From Business as Usual to Business Unusual: Exceptionalism in Africa’s relationships with France & China

by

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IFI - International Finance Institutions
IMF – International Monetary Fund
EU – European Union
AU – African Union
PRC – People’s Republic of China
SIT – Social Identity Theory
RCT – Realistic Conflict Theory
AOF – Afrique Occidentale Française
AEF – Afrique Equatoriale Française
ODA – Official Development Assistance
GNI – Gross National Income
OIF - Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
DAC – Development Assistance Committee
MDG – Millennium Development Goal
FOCAC – Forum on China Africa Cooperation
ACP – African Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States
CHAPTER I: AFRICA’S GRAVITATION EAST

Ghana, Senegal, Zambia, Cameroon: visit almost any country in Africa¹ and you cannot help but be struck by the extent of the Chinese presence across the continent. From oil fields in the East and West, to farms in the South, mines in the central regions of the continent, and veritable China Towns throughout, today almost every African country bears the stamp of China’s emerging presence.² Fueled by its nearly double digit economic growth in the last decade, China is emerging as a major axis of world power³ determined to assert its global influence. China’s venture into Africa is not just in economics or politics, as China has cultural agreements with 42 African countries, and 65 exchange programs across the continent.⁴ Perhaps because the Chinese were such outsiders, their proliferation went almost unnoticed at first. It took time, for not only Africa’s traditional partner, the West, but also it seems, Africa itself, to “wake up”⁵ and discover the developing Chinese foothold in Africa. It would be both foolhardy and nearly impossible to miss the presence of the Chinese diaspora in Africa now.⁶ It is clear that China has greatly increased the level of its engagement with the continent, which is to the apparent satisfaction of many in Africa.

This introduces the central issue of this study, the primary purpose of which is to understand why Africa persists in cultivating ties with Beijing. This situation gives rise to various questions to be answered in this study: Namely, does cultivating ties with China necessarily mean gravitation away from the West? And what is driving this gravitation? The answer to both of these questions is rooted in the idea that thanks to the way Western

¹ In this study, unless otherwise stated, or unless specific examples are given, ‘Africa’ or ‘the African continent’ refers to sub-Saharan or Black Africa
² (Pailey 2007)
³ (Obiorah 2007, 40)
⁴ (Pailey 2007)
⁵ Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Nigerian Finance Minister, cited in (Walt, “China’s African Safari” 2006)
⁶ (Walt, “China’s African Safari” 2006)
political and economic policies have been implemented in Africa, “Africa has had enough”\(^7\) and desires change in its traditional ties with foreign powers.

To understand the nature of this change we must answer two vital questions. The first is “What does Africa want from its foreign-policy relationships?” Two responses immediately arise. First, Africa wants to develop, and wants to do so quickly, and second, Africa wants more policy independence, understood here as an increased capacity to conduct its own affairs with greater freedom from external (read Western) influence. These answers, rapid development and increased policy independence, are Africa’s responses to escaping the African predicament, defined here as Africa’s “grinding poverty amidst immense mineral riches.”\(^8\) This debilitating development crisis is unfortunately the empirical reality of Africa, and escaping it is the continent’s central priority. It underpins African foreign policy directions and is a significant determinant underlying African public attitudes towards its development allies. With this priority in mind, the second question vital to this study is “What does Africa receive from Chinese engagement that it cannot, has not and does not receive from the West, that will help it escape its Predicament?” This issue will be explored in detail later in this study but a summary can be provided here. The answer lies in China’s ability to distinguish itself as a “liberating alternative”\(^9\) to the West, in more than just an economic or political sense.

But how distinct must this change be? For mixed in with China’s positive breaks with the typical state of relations between the West and Africa, are aspects of Chinese engagement that replicate the very ties Africa wants to change. Africa’s economic and trade structure for instance, is still clearly neocolonial or at the very least, Europe-oriented, and as

\(^7\) (Ramonet 2007)  
\(^8\) (Ayodele et. al 2005)  
\(^9\) (Huse and Muyakwa 2008, 8)
Table I (Appendix)\textsuperscript{10} shows, it is still dominated by traditional core-periphery styles of trade.\textsuperscript{11} The core-periphery relationship describes the economic reality of African trade structure. In abstract terms, a dependent country trades its primary products for manufactured goods it lacks the capacity to produce. This leads to a situation where the more dependent society exerts great control over the less developed nations’ economy. As Marx argued in Das Kapital, this asymmetrical nature of trade results in the accumulation of wealth at one pole, and misery at the other.\textsuperscript{12} Traditionally, this dependency theory assumes that economic domination runs across north-south geo-economic patterns, where the West represents the core, and Africa the periphery. The impact of this economic structure on African countries has largely been negative, and has led to very little development. Consequently, it is an element of foreign relations that Africa seeks to change.

You would expect then, that part of the reason China is seen as a liberating economic alternative is that Sino-African economic relations stand to bring seminal change in this relationship. Emerging structural change from Sino-African economic relations though, is still insignificant,\textsuperscript{13} and asking whether China is not just becoming a new core, would not be amiss. Indeed, evidence suggests that this may already be the case. As Moeletsi Mbeki, deputy chairman of the South African Institute of International Affairs, spelled out in 2005:

\begin{quote}
Africa sells raw materials to China and China sells manufactured products to Africa. This is a dangerous equation that reproduces Africa’s old relationship with colonial powers.\textsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

China’s engagement engenders tensions with elites, between neocolonial interests and those who promote the mounting Chinese links.\textsuperscript{15} These conflicting perspectives range

\textsuperscript{10} All tables, charts and graphs appear in an appendix at the end of the study.
\textsuperscript{11} The core-periphery framework as advanced by Frank, presupposes that underdevelopment results from being involved in the world economy as a peripheral, raw material producing area. See (Frank 1967, 221-242).
\textsuperscript{12} (Marx 1996)
\textsuperscript{13} (Maswana 2007, 8)
\textsuperscript{14} Speech at conference organized by the Chinese Parliament, (Mbeki, South African Journal of International Affairs 2006, 7)
\textsuperscript{15}
from market traders to Heads of State. Africans at different levels of society are acutely aware of the similarity of former Western and current Chinese engagement, both of which stressed resource extraction. China, like the West, sees in Africa the potential for economic benefit says Gbenga Edison, a Stanford University educated Nigerian business development consultant and movie producer living in Accra. As it is often expressed in Africa, Africans are wary that Chinese engagement does not just come to represent new wine in old skins i.e. that Africa does not wind up merely replicating its historical relationship with its former colonial powers by simply exporting raw materials to China while importing Chinese manufactured goods – which it is already in danger of doing.

Certainly, in the area of trade composition, there is little evidence of a significant change in the export/import patterns of Sino-African or West-African relations, which suggests that there is more behind Africa’s support for China than purely economic or political reasons.

**EVIDENCE OF THE GRAVITION**

The gravitation, or the shift, towards Chinese primacy in African economic and political affairs has been gradual yet visible: Over the last decade, growth rates in Africa have accelerated for the first time since the early 1970s, and Chinese economic engagement has been a driving factor. Trade between Africa and China increased from US$11 billion in 2000 to US$56 billion in 2006 and China’s share of Africa’s exports rose from 1.3 percent in 1995 to 9.3 percent in 2004. In foreign policy analysis publications like *Le Monde Diplomatique*, some commentators describe Chinese investments as “assets” for Africa. Further, when informed predictions in the same publication are made that “China will

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15 *(Maswana 2007, 8)*
16 Author Interviews, Accra, Ghana, January 2009
17 *(Maswana 2007, 10)*
overtake the EU as one of the continent’s principal suppliers,” and stands “to become [Africa’s] most important client by 2010,” they are made in a manner that reflects little sadness for the decline of Western primacy, and approval for China’s ascendance.

On the political and economic front, Beijing’s “Go Global” policy and its dynamic approach to Africa that stresses cooperation, makes China an inherently attractive development ally. China has built political and economic ties with African countries through investment, aid, high-level visits, and a strict policy of non-interference in internal affairs. This policy is fundamental to all of China’s foreign relations and can be found in all official PRC communiqués detailing the establishment of diplomatic relations with foreign countries. However, as will be shown in the discussion of Tibet and the Dalai Lama (see Chapter V) non-interference is not always an outcome; Chinese engagement is tied to certain political and strategic interests – namely dissuading governments from recognizing Taiwan. African countries must abide by this “One China” policy to receive financial assistance, and its success is seen in the fact that only four African countries do not have official diplomatic links with Beijing. Nevertheless, given the increase in bilateral agreements with China, the policy of non-intervention has caused a stir among Africa’s traditional donors, the International Finance Institutions (IFIs) such as the IMF and the World Bank, who have sounded alarms about the potential for increased corruption and non-poverty related spending by African countries.

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19 (Ramonet 2007)  
20 This is an official Chinese policy applied to the field of investment, where the Chinese Government encourages Chinese enterprises to “go global” and invest abroad. See(MoFA 2009).  
21 (Brookes 2007)  
22 The policy states that “Both Governments agree to develop friendly relations and cooperation between the two countries on the basis of the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non aggression and non interference in each other’s internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, peaceful coexistence” (MoFA 2009).  
23 (Hsu 2009, 3)
Contrary to the emphasis that many analysts and commentators\textsuperscript{24} place on non-intervention as a policy African governments under international scrutiny find particularly attractive, I emphasize and will show that it appeals to more than just Africa’s dubious leaders. It is a significant factor in African self-assertion, which is the desire for Africans to represent their own interests in development, without external interference. It thus also appeals to sober-minded African intellectuals and members of the general public. On the surface, non-intervention is a fine example of a political and economic determinant of the eastward gravitation. Such economic and political responses are pragmatic, accurate, and highly important to the discourse on Africa’s eastward gravitation because they indicate the areas of foreign relations that African countries want changed. The economic and political aspects on their own however, do not tell the whole story behind why China is seen as this all-encompassing “liberating alternative.”

Consider the case of Ghana, the country studied in Chapter V. What stands out is that when it comes to construction projects for instance, African countries like Ghana have been critical of Western tied-aid, which requires the recipient country to use materials and firms from the donor country. China, like the West, often also requires the use of its own labor and materials. At the Bui Dam project in Ghana for instance, a joint Sino-Ghanaian venture, there is a clear presence of Chinese workers, who, as Western workers on other projects do, sleep in separate quarters from the domestic labor. There is less criticism of the Chinese in this case, however, because unlike the Western projects, the Chinese workers also sleep in container houses, and not the best hotels. Furthermore, “the Chinese do not just supervise, they are a part of the work, they get their hands dirty as well,” says Gifty Anti, a journalist and media liaison with former Ghanaian President John Kufour. “When

\textsuperscript{24} See for instance, (Brookes 2007)
working with Africans, the West have a superior, ‘us’ versus ‘them’ attitude,” she continues, which is not a function of Chinese engagement, which instead, tends to place the Chinese “in the trenches with you.”

Why the Chinese and not Westerners will be “in the trenches” with workers is neither an economic nor a political factor. Anti’s remarks provide us with clues to untangle the paradoxical and positive reaction to Chinese engagement in similar situations across Africa. What Anti expresses here is an almost imperceptible difference between Western and Chinese engagement that though less tangible than economic or political reasons, is no less important as a determinant of Africa’s willingness to support China in Africa vis-à-vis the West.

China’s acceptance stems from its apparent ability to distinguish itself at multiple levels from traditional Western donors, particularly as pertains to the core-periphery relationships that have characterized (and arguably, continue to characterize) African relations with the West at many levels. Much of the support for China in Africa can be, should be, and in this study, is viewed in the context of evolving core-periphery relationships. What Africa receives from Chinese engagement then, that it cannot, has not and does not receive from the West, is a credible means to escape the predicament on more of its own terms. This desire on Africa’s part to assert itself in its destiny, here termed African self-assertion, is cultural and psychological in nature, and is based in the memory of a still-recent history of exploitation and control between the West and Africa.

Using a comparative perspective examining Sino-African and West-African engagement, I argue that there is more behind Africa’s gravitation towards Beijing than the observation that there are significant economic or political gains to be had. This factor,

25 Author Interviews, Accra, Ghana, January 2009
26 The core-periphery framework as advanced by Frank, presupposes that underdevelopment results from being involved in the world economy as a peripheral, raw material producing area. See (Frank 1967, 221-242)
African self-assertion, is the often-neglected cultural and pragmatic component that links the economic and political, and accounts for why even resource-poor countries that on the surface may not receive substantially more economic benefit from China than from the West, are participants in the eastward gravitation. China’s ability to help Africa achieve these goals is the basis of why, despite some blatant similarities with Western engagement, China is able to appear as a “distinctly lesser evil.”

**IMPLICATIONS OF AFRICA’S EASTERLY GRAVITATION: WHAT STANDS TO CHANGE?**

China’s burgeoning economic power is helping it become a major player in the international system, and to the apparent satisfaction of many in Africa, it has greatly increased the level of its engagement with the continent as part of this global strategy.

While the extent of this foothold has alarmed the West, it finds acceptance, even encouragement, in Africa. What does this mean for international relations? What stands to change? “China’s footprint in Africa becomes more pronounced each time the continent receives another high-level Chinese delegation,” reported an editorial in the Financial Times. In the wake of such visits, we can expect more roads, more bridges, more airports, more oil deals, and more credit, the same editorial suggested. I would add that we can also expect more markets flooded with cheap Chinese imports, more African companies underbid by Chinese firms, more imported Chinese labor, and growing concern amongst sections of the population who fear that Beijing is using Africa as a springboard to its own global hegemony.

The narrative from the West sees Chinese engagement as neo-colonial and “opportunistic,” labeling Beijing a “rogue creditor” whose approach stands to undermine

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27 (*Financial Times* Editorial 2007)  
28 (*Philips 2006, A2*)
the progressive governance and democratization agenda in Africa.\(^{29}\) This reflects the
Western suspicion\(^{30}\) that has hovered over China’s engagement with Africa – the “China
Threat.” In Africa, one finds expressions of similar concerns over Chinese engagement. You
do not have to look far in Africa in fact to encounter African characterizations of China as a
new “imperial power” come to Africa “pretending to be [its] savior,” but actually contains a
“colonialist project,” and is likely to “forget about Africa”\(^{31}\) once its objectives have been
attained. “The early colonizers came to Africa with alcohol and useless gifts to lure the
locals. Is not China doing the same with the help of greedy leaders?” asks prominent
Senegalese journalist Adama Gaye.\(^{32}\)

The overwhelming show of support from Africa that tends to greet Chinese
engagement, would suggest “No,” or at the very least, if China is doing the same as the early
colonizers, something is causing Africa’s response to be paradoxically and curiously positive.
Consider that in Africa, China has become “an example of transformation.”\(^{33}\) Its
commitment in Africa is seen as productive; as a sign of progress on par with some of the
other “crucial signs of improvement” on the continent, notably the cessation of the most
devastating hostilities, leaving Zimbabwe, Darfur, Somalia and the DRC as the primary crises
still to be overcome.\(^{34}\) For many people in Africa who find the death, suffering, and
inhumanity of the African crises deplorable and heartbreaking, not even the fact that China
is implicated in these crises is enough to erase the generally positive perception of China.

Asked how China’s implication in Darfur affected his general positive perception of the

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\(^{29}\) Daniel Large, cited in (Lammers 2007)
\(^{30}\) (Large 2006)
\(^{31}\) These remarks were made by Senegalese journalist Adama Gaye, in an online debate with Deborah Brautigam
over whether Chinese investment is good for Africa. The debate is available at
http://www.cfr.org/publication/12622/is_chinese_investment_good_for_africa.html
\(^{32}\) ibid
\(^{33}\) (Ravolomanana 2007)
\(^{34}\) (Robert 2007)
Chinese, “China is doing their best,” said a trader in Ghana’s Makola market. Although this remark might be surprising and suggest some ignorance of the situation in Darfur, it must be understood in context with common African perceptions on foreign complicity in crises and violence in Africa, because it does not indicate that Africans are apathetic to crises on their continent. What is important to note is the widely recognized reality that, in their long history with Africa, Western countries have instigated far more violent conflict and suffering in Africa than China has. Ignoring for a moment, slavery, and colonialism as examples, we can ask who put appalling leaders like the Democratic Republic of Congo’s Mobutu Sese Seko, or Togo’s Gnassingbé Eyadéma in power? Was not Mugabe once the “darling of the West?” Furthermore, which government provided the authoritarian regime of Major General Juvénal Habyarimana with over US$160 million in economic and military aid from 1990 to 1994, essentially contributing to the Rwandan Genocide of 1994? Not China.

In many such cases, culpability lies with Western countries such as France, but the French government is not alone. "While [China’s] support for Sudan and Zimbabwe is much discussed in the West, less is said about U.S support for authoritarian African states, especially oil producers such as Gabon, Cameroon, Angola, Chad and Equatorial Guinea, support that extends even to Sudan through US-Sudan intelligence cooperation," writes Barry Sautman. This previews the argument advanced in this study, which is that Africa shows a willingness to support China because its engagement with the continent is not as encumbered with an enduring and negative historical baggage of exploitation and imposition. These factors of foreign engagement and their role in Africa’s easterly gravitation will be examined further in this study through discussion of France’s post-
colonial African policy, *la Françafrique*, in Chapter IV, and the West’s history of imposition, in Chapter V.

Chinese commercial interests in Africa continue to win lucrative deals, and in some areas, despite the fact that Chinese retailers undercut local markets, citizens protest vehemently in favor of maintaining Chinese engagement. In a significant change in its foreign relations, the developing pattern seems to be that engagement with China is being prioritized at many levels in Africa; African countries are gravitating towards Beijing.

Owing to the traditional precedence of Western economic, political, and cultural influence in Africa, this gravitation can be perceived to be at the expense of the West. Indeed, for many centuries, Western nations, particularly such former colonial powers as France, played the most salient external role in molding Africa’s fortune and direction. The increasing prioritization of Chinese interests in Africa threatens the heretofore unchallenged “primogeniture” of the West’s position in Africa – the West’s economic, political and cultural primacy in Africa are no longer assured.

From a political and diplomatic point of view, the West is finding that their vision of a prosperous Africa governed by democracies respectful of human rights and the rule of law, and which embrace free markets, is being challenged by the escalating Chinese influence in Africa. The China model may encourage the old, anti-Western, anti-democratic tendency among Africa’s intellectuals, warns Obiorah. Yet for some among Africa’s contemporary rulers, China is living proof of “successful” alternatives to Western political and economic models, which could lead some African governments to point to China as the “poster-child for development sans democracy.”

39 (Gaye 2008, 131)
40 (Obiorah 2007, 46)
41 (Obiorah 2007, 45)
42
Commercial Competition

Africa’s prioritization of China has meant that many Chinese firms essentially now have rights of first refusal, which puts Western firms at a disadvantage. In resource extraction for instance, competition for oil and natural resources will only become tougher. American oil interests have long competed with French interests in Africa as evidenced by the mid-1990s competition in Congo-Brazzaville between French oil giant Elf-Aquitane and the U.S-based oil company, Occidental Petroleum Corporation (Oxy). China’s growing presence in Africa throws yet another major player into the game to secure natural resources. China’s accruing “primogeniture” status, which has been a reward to it by an Africa appreciative of its policies, seems to be a zero-sum threat for the West.

In late 2004, for instance, while IMF officials berated Angola for corrupt oil dealings, China gave the government US$2 billion in credit to repair railway tracks, devastated by its civil war, and to build new office buildings in the capital--all using Chinese contractors. China’s timing was “flawless” writes Walt.43 When French oil company Total applied to renew its license on a large block, Angola refused, handing it instead to Chinese firm, Sinopec, with which it then formed a joint venture to bid on other oilfields.44 But it is not all zero sum loss. China is arguably still a small player in Africa45 when compared to the West. China’s involvement in Africa has three main dimensions: foreign direct investment, aid, and trade, and in each of these dimensions, China’s engagement is dwarfed by that of the West. Consider that an estimated 70 percent of Africa’s US$435 billion world trade is still with the EU, compared to only 10 percent with China.46 Tables 2 and 3 reflect this trend, where trade

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43 (Walt, “China’s African Safari” 2006)
44 (Walt, “China’s African Safari” 2006)
45 (Manji 2008)
46 (Lammers 2007)
with three of the most dominant Western countries (France, the UK and the USA), grossly exceeds that with China.

Furthermore, at least for the French government, Chinese engagement is considered as a non-zero sum threat, finding that “the strategic character of Sino-African relations is related to their growth rate, not their actual volume.”\(^{47}\) In 2004, for instance, China represented 6 per cent of Africa’s external trade – again far less than traditional Western allies like France or the United States. In 1995 however, the Chinese share was a mere 1.5 per cent. Thus while the overall volumes of bilateral aid and trade may comparatively be quite modest, the growth rate is exceptional, with trade increasing by 59 per cent in 2004 and 35 per cent in 2005.\(^{48}\) But in this emerging age, as generations shift, and ideologies change in Africa, if belief in African self-assertion continues to grow, and increasingly prioritizes Chinese engagement, the total volumes of Chinese trade will doubtless also grow, making China even more of a commercial threat to the West. For a country like France, which has jealously guarded its former colonial territories as *chasses gardées* (private hunting grounds), the Chinese presence in its former spheres of influence, its *pre-carré*, should be a cause of concern. Thanks to the colonial relationships, France has had privileged access to natural resources in its *domaine reservé*, which has been able to absorb about 40% of France’s trade surplus.\(^{49}\)

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\(^{48}\) \(\text{Marchal, “French Perspectives on the New Sino-African Relations” 2008, 189}\)

\(^{49}\) Marchal, “La nouvelle politique africaine”
A Multipolar world

The rise of China reinforces the credibility of a multipolar world, notes Marchal.\(^{50}\) For reasons relating to the downgrading of its international great power status, France welcomes reforms of the international system that puts substance into the semantics of the “multipolar world” which the main French political parties routinely demand. One can note important affinities in this context. For instance, during the North Korean crisis in the summer of 2006, France and China were, if not in agreement, then pursuing a line of argument that was markedly different from that of Washington and its allies.\(^{51}\)

HEGEMONIC SHIFTS

By some accounts, China in Africa sounds the death knell for American hegemony\(^{52}\) and could stand to change the shape of the international system and the dominance of the United States in world affairs. The China threat, as it developed in the 1990s, reflected these fears.\(^{53}\) “China, while recognizing the dominance of the US, seeks to limit it through the U.N. and other international organizations, and by using its resources to forge stable relations with other countries and regions.”\(^{54}\) With over 50 countries, Africa represents a significant bloc (over a quarter) of the U.N. General Assembly. Friendly relations with African nations can bring favorable results for Chinese efforts at the U.N. and can even reduce the number of states that diplomatically recognize Taiwan. In recent years, African states have been pivotal in preventing Taiwan from joining the World Health Organization and in tabling a

\(^{50}\) (Marchal, "French Perspectives on the New Sino-African Relations" 2008, 195)

\(^{51}\) (Marchal, "French Perspectives on the New Sino-African Relations" 2008, 186)

\(^{52}\) See (Campbell, 2007)

\(^{53}\) For more details on Hegemonic Shifts, see (Organski 1968). Organski contends that there are only three alternatives that a Hegemon can follow to meet the threat posed by a rival’s industrialization. The first is to try and smother its rival’s attempt to industrialize; the second is to take half measures and try to delay the industrialization of a rival without actually intervening in its affairs, through trade embargoes or refusing aid; the third and final alternative is to help the nation all it can in the hope that in gratitude it will remain friendly once it has become powerful enough to do as it pleases. I argue that the second alternative accounts for America’s characterization of the China Threat issue, and Sino-American relations having been moving steadily towards the third alternative ever since.

\(^{54}\) (Tjønneland et al, Elling N 2006)
condemnation of Chinese human rights practices at the U.N.'s Commission on Human Rights. Furthermore, China and the AU formed the part of the South–South bloc in the World Trade Organization (WTO), opposing the patenting of life forms and the hegemonic plans of the US-based biotech corporations.

A NEW WORLD ORDER?

“We wish for China to direct the World, and when that happens, we want to be right behind you” (Former Nigerian President Olesugun Obasanjo, 2006).

This study is timely and important as it provides insights into the African perspective on these changes and the reasons for them. The West’s plans and fears are not those of Africa. “The battle for influence in the world between the west and China is not Africa’s problem,” says Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade -- development is. In pursuing its own interests, Africa could contribute to a reordering of the international system. Amidst all this potential for change in the international system, there must be a reevaluation of the way in which the West and other donors think of Africa. Africa wants help to escape the African predicament, but this help must come with an ample understanding of Africa’s cultural-historic memory and how it affects the continent today. Thus, it is necessary to understand the African perspective on the predicament to help determine the nature of that help, and the areas it should be applied. This foreign help is vital, but Africa must be, and wants to be part of the solution. “If things are going to change,” contends Adadevoh,

“Africa must be the driving force.”

\[55\] (Brookes 2007)
\[56\] (Campbell, 2007: 130)
\[57\] Cited in (Michel, Beuret et Woods 2008, 28)
\[58\] (Wade 2008)

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\[59\] Author Interviews, Accra, Ghana, January 2009
The emphasis in this study on culture and public perspectives as they relate to foreign policies, echoes the recent direction of foreign policy analysis. In recent years, the thinking about the role and uses of foreign policy in African states has evolved. In the past, instead of reflecting broader concerns or aims, African leaders used foreign policy to pay off domestic opponents. Foreign policy was an extension of domestic patrimonial relationships. Recently, scholars have emphasized that a state's foreign policy is not simply about power and resources: These may be important, but foreign policy also includes history, memory, values, structures, and legacies.⁶¹ In a continent that is increasingly democratic and that is driven by African self-assertion as defined in this study, it is likely that unless there is a drastic disaster in Chinese relations with Africa, or a similarly impressive change in Western relations with Africa, in the short term at least, policies will continue to favor China. Understanding and prioritizing African culture and traditions has been a significant determinant of Chinese success in Africa. Understanding those traditions and cultures as set out in this study might very well be one of the keys to economically and politically fruitful relations with an emerging Africa.

**ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY**

The study will draw on interviews conducted by the author in Accra, Ghana in early January 2009, as well as secondary sources. The study proceeds as follows. Chapter II sets out the theoretical framework. It highlights the important elements of African self-assertion and the historical legacy of interaction between the West and China and Africa. The chapter justifies approaching the project from a Francophone African and Anglophone African perspective, and identifies French engagement as a primary standard against which Chinese engagement is tested. Chapter III provides the essential overview to current relations

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⁶¹ (Wilson and Black 2004, 208)
between the West and Africa, and between China and Africa. The Chapter aims to
demonstrate the pattern of Western imposition and exploitation of Africa, against
‘friendlier’, more benign Chinese engagement. Chapters IV (Francophone Africa: Focus
Senegal), and V (Anglophone Africa: Focus Ghana), show that there are indeed pragmatic
causes of a gravitation east – but they do not fully explain why China is both perceived and
accepted as a better alternative to helping Africa escape the African Predicament. The study
concludes with Chapter VI, which provides a conclusion and synthesis.
CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

When it comes to the continent’s relationship with foreign powers, two priorities drive African foreign policy and direct African public opinion. The first, as remarked by President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, concerns the need for rapid development in Africa. “Our continent is in a hurry to build infrastructure, ensure affordable energy, and educate our people,”¹ he says. Wade then goes on to underline why Western engagement is inherently unattractive compared to Chinese engagement, decrying the “senseless [Western] red tape [that] impede[s] [Africa’s] ability to act”² towards development. The second priority also concerns development, but it lies in eliminating the imposed conditionalities to aid. For the past fifty years, under the “rubrics of partnership and sustainability,”³ Western countries and the IFIs they dominate have dictated the terms of development in Africa by applying preconditions to their offers of financial assistance. These conditionalities that limit policy independence tend to receive heavy criticism in Africa as Africans were often excluded from the councils that developed them, and furthermore, when the conditionalities provoked policy failures, the Western councils were shielded from accountability.⁴

These two priorities, rapid development and increased policy space, are a response to Africa’s desire to escape the African Predicament, and China has positioned itself to help Africa pursue these interests. Africa is gravitating towards China because of its desire for change; it wants to break with its past relations with foreign partners and forge new ties that afford it space to conduct its own policies free from external influence. This chapter provides the framework for assessing this change.

¹ (Wade 2008)
² (Wade 2008)
³ (Ward 2009)
⁴ (Ward 2009)
Africa’s desire for changes in its relations with foreign powers does not just stress altering economic or political engagement, but also stresses altering the approach of that engagement. I argue that beyond these two pragmatic sources of Africa’s eastward gravitation (politics and economics), as important as they are, lies a third factor - African self-assertion. African self-assertion can be defined as the African demand for a continent freed from uninvited external influence, where Africa has more control in running its affairs and shaping its destiny than it has had in the recent past. It is a resurgent aspect of Africa’s continental memory, left over from the still-recent history of Western exploitation and control, and has its base in the nationalist sentiments of the early post-colonial period and the development of “black racial assertion” in the 1960s.

The most crucial point was proving that black men could run – or ruin – their affairs in their own way, and this ideological hinge has not changed much. African self-assertion, then, is a development of this “black racial assertion,” taken up in the struggle of African nationalists and idealized in the ideology of Pan-Africanism in the 1960s, but weakened as a viable ideology since then due to African mismanagement of its affairs, and Western interference – both features of the African predicament. However, in large part due to Chinese engagement, African self-assertion is resurging as an African priority for escaping the African predicament. It is a crucial detail for this study as it introduces the cultural and psychological roots missing from the economic and political explanations behind Africa’s willingness to view China as a liberating alternative. It also allows for a better understanding of African affairs because it establishes the base of the African psyche – i.e. the motivations and factors that explain how Africans view their continent’s role in the world.

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5 (The Economist 1964, 178) “while Africa contains the ingredients common to most ‘third world’ countries (poverty, ignorance, love-hate of the former colonial powers), it has an ingredient all its own: black racial assertion.”

6 See Chapter V for more on Pan-Africanism
This study looks at shifting Africa-West and Africa-China relations through this lens and responds to the question “What does Africa receive from Chinese engagement that it cannot, does not, and has not received from the West?” The answer has three aspects. First, Africa views much of its relationship with the West to have been characterized by condescension and exploitation; it thus seeks to escape the emasculation and asymmetry brought about by years of a core-periphery relationship with Western nations and institutions. China is able to appeal to this aspect of the African psyche by emphasizing its historically “mutually beneficial” ties with Africa. Second, a growing desire for African self-assertion means that Africa is not only looking for partners to help it develop, but partners that while doing so, will grant it the respect it deems to have been absent in its relations with the West thus far. Third, and this is essentially the logical conclusion to the first two questions, China provides Africa with a means to diversify its political and economic ideologies and engagement, which have been dominated by Western influence. In summary, Africa cultivates ties with Beijing, as China is better able to satisfy Africa’s long-standing desire to shift its foreign relations from a state of business as usual to business unusual. Business unusual takes many forms, but it has at its heart a desire to equalize core-periphery relationships and end the patronizing assumptions that have characterized them. This sentiment pervades much discussion on West – Africa relations. As President Wade expressed it, China’s approach to Africa is better suited because it is distinguished from the “slow and sometimes patronizing post-colonial approach of European investors, donor organizations, and non-governmental organizations.”

The colonial period, or more specifically, the condescending and asymmetrical relationship that typified relations between the West and Africa, continues to be an

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(Wade 2008)
important component in the African psyche. It is not that Africans are sitting idle
complaining about having been exploited by the West. Evidence from this study suggests
the contrary, but it is difficult for Africa to forget the exploitations of the past, for even
though "colonialism is a thing of the past, Africa is still struggling to free itself." Physical
domination may have ended, but it is felt that the denigration of Africa has not. A core-
periphery relationship is still standard in the West’s relations with Africa, and there is still
the widely-held perception in Africa that the West desires to control the continent, for
instance with the rules and procedures (conditionalities) that are attached to its financial
engagement. Conditionalities to aid are primarily a tool of Western dominated International
Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (the
Fund) on which many African countries rely for financial assistance. The conditionalities are
widely considered extensions of the politics of dependency and control. They are a means
for the West to “maintain its colonial, or rather exploitative, relationship with Africa, as they
know that Africa needs the money” says Gifty Anti, a Ghanaian Television Anchor and media
liaison with former President John Kufour. This sentiment, that condescension and
asymmetry are the characteristics of West-African engagement, is widely-held in Africa, and
underlies Africa’s willingness to view China as an alternative.

The next sections explore the themes behind Africa’s easterly gravitation and
explain why the study is organized into analysis of Francophone and Anglophone Africa, and
why French engagement with Africa is used as a benchmark of Western engagement.
THE AFRICAN PREDICAMENT

Contemporary African nations in the postcolonial era have been inundated by multiple difficulties centered on inculcating political morality, curtailling political corruption, and nation-building in the face of ethnic fragmentation. Symptomatic of this post-colonial political instability has been the inauguration, almost throughout sub-Saharan Africa, of the politics of neopatrimonial rule; the politics of authoritarianism and military dictatorship in which power is concentrated in a leader or in a “coterie of like-minded power-seekers” who insulate themselves from the pressures of accountability to the people. Politics carried out in this manner has been a significant factor in the development of the African predicament. It has roots in traditional practice but can also be explicitly traced to the legacy left by colonial rule. The colonial state has been the framework for building democratic government in Africa, and it is necessary to highlight the colonial linkage in order to understand the connections Africans still see to exist, between colonial and current levels of Western engagement.

A full understanding of the African Predicament is a crucial factor in understanding Africa’s perceptions of China as an alternative donor, particularly since the ability and role of the West and China in developing Africa are central to the perceptions Africans have about the West and China. Why does perception matter though? The following example offers a valid response. Following the Tiananmen Square Incident in 1989, the Chinese government was heavily criticized for its failure to support international human rights, and turned to Africa for support. Many African governments argued that the emphasis on respecting human rights was a Western attempt to sabotage the Chinese economy as it was growing in

8 (Gyekye 1997, viii)
9 (Gyekye 1997, 25)
importance. To some, this may smack of conspiracy theory, although it is a theoretically sound interpretation of the process of hegemonic shift.\(^{10}\) Nevertheless, "whether such a plot to sabotage the Chinese economy existed or not is immaterial: What mattered was the perception, both in Beijing and in many African capitals, that there was some conspiracy to retard growth in developing countries."\(^{11}\) A similar situation exists today, in which Africans perceive that the West needs Africa “as it is” and it is thus in no hurry to change things. The conditionalities for aid, beyond being a means to foster good governance, are perceived as a strategy to maintain African dependence on the West. Equally important is the perception of similarity between China’s experiences and Africa’s situation. China is perceived as a sympathetic partner for Africa because it has been through, and emerged from a similar relationship with the West. Rightly and consequently, China is not viewed as having played a significant role in the establishment of Africa’s predicament.

It is not difficult to see that an African predicament exists or that the West has played a role in creating it. Neither is it difficult to see the appeal of a non-Western partner for Africa. But this would be an oversimplification of the rationales behind Africa’s gravitation towards Beijing. The African predicament is the problem that African self-assertion is being utilized to solve. It would be logical to expect that since the West has indeed played a considerable role in the predicament, the solution would be to cut ties with the entity causing such problems. This is not entirely the case however. In writing about Africa’s relationship with France, Michel and Beuret note that despite France’s damaging

\(^{10}\) Organski contends that there are only three alternatives that a Hegemon can follow to meet the threat posed by a rival’s industrialization. The first is to try and smother its rival’s attempt to industrialize; the second is to take half measures and try to delay the industrialization of a rival without actually intervening in its affairs, through trade embargoes or refusing aid; the third and final alternative is to help the nation all it can in the hope that in gratitude it will remain friendly once it has become powerful enough to do as it pleases. I argue that the second alternative accounts for America’s characterization of the China Threat issue, and Sino-American relations having been moving steadily towards the third alternative ever since. See (Organski 1968)

\(^{11}\) (Schroeder et. al 1998, 448) emphasis mine.
and patronizing relationship with Africa, “[Francophone] Africa came to love France.”¹² The same could be said about Anglophone Africa, as the following case helps to illustrate.

Despite their profound discontent with colonialism, a majority of market traders interviewed in Ghana’s Makola market would still prefer to do business with former colonial powers as when it comes to business, the West are more “genuine, sincere and trustworthy” than the Chinese. This reflects some of the significant frustrations with conducting business with China, despite its status as a non-Colonizer in Africa. As Linda Appah, a boutique owner explained, a common frustration centers on merchandise orders. “The problem is that after having travelled to China and paid for a specific order of clothing, the shipment arrives and the sizes or colors are not what you selected, but there is nothing you can do.”¹³ This was a common complaint about doing business with China, despite the ease and the lower cost of goods. It appears then, that the colonial past in and of itself is not that important in such cases; what is important, is a legacy of that past, namely, the condescension. According to many of the traders, if goods were cheaper and if the West changed its condescending attitude towards Africa, for instance by making visa policies less stringent, they would prefer to buy from the West. This suggests that the gravitation eastward is not necessarily permanent, and it highlights how Africans’ perceptions of the West interact with economic realities.

Similar complaints are made about engaging with China even at higher levels. Economic and political engagement with China is almost synonymous, which can make negotiating with Chinese companies difficult, as approval must always come from officials in Beijing. Tony Chukweke, head of Nigeria’s Department of Petroleum Resources, reflects similar frustrations to those of the market traders over conducting business with China. The

¹² (Michel, Beuret et Woods 2008, 149)
¹³ Author Interviews, Accra, Ghana, January 2009
Chinese “go back and forth,” he says, “and when they come back, sometimes you find it is not what you agreed to.” Chukweke, a former geophysicist with Shell in London, admits the benefits of negotiating with Western oil companies: "Exxon comes in with clear mandates," he says. "We can negotiate within those mandates." Nevertheless, there is little doubt that dealing with China tends to be a less bureaucratic and more efficient path to development, as there are far fewer institutionalized rules or procedures to be followed. These “rules and procedures” have been elements of Western engagement with Africa, and typify the sort of engagement Africa wants increasing independence from. China’s hunger for resources has led to something of a reversal in the traditional relationships African resource-rich countries have had with a major foreign power. Countries like Nigeria for instance, can apply far more pressure to China to develop infrastructure in exchange for resource contracts, than they can Western governments. In this way, the footing between China and Africa leans towards the equalization demanded in African self-assertion.

These two examples inform the debate on the causes of Africa’s easterly gravitation by offering support for the economic and political arguments. However, African self-assertion was also evident in that economics (cheap goods) and the perception of condescension were the important factors behind perceptions of the West and Africa. The surprising response from the traders that they would favor conducting business with the West, rather than with China, introduces the next section’s discussion on the colonial mentality, a feature of the colonial legacy that has contributed to the African predicament. This next section examines the colonial mentality and in so doing, it continues to substantiate the argument that economics and politics alone are not enough to pull Africa out of the predicament because the predicament is not just about economics and politics.

14 (Walt, “China’s Appetite for African Oil Grows” 2006)
15 Cited in (Walt, “China’s Appetite for African Oil Grows” 2006)
COLONIAL MENTALITY

As stated in Chapter I, escaping the African predicament is Africa’s goal, and central to this process is bringing an end to the core-periphery relationships that have characterized (and arguably, continue to characterize) African relations with development allies, particularly in the West. The colonial mentality itself constitutes part of the core-periphery\textsuperscript{16} paradigm that Africa seeks to escape from, further illustrating the need for more than just economic or political change. As Frank explains,

“Dependence is not simply an external relation between a dependent economy and its capitalist metropolis. Rather, it has the most profound and far-reaching ideological and psychological manifestations in the form of inferiority complexes and assimilation of the metropolitan ideology and development theory.”\textsuperscript{17}

Escaping the colonial-mentality is crucial then because it represents an action Africans themselves can take to improve their development situation. One of the most enduring effects of the African colonial and postcolonial experience has been this “acquired mentality that invariably leads many Africans to prefer European things...over African things of comparable worth.”\textsuperscript{18} Indeed, in Ghana, at first Britain was everything - everything from the UK was most cherished. Over the years, this developed into something of a deification or immortalization of not just Britain, but white people and the West in general. Today in Ghana, one encounters the phrase “Kwesi Obroni,” which loosely translates as “white Kwesi.” Kwesi is a name that can be given to any male child who belongs to the Akan tribe and is born on a Sunday, and “obroni” means “white person” in Twi, a widely spoken Akan

\textsuperscript{16} In the development of a core and periphery in the international system, Milos writes that “Development and underdevelopment constitute simply the two opposite poles of one and the same process: development of some nations (i.e., the imperialist countries) presupposes, or even causes, the underdevelopment of dependent countries, which are subjected to imperialist exploitation,” through international trade.

\textsuperscript{17} (A. Frank 1972, 19-20)

\textsuperscript{18} (Gyekye 1997, 27)
dialect, particularly in the capital, Accra. “Kwesi Obroni” has positive connotations and is a way of admiring white people and the things that come from the West. Today, it has morphed into a name that some give to their children or apply to themselves. This type of reverence for the West is part of the colonial mentality that Ghanaian intellectuals criticize. The colonial mentality “subverts originality and creativity, because it makes people look outside rather than inside for standards of judgment,”\(^{19}\) and it must be overcome if development is to have any real chance of success in Africa. This mentality leads to the often-cited criticisms of dependency and the failures of aid to developing countries.

The notion that Africa has relied too much on what it has been told by the West, provides further explanation for why China is considered a valuable alternative for Africa. Africa must propel any change it desires; it is not clear that there are very many in whose interests it would be to close the widening gap between core and periphery, Wallerstein wrote almost thirty years ago.\(^{20}\) Since independence, that gap has in fact grown. African self-assertion calls for Africa to detach itself from the self-defeating attitude that has fed its inaction for so long and made it complicit in prolonging the African predicament. It also seeks to compel a shift in the West’s attitude towards the continent, demanding change from an attitude of condescension to one of respect, as this will be a symbol of the narrowing gap between the core and periphery. As the situation with the traders suggested, the respect China is deemed to show Africa is a significant (and successful) factor in China’s efforts to portray itself in a positive image in Africa. China’s is a partnership not characterized by a big brother small brother relationship\(^{21}\) in the sense that whatever big brother says, little brother must do, as is often the case with the West. In this way, this

\(^{19}\) (Gyekye 1997, 27)  
\(^{20}\) (Wallerstein 1974, 414)  
\(^{21}\) Author Interviews with Dr. Adadevoh, Accra, Ghana, January 2009
aspect of Chinese engagement receives a considerable measure of support even from intellectuals because of the potential it has to empower Africans to think differently about their own role in development.

Crucially, the emerging Sino-African relationship can diminish the prevalence of the colonial mentality in development. China’s achievement in lifting 400 million people out of poverty in two decades, without externally enforced policies from IFIs challenges the notion that the western model to development is “sacrosanct.” As a result, with China’s achievement as motivation, and with Chinese engagement as a new option for finance, there is optimism that Africa too can follow the Chinese example, assert itself and devise its own path to development.

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE

This section introduces and examines the importance of culture in development discourse. “Culture,” can be defined as the principles guiding the behavior of members of the same ethnicity and geographical location. “African culture,” is defined here as the actions, practices and processes, uninfluenced by European involvement, specific to African societies. It includes ancestral traditions, guiding principles, and moral values of African societies pre-European engagement. In this view, the cultural background of African self-assertion is identifiable in the principles of black racial assertion referenced earlier in the chapter. Culture is regarded as one of the most important factors promoting or impeding development in Africa. It is important for the study because it is the basis for a counter argument to the idea that in order to escape the African predicament, Africa should seek

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22 (Lammers 2007)
Western or Chinese assistance. This section provides an example of how the notion of African self-assertion can be extended, such that the path to escaping the African predicament prioritizes neither Western nor Chinese engagement. Although it provides an extremist view, it also shows why Africa is unlikely to be satisfied just by changes in foreign relations that do not redress the perceived patronization.

The roots of the African predicament are legion, but primary amongst the multitude of causes is “the neglect, denigration, or subversion of the traditional cultural values of African societies in matters of development.” Since the euphoria of the early days of independence, African nations have been beset by a myriad of problems that have retarded their growth. Many of these problems have a cultural basis and are related to “cherished practices, habits, attitudes and outlooks that derive from inherited indigenous cultures.” As a result, though the root of some of Africa’s problems certainly predate the era of colonial rule, many of Africa’s problems derive from its attempts to grapple with and adjust to the aftermath of colonial domination. As Gyekye has stated, the African predicament has only come to the fore in the postcolonial period as Africa’s people attempted to “modernize” their societies or evolve forms of life in harmony with the ethos of the contemporary world.

Now while African countries in modern times certainly still maintain strong links with ancestral cultures and values, these cannot be described as the basis of most contemporary African societies. Because of colonization, almost every African country currently has significant elements of its culture and society borrowed from foreign, mostly European nations. This makes the colonial period a good point of departure for debate over

23 (Gyekye 1997, 233)
24 (Gyekye 1997, vii)
25 (Gyekye 1997, 29)
the African predicament. The colonial era serves as a hinge period in which Africa underwent significant political, economic and cultural change, many of the ramifications of which (both positive and negative), can still be felt today.

The strong link between culture and peoples’ perspectives on development, and their reactions to development policies, is “intuitively attractive” because “the development of a human society does not take place in a cultural vacuum,”26 writes Gyekye. All human activity springs from a cultural base and takes on, or derives, its significance from the context of that culture; and the cultural model of development is a totalistic (not segmented) model.”27 The interpretation here is that human activity in Africa, which has led to both the African predicament and African self-assertion, springs from the dominant European cultural base. Culture’s role in development discourse is significant and “compelling” therefore, because if Africa is to come to grips with its predicament, “then it can do so only within the culture of [its] society.”28

Amongst those for whom this argument prevails, the so-called cultural revivalists, arresting a further decline in African lives as a result of the African predicament necessitates a return to the cultural past of Africa. I argue that this revivalism would entail Africa wrestling itself free of external cultural and institutional influences of the recent past; a veritable unraveling and reformulation of ties with the West. That China is an available and willing replacement ally should this strategy go sour, encourages those who promote this mindset, and it thus leads to an implicit acceptance of Chinese engagement.

From a practical and informed perspective on development, an extreme revivalist approach is uncompelling and unrealistic. It does not follow that “for purposes of

26 (Gyekye 1997, 7)  
27 (Gyekye 1997, 240)  
28 (Gyekye 1997, 240)
development the entire corpus of a cultural past must be revived.”

The suggestion is not that all African cultures should be abandoned as they are anachronistic, but the approach to utilizing past cultural practices as a tool for development requires critical examination of those practices, to separate those which would be beneficial from those that would exacerbate any issues already inhibiting development. A prime example of a beneficial cultural practice that is being revived throughout Africa is the concept of “Ubuntu,” an African philosophy that draws on African humanistic values and the memory of elements of past cultures as a tool for reconciliation. The cultural practices that in my view have no business in modern development discourse, are those for instance, which rely on shamans and witch doctors.

Revivalism to some extent however, remains a key determinant underlying the attitudes Africans have of the West and of China. The reason for this is hostility to the fact that Western ideas and institutions were imposed on Africa’s existing culture, “without its having, or being given, the opportunity to select or adopt what it considered desirable...and to adapt it to suit its own circumstances.”

This issue on the imposition of Western institutions and values on Africa will be returned to in Chapter V because I argue that the perception that Chinese engagement has not resulted in such impositions, encourages Africans to support Chinese engagement. However, as will be shown in discussion of the Tibet issue, this is not necessarily always the case – Chinese engagement does impose certain conditions on African countries. Cultural revivalism then leads to support for Sino-

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29 (Gyekye 1997, 240)
30 The African Philosophy of “Ubuntu,” or “humanness” is resurgent in the idea of an African Renaissance put in focus by former South African President Thabo Mbeki. It is at the base of the African philosophy of life and belief system, and is central to the idea of reconciliation. As Professor Nabudere explains, “the rejuvenation of the philosophy of Ubuntu is, important because it provides Africans a sense of self-identity, self-respect and achievement. It enables Africans to deal with their problems in a positive manner by drawing on the humanistic values they have inherited and perpetuated throughout their history. Africans can thus make a contribution of these values to the rest of humankind through their conscious application.” (Nabudere n.d.)
31 (Gyekye 1997, 26)
African bonds for reasons similar to those advanced in discussing the colonial mentality. Chinese engagement is supported as an alternative to Western engagement because the broad changes it engenders is allowing Africa to begin to rethink its development strategies, and prioritize paths to development that are distinctly African.

**PSYCHOLOGY**

This section provides the scientific (psychological) basis of attitude formation. It presents evidence to suggest that Africa’s willingness to support Chinese engagement is not always driven by explicit, or even conscious factors. I argue that Africa’s willingness to support China is also driven by the fact that Chinese citizens have infiltrated many sectors of society, and live and work in close proximity with Africans, which has led to “popular legitimacy” for the Chinese. In many African countries, Westerners also live and work in close proximity to Africans. The difference is in the salience of the Chinese, and the fact that Chinese citizens are present in areas such as informal sector markets.

To assess the role of China’s “quasi-diplomats” in Ghana, and perceptions of Chinese and Western engagement in the country, the author conducted interviews with two pools of people in Accra, Ghana, in January 2009. The first pool, and the majority of interviews, was with traders in Makola market, a local city market in Accra, replete with hawkers and all manner of stores, selling everything from clothing to farm produce. It also serves as hub for small scale West African business as traders from neighboring countries such as Burkina Faso, Togo Burkinabe, Nigeria, and even Senegal, travel there to buy and trade their wares (or change money on the black market).

32 Adama Gaye uses this to describe the effect of the physical Chinese presence in commercial areas in African cities, especially Dakar. See (Gaye 2008, 130)

33 Adama Gaye employs this phrase to describe the Chinese citizens who set up boutiques and shops in the streets of Dakar and established popular legitimacy for the Chinese. See (Gaye 2008, 130)
I began by identifying an “encultured informant,” an individual who knew the culture of the Market well. This person was a family member, and after having pretested questions on her, and other family members, I set out to interview personal acquaintances in the same social network. From there, however, I branched out, asking each trader if he or she would be willing to refer me to others whom I could speak with. The defining criteria for selection was involvement at some level with China or other Chinese traders, thus all those interviewed had some part of their business affected by trade with China. They either travelled there themselves, or placed orders for goods with colleagues. I created a questionnaire mostly with standardized closed-ended questions for this pool as they were often busy making sales and had little time to spare.

A majority of those interviewed was Ghanaian but all had had intimate interactions with people from all over West Africa. Owing to the diverse nature of the market, the interviewees provide an adequate gauge of sentiment towards the West and China, coming from people in similar sectors in Francophone and Anglophone West Africa. This same claim cannot be made about all of Africa. The traders had not had intimate business relationships with Kenyans or Malawians for instance, and this is a limitation. Nevertheless, the message from the interviews is largely supported by secondary evidence used in this study to report on the perceptions of the economic, cultural, and political relationship between Africa and its development allies.\(^{34}\) For instance, although the traders criticized Western impositions on Africa, and were excited about Ghana’s new Chinese funded infrastructure, their strong criticisms of Chinese engagement’s effects on the textiles sector, was similar to those voiced in the besieged textiles industries of southern Africa.

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\(^{34}\) See for instance (Gaye 2008) for a perspective from Senegal, and (Huse and Muyakwa 2008) for a perspective from Zambia.
There is another possible ethnic and geographic limitation. It is likely that the interview responses may be different elsewhere in Ghana, particularly in the Asante region and in a city like Kumasi. This is because nowhere in West Africa had there been a longer tradition of confrontation between Africans and Europeans than in the Gold Coast between the Asante and the British. Military engagement started in the 1760s and culminated in 1874 when the British finally defeated the Asante and disintegrated the traditional empire. This consequences of this history would likely result in far more hostility directed at the British and by extension, the West, by people from the Asante region.

The second pool was smaller, and more selective, consisting of highly educated interviewees. With these interviewees, interviews lasted for over half an hour, and although many of the questions were exactly the same as in the Makola interviews, there were more follow up questions, more open-ended questions and more in depth discussion in these interviews. I take care not to claim that these responses are representative of all of Ghana or all of Africa too. However, just as with the interviewees in Makola, secondary evidence appears to support their contentions and observations. In addition, the professional background and education level of this pool increases the reliability of the information they provided and I argue that their collective views represent the intelligent, informed approach to Chinese and Western engagement in Africa. Neither blind acceptance, nor blind approval of Chinese engagement in Africa was claimed.

As a recent Pew Global study reported, among the general public in Africa, “China is seen as having a large and growing influence... [which] for the most part is viewed positively.” In sum, these in depth interviews provide support for the idea that Africans

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35 (Gueye 1990, 64)
36 These interviewees all had at least one University degree, and they had been educated both in African and Western Universities.
37 (Wike & Horowitz, 2007, p. 41)
see China as a liberating alternative, and that African self-assertion is a significant contributing factor to this.

Many studies report significant associations between an in-group’s identification with factors such as nation, ethnicity and culture, and less favorable attitudes towards out-groups. According to these studies, identification with factors like African self-assertion and the historical legacy, both features that define the African in-group, are likely to mean that there will be some hostility towards out-groups--i.e. the West and China. However, I hypothesize that because of the West’s role in the historical legacy, and its role in the African predicament, the underlying hostility towards the West as an out-group will exceed that directed towards China as an out-group. These assertions are based in two important theories of intergroup relations and ethnocentrism: social identity theory (SIT) and realistic conflict theory RCT.

According to Duckitt, SIT proposes that the more intensely individuals identify with an element like African self-assertion, the more bias they will show against salient out-groups. Empirical findings have shown that such intergroup bias is more likely when in-group members belong to and are strongly oriented in collectivist societies, as is the case in most African societies. The most dominant out-group influence in Africa is identifiably Western, and this on its own would suggest that over the years a degree of antagonism would surely have developed. Studies have shown that though not always isomorphic, salience and identification are related; “increasing or decreasing the salience of group

38 (Adorno, et al. 1950)
39 (Tajfel and Turner 1979)
40 (LeVine and Campbell 1972)
41 (Duckitt and Mphuthing 1998)
42 (Brewer 1979)
43 (Brown, et al. 1992)
categorization produces concomitant changes in intergroup bias.” With this in mind, through the interviews, this study seeks to identify what effect the physical salience of Chinese engagement is having on the perception that Africa is gravitating eastwards. As other studies (Mullen) have suggested would be the case, was China’s increasing salience in Africa resulting in a concomitant change in intergroup bias? Was there more or less bias towards the Chinese, and was the fact that China was becoming more salient than the West resulting in a lessening of the bias towards the West?

Contrary to what might have been expected, the answer to all these questions was “No,” (although this might be different in other countries). The hypothesis was that the realities of the African predicament, African self-assertion and the historical legacy would be reflected in a conflictual attitude between Africans and Westerners. I expected, and found, that Africans would tend to respond more negatively to Western policies and engagement, and African’s would continue to draw connections between current Western policies and attitudes and the historically negative policies and attitudes. Africans would have a more favorable attitude toward non-Whites, the Chinese, who would be seen as more similar to Africans and thus more sympathetic to African interests. Consequently, Chinese engagement would be favored because Western engagement was still deemed racist and imperious. This very much appeared to be the case. The perception of similarity between Africa and China is strongly promoted by China, which takes frequently highlights its developing country status when engaging with Africa. As an interviewee expressed to me, “we as Africans see China as part of us.” The Chinese were also seen as more similar to Africans in a “cultural-economic” sense. “The Chinese behave like us,” said Nana Larbi, a

\(^{44}\) (Mullen, Brown and Smith 1992)
sewing accessories boutique owner, as one of the reasons why she favored conducting business with the Chinese.

This sense of “cultural-economic” similarity between Africa and China was also expressed in different interviews. Having recently visited China, Anti was in good position to discuss some of these similarities. “In China, you bargain for everything,” she says, so “there is a cultural, business similarity between the Chinese and the African,” which supports Larbi’s observations. “The Western countries are too stringent, the Chinese are more flexible - they understand the principles of negotiation,” Anti continues. Conclusions from the interviews suggest that Ghanaian (and African) interest has shifted from the West to China because the Chinese have become easier to deal with. Because China was not as involved with exploiting and oppressing Africa, it is deemed to hold Africans in higher regard than the West. Thus, African countries and their peoples see China as a friendlier ally for Africa. Ghanaians and Africans, it seems, find it easier dealing with the Chinese, who “understand the humility that is so important in our culture.”

The results mirrored those of a classic experiment conducted by Duckitt and Mphuthing (1998), which assessed Black African students’ ethnic group identification and their attitudes primarily toward English Whites and Afrikaans Whites. Just as in Duckitt’s study, the interviews reflected that the more intense the feelings of African self-assertion, the more common the tendency to perceive out-group (in this case, Western) policies as domineering (although with frustrations to Chinese engagement growing over time, this might change soon). A strong identification with African self-assertion, or strong resentment

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45 Gifty Anti, Author Interviews, Accra, Ghana, January 2009
46 Gifty Anti, Author Interviews, Accra, Ghana, January 2009
47 Duckitt and Mphuthing assessed Black African students’ ethnic group identification and their attitudes toward English Whites, Afrikaans Whites, and Whites in general before and after South Africa’s transitional election in April 1994. As predicted, Black African identification was significantly related only to attitudes toward Afrikaans Whites. Considerably more positive attitudes were observed toward English Whites and Whites in general. See (Duckitt and Mphuthing 1998)
at the colonial legacy made it more likely that the ruinous aspects of Chinese engagement in Africa, would be overlooked in peoples’ immediate opinions.

Recalling the limitations put forward earlier, the similarity in my interview results with the results of Duckitt’s experiments, lends credence to my contention that the process of attitude formation expressed by Ghanaians mirror those in other parts of Africa. I hypothesize though, that in Francophone Africa, which has maintained closer links with its former colonial master than Anglophone Africa, this attitude would be stronger. This is perhaps the subject for another dissertation, but as can be inferred from discussion of Francophone Africa in Chapter IV, it is highly likely that this would be a true hypothesis. An important note must be made about salience: Part of the reason why Makola market was chosen was that it is a market in which one infrequently sees Westerners, or non-blacks, with the exception of the occasional backpacker. Recently, the Chinese have begun to set up shop there.

The interviews also sought to assess the impact of China’s physical salience as exported by these aspiring entrepreneurs. Psychological theory\textsuperscript{49} demonstrates that \textit{proximity} -- geographical nearness -- predicts liking more than it does hostility (though it can also breed aggression particularly in situations where resources are scarce and there is competition). \textit{Functional distance} -- how often paths cross -- encourages friendship as does \textit{anticipation of interaction/anticipatory liking}, which purports that people tend to like, or make more effort to like, those they see and must interact with frequently. The study tests this proposal by assessing the impact that Chinese traders have on Ghanaian attitudes toward China, and can be seen in Chapter V. The fact that Africans get to interact more with

\textsuperscript{48} There are, and have been for a while, populations of Lebanese and Indians, but comparably, they are not a salient group.

Chinese people is thought to, at the very least, make them more familiar with China than with France. Further, seeing that they are working in the same market, for similar hours and in the same conditions, this is likely to result in a more favorable or at least accepting view of them. Whether or not this extends to viewing China as a country favorably and thus, whether it amounts to implicit support for any gravitation towards China, is to be determined. Closely linked to the theorizing over the effects of functional distance is the mere exposure effect, which establishes that familiarity does not breed contempt, it increases liking.

Largely, these theories were proved accurate in the interviews, though the importance of RCT should not be ignored. RCT holds that out-group competition creates hostility towards the out-group, and though traders did not have many personal problems with the Chinese, they did not want Chinese to set up in the retail business. It appears then, that with a growing Chinese presence, it may only be a matter of time before more antagonism develops. This, and other challenges China faces in Africa will be further evaluated in the Conclusion and Synthesis chapter of this study.

Differing Continental Memories: Francophone & Anglophone Africa

Emphasizing culture is consistent with recent scholarship on the underlying factors of African foreign policies, which increasingly highlight the necessity of drawing on the insights of history, psychology, culture and anthropology to analyze foreign policy. Individual leadership, neopatrimonialism, is important in African foreign policy, but it cannot be abstracted from the society, history, and culture from which it originates. Thus, it is
necessary to situate foreign policy directions within these other processes. The dominant “processes” for Africa extend from the colonial legacy as “almost every African country is overlaid in varying degrees by the national culture of the former colonial power,” writes Schrader. Education, legal system and perhaps most obviously, national language are some of the most noticeable remnants of the colonial era. Although Africa shares the same continental memory when it comes to resentment over colonial experiences, different colonial masters left distinct cultural roots, which have resulted in separate foreign policy directions, and nuanced differences in the development priorities of African self-assertion. As a result, it is expedient to continue closer analysis after delineating countries based on the colonial past.

In the aggregate, the major problem of colonialism for the African continent is seen in the daunting problems, failures and frustrations African countries faced as they attempted to “develop or modernize, or to situate themselves more satisfactorily in the social, political, and intellectual formation of the contemporary world.” The issue has been that the West has always sought to export its values and institutions on African countries, without first taking into account whether those values and institutions were compatible with what was in place in Africa.

This is a significant conclusion and one that will be returned to in due course. It is sufficient here to show that these institutions and practices differed depending on whether France or Britain was the colonial power.

Policies on assimilation provide perhaps the starkest difference between the nature of French and British colonialism in Africa, particularly when counterposed with the policy of “autonomy,” which better describes the British approach. Assimilation and autonomy

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50 (Maswana 2007)
51 (Gyekye 1997, 25)
suggest the goals of French and British colonial policy respectively, with assimilation on the one hand indicating an “incorporation within the body politic of the mother country,”\textsuperscript{52} and “autonomy” indicating colonial self-government, on the other.\textsuperscript{53} A significant difference between the former Anglophone and Francophone African colonies is that the Francophone ones were organized into two distinct administrative federations, the\textit{Afrique Occidentale Française} (AOF), and\textit{Afrique Equatoriale Française} (AEF).\textsuperscript{54} The historical organization of these states into these administrative federations already provides indications of the “resilient and durable”\textsuperscript{55} ties that existed between France and its former colonies. It also hints at the social, political, and economic linkages born of common and sometimes shared post-colonial political experiences that have led to a surprisingly salient and dependent relationship with France – a kind of relationship not replicated between Anglophone African countries and Britain. Analyzing the relationship between France and its former colonies then is absolutely necessary and will provide clues as to the extent of any African gravitation away from the West and towards the East. This is because for Francophone Africa, engagement with the West can really be identified as engagement with France, as France has arguably been Francophone Africa’s primary political, economic and cultural connection with the West. Thus a shift in relations favouring ties with China over those with the West will be characterized in Francophone Africa, by a shift in relations with France.

\textsuperscript{52} (Lewis 1962, 131)
\textsuperscript{53} These policies were not mutually exclusive to either France or the Britain. British rule in Kenya for instance, was more or less approached by direct rule, and as France’s assimilation morphed into association, increasing efforts at indirect rule were tried. Nevertheless, the reality is that for the majority of French colonies, assimilation was the norm, and for British colonies, autonomy was the norm.
\textsuperscript{54} The AOF consisted of Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea, the Ivory Coast (officially Côte d’Ivoire in all languages since 1985), Mali, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), Dahomey (now Benin), and Niger. Togo, which was under French administration, operated under the aegis of the AOF but, since it was a UN Trust Territory it was treated a separate political and juridical entity. The AEF consisted of Chad, Ubangi-Shari (now the Central African Republic), Gabon, and the French Congo (now Congo-Brazzaville). The Territory of Cameroon (now known as Cameroon), was another UN Trust Territory which was also ruled by France in a similar fashion as Togo.
\textsuperscript{55} (Le Vine 2004, 2)
Recent literature\textsuperscript{56} on Franco-African relations has focused on a perceived shift away from notions of French exceptionalism in its relations with its former Black African colonies towards conceptions of normalization and disengagement. This study questions and finds evidence that the same process is occurring with the West and seeks to identify the driving forces behind such a shift. It does so in the context of whether this shift is, to borrow the same language, away from notions of French (and by extension, Western), exceptionalism, towards notions of Chinese exceptionalism, or rather Chinese normalization in relations with Africa.

\begin{quote}
Framework of Comparison: France and China in Africa
\end{quote}

France today is one of the most modern countries in the world and a leader among European nations. A small evidence of this is the fact that it has held the presidency of the G8 five times and was instrumental in the very conception of the annual summit meetings. The G8, the annual meeting of the top political leaders of the world's major industrialized countries, was born of a French political vision and with four of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council in the G8 (France, Russia, UK and USA – China is conspicuously absent), the legitimacy and import of the group can little be denied. France is also prominent in the European Union. It was one of the principal drivers of European economic integration with the euro, in January 1999. At present, France is at the forefront of efforts to develop the EU's military capabilities to supplement progress toward an EU foreign policy\textsuperscript{57} and has been playing a significant role in the new G-20.

France also stands as one of the primary donor countries to indebted African nations. As Chart 1 shows, the largest donors in 2007, by volume, were the United States, followed by Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Japan, according to the OECD

\textsuperscript{56} (Marchal, "France and Africa: The Emergence of Essential Reforms?" 1998)

\textsuperscript{57} (CIA Factbook France 2009)
(Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation). The volume of French official development assistance (ODA) however rose to US$7.3 billion, or 0.41% of gross national income (GNI), in 2003 from US$4.2 billion, or 0.32% of GNI, in 2001. This sets France out as the most generous G8 country in terms of an ODA/GNI ratio, and half of its projected US$9 billion in official development assistance (ODA) will, by 2012, go to Africa. This French commitment to developmental aid is not entirely new; even in the 1960s, in proportion to national income, French aid to Africa was the highest in the world, and second highest in absolute terms.

The main puzzle in this study is why, despite many obvious and public drawbacks of Chinese involvement, as highlighted by the negative press China receives for its involvement with the Darfur and Zimbabwe crises, African nations appear to regard Chinese involvement in their countries in a favorable light. Using a comparative perspective, this study examines French and Chinese involvement in West Africa to illustrate why, and the extent to which, African nations are gravitating towards favoring the creation of more ties with China than with such Western countries as France. The reality of this waning French influence in the face of rising Chinese influence is made clear when it is understood that there is a common feeling that Africa may be a continent that “no longer wants anything” from France.

Senegal and Ghana are the two primary case studies, and they can both be considered political pioneers in Africa. Ghana, as the first country to gain independence in 1957, stood as an example to the entire continent, and Senegal is one of the most economically and politically influential countries in Francophone Africa. The relationship

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58 (OECD, "Debt Relief is down: Other ODA rises slightly" 2008)
59 (Hayter 1965, 236)
60 (Marchal, "France and Africa: The Emergence of Essential Reforms?" 1998)
between Senegal, France’s oldest colony in Africa, and France’s “launching pad” for economic interests, has been remarkably intimate, and changes in this relationship can reflect wider changes in Francophone African states. Further, Senegal has been one of the more politically stable Francophone African countries, and with its established multi-party system and tradition of civilian rule left over from its long engagement with France, Senegal, like Ghana, is hailed as one of Africa’s model democracies. Senegal, also like Ghana (until recently), is not resource rich in the same way as countries like Nigeria or Cameroon. In addition to Senegal’s symbolic importance for Franco-African relations, its “resource poverty” also allows for political and economic assessment of its international relations beyond arguments dominated by the “resource curse” or Dutch disease, and allows Chinese engagement there to be examined beyond arguments of China’s resource hunger.

**Concluding Thoughts**

China is prowling the globe in search of energy resources.\(^{61}\) Chinese demand for and consumption of mineral resources is expected to grow exponentially in the foreseeable future, and in an attempt to diversify its supply sources, China has set its sights on Africa.\(^{62}\)

Chinese exports to Africa have steadily increased, and with China’s need, and ability to pay to exploit natural resources in Africa, the economic stakes of China’s presence are high. The economic story reflects the existence of something of a zero-sum situation when it comes to business. An eastward gravitation at the expense of the West can be seen in the firms that contracts are awarded to; a contract lost by Elf-Aquitaine and given to PetroChina in Angola is indeed an irrecoverable loss for French business. It should be noted, however, that often, China is willing to search for resources in areas where the West declines to go, and so the explosion of Chinese firms in Africa is not always in direct conflict with Western ones.

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\(^{61}\) (Guardian, 2005)
\(^{62}\) (Rocha, 2007).
The political story reflects the fact that the lack of intrusion in internal affairs is truly a significant feature of Sino-African relations, one that also reflects an eastward gravitation. The emphasis is on China’s position as a new, alternate donor. Furthermore, fears of democratic reversal as contained within the China threat are minimal, at least in Ghana. Africa’s response to the China threat is illuminating, as it is itself a sign of African self-assertion. In a dismissive response to the characterization of China's expansion in Africa as neo-colonial, “one appreciates the West's reflections on the issue but it is none of their business,” concludes Adadevoh.63 The West’s wishes and warnings for Africa could not have been so easily dismissed a decade ago. The lack of political conditionalities in China’s aid policy is a prized aspect of Sino-African relations. Although African countries attach considerable importance to this, it has not resulted in a total abandonment of the West as a donor or ally. That China is implicated in the atrocities of Darfur does not appear to have had that significant an impact on people’s perceptions of economic gain from China. Further, the years of Western exploitation and violence in Africa, and the complicity of nations such as France and Belgium in the Rwandan Genocide, are all grievous ills that do indeed infuriate Africans. Nevertheless, the economics of the pocket reign supreme, the bottom line is business.

The cultural story suggests that though colonialism is still a sensitive issue, it on its own has little bearing on support for China at the governmental levels. Culture is important as it pertains to the underlying issue of respect and African self-assertion. Because colonialism, post-colonial inequality and the African predicament exist, Africa remains in an embrace with the West, but it is waiting for and expecting reciprocated respect. It gets this respect from China, which does indeed make China a favorable ally in many eyes.

63 Author Interviews, Accra, Ghana, January 2009
China, in its aggressive pursuit of allies in Africa is proving to be a less demanding alternative to the more scrupulous relationships African countries have with traditional Western partners. In investing and providing assistance in areas that Western aid agencies have long neglected—physical infrastructure, industry, and agriculture, China has identified itself as a capable partner willing to supply Africa what it wants – a means to assert its own interests as a means to escape the African Predicament.

64 (Brookes 2007)
CHAPTER III: An OVERVIEW OF WESTERN AND CHINESE RELATIONS WITH AFRICA

Africa defies conventional logic. Despite its enormous resource wealth, African economies have fared disastrously in the postcolonial era even with “the constant infusion of capital and other forms of assistance from the developed nations of the world and international organizations.”1 Africa now is turning to China as what Africa demands, China is better able to supply. Africa wants a change from business as usual to business unusual not just in its economic and political relations with foreign powers, but in the attitudes that accompany those relations as well.

China embodies this change by being able to distinguish itself from the West. There are three features that really distinguish China’s relations with Africa from those of the West, and cumulatively, they seem to overshadow the negative aspects of Chinese engagement. First, and most important, the heritage of Sino-African relations is not founded in the “inglorious” trans-Atlantic slave trade. Neither does China have a history of colonialism and occupation in Africa.2 Second, in the post-colonial period, China has embraced African liberation processes, offering diplomatic, political, material and military support, which has developed into the framework of close South-South cooperation. Third, China has no associations with the “abysmal failure”3 of Western financial initiatives to develop Africa on the Western model. China has not been identified with the structural adjustment policies that impoverished Africa over the past 30 years.4 These elements inform the debate by showing that it is not just the history per se, that is important, but its legacy, and the baggage contained within that history that has contributed to the African predicament.

1 (Gyekye 1997, 26)
2 (Campbell, 2007: 130).
3 (Ayodele et. al, 2005)
4 (Campbell 2007, 130)
This chapter identifies three important periods in history that are important for how attitudes toward China and the West have been formed today. These three are the pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial eras. In outlining relations between the West (typified by France), and China, in Africa in these three periods, this section aims to demonstrate the pattern of Western imposition and exploitation of Africa, set against a pattern of “friendlier,” more benign Chinese engagement. The section analyzes these relationships to assess how they contribute to Africa’s willingness to encourage Chinese engagement.

Put one way, a focus of this study is that there is a perceived shift away from notions of “French exceptionalism” in relations between Africa and France. The framework for analyzing the African gravitation toward the East and away from the West is examined through the conception that France is increasingly losing ground in its traditional spheres in Africa to China (the notion of a loss of an exceptional position in the relationship),\(^5\) that Sino-African exceptionalism is replacing this, and that this is a deliberate process supported by African nations.

\[\text{PERIOD I: PRECOLONIAL PRE-1884}\]

The aim of this section is rather historical. It depicts the history of interaction between both the West and Africa, and China and Africa, in order to expose the “baggage” that encumbers Western engagement with Africa. The examples and events discussed here can also be seen to introduce the theme of foreign impositions on Africa, a secondary issue here, but an important one that becomes a focus in Chapter V.

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\(^5\) This phrase appeared in (Chafer, "Franco-African Relations: No Longer So Exceptional?", 2002). French exceptionalism refers to the ‘special relationships’ that have characterized France’s political, diplomatic, cultural and economic ties with African countries, most notably those in its former colonial territories.
From the outset, it must be stated that before the 1950s, there is a paucity of scholarship about Sino-African ties. There is some evidence of direct and indirect early contact probably undertaken by the great maritime expeditions of the first Ming Emperors.\(^6\) The voyages of Cheng Ho (c.1371-1435), the Ming admiral who led perhaps the most substantial fleet in the world at the time from China to the Eastern coasts of Africa,\(^7\) and those of Zhang Qian, stand as illustrations of China’s long history of international commerce.\(^8\) Evidence of the relationship between China and Africa, and the availability of scholarship depicting its evolution take a positive turn in more contemporary times. Trade and investment between China and Africa can be traced back for decades to the mid-1950s, where the foundations of Sino-African relations were established at the first Asia-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955. This period in Sino-African relations will be assessed in section II of this chapter.

The title for first direct contact between Europe and Africa belongs with the Portuguese and Captain Antony Gonsalves, who in the early fifteenth century arrived at Cape Bojador in present day Mauritania. The Portuguese later arrived on the shores of present day Ghana in 1471, discovering so much gold deposited in the sand that they called the place Mina, or Mine. In 1482, they built Elmina Castle to establish a permanent trading post for gold, ivory, and slaves. France’s first colonial endeavor in Africa landed it in the area of modern day Senegal, which became its first colony in Black Africa. It established a trading post there in 1659 that would be the basis of French commercial ventures along the Guinea coast, making Senegal the key to France’s colonial future in West Africa.\(^9\) Late in the nineteenth century and under the aegis of the Third Republic, after having won and then

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\(^7\) (Mancall 2006, 115)  
\(^8\) (Broadman, 2007)  
\(^9\) (Le Vine 2004, 31)
lost its first great colonial empire of the 17th and 18th centuries, France entered into another motivated imperial career, this time primarily in Africa.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the commercial interests of the European nations were increasingly well established in Africa. This relationship was changed by landmark events between 1876 and 1880. The first of these was the Brussels Geographical Conference in 1876, at which King Leopold I of Belgium laid personal claim to all the lands of the Congo. Insulted by this and frantic about losing out, other European powers followed suit, sending expeditions out to Africa. By 1880, European powers were poised to alter the state of their initially trade-centric relationships with African nations and were preparing to take over politically.

The Berlin Conference of 1884-5 was a second landmark event, convened as a means of settling the territorial disputes arising out of the chaotic European expansion, particularly in the Congo. The conference, hosted by Bismarck in Berlin, was attended by France, Britain, Belgium, and Portugal, and established “the rules to be observed ... with regard to the occupation of territory on the coasts of Africa.”

Although its intention was not initially to partition the continent, that was its main result. The conference “merely laid down a few rules to govern a process already in motion.” Following this, colonization took off with reckless disregard for the well-being of Africans following this. The partition complete on paper, military conquest and occupation quickly and eagerly followed.

When Europeans first came to Africa, they did not possess the military or technological means to impose their will on Africans. This soon changed, thanks to technological advancements in Europe. African kingdoms were no match for the

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10 (Uzoigwe 1990, 15)
11 (Uzoigwe 1990, 15)
technological superiority of the Europeans and in particular the Maxim machine gun. As English poet, Hilaire Beloc succinctly wrote:

Whatever happens we have got
The Maxim gun and they have not

Strictly speaking, British colonial rule in Ghana was not established until after the Conference of 1884 - 1885, though British power and jurisdiction in the Gold Coast began to take firm roots from the beginning of the nineteenth century. Throughout this time, and during the colonial period, governors-general carried out political rule in both British and French colonies. For Francophone Africa, one of the most important of these was Louis Faidherbe, Governor of Senegal from 1854 to 1861 and again from 1863 to 1865. Faidherbe greatly expanded French interests in the West African region with excursions aimed at gradually creating an empire in the area. Though he failed, his efforts were an important precursor to France’s later push inland leading up to and after the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. Following the partitioning of Africa set in place by the conference, by 1920 France emerged from the Scramble for Africa with one of the largest territorial empires ever assembled. 12

Colonialism conceivably occurred because Christian missionaries who had visited Africa returned to Europe to speak of Europe’s duty to civilize the Dark Continent. For Britain this mindset was termed “The White Man’s Burden,” in France, “mission civilisatrice” was the term employed. Proponents, usually impatient and resource hungry capitalists and traders desperate to expand their search for resources further into Africa, drummed up support for expansion. French traders wanted to explore more of the hinterland west of the Senegal River and likewise, the British and other colonial powers sought out the secrets of the African interior. The result was a scramble for territories in Africa, which were valued for

12 (Le Vine 2004, 38)
their resources, but also as a means of maintaining prestige in Europe. Though this perspective is true, it provides only a cursory glance at the reasons for colonization.\textsuperscript{13}

To conclude this section, we should note that much of Africans’ frustrations with the West revolve around such Western impositions on Africa. The Berlin Conference of 1886 stands as a significant imposition on the African continent and its people particularly since the ethnic fragmentation it engendered is viewed as one of the ultimate sources of the African predicament. The “intractable problems and frustrations of nation-building” experienced by postcolonial Africa, such as recurrent conflicts driven by ethnoculturalism,\textsuperscript{14} has resulted in the institution of the nation-state imposed by the conference in 1885 being characterized as a “curse” on Africa.\textsuperscript{15} Such problems of nation-building are by no way unique to African states; they, however, appear to be much more “rampant and resilient” in Africa than elsewhere. Colonial impositions at the very least are to blame. The argument is that Africa’s people were disadvantaged in having, on the attainment of political independence, to operate alien institutions that cannot be said to have constituted a part of their own political culture at the time. “These were institutions and practices, therefore, that African people were not - and could not have been –inured to.”\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{PERIOD II: COLONIZATION: 1902-1960}

This section continues in the vein of establishing Western “impositions” on Africa during the colonial period, and sets these against the emergence of cooperative Chinese engagement. One of the most notable features of China’s new activist foreign policy towards Africa is its emphasis on the historical context of the relationship. China uses this to

\textsuperscript{13} For further details see (Uzoigwe 1990, 10-14)
\textsuperscript{14} See Section 5 on Côté d’Ivoire in Chapter V for further discussion.
\textsuperscript{15} (Davidson 1992)
\textsuperscript{16} (Gyekye 1997, 138)
claim solidarity and similarity between Africa and itself, a strategy that the West, for reasons shown throughout this chapter, avoids. China’s ability to appeal to the past and claim solidarity with Africa, does appear to have a corollary effect on Africa’s willingness to accept Chinese engagement, and even to to support China’s “peaceful rise”\(^\text{17}\) to a global power.

The way France chose to rule its empire differed greatly from the approaches of its colonial competitors like Britain. Assimilation can be viewed as a French ideal, and an extention of the mission civilisatrice and France’s revolutionary pride in disseminating its universal values. At the Brazzaville Conference in 1944, de Gaulle met with high-ranking officials from the colonies to discuss the future of France’s empire. Participants at the conference discussed political, social and economic reforms, and as far as national self-determination went, the final resolution declared that

The aims of the work of colonization which France is pursuing in her colonies exclude any idea of autonomy and any possibility of development outside the French empire bloc; the attainment of self-government in the colonies even in the most distant future must be excluded.\(^\text{18}\)

This statement was not only a recommitment to the status-quo of over a century’s standing but a “reaffirmation of the ideal of assimilation to the French nation as the logical outcome of the French mission civilisatrice.”\(^\text{19}\) The French, unlike the British in their Colonies, did not tend to utilize traditional power holders in their administration of their territories to any great extent. Following the conference, the French Empire became the French Union. The purpose of this Union was that as members, Africans would be “one hundred million citizens and free men” of a France “enriched, ennobled, and expanded.”\(^\text{20}\)

This French political vision would never be fully realized. Assimilation would initially be

\(^\text{17}\) (Alden and Alves 2008, 44)
\(^\text{18}\) (Luethy 1955, 218)
\(^\text{19}\) (Lewis 1962, 29)
\(^\text{20}\) (Lewis 1962)
abandoned in 1851 when the ideological pendulum swung away from it following the fall of
the Second Republic and the rise of Napoleon Ills Second Empire (1851-1870).\textsuperscript{21}

In the end the debate was settled by 1905, when the French Ministry of Colonies
abandoned the process of assimilation attempted in Senegal as a result of dominant opinion
in French colonial circles that found it not only effortful but expensive. French colonial elites
began to espouse French racial superiority and the corollary doctrine that only after
centuries of evolution under French or European rule could Africans attain European levels
of civilisation.\textsuperscript{22}

In an illustration of the special relationship between France and Senegal, in 1945,
two Senegalese deputies (Lamine Gueye et Léopold Sédar Senghor), members of the French
National Assembly, were allowed to form a territorial assembly in 1946. This assembly had
representative parliamentarians who were able to agitate for improvements back in
Senegal, such as freedom of association and freedom from forced labour. Gradually, this led
to the formation of distinct political parties in Senegal, although even in Senegal, only the
residents of the \textit{quatre communes} had any political voice and it was they who grew into the
political class that would guide Senegal to and through independence after the Second
World War.\textsuperscript{23}

Further calls for reform included African representation in the French National
Assembly and increasing autonomy in West Africa. Councils where Africans could at least
participate in local governance were demanded and slowly gained acceptance.
France’s reluctance to grant autonomy after the instrumental role Africans had played in the
War was a serious point of contention which was exacerbated by the African deputies in

\textsuperscript{21} (Le Vine 2004, 40)
\textsuperscript{22} (Le Vine 2004, 41)
\textsuperscript{23} Iba Der Thiam et Mbaye Guèye, available at http://www.gouv.sn/senegal/histoire.html
Paris who were agitating for change. Faced with French immovability, African leaders opted for the creation of new, Africa-based political parties, the most important of which was Félix Houphouët-Boigny’s Rassemblement Démocratique Africain, (RDA). Faced with mounting pressure for independence, the French coalition government of 1956, which included such prominent Africans as Houphouët-Boigny, produced a legal and constitutional milestone in the framework of the loi-cadre, or enabling law, in 1956. This was not independence, but was France’s strategy to a semblance of autonomy for African nations. The main tenets of the law were that certain “principles,” such as enfranchisement, were to be changed.

The loi cadre allowed local government for individual territories in French West Africa. At the same time in Ghana however, agitation for political independence had also grown, leading to the formation of a number of political parties created to explore paths to independence. Among these was the party formed in 1949 by Nkrumah, the Convention People’s Party (CPP). Political concessions and the weakened state of Europe after the Second World War eventually resulted in Ghana winning its independence in 1957, becoming the first African country to achieve complete autonomy from Colonial rule.

Bandung I:

At the same time as the struggles for independence, China under Mao Tse-tung began its search for allies in Africa. With the political composition of African nations still undecided, Africa represented something of a strategic interest for China mainly in its “ideological campaign against Western imperialism.” The first Bandung Conference, or Bandung I, was "a seminal event" in Sino-African history because it was at this conference

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24 (Le Vine 2004, 67)
25 (Lammers 2007)
that Communist China first made its tentative links with the African continent.\textsuperscript{26} The Bandung meeting was the “the real beginning” of China’s rapid entry on the African scene. It was an equally important meeting for China for as late as 1954 Beijing still had no diplomatic relations with any African countries.\textsuperscript{27}

The stated objectives of the Bandung Conference were “to promote Afro-Asian economic and cultural cooperation and to oppose colonialism or neocolonialism by the United States, the Soviet Union, or any other imperialistic nation.”\textsuperscript{28} The conference established very positive relations between China and the African countries that had attended. The framework guiding their negotiations and cooperation was the “Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence” which formed the cornerstone of China’s diplomatic relations with its allies. Such was the success of the conference that in the final communiqué, the conference participants had agreed to adopt the “Bandung Declaration of 10 Principles.” This Declaration contained all the points in the Five Principles, and extended and developed many of them.

Of the 10,\textsuperscript{29} some of the more pertinent ones to this study are principles 2, 5 and 9, which form the basis of China’s non-intervention policy and dictate its principle of mutual cooperation. As they officially appear, the principles state; (2) respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations; (5) abstention from intervention or interference in the

\textsuperscript{26} (Muekalia 2004)
\textsuperscript{27} (Cooley 1965, 9)
\textsuperscript{28} (Cooley 1965)
\textsuperscript{29} The 10 Principles of the 1955 Bandung Conference are: (1) respect for fundamental human rights and for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations; (2) respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations; (3) recognition of the equality of all races and of the equality of all nations, large or small; (4) respect for the right of each nation to defend itself singly or collectively, in conformity with the United Nations Charter; (5) abstention from intervention or interference in the internal affairs of another country; (6) abstention from the use of arrangements of collective defense to serve the particular interests of any of the big powers; (7) refraining from acts or threats of aggression or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any country; (8) settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation, arbitration or judicial settlement as well as other peaceful means of the parties’ own choice, in conformity with the United Nations Charter; (9) promotion of mutual interest and cooperation; and (10) respect for justice and international obligations.
internal affairs of another country; (8) settlement of all international disputes by peaceful means, such as negotiation, conciliation, arbitration or judicial settlement as well as other peaceful means of the parties’ own choice, in conformity with the United Nations Charter. The primary goals of the Bandung Declaration of 10 Principles are still the ones that guide Sino-African relations in the modern era. They can thus be seen as an important factor explaining the African attitude towards China as opposed to the attitude towards colonizers like France and its policy of assimilation. Africa is granted greater policy space to conduct their affairs by Chinese engagement.

For China, Bandung signaled its march out of isolation and it was Africa that provided it with a field of action and recognition.\(^{30}\) The Conference “enhanced the unity and co-operation of the Asian and African countries, inspired the people in the colonies to struggle for national liberation and played a significant role in promoting the anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggle of the Asian and African people.”\(^{31}\) Bandung was also of prime economic significance; Trade between China and Africa grew following the conference. The total volume of Chinese trade with African partners increased almost sevenfold by 1965 and was extended to include African countries as they became independent. Diplomatic relations also deepened during this period as seen by the organization of a further conference, the first Afro-Asia People’s Solidarity Conference, held in Egypt in 1957, and by the fact that between 1960 and 1965, China entered into relations with fourteen newly independent states in Africa.”\(^{32}\)

It is highly important to note the major historical bond that existed between China and African countries at this time, if we are to understand the solidarity that developed

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\(^{30}\) (Cooley 1965, 13)


\(^{32}\) (Muekalia 2004, 6)
which has allowed China to make appeals to Africans about its mutually and historically beneficial friendship with Africa. The People’s Republic of China was founded at a time when most of today’s developing world was still under the yoke of colonialism. The fledgling status of the Chinese republic explains the fraternal atmosphere in which Sino-African ties developed. Here, there was no explicit hierarchy as there was in Africa’s dealings with France.

The civil war in China (1927-1949) had ended and the Communists had emerged victorious, and this coincided with the escalation of independence movements in Africa in the 1950s and 1960s. This event was also responsible for one of the guiding principles of Chinese policy – the “One China” principle and the Taiwan issue. Simply stated, Taiwan is considered an “inalienable part of China” and as such recognizing the sovereignty of Beijing over Taiwan is an unassailable prerequisite of engagement with China. Though also desperately poor and grappling with its own economic issues, following Bandung, China intensively aided African governments, groups, and individuals in their independence struggles. China provided guerilla training, technical support, and also educated African leaders and students in Beijing, to counter this same policy being carried out by France and Britain. A veritable battle for the hearts and minds of Africans had begun and it was not just against Western nations. As African historian, Martin Meredith writes, “an even fiercer contest for influence was waged between the Russians and the Chinese ... the Russians were worried that China’s emphasis on revolutionary activity would lead to ... greater Western intervention.” Russia, which had a series of valuable trade agreements with moderate governments in Africa had a lot to lose if China’s emphasis on exporting revolutionary communist ideology alarmed the fledgling African states. Russia was advancing an aid and

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33 (PRC Embassy in USA 2009)
34 (Meredith 1984, 177)
trade relationship that was essentially at odds with the approach China took to Africa.\textsuperscript{35} Beijing’s first forays into Africa were structured so that it could present itself first as a friend to African countries seeking liberation from their colonizers, and then later as an alternative to the USA and the USSR during the Cold War. During the period, China’s aid to Africa was an attempt to “outdo the revisionist communist Soviet Union as well as to mark its opposition to the West.”\textsuperscript{36}

The major difference between the Soviet and Chinese approaches was that whereas the Soviet strategy was centered on large-scale capital-intensive construction projects such as the Aswan dam in Egypt, China focused on modest self-help projects and stressed the racial issue. Thus, racism was a major part of both French and Chinese policies in Africa, for different reasons. The former applied it; the latter purported to work against it. China connected the Afro-Asian struggle against American “imperialism” with that of African Americans in the United States. It was not a stretch for China to stress that the USSR was also run by white people and by association with their skin color, they were just as untrustworthy as the other imperial powers. Africans and Chinese, who were non-white, were peoples who had had great civilizations brutally suppressed for centuries and had suffered under subjugation by Western powers. As Chinese diplomats proclaimed, “You are our underdeveloped brothers, our black and brown-skinned brothers...we have known oppression and adversity and you have known oppression and adversity... You can expect no real help or sympathy from the United States...or the Soviet Union. Its leaders are white men like the rest.”\textsuperscript{37} The novelist Richard Wright, in his book The Color Curtain, captures the spirit, mood and importance of the moment with following passage:

\textsuperscript{35} (Meredith 1984, 177) 
\textsuperscript{36} Lammers, 2007 
\textsuperscript{37} (Cooley 1965, 4)
The despised, the insulted, the hurt, and the dispossessed—in short, the under dogs of the human race were meeting. Here were class and race and religious consciousness on a global scale ... And what had these nations in common? Nothing, it seems to me, but what their past relationship to the Western world had made them feel. This meeting of the rejected was in itself a kind of judgment upon the Western world.38

In concluding this section, China’s appeals to historical solidarity with Africa are evident, and the appeals for respect in both black-racial assertion and African self-assertion closely mirror those in China. What China shared with African nations was a sense of humiliation, the urge to restore dignity and a determination to take control of its own destiny. China sought to maintain its independence from Western imperialism and also to keep the USSR at bay, which led to the movement of Non-Alignment that was preached at Bandung, and led to the development of “South-South” co-operation, the banner under which China still conducts all of its current affairs with Africa.

PERIOD III: POSTCOLONISATION 1960 - Present

This section presents an examination of modern Sino-African and West-African relations, particularly in the political and financial assistance fields. This is required if we are to understand why “the puzzle”39 exists.

Sino-African Relations

As the consequences of Bandung I suggest, relations between independent Africa and China have been close. African countries have a history of supporting China, a significant illustration of which came in the 1960s, as seen in Ghana’s actions on behalf of

38 (Wright 1956, 12)
39 As a reminder, the puzzle in this study is why does Africa show a willingness to support Chinese engagement despite the deleterious aspects of Chinese engagement.
China. The Republic of Ghana and the People’s Republic of China (PRC) established diplomatic relations in 1960, the year that Nkrumah became the first President of Ghana. The founding fathers of the two newborn republics laid a “solid cornerstone” for the development of bilateral ties by entering into economic and technological cooperation and trade agreements that were greatly enhanced by Nkrumah’s personal ties with the communist state.  

Whatever diplomatic support Nkrumah offered China, such support was reciprocated by China with materials to support development, setting the stage for future Sino-African relations. In that year, 1960, the PRC was not a member of the UN. Nkrumah campaigned for PRC reinstatement and later in 1962, he supported the PRC in its border conflicts with India. China rewarded Ghana with grants and continuous technical assistance for Nkrumah’s development projects, though not at a high level. Between 1964 and 1967, Ghana received only US$3.5 million in economic aid from China. Following the 1966 coup in Ghana, the relationship between Ghana and China soured somewhat as the Ghanaian government unilaterally severed diplomatic relations with China. In spite of the now frosty relations, not all ties were completely cut.

Between 1964 and 1967 China extended a further US$40 million in credits and grants to Ghana, and in a sign of better relations to come, in 1971 Ghana joined other African states in casting a majority vote to reinstate China in the UN. The year was a positive turning point in Sino-Ghanaian relations. The government of I. K. Acheampong restored diplomatic relations with China, paving the way for smooth relations in the future. The agreements of economic and technological cooperation and trade between Ghana and China have resulted in the latter undertaking such significant projects over the years as the

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40 (PRC Embassy Ghana 2009)
41 (M. Davies 2008, 38)
42 (MoFA 2009)
43 (M. Davies 2008, 40)
44 (CFM 2009)
construction of the national theater in Accra, the Afefi Irrigation Project, the vocational training center and the Dangme East District Hospital. Further projects that Ghana has benefitted from include cotton-textile machinery and methane-gas equipment supplied by China, and technical cooperation for the Nobewam Farmland Irrigation Project.  

Interestingly, it was John Kufuor, then Ghana’s deputy minister for foreign affairs, who cast the vote in favor of China’s reinstatement in the UN.  

Similar events unfolded in Senegal, where in the 1990s, then led by President Abdou Diouf (and supported by future President Abdoulaye Wade), the West African state recognized Taiwan in January 1996, triggering the severance of relations with the PRC. Less than a decade later in 2005, Wade would make a reversal, taking Senegal back into the Chinese fold by renouncing diplomatic ties with Taiwan in favor of re-engagement with China as adherence to the “One-China” principle is the sine qua non of Chinese foreign affairs and engagement.

Bilateral relations and the notion of loyalty are highly important in Chinese foreign affairs. China attaches “great importance to all-round friendly and cooperative relations” between itself and its allies. China still found support in Africa following Tiananmen Square Incident in 1989, finding Africa a "reserve pool of like-minded national elites upon whom it could count on for support.”

It is fair to say that Africa has once again been identified as a region of strategic interest by China, though the key purpose for this has changed. China is no longer as explicitly interested in exporting its Chinese style communism to other countries; the desire to spread this ideology has waned, replaced instead by motives that are “profit-centered

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45 (MoFA 2009)  
46 (Idun-Arkhurts 2008, 4)  
47 (Gaye 2008, 130)  
48 (Cornelissen and Taylor 2000, 618-619)
and pragmatic." China’s presence in Africa reflects this shift in focus from ideological considerations to all-round but especially economic and cultural cooperation. To promote these ideals, the last decade has seen rising bureaucratic, corporate and individual high-level exchanges between the Asian giant and the African continent.

Franco-African Relations

Allusions have already been made in the preceding pages to the political and economic ties that exist between France and Africa and China and Africa, but we can go further in defining this concept by analyzing the nature of ties and involvement as they existed in the postcolonial era in France’s de facto policy of la Françafrique -- the term used to describe the clandestine relationship between most Francophone African regimes and France. France’s approach to colonization was to “consolidate the moral and material ties”\(^5\) that bound those in its colonies together with those in mainland France. This relationship had a cultural dimension; schools were built and French language and culture was taught. The relationship had an economic dimension too and because of the Syndrome de Fashoda,\(^5\) France created the Franc zone as an exclusive trading bloc in West Africa that only France and other Francophone countries had access to.

The political and diplomatic ties between France and its pre-carré were strong, and for countries like Senegal, this relationship contributed immensely to its prestige on the

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\(^{49}\) (Lammers 2007)

\(^{50}\) (Lewis 1962, 129)

\(^{51}\) The Fashoda Syndrome was the name given to France’s willingness to fight the British (and any other power) over matters of encroachment into French spheres of interest. It developed out of the 1898 Fashoda Incident, the climax of imperial territorial disputes between the United Kingdom and France in Eastern Africa. It brought the two European countries to the brink of war over territory in what is now Sudan. It ended in diplomatic loss for France, and a perhaps more significant, it resulted in the deeply ingrained wounded pride that encouraged the syndrome. French intervention in Rwanda in 1994 is sometimes referred to as an expression of this syndrome.
international stage, through for instance, its prominent role within the Organization of Francophone States (Organization Internationale de la Francophonie - OIF).\(^{52}\)

There are developing parallels between this general French relationship just described, and the developing Chinese relationship with African countries. The Chinese relationship is not as rigid or imperial as the French one once was, but it is following a very similar path, even when it comes to cultural and language ties. Evidence suggests that China hopes to bring Chinese culture a big step closer to African countries. Inspired by the example of colonial countries like France, and its success in exporting its language, Chinese officials have begun new initiatives to teach Mandarin classes to African businessmen and officials – after all, if the French could do it, why not the Chinese? African officials are increasingly asking the same question. The Ghanaian government happily reported the move by the Chinese government to dispatch Chinese language teachers to help the University of Ghana open Chinese language and literature courses\(^2\) beginning in August 2008.

What the historical legacy has begun to show in this section is that the West’s long, exploitative history of interchange with Africa, and the baggage that comes with it continues to have impact, as the next section on aid reveals. The developing pattern is that the duration and baggage of the historical legacy predispose Africans to desire change, and China is the agent of that change.

*Impact of aid on development*

One of the reasons Africa supports Chinese engagement is because it is comparatively new, and does not come with the attendant baggage that metaphorically

\(^{52}\) See Chapter IV for more on the OIF
drags the West down in the minds of many Africans. The aid relationship between Africa and its development allies is a vital element leading to this conclusion.

If we examine the West’s role in the African Predicament, it is notable that China has not been associated with it; there is not the same sort of negative national memory attached to China as there is to the West. In addition, despite the fact that the West has indeed repeatedly made efforts to help Africa escape the African predicament through aid assistance, the African predicament -- “grinding poverty amidst immense mineral riches”\(^53\) -- is one that has continuously perplexed people. Despite its enormous resource wealth, African economies have fared disastrously in the postcolonial era even with “the constant infusion of capital and other forms of assistance from the developed nations of the world and international organizations.”\(^54\)

China receives support in Africa because a growing sense of pessimism has developed over the capability of the West to quickly pull Africa out of poverty if a relationship of business as usual is maintained. “Every decade or so, a throng of Western donors, African governments, and international organizations gathers to announce grand initiatives to pull the world’s poorest continent out of their economic miasma. They all fizzled. Why should Africans place any faith in the current initiatives to reverse Africa’s economic atrophy?” asks Thompson Ayodele, the director of the Institute of Public Policy Analysis in Nigeria, in a report on aid to Africa, which also makes the following vitriolic statement: “Helping Africa is a noble cause, but the campaign has become a theater of the absurd.”\(^55\)

\(^{53}\) (Ayodele et. al 2005)
\(^{54}\) (Gyekye 1997, 26)
\(^{55}\) (Ayodele et. al 2005)
Ayodele and his co-authors are not the only ones in Africa and elsewhere to take this pessimistic attitude. Writing for Global Policy Forum, a non-profit with consultative status at the UN, one of whose primary missions is to monitor policy making at the United Nations, Pekka Hirvonen reminds us of some of the significant steps taken by the West to combat underdevelopment in Africa. According to a U.N. resolution, donor nations agreed to “exert their best efforts” to progressively increase their ODA spending to reach the aid target of 0.7 percent of their gross national product by the middle of the decade. That decade, was the 1970s, and since the U.N. adopted that resolution, the results have been meager. By 1975, only two countries, the Netherlands and Sweden, had succeeded in living up to that promise.\(^56\)

The 0.7 percent target has been reaffirmed many times since then, and efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have further stimulated discussion on reaching the old aid goal. But the results have been paltry. As Chart II shows, after over 3 decades of promises, only five of the 22 Development Assistance Committee (DAC) member countries -- Norway, Sweden, Luxembourg, Denmark, and the Netherlands -- have reached the goal. Efforts are indeed being made; there has been a rise in the volume of French ODA to USD 7.3 billion, i.e. 0.41% of gross national income (GNI), in 2003, from US$4.2 billion, i.e. 0.32% of GNI, in 2001. France pledged to increase its ODA to 0.5% of GNI by 2007, equivalent to around US$9 billion, and then to 0.7% by 2012, with at least half of the money going to Africa to help achieve the MDGs. Other countries have opted for a strategy of fixed timetables to reach the 0.7 percent target: both Belgium and Finland have set the end of the timeframe at 2010, France and Spain at 2012, and the UK at 2013. In May 2005, the

\(^{56}\) (Hirvonen 2005)
European Union agreed on a new collective EU ODA target of 0.7 percent GNI by 2015 with an intermediate target of 0.56 percent by 2010.\textsuperscript{57}

With the decreases in aid in the early 2000s however, it is “questionable”\textsuperscript{58} if those European countries with fixed timetables will actually succeed in boosting development assistance to the promised level. The Finnish government has not significantly increased its aid budget since adopting the timetable in 2003, and Belgian development assistance has actually decreased since 2002. At this pace, the two countries will never be able to reach their own targets.\textsuperscript{59} As concerns the EU’s collective ODA targets, the news does not appear to be good for Africa elsewhere in the EU either. Ireland, the fastest-growing economy in Western Europe, already recognized its defeat in November 2004 by officially abandoning its previous commitment to reach the 0.7 goal by 2007,\textsuperscript{60} and with the onset of the 2008/2009 global financial crisis, the Irish economy has been showing signs of contraction.\textsuperscript{61}

The West has not given up on developing and proposing initiatives to aid Africa; Former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair established The Commission on Africa, which seeks to raise US$50 billion a year on the international capital markets to be used to reverse Africa’s economic atrophy. Blair also made aid to Africa the focus of the British presidency of the G-8 meeting in Gleneagles, Scotland, in July 2005. As of 2006, former President George Bush had notably also tripled American aid to Africa to US$4.3 billion since taking office in 2001. To further boost grants to poor African countries, the Bush administration also instituted the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), a development program poor countries can only benefit from once invited to participate by the USA, after having first fulfilled a set of conditions. France, the most generous G8 aid donor to Africa in terms of ODA/GNI ratio,

\textsuperscript{57} (Eurodad 2005)
\textsuperscript{58} (Hirvonen 2005)
\textsuperscript{59} (Hirvonen 2005)
\textsuperscript{60} (Eurodad 2005, 6)
\textsuperscript{61} (Dunne 2009)
proportionally proposed an international tax on financial transactions or items such as plane tickets. With aid levels to Africa having stagnated in recent years and with Western donors struggling to reach the 0.7 percent ODA goal, makes the West seem unreliable to an extent in keeping to their promises of delivering aid. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have repeatedly published reports evaluating donors and encouraging the reluctant to catch up with the best performers. However, as the trend in Chart III indicates, DAC member countries are still struggling to live up to their promises.

China, on the other hand, appears to need little encouragement to increase aid and assistance to Africa. Beijing frequently highlights the extent of the commitment it has made to Africa, but follows it up with concrete evidence. Seeking to “strengthen cooperation in more areas and at higher levels” and in an effort to forge a “new type of strategic partnership,” China pledged to raise its assistance to Africa from its level in 2006. One way it did this on the eve of President Hu’s 2007 visit to Africa, was to forgive 168 interest free loans that matured at the end of 2005 to 33 African countries.

Debt Relief

Debt relief is a crucial factor in the relationship between Africa and its development allies. It is both a solution and a cause of the African predicament, its latter characteristic arising because of the colonial mentality and the capacity of aid to encourage dependence. Interestingly, it is also in analyzing debt relief that some of the first fears of Africa’s easterly gravitation arose. This was because debt relief implied greater freedom for indebted countries because freed from conditionalities for aid, countries were now afforded

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62 (Ayodele et. al 2005)  
63 Cited in (Huse and Muyakwa 2008, 18)  
increased policy space to potentially do as they wished. IFIs appeared to be losing their economic foothold in African countries as these countries became increasingly independent from the IFIs. The idea advanced here is that freed from the constraints of the IMF, African countries could potentially spurn Western mandates and choose from a broader range of economic models for its development; that African leaders might dare to think outside the cadres of the Washington consensus.  

China’s moves to cancel debt were a precursor to the commitments outlined by Chinese President Hu Jintao’s eight-measure African policy announced at the Beijing Summit of the China-African Cooperation Forum (FOCAC) in 2006 in Beijing. The policy covers China's assistance to Africa, preferential loans and credits, the building of a conference center for the African Union, the canceling of debts, a further opening-up of China's markets to Africa, the establishment of trade and economic cooperation zones in Africa, and the training of African professionals. The policy has been carried out effectively and with “remarkable achievements” in the past two years, according to Chinese Minister of Commerce Chen Deming.

In July 2005, a series of massive concerts held in the G8 countries and South Africa were organized to pressure leaders to cancel Africa’s debt. Days later, at the G-8 summit, G8 leaders wrote off some US$40 billion worth of debt from 18 countries, almost all of them African. The congratulations were mixed with the uneasy sense that Western leaders had arrived late at the issue. China had already led the way in debt relief to Africa when, two years before, Beijing cancelled US$1.3 billion in African debt, paving the way for business across the continent. "Africa doesn't need concern about its plight," says Pat Utomi, a U.S.-

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66 (Huse and Muyakwa 2008, 18)
67 (Xuequan 2009)
educated economist and professor at Lagos Business School. "It needs partners to do business with."  

Amidst the promising initiatives lie fears that it will not be enough, that “the [EU] targets may well turn out to be just another set of empty promises” echoing the attitude of critics such as Ayodele. Despite these efforts, Africans remain “skeptical” because “the record of Western aid to Africa is one of abysmal failure.” Now while this represents a rather extreme assessment of Western aid initiatives to Africa, it does not mean that it should be ignored for one of the single greatest reasons Chinese engagement in Africa is sought after and encouraged is due to the fact that Chinese aid comes with (virtually) no strings attached.

In summary, the West’s enduring relationship with Africa and its concomitant baggage -- impositions and a disappointing record of development -- appears to be a significant push factor propelling African countries to look East. China is also doing much to attract African countries by using its historical ties, respectful approach, and no-strings attached aid, to respond to Africa’s demands. The next chapters continue to develop these arguments because they are not as neat as they seem. Chinese engagement faces challenges in Africa, and as already suggested, the West’s colonial domination has not led to radical calls to sever ties with the West. These next two chapters examine Africa’s easterly gravitation from the context of Francophone and Anglophone Africa, and demonstrate that although African self-assertion is a feature common to the African psyche, it has a different emphasis depending on where in Africa you are.

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68 Cited in (Walt, "China’s African Safari" 2006)  
69 (Hirvonen 2005)  
70 (Ayodele et. al 2005)
CHAPTER IV FRANCOPHONE AFRICA: FOCUS SENEGAL

« L’avantage de la Chine sur vous (les Occidentaux) c’est qu’elle ne s’occupe pas de politique. Enfin pas selon la définition que vous en faites en Occident. Comment vous appelez ça déjà ? Ah ! oui, la démocratie ! »

“China’s advantage over you (the West) is that it does not concern itself with policy. At least not according to the definition you stress in the West. What do you call it? Ah, yes, democracy!”

This statement by Samuel Bognis, a long standing member of Cameroonian President Paul Biya’s, media staff, pertains not only to his country, or Francophone Africa for that matter, but the rest of Africa as well. In his near quarter century in the employ of the President, Bognis has been on hand to witness many of the interactions between his President and world leaders. His observations are revealing. Talking about interactions between Biya and former French President Jacques Chirac, he says « J’ai toujours ressenti une forme de paternalisme. Jamais chez les Chinois. On se parle d’égal à égal » (“I always sensed a degree of paternalism but never with the Chinese. [With the Chinese], we speak as equals).

Bognis’ perception of paternalism in French relations is not unique. It is a perennial complaint in Franco-African relations that recurs across the continent. As such, it is a central motivation behind Africa’s willingness to support Chinese engagement. It leads to the desire for attitudinal change demanded by Africans. As such, the paternalism, condescension and

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2 The French word ‘politique’ can be translated as both ‘policy’ and ‘politics.’
3 Author’s translation
4 Samuel Bognis has been the official cameraman for Paul Biya, the President of Cameroon, for the past 24 years, and has attended each of the Franco-African Summits with the President in that time. His statement is part of an interview with Michel and Beuret, the authors of “La Chineafrique”.
5 (Michel, Beuret et Woods 2008, 149)
disrespect felt to typify economic and political Franco-African (and West-African) relations is the soil from which African self-assertion sprouts.

The specter of paternalism clouds Western engagement in Africa in that it often appears as the main criticism of Western engagement. Recall President Wade’s comment that the advantage of Chinese over Western engagement is that it is a better alternative to the West’s “slow and sometimes patronizing post-colonial approach.”

But how important is this slight in the wider scheme of things? Is too much being made of the perceptions of condescension in West—Africa relations? Surely the promise of economic gain will trump any feelings perceived to be hurt by a condescending attitude? As the following example reflects, it is certainly true that absolute economic gain will lead Africans to conduct necessary business with, or accept aid from, both the West and China. There is an important caveat though, which suggests that in the long-run, the attitudes of those donors or partners will take on increasing importance, especially now that the all important element of choice, has been thrown into the equation.

Consider the following: Reports from the Senegalese finance ministry in early 2009 stated that China had agreed to loan Senegal 41 million Euros to fund a number of public works projects, such as replacing the country’s aging bus fleet and financing improvements in ITS and the national security network. This was not the only foreign funding Senegal had received in recent times for public improvements. In December of 2008, France had also extended Senegal an “exceptional 125 million euro loan” as part of its assistance for similar public development in Senegal. As is often the case, the total volume of assistance from France is larger than that from China, and if this were to be the end of the story,

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6 (Wade 2008)
7 (Agence France Presse 2009)
8 (FranceDiplomatie, "Senegal: Economic Relations" 2008)
France’s larger economic assistance would conceivably make it the victor in any campaign for hearts and minds. However, a major difference in the forms of that aid darkens attitudes towards France despite the larger loan. Unlike China’s loan, France’s remains “contingent on Senegal’s ongoing cooperation with the IMF...on the Fund’s approval, [and] on the second review of economic Policy Support Instruments (PSIs).”\(^9\) This demonstrates Wade’s earlier point about Western aid. The PSIs and reviews are what delay the delivery of assistance to Senegal, and are deemed patronizing and unnecessary by Africans. As China’s engagement is not contingent on such external review, China’s attitude towards Africa is considered less condescending. This makes its political and economic engagement (even if monetarily less than that from France), that much sweeter.

This is one end, albeit the much wider end, of the spectrum of opinion on Chinese engagement in Africa. This end of the spectrum houses the optimistic perspective of Sino-African vis-à-vis Franco-African engagement. Here, the dominant view is of China as a “potential investor in a continent starved of capital.”\(^10\) At the other end of the spectrum, the proliferation of Chinese engagement in Africa is a “life or death issue for our continent [that] must be contained.”\(^11\) In this corner, attitudes towards the Chinese presence in Africa are guarded at best, as Chinese engagement is considered a “dangerous phenomenon” likely to put Africa right back into the sort of asymmetrical relationship that has typified relations between Africa and the West. As has already been shown, there is indeed similarity between China’s resource-driven trade profile with Africa, and the colonial era trade profile with the West. Herein lies the puzzle: Given that Africa’s goal is to break with the types of relations of the past, and given the similarities that Chinese engagement shares with that

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\(^9\) [FranceDiplomatie, “Senegal: Economic Relations” 2008]
\(^10\) Cited in (Gaye, 2008, p. 132)
\(^11\) Cited in (Gaye 2008, 133), anonymous interview with Director of West-African democracy promoting NGO, 2005
past, why is the reaction toward China so much more positive than negative? For Francophone Africa, this debate has a complicated twist. Owing to the nature of decolonization from France in the late 1950s and 1960s, Francophone Africa emerged from the colonial era still tightly allied with and dependent on France. France has developed an exceptional relationship with its former colonies that has made it Francophone Africa’s primary political, economic and cultural connection with the West. For this reason, assessing Francophone Africa’s engagement with the West must really be done through assessing engagement with France. A shift in relations favoring ties with China over those with France will be indicative of a wider shift away from the West.

With this in mind, this chapter contextualizes the exceptional relationship between France and its former colonies as a means to compare the developing Chinese relationship. Senegal’s historic importance to France makes it a prudent country to focus on as it has been an integral part and even the originator of the exceptional relationship with France. Unlike in countries like Congo Brazzaville, Côte d’Ivoire or Cameroon, in Senegal the consequences of the relationship with France have not been as violent. Whereas in those countries it would not be too surprising to see the desire for change, the experience of Senegal, its general perspective and direction in terms of foreign policy, will provide strong indications of the driving forces behind the gravitation east. Assessing Senegal’s position will also help to identify whether Francophone Africa’s shift away from French exceptionalism is, to borrow the same language, towards notions of Chinese exceptionalism, or even Chinese normalization in relations with Africa.

This chapter is structured as follows: Sections I through III, identify and discuss three pillars of French engagement in the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial periods that are essential to understanding Africa’s gravitation away from France. The three pillars are the
essential elements of the special relationship. As such, I introduce historical notes throughout the chapter because they are crucial to understanding the construction of these pillars, and how they fit into the exceptional relationship. To see how these pillars push Africa to support Chinese engagement, in section IV, Chinese engagement is analyzed and compared against the three pillars. I argue that these three areas contain the sources of Francophone Africa’s demands for change and that China’s ability to distinguish itself from the engagement typified by these pillars is behind the eastward gravitation. Section V is a case study on the civil war in Côte d’Ivoire, which allows for comparison of elements of all three pillars and Chinese engagement in a specific case. A conclusion follows in section VI.

The three pillars are assimilation, la francophonie, and la Françafrique. Assimilation, the French ideal behind the treatment of its colonies, is the source of the condescension Africans see to typify Franco-African relations. La francophonie has two interpretations; in its non-institutionalized form, it is based in the “febrile nationalism” of French politics that saw in colonial conquest a way to regain national prestige lost in the disaster of 1871, where France lost possession of the territories of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany. It represents the French need to preserve and strengthen a greater community of French speaking nations, but also depicts France’s reluctance to disengage from Africa, as well as Africa’s own reluctance to disengage from France. In its institutionalized form, la Francophonie refers to the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), and serves as the primary example of the benign and valued aspects of the exceptional relationship which Francophone Africa is in no hurry to change. The third pillar is la Françafrique, and it establishes France’s relationship of imposition and control in Africa during the postcolonial period. The term simply refers to “the secret criminality in the upper echelons of French politics and

\[\text{12 (Neres 1962, 14)}\]
economy, where a kind of underground Republic is hidden from view.”¹³ *La Françafrique* was driven by networks (*rédaux*), formed between French and African elites. It provides a critical look at the true nature of Franco-African engagement, and depicts much of the political, economic and cultural (attitudinal) change that Africa seeks. *La Françafrique* is also presented in response to the puzzle of this study, as an explanation for why the bar may be set so low for Chinese engagement in Africa, i.e. why Chinese engagement is supported despite China’s implication in crises like Darfur. The pillars serve to establish two major conclusions of this study. First, African self-assertion leads Francophone Africa to support Chinese engagement because it allows them to exercise more political independence. Second, Africa is willing to support Chinese engagement because it is able to appear distinctly as the lesser of two evils.

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**SECTION I : ASSIMILATION**

It is “well settled”: civilizing Negroes is an impossibility. To attempt it is “pure aberration.” Negroes, scarcely emancipated...cerebral development corresponds hardly to that of our Stone Age ancestors, [and] they have jumped into all the complexities of our formidable modern administrative machines.(French explorer Gustave LeBon, 1889).¹⁴

Such discourse exemplified the debate on assimilation towards the end of the nineteenth century. The debate on assimilation found its focus in meetings attended by many high-level officials from various branches of the French government at home and abroad, as well as by scholars, explorers, and other private individuals interested in colonial questions.¹⁵ The first of these meetings was the *Congres Colonial Internationale de Paris*

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¹³ *(Verschave, “Defining Françafrique by François Xavier Verschave” 2006)*
¹⁴ French Explorer, Gustave le Bon at the Congrès Colonial Internationale de Paris of July and August, 1889, cited in *(Lewis 1962, 138)*
¹⁵ *(Lewis 1962, 137)*
(CCI) of July and August, 1889, and the second was the Congres Colonial National (CCN) of December, 1889, and February and March, 1890.\textsuperscript{16} By no accounts were all Frenchmen as scathing towards Africans. As Admiral Vallon, former governor of Senegal, replied to Le Bon, "the blacks lacked neither intelligence nor natural gifts, and in that respect they sometimes put us in the shade."\textsuperscript{17} Yet even when attempting to be forward thinking, the attitude was still identifiably condescending. As Dr. Poitou-Duplessy, a retired chief physician of the navy, explained, "just as the stomach requires food appropriate to its age and kind, so the brain requires nourishment suitable to the degree of development which it has attained," and by inference, the brains of Africans were not yet capable "of partaking of our intellectual nourishment without cerebral indigestion."\textsuperscript{18} Not everyone agreed that assimilation was an impossibility. It could be achieved, the argument went, if approached slowly and carefully, as a parent teaches a child.\textsuperscript{19} This was because, "even in an inferior race, some men's brains are equal to the average among ourselves," and are thus capable of European education. "To refuse it to them would seem to me difficult and unjust."\textsuperscript{20}

The idea that it was unfair to deny colonies education through assimilation was taken further by arguments advanced by men such as Frank Puaux, a member of the Superior Colonial Council. Puax argued that "Suppose that if on the conquest of Gaul, some savant of that time had maintained that the Gauls should be left in barbarism; that singular philanthropist might have been heeded. Would we be here today, if the Romans had followed his counsel? Do not forget, Messieurs, that we have become what we are because a people of superior civilization communicated their light, their arts, and their laws to our

\textsuperscript{16} (Lewis 1962, 132)
\textsuperscript{17} (CCI 1889, 90-91)
\textsuperscript{18} CCI 1889, p. 81-83
\textsuperscript{19} (Lewis 1962, 140)
\textsuperscript{20} (CCI 1889, 81-83)
ancestors. Have we the right to keep this rich heritage for ourselves? Can we refuse to do today for others what the Romans did for us nearly two thousand years ago?"\textsuperscript{21}

Such appeals had limited success. The belief in French racial superiority and the corollary doctrine that only after centuries of evolution under French rule could Africans attain similar levels of civilisation, won out and the French Ministry of Colonies abandoned assimilation in 1905.\textsuperscript{22} Thus it was really only in Senegal where the assimilation experiment was partially carried out, and was relatively successful. This stemmed from the fact that Senegal was a French territory in 1848. In that year, the French Second Republic again abolished slavery (Napoleon I had reestablished it) and to an extent, reestablished universal suffrage in the colonies. Senegal became the privileged “laboratory of assimilation”\textsuperscript{23} and only here did even a small percentage of West Africans come to participate in French national affairs.\textsuperscript{24} Outside of Senegal, West Africans had become subjects (sujets), not citizens.\textsuperscript{25}

It is not so much the idea of assimilation that is objectionable, but rather the attitude that developed behind it. Assimilation was born of noble, albeit overly zealous and misguided, intentions. The leaders of the French Second Republic (1848-1851) saw in their work the “moral reincarnation of the victories of 1789.”\textsuperscript{26} This led them to abolish slavery again, turn all natives into citizens and enfranchise them. To this effect, Senegal was divided into quatre communes (the four communes of Dakar, Gorée, Rufisque and Saint-Louis) in order to grant citizens the ability to elect deputies to the French National Assembly. This led to a handful of individuals such as Blaise Diagne and Léopold Sédar Senghor becoming

\textsuperscript{21}(CCI 1889, 91)
\textsuperscript{22}(Le Vine 2004, 41)
\textsuperscript{23}(Le Vine 2004, 32)
\textsuperscript{24}Although, especially in countries like Côte d’Ivoire, African elites could become French citizens.
\textsuperscript{25}(Ali-Dinar 2008)
\textsuperscript{26}(Le Vine 2004, 40)
prominent members of the French parliament in the colonial period. However, it seldom
occurred to French policymakers that Africans might not wish to be assimilated, and thus it
was maintained as “the logical expression of national pride and cultural superiority”\(^\text{27}\) -- a
superiority that is arguably still felt in modern times, and that is the basis for the
condescension and disrespect that Africa sees as typifying French policies and attitudes
towards it.

SECTION II: LA FRANCOPHONIE

L’histoire des relations entre la France et l’Afrique ressemble à cette
incompréhension permanente. Quand la France s’engage, l’Afrique l’accuse
d’ingérence. Quand elle se retire, on lui reproche le « lâchage ».\(^\text{28}\)

The history of relations between France and Africa is perpetually perplexing. When
France engages, she is accused of interference. When she withdraws, she is
reproached for “deserting” Africa.\(^\text{29}\)

This section addresses this curious facet of Franco-African relations, in particular by
contextualising why French withdrawal would be “reproached” and considered an
abandonment. The “interference” aspect will be addressed in Section III. In the apparent
ebb and flow of Franco-African relations suggested above, I argue that changes in France
leading to neglect of Francophone Africa, will drive Africa to gravitate towards China. La
francophonie establishes the more benign aspects of the exceptional French relationship,
much of which was actually promoted by Francophone African leaders themselves. It is
necessary to understand this aspect of the relationship in order to juxtapose it with its
antithesis, discussed in the next section, la Françafrique. Perhaps more importantly,

\(^{27}\) (Le Vine 2004, 41)
\(^{28}\) (Michel, Beuret et Woods 2008, 166)
\(^{29}\) Author’s translation
understanding la francophonie helps answer the question whether the shift away from French exceptionalism is permanent. In examining the role of la francophonie as a significant element in the exceptional relationship, it also becomes clear that the shift towards China should be thought of rather as “normalization” rather than “exceptionalism” because Chinese engagement in Africa, although substantial and increasing, has not yet reached the levels of French exceptionalism to be examined in this and the next section. However, the prominence of FOCAC meetings, other China-Africa summits, and China’s concerted efforts to spread its language and culture in Africa, bears close resemblance to la francophonie (in its institutionalized and non-institutionalized form), and in that way this section establishes another similarity between Chinese and Western engagement.

I argue that complete French disengagement from Africa is unlikely because France has too many sunk costs (both financial and behavioural) in Africa. The framework used to make this assertion is the endowment effect which, although more typically used in the economics of business succession, is a concept that can be used to describe the situation. According to Issacharoff, the endowment effect refers to the “propensity of people to value what they already have more dearly than what they expect to have, or what they have the opportunity to acquire in the future.” The theory indicates that higher value is placed on something that has been owned rather than something that is expected to be owned, thus it is difficult to relinquish ownership. A simplistic illustration of this would be the actor who refuses to exchange a shirt for a pair of shoes not necessarily because the shirt is more useful to him than the shoes but because the shirt is already in his possession and therefore is not easy to part with.

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30 (Issacharoff and Loewenstein 1994)
If the endowment effect’s theory holds, that value increases with the duration of ownership, it will in part explain why France has jealously guarded its special relationships with African countries and provides a plausible reason why it is unlikely to fully disengage. Predictably, there are eras in which the endowment effect is more visible than others, and the Cold War is a vivid example. In the possessive manner implied by the endowment theory, French policymakers predictably claimed that historical links with Africa and geographical proximity justified placing Francophone Africa within France’s sphere of influence and not that of the United States or any other power. Through the use of institutionalized mechanisms like *la Francophonie*, France’s organisation of Francophone Africa in the colonial and post-colonial era greatly benefited this intention to maintain dependence.

The AOF and AEF, the first administrative organizations of Francophone African states in the colonial period, can be seen as the precursors to future Francophone consolidation, such as *la Francophonie* in 1986, as well as other organizations such as the *Groupe des Etats d’Afrique, des Caraïbes et du Pacifique* (Groupe ACP), which was created in 2000 to provide Francophone Africa with a more direct line of engagement with the European Union.31

*Why La Francophonie Developed*

Although France emerged on the victorious side following World War Two, it faced intense pressure to relinquish its empire thanks to the emergence of two avowedly anti-colonial superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, and also to growing demands for independence in its colonies. Having been militarily, economically, and diplomatically battered from the War, France felt that it needed its empire now, more than ever. In a

31 *(Gouvernement du Sénégal 2009)*
classic illustration of the “Franco-French”\textsuperscript{32} debate on France’s decline in the international system, France was reluctant to emancipate its colonies fearing that this would further reduce its status as a world power. Debate over the position of France in the global system gave rise to the \textit{besoin de rayonnement}, a foreign policy ideology that there was a need to preserve and strengthen a greater French-speaking community of nations and that France should be projected overseas. This process, also known as \textit{la francophonie}, served as France’s “bedrock foreign policy principle” throughout the era of independence.\textsuperscript{33} The ideal of \textit{la francophonie} was not directed solely at Africa, but also at the loss of French influence elsewhere in its empire, such as in Algeria and Vietnam. These territorial losses made preserving French influence in its \textit{pre-carré} (privileged sphere of influence) in sub-Saharan Africa, central to its \textit{besoin de rayonnement}.\textsuperscript{34}

Senegal was again a “key linchpin”\textsuperscript{35} in France’s strategy. Not only was Senegal one of the most economically and politically influential countries in Francophone West Africa, (its capital, Dakar, was the seat of the federal Government-General of French West Africa),\textsuperscript{36} but its leader, Senghor, was an avid Francophile who essentially came to France’s rescue over the independence question. Along with President Houphouët –Boigny of Côté-D’Ivoire, which commanded similar economic and political influence amongst the Francophone nations, Senghor envisaged decolonization more as a process of integration of the colonies into some sort of federation with France. He conceived a plan, the \textit{loi-cadre}, highly agreeable to France, to create a modern Africa within the colonial system. France, together with leaders such as Senghor and Houphouët –Boigny, was thus able to preserve and extend its influence in Africa.

\textsuperscript{32} (Marchal, “French Perspectives on the New Sino-African Relations” 2008, 189)
\textsuperscript{33} (P. J. Schraeder 2001, 43)
\textsuperscript{34} (Chafer, “Franco-African Relations: No Longer So Exceptional?” 2002, 346)
\textsuperscript{35} (Chafer, “France and Senegal: The End of the Affair?” 2003, 157)
\textsuperscript{36} (Chafer, “France and Senegal: The End of the Affair?” 2003, 157)
La francophonie took on more than just a foreign policy dimension. Its cultural resilience is demonstrated by the fact that French remains one of the official languages of government and elites in Francophone Africa. The commitment of Francophone Africa to France has remained strong since la francophonie moved from being an ideology to an institutional government level organization with a representative weight identical to the AU or the Commonwealth.\(^{37}\) Begun in 1970 as the Agence de coopération culturelle et technique (ACCT), (Cultural and Technical Cooperation Agency), and attended by 21 heads of state , today, 56 states and governments make up the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (la Francophonie).\(^{38}\) It has grown beyond its initial function as a promoter of linguistic and cultural interchange and now also takes the form of promoting major international political and economic cooperation in a range of fields, such as agriculture, energy, culture or the dissemination of scientific and technical information.\(^{39}\) The summit, held every two years, is the highest authority of la francophonie. It enables the heads of state of member countries to meet and collectively define policies and goals to ensure the organization’s influence on the world scene.

The history of this organization shows the intimate nature of Franco-African relations, particularly the role of African elites in preserving engagement with France. Consequently, it is essential to point out that the idea of holding summit meetings of Francophone governments, that eventually evolved into la Francophonie, took shape years before the first meeting was held in Paris in 1986.\(^{40}\) Furthermore, it was the political leaders\(^{41}\) who emerged from decolonization such as Senghor, who thought to expand the

\(^{37}\) (Gouvernement du Sénégal 2009), www.gouv.sn/international/francophonie.html

\(^{38}\) (Gouvernement du Sénégal 2009)

\(^{39}\) (Gouvernement du Sénégal 2009), http://www.francophonie.org/oif/historique.cfm

\(^{40}\) (LaFrancophonie 2009)

\(^{41}\) The other African leaders who promoted la francophonie into an institutionalized form were Presidents Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia, Ould Daddah of Mauritania, and Hamani Diori of Niger.
institutional and functional co-operation within the Francophone world by creating the ACCT at the convention of Niamey in 1970. The ACCT became the Agence de la Francophonie in 1995, and a decade later, the OIF. Several of the Francophone African states saw it as a means to access French ODA, a mini-North-South dialogue. A common monetary policy was also created for the countries in the ‘franc zone’ – (Francophone Africa). Under the arrangement, which is still in place today, France serves as a central bank and a common currency, the Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA) franc is tied to the French franc and guaranteed by the French treasury.

A final aspect in the development of la francophonie as an ideology and as an illustration of the continued importance of France to Francophone African countries, are the Franco-African summits instituted in 1973, the “centerpiece[s]” of Franco-African cultural relations. The cornerstone of the summits is the nurturing of close, high-level personal ties between the French President and his Francophone counterparts. This is important because it is through these that much day-to-day decision making about French policy towards Africa takes place. Hosting the summits is a coveted honor but seeing as these meetings resemble “family reunions,” critics assert that few real gains such as increased trade or investment accrue to the host nation. Nevertheless, competition to host them is fierce and akin to that to host the AU or the Olympics, as it confers prestige on the African nation as a leader of Francophone West Africa.

Through these institutionalized organizations, the continued salience of France for African countries is clear, as is the political aspect of the special relationship that exists

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(Mason 1999)

42 This study was completed in April 2009.
43 (P. J. Schraeder 2001, 46)
44 (P. J. Schraeder 2001, 44)
46 (P. J. Schraeder 2001, 44)
47 (P. J. Schraeder 2001, 44)
between the two. There are also many similarities that can be drawn between la
Francophonie and emerging Chinese engagement, which will be addressed later this
chapter. There is, however, one final dimension of the special relationship to be discussed. It
builds off the close relations exemplified by la francophonie – the réseaux and la
Françafrique.

SECTION III : LA FRANÇAFRIQUE

La France décide officiellement d’accorder l’indépendance aux anciennes colonies
françaises au sud du Sahara. Vous avez [cette] nouvelle légalité international,
indépendance...mais vous voulez maintenir la dépendance. C’est illégal, vous ne
pouvez le faire que de manière cachée, inavouable, occulte : La Françafrique.

France officially decides to grant independence to its former colonies in sub-Saharan
Africa. You have this new international legality, independence...but you want to
maintain dependence. It is illegal, you can only do it in a hidden, shameful and
secret manner: la Françafrique.

Underpinning the special Franco-African relationship lay this noxious policy that
allowed an array of deeply treacherous clientelist networks to develop. It linked the elites in
the French and African political, business and military worlds, and thrived on embezzling
French ODA and burglarizing Africa’s resources. Despite his official proclamations, de Gaulle
“sacrificed” true independence for Africa and charged his right hand man, Jacques
Foccart, “the man in the shadows,” to work towards the exact opposite. Four motivations
drove de Gaulle’s actions. The first was to help France maintain its rank as a world power by
maintaining a throng of client states ready to vote with it at the UN. The second was to

49 Much of the information in this section is based on (Verschave, “De la Françafrique à la Mafiafric” 2004)
50 (Verschave, “De la Françafrique à la Mafiafric” 2004, 9)
51 Author’s translation.
52 (Verschave, “De la Françafrique à la Mafiafric” 2004, 10)
53 (Verschave, “De la Françafrique à la Mafiafric” 2004, 9)
maintain privileged access to strategic natural resources, and linked to this was the third reason: to finance his Gaullist party and the other parties of the government. The final reason lay in France’s role as an ally of the United States in the Cold War, which left it to France to prevent Francophone Africa falling prey to the Communist ideology.

France, through Foccart, went about this by selecting Africans to be essentially, puppet Heads of State. That they were African and black gave the impression that the countries were independent, though often those who were put in power were more French than African. Some, like Omar Bongo, President of Gabon since 1967 was a member of the French secret service. To get men like this in power required incredible uses of violence and deception by France. Between 1957 and 1970, France subjected Cameroon to a blood bath equivalent to its war in Algeria, in order to destabilize Ruben Um Nyobé, a leader of the caliber of Nelson Mandela and head of the UPC, an independence movement in the country. Assassinations were also the order of the day for France – even assassinations of elected leaders like Sylvannus Olympio of Togo – assassinated in a coup in 1963 led by his French chief of security and four Togolese sergeants who had served in the French army in Algeria and Vietnam. One of the four sergeants, Gnassingbé Eyadéma, served as President of Togo from 1967 until his death in 2005.

La Françafrique also means "France à fric,“ which leads us into a more detailed discussion of the economic aspects of the secret relationship. Over the course of four decades, the equivalent of hundreds of thousands of Euros were misappropriated from debt, aid, oil, cocoa, or drained through French importing monopolies. France remains an important economic partner for Africa, but in a clear reflection of the shifting nature of ties

54 (Verschave, “De la Françafrique à la Mafiafrérie” 2004, 11)
55 "Fric" means ‘cash’ and this was a phrase used by François Verschave, the man responsible for the understanding of ‘Françafrique’ used in this study. Cited in (Verschave, "Defining Françafrique by François Xavier Verschave" 2006)
56 (Verschave, "Defining Françafrique by François Xavier Verschave" 2006)
between the two, Africa plays a shrinking role for France. For the past decade, various French elites and commentators, including President Sarkozy at a 2006 Conference in Bamako, have stated that, economically speaking, “France no longer needs Africa.” There is some evidence to support this statement. Just over a decade ago in 1998, Africa accounted for less than 5 per cent of France’s foreign trade and received less than 20 per cent of France’s FDI, far behind Eastern Europe. While France absorbs 25 per cent of African exports, the relevance of the Franc Zone for French external trade has fallen to 1 per cent of the total. The overall Africa share of French exports has fallen from 8.7 per cent in 1970 to 5 per cent in 2003, and France imports 4 per cent from Africa as a whole. France is Senegal’s leading supplier and second-leading customer: French exports stood at €666M in 2006, with increased sales of automobiles, electric and electronic equipment, and household equipment. French imports, composed primarily of agrifood products, reached €101M.

At the height of colonialism, French interests benefitted from a near monopoly position. The colonial empire represented 60 per cent of French External trade in 1950 and increased even more in the post-colonial era thanks to the rentier capitalism proliferated by the réaux of la Françafrique, which resulted for instance, in pseudo-African leaders like Denis Sassou-Nguesso, president of Congo-Brazzaville officially requesting merely 17% of petrol revenue for the country, while the rest went to France, or the petrol ‘consortiums’ that automatically gave French petrol company ELF 42.5% of petrol deposits. Even the CFA franc was a constitutive element of la Françafrique as it was another means to control the countries. Because it could be exchanged in Switzerland, it often was in corrupt dealings

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58 (Marchal, "French Perspectives on the New Sino-African Relations" 2008)
59 (FranceDiplomatie, "Senegal: Economic Relations" 2008)
60 (Verschave, "De la Françafrique à la Mafiafric" 2004, 29)
61 (Verschave, "De la Françafrique à la Mafiafric" 2004, 36)
that allowed the vassals that France installed to lead the ‘independent’ states to enrich themselves, sometimes, as in the case of Mobutu and Eyadema to fortunes equal to the external debt of their countries. This is an example of the “absolutely unbelievable economic criminality”\(^{62}\) behind Franco-African relations in the postcolonial period, and it barely scratches the surface.

France showed itself prepared to support the authoritarian regimes of leaders who remained allied to it even at the expense of those undergoing positive democratization efforts. For example, Benin, undergoing a democratization process but not as closely aligned to France, saw its aid reduced from 580 million francs in 1989 to 300 million in 1990, while Eyadéma, even with the bloody repression of citizens saw its aid go up from 628 million francs in 1989 to 923 million francs a year later.\(^{63}\)

France saw it fit to provide its African leaders with agents from its secret service as a protective detail – that is until they ceased to please France. When Nigérien President Hamani Diori wanted to sell uranium to other powers but France, he was almost instantly deposed.\(^{64}\) When Sékou Touré declined to submit Guinea to the Loi-Cadre in 1958, his country suffered from a veritable scorched earth policy carried out by France. Such events highlight the fact that going against French interests in the postcolonial era was at times akin to a death sentence. What all this demonstrates is that Francophone Africa’s close ties with France have relied on maintaining close, usually corrupt or authoritarian networks that leave little room for self-assertion. La \textit{Françafrique} has contributed immensely to the

\(^{62}\) (Vercache, “De la Françafrique à la Mafiafrique” 2004, 6)
\(^{63}\) Cited in (Chafer, “Franco-African Relations: No Longer So Exceptional?” 2002, 360)
\(^{64}\) (Vercache, “De la Françafrique à la Mafiafrique” 2004, 13)
political instability and violence (the African predicament) that has been rampant in Africa and that has de facto, prolonged colonialism. 65

SECTION IV: CHINA AS A LIBERATING ALTERNATIVE: HOW CHINESE ENGAGEMENT DECONSTRUCTS AND RESPONDS TO THE THREE PILLARS

This section argues that China’s markedly different and multi-dimensional approach to strengthening relations with Africa serves to deconstruct or respond to the three pillars. China’s dynamic approach is clearly seen particularly in the language it adopts towards Africa. This is especially important for deconstructing the condescension and disrespect inherent in assimilation, and is seen in China’s official language towards Africa that emphasizes “mutual friendliness,” and continued, non-intrusive cooperation. China often employs the rhetoric of fraternalism in describing its relationship with Africa, and as will be shown in Chapter V Anglophone Africa: Focus Ghana, this does indeed affect people’s attitudes. Much of the fraternalism extends from China’s self identification as “the largest developing country” and the reality that Africa comprises the largest concentration of developing countries, putting the two in a logical position for mutual cooperation. The levels of this cooperation, however, are why I contend that la francophonie is arguably not deconstructed but replicated in both China and Francophone Africa.

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) summits, the first of which was in 2000, are a vivid example of this. As a “mechanism for pragmatic cooperation between China and Africa,” 66 FOCAC bears undeniable similarity to la Francophonie, and the

65 (Michel, Beuret et Woods 2008, 159)
66 (FOCAC 2009)
parallelism and intimacy of the relationship is growing. The “enthusiastic support African
countries have for such fora resembles that which the Francophone African countries had
(and continue to have) for la Francophonie (OIF). China and Africa agreed to set up a
mechanism of regular political dialogue between foreign ministers of the two sides\(^6\) and
such high-level visits are regularly promoted aspects of Sino-African engagement. There is
one important exception to the development of a “Chinese francophonie” which is that at
the moment at least it does not appear to have an element of la Françafrique. This pillar of
Franco-African engagement is deconstructed by China’s policy of non interference, but as
the Congo, Darfur or Zimbabwe crises plainly show, the pursuit of self interest does not
need to be clandestine in order for it to have equally deleterious effects on people’s lives.

The following section re-examines these points through a closer look at certain
developments particularly in China-Senegal relations, although events in other Francophone
African states will also be discussed.

\(\textit{Sino-Senegalese relations: Constructing new pillars in African Foreign Relations}\)

Change, it seems, has been a long while coming in Francophone African nations,
where one cannot help but be struck by the symbolism of the potential replacement of
traditional Western influence with Asian forms of capitalism.\(^6\) Nor can one but be struck by
the pervasiveness of Chinese influence in a cultural sense too. Whereas a few years ago a
white person walking through a city in Africa would be accustomed to cries from little
children of “hello mistal,” “salut toubab”\(^6\) or even “monsieur, monsieur,” in a vivid example
of the extensive changes perpetrated by Chinese engagement, you are just as likely to be

\(^6\) (FOCAC 2009)
\(^6\) (P. J. Schraeder 2001, 58)
\(^6\) ‘Toubab’ is a Central and West African name for a person of European descent used in the Francophone
African countries.
greeted by cries of “Ni hao, ni hao.” This is perhaps not too surprising when you consider that everywhere in Africa, one sees veritable Chinatowns. This is nowhere more evident than in Dakar, the Senegalese capital, selling anything and everything the consumer could want from children’s and adult’s clothes to electronic gadgets, all at prices that defy and undercut competition. The presence of the Chinese is clear in all aspects of the market and not just big business. In one of the areas of Dakar’s unofficial Chinatown, such has been the proliferation of Chinese tradesmen, or Dakarois Chinese, that one can speak of a virtual “Boulevard Mao” as an ironic renaming of the main street. This is another pertinent symbol of the extent of China’s presence in Senegal. In an ironic twist of fate, it seems the virtual Boulevard Mao is actually Boulevard Général de Gaulle. The popular thoroughfare was renamed in homage to one of the heroes of France, yet it now more resembles a road worthy of the “The Great Helmsman” of China’s Mao. This introduces the second and perhaps more striking reason why the presence of the Dakarois Chinese signals significant change, in that it indicates the growing distance between Senegal and her former (though some would argue still manipulative) colonial master, France. The proliferation of Dakarois Chinese in Senegal amounts to a “slap in the face of traditional diplomacy...because it contradicted the state of relations between the PRC and Senegal.”

The mystery is that during the expansion of numbers of Chinese citizens in Senegal, Senegal and China did not have official diplomatic ties, and Senegal was not one of the countries Beijing was directing its citizens to. In January of 1996, Senegal, then led by President Abdou Diouf (and supported by future President Abdoulaye Wade), recognized Taiwan, triggering the severance of relations with the PRC. However, less than a decade later in 2005, Senegal “abandon[ed] the politicization of development and opt[ed] for

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70 “Ni hao » means “hello” in Chinese (Michel, Beuret et Woods 2008, 9)
71 (Gaye 2008, 130)
decisions based on a free market”\textsuperscript{72} and reestablished ties with China. “In the past, the political power-play between Taiwan and China often spurred Asian investment on the African continent. Today, however, economic relations are based more on mutual need – and the economic reality that the EU and the US cannot compete with China,”\textsuperscript{73} the President said. The irony in Wade’s statement is that establishing ties with Beijing is always “politicized” because it means diplomatic relations cannot be established with Taiwan. Nevertheless, this sentiment that Chinese engagement is free from political pressure, is widely held on the African continent, and it signals the gravitation east for economic benefit.

*Charting change in Francophone African foreign relations*

The ties of the réseaux and la Françafrique have waned somewhat on their own because they rely on personal ties, and thus generational shifts can have monumental effects on the strength of those ties. For instance, the election of President Soglo in Benin and Konaré in Mali in the early 1990s demonstrates the growing trend toward democratic transitions fostering a second generation of leaders less aligned to France. Soglo’s victory led to the formation of an administration more interested in promoting closer ties with the United States and not France, which led to a diminution of French aid to Benin. Senegal has long been one of the most economically and politically influential countries in Francophone Africa, and it has also had the longest and one of the closest relationships with France, which means that its stance can be viewed as a symbol of the wider direction of Francophone African foreign relations. Thus it was reflective of the changing nature of Franco-African relations when at the Franco-African summit in Cannes in 2007, Wade

\textsuperscript{72} (Wade 2008)
\textsuperscript{73} (Wade 2008)
declared, “We are at a turning point...this type of Summit can no longer continue. They were linked perhaps to the personality of Jacques Chirac. Perhaps it is time that these summits disappear.”

Senegal is a nation not bestowed with any substantial natural resource and thus it provides a fitting example of Chinese engagement beyond resource riches. “Resource poverty” also makes Chinese engagement in Senegal interesting because it helps to show that Chinese engagement in Africa is not limited to any one area, country size or history. Chinese President Hu Jintao’s trips to Africa have included visits to pocket-sized Gabon, whose 1.4 million people could fit into a corner of Shanghai but which has more than two billion barrels of oil reserves. Such visits have often added to criticism that China is only interested in Africa’s riches, but in 2007 President Hu visited Senegal, as part of a tour of the continent that included Mali, Tanzania and the Island of Mauritius – countries that are neither oil producers nor resource-rich. Perhaps the visits were organized to fend off this very criticism and to show that China does engage at a significant level with resource poor nations (though that level of significance tends to appear higher for the African country than China).

A look at the official agreements to come out of President Hu’s talks with President Wade following the latter Head of State’s 2006 visit to China appears to support the contention that China is not only always primarily interested in resource extraction. A major outcome of the meeting of the two Heads of State was the declaration by President Hu setting out four aspects of bilateral cooperation and mutual benefit. The first of the four was a commitment by each nation to treat the other “sincerely...and [to] deepen political mutual

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74 Journal du Dimanche, cited in la Chineafrique pg 170
75 (Walt, “China’s African Safari” 2006)
trust [by] maintaining the momentum of high-level exchanges”76 between Beijing and Dakar. Perhaps support for the argument that in Senegal, economic, resource-driven engagement comes second to political considerations can be found in the details of the communiqué, in that the “strong economic complementarities and great cooperation potential” between Senegal and China appeared as the second and not the first aspect of mutual cooperation in the document. China pledged its commitment to strengthen cooperation with Senegal in such areas as agriculture, resource development and infrastructure construction – in exchange, it seems, for a promise from President Wade to facilitate the entry of Chinese businesses and investment in Senegal.

What is clear though is that as China engages with Africa, a wake of financing is usually left behind that tempts all countries to seek positive relations with Beijing. Although commitments to work together on future projects were agreed to at the meeting in Beijing, actual commitments are noticeably absent, which again emphasizes the more political nature of Sino-Senegalese ties. Diplomatic alignment with China is an appealing situation for African countries, whether the primary reason for doing so is political or economic. This is supported by the fact that in the last few years, countries like Senegal and Chad have renounced ties with Taiwan in favor of ties with China, in adherence to the “One China” principle. In 2006, Chad severed diplomatic relations with Taipei in order to foster those with Beijing. Almost every country in Africa feels the allure of relations with China. In a move that appeals to a significant percentage of the continent, China has placed Africa high on its pedestal of diplomatic affairs, having promised at the 2006 FOCAC summit to make its first diplomatic trip of every year to Africa. In the usual start to its New Year diplomatic calendar, Chinese foreign minister, Yang Jeichi, in January 2009 embarked on a four nation

76 (MoFA 2009), story available at http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjdt/2649/t1259893.htm
African tour to Rwanda, Uganda, South Africa and Malawi. Landing in the former Belgian and French colony of Rwanda, as the first stop of his visit, the foreign minister officially opened the Rwandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, which was funded by the Chinese government to the value of US$8.9 million.77

Despite the low levels of funding, the visits are significant because in the latter half of 2009 the 4th Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Summit will be hosted in Cairo. Part of the visit is to assess progress made on the eight measures announced by President Hu Jintao at the 2006 FOCAC Summit, notwithstanding the urgency to expedite those projects that are still to be initiated.78 Senegal, although resource poor, still appeared to gain from reestablishing ties in 2005 even if it was through a comparatively minute US$11.7 million aid loan, as Senegal received in January 2009.79

How China in Africa has led to a growing independence from La Françafrique

China’s presence is changing the clandestine and deleterious nature of Franco-African affairs, as evidenced by the increasing incidence of Francophone African states asserting themselves in the economic and political spheres. Francophone African leaders across the board can be seen to have taken actions against the interests of France and in their own interests, which I argue they would not have been able to without the strength of China as an ally. Idriss Déby in Chad would never have dared to stand up to France and assert himself in the manner he did following the Ark of Zoe Affair in 2007 they had not reestablished ties with Beijing a year earlier. Without the existence of the Chinese alternative to France, neither would President Mamadou Tandja of Niger have expelled the head of Areva in 2007. When President Paul Biya of Cameroon stated that “Cameroon is not

77 (Naidu 2009)
78 (Naidu 2009)
79 (Jingjing 2009)
the property of anyone,” although in a speech addressed to 250 ethnic groups, owing to the
nature of Franco-African relationships, Michel and Beuret nevertheless suggest that his
words are indicative of the message being sent to Paris.80

What all of this says is that “African leaders want to diversify their international
contacts,” writes Pierre Antoine Braud,81 a former advisor to the UN, and china is allowing
them to increase those contacts.

To sum up la Françafrique, I turn to the story of Côté d’Ivoire, France’s “flower”82 in
Africa. Events leading up to, and during its civil war (2000-2003), illustrate why China’s
strength as an ally can be so important economically, politically and militarily, in the face of
la Françafrique. The story of Côté d’Ivoire reflects a shift in Sino-African and Franco-African
relations where, as France withdrew from the country, China advanced to assist it.

SECTION V: CÔTÉ D’IVOIRE

Perhaps no story more than that of Côté d’Ivoire as it unfolded in the 1990s better
reveals the clandestine ills of France’s special African relationship. The background to the
civil war and the actual events touch on a number of themes central to this study; more
precisely, they reflect how the interplay of the colonial legacy, la Françafrique, Western
imposition and poor African leadership, typically led to the political instability and violence
that characterize the African predicament. It shows how engagement with China leads to
the all-important diversification of political allies and illustrates why increased political
independence has come to be a fundamental aim in Francophone Africa. The reasons why
President Gbagbo turned his country east will soon become evident, but it is also important

80 (Michel, Beuret et Woods 2008, 154)
81 (Michel, Beuret et Woods 2008, 154)
82 (Verschave, 2004, p. 19)
to consider the dynamic nature of such gravitations – i.e. that France showed signs of 
withdrawal, China reached out to the former French colony, and Côté d’Ivoire accepted, 
leading to further antagonism and divergence in Franco-Ivorian relations

*Background*

At the heart of the conflict was the issue of ethnic fragmentation residual from the 
Berlin Conference in 1885 - one of the ultimate sources of violent conflict seen through the 
African predicament. Ethnic fragmentation caused by shepherding diverse communities into 
single nation states has undoubtedly led to difficulties in maintaining political stability in 
African nations. It has often been politicized into a “pseudo-nationalist xenophobia” and 
harnessed by leaders as a means to remain in power. The end of the 1980s saw a rise in the 
incidence of such policies. The two main reasons for this were the fall of the Berlin Wall in 
1989 and the growing pressure for democracy sweeping the globe, which Huntington calls 
“The Third Wave of Democratization.” With the Cold-War coming to an end, African 
countries were faced with declining foreign aid, which had been coming mostly from the 
West. Generally ill-prepared to lead, African leaders found it increasingly difficult to fall back 
on the rhetoric that they deserved to be in power because they alone could bring economic 
development. As aid diminished, such claims increasingly lost credibility. Faced with the 
prospect of losing power in elections, leaders turned to scapegoating the woes of their 
countries on other ethnic groups. This discourse underlined the Genocide in Rwanda (1994), 
it underlines the ongoing Genocide in Darfur (2003 – present ), and was also behind the 
Ivorian Civil War (2002-2004). As Le Vine notes, “xenophobia is one of the easiest nationalist 
weeds to cultivate” and expulsions of ‘strangers’ or ‘aliens’ according to it, became 
“commonplace” in Africa. The following tells the story of the “venomous flowers of
Ivorité,” the toxic Ivorian political construct that made ethnic discrimination more or less an official policy following President Houphouët-Boigny’s death in 1993.

Events Unfold

When Houphouët-Boigny, or, “le Vieux” as he is often fondly referred to, died in 1993, his protégé, another Ivorian backed by Paris, Konan Bédié took his place. Côté d’Ivoire’s hegemonic administrative structure was very much the creature of Houphouët-Boigny, who, despite being one of the leaders France had installed in Africa, was an adept leader with fine command of his administrative structure, and support of the people. Bédié’s political skills however left much to be desired. Faced with an ailing economy and mass unemployment, Bédié introduced a law into the constitution – article 35 – a xenophobic law that restricted political power only to citizens whose parents had both been born in Côté d’Ivoire. This law was designed to obstruct Alassane Ouattara, the former Prime Minister under Houphouët-Boigny, and whose mother was Burkinabe, from running for presidential elections in 1995. Violence erupted in response, and spread throughout the late 1990s, eventually resulting in a coup by retired General Robert Guéï in 1999. Although initially viewed and welcomed as a solution to the problem, Guéï proved even more xenophobic than Bédié, condemning the country to more violence and instability in his reign. Guéï, however, was soon also forced out of power, but not before exacerbating the “Ivorité” issue by adopting a referendum in July 2000 whose wording barred non-Ivoirians from seeking the presidency.83

Tainted elections in 2000 brought Laurent Gbagbo to power, and though Gbagbo made efforts at reconciliation with a Ouattara who was now living in exile, by uplifting the

83 (Le Vine, 2004, p. 212)
legal ban on Ouattara’s candidacy, his election did little to restore calm to the fractured country. Protests, coup attempts, and xenophobic violence continued. France, who had accepted Gbagbo’s presidency despite the escalating violence, withdrew their support when, in 2000, 57 corpses were discovered at Yopougon, a neighborhood in Abidjan, and a home to many immigrants. Disgraced and shunned by Paris, Beijing extended support to the Gbagbo regime besieged at home and abroad by its former colonial master. In April 2002, Gbagbo travelled and spent over 10 days in China, and in June of that year, China sent a high-level delegation to Abidjan. It is unclear exactly what was promised at these meetings—"nothing good for French enterprises"—hint Michel and Beuret, who in an almost conspiratorial way connect those meetings with the onset of the civil war when they then remind us that, whatever was agreed to, a mere three months later, the country was plunged into civil war.

This link is not as unfounded as it may first appear when what France stood to lose with growing Chinese engagement considered. France’s exceptional relationship with Côte d’Ivoire had resulted in French companies holding almost unbridled control of significant market sectors. French companies like Bolloré (who controlled maritime transport in the Port of Abidjan, the largest in West Africa), also held a significant stake the railway industry, the peanut, tobacco and cocoa trade (Côte d’Ivoire’s main exports). French company Bouygues, was the de facto water and electricity company, and the majority shareholder in Côte d’Ivoire Telecom and Société Ivoirienne des Mobiles, was none other than France Telecom. The banking sector also resembled that which you might find in any region in France; BNP Paribas, Société Générale and Crédit Lyonnais were the undisputable leaders of

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84 (Le Vine, 2004, p. 212)
85 (Michel, Beuret, & Woods, 2008, p. 162)
86 (Michel, Beuret, & Woods, 2008, p. 163)
87 (Michel, Beuret, & Woods, 2008, p. 163)
this sector. Total, the petrol giant, had over 150 gas stations and a 25% stake in SIR, the 
premier Ivorian refining enterprise – all of which contributed to making Côté d’Ivoire
“France’s most important economic partner” at the time.\textsuperscript{88}

France, therefore, had much to lose if Gbagbo continued his rapprochement with 
China, a situation not lost on Gbagbo. Thus, when mutinies erupted in the north of the 
country, Gbagbo saw the hand of France at work. In the streets of Abidjan, Gbagbo loyalists 
renewed their attacks against their former targets, Burkinabe and other immigrants, but 
also took their fight to the gates of the French Embassy. The coup begun in the north 
ultimately failed as Gbagbo’s forces, armed by China,\textsuperscript{89} repelled the rebels, but did not crush 
the rebellion. Despite various attempts by France and friendly African governments under 
ECOWAS, to bring an end to the fighting, the war and interethnic killing continued into 2003 
when an uneasy power-sharing pact was finally negotiated by the French at Marcoussis.\textsuperscript{90}

If la Françafrique has demonstrated one thing, it is that France certainly had the 
capacity to turn on former allies, or those who disagreed with its intentions, and had done 
so many times.\textsuperscript{91} What further evidence is there of France’s role in this crisis? There are two 
major ones. The promise of military intervention was one of the most valuable aspects of 
the French special relationship. In all but a few French interventions in Africa, French action 
was to protect French nationals, subdue rebellion (irrespective of legitimacy), and prop up 
pro-French rulers, including some of the most despotic and murderous individuals in post-
colonial African history.”\textsuperscript{92} These rulers are the ones most often associated with the African 
predicament; men such as the génocidaires of Rwanda’s President Juvenal Habyarimana,

\textsuperscript{88} (Michel, Beuret, & Woods, 2008, p. 163)
\textsuperscript{89} (Michel, Beuret, & Woods, 2008, p. 164)
\textsuperscript{90} (Le Vine, 2004, p. 194)
\textsuperscript{91} For instance when Sekou Touré of Guinea refused French “independence” by refusing to subscribe to the loi-
cadre.
\textsuperscript{92} (Le Vine, 2004, p. 342)
and leaders such as Bokassa and Mobutu. These were leaders whom France supported to the very end of their regimes. France’s support for these leaders is made worse by the understanding of the situations when France could have saved other leaders (some of whom had potential to be promising leaders) with its soldiers but chose not to: Dahomey’s Justin Ahomadégbé (1972), Chad’s Hissène Habré (1990), Côte d’Ivoire’s Gbagbo...the list goes on.93

Further worrying signs of the role of la Françafrique are seen in the fact that, TF1, the French media company owned by Martin Bouygues was on hand from day one to portray the rebels’ perspective. Alassane Ouattara, in whose interests the rebels purported to be fighting, was a personal friend of Martin Bouygues (he assisted at his wedding). Ouattara was also allied with the President of Burkina Faso, who was faithful to Paris and who also had ties to Taiwan. Neither France, Ouattara, Burkina Faso nor Taiwan wanted to see ties develop between Gbagbo and Beijing. Franco-Ivorian relations continued to decline as Chirac continued to threaten Gbagbo by making clear at the 2003 Franco-African summit in Paris for instance, that he would receive no French support against the rebels. Beijing, however, continued to become close with Gbagbo, becoming his “Great protector,” and defending him at the UN. Symbolic of the growing ties even in the midst of war, Beijing constructed its embassy in Abidjan, followed this up with a hotel and a hospital, and even paid the salaries for civil servants – in return of course for contracts and agreements to scout for resources.94

In conclusion, what these events demonstrate is the importance of alternate political allies for Francophone African states. After having angered France, Gbagbo, and

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93 For a more complete list of leaders whom France refused to help, and a discussion of their rationales, see LeVine, 2004, pg 342.
94 (Michel, Beuret, & Woods, 2008, p. 165)
Côté d’Ivoire were left to the rebels. Despite what one may think of Gbagbo as a leader, the fact remains that without Chinese military and diplomatic assistance, the Ivorian government would have been defenseless. Now, I do not argue that Chinese military or diplomatic assistance for incumbent regimes is always a good thing – it is quite the opposite most times, as seen by China’s supply of small arms to the Sudanese government, which helps perpetuate the Darfur Genocide. What I purport to show is why some regimes, dubious or admirable, seek political diversification. For Francophone African countries, political neglect from France can result from independent actions that might be contrary to France’s wishes. The consequences do not need to be as dire as civil war, and can just as easily be seen in more subtle forms of abandonment, for instance, in reduced aid. France stands as a veritable *dues ex machina* – but one that can just as easily resolve as instigate a plot. Consequently, in my view, seemingly small actions like the Chadian government standing up to France after the Zoe’s Ark affair are more significant than they appear as without Chinese engagement to counter any losses from France, such unilateral action would not be as likely.

SECTION VI: EVALUATION

So what can be made of the state of France’s exceptional relationship? To borrow from the metaphor of Francois Verschave, Franco-African policy is like an iceberg. The 10% you see above the water, as perhaps typified by institutions like la Francophonie, is a France that is “the best friend of Africa”, a France that is the fatherland of the Rights of man and the citizen. If la Francophonie represents the benign or positive side of intimate Franco-African relations, la *Françafrique* is its evil black sheep twin. The corrupt core of French engagement in Africa (perpetuated mostly by France, but with the support of unsavory
African leaders) in the postcolonial period has damaged the structure of African states and severely damaged perceptions of France in Africa – perhaps more so than the period of colonialism itself. Submerged beneath the goodwill lies the rest of the iceberg and all manner of vile mechanisms used by France to maintain French domination over Africa. Although maintaining this domination was France’s goal in the post-colonial era, there is evidence that both France and Africa are retreating from this situation. La Françafrique, the sordid underbelly of French foreign policy stands as one of the most prominent reasons behind the Francophone African hostility to France. It illustrates why Africa is fed up with France and western countries that impose themselves on Africa, and thus begins to account for why Africa revels in the emergence of a new partner, China, despite the fact that not all Chinese engagement is necessarily beneficial.

The resource curse and the large-scale corruption of African leaders are often talked about, but what is ignored are the seedy details of Western involvement. Yet despite this, and having been France’s servant under colonization and then having become her mistress during independence, ‘independent’ Africa grew to love France.\(^5\) In the last decade or so, hostility towards France has been renewed; Africa feels betrayed in large part because French interest has decreased fundamentally since the late 1990s. This decrease has been driven by the failure of policies such as la Françafrique that wind up implicating French elites in crises like in Rwanda. This highlights the predominance of politics and the historical legacy in Francophone Africa’s gravitation towards China. From this, we can arrive at the conclusion that France’s exceptional relationship continues to decline, but more so in the political than the economic realm.

\(^5\) (Michel, Beuret et Woods 2008, 149)
There continue to be elements of la Francophonie that Francophone African nations noticeably want to maintain – the financial benefit of the CFA, despite its having been devalued in 1994. Indeed Chinese aid to Africa has risen in the last decade as Western ODA has waxed and waned, recently hitting its lowest point in 2007. It is important to note though, that the decline in aid was not just a decline in French aid. ODA from the members of the Development Assistance Committee had been exceptionally high in 2005 (US$107.1 billion) and 2006 (US$ 104.4 billion), but in 2007, the purpose of ODA for that year shifted and was directed at initiatives to reduce exceptionally high debt in countries like Nigeria and Iraq. According to provisional data reported by DAC member countries, in 2007, total ODA fell by 8.4% in real terms to USD 103.7 billion. In terms of DAC member countries’ combined gross national income (GNI), this represented a drop from 0.31% GNI in 2006 to 0.28% in 2007.

Concerning resource extraction, oil is now clearly at the top of France’s goals. “In Cameroon we have bauxite, cobalt, sapphires etc, but France only wants oil.” As Figure 1 shows, oil from Nigeria also appears to be higher on the list than even oil from Francophone countries – French ODA to oil producing Nigeria, stands at US$1028 Million, and dwarves French ODA to all other countries, even resource rich Cameroon, which receives US$571 million and France’s long standing and privileged Francophone interest, Senegal, which receives US$258 million. This apparent decline in the importance of Francophone countries to France and vice versa, should also not be overstated. Africa is responsible for a quarter of France’s trade surplus, half of which comes just from the Franc Zone, and in that zone, major French banks and business still dominate the market in niches as yet unthreatened by

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96 Charles Salé, Cameroon Minister of Industry cited in (Michel, Beuret et Woods 2008, 147)
China. In summary then, Chinese engagement with Africa is not yet “exceptional” in the Franco-African way, and as a result of the significant declines in the reach of la Françafrique, the political changes in the relationship stand out. Consequently, I conclude that Chinese engagement allows Francophone African countries the increased political independence from France that has been denied them so long, and that when it comes to prioritizing rapid development or political independence as the means to escape the African predicament, political independence comes first.

(Marchal, "French Perspectives on the New Sino-African Relations" 2008, 186)
“We have turned East where the sun rises, and given our backs to the West, where the sun sets,”¹ said Robert Mugabe in 2005, on the issue of his country’s relations with the West and with China. Now while Mugabe cannot be said to speak for all Africa, his words reflect a developing pattern across the continent. This is due to the already noted prevalence of Chinese engagement in Africa at many levels, and Africans’ responses to it. Even devoted critics of Chinese engagement, such as economic historian and researcher in rural sociology Zimbabwean, John Blessings Karumbidza, speculate:

In the next half century if all African countries abandoned the colonial languages which create a barrier to cultural unity, China could replace them with one language spoken across the continent. Maybe then a ‘United States of Africa’—under Chinese ‘prefectship’—would become possible.²

Karumbidza’s statement on its own is an indication of the extent of China’s current engagement with Anglophone Africa, which is at a high enough level that it recalls European colonial engagement with Africa. In what began as an almost stealth move into Africa during the early 1990s, Chinese trade has proliferated so quickly that in some countries it threatens to eclipse relationships that the U.S. and Europe have nurtured for decades, explains Vivienne Walt at Fortune Magazine.³ “We haven’t been totally invaded by China yet,” says Iheanyi Ohiaeri, head of business development for Nigeria’s National Petroleum Corp., which controls some of Africa’s largest oil and gas reserves, “but it will come,”⁴ he says, in a striking declaration. In spite of such fears about the imperialist feel to Chinese engagement, and other African concerns about China’s role in Africa, China remains an attractive partner for Africa, and this is not just in the resource sectors. China’s increasing

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¹ President Robert Mugabe, in a speech to Zimbabweans celebrating 25 years of independence, April 19, 2005.
² (Karumbidza 2007, 103)
³ (Walt, “China’s Appetite for African Oil Grows”, 2006)
⁴ Cited in (Walt, “China’s African Safari” 2006)
presence in Anglophone Africa is starkly visible in the eyes of the general public, where in
Nigeria and Ghana for instance, three quarters hold China in a favorable view. To
appropriate Mugabe’s words, and extend their application, such evidence suggests a
gravitation; it suggests that a process of evolution appears to be under way in Africa’s
relations with foreign partners, as Anglophone Africa also “turns east.” But what is causing
this gravitation amongst Anglophone African states?

Interestingly, Karumbidza’s “astonishing—some would say craven—vision of
unification under Chinese ‘prefectship’ appears (as if out of nowhere) in the concluding
remarks of a chapter that is mainly devoted to critiquing China’s role in Zimbabwe,” notes
Nick Young. This paradox appears to be a dominant pattern emerging in Africa over
Chinese engagement. Chapter IV, Francophone Africa: Focus Senegal, specified this puzzling
issue in Francophone Africa’s response to Chinese engagement. Namely, it asked why
positive perceptions of Chinese engagement outweighed cautions -- for instance, the threat
posed to local industries by Chinese engagement, or China’s implications in continental
crises. If this puzzle exists in Francophone Africa, is the same true elsewhere on the
continent? The answer to this question is “Yes,” and this chapter addresses this by focusing
on responses to Chinese and Western engagement in Anglophone Africa, where the same
puzzling show of support for Chinese engagement exists.

This chapter argues that Anglophone Africa also desires change in its foreign
relations and seeks to foster relationships with China as a means to break the typically
asymmetrical and condescending nature of relations it has had with development allies in
the West. This is the basis of African self-assertion, the desire for Africans to exercise greater

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5 (Wike & Horowitz, 2007, p. 41)
6 (Young 2007)
7 Anglophone Africa refers to the countries in Africa which are distinguished by their common use of the English
language and English common law for diplomatic and administrative purposes. The English language and English
administrative practices form part of the core symbols of their collective imagination in relation to others.
control over their continent’s own destiny, and it motivates the aforementioned puzzle. The chapter finds that Anglophone Africa’s experiences lead it to prioritize ties with China first because of the capacity for rapid development, and then for the increased political independence it brings. This is in contrast to the findings of Chapter IV, which concluded that Francophone Africa’s first priority in encouraging Chinese investment was the increased political independence it brings, and then the capacity for rapid development. In both cases however, African self-assertion is what encourages Africa to seek this change from China.

FRAMEWORK OF THE CHAPTER

To research the role of African self-assertion in attitude formation and perspectives on Sino-African and West-African relations, the author conducted on site interviews in Accra, Ghana in January 2009 to gain insight into public perspectives on foreign relations with Africa.

Why Ghana? As one of the first countries in sub-Saharan Africa to establish relations with Beijing in 1960, and as the first African country to gain independence from colonial rule in 1957, Ghana has a long standing diplomatic relationship with both China and the West. From a development perspective, Ghana is one of the few African countries on track to meeting its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which without Western assistance would have been more difficult to do. Under the World Bank Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China’s EXIM Bank, both the West and China have identified Ghana as a development priority in Africa, though their approaches to development assistance differ. While the West in Africa operates within a multilateral framework, channeling aid through NGOs, United Nations agencies, and International Financial

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8 In 1966, following Ghana’s first coup d’état, Ghana severed diplomatic relations with China, which were reestablished in January 1972, and have ‘developed smoothly’ since then, according to the Chinese Foreign Ministry. (See Chapter III for more information on the background and development of Sino-Ghanaian relations).

9 (M. Davies 2008, vii)
Institutions (IFIs) such as the IMF and the World Bank, China’s assistance is bilateral. China does not have a development cooperation agency 10 and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, and Commerce design its aid policies. 11 Chinese development assistance is provided either as grants, zero-interest or concessional loans, and China does not provide budget support. All Chinese aid is project based, and grants are often given as tied aid, requiring the borrower to purchase Chinese goods or services. 12

Furthermore, Ghana’s geopolitical position in Africa makes it something of a harbinger of change in Africa. Since the days of independence, Ghana has held influence in Africa disproportionate to its small size. Having recently successfully undergone a regime-changing third Presidential election in 2008, it is one of the continent’s most successful democracies, and stands as an example for that reason. It is hypothesized that as a greater number of people begin to vote their interests in countries like Ghana, public perspectives could begin to affect the direction of the country through the ballot box, making it prudent to understand some of the public’s motivations. As a country like Ghana continues to mature its democracy, public perspectives will only grow in importance.

The interviews 13 conducted in Ghana provide support for the view that attitudes toward the West and China are greatly affected by perceptions of the West and China’s role in Ghana’s development, i.e. which ally is best positioned to help Ghana escape the African predicament. Owing to the “attitudinal” aspect of the predicament, the fact that China is deemed almost by default to hold Ghanaians in higher regard than the West, encourages people to support Chinese engagement. This boosts the support China already receives for its ability to respond to the call for rapid infrastructural change, and reinforces the

10 (Huse and Muyakwa 2008, 11)
11 (Human Rights First 2008)
12 (Huse and Muyakwa 2008, 12)
13 See Chapter II: Theoretical Framework
frustration over the West’s apparent inability, or unwillingness, to do the same, despite the West’s long history of engagement with Ghana. These can be considered responses to the questions raised earlier in Chapter I of this study, and reformulated here: “What does [Ghana] want from its foreign policy relationships?” and “What does [Ghana] receive from its foreign policy relationship with China that it cannot, does not and has not received from the West?”

ARGUMENT

In response to these key questions, this chapter draws on the insights of history and anthropology to examine the relationship between the West and Anglophone Africa (with a focus on Ghana), in order to contextualize the country’s relationship with its development allies. I follow a pattern of argument similar to that used in Chapter IV and identify three dimensions of foreign relations that have contributed to African self-assertion and to the approval for Chinese engagement in Anglophone Africa. The chapter will compare Chinese and Western engagement in Anglophone Africa across all three dimensions because, I argue, Anglophone Africa’s willingness to support Chinese engagement is based on these three dimensions.

The first of the three dimensions lies in the culture of foreign policy decision-making in Anglophone Africa and the ideology of Pan-Africanism; the second dimension concerns the increased political independence (or policy space), that Chinese engagement affords Anglophone Africa, vis-à-vis the restrictions of Western engagement. This is couched within wider complaints against the history of Western imposition and control in Africa. Finally, the third dimension concerns the efficiency of Ghana’s development partners.
In discussing Pan-Africanism, Section I, *Pan-Africanism: Anglophone Africa’s Cultural Roots*, illustrates the “cultural roots of ... foreign policy in Anglophone West Africa.”¹⁴ The cultural roots need to be explored in order to understand why the political origins of Anglophone African states in the postcolonial era differed from those of Francophone Africa. This is an important concept for the study because, as will soon be evident, the experiences of decolonization have led to different priorities for African self-assertion in Francophone and Anglophone Africa. Both Francophone and Anglophone Africa see the promise of liberation and diversification in Chinese engagement, but the stress is more political than economic in Francophone Africa, while the opposite is true in Anglophone Africa.

It is necessary to highlight that the implication is NOT that increased political independence is an unimportant goal for Ghana. However, unlike Francophone Africa, Anglophone Africa today, (and in the post-colonial period), does not possess similarly intimate political ties with its former colonial master. There are of course cultural and diplomatic ties between the UK and Anglophone African countries (the Commonwealth for instance), but not to the extent of *la francophonie* or *la Françafrique*. For the purposes of this study, this immediately places Anglophone Africa at a more advanced starting point in terms of political independence. Therefore, a qualification of the answers to the defining question, “What does [Anglophone Africa] want in its foreign policy relations?” must be made. Rapid development and increased political independence were the answers identified in Chapter I. “Increased political independence” though, now has a slightly different implication for Francophone Africa than it does for Anglophone Africa.

¹⁴ (*Adibe 2001, 16*)
Seeing that decolonization reinforced political dependency between Francophone Africa and France, the “increased political independence” Francophone Africa seeks through ties with China recalls the sort of independence sought during the independence era. This is not the case with Anglophone Africa, which emerged from decolonization with a greater degree of political autonomy. Consequently, this chapter argues that African self-assertion does not lead Anglophone Africa to prioritize “increased political independence” as a basis for encouraging Chinese engagement, in the same way it does for Francophone Africa. As will become clear in Section II, Anglophone Africa does indeed seek a form of “political independence,” but it is economically related. Anglophone Africa’s desire for “increased political independence” is largely a response to the policy impositions that accompany Western financial assistance – the conditionalities to aid. “Increased policy independence” then, would be a more precise term to be used for Anglophone Africa.

These three dimensions, the cultural roots of Pan-Africanism, restrictions on policy space and impositions, and the efficiency of development partners, lead to the conclusion that in Anglophone Africa, the priority for escaping the African Predicament lies more in rapid development than in increased policy independence.

**Structure of the Chapter**

The chapter is structured to allow for levels of comparison with Chapter IV, *Francophone Africa: Focus, Senegal*. Two points of comparison stand out. First, the three pillars of Francophone African relations charted the development of African self-assertion in the Francophone African context by identifying the primary historical factors that have contributed to it. In so doing, they also provided a view of the development of the African Predicament in the Francophone context, leading to the conclusion that African self-assertion in Francophone Africa prioritizes increased political independence or increased
political diversification. In the same way, the three dimensions to be discussed in this
chapter substantiate the development of African self-assertion as a response to the colonial
legacy and the African predicament in Anglophone Africa. For it is in responses to the
African predicament that African self-assertion becomes apparent, and at the same time, it
becomes clearer why in this region, economic development comes before increased political
and policy development. As such, analysis in this chapter serves as a counterpoint to the
three pillars discussed in Chapter IV. Section I, Pan-Africanism: Anglophone Africa’s Cultural
Roots, can be seen as the counterpoint to assimilation and la francophonie. There is some
overlap though, as the paternalism and disrespect typified by assimilation also finds its
parallel in Section II of this chapter. La Françafrique revealed the relationship of imposition
and control between France and its former colonies. It contributed to the African
predicament in multiple ways, most importantly through the violence it engendered and the
poor lessons on leadership it inaugurated. Similarly, Section II of this chapter, Policy space
and Impositions, reveals this relationship of Western imposition and control in Anglophone
Africa, which stands in contrast to China’s “liberating” engagement.

Second, seeing how Francophone Africa’s overtly acquiescent relationship was
miring development by entrenching the African predicament, I argue that diversifying
political relations through alternate sources (Chinese) of engagement is a required first step
on the path to development and escape from the African predicament. In Anglophone
countries like Ghana, the pattern is different. Based on primary research from interviews
and secondary sources, I stress that African self-assertion in Anglophone Africa favors
Chinese engagement for its role in diversifying development partners, more than its role in
increasing political independence. How I arrive at this conclusion becomes clearer when set
against Francophone Africa’s experiences, and also requires the historical and cultural contexts introduced in the chapter.

Thus, in its discussion of Pan-Africanism, Section I sets up the cultural and historical framework behind African self-assertion in Anglophone Africa, which supports China’s engagement in Africa for its role in diversifying Africa’s economic and development partners. Section II establishes why China’s non-intervention policy is so attractive. It argues that the lack of conditionalities to financial assistance, and the increased policy independence this affords African countries are significant incentives for Anglophone Africa’s support of Chinese engagement. This is couched within the wider complaint over the imposition of ideologies and institutions on Africa. The imposed conditionalities are deemed patronizing and an extension of the traditional core-periphery framework with the West. It thus gives rise to African self-assertion in Anglophone Africa. Further, Section II contextualizes the argument over the West’s prolonged (and some maintain, continued) history of imposition and condescension in Africa. Section III introduces pragmatism into the argument and compares the efficiency of China as a development partner with the West’s efficiency as a development partner. Section IV consists of two case studies on the Bui Dam and Makola Market. Bui Dam is the hydrological energy project financed by China in Ghana, and Makola Market is a popular market in the nation’s capital, Accra. Seeing as allusions and reference have been made throughout this study to Makola, the focus of section IV will be predominantly be on Bui Dam. Makola will be introduced and discussed in brief in order to highlight the fact that large-scale investment tends to be welcomed from China, but antagonism is higher when China enters local retail sectors. An evaluation will then follow in section V.
The analysis in this chapter leads to a major conclusion of the study: That a major element behind Africa’s willingness to support Chinese engagement is precisely because it is new and does not contain the same historical baggage. It is felt that fifty years of traditional aid and lending have not solved Africa’s problems and China’s economic progress suggests that “the Western model is not holy.”

For the many in Africa who are “physically and intellectually exhausted” by two decades of “[failed] western style” economic reform, China represents the hope that “another world is possible in which bread comes before the freedom to vote.” Though the West frequently presents China as a spoiler for transparency, good governance and human rights, there still appears to be support for Chinese engagement in Africa. There is the sense that Africans have had enough. As Ghanaian Professor Kweisi Kwaan Praah, Director of the Cape Town-based Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society, said;

It is a bit hypocritical for Western states to be concerned about how China is approaching Africa when they have had centuries of relations with Africa, starting with slavery and continuing to the present day with exploitation and cheating . . . so that a cow in the European community gets a subsidy of $2 a day and 60 per cent of Africa doesn’t get [earn] that.

It appears then that if only out of “weariness” with the West, Africans are prepared to cooperate with China as it offers a new opportunity for development. In a reversal of the popular maxim, it appears that in Africa, for Africans, it appears better to choose the devil they do not know rather than the one they already do.

15 Lammers, 2007
16 Obiorah, 2007
17 See (Ayodele et. al 2005), and also Chapter III (Ayodele et. al 2005)
18 (Young 2007)
19 (Young 2007)
20 (Young 2007)
SECTION I: THE CULTURAL ROOTS OF PAN-AFRICANISM

In Chapter II of this study, I argued for the inclusion of “culture” as factor in development discourse because culture affects people’s perspectives on development. One way in which it does this can be seen through African self-assertion, itself a cultural construct. This section re-iterates and extends the arguments from Chapter II in discussing a cultural mechanism that Africa can re-harness as a tool to escape the African predicament – Pan-Africanism. Pan-Africanism refers to the idea of uniting African states under one continental nation-state or, failing that, under some non-governmental institutions.\(^\text{21}\) It has long been considered one of Africa’s best possible strategies out of the predicament, because unification can serve to mitigate some of the fragmentation imposed by the 1885 Berlin Conference, the starting point of many of Africa’s problems. Pan-Africanism also shares similar principles with black racial assertion and both ideologies have led to the development of African self-assertion. Thus this section continues to substantiate African self-assertion as a viable sentiment and strategy in African development discourse. It is an important concept for this study because it helps to substantiate the argument that culture can play an important role in development, and it goes a long way to show African reasons why Anglophone Africa did not seek to create ties with Britain in the same way that Francophone Africa did with France.

The idea of Pan-Africanism, the unifying ideology in Anglophone African colonies, was linked to a growing racial consciousness advanced by the “diaspora states” of Anglophone West Africa, Sierra Leone and Liberia. In Sierra Leone, the threat of racial war encouraged elites to promote unity and pride among all blacks, whether native or repatriate

\(^{21}\) (Adibe 2001, 18)
from slavery plantations in North-America. The new generation of African elites that began
to emerge “oriented Pan-Africanism to mean self-determination for the African peoples”
– a succinct classification of what has come to be African self-assertion. Ghana, under Kwame
Nkrumah, the father of the nation, played an instrumental role in advancing this idea.

Nkrumah inherited the mantle of leadership in West Africa when in 1957 Ghana
gained its independence from Britain, bringing to an end over half a century of foreign rule
and becoming the first African country to gain independence from colonialism. Nkrumah
“personified the emotional and political aspirations of Pan-Africanism,” propelling it to
become the dominant feature of foreign policies in the years after independence. It became
the “core of Ghana’s foreign policy in relation to Africa … [and] was in consonance with
Ghanaian and African interests.” Nkrumah proceeded to use this strategy to establish
himself and Ghana as the Black Star of freedom and progress in Africa. Envisioning freedom
from colonial rule for the entire continent, his strategic vision demanded more than just
independence for Ghana. "Our independence is meaningless unless it is linked up with the
total liberation of the African continent," he said. This begins to illustrate why Anglophone
African countries like Ghana did not seek to maintain close ties with their former colonial
power, and instead sought autonomy.

The Pan-African ideology in Anglophone Africa led to efforts to “articulate an
independent national foreign policy based on individual assessments of national interest”
and thus for many of the new Anglophone African states, “vocal anti-colonialism was [the]
pREFERRED plank on which to base national foreign policy.” A major distinction between

\[22\] (Adibe 2001, 19)
\[23\] (Adibe 2001, 19)
\[24\] (Krafoa 1986)
\[25\] (Krafoa 1986, 22)
\[26\] (Adibe 2001, 21)
\[27\] (Adibe 2001, 22)
Anglophone and Francophone Africa’s post-colonial experiences, then, was that Anglophone Africa did not advance opportunities to maintain a system similar to la Francophonie. As Adibe explains;

Unlike their Francophone neighbors in the years following independence, Anglophone West African states sought to distance themselves from their former colonial power, with all the attendant loss of ‘privileges’ and access to much-needed resources. For these states, the annual summit meetings of the Commonwealth were perceived to be little more than an opportunity to socialize with Her Majesty.\(^\text{28}\)

Instead, multilateral African cooperation was pursued. Pan-Africanism was somewhat successful as it resulted in the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, though assessing the successes of this organization which became the African Union, is another question. The OAU was the “culmination of efforts to find alternative diplomatic structures” after Nkrumah withdrew Ghana from pre-independence colonial institutions. It was also a victory for what would become the cardinal principle of African diplomacy: non-intervention in the affairs of a sister state. This principle would be “jettisoned”\(^\text{29}\) in subsequent years, with the eruption of violent conflict in Liberia in the 1990s, but the ideology is undeniably similar to China’s. It can be suggested then that China’s policy of non-interference is attractive to Anglophone Africa for sentimental reasons -- that this similarity between Chinese and Anglophone African foreign policy fosters ties between the two. This argument has elements of truth to it, but framed in this way, it is unacceptably intangible and cannot be defended here. However, it is pertinent to recall that in the wider discourse over Africa’s gravitation east, a major strategy of Chinese foreign policy with Africa is to stress the historic and mutually beneficial links. I return to this policy of non-intervention in

\(^{28}\)\cite{Adibe2001,22}
\(^{29}\)\cite{Adibe2001,21}
section II, to demonstrate its impact on Anglophone Africa’s willingness to support Chinese engagement.

In sum, the foreign-policy framework rooted in the ideology of Pan-Africanism, retooled by Nkrumah as the “unimpeded decolonization of Africa, and the consolidation of freedom,” contributed immensely to the path away from post-colonial political dependence. Though both Anglophone and Francophone Africa see Chinese engagement as a liberating alternative, the cultural roots of Pan-Africanism and self-determination have contributed greatly to the development of African self-assertion in Anglophone Africa. They have also led to a situation where a comfortably politically independent Anglophone Africa prioritizes Chinese engagement more for the benefit of diversifying economic, as opposed to political relations with foreign powers. Anglophone and Francophone Africa have followed dissimilar post-colonial paths and , thus in turn, their self-assertion prioritizes different methods of escaping the African predicament.

SECTION II: POLICY SPACE AND IMPOSITIONS

POLICY SPACE

This section examines the political, or rather, policy pressure of Western and Chinese engagement in Africa. It begins by analyzing the conditions of Western and Chinese financial assistance, and the effect they have on the gravitation discourse.

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30(Adibe 2001, 20)
Our assistance is free of any political pressure and helps resolve specific problems, a good demonstration of China’s peaceful development road and constructive role in the world.  

As stated here by Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing, this is the essence of Chinese engagement. This lack of political pressure, or “policy independence,” is a highly attractive feature of Chinese engagement for Anglophone and Francophone African countries alike, though as this chapter argues, it is a higher priority for Anglophone Africa. Western political pressure, notably in conditionalities to aid and the imposition of Western-style democracy on postcolonial states, is compared against China’s notions of non-interference.

When engaging Africa, all foreign players realize the need for a foreign aid component in their foreign policy program, with China being no exception. Ghana’s traditional trade partners have been Western. Although some Western aid is bilateral, for instance with USAID, the West typically disburses most of its assistance through NGOs and IFIs such as the World Bank and the IMF. The emphasis of aid assistance in the 1960s and 1970s was placed on infrastructure development, the productive sectors, particularly agriculture, health and education, as well as poverty alleviation. At the beginning of the 1980s, the onset of the African economic crisis triggered forced reforms on the social policies of whichever post-colonial African state was under pressure, resulting in the imposition on those states of various compulsory conditions that needed to be satisfied in order to receive the much-needed financial assistance from the West. Led by the World Bank, aid assistance shifted towards policy-based program lending as opposed to traditional project lending. This shift was accompanied by donor conditionality, mainly macroeconomic reforms and economic growth, which were implemented through

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31 Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing, cited in (Save Darfur Briefing Paper 2007), available at http://darfur.3cdn.net/2573d6e338d592b4a0_csm6beuk7.pdf
32 (M. Davies 2008, vii)
33 (Baffour 1999) cited in (Quartey, “Innovative Ways of Making Aid Effective in Ghana: Tied Aid versus Direct budgetary Support” 2005, 4)
stabilization and structural adjustment reforms. Western donor policy also included the reform of civil service, privatization as well as the creation of an enabling environment for the private sector. ³⁴

The aid policies restricted the political independence of countries like Ghana because they often took the shape of forced reforms, which to some critics of the West constituted an “attack on the social sectors.”³⁵ Supporters of this perspective go further in their criticisms and suggest that these “attacks” were transformed into a dogma in the context of the IMF/World Bank structural adjustment programs and have become further enslaved within the neoliberal self-imposed framework of NEPAD (the New Economic Partnership for African Development). “By accepting these two capitalist credos, African states have damaged their labor unions as well as the ability to give a political form to economic institutions and production relations,” writes Jean-Claude Maswana.³⁶ Such conditionalities are noticeably absent from China’s pragmatic aid. These conditions of Western financial assistance that reduce policy space are a major imposition which leads Africans to encourage China as an alternative.

It is important to note that the opposition to conditionalities is not merely economic. Market traders interviewed in Makola Market reinforced the notion that these Western conditionalities to aid are important factors in their willingness to encourage Chinese engagement. However, their responses were framed by their emphasis on notions of condescension and respect, as opposed to the intricacies of IMF lending and macroeconomics. Like many Africans, the traders saw in these conditionalities attempts by the West to maintain control of Ghana. To the majority interviewed, these conditionalities

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³⁴ (Quartey, “Finance and Small and Medium Enterprise Development in Ghana” 2002)
³⁵ (Maswana 2007, 12)
³⁶ (Maswana 2007, 12)
symbolized the disrespect and condescension that have accompanied Western engagement with Ghana in a patronizing fashion. The fact that Chinese engagement lacks such conditions is not always looked upon as a policy independence, or economic development argument, but rather, it returns us to the notion that Africa is seeking change from historic core-periphery relationships and the attitudes that accompany them.

**IMPOSITIONS ON AFRICA**

Imposition takes many forms. I return here to the argument on imposition referenced in Chapters II through IV in a discussion on democracy. The issue is that the West’s approach to democracy in Africa has been and remains a point of contention because of its heavy-handedness. A little historical note is needed. Some critics of the West blanket Africa’s problems with the arbitrary creation of nation states during the colonial period. A more refined presentation of the issue is that it was not so much “nation-statism” that was a problem, but “the imposition of the type of nation-state tendentiously designed for the African people...which did not take into account the cultures and characteristics of the peoples forcibly placed within the same territorial borders and ordered to evolve a common form of cultural and political life.”37 The reality of history is that China had nothing to do with this, and seeing that their engagement is now not explicitly directed at exporting “Chinese Communism,” engagement with China has an inherently better feel about it. The West however, whether for good or evil, is still driven by the desire to impose their own ideas of democracy and capitalism.

Regardless of one’s perspectives on the inherent good of democracy, the hypocrisy of the West in imparting this ideology to Africa remains embittering. Even though the British system of government was itself democratic, the colonial system of rule was not: Citizens had no, or exceedingly little, share in the making of the laws to which they were subjected.

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37 (Gyekye 1997, 86)
as the head of the colonial government in British colonies like Ghana, the colonial governor, ruled by issuing decrees. The colonial government thus derived its legitimacy not from the citizens but from the colonial metropolis and its superior military strength. This colonial system of rule, through which many African leaders arrived at political maturity, was undoubtedly in the tradition of single parties or autocratic government. Furthermore, in Anglophone Africa for instance, the British colonial government did not set a great example of diplomatic governance. They did a better job of it than the French, but the wider issue then and arguably today is that democracy was approached as if it were a “set of constitutional arrangements to be taken off the peg for immediate use...[forgetting or ignoring that] the conditions under which parliamentary democracy evolved in the West were entirely different from those in Africa.”

Despite the hostility to the West over the manner in which democracy was introduced, in turn-of-the-twenty-first century Ghana though, there is little doubt that Western style democracy is the preferred system of government. Owing to the tense political climate at the time of interviewing and research, specific questions about people’s perceptions of democracy and governance were not asked, although much could be confidently inferred on this topic from the directions of conversations and peoples’ actions in Ghana. “With successful, peaceful elections in Ghana, people abroad will look at Ghana and marvel. On CNN, on BBC, we will be a symbol of success. We can be proud and move forward.” This shows the near-yearning for acceptance by the West. Such sentiment expressed to me in my research reflects Ghanaians’ desire for democracy to work in their

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38 (Gyekye 1997, 137)
39 (Gyekye 1997, 137)
40 Here understood as the West
country. At least for Ghana, such widespread and resolute sentiment helps to counter the Western fear that African countries will all look to emulate China’s political structure.

Ghana’s history of coups and military rule is still a sufficient deterrent to any hints of authoritarianism in governance. Despite (or perhaps as a consequence of) prolonged periods of military rule, there are important social and political forces embedded in the fabric of Ghanaian society that believe deeply in democratic government. In some important ways, the West grants Africa the increased policy space it desires, for instance through some of its debt relief initiatives.

**Debt Relief & Economic Recovery Programs**

There has been a change in the relationship between Zambia and the Fund (IMF) because Zambia no longer owes the Fund any money (to speak of) as a result of HIPC and MDRI. IMF leverage is not as direct as it used to be. It is harder for us IMF to impose very strict conditionality. The perception is that Zambia has matured a bit and should be better at steering its own course.

The issue in Ghana, and across Africa, as the statement concerning Zambia seems to indicate, becomes whether countries that have seen most of their debt cancelled would now be able to exercise complete independence from the West, and whether they would choose to do so. Has this been the case?

The answer, as evidenced by Ghana’s continued and at times voluntary decisions to subscribe to Western development initiatives, would appear to be “No.” One such initiative was the Economic Recovery Program begun in 1983, which has helped to restore macro-economic stability in Ghana. In its “Vision 2020” document, the Rawlings government declared its intention to achieve an accelerated growth rate of 8-10% in the medium term. However, Kufuor’s government (2000-2008) decided to bring in a new strategy, Vision 2010.

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[^3]: (Ayee 2009)
[^4]: IMF Representative, cited in (Huse and Muyakwa 2008, 25)
An overall growth rate of more than 5% is required to achieve substantial improvement in the economy and reduce existing poverty levels. But annual GDP growth over the past few years has been averaging 4.3% and the GDP growth rate was 6% in 2006. A further decision taken by the Kufuor administration that reflects a consistent relationship with the West was its decision in March 2001, to apply for assistance under the Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Country [HIPC] initiative, whereby external debt is cancelled to enable countries to use savings to fund poverty eradication programs. The IMF and the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) granted Ghana HIPC status in July 2004. Ghana’s current IMF agreed 3-year Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) finished in October 2006. Loans attached to it amounted to around US$258 million, and Ghana’s debt has been massively reduced as a result of this. Further, the government has stated its intention to sign up to the IMF’s policy support instrument and implement its own growth and poverty reduction strategy.

Now it may seem as if Ghana has embarked on these initiatives on its own accord, but this may not be the case because although the formal leverage of IFIs has decreased, they may still play a significant “gate-keeper” role behind the scenes. This is because Western bilateral donors still look to the IMF to judge a recipient country’s economic policy before engaging. When it comes to Western aid, even countries who may have graduated from the conditionalities of the past decade may still choose to engage with the IFIs as a signal to Western donors. In this respect, the increased policy independence that may have resulted from the debt relief initiatives may in fact just be nominal. Poor countries, it seems,

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43 (UK Trade and Investment 2008)
44 (Foreign & Commonwealth Office 2009)
45 (Huse and Muyakwa 2008, 25)
may still have difficulty escaping from Western conditionalities. In this respect, it is easy to see the appeal of an alternate partner like China.

This is an ideal occasion to further consider how the West’s financial engagement as just described, compares with Chinese engagement. China’s foreign aid assistance to Ghana is couched within bilateral relations. Assistance comes in various forms; grant assistance, interest free loans, preferential government loans and large turn-key projects. The concessional loans are a major form of aid that the Chinese government provides, and the China Exim Bank, reported as one of the largest financing bodies in the world, handles concessional lending and plays a central role in China’s aid policy in Africa.\textsuperscript{46} The Bank extends more than 90 percent of its loans to state-owned companies, which themselves “engage in business ventures designed to support governmental rather than commercial ends.”\textsuperscript{47} The China Exim Bank, though ostensibly an independent institution, focuses on strategically important projects for Beijing, helping to increase resource extraction overseas. One example of this occurred during Chinese President Hu’s visit to Africa in 2007, when he announced that China had decided to write off more than US$80 million in debt owed to it by Sudan – a debt owned by the Exim Bank.\textsuperscript{48}

In Ghana, until recently, Chinese ODA was insignificant. Between 1964 and 1970, China extended a total of US$43.5 million in assistance, and the single largest loan advanced to Ghana by China was a buyer’s credit of US$18 million. This has changed drastically since 2001, when China became a major development partner in technical cooperation and infrastructure development, helping the Ghanaian government reduce the estimated US$2.5 billion infrastructure gap.\textsuperscript{49} Thus following the first FOCAC summit in 2000, China

\textsuperscript{46} Huse and Muyakwa 2008, 11
\textsuperscript{47} New Report: Human Rights First, 2008
\textsuperscript{48} Harman 2007
\textsuperscript{49} Cited in (M. Davies 2008, 38)
undertook a number of projects to assist Ghana in its infrastructural needs. China’s ODA complements what has become part of the country’s “symbolic diplomacy” in infrastructure financing.50

Although not dependent in the same way as la Francophonie, Ghana seems to demonstrate a willingness to engage with both China and the West. It appears that Ghana’s success with democracy is making this conditionality far less of an issue. The success of Western versus Chinese engagement however, tells a different story. This section has sought to show that the notion that Chinese engagement comes with no political pressure encourages the easterly gravitation. However, what are the limits to China’s non-intervention? What would happen if that policy were to change?

**Non-Intervention: a viable policy?**

Indeed, China’s is a policy based on non-interference, respect for sovereignty, equality and mutual benefit. Unlike Western engagement in Africa, Chinese engagement is comparably seen to come without stipulations on human rights, good governance, economic reforms or environmental concerns. The idea that China does not interfere at all in domestic politics though, needs closer examination. China does have one unassailable stipulation of engagement– the “One China” principle. It is a simple principle that mandates that in order to maintain diplomatic ties with China, and thus (in the case of African countries) in order to receive Chinese financial assistance, a country must recognize the sovereignty of Beijing over Taiwan. The impact of this policy in international affairs is easy to see in Taiwan’s diplomatic presence (or lack thereof) in Africa. When after “careful consideration of the benefits that we will be getting from mainland China”51 Malawi cut ties with Taiwan in favor of cultivating ties with China in 2008, it left Taiwan with just four

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50 (M. Davies 2008, 39)
51 Joyce Banda, Malawi Foreign Minister, cited in http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7186918.stm
remaining allies in Africa. By association, the principles of ‘One China’ naturally extend to all territories deemed to be under the sovereign rule of China, including Tibet.

As recent events in South Africa illustrate however, the notion of complete political or policy independence is not entirely tenable. In March 2009, the South African government barred the Dalai-Lama, Tibet’s spiritual leader, from attending a peace conference in Johannesburg, saying that the Tibetan leader’s presence “would not be in South Africa’s best interests.” China is one of South Africa’s most important trading partners, and official claims that the decision to deny the Dalai-Lama entry into South Africa is not a result of Chinese pressure, remain unconvincing to many. Critics see in this situation a prime example of China using its economic muscle in a way that does not reflect well on South-Africa, a country supposedly committed to freedom of expression. At the time of writing (April 2009), the situation is still playing out, but all signs point to the South African Government emphatically refusing to change its position, for which China extols it. The fallout of the situation for South Africa has so far been verbal, with prominent South Africans such as Desmond Tutu decrying his country’s “shameless” capitulation to Chinese pressure. This forces the conclusion that China does indeed exert its own form of imposition and control, however it is a new form of imposition and control that African governments appear willing to accept.

In the long run however, it is unclear exactly how long China will be able to adhere strictly to this policy, particularly in countries like Sudan, Zimbabwe and Congo. This study has often noted how perspectives of China remain positive despite its complicity in these crises. But how long will this last for? How long will African countries or the West continue

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52 The four countries are Burkina Faso, Gambia, Swaziland and Sao Tome and Principe
53 Thabo Masebe, Government Spokesman, cited in (Dugger 2009, 10)
54 (Dugger 2009)
55 Desmond Tutu, cited in (Dugger 2009)
to stand aside? Non-intervention is one thing when the issue is the size of the civil service. It is altogether another when the issue is genocide. These are questions for another study, but a point or two can be made here as there are signs that China’s approach to non-intervention could change.

On the Darfur question, since 2006, and especially in 2007, faced with mounting political pressure, and cognizant of the mounting political price it was paying, China began to urge Sudan\textsuperscript{56} to accept the AU-UN hybrid force in Darfur. Later, as President of the Security Council in July 2007, UN Resolution 1769 was passed, establishing the United Nations-African Union mission (UNAMID), the joint military force intended to resolve the Darfur Crisis. China voted for it and claimed significant credit for getting Sudan to accept the agreement.\textsuperscript{57} Elsewhere on the continent, there are signs that Beijing’s non-intervention may not be completely tenable. Following Guinea’s coup in December 2008, and confronted by a difficult global economy, China has begun to retreat from some of its riskiest and most aggressive plans, demanding the same guarantees that Western companies have long sought for their investments: economic and political stability, says Polgreen.\textsuperscript{58} Perhaps as Obiorah wrote in 2007,\textsuperscript{59} instability and conflict will compel China to realize that its long term economic interests are best served by promoting peace in Africa, at which time it will be forced to reconsider what sorts of regimes it supports. Nevertheless, it remains to be seen how African countries are going to react to the Guinea case, and if this “intervention” will be applied to them at all. Might the case of Guinea be extreme? Perhaps, yes, but seeing that China has always made it part of its strategy to venture into areas Western countries

\textsuperscript{56} Beijing is reluctant to fracture ties with Khartoum as China is Sudan’s leading trade partner, and purchases about two-thirds of Sudan’s exports – mostly oil, and it has also been the lead developer in Sudan’s oil industry and infrastructure.

\textsuperscript{57} (Save Darfur Briefing Paper 2007)

\textsuperscript{58} (Polgreen 2009)

\textsuperscript{59} (Obiorah 2007, 63)
consider too risky, it appears to be a salient withdrawal, but one that should not be overstated. This case does not reflect any monumental shift in Chinese policy – at least not yet.

In conclusion, this section has argued that the history of Western impositions on Anglophone Africa, primarily through conditionalities, comes to represent the excess baggage weighing down West-Africa relations. China is at the moment unencumbered by such baggage, although this may change.

SECTION III: EFFICIENCY OF DEVELOPMENT ALLIES

The preceding sections have argued that in response to the question “What does Anglophone Africa want in its foreign policy relations,” rapid development comes first. Taking this into account, this section responds to the next question, “What does [Ghana] receive from Chinese engagement that it cannot, has not and does not receive from Western engagement?” As a point of departure, it uses Ghana’s development plans as laid out by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and assesses the capacity of both the West and China to help Ghana realize this goal.

The MDGs are a form of aid, and they are criticized because they misrepresent the progress made by African countries, which contributes to an international stereotype of African failure. ⁶⁰ Nevertheless, it is useful to discuss them in this section because of Ghana’s commitment to them. The MDGs have been made a primary objective in Ghanaian development, and its methods to reach them require both Western and Chinese engagement, which can be compared here.

⁶⁰ (Easterly, Linn and Leipziger 2008, 13)
Following the 2000 millennium summit, Ghana adopted the MDGs as its long-term minimum set of socio-economic objectives for national development and eradication of poverty and hunger. The MDGs are a set of quantified and time-bound goals for dramatically improving the human condition by 2015. They have been agreed to by all member states of the United Nations and were reaffirmed at the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. Though dozens of countries are far off track for achieving the Goals unless progress is accelerated dramatically, many countries like Ghana have made significant progress towards the Goals. Compared to other African countries like Tanzania and Uganda, Ghana’s total investment needs for meeting the MDGs are significantly lower in aggregate and per capita terms, averaging US$1.9 billion per year or US$80 per capita. At US$1.1 billion, the country is projected to require lower levels of annual external financing than Tanzania or Uganda. However, this need remains significantly above the US$758 million in ODA that donors committed to Ghana in 2001 for MDG and non-MDG-related activities.

With Ghana’s decision to aggressively pursue the MDGs, and the fact that assistance from the West is insufficient to achieve this goal, partnership with China appears practical and necessary. China’s record elsewhere on the continent suggests that it can bring Ghana success. Consider, for example, the speed with which it began to complete its ambitious promises to Africa. As one of the eight measures proposed by President Hu in 2006, China pledged to set up three to five economic and trade cooperation zones in Africa. The

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61 The following information on the MDGs is excerpted from (Sachs et al, 2004)
62 (Sachs et al 2004, 7)
63 (Sachs et al 2004, 16)
64 The selected sites are the Zambia-China Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone, the Nigeria-Guangdong Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone, the Lekki Free Trade Zone in Nigeria, the Egypt Suez Economic and Trade
speedy construction of these zones shows the lengths that China goes to in order to put speculation to rest and prove that it is as good as its word. Among the economic zones, the Zambia-China Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone was the first to be established, and was commemorated during President Hu’s 2007 Africa tour. To date, the zone has developed well, as evidenced by the fact that the 10 enterprises that have set up offices in the zone have signed contracts totaling investment of more than US$700 million in industries such as mining, smelting and chemical engineering.65 The enterprises are projected to provide employment for 3,500 local people and reach a total of US$300 million in local procurement.66

Further evidence of China’s prized capacity to bring desired change quickly to Africa lies in the action of the China-Africa Development Fund. Officially launched in 2007, the China-Africa Development Fund, currently China’s largest private equity fund had by the end of 2008, already invested nearly US$400 million in 20 projects, bringing total investment in Africa by Chinese enterprises to over US$2 billion, said Minister Chen. By the end of 2008, China’s direct investment stock to Africa had surpassed 5 billion USD.67

China’s commitment to Africa remains strong even in times of financial crisis. Amidst the deepening 2008/2009 international financial crisis, China’s foreign minister, Yang Jiechi, allayed African fears that Beijing would downscale its trade and investments across the continent. China will “continue to provide assistance to African countries,” Yang confirmed during the final leg of his African visit in South Africa. The US$77 million low interest aid package signed earlier on the trip with Uganda, in “a renewed bid to boost the

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65 (Daily 2009).
66 (Daily 2009).
67 (Daily 2009).
East African country’s development\(^\text{68}\) seems to substantiate his country’s stated commitment. Of further import, Chen noted, almost fifty percent of the hospitals that China pledged to help build in Africa have already finished construction bidding, and the construction of the African Union Conference Center, also a Chinese aid project, began last December and is scheduled to be completed in 2011.\(^\text{69}\)

Thus the increasing favor that China finds in Africa is not just due to Western inaction or African discontent with the nature of its current and historic economic ties with the West. China’s increasing favor is also driven by its decidedly pragmatic nature. This has led some to question as to whether Africa is indeed in charge, or whether China is. “China is seemingly engaging Africa on new terms – terms that are not shaped by traditional powers, nor perhaps even by Africans themselves,” Davies suggests.\(^\text{70}\) However, if the following claim by President Wade is anything to go by, this fear is not an issue, and his words can be interpreted as indicative of Western fears of a gravitation east. As Wade said

It is a telling sign of the post-colonial mindset that some donor organizations in the West dismiss the trade agreements between Chinese banks and African states that produce these vital improvements – as though Africa was naïve enough to just offload its precious natural resources at bargain prices to obtain a commitment for another stadium or state house.\(^\text{71}\)

China’s aid to Ghana then cuts across infrastructure, education, agriculture and building construction, though cooperation in the energy and infrastructure sectors are the areas particularly welcomed by Ghana. Across Africa, dramatic investments are required to maintain current levels of service provision in cities that are growing at the fastest rates observed anywhere in the world. China stands poised to provide the investment necessary

\(^68\) (Naidu 2009)
\(^69\) (Xuequan 2009).
\(^70\) (M. Davies 2008, iv)
\(^71\) (Wade 2008)
to address this issue. A major difference between the West and China is China’s willingness and capacity to quickly finance essential infrastructure projects.

Consequently, as decisions taken in Ghana leading up to the 2008 Africa Cup of Nations suggest, one can indeed speak of a shift favoring Chinese enterprises in the business and construction world. A high level Ghanaian Government delegation visited the Pudong Yuashen Stadium in Shanghai, China, and Ghana’s Cabinet thereafter recommended that the government pursue the replication of this particular stadium for the tournament in Ghana. Tendered offers were withdrawn from other firms and handed to the Shanghai Construction Group, that had constructed the Pudong Yuashen Stadium in Shanghai.72

The Ghanaian government’s shift in economic ties towards China is very closely linked to Chinese aid policy and its capacity for results. What the interviews reflected was that the reason China has been able to expand so quickly in Ghana and Africa is the fact that with the exception of adherence to the “One China Principle”, its financial assistance has no political or fiscal conditionalities in the manner of Western assistance,73 which means not only can China implement projects faster, but it also maintains a wholly different political relationship with African allies like Ghana.

It is estimated that Ghana has a US$350-400 million per annum infrastructure gap in energy, roads and telecommunications which must be closed if the country is to develop and reach its MDG goal of reducing poverty to 25.8% by 2015.74 Ghana has also identified reaching middle-income status as one of its main priorities, meaning income per capita should have reached US$1,000 by 2015. It projects reaching this target by stimulating productivity in agriculture, expanding the industrial base and non-traditional exports, and

72 (Osafo-Maafo MP 2005)
74 (Idun-Arhurts 2008, 6)
encouraging learning and innovation in information and communications technology (ICT).

In order to get near achieving such goals, the infrastructure issue must be addressed.

Ghana’s gravitation toward China can be seen in this context as it is an area which has caused the two countries to become increasingly close. Ghana has been expanding its cooperation with China in a number of those sectors that traditional donors have skirted in the past. This strategy is paying off as it has caused a shift in African interest of China.

African interest has shifted to China in part because

the Chinese became smarter...  

they realized that the West quickly captured Africa. China has Superpower ambitions, but everywhere else had already been exploited; Africa has cheap, abundant, natural and human resources that China needs, and China can provide African countries with what they need and want; rapid financing for infrastructure, free of external conditions.  

This next section discusses China’s impact on vital infrastructure development in Ghana.

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SECTION IV: BUI DAM & MAKOLA MARKET

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Bui dam and Ghana’s Energy Sector

Ghana’s largest aid commitment from the PRC to date comes in the form of a US$562 million loan for the construction of a US$622 million dam at Bui. The Ghanaian government is providing the counterpart funding of US$60 million. The idea to build a dam at Bui has been around since the days of Nkrumah yet construction has been perpetually delayed owing to a lack of financing. The Nkrumah government successfully constructed the Akosombo Dam on the Volta River with help from the World Bank, and the American and British governments. Akosombo Dam, once the “the largest single investment in the

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75 She uses ‘smarter’ here in the Ghanaian cultural understanding to mean discerning and shrewd.

76 Author Interviews, Accra, Ghana, January 2009
economic development plans of Ghana,“\(^{77}\) has not been the answer to the country’s woes. Acute water crises as a result of droughts attributed mostly to the effects of Global Warming have led to perennial water levels too low to meet the country’s needs.\(^{78}\) Bui Dam stands to change this.

Located strategically between the north and south of the country, the construction of the new dam, expected to be completed by 2012, stands to bring enormous benefits not just to Ghana, but some of its neighbors too. The dam is set to provide 10 percent of Ghana’s current energy requirements,\(^{79}\) as part of a long-term plan to increase the country’s energy supply capacity from the current 2,000 megawatts to 6,000 megawatts by 2015.\(^{80}\) With the Akosombo Dam’s diminished capacity, the Bui dam will improve the security of power supply to Northern Ghana, and will allow for energy exports to Côte d’Ivoire and Burkina Faso. Energy from Akosombo will then be diverted back to supply the southern part of the country, bringing a closer end to the country’s crucial energy bottleneck. In April 2007, agreements were signed with Sino-Hydro, the Chinese company contracted with building the 400 megawatt dam.

“The dam is already built,”\(^{81}\) said Fred Oware, the CEO of Bui Authority, created to oversee the project, “I’ve gone beyond thought – the dam is there,” he concludes. With construction running ahead of schedule,\(^{82}\) Oware has reason to be optimistic. Further, of the 900 workers (both skilled and semiskilled) working at Bui, 67 per cent were Ghanaian, with the remainder of the workforce being made up mostly of Chinese workers and some

\(^{77}\) (“History of Akosombo Dam”, 2009)  
\(^{78}\) (Davies, 2008, p. 40)  
\(^{79}\) (Davies, 2008, p. 40)  
\(^{80}\) (Idun-Arkhurts, 2008, p. 7)  
\(^{81}\) (Bui Hydroelectric Project, 2007, 1min 10s)  
\(^{82}\) This was in 2008 when the documentary was filmed
Pakistanis. The project will eventually employ 3,400 workers, 2,900 of which will be local labor. Not only is a dam being built, but there are plans to develop the entire area by constructing Bui City, a planned metropolis and economic zone, such as China is already building in Zambia and Nigeria. The area will get a new airport, perhaps a theme park to increase tourism. Hotels and industries are reportedly bidding for quarried land, and the area will further provide economic benefit through irrigation capabilities and fisheries. Furthermore, Bui Authority propose to build a small research institution, the Bui Institute of Technology, to specialize in civil engineering, geology and hydrology. The institution is contracted to be in partnership with the Kwame Nkrumah University, Ghana’s premier higher learning science and technology institution, and Cornell University, the renowned American University.84

With this in mind, the excitement over Chinese engagement in large projects is unmistakable. At such projects, both Ghanaians and Chinese workers work in two shifts for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – a rate of work observable in Chinese endeavors across the continent, resulting in a speed of construction that does not cease to amaze and attract African governments. This project is a typical example of why African governments flock to China for quick, large-scale investment for projects. As the Makola case study shows, however, in smaller sectors, market competition does not hold China in the same high regard.

Smaller energy related projects are also being implemented. In a joint venture utilising funds from the China-Africa Development Fund, China’s Shenzhen Energy Investment Co Ltd has committed to build a gas-fired plant in Ghana. At a total cost of 1.03 billion RMB (approximately US$150 million), the project will add 200MW to the energy grid.

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83 (Bui Hydroelectric Project, 2007, 16:00mins)
84 (Bui Hydroelectric Project, 2007)
Shenzhen is expected to retain a 60% stake in the venture with the remaining 40 percent being held through the China-Africa Development Fund. China is playing a vital role in African development because of its engagement in the energy sector. As in most other African countries, a persistent energy crisis slows Ghana’s growth by increasing the costs of running a business. Many businesses are often forced to either scale back or shut down operations because of insufficient and unreliable energy supplies. Those who can afford it thus buy petrol generators to supplement the power from the natural grid, although they must still pay full price for power. In many ways this is a necessary cost to incur, but an operating cost that could and should be avoided.

The crisis affects business at all points on the spectrum. At the top end; the Volta Aluminium Company (VALCO), a major foreign exchange earner for the country and a major source of raw materials for many of Ghana’s flagship local companies such as Aluworks, in March 2007 was compelled to shut down temporarily for the 11th time in its 40-year history due to chronic power and water shortages. Multinationals also suffer; Coca-Cola lost US$4,000 for every day without power and was also constrained to abandon plans to start a bottling operation in Tamale, the capital of the Northern Region of Ghana, depriving the poorer northern part of the country of a major economic activity. Inadequate energy supply drove Ghana into a year-long energy crisis in 2006 causing the industrial sector to forego growth. That year growth in the industrial sector declined from 9% to 7.4%. Had there been no energy crisis, the World Bank estimates that the country as a whole could have grown by 7.5–8% over the period, the growth rate needed to achieve the 2015 Millennium Development Targets.85

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85 (idun-Arkhurts 2008, 8)
Politically, China holds a position of high regard amongst Ghana’s governmental elite. There are frequent and publicly reciprocated efforts at highlighting the close relationship between the two countries. However, though the relationship is highly valued, it has not meant that Ghana has cut or diminished its positive relationship with Western countries and IFI’s. Amongst Ghanaian citizens interviewed, it also appears that citizens are equally excited about China’s identification as a development partner for Ghana. In the discourse over gravitation, the research suggests that it is not just the absolute values of aid that matter to the average citizen and to government, but also the manner in which assistance is extended. Ghanaians do by and large feel that China extends more respect to them and their country than Western nations do, or at least traditionally have. This contributes to there being less scrutiny and suspicion applied to China. Because of its status as a non-Colonizer in Africa and because of its renewed current focus in Africa, its success and the highly visible results of engagement there is wide spread approval of Ghana’s relationship with China – so long as remains a win-win situation.

This was also what traders in Makola wanted. China to assist Ghana in large scale construction, and win-win business, which was not what was going on in the market. The presence of Chinese people in local markets is not without its problems. Although Makola traders feel that trading with the Chinese is cheaper and easier, they do not want the Chinese to involve themselves further in the retail sectors as they grossly undercut the market. Although there is currently little physical animosity, this could potentially grow. Similarly, although Ghana’s small scale mining sector is legally reserved only for Ghanaian nationals, over 60% of the sector is being run by Chinese. They came through Ghanaian nationals who took possession of industries, but were unable to fully exploit them, and
though there currently is little resentment of this, in the next few years, it is a real possibility.\footnote{Abboulai: Third World Network Africa Fohamu Podcast}

SECTION V: EVALUATION

Anglophone West Africa’s anti-colonial stance articulated through the Pan-African ideology is the basis of the difference between the priorities for African self-assertion witnessed in the Anglophone and Francophone cases. It is perhaps a result of their different approaches to colonial rule. The French cultural ideal of assimilation discussed in Chapter IV sought “constantly more intimate union between the colonial territory and the metropolitan territory… [colonies were] considered simple prolongation[s] of the soil of the mother country.”\footnote{See also LeVine, p 43 Arthur Girault, Principes de Colonisation et de Legislation Coloniale (Paris, 1st ed., 1895; 2nd ed., 1903; 3rd ed., 1907; 4th ed., 1921; 5th ed., 1927). The quotation used is from the 1\textsuperscript{st} edition} In direct contrast to Britain’s approach, France’s method of rule tended to erode African authority.\footnote{Betts 1990, 148}

Chinese assistance is necessary for rapid economic development. Ghana is one of the most favored destinations for funds targeting Africa.\footnote{Idun-Arkhurs, 2008} Despite the country being one of the top 10 best reforming countries in 2007 and 2008,\footnote{World Bank, Doing Business Report, 2007; Doing Business Report, 2008. Washington DC: World Bank.} however, there remain significant constraints to development, chief amongst them being the limitation posed by inadequate infrastructure. Deficient or scarce infrastructure in energy, roads and telecommunications form one of the most significant barriers to Ghanaian efforts at development. For instance, in 2007, Ghana’s energy crisis is estimated to have reduced the country’s overall growth rate
by 1.5%. Without the crisis, a growth rate of 7.5-8% could have been achieved over the period.\(^9\)

The need for financing is so great that most African countries welcome China’s assistance, including loans. This is particularly the case when it comes to large projects. Although the overarching focus by the West on immediate poverty reduction is crucial, other aspects of development – infrastructure and energy in particular - have perhaps been neglected by traditional lenders, and this has led Africans to turn to China instead. Some of these projects are considered prerequisites for growth, and it is expected that loans from China can help remove these development bottlenecks.

Despite the pragmatism of economic gain, African self-assertion remains a convincing argument because “nothing can replace a people’s need for self-governance.”\(^9\) In order to escape the African predicament, Africans must free themselves from such shortcomings as the colonial mentality and dependency. Waiting for salvation from the West or from China is as “illusory as it is for women to expect to attain their liberation through male goodwill,” writes the philosopher and historian, Albert Memmi. Escaping the African predicament requires a “rediscovered freedom” in order to create the pragmatic balance between the specific needs of Africa’s people and economic liberalism. Chinese engagement and African self-assertion can together be the first steps toward rediscovering that essential freedom.

\(^9\) (idun-Arkhurts 2008, 8)
\(^9\) (Memmi 2004, 140)
CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION AND SYNTHESIS

In the preceding chapters, I argued that Africa’s relationship with its development allies is evolving. As Africa continues the process of cultivating ties with Beijing, the “exceptionalism” and predominance of Western engagement is no longer assured. Africa’s resurgent desire to express itself in response to its paradoxical, debilitating development crisis, the African predicament, propels this easterly gravitation. This is not just because of the West’s role in this situation, but also because in the wider scheme of things, China is doing a better job of responding to Africa’s demands. And what exactly are these demands? Africa desires to escape the African predicament and so the first logical step is to bring to an end the factors that have caused this predicament. The core-periphery relationship and the attendant attitudes of condescension and disrespect that are seen to have typified relations between the West and Africa are at the heart of the matter. Africa seeks an end to such relationships; it seeks to improve its development through new forms of foreign engagement free of attitudes of patronization, and the politics of control, and this drives Africa east.

Emphasizing this need for assertion by no means implies that politics or economics are not significant determinants in the easterly gravitation- it goes without saying that they are. Africa, however, stresses the need for change in its foreign relations. It is not just absolute sums of financial assistance, for instance, that Africa is after. Africa is determined to compel change in its economic and political engagements that will afford it more control over its own affairs. In this regard, Africa both desires and uses self-assertion in communicating its role in the international system, and its role in its own development. The point to be made then, is that without China’s readiness or ability to accompany its political and economic engagement with the factors demanded by African self-assertion, we would
not see Africa as willing as it currently is, to support Chinese engagement. And this is not just in government or elite fields.

Across Africa, favorable views of China outnumber critical judgments by two-to-one or more (in every country except South Africa,) where opinion is divided. In both Mali and Côte d’Ivoire, more than nine in ten (92%) have a favorable view of China, and positive opinions also overwhelm critical judgments in Senegal and Kenya, where 81% view China favorably. Even in Uganda – where a third of the population does not know enough about China to express an opinion – twice as many have a favorable view as view China unfavorably (45% to 23%).¹ The overwhelming approval of China is puzzling. The economic and political gains of supporting Chinese engagement are substantial indeed, but in both these domains, there is striking similarity, or even continuance, to the type of engagement Africa desires to escape. The curiosity here is deepened by the awareness that Chinese engagement is often criticized for flooding markets, undercutting competition, and even contributing to violence in crises such as in Darfur and Zimbabwe.

I conclude this study in a three part discussion structured to address this issue, and show that Chinese engagement is viewed positively thus far, because China appears as a liberating alternative to Western engagement. In Section I, I review why Africa appears willing to encourage Chinese engagement, in a summary of the key factors that China’s engagement changes. Section II looks a little further ahead to what stands to change, and Section III presents concluding thoughts.

¹ (Wike and Horowitz 2007, 41)
SECTION I-What is changing?

The key factors addressed in this section are patrimonialism and condescension, the mentality of the core-periphery experience, imposition, and economic relations and policy independence. Perhaps China’s greatest asset in being able to deliver this change, is its ability to frame the issue in historical terms that emphasize fraternity and similarity. Thus, I begin with this theme.

Ia. Similarity – How China successfully frames its engagement with Africa

Having suffered humiliation and occupation during its colonial period, the transformation and respect China sought, mirrors aspirations on the African continent. Appealing to historical relations has been a deliberate strategy from Beijing. What are some of its contentions? “Politically, China has always regarded Africa as its most reliable ally in the international struggle.”2 Beijing seeks to highlight similarities between China and Africa; it formulates its identity through its current claims of belonging to the third world. Its argument is that its cooperation should be viewed as mutually beneficial because China is the “largest developing country and Africa contains the largest concentration of developing countries,” and thus its cooperation with Africa, is intended to “uplift[.] the collective prosperity of developing countries and enable them to share in the fruits of globalization.”3

China is particularly successful at communicating this message of historical solidarity in countries where relatively recent memories of Chinese support for newly-independent African states reinforce the image of China as a partner that has stood the test of time. This particularly applies to such countries as Ghana, Tanzania and Zambia – long-term political

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2 (He 2008, 143)
3 (He 2008, 144)
ally of China through the “romantic” 1960s and 1970s. It invokes the image that Beijing has not abandoned the founding principles that have guided its engagement with the continent – the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence – the cornerstones of diplomatic relations between China and its allies.

The principles underline the “mutually beneficial” nature of Chinese relations with Africa and reinforces China’s image as a brother to Africa. Its developing country status perpetuates the impression that China understands Africa’s development needs better than the West. This is not just empty rhetoric, as China has been successful in conveying this message to its “quasi-diplomats,” who then carry this message with them as they travel. Asked why he had decided to operate a shoe store in Accra’s Makola market, a Chinese trader known as Steven, underlined the fact that “China is close to Africa; China takes Africa as a brother. The foreign ministry has said that when we see a black man, we should think “brother.”

Thanks to the sense of a common history, Chinese engagement is encouraged in Africa because China has “a much greater sense of the personal urgency of development in Africa than many Western nations.”

lb. Economic ties and policy independence

Economic ties with China are growing ever closer and China is supported in Africa, as thanks to Chinese engagement, “Africa is drastically shifting its trade pattern away from its colonial framework: It too is becoming linked to a rapidly changing economy...making it easier for Africa to adjust to the emerging new global economic order.”

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4 (M. Davies 2008, 51)
5 This term was coined by Adama Gaye, see (Gaye 2008), and refers to Chinese citizens in Africa who, by their very presence, spread the PRCs rhetoric.
6 Author Interviews, Accra, Ghana, January 2009
7 (Wade 2008)
8 (Maswana 2007, 16)
Here, we see an important Ghanaian and African motivation for encouraging Chinese engagement; appropriate knowledge transfer to integrate Africa into the Global economy. “We can learn real marketing from the Chinese,” explains Gbenga Edison. For instance, we can learn the value of “profits in small volumes and the benefits of cheap goods,” he says. The idea is that Africa can learn to develop comparative advantage in certain areas by starting out small. Ghana looks up to China's business acumen, says Anti, and not its political model, and, like many Ghanaians, believes that “China has come in strictly for business.”

Unintentional, but no less interesting for its occurrence, Anti’s remarks mirror those of China’s former deputy Foreign Minister, Zhou Wen Zhong, who famously remarked that China is engaged all over Africa and respects the sovereignty of all nations because “business is business.” The effect of China’s “business is business” attitude and non intervention policy on Africa’s eastward gravitation should not be underestimated: It appeals to sober-minded intellectuals and members of the public, and not just the leaders of dubious regimes; It is a hallmark of Sino-African cooperation that completely defines it in opposition to Western cooperation.

The Chinese do not peg their economic activity or aid to political conditions... you never hear the Chinese saying that they will not finish a project because the government has not done enough to tackle corruption. If they are going to build a road, then it will be built.

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9 Author Interviews, Accra, Ghana, January 2009
11 Kenyan Government spokesman, Alfred Mutua, cited in (Obiorah 2007, 40)
Chinese engagement is also much faster than Western engagement. A contract that would take five years to implement with the World Bank can take just three months with Chinese authorities.  

Ic. Mentality of Core-Periphery Experience

At the heart of the African predicament is the core-periphery relationship. This relationship is indeed primarily economic, and political, but it has other elements as well. As Frank explains, the economic dependence entrenched in such relationships is also manifest in the form of inferiority complexes among the populations in the periphery. This is linked to the colonial mentality that has plagued African development. Chinese engagement is helping Africa emerge from this:

The shift towards China is based on the fact that Africans are now discerning. [There is a] sense of pride and self realization sweeping through the continent...a sense that what the white man can do, I can also do. The myth that the white man is so superior is broken; attempts to dominate the African are rebuffed. Now Africa has options in China. (Anti)

Western influence has also resulted in the negative notion that Africans appear to be “the eternal students” of the West -- a notion that has cost Africa greatly as it has led to a diminishing of confidence, a lack of ownership, and dependency. China, it seems, is engaging with Africa on new terms – “terms that are not shaped by traditional powers, nor perhaps by Africans themselves,” suggests Davies. By all means China is pursuing its interests in Africa, but is it also merely replicating colonial relations? Is it, as Davies suggests, in control? Is it co-opting and exploiting Africa in the same way as the former colonial

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12 See (Wade 2008) “I achieved more in my one hour meeting with President Hu Jintao in an executive suite at my hotel in Berlin during the recent G8 meeting in Heiligendamm than I did during the entire, orchestrated meeting of world leaders at the summit”

13 (A. Frank 1972)

14 Interview with Gifty Anti, Accra, Ghana, January 2009

15 (Davies, 2008, p. vii, emphasis mine)
powers? President Wade of Senegal however argues against this, asserting that Africa really is in control, and is not “naive enough to just offload its precious natural resources at bargain prices to obtain a commitment for another stadium or state house.”

There is the sense that Africa is finally beginning to think seriously about taking control of its destiny.

As far as accusations of exploitation and imposition go, China is not too dissimilar from the West. In fact, it is arguably better than the West. Western countries have a highly visible and documented history of exploitation with Africa. In order not dwell on eras already discussed in this study, I draw an example from the 1990s. In that decade, France attracted increasing criticism for the “self-serving and wasteful” deployment of its ODA to Africa. Part of the reason for this criticism was the fact that almost all French ODA was structured to benefit the members of its clientelist networks. These réseaux provided ample opportunity for corruption and for a majority of people, the benefits of French aid filtered down slowly, if they did at all. When aid did trickle down, it provided for over-priced French goods or was tied to obtaining contracts for French firms. Thus the self-serving nature and complicity in tragedy of foreign nations on African soil is not new. The West has been complicit in Africa’s predicament. As for China, we can recall one of the conclusions from Chapter IV to sums things up – compared to the West, China appears distinctly as the lesser evil.

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17 (Wade 2008). Wade’s entire statement is provided here because it neatly reflects African perspectives on Western and Chinese relationships with Africa. It is a telling sign of the post-colonial mindset that some donor organizations in the west dismiss the trade agreements between Chinese banks and African states that produce these vital improvements – as though Africa was naive enough to just offload its precious natural resources at bargain prices to obtain a commitment for another stadium or state house.


19 (Chafar, “France and Senegal: The End of the Affair?” 2003, 162)

SECTION II - What Stands to Change?

IIa. Changes to the Global System

It is noteworthy that perceptions of China among Africa’s political leaders go beyond an appreciation for no-strings attached aid and trade. China’s potential as an alternative political and economic model to Western prescriptions is pervasive among African politicians, intellectuals, civil society and media. The global system has been unipolar and dominated by the West (mostly the U.S) since the end of the Cold War. This has been a source of much discomfort for many African intellectuals and political leaders. China’s emergence as a major axis of power is often welcomed among those – in Africa, and elsewhere – who hope that it may herald a return to global multi-polarity. In this situation, Africa will have a greater role on the global stage than they now do.\(^{21}\)

France, interestingly, is one of those countries that “welcomes” Chinese engagement in Africa because it stands to reorder global politics towards multipolarity. Surprisingly, France appears to view Chinese engagement in Africa as a non-zero sum threat. France approaches China’s engagement with a “measured pessimism”\(^ {22}\) that extends from the fact that economically, France and China do not seem to be clashing as competitors in Africa. French companies like Bouygues, Dumez, Electricité de France and Vivendi still dominate the infrastructure sector in Francophone Africa. Major French banks like Société Générale and Crédit Lyonnais represent 70 percent of the banking sector in Francophone Africa.\(^ {23}\) For France, its companies still maintain significant business niches that are currently unthreatened by Chinese ambitions. Competition is indeed fierce and of a zero-sum nature in sectors such as energy and construction, but the rivalry at the moment does

\(^{21}\) (Obiorah 2007, 40)
\(^{22}\) (Marchal, “French Perspectives on the New Sino-African Relations” 2008, 190)
\(^{23}\) ibid
not worry French policymakers.\textsuperscript{24} This lends credence to the idea that emerging Sino-African bonds reflect a “normalization” of ties between Africa and China. At least from the French perspective, China is merely\textsuperscript{25} in the process of becoming what it once was – one of the world’s biggest economies.

This attitude and reality could obviously change, particularly as China win increasing favor with Africans as a development ally. As for African strategies to pull itself out of the predicament, however, some Africans and Chinese promote the idea that the West’s past approaches to development in Africa have generated too few success stories to be worthy of further consideration.\textsuperscript{26} Their approach has been “too distant”\textsuperscript{27} from Africa’s experiences and thus offers few transferrable lessons. I continue this discussion in the next section.

Ilb. An Alternative Model for African Development?

China’s success in pulling millions of its people out of poverty in two decades and without IFI imposed decrees, leads some on the continent to embrace China’s model. It appears that Chinese engagement in Africa could result in some major shifts in global power. The West appears to be losing its influence in Africa; its ideal that served as a model has begun to weaken throughout the world, and “is no longer the bright new engine that led the majority of Europe into the nineteenth century,” writes Memmi. “Perhaps now we are witnessing the end of nation-states,” he concludes.\textsuperscript{28}

At the very least, Sino-African ties must continue to be examined, and from diverse perspectives. This study just scratches the surface in taking a non economic or non political factor like perception, and making the connection with foreign policy directions. A broader

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{24} ibid
\textsuperscript{25} (Marchal, “French Perspectives on the New Sino-African Relations” 2008, 188)
\textsuperscript{26} (Brookes 2007)
\textsuperscript{27} (Brookes 2007)
\textsuperscript{28} (Memmi 2004, 55)
\end{flushleft}
range and greater number of interviewees from different backgrounds all across Africa would enrich a study like this. Africa is poised on the verge of a new era that could see it take strides on the way out of its predicament. International relations and development in Africa are in a transformative phase, and require new thinking. Particularly with development, old approaches have not worked, and this study has sought to provide a new approach, a means to articulate a new, intelligent stance to international relations with Africa, by examining the often overlooked psycho-cultural aspect. African self-assertion therefore argues that Africa would rather relate to newer options than Western countries for psychological reasons, which must be taken into account when foreign powers, primarily Western powers, engage with Africa. Without this understanding, situations that may be dismissed as unimportant in the wider scheme of things, could actually be crucial to national interests. I examine this idea in the final section of this study.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

In a speech by French President Nicolas Sarkozy, in Dakar in July 2007, he outlined his country’s vision of Franco-African relations. Though Africa had at first eagerly anticipated the French President’s visit, the condescending comments in his speech soon had people vehemently denouncing him. "The drama in Africa is that the African has never really entered history," proclaimed Sarkozy, who continued in this provocative tone by evoking an image of African civilization lacking in “human adventure and the idea of progress.”

Though Sarkozy did acknowledge the moral blights of both slavery and colonialism, he did so in a manner that inflamed his audience. Deeply insulted by his speech, some critics interpreted his message as one intended to “confirm the supremacy of a Europe

29 (Robert, 2007)
30 Speech by Nicolas Sarkozy, 2007, cited in (Robert, 2007)
representing freedom, emancipation and justice...in contrast with an African identity immobilized by its dreams.”31 What is interesting about this particular case, is not so much the call to Africans to “open their eyes” to the modern world or indeed the call to Africans to look to the future and not dwell on the past, for many Africans are very aware of this already; many Africans are lucid enough to realize that inaction and laying all the blame for current problems on the past is not a strategy conducive to development.

The resentment came because the manner of his speech dredged up memories of this still recent and painful past. The bitterness was exacerbated by feelings that due to the historical ties between France and Africa, Sarkozy should have known better; as one journalist put it, “the head of the state responsible for many of the wrongs in that past is perhaps not in the best position to make such judgments.”32

Such outraged responses as an outcome of this episode reveals that the past, in particular the colonial past, is still a sensitive topic for Africans and it affects their current attitudes toward the former colonial powers. Colonialism is not a topic that cannot be talked about, but Western nations in particular must be aware of the sensitivity of the issue., and how they talk about it. It is like a healing wound that is easily opened and easily becomes septic. In this sense, Sarkozy’s words were toxic. If this study has sought to do one thing, it is not to dismiss the importance of sentiments such as African self-assertion that communicate a nation’s, or even a continent’s state of mind.

China understands this, and is doing very well with it. The thrust of its new engagement with Africa is about meeting the demand for African self-assertion; thus, “affording African countries respect and recognition of the right to choose their

31 (Robert 2007)
32 (Robert 2007)
independent path of development,” says Wenping He.33 “This is clearly stated in the language that China adopts toward Africa, which is nonintrusive and outlines continual support for African countries’ efforts to seek renewal through strengthening unity.”34 The West need not follow the exact same strategy, but must be aware of the implications of not doing so, as they could greatly affect national interest. Sarkozy cannot continue to say things, like this because he acidifies a ruptured wound struggling to heal. Heed should be paid to African self-assertion as the beginnings of a mutually beneficial healing process and rapprochement. Economics and politics on their own are not enough. In a world that arguably shows signs of shifting towards multi-polarity, the emerging reality is that African peoples and governments will appear less and less as passive bystanders; it would seem prudent to understand the factors that will promote alienation, and to work against them.

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33 Professor, Director of African Studies Section of Institute of West Asian and African Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.
34 (He 2008, 151)
## APPENDIX

### TABLES AND CHARTS

### TABLE 1: EU TRADE WITH AFRICA

<table>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>91793</td>
<td>95034</td>
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<td>Primary products:</td>
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<td>Food &amp; drink</td>
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<td>Crude materials</td>
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<td>90700</td>
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<td>Energy</td>
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<td>9374</td>
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<td>Manufactured goods:</td>
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<td>73543</td>
<td>26021</td>
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<td>39879</td>
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<td>Chemicals</td>
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<td>10515</td>
<td>18800</td>
<td>2483</td>
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<td>8433</td>
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<td>Machinery &amp; vehicles</td>
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<td>40913</td>
<td>9046</td>
<td>8963</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other manufactured articles</td>
<td>15885</td>
<td>21712</td>
<td>18514</td>
<td>23090</td>
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<td>-1376</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>1691</td>
<td>7602</td>
<td>9666</td>
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Source:


### TABLE 2: AFRICAN EXPORTS, Scale: USD Millions

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<tr>
<td>EXPORTS TO CHINA, P.R.: HONG KONG</td>
<td>498.598</td>
<td>435.56</td>
<td>440.926</td>
<td>438.29</td>
<td>555.044</td>
<td>664.68</td>
<td>828.969</td>
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<td>14246.6</td>
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<td>19396.8</td>
<td>18148.5</td>
<td>26912.6</td>
<td>39169.9</td>
<td>56404.3</td>
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<td>EXPORTS TO UNITED KINGDOM</td>
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<td>7089.38</td>
<td>7040.65</td>
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<td>6884.91</td>
<td>8615.7</td>
<td>9427.95</td>
<td>10179.0</td>
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<td>EXPORTS TO FRANCE</td>
<td>10528.6</td>
<td>12521.1</td>
<td>12473.3</td>
<td>12573.5</td>
<td>15133.6</td>
<td>16882.2</td>
<td>19266.5</td>
<td>20560.7</td>
<td>22071.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXPORTS TO EURO AREA (AGGREG.)</td>
<td>38191.0</td>
<td>46189.8</td>
<td>43716.0</td>
<td>46377</td>
<td>53346.5</td>
<td>61484.7</td>
<td>77341.4</td>
<td>88323.3</td>
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Source: IMF Direction of Trade Statistics, author generated
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<td>IMPORTS FROM UNITED STATES</td>
<td>8358.34</td>
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<td>8700.0</td>
<td>8881.4</td>
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<td>11671.3</td>
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<td>6709.7</td>
<td>8187.0</td>
<td>9040.34</td>
<td>9096.02</td>
<td>10123.20</td>
<td>11597.40</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMPORTS FROM FRANCE</td>
<td>15375.7</td>
<td>14807.9</td>
<td>15065.9</td>
<td>14303.1</td>
<td>19485.9</td>
<td>24151.3</td>
<td>25449.20</td>
<td>26601.60</td>
<td>31346.30</td>
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<td>IMPORTS FROM EURO AREA (AGGREG.)</td>
<td>43008.9</td>
<td>39613.9</td>
<td>41339.5</td>
<td>42926.3</td>
<td>55319.6</td>
<td>67835.3</td>
<td>75342.20</td>
<td>87102.90</td>
<td>116065.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMPORTS FROM CHINA, P.R.: HONG KONG</td>
<td>997.794</td>
<td>776.31</td>
<td>679.45</td>
<td>688.89</td>
<td>883.24</td>
<td>1092.69</td>
<td>1079.88</td>
<td>1267.580</td>
<td>1521.99</td>
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Source: IMF direction of Trade Statistics, author generated
**CHART 1: NET OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE IN 2007**

**CHART II: NET OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE – AS PERCENTAGE OF GNI**

![Chart II: Net Official Development Assistance as Percentage of GNI](chart2)

**CHART III: PERFORMANCE AGAINST 2005 GLENEAGLES ODA PROJECTION**

![Chart III: Performance Against 2005 G8 ODA Projection](chart3)

*Note: This chart does not show actual ODA figures for 2005 and 2006 which were affected by exceptional debt relief.*

**FIGURE I: Top 10 recipients of French ODA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Ten Recipients of Gross ODA (USD million)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Nigeria</td>
<td>1,028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Iraq</td>
<td>775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Cameroon</td>
<td>571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Morocco</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Mayotte</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Senegal</td>
<td>258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Tunisia</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Algeria</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 China</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Viet Nam</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Source: OECD*
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