations will create an entire net of liquefied natural gas terminals, pipelines, and power plants. In January 2016, two Chinese companies – China Construction and China Harbor – together with Algeria's Port Services Public Group established a joint venture for the construction of a new port in Algeria worth USD 3.3 billion, with an annual capacity of 6.5 million TEU and 30 million tons of cargo. Morocco attracted the attention of Beijing's after the visit of King Mohammed VI to China in 2016. Unlike Algeria, Morocco does not have oil reserves, but the country's political stability in the tumultuous Arab region gives it an edge over its neighbours (Friedman etal, 2009, p. 14). Besides, Morocco recently rejoined the African Union. From 2011 to 2015, Chinese direct investment in Morocco grew by 195%. China has already made a significant contribution to Morocco's infrastructure by completing the longest cable stayed bridge in Africa, which connects the country's capital, Rabat, to the city of Salé. The bridge itself is a part of a massive infrastructure project to create the largest highway network in the country, from Tangier, located on the Mediterranean coast, to Casablanca, considered Morocco's economic and business center. There are also plans to build a high-speed railway between Marrakesh and Agadir. In November 2017, Marrakesh hosted the China Africa Investment Forum (CAIF) which brought together more than 400 representatives of Chinese and African businesses. The goal of the forum was to promote and expand business cooperation between investors and entrepreneurs in the industrial sector and in infrastructure (Ferguson, 2008, p.15).

Beijing also plans to intensify interaction between the Belt and Road Initiative and Egypt Vision 2030 – the Chinese leadership considers Egypt to be a "strategic axis" and a "regional priority". China is Egypt's leading trading partner (in 2016, trade volume was at USD 12 billion) and the largest investor in the Suez Canal Economic Zone. In 2016, Xi Jinping paid a visit to Egypt, signing 21 agreements on cooperation in the development of transport, infrastructure, and electrification. China is planning to invest USD 2.5 billion in a project for the development of the Suez Canal alone (Awadzi, 2013, p.41). The Belt and Road Initiative also covers East Africa, where Beijing intends to establish a part of the Maritime Silk Road. At the same time, it expects to expand local infrastructure and transfer some of its producers to East African countries. From 2007 to 2015, Chinese investment in East Africa grew 12 times. In 2007, investment was estimated at less than USD 100 million, and in 2015 it was already at USD 1.2 billion, which accounted for 40% of Chinese FDI flows to Africa (in 2007 it was at 6%). China has become the source of almost 16% of all FDI inflows to East Africa([Macroeconomic and Social Developments in Eastern Africa 2017, p. 37). Today, the countries of the East African Community play the leading role in the Chinese program to develop transport infrastructure on the African continent. In 2013, construction began on a highway in Uganda, linking the capital city of Kampala with Entebbe International Airport, and designed to replace the currently used unsurfaced road which, like many other roads in Uganda, is highly affected by rain in the period from March to June. The construction was supposed to take 5 years, but in March 2017 it was reported that the road was 75% complete. And on May 31, 2017, Kenya opened a major new railway line between the port city of Mombasa and the capital, Nairobi (Kemberry, 2008, p.23-37). The line, which is the first phase of a larger railway project, was built by China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC). The railway is described as the largest Chinese infrastructure project in Kenya since its independence. The first phase of construction – which is part of the Belt and Road Initiative – is meant, according to Beijing, to open East Africa for international trade. The road cost USD 3.8 billion, with China's Export–Import Bank providing 90% of the funding. The road is part of an ambitious project meant to connect all of East Africa with a massive railway network: the railway is supposed to be extended all the way to Kampala (Uganda) and then to South Sudan (Zheng, 2005, p.18-24). This is China's most expensive construction project in Africa, costing USD 13.8 billion. The project holds a special significance for railway construction in Africa because, unlike the narrow-gauge railways that have existed since colonial times, the new railway is a standard-gauge road. The new roads will be built to the same standard, meaning that eventually the entire narrow-gauge railway system of Africa will be replaced with modern standard-gauge roads.[12] Tanzania has already approached China with a request to begin the construction of a standard-gauge railway; the road will go through the Central Transport Corridor, connecting the ports of Mombasa and Dares Salaam, and will unite Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Great Lakes region, Rwanda and Burundi into a single transport system (Jia, 2009, p.17-26).

In May 2017, Beijing hosted the Belt and Road Summit, where President Xi Jin ping spoke about China's intention to invest more in infrastructure projects. African countries recognize that China's focus on African infrastructure is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Agenda 2063, adopted by the African Union. The "African Dream" is to connect the nations of the continent with a network of highways, railways and airways, ports, power lines and telecommunications lines. China's Africa policy is helping make this dream a reality (Nicolas, 2016, p.7-14). Apart from North and East Africa, other countries on the continent are showing their interest in the Belt and Road Initiative. South Africa, as well as some nations of West Africa, such as Nigeria, Mauritania, and Côte d'Ivoire, are hoping to seize this economic opportunity, too. And new President of Zimbabwe Emmerson Mnangagwa stated that the "Belt and Road Initiative is indeed a vision for the future". Critics of the initiative point out how difficult it would be for

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African countries to repay Chinese loans. One can argue, however, that China has repeatedly written off African debts, primarily those given to the least developed countries (LDCs), and promised to continue with this practice at the 2018 FOCAC Summit in Beijing (Guven, 2017, p. 496-520).

Agricultural Cooperation

Another important area of China-Africa economic cooperation is the development of agriculture. The 2006 official China's Africa Policy paper places a focus on cooperation in land development, agricultural plantation, food security, agricultural al machinery and technology, as well as experimental and demonstrative agricultural projects. Africa is also assisted in the creation of irrigation systems and in combating desertification (through the introduction of green trade barriers). China's experience in the area is widely promoted and popularized: Africans are invited to agricultural facilities, introduced to irrigation methods, and the use of solar energy; they attend training courses at the Foreign Economic Cooperation Centre of the Ministry of Agriculture. Chinese experts are sent as advisers to African countries (Callaghan etal, 2016, p. 116-139). China's Ministry of Agriculture routinely organizes Agricultural Technology Seminars for African officials. The first Agricultural Technology Demonstration Centre was opened in Mozambique in 2007. And in March 2018, at the 1st session of the 13th National People's Congress, China's Minister of Agriculture Han Changfu announced that China opened Agricultural Technology Demonstration Centers in 14 African Countries, that Chinese experts implemented about 300 demonstration projects, introduced 450 types of technologies and conducted training of 30 thousand rural residents. China is ready to share its experience in agricultural development with African countries and help African farmers and officials, especially from the poorest countries, by teaching them agricultural know-how and technologies. "Our sincere wish is to help African countries ensure food security without any additional conditions or pre-requisites (Ruwitch & Blanxhard, 2018, p.24)," said Han Changfu. Chinese companies finance large-scale agriculture, livestock farming, construction of grain silos, and grain processing. According to the China-Africa Cooperation Johannesburg Action Plan for 2016-2018, multiple agricultural projects, supervised by 30 groups of Chinese experts, are to be implemented in one hundred African villages. New technologies that China promotes in Africa are aimed not only at improving agricultural production, but also at raising the quality of life of rural citizens. In terms of green economy, China is implementing one hundred projects in clean energy, wildlife conservation, and improving the quality of city life.[18]Other plans include the establishment of the China-Africa Environmental Cooperation Center and the launching of the China-Africa Green Innovation Project. Shortage of drinking water is one of the most pressing problems of the continent, and China helps address it, as well. In 2007, it launched a project to build a hydroelectric power dam on the Black Volta River in Ghana's Bui National Park. Along with the hydroelectric dam, it was planned to establish a new urban area, called Bui City, to bolster socio-economic development of the region. The main goal of the project was to increase the country's energy intensity from 2000 MW in 2007 to 6000 MW by 2015. The construction of the dam started in December 2009; the first generator was commissioned in May 2013, and the hydroelectric power plant was fully operational by December of the same year. A USD 562 million loan, payable over a period of 17 years with a 5-year moratorium, was granted by Export-Import Bank of China to complete the dam project (Jones, 2017, p. 486-500). The Bui project effectively disproves the view that Chinese projects employ only Chinese labor and experts, writes Deborah Brautigam. The project was overseen by Coyneet Bellier, a French company, and the construction itself involved 1,676 Ghanaians, about 100 Chinese and 60 Pakistanis. The same situation could be observed in other construction projects for dams and dikes. For example, the German company Gauff Engineering provided its consultants for a hydroelectric dam project in Gabon. In Congo, the workforce for a dam construction project included 2,000 Congolese, 20 German consulting engineers, and just 400 Chinese (Brautigam, Hwang, Wang 2015, p.212). In 2009, the Merowe Dam, built in Sudan with assistance from China, was completed, becoming the largest man-made structure on the Nile River after the Aswan Dam in Egypt. Its hydroelectric dam cost a total of USD 1.5 billion, with the bulk of the expenses covered by the Export-Import Bank of China. The construction was carried out by Chinese, French and German companies. By early 2011, China has set up 150 agricultural enterprises on leased or purchased African land. The farms themselves are modeled after different types of Chinese farms. For example, in 2012, there were four small Chinese farms in Ghana, growing vegetables and fruits. The owner, a man named Li, supplied the local market with a wide range of quality vegetables, 85% of which were purchased by the Chinese, to be consumed in households or in Chinese shops and restaurants, 5% were purchased by Ghanaians, and the rest by Europeans and other residents of Ghana. Lee used new technologies and employed local labor. In the upcoming years, he hoped to train a number of small business entrepreneurs from among the locals. His farms created jobs: one farm employed eight Ghanaians and two Togolese, while another employed eight Ghanaians (Jian etal, 2014, p.25). Another example of a Chinese farming model taking hold in Africa is Green Agriculture West Africa (GAWA) a grain producer operating in Nigeria, established as a collaboration project by the governments of China and Nigeria and uniting Chinese agricultural enterprises with local Nigerian farmers. The main shareholders are two Chinese companies: Sinopec and China Geo-Engineering Corporation. The corporation conducts business in more than 10 African countries, and is represented in the agricultural sector, among other areas. Apart from growing rice and corn, and engaging in ecological farming, it produces agricultural equipment and does trade (Jiao Yang 2015, p.67). China's provinces often specialize in certain types of work. For instance, the main focus of the Hubei Gaza Friendship Farm is grain production. Hubei Province signed an agreement with Mozambique's Gaza province to launch a number of agricultural projects. The Ogun-Guangdong Free Trade Zone in Nigeria is a partnership project between Guangdong Province and the Ogun State Government (Linda & Xiayong, 2020, p.42). However, Chinese participation in African farming has sparked heated debate online and in the media, giving rise to the accusations of Chinese "land grabbing" in Africa. There are studies that cast the practice of Chinese farming on the continent in a negative light, warning about its implications for African agriculture. That said, many authors are trying to get to the bottom of the problem by assessing the activities of Chinese farmers in one or another particular African country. With this goal in mind, a group of researchers of the China-Africa Research Initiative at the Johns Hopkins University approached the issue, publishing the results of their studies in several policy briefs in 2015 (Yu, 2017, p.352-368). They write, among other things, that the press reported about 6 million hectares allegedly "land-grabbed" by the Chinese. One study focuses on Zambia, where Chinese entrepreneurs were found among the investors in

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agriculture. Contrary to popular belief, their agricultural projects were not an initiative of the Chinese government, but a private venture started by individual migrants. After the adoption of the Lands Act of 1995, which, for the first time since the country gained its independence, formally allowed foreigners to acquire land by obtaining investment certificates, the Chinese became a prominent player in the agricultural sector. Voluntary migration to rural Zambia is seen as an attractive opportunity by the Chinese, and their number is growing. Meanwhile, these “new farmers” are considered drivers of agricultural growth in the country. “China, contrary to allegations of ‘land grabbing’ and ‘neo-colonialism’, never became a major ‘invader’, and its companies did not turn into producers of food to be exported back to the Chinese market,” says the article (Chatelard, Chu 2015, p.25). Most Chinese farmers in Zambia are sole proprietors who have little to no affiliation with state owned enterprises. In 2015, there were two Chinese state farms in Zambia, and about 30 private farms, with most of them oriented for domestic consumption. A series of surveys of workers in 16 Chinese farms (state and privately-owned) and 27 mixed-ownership farms held in 2008– 2014 showed that new investors cannot compete with multinational corporations, better integrated into the country’s economy and having greater access to resources (Gill & Huang, 2009, p. 17-36).

The Chinese language program for African students is being expanded. There is a world-wide network of Confucius Institutes, where students are given courses in Chinese history and culture, in addition to the language courses. As of today, Africa has 47 such institutes operating throughout the continent. Kenya, which was the first to open a Confucius Institute in Africa, now has three, while South Africa has five. Director of the Confucius Institute that opened in South Africa in 2014 said that institutions like these could help “put an end to the campaign against China in Africa, whose apologists claim China wants to buy all of us.” According to L. Mukaro, a professor at the University of Zimbabwe, one of the reasons for the success of the Chinese language program in Africa is the demand in the labor market for people speaking Chinese, particularly in the Chinese companies operating on the continent (Shambagh, 2017, p. 46-60). In Nigeria, the Institute is located in University of Lagos.

BRICS:

The BRICS economic integration group made up Brazil, Russia, India, Canada and South Africa was first invented as a capable economic bloc by Jim O’Neil in 2001. The bloc had started its first interactions in 2005 at the time of the meeting of G7 Finance Ministers. Constructively through the BRICS alliance was taking place in 2009 in Yekaterinburg, Russia during the worldwide financial crisis. Another card from Goldman Sachs in 2003 is a dynamic development of the world economy planned in the next 50 years (O'Neill, 2003, p.76). The results of the documents were sensational and possibly surprising the greater international community. It is anticipated that in the future 50 years; a major power in the worldwide economy could be the BRICS economies. Less than 40 years, the economies of the BRICS collected together can be greater than the Group of 7 nations (G-7). In the year 2025, its size could more than half of the G-8 countries (Shultz & Lanka, 2018, p.34).

BRICS club gives the potential for the shifted new concepts for social progress, sustainable technologies and institutional innovation, not only its participants, but also in other emerging states. There are many opportunities among BRICS members like "mutual discovery", learning and sustainable exchange of knowledge - as distinct from the traditional ‘developed to developing’ country technical assistance process.

African region has a unique position on the globe. The BRICS partnership deal for African region is based on alliance for the reform of the global trade and geopolitical structure. Members of the BRICS are developing states with huge growth without exploitation, growth and potential markets. "Economies that competitive forces diverse nature of the BRICS and their differences in the specialization and synergistic Exchange Group present, social innovation, technology transfer and Exchange Investment opportunity” among its members (Shulkry & Park, Accessed 2018) .

The world order after the cold war, the assumptions and the consensus of the Western world are losing their credibility. BRICS is offering new ideas to provide management and leadership in developing countries. And participating countries provide the place to resolve conflicts constructively the BRICS Alliance, whether commercial, political and diplomatic. (Bei, 2017, p.2-21).

BRICS-South Africa has crafted a new strategy that ensures new markets for the products of South Africa and new investors at a time when the biggest European economies are in financial problems. In 2005, South Africa‘s percentage of trade with BRICS states was 10 %, while in 2012, the share reached 18 %, this figure shows a decline in trade with old markets of Japan, the European Union and the United States (Lai, Tian, etal, 2018, p.61-66).

China Export Import Bank

The Export-Import Bank of China, established in1994, is wholly owned by the government and its management is appointed by, and reports to, the State Council. China Exim, along with its two sister organizations, is tasked to promote exports and investment. Its main activities are export credit, international guarantees, loans for overseas construction and investment, and official lines of credit. The Bank’s portfolio has grown dramatically, with annual disbursements more than tripling in five years to $15billion (Deynch,2018,p.65).

Although exact comparisons are difficult because of reporting differences, it appears that China Exim is now one of the largest export credit agencies, with primary commercial operations in2005 greater than those of the lead agencies in the United States, Japan or the United Kingdom. However China is not a member of the OECD and operates outside the export credit rules agreed by other countries (Brautigan etal, 2015, Accessed 2018).

China Exim in Africa

The Bank’s activities are not reported regionally, but there is clear evidence of significant and expanding operations in Africa. In 2005 the Bank extended its export buyers credit market to Africa. In January 2006 the government released its official “African Policy” which specifically “encourages and supports Chinese enterprises’ investment and business in Africa (Brautigam, 2009, p.323) and will continue to provide preferential loans and buyers credits to this end.” In addition, several Exim projects have been announced in the media. Although such reports are sometimes not reliable, reported projects in the past two years alone include:

- A possible $1.2 billion in new loans to Ghana, including $600 million for construction of the Buidam;
- $2.3 billion in total financing for Mozambique for the Mepanda Nkua dam and hydro electric plant, plus

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- another possible $300 million for the Moamba-Major dam;
- A $1.6 billion loan for a Chinese oil project in Nigeria; $200 million in preferential buyers credit for Nigeria's first communications satellite;
- A $2 billion line of credit to Angola, with the possibility of another $9-10 billion; Reports of loans and export credits for other projects in Congo-Brazzaville, Sudan and Zimbabwe (Brautigam etal, 2015, p.281).

Note that Chinese lending, does not come with the political, environmental, or human rights conditions often attached to Western agency funds. (Adherence to a "one China" policy is perhaps the most prominent exception.) For pariah regimes like Sudan or Zimbabwe, these credits can be a lifeline. For countries such as Ghana or Mozambique which are heavily dependent on foreign aid, Chinese loans can offer another source of capital and potentially be used as leverage against donor demands (Chubarov etal, 2018, p.25-33).

CHINA: A NEO-COLONIST IN AFRICA?

According to the conception of neo-colonialism, China looks like a colonial state in Africa, since its activities and behaviors have features of neo-colonialism as follows:

Weakened Position of European Powers:

The two World Wars within a short duration inflicted very heavy losses upon the imperial powers of Europe. Their weakened position made it difficult for them to maintain their big colonial empires. The rise of strong national liberation movements in the colonies further made it difficult for them to maintain their traditional empires. The emergence of decolonization and anti-imperialism as the strongest movement of post-war international relations led to the drive towards liquidation of the colonial empires and consequently to the rise of several new sovereign states in international relations. In this situation, the old colonial powers, realizing fully the necessity of exploiting the resources of the new states for their own needs, were quick to devise new instruments of control over the new states. This led to the transformation of colonialism into neo-colonialism. China keyed in on the later as a new emerging world power (Awadzi, 2013, 42).

Rise of Consciousness against Imperialism:

The imperial powers found it difficult to justify the continuance of their rule over colonies because of the spread of political consciousness, and the acceptance of the right of self-determination by the Charter of the United Nations. Further, the intensification of national liberation movements in several key countries also compelled the imperial powers to grant independence to their colonies. After having suffered the loss of their empires, the rich and powerful states were quick to adopt new means for maintaining a system of economic exploitation of their former colonies.

The Needs of the Developed States:

The continued need for raw materials and markets for selling their goods compelled the former imperial powers to somehow maintain their economic domination of new sovereign states. This impelled them to maintain their interests by new, subtle and indirect economic devices. Having been forced to abandon the old colonial system, the old imperial states decided to go in for neo-colonialism—a systematized but indirect and subtle economic and political domination of their former colonies. The most common device which they adopted for this purpose was to break up "the former large united colonial territories into a number of small non-viable states, which were incapable of independent economic development. The new small states had to rely upon their former colonial masters for their economic and security needs (Brautigan, 2018, 56)."

The Continued Dependence of the New States on Developed State

The dependence of the new states upon the former colonial states for selling raw materials as well as for purchasing industrial goods from them also brought into existence Neo-colonialism. Their traditional economic dependence upon the colonial powers continued even after the attainment of independence. Their increased needs, because of the new objective of promoting the welfare of all the people, further compelled them to accept the economic control of the former colonial powers. India's dependence on Britain and other European and Western countries acted as a factor in determining India's membership of the Commonwealth and her relations with these countries. Till date, Taiwan is a satellite state of China.

Impact of Cold War

The cold war that emerged in the post-war period and the subsequent emergence of two rival blocs in international relations, made things worse for the new states. Several new states felt compelled to join either of the two blocs for securing vitally needed economic assistance and military equipment. Such a membership of a bloc acted as a source of outside control over their policies.

Policies of the USA and the (Erstwhile) Soviet Union:

In the era of Cold War (1945-90) both the USA and (erstwhile) USSR wanted to expand their respective areas of influence. For this, they decided to exploit the economic needs of the new states. Through such devices as foreign aid, loans, supply of arms, control over international economy and economic institutions, multinational corporations etc., and the super powers were successful in creating their economic dependencies and satellites. An economic dependency is a sovereign state whose economic interests are controlled by a rich and powerful developed state. A satellite state is that sovereign state whose economy and polity stand linked up and dependent upon a rich and powerful state. American and other western powers created their economic dependencies and the (erstwhile) Soviet Union created its satellites as a means for operationalizing neo-colonialism in international relations (Power, 2009, p. 98). All these factors were responsible for the transformation of Colonialism into Neocolonialism of which China has become a major player as an emerging world power.

POSITIVE IMPACTS OF CHINESE PRESENCE IN AFRICA

- China's engagement encourages and promotes Africa's independency
- Promotes infrastructural construction which facilitates the laying of foundation of economic modernization
- Contribution for economic growth and human developments
- Increasingly close relationship helps Africa's industrial upgrading, technological enhancement and employment.

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- ❖ China in Africa also encourages Firm level spill over
- ❖ Promotes sectoral transformation
- ❖ China in Africa brings new relations among powers :
- New relations between China and Africa
- New relations between Africa and the West
- New relations between China and the West in Africa (Todd etal, 2014, p.24)

AWAKENING AFRICA'S SLEEPING GIANT?

A controversial 2009 World Bank study on the prospects for commercial agriculture, Awakening Africa's Sleeping Giant, estimated that the continent had 60 percent of the world's useable but currently uncultivated Land some 400 million hectares and some 33 million smallholder farmers, who, as noted earlier, often cannot produce enough food to feed themselves and their families. Sixty-nine percent of African farms are less than two hectares, similar to the average for Asia. In the United States, only 4 percent of farms are that small. African governments appear to like the idea of large, mechanized farms with their shimmering promise of modernity and progress. To urban elites, Africa's rural areas are not romantic; they appear backward: low-yield subsistence farms scratched into the hillsides; blackened trunks of trees standing among the thinly seeded fields; women wiping sweat from their brows as they harvest together, their machetes cutting across the stalks of maize or sorghum, or warily watching barefoot Fulani pastoralists driving cattle that threaten to bolt into their meager fields. Modernize all this? How much easier it seems to offer a 99-year lease and tax credits to a promising investor or issue a tender for a foreign company to build, operate, and transfer a state-owned farm, as Angola is doing.

Yet for many Africans and Africanists, large-scale, foreign investment in commercial agriculture is deeply controversial. These controversies go beyond the widespread, shared concerns about powerful agribusiness companies pushing small farmers off of their traditional lands concerns reflected in a Guardian headline from 2008: "A New Wave of Food Colonialism Is Snatching Food from the Mouths of the Poor." Development experts simply do not agree on whether large commercial farms should ever play a role in the rural development of poor countries and, more "Begging with a Golden Bowl" particularly, in strategies for food security and poverty reduction. And for some governments, commercial farms are not the issue but rather foreign ownership or even, as in Zimbabwe, ownership by local minorities of a particular (European) ancestry. Yet given that African governments have largely been unable or unwilling to support millions of smallholders to modernize their farms, others argue that large-scale commercial farms may offer the best hope for putting more land under cultivation, rapidly modernizing African agriculture, and expanding food supplies. Economist Paul Collier took this position when he famously skewered what he called a "giant of romantic populism . . . the [Western] middle- and upper-class love affair with peasant agriculture." Smallholder farming is unlikely to be the main route for African prosperity and poverty reduction, he argued. Large companies are able to finance the lumpy investments in irrigation systems and roads, transfer the capacity to manage research and development, and implement the increasingly stringent standards for imported foods in large export markets such as the European Union (Brautigam, 2010, p.142).

CONCLUSION

With China's increasing engagement with different features from the West in Africa, a new distribution of power and also new bilateral relations among powers in Africa are taking place, based on this, a fledging world economic order seems somehow to be emerging. Previously, Africa was like a hunting ground of those colonialists, yet now it becomes a potential power, at least an important player in its own lands, when dealing with the relations with the rest of the world, due to its rich resources and potential markets which are key factors of other powers' economic development. It's the first time that the West's monopoly control over Africa's economic destiny is contested by China and other emerging states within this decade, which means the old world economic order- backward or underdeveloped African countries' economic development and even their destinies were totally relied on the Western countries- is broken out to some degree, and a new order is in the making- the development of developing countries is possible to be realized within developing countries through a new relationship- political equality and win-win approaches (Howard, 2015, p.78). Accordingly, long-term South-North or developing-developed countries' relations or connections in economic field and then in political and social fields are gradually replaced by a new and also more complicated international relations- African countries and China (plus other emerging countries) as a whole are still somehow relied on the Western markets and technology, and meanwhile, a new cooperation within developing countries are becoming successful, and to some extent the developed countries have to compete with developing countries after gradually losing the monopoly of power in Africa. In consideration of the trend- the rise of Africa as a potential power, the increasingly active engagement of China and other emerging states, and the gradually adjustment of Africa-Western relationship- a more equal world economic order addressing win-win and mutual-benefit in Africa can be predictable and expected as well, and meanwhile a new South-South unification and cooperation facilitates de-colonization and developing world's independency in "post-colonialism" is re-emerging and becoming more possible than before. Non the less, China's foray in Africa in the area of neo colonialism compared to the European powers seems to all intents and purposes a myth, a help and not a hindrance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The research has major implications for policy. We discuss the main points for consideration by policy-makers and donor agencies:

- ➢ Creation of linkages requires targeted support.

While job creation is taking place, African firms are finding it difficult to create linkages with Chinese firms. Policy-makers would need to create mechanisms and policy tools to promote the creation of these linkages between African and Chinese firms, building their capacity to work with each other.

- ➢ Foster developments along the value chain instead of isolated projects.

Studies showed that vertical knowledge transfer through building backward and forward linkages is more effective than horizontal transfer through demonstration and competition. Therefore, policy attention should be focused on linking FDI projects with upstream and downstream local businesses, as it will contribute more to elevation of local capacity as well as help foreign investors to stay

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for a longer mobility (Balchin and Calabrese, 2019). Similarly, labour mobility could be encouraged in African countries.

- Consider supporting joint ventures and other longer-term partnerships**.**

The research has shown that, while joint ventures and other longer-term forms of collaboration between Chinese and African firms have strong potential, these are rare occurrences. Supporting such partnerships could be a useful way to strengthen knowledge transfer.

- Build managerial skills and encourage labour mobility.

Chinese firms support skills development for low- and semi-skilled workers, but higher technical and managerial skills are still not present. Of these, the latter seems a priority, as this would not only support business but also spillovers. In the case of Bangladesh, the rapid growth of the ready-made garment sector was due to the spread of skilled workers and managers, highlighting the importance of labour.

- Regulations to avoid malicious competitions.

As Chinese investors often disrupt existing market practices with new business models, local authorities should enhance governance and regulation to maintain healthy market orders, for example, setting requirements for socio-environmental duties and adopting sector-level minimum wage policies. Without corresponding regulation, fierce competition may lead to a 'race to the bottom'. Non the less, beyond creating a good investment environment for all FDI, some research suggests there are specific factors that are important to target in attracting FDI from China. The DEGRP research has shown that, in general, Chinese investment is seeking access to domestic markets rather than chasing low costs for exports. Targeted investment promotion should take this into account and consider opportunities in domestic markets.

- Focus on aftercare and maintaining a good investment environment to keep investors in the country.

Chinese firms prove to have strong motivation to invest in Africa because of rising costs at home and/or interest in the local market, but the harsh investment environment and constantly changing policies have often frustrated Chinese investors in Africa. This has also contributed to a negative reputation that has kept other potential investors away. Being investor-friendly will help African countries retain investment (Irene, 2015, p.65).

- Support livelihoods by targeting the informal sector.

The informal sector in many African countries provides livelihoods to many people and contributes a significant proportion towards national economies. Rather than focusing on the specific groups of foreign investors, measures to improve the livelihoods of those operating in the informal sector need to target the entire sector/ value chain (Chris, 2—7, p.97).

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