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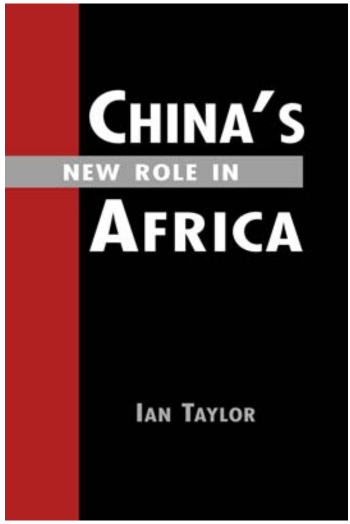
China's New Role in Africa

Ian Taylor



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China's Africa Policy in Context

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The increase in China's economic and political involvement in Africa is arguably the most momentous development on the continent since the end of the Cold War.[1] The People's Republic of China (PRC) is now Africa's second most important trading partner; though behind the United States, it is ahead of the United Kingdom, with Sino-African trade hitting US$55.5 billion in 2006 (*People's Daily,* January 30, 2007) and approximately US$74 billion in 2007 (Fundira, 2008). Comparing those figures to the estimate for 1997, when China was doing US$5 billion worth of official trade with Africa, one can appreciate the rapid rise in economic activity, although in fact Sino-African ties are longstanding (Taylor, 2006a). Furthermore, a senior economist at the Chinese Ministry of Commerce predicts that trade between China and Africa will top the US$100 billion mark in the next five years (*China Daily,* January 13, 2006). Apart from the flurry of articles in the popular media "discovering" the topic, the burgeoning relationship has been particularly well illustrated by two events: the summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing in November 2006 and the annual meeting of the African Development Bank (ADB) in Shanghai in May 2007. These followed the early 2006 release of an official White Paper by Beijing, titled *China's Africa Policy,* which lays out in general terms the contours of China's official policies toward Africa.

At both events, the Chinese leadership was enthusiastic in showcasing its country's engagement with Africa and publicizing what it habitually describes as a relationship that "has always been based on mutual benefits and win-win results" (*Xinhua,* May 15, 2007). In contrast, critics have claimed that, for the most part, Africa is exporting oil and other raw materials to China while importing cheap manufactured Chinese goods—an exchange remarkably similar to that of the colonial era.[2] Indeed, the accusation that China is a new colonizing power, exploiting Africa's natural resources and flooding the continent with low-priced manufactured products while turning a blind eye to its autocracies is at the core of most critiques of China's current engagement with Africa (Tull, 2006; Taylor, 2007a). Among the accusers are senior politicians in both the West and Africa. For instance, Karin Kortmann, parliamentary state secretary in the German Development Ministry, has declared, "Our African partners really have to watch out that they will not be facing a new process of colonization" in their relations with China (*Guardian*, November 16, 2006); in December 2006, South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki warned that "the potential danger . . . was of the emergence of an unequal relationship similar to that which existed in the past between African colonies and the colonial powers. China can not only just come here and dig for raw materials [but] then go away and sell us manufactured goods" (*Business Day,* January 6, 2007). Meanwhile, African newspapers talk of whether "Africa might be China's next imperial frontier base" (*East African Standard,* January 8, 2007). In response, Chinese academics such as He Wenping aver that "China's behavior in Africa is no worse and, on balance, probably better than that of the West" (He Wenping, 2007: 29). This book seeks to examine the evidence and arrive at some conclusions regarding the validity of such competing claims.

Chinese engagement with Africa is long-standing (see, for instance, Duyvendak, 1949; Ismael, 1971; Larkin, 1971; Filesi, 1972; Ogunsanwo, 1974; Hutchison, 1975; Bermingham and Clausen, 1981; Gao Jinyuan, 1984; Snow, 1988; Han Nianlong, 1990; Taylor, 2006a; and Sautman and Yan Hairong, 2007). In contrast to the past, Chinese ties with Africa are now generally based on the cool realities of trade and profit in keeping with *Jianshe you Zhongguo tesede shehuizhuyi* or "socialism with Chinese characteristics" (Deng Xiaoping, 1985). Official trade between Africa and China began to accelerate noticeably around 2000 and between 2001 and 2006, when Africa's exports to China rose at an annual rate of over 40 percent, from US$4.8 billion in 2001 to US$28.8 billion in 2006 (Wang Jianye, 2007: 5). Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for the vast majority of Sino-African trade, and it is on sub-Saharan Africa that this book focuses. Most of the expansion in trade is driven by a desire to obtain raw materials and energy sources for China's ongoing economic growth and for new export markets. While of benefit to some African economies and actors, the nature and political repercussions of such trade need to be discussed.

Indeed, as we've already suggested, Chinese expansion into Africa has not been met with universal acclaim. Although the Chinese are agreeable to expanding economic and political relations with poor and frequently volatile African states anxious for foreign direct investment (FDI), their methods are sometimes at odds with official Western policies regarding governance and development.[3] The resulting censure and criticism have had an interesting impact upon Beijing's foreign policies toward Africa, as will be detailed in this volume.

Even though ties between Beijing and sub-Saharan Africa go back decades, the exponential increase in China's trade with sub-Saharan Africa since 2000 means that the solidified Sino-African relationship is still at an early stage.[4] The repercussions of China's sustained, in-depth political and economic involvement toward the end of broad-based development in Africa have yet to be ascertained.[5] As of this publication, the picture appears mixed. There are instances in which China's role in Africa is clearly positive and appreciated (Sautman and Yan Hairong, 2007); conversely, there are instances in which Beijing plays an equivocal role, one that arguably threatens to unravel some of the progress Africa has made on issues of good governance and accountability.[6] As of 2008, Beijing's role in Africa—like that of all other foreign actors—is diverse, and its effect on the continent varies widely, depending on local economic and political circumstances.[7] To reiterate, a balanced appraisal of China's engagement in Africa is the aim of this volume. It is thus particularly important to contextualize and discuss both Beijing's foreign policy and the evolving political economy of the PRC. Relatedly, the diverse nature of both China and sub-Saharan Africa warrants prompt consideration if we are to develop a coherent picture of what is going on.

Which China?

It is commonplace in the literature on Sino-African ties thus far to refer to "China." Although the label may make sense heuristically, it potentially obfuscates which processes are unfolding and why.[8] Ontologically, "China" is increasingly problematic, as it is less and less plausible to speak of the area it ostensibly covers as some sort of monolithic entity (Brown, 2007). For instance, in a globalizing world, China's foreign-economic policies are put into practice by an increasingly diverse set of actors under pressure from a wide variety of interest groups and constituency demands (Zhang Yongjin, 2005). As Shaun Breslin (2007: 61) notes, however, "some non-China specialists still seem somewhat surprised to discover that [China] is not a monolithic political structure with all power emanating from Beijing."

Although we might agree that the nexus between economic growth and national security has gained prominence in China since the mid-1990s (Wang Zhengyi, 2004), the reality of contemporary China and the ways in which power is exercised there complicates the linkage (Wu Guoguang, 2005). If we were to summarize what Chinese foreign policy is, we might connect it to the key domestic concern of the Communist Party of China (CPC), namely "promoting China's economic development while maintaining political and social stability" (Sutter, 2008: 2). This connection reflects a process whereby the CPC has changed from a revolutionary party grounded in class struggle and mass mobilization to a ruling party, with its attendant focus on order and security (Zheng Shiping, 2003: 54).

Domestically, the post-Mao Chinese state has arguably been based on "an unwritten social contract between the party and the people, where[by] the people do not compete with the party for political power as long as the party looks after their economic fortunes" (Breslin, 2005a: 749; see also Meisner, 1999); meanwhile, "foreign policy that sustains an international environment supportive of economic growth and stability in China serves these objectives" (Sutter, 2008: 2; see also Nathan and Ross, 1997). One way this policy is articulated is through the promotion of China as a responsible great power *(fuzeren de daguo),* a state that operates according to international norms and within multilateral institutions.[9] This image is reinforced by the official concept, initially proposed by Zheng Bijian at the 2003 Bo'ao Forum for Asia (Zheng Bijian, 2005), of China's "peaceful rise" or *heping jueqi* (Guo Sujian, 2006; Pan Chengxin, 2008). The expression was promptly endorsed by China's fourth-generation leadership, appearing both in Premier Wen Jiabao's speech at Harvard University in December 2003 and in President Hu Jintao's address at the forum commemorating Mao Zedong's 110th birthday (Zha Daojiong, 2005a). Because some observers have focused on the inevitability of China's "rise" rather than its "peaceful" character (such concern predates the phrase; see Overholt, 1993), the concept was recast as "peaceful development" *(heping fazhan)* as a means to reassure other countries about Beijing's intentions (Glaser and Medeiros, 2007), although the issue of rising nationalist emotions within China continues to cause alarm in some quarters (Wang Fei-ling, 2005; see also Gries, 2005).[10] In fact, Beijing's policymakers seem to be going out of their way not to alarm the world about China's rise, their stated policy now merely to build a "moderately prosperous society in all respects" *(xiaokang shehui)* along technocratic lines, according to the Scientific Outlook on Development or *kexue fazhan guan* (Hu Jintao, 2007).

According to Liu Guoli (2006), China's "deep reform" requires a peaceful international environment whose maintenance is central to Beijing's current diplomacy. This goal fits with the strategy to "go global" *(zouchuqu),* which encourages Chinese corporations to invest overseas and play a role in international capital markets (see Hong Eunsuk and Sun Laixiang, 2006; Gu, 2006). It also reflects the argument that globalization forces countries such as China, which are competing for foreign investment, to maintain peaceful, stable markets (Liu Guoli, 2004). In short, there is a growing awareness regarding the interconnectedness of the international and domestic settings, which is illustrated by the slogan *yu guoji jiegui,* or "linking up with the international track" (Wang Hongying, 2007). However, the situation is not always *heping* or "win-win" (*shuangying*) despite its portrayal by Beijing. As one informant put it, there are obvious limits to "mutual benefit" due to the widely different levels of development between China and Africa as well as within Africa.[11] Additionally, Chinese compliance with international norms depends on the issue and its context (Wang Hongying, 2007). Furthermore, there is an antihegemonic aspect to the promotion of mutualism, one that either helps generate a support constituency (Taylor, 2006a) or serves to undermine the domination of the United States (Breslin, 2007). These are intrinsic parts of the *heping fazhan* hypothesis. Yet the ability to make effective decisions about and—probably more crucial—implement such a policy is complicated by the growing plethora of interests struggling for attention and influence.[12]

Central government ministries as well as provincial and municipal bureaucracies all have input, while state-owned enterprises (SOEs) now have to be sensitive both to general government policies and proclamations and to the profit motive.[13] Although the central government may have a broad Africa policy, it has to be mediated via the economic interests of private corporations and the political motivations and aspirations of local state officials who, with growing autonomy, may not share the enunciated central vision (Pearson, 1999). A form of "fragmented authoritarianism," whereby policy made at the center becomes ever more malleable to the organizational and political goals of the different parochial and regional agencies entrusted with enforcing policy, is a reality in contemporary China (Lampton, 1987; Lieberthal and Oksenberg, 1988; Lieberthal and Lampton, 1992; Lieberthal, 1995). Throw into this mix the facts that commercial organizations in China are ever more centered on profitability (see Naughton, 2007) and that the numbers and types of actors within the fragmented-authoritarianism framework have increased dramatically, and the decreasing willingness of many Chinese actors to perform activities willy-nilly at the behest of Beijing becomes clear.[14]

Meanwhile, a new and still-changing combination of forces has been remaking Chinese foreign policy, a development intimately linked to the reform era (Lampton, 2001). There now exists "a more pluralistic range of Chinese decisionmakers whose diverse interests are reflected in foreign policy and behavior"; they "represent a variety of government, party, and military bureaucracies, government-affiliated and nongovernmental think tanks, and provincial and local governments" (Sutter, 2008: 58). Competition and compromise with respect to policy formulation is now the norm at all levels of government as the policy process has become more open, facilitating greater, more proactive input from various agencies rather than the former reactive version.[15] Although the role of the paramount leader continues to be significant, one informant has asserted that, in general, policy direction is increasingly open to advice from academics and business associations and that China's policies toward Africa are becoming more nuanced as a result.[16] Other academics interviewed in Beijing in September 2007 and February 2008 concurred that there was greater receptivity to policy counsel, although Chinese capacity in African Studies was held to be weak.[17] Consultations using internal reports, conferences, and public policy debates, as well as policy NGOs all now take place (Zhao Quansheng, 2006; Leonard, 2008). As Robert Sutter notes (2008: 60), "Among key administrative actors consulted in . . . decisionmaking are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Commerce Ministry, the *Xinhua* news agency . . . and components of the PLA [People's Liberation Army] dealing with intelligence, military exchanges, and arms transfers." The International Department of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP/ID) has also played a role in some foreign policy matters (Shambaugh, 2007; Zhong Lianyan, 2007).

Interestingly, Chinese think tanks are playing a larger role in policy formulation across a range of issues (Glaser and Saunders, 2002; Tanner, 2002; Leonard, 2008) and foreign policy is no exception, with the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), China Institute of International Strategic Studies (CIISS), the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), and others all serving a function (Shambaugh, 2002a; Zhao Quansheng, 2005; Liao Xuanli, 2006). These organizations are obviously not independent by Western standards, but under Hu Jintao's leadership, pluralism does appear to have increased, as the CPC seeks new ideas and new solutions rather than simply relying on sources that justify already-held beliefs or policies. Although there are clear limits to what can be said within the Chinese political system (Zhao Quansheng, 2005), greater receptivity to new ideas is in evidence.

However, "a weak link" is also in evidence, one that concerns "the problems regarding implementation of policy choices. It is here that the Chinese state reveals itself as a bargainer and negotiator" (Narayanan, 2005: 463). Bates Gill and James Reilly (2007) identify an array of actors supposed to oversee policy, illustrating the complexity of contemporary China's engagements abroad. For instance, the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission (SASAC) either own or have controlling shares in SOEs. Thus, SASAC "has a clear incentive to maximize value and profit in China's SOEs, even if these companies' pursuit of profits ends up damaging China's broader diplomatic or strategic interests in Africa" (Gill and Reilly, 2007: 42). Alongside SASAC, the Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) play a role. But it must also be pointed out that the Ministry of Commerce and the SOEs have provincial and city as well as national offices, each with their own often divergent interests (Oi and Walder, 1999). Given that provincial SOEs make up nearly 90 percent of all Chinese companies investing overseas, center-provincial tensions—long a problem within the domestic polity (Goodman and Segal, 1994; Breslin, 1996a; Goodman, 1997)—clearly have the potential to play out abroad, further complicating policy coherence. A 2007 report, however, suggests that the central government is aware of these issues, as "several recent initiatives by SASAC specifically and [the] central government more generally appear aimed at reestablishing central government authority over the crème de la crème of SOEs" (Mattlin, 2007: 44). The development of such initiatives is something to scrutinize in future.

At the same time, some of the pathologies associated with the post-Maoist liberalization regime, such as an inattention to environmental safeguards and workers' rights (see Ogden, 1995; Teather and Yee, 1999; Tubilewicz, 2006; Wang and Wong, 2007), are being replicated abroad as Chinese corporations increasingly operate outside of China, notably in Africa.[18] In China itself, companies habitually dodge environmental and labor regulations liable to impede the profitability of any given venture, either by colluding with local state officials interested in encouraging economic growth or by graft (Sun Yan, 2004). Either way, violations of environmental law and hazardous conditions for workers are the norm in much of China. It can therefore be no surprise that similar circumstances develop overseas.[19] Since the central state cannot control such problems within China, it is doubly unlikely to regulate what myriad Chinese actors do in Africa. In other words, "the interests of Chinese corporations and their supporting bureaucratic agencies [in] the Chinese government may conflict with the interests of other Chinese government bureaucratic actors also engaged in Africa" (Gill and Reilly, 2007: 44).

Even with regard to ostensibly strategic arms of government, policy coherence has its limitations. For instance, Beijing has as of this publication been incapable of enforcing a geographical division of labor on the main national oil companies, namely the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), the China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (Sinopec), and the China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC). The result is overlap and competition among China's national oil companies, even though they are all ostensibly central to Beijing's energy-security policies. All three corporations possess subsidiary companies and have independent seats on their executive boards, meaning that various agendas are often pursued (Jiang Wenran, 2005). There is arguably little in the way of a unified strategy to secure an entrée into specific oil and gas fields; in some instances, national oil companies have even bid against one another—as when CNPC and Sinopec vied against each other for a pipeline project in Sudan.[20] Indeed, "the [national oil companies] view one another as rivals, competing not only for oil and gas assets but also for political advantage. The more high-quality assets a company acquires, the more likely it is to obtain diplomatic and financial support from the Chinese government for its subsequent investments. This is especially true for CNOOC, which does not have as much political clout as CNPC and Sinopec" (Downs, 2007: 50). This interfirm competition is normal in the capitalist West but sheds a more unexpected light on "China Inc." (Fishman, 2006) and its presumed oil strategy in Africa. There is in fact growing pressure on Chinese actors abroad to unify their thinking *(tongyi sixiang)* so as to avoid policy incoherence and ensure that "going global" serves China's domestic priorities (Glaser, 2007).

The central state has acted more forcefully with respect to the construction industry, at times compelling Chinese building companies to deliver projects in Africa at a loss as a means to advance wider national interests. Deng Guoping, general manager of the China Road and Bridge Corporation in Ethiopia, has stated that he is "instructed to slice projected profit margins so thin—about 3 [percent]—that losses are inevitable, given perennial cost overruns in Africa.

Western businesses, by contrast, typically paid bids with projected profits of 15 [percent] and more. . . . 'We're a government company and the Chinese government wants us here building things,' he says" (*Sudan Tribune*, March 30, 2005). However, this is not the only story, and a clash of interests often leads to corporate attempts to maneuver around government directives and/or recoup losses by going into businesses not sanctioned by the central government.[21] This can result in "an increasing set of tensions and contradictions between the interests and aims of government principals—the bureaucracies based in Beijing tasked with advancing China's overall national interest—and the aims and interests of ostensible agents—the companies and businesspeople operating on the ground in Africa" (Gill and Reilly, 2007: 38–39). In an environment where corrupt networks have arguably been able to infiltrate and take over some Chinese state institutions (Shieh, 2005), discussing "China's" ability to control piracy, unethical business practices, or even low-level arms sales abroad becomes even more problematic (as Chapters 3 and 5 further attest).

In short, bureaucratic interests, domestic politics, corruption, and other pathologies of China's capitalist development, as well as the increasing diversity in Beijing's foreign-policy procedures, all coalesce to undermine the notion of a unitary Chinese state relentlessly pushing forward a single agenda, in Africa or elsewhere.[22] Domestically, while state capacity to enforce policy continues to erode (Wright, 2007) competition among state agencies, even bureaus within single municipalities, is relentlessly increasing, as detailed case studies have demonstrated (Duckett, 1998; Zhang Jianjun, 2008). In Catherine Boone's estimation,

> the capacity of the center to administer, monitor, and enforce national policy in the provinces and localities—and presumably to overcome local resistance to central directive—remains limited, and arguably even diminished, over the course of the 1990s. Local despotisms, fiefdoms of personal rule, maverick localities, and entrenched interests at the local level compete against each other, and sometimes against central actors, via means both fair and foul. Some of these problems were laid bare during the SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) crisis in the spring of 2003, when center-provincial tensions, apparent breakdowns in official chains of command, and perverse incentives that encouraged local officials to cover up local problems were on full display. (2004: 230)

Such difficulties are not restricted to the domestic sphere; they are often—and increasingly—reproduced abroad, as various chapters in this book make clear.

The idea of the strategic use of economic relations by Beijing as a means of achieving power-politics objectives (see, e.g., Kurlantzick, 2007) thus needs to be treated with caution. It is important not to overestimate the degree to which the Chinese state has been able to control and direct the evolution of its international economic relations.[23] Indeed, economic liberalization has made it ever-more complicated for state authorities to identify exactly what Chinese firms and entrepreneurs are doing outside of China.[24] The behavior of the three main national oil companies is one thing—although, as we have noted, they are not as monolithic as perhaps presumed—but the large number of small, often private, traders is something quite different.[25] The notion that their actions are in some way representative of the Chinese state, or an element of some grand Chinese strategy, is far-fetched.[26] Yet despite the ongoing liberalization process and the concomitant diversity of Chinese actors and interests overseas, studies are remarkably likely to refer to a unitary "China" with a single set of interests.[27] Part of this book's aim is to examine how "evidence from Africa suggests that the Chinese government is now struggling to address tensions arising from . . . internal contradictions" (Gill and Reilly, 2007: 45)—and to consider how this struggle plays itself out in Africa.

Which Africa?

When talking of "Africa," we are required to generalize even as we recognize that each state in Africa is different and, as a consequence, that the way in which Chinese engagement with any particular African country will always be contingent on the latter's political economy.[28] In this sense, discussing "Chinese" engagement with "Africa" has its limitations. Having said that, we cannot deny that in a good many African countries, power is a function of patrimonial power and not a representation of the sovereign will of the people. In other words, behind the façade of the modern state, power in many African polities progresses informally between patron and client along lines of political reciprocity; it is intensely personalized and is not exercised on behalf of the public. In being reflexive about which states we are discussing, we arguably avoid the dangers of generalization.

Claude Ake (1991: 316) argues that "we are never going to understand the current crisis in Africa . . . as long as we continue to think of it as an economic crisis." Indeed, one of the fundamental problems in much of postcolonial Africa is that the ruling classes lack hegemony. The early years of nationalism saw an attempt to build a hegemonic project, but it quickly failed, collapsing into autocracy. Moral and political modes that transcend economic-corporate interests are generally absent; the ethicopolitical aspect that, in a hegemonic project, helps build economic configurations but also lends legitimacy, is lacking. As a result, the ruling classes express their domination and their modalities of governance via both the threat and the use of violence as well as the immediate disbursal of material benefits to supporters in neopatrimonial regimes (Bratton and van de Walle, 1994). Without these twin strategies—both inimical to long-term development and stability—the African ruling elites cannot rule: "The struggle for power has become so intense and so absorbing that it has overshadowed everything else, including the pursuit of development" (Ake, 1991: 318). Nonhegemonic rule often leads to despotism and unpredictability—the latter of course being anathema to capitalism. In fact, many African states are trapped in a cycle of underdevelopment, which stimulates societal conflict. As of 2008, it seems apparent that Chinese policymakers seem neither to realize this nor to understand the complexities of African politics, among them the fact that, when developing official state-to-state relations in Africa, they are often dealing with "quasi-states" (Jackson, 1993).

Within much of postcolonial Africa, ruling classes have been forced by their lack of hegemony to take direct charge of the state (Markovitz, 1987: 8). By the ruling classes, we mean political elites and top bureaucrats, the leading members of the liberal professions, the nascent bourgeoisie, and the upper echelons of state security forces. However, African leaders have relied on control and patronage rather than through building effective hegemonies. They control the state, but it is one their own practices often undermine and subvert. This dilemma springs from the reality that bureaucracies inherited from the colonial era have since been "transformed into far larger, patrimonial-type administrations in which staff were less agents of state policy (civil servants) than proprietors, distributors, and even major consumers of the authority and resources of the government" (Jackson and Rosberg, 1994: 300).

The nonhegemonic nature of much of Africa's ruling elites means that the state lacks the sort of autonomy that would allow reforms, make autocracy redundant, and create the soil in which liberal democracy might be nurtured (Carmody, 2007). Indeed, the modern state envisioned by donors and external actors is dependent upon the intrinsically bourgeois-liberal distinction between the public and the private, which in turn allows for the distinction between politics and economics. Yet the very kernel of politics in large parts of Africa is the absolute conflation of the public and the private spheres. Indeed, the state is the main battleground on which both political and economic domination can be not only achieved but exercised with no concern over its effect on the dominated.

Central to this scenario is the fact that, in most parts of Africa, class power is fundamentally dependent upon state power, and capturing the state—or at least being linked favorably to its leaders—is an essential precondition for acquisition and self-enrichment: "The absence of a hegemonic bourgeoisie, grounded in a solid and independent economic base and successfully engaged in a private accumulation of capital, has transformed politics into material struggle. . . . Political instability is . . . rooted in the extreme politicization of the state as an organ to be monopolized for absolute power and accelerated economic advancement" (Fatton, 1988: 34–35). Instead of a stable hegemonic project that binds different levels of society together, what we have in much of Africa is an intrinsically unstable, personalized system of domination. Absolutism reigns and power is maintained through patrimony, by means of the illegal commandeering of state resources. Corruption, not hegemonic rule, is the cement that keeps the system together, yoking the patrons to their predatory ruling class (Fatton, 1988: 36).

Clientelism is central to neopatrimonialism, with widespread networks of clients receiving services and resources in return for support. This fact is well understood and accepted in many African countries. Indeed, the system of personalized exchange, clientelism, and corruption is internalized and constitutes an "essential operating code for politics" in Africa (Bratton and van de Walle, 1997: 63). "Accepted as normal," this behavioral code is "condemned only insofar as it benefits someone else rather than oneself" (Clapham, 1985: 49). Indeed, many African countries possess what Olivier De Sardan (1999: 28) terms "a moral economy of corruption," whereby corruption is so commonplace it is construed as normal. De Sardan goes so far as to assert that it is inaccurate to describe various types of transactions in Africa as corrupt, since they have become a legitimized and routinized part of everyday life. However, he also notes that the forms of corruption that take place at the upper end of the sociopolitical spectrum—the spectacular theft and grand larceny of the Nigerian governors and Kenyan cabinet ministers, for instance—have not become normalized and still draw condemnation from the people.

Still, in general, the personalization of political power depends on the participants' understanding of well-defined roles that are less clearly understood by external actors. This accounts for the distinct naïveté external actors often exhibit in their dealings with large parts of the continent (Taylor, 2004b): "One of the most amazing things about the literature on development in Africa is how readily it assumes that everyone is interested in development and that when [African] leaders proclaim their commitment to development and fashion their impressive development plans and negotiate with international organizations for development assistance, they are ready for development and for getting on with it" (Ake, 1991: 319; see also Taylor, 2006b).

It has been argued that, in China, the party is the government and the government is the state, just as is the case in much of Africa. Thus the concept of politics in China is very similar to that in many African countries, and the Chinese have been accused of personalizing their political engagement with African leaders, hence reifying the extant neopatrimonial regimes.[29] For instance, Chinese officials in Namibia commissioned a Chinese translation of former president Sam Nujoma's hagiographical "autobiography," which was in practical terms a show of support for Nujoma's personality cult.[30] Similarly, China is famed for building presidential palaces and national stadiums across the continent. These gestures inflate the egos of many African leaders, creating in them an affinity for and sense of gratitude toward Beijing.[31] Not everyone, however, sees such investments as a good thing; as one informant put it, "our elites do not see the big picture and are happy to get some infrastructure built by the Chinese, which they can show off to the people as if they themselves have delivered it. However, they have no idea about how development is pursued or in fact have any real interest in this."[32] An official in Sierra Leone commented that "[many] Chinese infrastructure projects in Africa are for demonstration and are often built with little regard for sustainability or even suitability. They are also deliberately high-profile, such as national stadiums, ministry buildings, et cetera. But this is the fault of African governments who accept such things and think the Chinese must be devoted to them, when it is obvious what is going on."[33] In some ways, these sorts of personalized activities are similar to those in which the French, with their own policy of presidentialism and culture of personalization, engage.[34] In short, Beijing has been accused of seeking to exploit the personalization and informalization that are the hallmarks of politics in many African states. [35]

Problematically for the continent's development, resources obtained from the state or the economy are deployed as the means to maintain support and legitimacy in this system, with the concomitant effect that control of the state is equivalent to control of resources, which, in turn, is crucial for maintaining power. Control of the state serves the twin purposes of lubricating the patronage networks and satisfying the selfish desire of elites to enrich themselves, often in quite spectacular fashion. Greed is what lies at the heart of the profound reluctance of most African presidents to hand over power voluntarily and what causes many African regimes to end messily, often in coups. In most cases the democratic option is either absent or is not respected by the loser—the stakes simply are too high. Once one is out of the loop vis-à-vis access to state resources, the continuation of one's status as a Big Man and hence the ability to enrich oneself becomes virtually impossible. Politics in Africa thus tends to be a zero-sum game (Flanary, 1998).

The fact is that a hegemonic project that encompasses national development and a broad-based, productive economy is far less a concern for elites within African neopatrimonial systems (who may in fact oppose such notions) than is continued control over resources for the individual advantage of the ruler and his clientelistic networks. Paradoxically, "intense processes of class formation based on the struggle to the death between contending blocs to capture the state for the establishment of predatory rule and the utter dependence of African societies on external constellations of financial and military power have ultimately contributed to the decay of the African state" (Fatton, 1999: 4). The parts external actors such as Beijing play in this scenario must be carefully considered if they are not merely to reinforce some of the negative trajectories that have defined Africa's postcolonial history.

In simple terms, under a neopatrimonial system, the separation of the public from the private is recognized, at least nominally, and is certainly manifested in the symbols of the rational-bureaucratic state: there are flags, borders, governments, bureaucracies, and so on. These are what China's leaders generally encounter when they invite delegations to Beijing or visit Africa.

However, in practical terms, the private and public spheres are largely attached, and the outward manifestations of statehood are façades hiding the real workings of the system. This may prove a problem for Beijing as it attempts to craft coherent, long-term developmental relationships according to its stated foreign-policy goals in Africa, although short-term commercial exchanges of mutual benefit to African elites and Chinese corporations are evidently possible. In the critique of one informant, China's "Africa" is really an assortment of regimes.[36] This elision is a potential conundrum that we will return to in other chapters. Africa's role in Chinese foreign policy is what we turn to next.

China's Africa Policies

Africa has been important for China since the late 1950s, when Chinese diplomacy began to emerge, in the aftermath of the Korean War, from the shadow of the Soviet Union (for a detailed history of Sino-African relations from 1949 to 2005, see Taylor, 2006a). During the early period of Sino-African interaction, China was ideologically motivated, providing support for national liberation movements as well as direct state-to-state aid, most noticeably for Tanzania (Yu, 1970 and 1975). Indeed, by the mid-1970s, China had a greater number of aid projects in Africa than did the United States.[37] However, as the socialist modernization program picked up under Deng Xiaoping from the late 1970s onwards, Chinese interest in the continent dwindled, although Chinese policymakers have always denied this was the case (see Taylor, 1997).[38] The retreat can in part be explained by the fact that

> Africa's failure to develop its economies efficiently and open up to the international market militated against Chinese policy aims, and the increasing extraneous role the continent played in global (read: superpower) geopolitics resulted in a halt to closer Chinese involvement. Essentially, Beijing not only viewed Africa as largely immaterial in its quest for modernization but also saw that the rationale behind its support for anti-Soviet elements in the continent was no longer valid. (Taylor, 1998a: 443–444)

However, three developments—one in Africa and the others in China—came together to stimulate the close involvement of China in Africa in the postmillennial era. Following the events in and around Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989, Beijing underwent a major reevaluation of its foreign policy toward the developing world. While Tiananmen Square triggered a crisis, albeit temporary, in China's relations with the West, Africa's reaction was far more muted, if not openly supportive: "It was . . . our African friends who stood by us and extended a helping hand in the difficult times following the political turmoil in Beijing, when Western countries imposed sanctions on China" (Qian Qichen, 2005: 200). Angola's foreign minister, for example, expressed "support for the resolute actions to quell the counterrevolutionary rebellion" (*Xinhua,* August 7, 1989), while Namibia's Sam Nujoma sent a telegram of congratulations to the Chinese army (*Xinhua,* June 21, 1989). According to one commentator, "The events of June 1989 . . . did not affect the PRC's relations with the third world as [they] did with the Western world . . . what changed [was] the PRC's attitude toward the third world countries, which . . . turned from one of benign neglect to one of renewed emphasis" (Gu Weiqun, 1995: 125).

As a result, the developing world became a "cornerstone" of Beijing's foreign policy.[39] After 1989, the 1970s-era depiction of China as an "all-weather friend" (*quan tianhou pengyou*) of Africa was dusted off; in the postmillennium, such rhetoric is still deployed with vigor (Taylor, 2004a). This posture is a reaffirmation of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, formulated in 1954 to set out the guidelines for Beijing's foreign policy and its relations with other countries.[40] The Five Principles are mutual respect for territorial integrity; nonaggression; reciprocal noninterference in internal affairs; equality and mutual benefit; and peaceful coexistence. Thus Chinese policymakers are reasserting an old theme in Beijing's foreign policy.[41]

Another macroprocess facilitating Sino-African relations involved the increasing momentum of Africa's economic reform programs in the 1990s. Beijing officials began to believe that the macroeconomic situation in Africa was taking a favorable turn, with resultant opportunities for Chinese commerce.[42] This analysis was based on the assumption that African countries had adopted a set of active measures to hasten the pace of privatization, opening up international trade and reform based on bilateral and multilateral agreements. An implicit proposition was that African economies were beginning to copy China in its open-door policy.[43]

Beijing has sought to take advantage of these developments in Africa, officially encouraging joint ventures and economic cooperation at multiple levels. This move couples with the belief held by many Chinese manufacturers and entrepreneurs that the types of goods that they produce and sell (household appliances, garments, and other domestic products) potentially have immense value in Africa, where the economy is less developed than it is in Western nations and where the consumers are thus perceived to be more receptive to such inexpensive products.[44] That the domestic markets of many African countries are relatively small means that there is relatively little competition and hence that market share can be large even from day one of operations.[45] Additionally, both the Chinese government and Chinese companies perceive Africa to be rich in natural resources, particularly in crude oil, nonferrous metals, and fisheries.[46]

The third, related macroprocess is that China's rapidly developing economy in itself propels Sino-African trade. China's growth in recent years has been extraordinary and needs no rehearsing here. However, what is often overlooked in discussions of Sino-African relations is that the significance of China to Africa has to be appreciated in terms of Beijing's own development trajectory.[47] China's real economic growth—on average just under 9 percent annually for the last thirty years—has been grounded in export growth averaging over 17 percent. This figure is based on the fact that Chinese factories process and assemble parts and materials originating from outside of China (see Breslin, 2007). China's leadership depends on the continuation of this high-speed growth as, with the effective abandonment of Marxist ideology (Meisner, 1996; Misra, 1998), the only thing that lends de facto legitimacy to Communist Party rule is economic growth. However, the mounting saturation of China's export markets, combined with a rapid increase in the cost of importing raw materials into China (due in the main to China's own demand, which increases prices), makes Africa more and more important to China's economy.[48] Indeed, as the value of Chinese exports depreciates, Beijing has to maintain the growth of its economy by adding more Chinese "content" to its exports (*Business Day,* February 22, 2007). Getting hold of raw materials is integral to this strategy; Africa, with its natural resources, thus fits squarely into Chinese policy both foreign and domestic. Indeed, it would be difficult to overstate the importance of Africa to China's own development.[49]

Consequently, although maintaining strong links with Washington is also fundamental to Chinese foreign policy, Africa is becoming more and more important.[50] To reiterate, Beijing has often expressed concern about the rise of an unchallenged hegemon, namely the United States, and this concern implicitly shapes its discourse on "peaceful development." Chinese policymakers have maintained the opinion that, in the postmillennial international system, Beijing and the developing world must support each other and work together to prevent the overdomination by this new hegemon. The assertion that mutual respect for and noninterference in domestic affairs should underpin any new international order is fundamental to this stance (see Chapter 4), as is a policy of accommodation and equivocation toward Washington when deemed appropriate (Foot, 2006).

This position feeds into the long-held stance by Beijing that it is the leader of the developing world (formerly known as the third world).[51] On a trip to South Africa in early 2007, Hu Jintao remarked, typically, that although "Africa is the continent with the largest number of developing countries . . . China is the biggest developing country" (*Xinhua,* February 8, 2007). The theme of solidarity is familiar in Sino-African diplomacy, as is the refrain that, "as . . . is known to all, Western powers, not China, colonized Africa and looted resources there in the history" (*People's Daily,* April 26, 2006). Echoes former Chinese foreign minister Qian Qichen, "As developing regions that . . . once suffered the oppression and exploitation of imperialism and colonialism, China and the African countries . . . easily understand [one another's] pursuit of independence and freedom and . . . have a natural feeling of intimacy" (Qian Qichen, 2005:

200). Such sentiments are used to argue that "there is no . . . interest conflicts [*sic*] between China and African countries" (*People's Daily,* April 26, 2006). Whether there are in fact "interest conflicts" and how they manifest themselves are major topics of this book.

Paradoxically, as China's leaders increasingly integrate themselves into the global economy and start, however tentatively, to play by essentially Western rules—as is exemplified by Beijing's membership in the World Trade Organization (see Breslin, 2003)—they have simultaneously sought to strengthen political ties with various African countries, arguably (at least in part) as a defensive mechanism against Westernization if and when it should threaten influential domestic interests. This contradiction reflects the overall tension in Chinese diplomacy between engagement in and distance from the global order (Breslin, 2007; Lanteigne, 2008). This tension, combined with the notion that China seeks to "restore" its "rightful place" in world politics (Mosher, 2000; Scott, 2007) casting itself as a "responsible power" at the forefront of the developing world (Foot, 2001), is seen by many as a key influence on policy (Yong Deng, 2008). Certainly it helps explain the postmillennial developments in Sino-African diplomacy so graphically illustrated by the Sino-African forums held in 2000, 2003, and 2006.

Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Ministerial Conference

The first forum met in October 2000 in Beijing and was attended by nearly eighty ministers from forty-four African countries. The second ministerial conference was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in December 2003, when the Addis Ababa Action Plan (2004–2006) was passed. The FOCAC summit and the third ministerial conference were held in Beijing in November 2006; the next ministerial-level FOCAC meeting will be held in Cairo, Egypt, in late 2009.

The initial meeting had three main objectives**.** One reflected Beijing's overall foreign-policy strategy, namely its declared aim of overhauling the global order and opposing perceived hegemony (Blum, 2003). Critics within China view this attempt at domination, dressed up as "globalization" *(qianqiuhua),* as detrimental to the autonomy and sovereignty of China, arguing that it needs careful management (Breslin, 2006). By extension, this perceived hegemony of the United States applies to the developing world. As then Chinese premier Zhu Rongji said at the forum, Sino-African ties would help "build up our capacity against possible risks, which will put us in a better position to participate in economic globalization and safeguard our economic interests and economic security." They would also "improve the standing of the developing countries in North-South dialogue so as to facilitate the establishment of a fair and rational new international political and economic order" (Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of Zimbabwe, 2000a).

Such a position is based on the belief that—as then minister of foreign trade and economic cooperation[52] Shi Guangsheng put it at the time—"when the new international economic order has not been established and countries differ considerably in economic development, the benefits of economic globalization are not enjoyed in a balanced way." Consequently, "developed countries are benefiting most from economic globalization; but the large number of developing countries are facing more risks and challenges, and some countries are even endangered by marginalization." Thus the global community should "give more considerations to the will and demands of developing countries" (Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of Zimbabwe, 2000a).

It's crucial to note that China's leadership is intensely suspicious of the West's promotion of human rights, regarding it as a Trojan horse by which the West might undermine Beijing.[53] Importantly, the perceived Western strategy of "peaceful evolution" (*heping yanbian*) being exercised on Beijing's political security has been cast—not unreasonably—as being analogous to regime change (Ong, 2007). This sees Western powers surreptitiously working to undermine CPC rule by advancing liberal capitalism and its attendant values system. The Chinese have long responded by depicting liberal conceptions of democracy and human rights (and, occasionally, of the environment) as the tools of neoimperialists advancing on both China and the developing world. This falls on many receptive ears in Africa at the elite level, a fact of which China's policymakers are not unaware, as we will see in Chapter 4. Indeed, Beijing has long managed to rely on the developing world's strength in numbers to evade international condemnation.[54] FOCAC likewise serves as a means by which Beijing can advance a position of moral relativism regarding human rights to a mostly sympathetic audience, consolidating its standing within African elite circles. The assertion made in the *People's Daily* (October 12, 2000) at the time of the first FOCAC that China and Africa "should . . . enhance their cooperation and consultation in multilateral . . . organizations in order to safeguard the interests of both" is a reflection of this concern. Hence the Beijing Declaration of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, released at the end of the meeting, stated that "countries that vary from one another in social system, stages of development, historical and cultural background, and values, have the right to choose their own approaches and models in promoting and protecting human rights in their own countries" (Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of Zimbabwe, 2000b). The declaration further claimed that "the politicization of human rights and the imposition of human-rights conditionalities" themselves "constitute a violation of human rights" and that the inclusion of good governance and respect for human rights as requirements for development assistance "should be vigorously opposed." Such statements were no doubt music to the ears of many of the African leaders who sat in the hall in Beijing, and all were arguably meant to promote an "alternative" global order.

The outcomes of FOCAC reflect the increased priority China's leadership places on Africa. The summit in late 2006 approved a three-year action plan to forge a "new type of strategic partnership," which included a pledge that China would double aid to Africa by 2009 (to reach about US$1 billion); set up a US$5 billion China-Africa development fund to encourage Chinese companies to invest in Africa; provide US$3 billion in preferential loans and US$2 billion in preferential buyer's credits to African countries; cancel all debt stemming from interest-free government loans that, by the end of 2005, had matured for thirty-one of the least developed countries (LDCs) most indebted to China (an amount estimated at around US$1.4 billion); further open China's markets to exports from African LDCs by increasing from 190 to 440 the number of products receiving zero-tariff treatment; train 15,000 African professionals and double the number of Chinese government scholarships given annually to Africans to 4,000; send 100 senior agricultural experts and 300 youth volunteers to Africa; and build thirty hospitals, thirty malaria treatment centers and 100 rural schools there (*Africa Renewal,* January 19, 2007). Bilateral loans are presumably separate. Whether any of the above will materialize remains to be seen.

Indeed, the capacity of the state to compel Chinese companies to invest in Africa or even open up its markets to Africa is limited by the threat of undermining domestic economic and political interests. Delaying transport once products reach China, warehousing them interminably, or even "losing" them are all curious possibilities for potential sabotage.[55] Having said that, symbolic diplomacy achieved with rhetorical flourish and backed by some actual headline-grabbing initiatives is, as with all other countries' foreign policies, integral to Chinese engagement with Africa. But what is especially important when discussing FOCAC is recognizing the growing economic imperatives that underpin Sino-African relations, a subject to which we will briefly turn.

Sino-African Economic Interaction

As we have claimed, the legitimacy of the CPC's political system is based on its ability to sustain economic growth in the postmillennial era—one that is hampered by a long-term decline in domestic oil production (Taylor, 2006c). Chapters 2 and 3 discuss these issues in greater depth. As Chapter 2 demonstrates, China's policymakers are aggressively pursuing oil and other natural resources in Africa. China is currently the world's second-largest oil importer and the second-largest consumer of African resources. Indeed, the abundance of natural resources in Africa has led Beijing to seek long-term deals with

African governments that ensure continued access to all its raw materials and sources of energy. As China's national oil companies are excluded from the majority of Middle Eastern oil supplies, Beijing—determined to limit its vulnerability to the international oil market—encourages investment in Africa, courting states that the West has overlooked. This approach to securing access to African resources is what David Zweig and Bi Jianhai have dubbed a resource-based foreign policy, which by its very nature has "little room for morality" (2005: 31). Chapter 2 discusses some of the potential repercussions such policy may have for China's reputation on the continent.

China's interest in ensuring resource security and economic growth via involvement in Africa is by no means restricted to oil; it encompasses all natural resources. From copper investments in Zambia and platinum interests in Zimbabwe to fishing ventures in Gabon and Namibia, Chinese corporations have vigorously pursued the political and business elite in Africa, often sweetening the deals they make with incentives provided by the central government. One of the benefits of Chinese interest in African resources is that it has dramatically increased demand, revitalizing such commercial sectors as Zambia's copper industry.[56] However, the influx of capital into weak and authoritarian governments may also have adverse long-term consequences for Africa, as leaders may be tempted by their newly perceived economic security to neglect necessary reforms. Yet, as this book makes clear, such problems cannot be specifically associated with Chinese engagement with Africa; they are intimately linked to the state of the continent in general. Indeed, there is a real danger that "China" is being constructed as some sort of scapegoat for concerns that have very little to do with Beijing. As a source from within the African Union admitted in 2007, "Totalitarian regimes in Africa are the problem. If China was engaging with serious governments the relationship would be very different—and better."[57] One purpose of this book is to point out this reality and move the debate about Chinese involvement in Africa forward, beyond some of the more simplistic analyses offered thus far.

Granted, we must note that, with the exception of oil exports into China, Sino-African trade is generally lopsided in favor of Chinese exporters who are penetrating African markets with cheap household products. Critics charge such trade is doing little to encourage indigenous African manufacturing.[58] That said, it is the failure of African economies to industrialize and develop postindependence that has made them a natural target for Chinese exporters.[59] Referring specifically to one industry in Nigeria, one informant made a point that could apply to all industries across the continent: "The government is uninterested in investing in the petrochemicals industry, and so Nigeria has to import products from China and India [that] we could easily make ourselves."[60] These serious and complex issues are discussed in depth in Chapter 3.

At any rate, Chinese estimates of trade with Africa need to be treated with caution. The part played by Hong Kong as a transit point for Chinese imports and exports makes the official bilateral figures very dubious. A huge proportion of Chinese exports are routed through Hong Kong; whether they are counted as Chinese re-exports has an enormous bearing on trade statistics.[61] In addition, foreign-invested firms account for just over half of all Chinese trade, which means that much of Chinese trade is not actually "Chinese" at all, especially if we take into account domestic Chinese companies that produce under contract for export using foreign components. In fact, the majority of Chinese exports are produced by foreign-funded enterprises; many are joint ventures, but an increasing number are wholly foreign owned. In addition, "as Chinese producers can claim a 15 percent VAT [value-added tax] rebate for exports, there is an incentive for producers to overstate the value of exports or even to totally fabricate exports and sell them at home instead" (Breslin, 2007: 107). That any visitor to an African market these days will observe huge amounts of Chinese-made products on sale is not in dispute. The specific (and colossal) figures provided by Beijing regarding Sino-African trade, however, do need to be taken under caution.

China's Developmental Assistance

Another core, long-standing element of Beijing's strategy in Africa is development assistance (Brautigam, 1998). The 2006 governmental White Paper states that "the Chinese government encourages and supports competent Chinese enterprises to cooperate with African nations . . . on the principle of mutual benefit and common development" (*China's Africa Policy,* 2006: 5). Whether it has the capacity to do so is questionable; as of 2008, Chinese development assistance primarily consists of aid packages and investment by SOEs. Tremendous debt and low levels of FDI across Africa mean that Chinese investment and aid are both welcomed and needed in many countries. Yet they have had decidedly mixed effects.[62]

It is clear that, in distributing aid, China favors countries that are rich in resources, to the point of apparent disregard for potential political repercussions. It would be a "big mistake," in one informant's words, "to rely on China as the 'savior of Africa.' If a country is resource rich, China is useful, but otherwise, [it] cannot be counted upon, even for aid."[63] This assessment is probably unfair, but the US$2 billion in aid that China gave Angola in 2005 does illustrate how resource-driven policies elicit such condemnation.[64] After three decades of civil war, Angolan government officials were on the verge of accepting a loan package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that stipulated strict monitoring of the domestic situation of what was after all one of the most corrupt nations on the continent. However, in the face of an almost unconditional aid package from Beijing worth US$2 billion, the Angolan government rejected the IMF's offer in favor of China's, of which one of the few stipulations was the right to 10,000 barrels of oil per day. This arguably undercut the IMF's efforts at increasing transparency, although we should point out that in 2004, Standard Chartered, backed by a consortium of European banks that included Barclays and Royal Bank of Scotland, disbursed a loan of US$2.35 billion to Angola's state oil company, Sonangol. Repayments over five years were guaranteed based on future oil production (*Guardian,* June 1, 2005). In other words, the Chinese are not the only ones financing the corrupt regime in Luanda.[65]

However, the situation in Angola is by no means unique and thus it underscores concerns that Beijing is at times undermining opportunities to promote good governance. Supporting unlawful or despotic regimes has potential consequences not only for the African people but also for China's own legacy on the continent, for if these regimes are toppled, Beijing runs the risk of being branded as their ally and losing its access to the resources it had tried to secure (see Chapters 2 and 5). The continuation of bad governance is to both Beijing's and Africa's long-term disadvantage, as it sabotages the long-term possibilities of Sino-African economic links. There are, however, signs of evolution in Chinese thinking in this regard, as will be detailed in the following chapters.

In terms of FDI, Chinese corporations, unlike other (primarily Western) companies operating in Africa, are generally undeterred by risk, as they are state owned and therefore not accountable to investors, serving political interests instead.[66] However, as Chinese business dealings progress on the continent, their long-term effects are being questioned. Although the arrival of new actors on the continent who are eager to invest is largely positive, the possible downside is that the leaders of some African states may, in the quest for economic growth, dodge the political and economic reforms necessary to revitalize the continent.[67] And although China has forgiven billions in debt to African countries, further loan packages negotiated at unfavorable rates jeopardize both the strongest growth rates on the continent since independence and the benefits of the original debt cancellation.[68]

Meanwhile, China has made much of opening up its markets to Africa and places no tariffs on the twenty-five poorest African states. However, the huge supply of inexpensive Chinese goods pushes domestic goods out of the African market, as Chapter 3 shows. According to Sanusha Naidu and Martyn Davies (2006: 79), "African producers have been marginalized and displaced from the market because of the influx of cheap Chinese goods . . . their livelihoods will have been eroded by competition from cheap Chinese goods." And of course, despite Chinese claims that the opening of its markets to African goods is to the continent's economic benefit, the inescapable fact remains that, natural resources aside, Africa would have very few products of value to China's consumers even if it were able to export them in sufficient numbers, efficiently, and with the guarantee of satisfactory quality.[69]

An arguably positive aspect of Chinese investment for ordinary Africans is its focus on building infrastructure, a need that has largely been ignored by Western donors in recent years. This has considerable potential for good, according to one Western diplomat, as "China is able to build a railway before the World Bank would get round to doing a cost-benefit analysis."[70] This willingness to construct or repair infrastructure has to be appreciated. However, one of the criticisms leveled against Chinese investment in and loan packages to African states is that they often stipulate that contracts be awarded to Chinese companies.[71] Since Chinese aid often comes in the form of loans, not grants, leverage to insist on such provisions are robust. For example, the terms of the previously mentioned US$2 billion loan to Angola were that, in addition to the aforementioned oil rights, 70 percent of contracts must go to Chinese corporations. Chinese corporations are further accused of using cheap contract labor from China rather than employing Africans. These criticisms will be discussed in other chapters.

As of 2008, most Chinese aid is conditional, connected to the purchase of Chinese goods and services; around 69 percent of Beijing's aid funds are spent on Chinese equipment. That said, virtually all donors practice tied aid. For instance, about 60–75 percent of Canadian aid is tied, while the United States, Germany, Japan, and France still insist that a major portion of their money be used to buy products originating from their respective countries, according to a UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) report (*Inter Press Service,* July 6, 2007). In countries with underdeveloped economies, Chinese engagement at least provides the capital and skills necessary for infrastructure building while supplying affordable products to the markets—actions that many Western donors could be accused of shirking.[72] And given that Africa desperately needs its infrastructure built, refurbished, and/or replaced, Beijing's construction companies are playing at least a partly positive role in Africa. Indeed, their investment of large amounts of money in infrastructure is arguably laying a solid foundation for Africa's future development—if managed properly by its leaders.[73] The World Bank has estimated that loans from the China Export-Import Bank to sub-Saharan Africa in the infrastructure sector alone amounted to over US$12.5 billion by the middle of 2006 (*China Daily,* July 17, 2007). (Since the mid-1990s, Chinese companies have been securing about 20 percent of all construction contracts in Africa under the aegis of the World Bank.)

Chinese companies with aid experience in Africa have an important advantage in securing contracts over other engineering companies in that they are prepared to undertake projects at very low tenders as a means to ensure future contracts. Once in country, these companies keep hold of equipment such as bulldozers and other apparatus, which greatly increases the competitive costing for postaid, commercial construction contracts.[74] Indeed, Chinese construction teams typically stay on in African countries once an aid project is completed in order to set up a branch office of their home companies.[75] The teams then go into business alone or launch joint ventures with local partners.[76] In short, many Chinese aid teams are spurred on by potential future profits.[77] Ministries, provinces, counties, and SOEs have all reorganized their foreign-aid offices to reap the benefits afforded by an upsurge in Sino-African relations and the projects it has engendered (even at the arguable expense of policy coherence from the macro perspective of the Chinese state).

China as a Model for Africa?

Politically as well as economically, China has provided an alternate development model for African states in the eyes of many of their leaders.[78] According to Naidu and Davies (2006: 80), China poses "a refreshing alternative to the traditional engagement models of the West. . . . African governments see China's engagement as a point of departure from Western neocolonialism and political conditions." Concurs one Nigerian analyst:

> For some among Africa's contemporary rulers, China is living proof of "successful" alternatives to Western political and economic models. . . . For many of Africa's ruled, who are physically and intellectually exhausted by two decades of economic "reform" supposedly adopted by African governments but driven by Western governments, donors and the IFIs [international financial institutions], China represents the hope that another world is possible, in which bread comes before the freedom to vote. (Obiorah, 2007: 38)

Countering the West's promotion of neoliberal reforms in Africa, Chinese sources have argued that the imposition of an essentially Western ideology on African states is a form of neoimperialism.[79] In what has been termed the post-Washington consensus era (ostensibly a move away from hardcore neoliberalism toward sustainable and egalitarian growth) the search for a new developmental path is understandable (Fine, Lapavitsas, and Pincus, 2001), and China's model of development provides an appealing alternative for some. Joshua Cooper Ramo (2004) has called this pro-China perspective the "Beijing Consensus," consisting of three key parts: a commitment to innovation and constant experimentation instead of to one-size-fits-all neoliberal projects; a rejection of per capita gross domestic product (GDP) as the be-all and end-all in favor of equal concern for sustainability and equality in policymaking; and self-determination and opposition to international hierarchies. This model still reflects the neoliberal paradigm but possesses idiosyncratic facets. Although Chinese diplomats deny that they seek to export any model to Africa or elsewhere,[80] it is a fact that Ramo's ideas have been promoted within China, approvingly cited in *Xinhua* and elsewhere, and that Chinese academics see soft power as intrinsic to building Sino-African ties (see, e.g., Liu Yong, 2007).

Meanwhile, the Chinese leadership has been very politically dexterous in the way they court African leaders. This is notwithstanding a general disdain for Africans on the part of the Chinese, which has historically caused problems for Sino-African relations but which is now a taboo subject (Dikötter, 1992; Sautman, 1994). By holding political and business summits such as the various Sino-African forums and arranging state visits by high-ranking Chinese political officials, Beijing symbolically accords Africa equal diplomatic status with the dominant world powers. For instance, it has become a tradition that the first overseas visit that China's foreign minister undertakes each year is to Africa. For their part, African elites are deeply appreciative of being given the red carpet treatment whenever they turn up in Beijing. On a research trip to Beijing in September 2007 that coincided with a visit by Chad's president, I was impressed by the way the diplomatic occasion was covered in the media, where it received top billing, and by how the Chadian flag was prominently displayed around Tiananmen Square.

In contrast, when African leaders visit London or Washington, unless they are from South Africa, Egypt, or one of the few other states deemed important, they are barely afforded a few minutes and even then they are more likely to be admonished for their chronic failures in governance than they are to be toasted as dear friends or, more important, credible statesmen.[81] China's leadership realizes this and thus expends energy on massaging the egos of Africa's leaders. And it pays off. Beijing has been successful in gaining African support at institutions such as the United Nations (UN), where the vote of the African block has allowed China to block resolutions on domestic human-rights abuses (see Chapter 4). African support also helped Beijing in its campaign to host the 2008 Olympics; explained an official in Sierra Leone's ministry of foreign affairs, "In Africa we look after our friends and help them."[82]

Symbolic diplomacy, defined as the promotion of national representation abroad, has become an increasingly important component of Chinese foreign policy in Africa and elsewhere (see Kurlantzick, 2007). Thanks to the experiences of their own developing nation, Beijing's policymakers are very much aware of the importance of prestige projects in asserting the power of state leaders and thus have been involved in such large-scale undertakings as the construction of national stadiums all over Africa. This approach has proven beneficial to both the ruling elites in Africa, who view the results as symbols of regime legitimacy and power (which suitably impress the local populations), and to Beijing, as it demonstrates China's rising prominence.[83] By engaging in these kinds of projects, along with presenting aid packages and disseminating the notion that China may be a model for Africa, Beijing is very much asserting itself as an equal of Western powers as well as appealing to the African elite classes.[84] Indeed, Arif Dirlik (2006) surmises that the Beijing Consensus draws its meaning and appeal not from some coherent set of economic or political ideas it conveys à la Ramo, but from the alternative it offers to the version of statehood espoused by the US government, which those opposed to Washington and, by extension, the West can draw inspiration from. Shaun Breslin (2007: 2) concurs: "China's alternative path is partly attractive because of the apparent success of the experience of economic reform. Other developing states might also lean toward the Chinese way not just because China's leaders don't attach democratizing and liberalizing conditions to bilateral relations, but also because China is coming to provide alternative sources of economic opportunities (with no democratizing strings attached)."

However, Africa's intellectuals must consider with caution the notion that China offers a viable alternative model of development.[85] For one thing, "the appeal of China as an economic model" wielding soft power (Kurlantzick 2006: 5) overstates the ability of the leadership in Beijing to project and promote an alternative economic type (Yan Xuetong, 2006). Although the thought that economic liberalization can occur within an authoritarian political system might be appealing to some African autocrats, it has its limits, not least for the Chinese themselves in promoting such a message; indeed, China's support of authoritarian elites in Harare and Khartoum has already stimulated anti-Chinese feelings among African civil-society leaders. Furthermore, China's own sustained growth has taken place in a system without democracy or transparency and under a government that has generally shunned policy reforms promoted from outside. This scenario must seem attractive to those African leaders whose rule has no real legitimacy and who are tired of fending off criticisms from the IFIs and the wider donor community.[86]

Yet China's extraordinary economic growth has come about, at least initially, within the context of capable governance, in a region that is itself economically dynamic. Rapid economic growth without democratization, per the East Asian model, was most likely to occur only in a strong developmental state (Öniş, 1991; Evans, 1995; Clapham, 1996; Woo-Cumings, 1999; Leftwich, 2000); the case of China generally confirms this proposition (Ming Xia, 2000), though analysts offer certain caveats (Breslin, 1996b). But contrast East Asia with Africa. Though the strength of the Chinese state has declined somewhat as liberalization progresses (Wang Hongying, 2003), Beijing remains powerful and stable in ways that are beyond the ambition of most—if not all—current African leaders.[87]

Furthermore, the irony is that those who applaud alternatives to Western-dominated IFIs often—sometimes perhaps without realizing it—end up in a position that supports not only the authoritarian status quo in some African states but also the emerging leadership of China. Opposition to neoliberalism—which has considerable appeal—can result in the promotion not of social democracy or even Keynesian liberalism but illiberal authoritarianism. Even within China itself, as Zha Daojiong observes (2005a), there is debate as to whether the Latin American condition of social polarization, international dependency, and economic stagnation will be China's fate if appropriate policies are not implemented (see also Nolan, 2004). These debates often question the capitalist direction of Beijing's current course, again destabilizing the notion of a Chinese model (see Wang Chaohua, 2003; Wang Hongying, 2003; see also Fewsmith, 2001). Even if we disagree with Gordon Chang's forecast that collapse is inevitable (2002), we may grant that critiques of the "China miracle" (Wu Yanrui, 2003) seem to go overlooked by its advocates (Hutton, 2007; Shirk, 2007).

Besides, Martin Hart-Landsberg and Paul Burkett (2005) have demonstrated how market reforms in China have led inevitably toward a capitalist and foreign-dominated developmental path, with massive social and political implications that have yet to be fully determined (see also Hinton, 1991; Sharma, 2007). Even though a key criterion of capitalism—that is, private ownership of the means of production—is not wholly present in China, "profit motivation, capital accumulation, free wage labor, commercialization/marketization[—]in other words, economism (profitmaking, competition, and the rule of capital)[—]is gaining priority as the determinant driving force of societal development" (Li Xing, 2001: 161). This trend has generated social dislocations across the country and caused acutely uneven development between and among regions (Wang Shaoguang and Hu Angang, 2000), such that China's model begins to resemble either crony capitalism or gangster capitalism in the eyes of its critics (Holstrom and Smith, 2000). The rapid growth figures that have defined post-Mao China are arguably a function not of improved efficiency but of a systematic dismantling of the social benefits that facilitated significant levels of economic equality during the socialist-construction period (Hart-Landsberg and Burkett, 2005). China's transition to a liberal market system has been predicated on intensified exploitation of its own labor force (Harney, 2008), which has attracted a mass incursion of foreign corporations (Chossudovsky, 1986) aided by a cadre of compradors (Hinton, 1993). Ironically enough, given the Chinese economy's arguably excessive dependence on exports and FDI (around three-fifths of its exports and nearly all of its high-technology exports are manufactured by non-Chinese firms), foreign companies are routinely denounced within Africa as neocolonialists. In other words, the Chinese model for Africa, one which at least was initially predicated upon extraordinary dependency upon foreign capital, is now being touted by African intellectuals whereas a previous consensus seemingly cast dependency as the key variable for Africa's economic predicament. How such realities fit coherently is unclear.[88]

In "burying Mao" (Baum, 1994)—inherently a process of "smashing the iron rice bowl" (Hughes, 2002)—and "retreat[ing] from equality" (Riskin, Renwei Zhao, and Shi Li, 2001), the deterioration of the Chinese health system, high levels of unemployment, rocketing state debt, regional inequalities, and serious social dislocations across the country have all occurred (Weil, 1996; Chan, 2001; Besha, 2008; Hart-Landsberg and Burkett, 2007; Gao Mobo, 2008). Furthermore, when people speak of China as a model, it is actually only part of the nation they are interested in—namely the coastal and southern regions. The other part—"the central rural belt of poor peasant farmers, the underinvested western regions of Xinjiang, Ningxia, and Tibet, and the ailing industrial areas of northeastern China around Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces"—is overlooked (French, 2007: 105).

At the same time, China's economic revolution has deepened the contradictions of capitalist development in other countries, particularly in China's neighborhood but also elsewhere, and the pathologies associated with the post-Mao reforms are regularly played out wherever Chinese actors operate (which, again, has ironically enough started to produce anti-Chinese sentiment within Africa). Furthermore, in 2004 alone, disparate rural, ethnic, and economic tensions, often stimulated by stresses caused by liberalization, in China provoked 74,000 protests and riots involving more than 3.7 million people, according to China's own security minister, Zhou Yongkang (Keidel, 2006). Meanwhile, 0.1 percent of the households in China possess 41.4 percent of the country's total wealth (*People's Daily,* October 31, 2007; see also Goodman, 2008). Is this a model that any African society wishes to follow?

Arguably, the most we can say about China as a model is that a strong state with an overarching ideology, backed by elites dedicated to development but prepared to indulge in policy experimentation concerning subnational officials and social institutions, can stimulate growth. But that axiom is not specific to China—it applies to developmental state models in general, which Africa has long needed (Taylor, 2005a). As Randall Peerenboom (2007) points out, China is plainly following the patterns of its East Asian neighbors. Perhaps the idea that, in a strong state, authoritarian leaders may maintain control over policy and continue their patronage networks accounts for some of the receptivity of various African countries to the so-called Chinese model. But the key difference between China and Africa is that the former has promoted rapid (albeit uneven) development; with a few exceptions, the latter has not.[89]

The Taiwan Factor

One aspect of Sino-African relations that has lost much of its purchase is the competition between Beijing and Taipei for diplomatic recognition. The search for status, or, more correctly, the desire to maintain status lies at the heart of the Republic of China on Taiwan's (ROC) foreign policy, particularly vis-à-vis its official state-to-state relations; its competition with Beijing for international legitimacy has been a feature of their relations since 1949 (Chen Jie, 2002). However, Taiwan has perpetually been constrained by China's success in marginalizing it on the world stage; as a result, Taiwan has had to satisfy itself with maintaining official state relations with small states.[90] All, with the exception of the Vatican, are in the developing world, including four in Africa (see Taylor, 2002a).

Since the early 1970s, Taiwan's position as a diplomatically recognized entity on the international stage has been weakening.[91] The process of derecognition started approximately in 1970, when Canada and Italy established diplomatic relations with China; three subsequent watersheds clinched it. First was the admission of China to the UN General Assembly in October 1971; second was the termination of official ties with Taipei by Tokyo in late 1972; and third was the decision in 1979 by Washington, DC, to switch official bilateral ties to Beijing. Between 1971 and 1979, forty-six states came to recognize China instead of the ROC (Larus, 2006). The consistent policy of China is to obstruct Taiwan's relations with the world community and maintain that "China," including Taiwan, is governed by the CPC in Beijing, not the "renegade province" that is, in official parlance, the ROC government (see Taylor, 1998b).

Increasingly, Beijing has used its political and economic muscle to threaten that it will sever relations with any state that establishes or upgrades its relations with the ROC.[92] As a result, Taiwan has full diplomatic relations with only twenty-three countries as of June 2008, as Costa Rica shifted its allegiance to Beijing in June 2007 and Malawi followed suit on December 28, 2007. In Africa, Taipei's current allies are Burkina Faso, The Gambia, São Tomé and Principe, and Swaziland. No other country has been as isolated diplomatically as Taiwan, not even such "pariah states" as Israel or apartheid-era South Africa (Geldenhuys, 1990). Paradoxically, however, even as Taiwan has seen its official status drastically deteriorate over the last thirty years, it has continued to emerge as a major economic player on the global stage and as a democracy—the first ever in Chinese history.

Still, Beijing is able to pursue its aggressive policy against Taipei primarily because of its own ever-expanding economic and political clout. In particular, a seat on the Security Council of the United Nations (and the veto power that goes with it) is China's ultimate trump card, which it plays to dissuade other economically strong or ambitious nations from holding official relations with Taipei (Payne and Veney, 2001).

It is probably true that most Africans do not care much who the "real" China is or with whom official diplomatic ties should be established. In fact, most countries would probably opt for relations with both if it were possible.[93] However, the diplomatic competition is to Africa's advantage (see Taylor, 1998b), particularly insofar as African leaders can play the two Chinas against each other. Indeed, such manipulation has resulted in economic assistance for some countries at a time when the interest of other foreign powers in the continent has continued to decline. Since the 1960s, Taiwan has deployed aid as an inducement for maintaining or establishing official ties with Taipei. This has had the unfortunate effect of causing African countries to sell their recognition to the highest bidder. For instance, in 1996, Senegal switched—for the third time—from Beijing to Taipei to become the recipient of a generous aid package, as had been the case with the previous switches. Similarly, when The Gambia abandoned Beijing in July 1995, a US$35 million aid package awaited Banjul in reward. It was also reported that São Tomé stood to gain US$30 million over three years for recognizing Taipei in 1997—no small amount for a country with an annual GDP of around only US$45 million (see Taylor, 2002a). However, the discovery of oil around São Tomé's waters probably means that its ties with Taipei are approaching their end.

Taiwan is a generous aid partner of those countries who officially recognize Taipei. Yet its generosity has on occasion been exploited by certain African nations that have effectively held Taipei to ransom. A case in point is Niger, which dallied between the two Chinas in an obvious attempt at draw out extra money. In June 1992, Niger agreed to establish diplomatic relations with Taiwan. However, just before the Taiwanese ambassador designate was due to leave for Niamey, Niger suddenly went back on its word and announced it was sticking with Beijing. But the next day, Niger's prime minister contacted Taipei to contradict the announcement. A Taiwanese embassy was established in Niamey, and China departed, denouncing Niger's position. Taiwan immediately began funding medical and agricultural programs and assisted in extracting Niger's uranium deposits. However, this was not the end of the debacle; in 1996, Niger switched back to Beijing, complaining that aid promised by Taipei had not materialized (see Taylor, 1998b).

That one of the most advanced economies in the world was reduced to such an exercise as scrabbling for the favors of Niger (which has a per capita gross national product, or GNP, of less than US$300) illustrates Taiwan's lack of political power in the international arena. Taiwan has since become more circumspect in its dealings with prospective diplomatic partners; those countries seeking a payout from Taipei in return for recognition are likely to be disappointed.[94]

Pragmatically, Taiwan encourages the international community to stop looking at relations with Taipei and Beijing as an either/or matter. Instead, Taiwanese policymakers have adopted what they see as a nonideological and flexible approach to foreign policy. Their policies remain ambiguous vis-à-vis China (Hickey, 2007). On the one hand, Taipei insists that there is only one China, of which Taiwan is a part, and disavows any ambitions for the island's independence *(tai du)*. On the other hand, Taipei emphasizes that it is a sovereign state that should join the international community as an equal. Intricately linked to this contradiction is the ongoing democratization process whereby Taiwan moves toward a more pluralistic society (see Taylor, 2002a). This development has stimulated a whole gamut of new debates within Taiwanese society, including the fundamental question of how to define Taiwan, which have played themselves out in Taipei's foreign policy (Rigger, 2005). Yet as China's economic growth continues at an extraordinary pace, the overwhelming majority of African states are not prepared to risk Beijing's wrath by recognizing

Taipei. The biggest prize, South Africa, fell to China at the end of 1997, and the subsequent defections of Costa Rica and Malawi are indicative of the continuing trend.

The Structure of This Book

The book opens with a discussion of Chinese activities in Africa's oil industries. As of 2008, Africa provides around a quarter of China's fast-growing oil needs, and oil and strategic minerals dominate the profile of Africa's exports to China. The most significant provider to Beijing is Sudan, which began its trade with China in 1996, but the PRC's state-owned oil companies are actively establishing a stake elsewhere as well. Other investments include chromium extraction and processing in Zimbabwe. The major oil companies—CNPC, Sinopec, and CNOOC—were rationalized in 1998 so that they could function more effectively in the global arena. Though they ostensibly operate according to a strategy set by Beijing, coordination seems to be a growing issue. Chinese oil diplomacy in Africa likely has two key aims: to lock in oil supplies to help provide for the Chinese economy's burgeoning energy needs in the short term, and to place Chinese corporations as players in the global oil market in the long term.

Although China's energy requirements have elevated prices and thus income for oil-rich African governments, its attitude of noninterference and its seeming indifference to what happens to the money—where it goes and how it does or does not facilitate development—is probably not helping Africa escape from its infamous "resource curse" (Meidan, 2006). Indeed, Beijing's noninterference policy, based on the stance that "foreign countries should only get involved in a country if invited to by the host state," means that the choices of the host state's elites are paramount.[95] Until and unless the elites themselves promote transparency and prodevelopment policies, no such governance standards will be adopted. In such a depredated milieu, the perpetual question will be: How might Africa engage with and exploit the increased engagement by Chinese companies in order to benefit ordinary people and promote development?[96] Given the average standards of governance in most resource-rich African states, the likely nature of such engagement is evident—and troubling. But it is ultimately a matter for Africans to decide themselves.

A key aim of Chinese involvement in Africa is resource security, but Beijing's entrepreneurs also seek commercial advantages. As China's economy has taken off, the search for more and more markets for Chinese exports has intensified. Africa is seen as a useful and profitable destination, and Chinese imports into Africa—mostly low-cost and low-quality goods—have taken over the marketplaces in most African countries, as any visitor will attest. Chapter 3 looks at how competition from Chinese manufacturers is impacting African industries, focusing especially on the effect Chinese textile exports have had on Africa's apparel industry and its own export competitiveness. Indeed, the impact on local economies of Chinese imports is becoming more and more apparent, leading to growing local resentment.[97] Concerns over unfair Chinese competition and the colonization of Africa by China are invariably linked to such imports. Critics might argue that effective dumping practices across the continent—of which many Chinese businesses stand accused—constitute an infringement of World Trade Organization (WTO) rules; China, they might add, should recognize that—with the exceptions of South Africa and possibly Mauritius—African countries generally lack the necessary technical and monetary resources to bring such issues before the WTO's dispute-resolution panel. As a Nigerian journalist observed, Africa is an easy target for Chinese exporters due to the meager controls on customs; African officials can very often be bribed to look the other way.[98] Beijing appears to recognize that the trade imbalance threatens to sour Sino-African relations—hence the decision, made at the 2006 FOCAC, to more than double the number of African products allowed into China duty free.

It is vital that any analysis of the effect cheap Chinese imports are having on Africa's manufacturing base—particularly the clothing and textile sectors—acknowledges that industries on the continent have been in decline for a long time. A key aim of Chapter 3 is to put Chinese exports to Africa into context and challenge the commonly held view that "China" is to blame for the difficulties of Africa's manufacturing industries. Instead, it cautions against making China a scapegoat for failings that are not Chinese in origin—while conceding that there are issues that need addressing.

Chapter 4 looks at the controversial issue of how the concepts of human rights and good governance fit into Sino-African relations. As we have mentioned, Beijing's relations with all foreign nations are grounded in the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which rule out interference in domestic affairs and elevates state sovereignty. Critics of Sino-African ties have often emphasized Beijing's no-strings-attached stance on human rights and governance. Clearly, many African states that benefit from Chinese support not only abuse their citizens' civil and political rights—the definition of which may, granted, depend on a Western orientation—but also undermine their economic and social rights, which is the aspect of human rights that Beijing emphasizes. Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe is a case in point. The chapter suggests that if, while holding fast to the principle of engagement without interference, China actually makes things worse for some in Africa, then its argument that socioeconomic rights are more important for the poor in underdeveloped countries than are "abstract" political rights is potentially awkward, raising the possibility of exploitation by the continent's autocrats. Doing no harm, which is not the same as doing nothing, needs to be part of Beijing's broader African policy. Engaging without damaging is one of the greatest challenges China faces in its African diplomacy, although there are indications that it is beginning to do so, as the chapter details.

Chapter 5 examines another contentious issue in Sino-African relations—arms sales. Chinese arms exporters sell almost exclusively to the developing world, furnishing Africa with cheap defense equipment, much of it small arms. Like many other arms exporters, Chinese companies are cynical; for instance, they supplied both sides in the 1998–2000 border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. High-level military exchanges between China and Africa are an ever-present feature of Sino-African ties, and Beijing has demonstrated that it is more than happy to supply weaponry to nations regarded by the West as rogue states, invariably invoking the principle of noninterference as its justification. As the chapter demonstrates, Chinese arms have found their way to military forces and police agencies in states that use them in flagrant violation of human rights, Sudan being the example *par excellence,* though not the only one. Furthermore, because the sales are mostly of small arms, control over their distribution or over the wider effect they have on a continent beset by conflict and instability is particularly problematic.

Although all arms exporters face justifiable criticism for their actions, what is especially troubling with regard to Beijing is its no-strings-attached attitude, such that Chinese exporters strike deals regardless of their clients' records on governance and human rights. In fact, cynics might aver that it is precisely the rogue regimes of Africa that provide China with a niche market. The palpable danger is that Beijing's supposed nonpolitical diplomacy simply camouflages its bottom line of profit and resource procurement, which arms sales to Africa possibly facilitate. Although an energy-for-arms link cannot be easily confirmed, the companies involved in arms shipments to Africa are state owned and ostensibly under the direct control of the State Council. Thus China's leadership cannot simply wave away questionable arms deals as the work of irresponsible factories beyond the control of Beijing. However, as the chapter also attests, China's leaders are aware that questions regarding the control of arms sales, particularly small arms, complicates their wish to be seen as responsible players in the global arena. This aspiration gives the international community opportunities to pressure Beijing concerning arms sales, particularly—though not exclusively—to Africa.

Chapter 6 is a study in contrast to the arguably irresponsible arms-sales policies of Chinese companies; it details China's growing role in peacekeeping on the continent. Beijing supports conflict resolution and peace operations in Africa in various practical ways, thus effecting a complete reversal of its previous, long-held policy against so doing. Since 1990, China has contributed over 7,000 peacekeepers to UN operations, and in mid-2007 more than 1,500 Chinese peacekeepers were serving on missions in places such as Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Liberia, and Sudan. As of 2008, in fact, China sends more peacekeeping troops abroad than any other permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC). China has also contributed financially to peace processes in Somalia and other places. As Chapter 6 further details, the number of Chinese military personnel sent on peace missions has been growing in recent years and is a major positive step in Sino-African relations. However, China's stance on peace operations is closely tied to its attitude on state sovereignty, which limits interventions. Studying how China's position on peace operations has changed, such that Beijing is taking on a greater and greater share of such operations in Africa, is thus a vital part of any wider analysis of Sino-African ties.

Chapter 7 wraps the book up by making the case for a balanced approach to China's intensifying relationship with Africa, avoiding the hysteria that has marked previous accounts and captured the imagination of the popular media, both in Africa and particularly the West. There are both positive and negative aspects to Sino-African ties as they appear in the 2000s, but Chinese policy toward Africa is constantly evolving, and since about 2005, Beijing has clearly been rethinking its policies toward so-called pariah regimes. Indeed, the book concludes that many of Beijing's interests in Africa ultimately coincide with those of longer-established partners; thus engagement with rather than opprobrium toward Beijing is a more realistic and advisable policy for the latter to adopt as they seek to come to terms with the growing Chinese presence on the African continent.

Notes

1. Interview with Western diplomat, Abuja, Nigeria, September 3, 2007.
2. Interview with David Jabati, news editor, *Awareness Times,* Freetown, Sierra Leone, June 7, 2006.
3. Interview with Western diplomat, Abuja, Nigeria, September 3, 2007.
4. Interview with Chinese diplomat, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 15, 2007.
5. Interview with Western diplomat, Abuja, Nigeria, September 3, 2007.
6. Interview with Sanusi Deen, national chairman of the Sierra Leone Indigenous Business Association, Freetown, Sierra Leone, June 7, 2006.
7. Interview with Western diplomat, Asmara, Eritrea, June 29, 2006.
8. Interview with Chinese academic, School of International Studies, Peking University, Beijing, China, September 20, 2007.
9. Interview with Chinese diplomat, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 15, 2007.
10. Interestingly, the Foreign Languages Press in Beijing has started publishing a series of books titled *China in Peaceful Development,* seeking to prove that China has always been a peace-loving nation, even with regard to military strategy (see Huang Zu'an, 2007). However, this argument is undermined by the findings of Andrew Scobell (2003), who argues that a cult of defense within Beijing disposes Chinese elites to rationalize all military operations as defensive.
11. Interview with African Union official, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 16, 2007.
12. Interview with Chinese academic, School of International Studies, Peking University, Beijing, China, September 20, 2007.

13. Interview with Chinese academic, School of International Studies, Peking University, Beijing, China, September 20, 2007.

14. Interview with Western diplomat, Abuja, Nigeria, September 3, 2007.

15. Interview with Chinese academic, School of International Studies, Peking University, Beijing, China, September 20, 2007.

16. Interview with He Wenping, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, China, September 18, 2007.

17. Interviews with Chinese academics, Center for African Studies, Peking University, Beijing, China, September 20, 2007; and School of International Studies, Renmin University, Beijing, China, February 21, 2008.

18. Interview with Western diplomat, Asmara, Eritrea, June 29, 2006.

19. Interview with an official in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Freetown, Sierra Leone, June 9, 2006.

20. Interview with Western diplomat, Asmara, Eritrea, June 29, 2006.

21. Interview with the acting head of the political-affairs section of the Chinese embassy in Windhoek, Namibia, August 13, 2006.

22. Interview with Chinese academic, School of International Studies, Peking University, Beijing, China, September 20, 2007.

23. Interview with British diplomat from embassy in Beijing, Hong Kong, November 12, 2006.

24. Interview with Pentagon official, Washington, DC, United States, April 5, 2007.

25. Interview with British diplomat, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 15, 2007.

26. Interview with Western diplomat, Asmara, Eritrea, June 29, 2006.

27. Interview with Chinese academic, School of International Studies, Peking University, Beijing, China, September 20, 2007.

28. Interview with British diplomat, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 15, 2007.

29. Interview with Henning Melber, Namibian political economist, Windhoek, Namibia, August 14, 2006.

30. Interview with Robin Sherborne, editor of Namibian political magazine *Insight,* Windhoek, Namibia, August 14, 2006.

31. Interview with David Jabati, news editor, *Awareness Times,* Freetown, Sierra Leone, June 7, 2006.

32. Interview with African Union official, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 16, 2007.

33. Interview with an official in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Freetown, Sierra Leone, June 9, 2006.

34. Interview with Henning Melber, Namibian political economist, Windhoek, Namibia, August 14, 2006

35. Interview with Henning Melber, Namibian political economist, Windhoek, Namibia, August 14, 2006.

36. Interview with African Union official, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 15, 2007.

37. Interview with Chinese diplomat, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 15, 2007.

38. Interview with the acting head of the political-affairs section of the Chinese embassy in Windhoek, Namibia, August 13, 2006.

39. Interview with Wang Xue Xian, China's ambassador to South Africa, Stellenbosch, South Africa, February 13, 1998.

40. Interview with the acting head of the Political Affairs Section of the Chinese embassy in Windhoek, Namibia, August 13, 2006.

41. Interview with Chinese diplomat, Abuja, Nigeria, September 5, 2007.

42. Interview with Wang Xue Xian, China's ambassador to South Africa, Stellenbosch, South Africa, February 13, 1998.

43. Interview with Chinese diplomat, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 15, 2007.

44. Interview with Xu Mingzheng, general manager of Sierra Leone Guoji Investment and Development Company, Freetown, Sierra Leone, June 8, 2006.

45. Interview with Chinese trader, Gaborone, Botswana, September 25, 2004.

46. Interview with the manager of a Chinese trading company, Massawa, Eritrea, July 1, 2006.

47. Interview with Department for International Development (DFID) official, Freetown, Sierra Leone, June 7, 2006.

48. Interview with African Union official, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 15, 2007.

49. Interview with Ethiopian academic, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, November 22, 2005.

50. Interview with Chinese academic, Center for African Studies, Peking University, Beijing, China, September 20, 2007.

51. Interview with Shu Zhan, Chinese ambassador to Eritrea, Asmara, Eritrea, June 29, 2006.

52. In 2003, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (MOFTEC) was renamed the Ministry of Commerce after incorporating the former State Economic and Trade Commission and the State Development Planning Commission.

53. Interview with the acting head of the Political Affairs Section of the Chinese embassy in Windhoek, Namibia, August 13, 2006.

54. Interview with Western diplomat, Asmara, Eritrea, June 29, 2006.

55. Interview with an official in the State Department, Washington, DC, United States, April 5, 2007.

56. Interview with a government official, Gaborone, Botswana, September 25, 2004.

57. Interview with African Union official, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 16, 2007.

58. Interview with David Jabati, news editor, *Awareness Times,* Freetown, Sierra Leone, June 7, 2006.

59. Interview with a journalist from the *Abuja Inquirer,* Abuja, Nigeria, September 3, 2007.

60. Interview with an official from the Business Round Table, Abuja, Nigeria, September 6, 2007.

61. Interview with British diplomat from embassy in Beijing, Hong Kong, November 12, 2006.

62. Interview with an official in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Freetown, Sierra Leone, June 9, 2006.

63. Interview with African Union official, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 15, 2007.

64. Interview with Pentagon official, Washington, DC, United States, April 5, 2007.

65. Interview with British diplomat, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 15, 2007.

66. Interview with Western diplomat, Abuja, Nigeria, September 3, 2007.

67. Interview with Saffie Koroma, National Accountability Group, Freetown, Sierra Leone, June 7, 2006.

68. Interview with British diplomat, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 15, 2007.

69. Interview with Ethiopian academic, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, November 22, 2005.

70. Interview with Western diplomat, Abuja, Nigeria, September 3, 2007.

71. Interview with Robin Sherborne, editor of *Insight,* Windhoek, Namibia, August 14, 2006.

72. Interview with Lucy Corkin, research manager, Centre for Chinese Studies, Stellenbosch, South Africa, July 31, 2006.

73. Interview with African Union official, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 16, 2007.

74. Interview with Moses Pakote, deputy director of Investor Services, Namibia Investment Centre, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Windhoek, Namibia, August 11, 2006.

75. Interview with British diplomat, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 15, 2007.

76. Interview with Moses Pakote, deputy director of Investor Services, Namibia Investment Centre, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Windhoek, Namibia, August 11, 2006.

77. Interview with Chinese diplomat, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, May 15, 2007.

78. Interview with Ethiopian academic, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, November 22, 2005.

79. Interview with Chinese diplomat, Abuja, Nigeria, September 5, 2007.

80. Interview with the acting head of the political-affairs section of the Chinese embassy in Windhoek, Namibia, August 13, 2006.

81. Interview with British diplomat, London, October 17, 2007.

82. Interview with Ibrahim Yilla, director of Asia and Middle East Countries in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Freetown, Sierra Leone, June 8, 2006.

83. Interview with an official in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Freetown, Sierra Leone, June 9, 2006.

84. Interview with Ugandan academic, Mbarara, Uganda, November 2, 2006.

85. Interview with Ethiopian academic, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, November 22, 2005.

86. Interview with Saffie Koroma, National Accountability Group, Freetown, Sierra Leone, June 7, 2006.

87. Interview with a journalist from the *Abuja Inquirer,* Abuja, Nigeria, September 3, 2007.

88. Interview with Ethiopian academic, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, November 22, 2005.

89. Interview with government official, Gaborone, Botswana, September 25, 2004.

90. Interview with Taiwanese diplomat, Banjul, The Gambia, March 31, 2008.

91. Interview with an official in the State Department, Washington, DC, United States, April 5, 2007.

92. Interview with Taiwanese diplomat, Banjul, The Gambia, March 31, 2008.

93. Interview with David Jabati, news editor, *Awareness Times,* Freetown, Sierra Leone, June 7, 2006.

94. Interview with Taiwanese diplomat, Banjul, The Gambia, March 31, 2008.

95. Interview with Shu Zhan, Chinese ambassador to Eritrea, Asmara, Eritrea, June 29, 2006.

96. Interview with Christopher Parsons, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Freetown, Sierra Leone, June 8, 2006.

97. Interviews with local market traders, Casamance, Senegal, April 3, 2008.

98. Interview with journalist, *Guardian,* Abuja, Nigeria, September 5, 2007.