

# Cycle of Seminars

## China-Africa/Africa-China relations

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# Schedule

**October 16, 4.30pm**

**China-Africa relations: past and present**

Mariasole Pepa (University of Padova), in presence & on zoom Palazzo Maldura, room CAL2

**October 23, 4.30pm**

**Politics of environmental governance in China's belt and road initiative (BRI)**

Usman Ashraf (University of Helsinki, Doctoral Programme in Political, Societal and Regional Change), in presence & on zoom Palazzo Maldura, room CAL2

**October 30, 4.30pm**

**Rethinking the political economy of China-African agricultural cooperation: the Chinese Agricultural Technology Demonstration Centers**

Mariasole Pepa (University of Padova), in presence & on zoom Palazzo Maldura, room CAL2

**November 6, 4.30pm**

**China-Africa infrastructure relations: building infrastructure and brokering labour relations**

Elisa Gambino (University of Edinburgh, AFRIGOS Project), in presence & on zoom Palazzo Maldura, room H

**November 13, 4.30pm**

**Africa-China relations amid COVID-19**

Mariasole Pepa (University of Padova), in presence & on zoom Palazzo Maldura, room CAL2

**November 20, 4.30pm**

**An overview of Tanzania-China relations**

Mariasole Pepa (University of Padova), in presence & on zoom Palazzo Maldura, room H

**November 27, 2.30pm**

**China's Soft Power in Tanzania: Opportunities and Challenges**

Mariasole Pepa (University of Padova) with the intervention of Dr. Muhidin Shangwe (University of Dar Es Salaam), in presence & on zoom Palazzo Maldura, room H

**December 4, 2.30pm**

**Open debate: How to rethink China-Africa relations?**

Mariasole Pepa (University of Padova), Tim Zajontz (Research fellow AFRIGOS) in presence & on zoom Palazzo Maldura, room H

# Useful links

- The China in Africa podcast and news: <https://chinaafricaproject.com/>
- Chinese in Africa/Africans in China (CA/AC) Research Network: <https://ca-ac.org/>
- China-Africa Research Initiative (CARI): <http://www.sais-cari.org/>
- China-Africa toolkit at SAIIA: <https://saiia.org.za/toolkits/china-africa-toolkit/>

# China-Africa relations Past and Present

**“The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story”**

**Chimamanda Adichie**



## Perceptions of China in Africa | 36 countries | 2014/2015

### China ranks 2nd

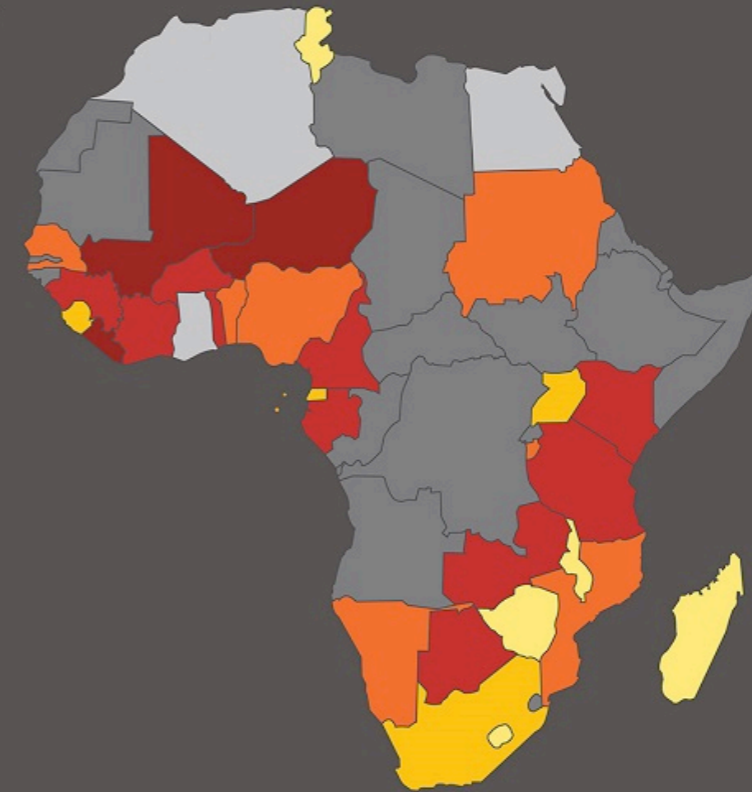


- as a development model (after the U.S.)
- as greatest external influence (after the former colonial powers)

China is a “somewhat” or “very” positive influence in their country:

# 63%

(average all countries)



#### Key

Grey	31 - 40%
Yellow	41 - 50%
Orange	51 - 60%
Light Red	61 - 70%
Red	71 - 80%
Dark Red	>80%

**AFROBAROMETER**

Top factors contributing to:

• a **positive**

image of China:  
Investments in infrastructure  
and business development



• a **negative**

image of China:  
Poor quality  
of products

<http://afrobarometer.org/press/world-development-information-day-chinas-growing-presence-africa-wins-positive-popular-reviews>

China's infrastructure/development and business investments are seen as reasons for China's positive image in Africa, though that image is tainted by perceptions of poor-quality Chinese products (Afrobarometer, 2016)

# Mobility of narratives

- New colonialism (Manji and Marks 2007); “China’s new scramble for Africa”, *Financial Times*, 2010)
- Alternative non-Western partner (Amin, 2016)
- Renaissance of SSC and Bandung spirit (Gray & Barry, 2016)



# History and periodization

“The contemporary neo-liberal discourse has one fundamental blind spot. It treats the present as if the present has had no history”

(Issa Shivji, 2004)

“Periodization is itself a way of presenting very particular spatial and temporal experiences”

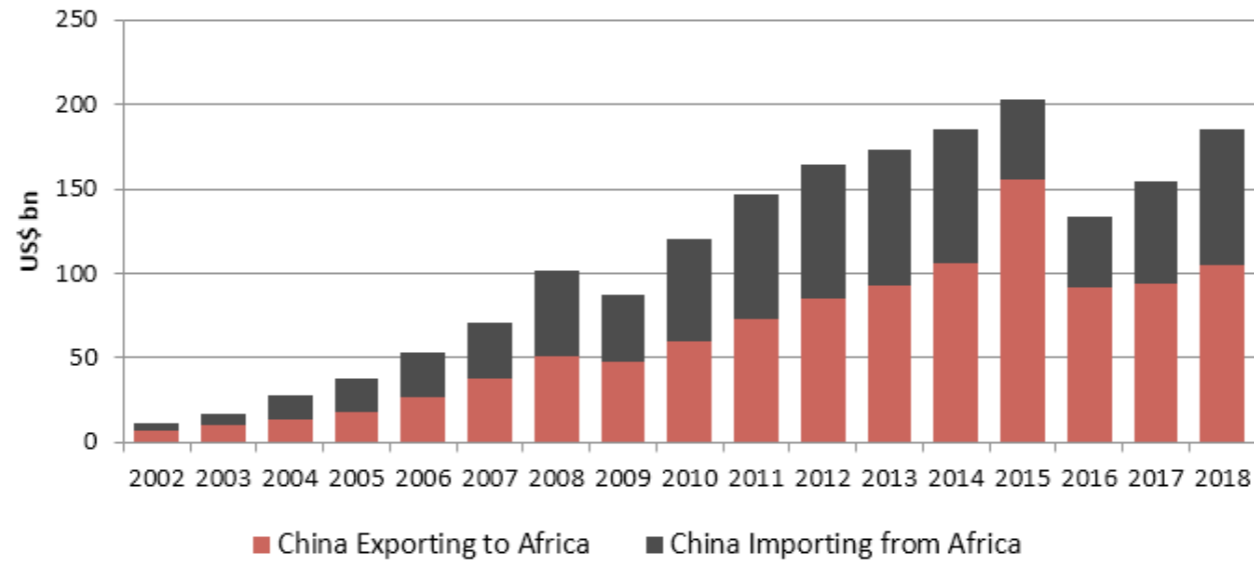
(Parvati, Noxolo & Madge, 2014)



# Present

- China surpassed the United States as the largest trading partner to Africa in 2009 and has become the top exporter to 19 out of 48 countries in sub-Saharan Africa
- The value of China-Africa trade in **2018 was \$185 bn from US\$10.8 billion in 2000**
- **CHINESE FDI IN AFRICA:** From 2003 to 2018, the number has surged **from US\$75 million in 2003 to US\$5.4 billion in 2018**
- The number of Chinese workers in Africa by the end of 2018 was 201,057, according to official Chinese sources.
- In 2018 Chinese **foreign aid expenditures was USD 3.3 billion**
- Over 10,000 Chinese firms in Africa, potentially generating **\$440 billion in revenues** by 2025 (according to McKinsey and Company)
- Thousands of Africans live in Chinese cities/regions

## China-Africa Trade

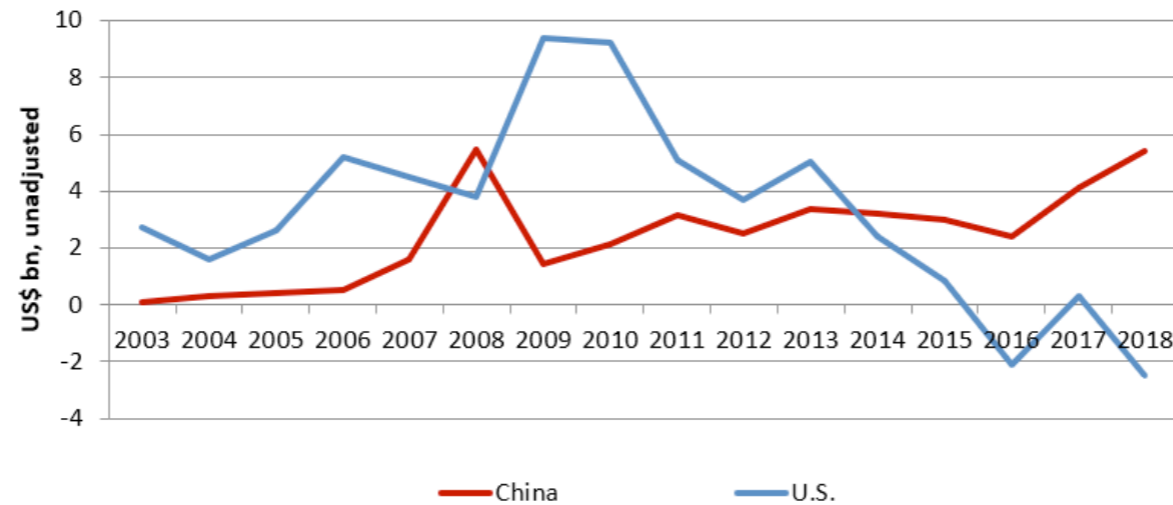


Feb 2020  
Source: UN Comtrade

**CHINA★AFRICA**  
RESEARCH INITIATIVE



## Chinese FDI vs. US FDI to Africa, Flow



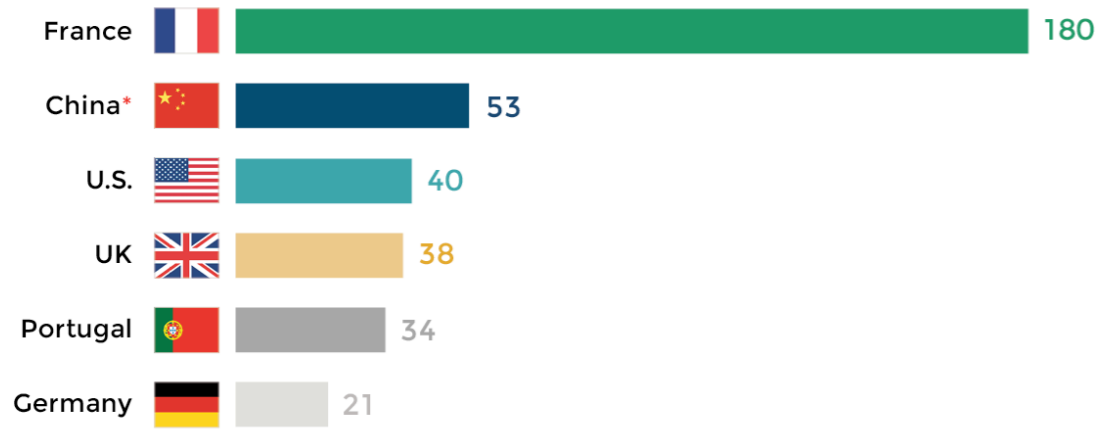
Feb 2020  
Source: The Statistical Bulletin of China's  
Outward Foreign Direct Investment, UNCTAD  
Bilateral Debt Statistics

**CHINA★AFRICA**  
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Source: CARI

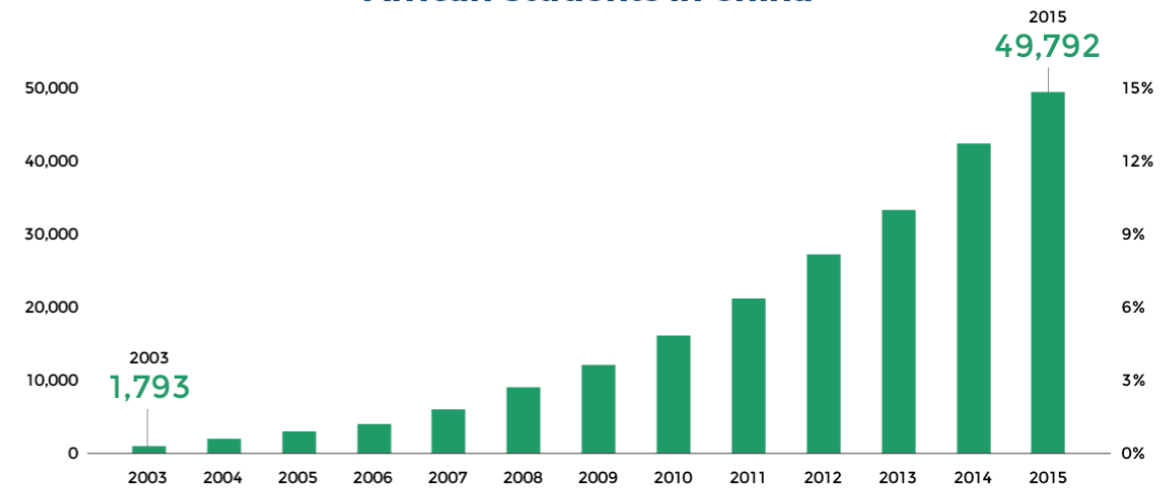
### Cultural Institutes in Africa by Country



\*Hanban (2019)  
Source: Quartz (2018 data)

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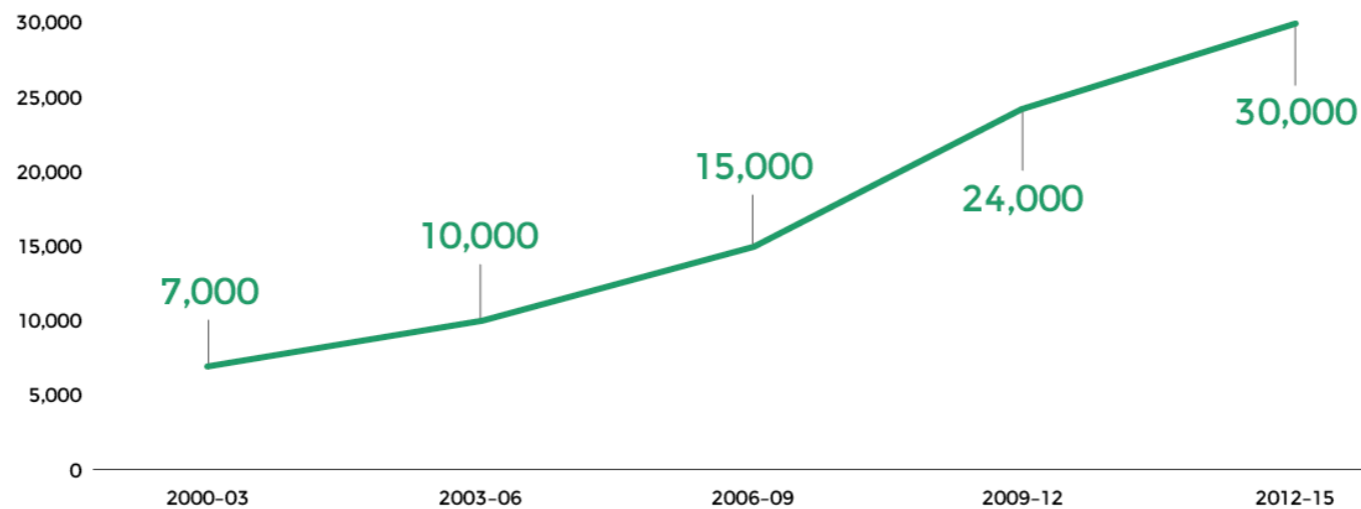
### African Students in China



Source: Quartz

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### Africans Participating in Chinese Training Courses



Source: Tugendhata, Henry and Alemub, Dawit: Chinese Agricultural Training Courses for African Officials: Between Power and Partnerships, In: World Development, Volume 81, May 2016, pp.71-81.

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## **Situate China-Africa relations:**

**Aftermath of 2007-08 food and financial food crisis**

**New global land rush: land and water grabbing**

**Financialization of farm and farmland**

**Changing Global development landscape**

**Increasing US-China tension**

**Challenge to US hegemony**

**Renaissance of South-South Cooperation**

**‘Moving parts’: pre-post Covid-19, africa agency, western actors**

**Link China-Africa within broader political economy and global capital system**

**When did it start?**

**How have China-Africa relations evolve?**

**A new geographies imaginaries?**

**What is the supporting discursive  
narrative of Sino-African relations?**

# Bandung Conference

**China-Africa relations have a long history dating back to the 1950s**

-April 1955: Asian-African Conference, also known as the Bandung Conference

-29 “non-aligned” nations in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East met to condemn colonialism, decry racism, and express their reservations about the growing Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.

-Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence: respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence



**Figure 1. Premier Zhou Enlai during the Bandung Conference**

# From ideological support to economic-driven relations

Three phases:

1. **Initial period (1960s-1970s):** ideological/political support

2. **Transition period (1980s-1990s)** which reflect China's reform period under Deng Xiaoping.

Deng Xiaoping (1978): “We are still very poor and cannot do much in terms of proletarian internationalism at the moment. We may be able to contribute more to mankind, especially the Third World, when we realize the Four Modernizations and have a stronger national economy in the future”

3. **Current stage (2000s–present)**

**“As in other countries, China's foreign aid policy is formed by the *interaction* between China's domestic political forces and the international circumstances. The weights within this interaction have varied over time” (Warmerdam & Haan, 2015)**

**-China's domestic environment have impacted China's foreign policy therefore its foreign aid policy**



Figure 2. 'Serve the Revolutionary People of the world'. Promotional poster from 1971 depicting a Chinese worker helping to construct the Tanzam railway

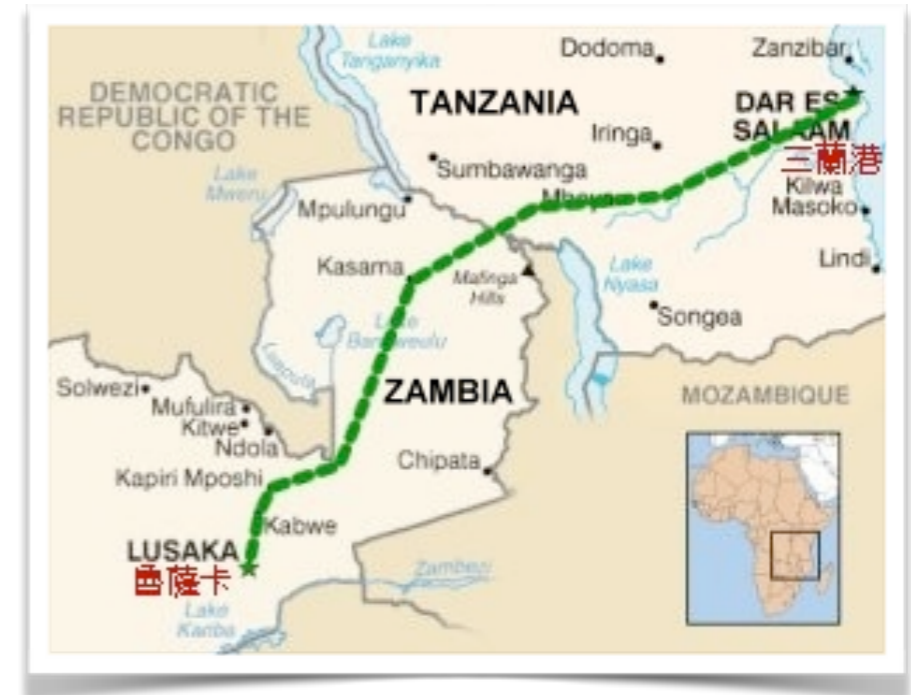


Figure 3. Map of TAZARA



Figure 4. Chinese and African laborers work at the construction site of the TAZARA railway.



Figure 5. The friendship road

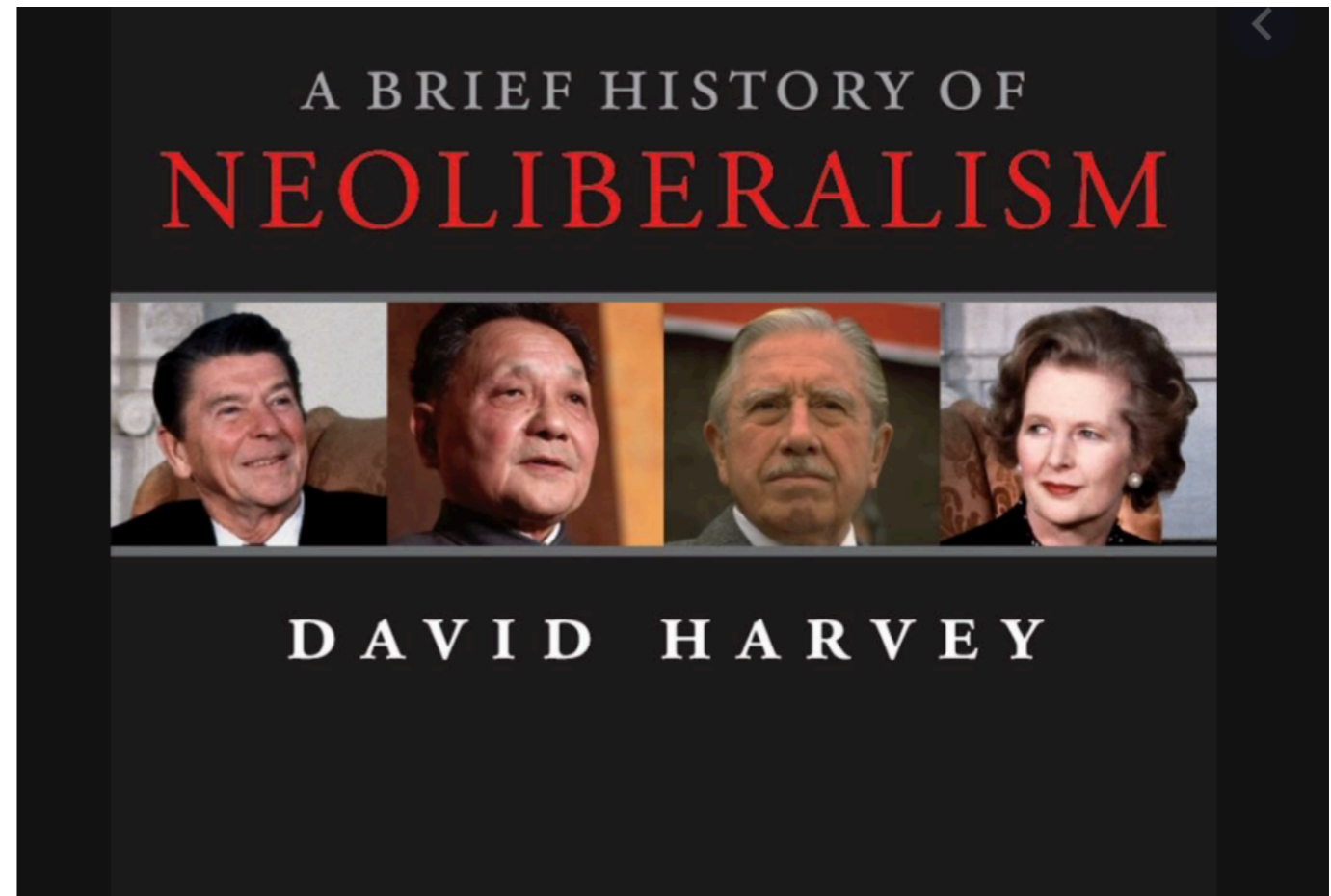


# Deng Xiaoping begins reform in 1978.

“The outcome in China has been the construction of a particular kind of market economy that increasingly incorporates neoliberal elements interdigitated with authoritarian centralized control.” (120)

“It has managed to construct a form of state-manipulated market economy that delivered spectacular economic growth (averaging close to 10 per cent a year) and rising living standards for a significant proportion of the population for more than twenty years. But the reforms have also led to environmental degradation, social inequality, and eventually something that looks uncomfortably like the reconstitution of capitalist class power.” (122)

**A brief history of neoliberalism, David Harvey; Chapter 5 Neoliberalism ‘with Chinese Characteristics’**



# At the turn of the century

- China's economy has been growing steadily since the mid-1980s following the implementation of wide-ranging reforms from the late 1970s.
- This growing also related to increase energy, food .. massive changes in the way people live, and growing pressures on energy and resources

## **In the new millenium:**

- China joined the World Trade Organisation in 2001
- China launched the Going Out policy in 2000s: encourage/support Chinese companies to invest abroad
- Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Forum (FOCAC)
- China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013: promotes connectivity,

# Sino-African relations intensified at the turn of the century

## **FOCAC- Forum on China-Africa cooperation:**

- Strategic instruments in cultivating and enlarging contacts with African elites (Idun-Arkhurst & Laing, 2014)
- Today FOCAC comprises 54 African countries, the African Union Commission and the People's Republic of China as partners
- **China's White paper on African policy**

## **Highlights**

- FOCAC III held in Beijing in 2006: the conference brought on consistent step forwards China's involvement in Africa, and the necessity to understand this new dynamic in the West (Brautigam, 2011:2).
- 2018 FOCAC: UN Secretary-General António Guterres attended the FOCAC in Beijing; Inspire the Way Forward of China-Africa South-South Cooperation
- 2020 Extraordinary China-Africa Summit On Solidarity Against COVID-19



‘At such a critical moment in the global fight against COVID-19, we are gathered together in this Extraordinary China-Africa Summit. Friends old and new are connected via video link to discuss our joint response to COVID-19 and to renew the fraternity between China and Africa’ Xi Jinping opening discourse at the Extraordinary China-Africa Summit On Solidarity Against COVID-19

CGTN



**Source: <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2020-01-07/Chinese-FM-Wang-Yi-to-visit-five-African-countries-N3n2ID1jkQ/index.html>**

# Imaginative geographies

“A group of people living on a few acres of land will set up boundaries between their land and its immediate surroundings and the territory beyond, which they call "the land of the barbarians." In other words, this universal practice of designating in one's mind a familiar space which is "ours" and an unfamiliar space beyond "ours" which is "theirs" is a way of making geographical distinctions that can be entirely arbitrary. I use the word "arbitrary" here because imaginative geography of the "our land-barbarian land" variety does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction. It is enough for "us" to set up these boundaries in our own minds; "they" become "they" accordingly, and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from "ours."

**Edward Said, Orientalism 1978**

[https://monoskop.org/images/4/4e/Said\\_Edward\\_Orientalism\\_1979.pdf](https://monoskop.org/images/4/4e/Said_Edward_Orientalism_1979.pdf)

The rising role of China and BRICS countries in the Global South raises questions about dominant binary imaginaries such as North-South, developed-developing etc., overturning the spatial imaginaries of 'development' and of postcolonial theory

# Renaissance of South-South development cooperation (SSC)

- China supports the South-South cooperation debate
- China is still considered a developing country according to global growth indicators set by international financial institutions such as the World Bank and World Trade Organisation. As of June 2018, China's nominal GDP growth was \$9,782 and the World Bank considers countries with a per capita income of less than \$12,275 as developing (CEIC Data, 2018)
- SSC: This is the transfer or exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between “developing” countries, set within claims to shared colonial and post-colonial experiences, and anchored within a wider framework of promoting the collective strength of the “South” (Mawdsley, 2019)
- Central principle: **non-interference** in other countries political affairs

# Discursive framings

Western donors	Southern development cooperation partners	DAC today with (MICs and FEs)
Charity	Opportunity	Opportunity
Moral obligation to the unfortunate	Solidarity with other Third World countries	Development partnerships
Expertise based on superior knowledge, institutions, science and technology	Expertise based on direct experience of pursuing development in poor country circumstances	Expertise in technical, legal and financial sectors; and in 'traditional' development in 3 <sup>rd</sup> countries
Sympathy for different and distant Others	Empathy based on a shared identity and experience	Collaborating partners
The virtue of suspended obligation, a lack of reciprocation	The virtue of mutual benefit and recognition of reciprocity	Win-win and mutual benefit

Source: Mawdsley, 2012 and speech at the Global Development Institute 2018



‘Recognises the differences between African polities, the agency of African political actors, the flexibility of the apparently rigid ‘Beijing Consensus’ and the fractures and tensions within the supposedly monolithic ‘China Inc’ (Mohan & Lampert, 2010)

Chinese relations with many African countries are maturing and moving beyond state-to-state deals, implicating many more actors. So, the need to move beyond statist, elite dialogues is not simply a theoretical exercise, but one made more pressing by this growing ‘embeddedness’ of mutual political and economic ties”

‘The dominant assumption in much literature on the Chinese presence in Africa is that the monolithic entity “China”—and the Chinese state in particular—is able to set the terms of engagement with African states and to unilaterally determine events’ (Mohan & Lampert, 2015)

# Africa Agency turn

‘Change the standing point for observing real world dynamics, to invert the logic to ask ‘What is the influence African contexts and people have on Sino-African relations?’ rather than continue asking only ‘What is the influence China has?’ (Procopio, 2016)

## Working Paper No. 3/2016.

Passive agents? Bureaucratic agency in Africa-China negotiations:  
*A case study of Benin.*

By Folashadé Soulé-Kohndou.



1)The assumption that West African francophone countries’ dependency on aid and foreign investment necessarily limits their capacity to bargain effectively and exert influence in negotiations with China

2)Assumption that African bureaucracies are ineffective and passive in their relationship with China

# African resistance and social agency in action

## In Ghana and Nigeria (Mohan & Lampert, 2012):

- Challenge Chinese traders and importation of ‘cheap’ Chinese products
- In Nigeria: agitation against China Town

*‘Manufacturers Association of Nigeria had begun to mobilize against it. They argued that the importation of cheap and often sub-standard Chinese goods was fatally undermining local producers. Indeed, this agitation only increased as the new complex became more popular with Chinese traders and African consumers alike’*

Outcome: the Nigerian federal government banned from the import list in 2003 and 2004 a greater number of goods, especially in textile and furniture

- Facilitating/ posing resistance to the Chinese presence
- Both in Ghana and Nigeria seemed that African traders in China, rather than Chinese traders in Africa, have been primarily responsible for the massive influx of cheap Chinese.

*“I had a small-scale factory in [China] and we knew that Nigeria was a large market because Nigerians were importing from my factory.... So that was why I knew that there’s a market in Nigeria. So I came to Nigeria.”*

- Evidence that African companies look at China as a source of skilled and/or hard-working labour

# 'Chinese model' or 'Beijing Consensus'

- Chinese model as a product of web interaction:

*'What is clear is that contemporary economies can rarely be straightforwardly demarcated as 'national', and therefore, marketable as having an 'Indian' or 'Chinese' character. Their spatialities are displaced from the nation in important ways because they are produced through a web of connections' (Parvati, Noxolo & Madge, 2014)*

- China's approach change depending on the time/space= there is no a Chinese model for all time and places
- Time: evolution of historical relations
- Space: approach changes depending which state China is dealing with Space and time related to African agency
- Role of Africa Agency

# Recap

1. China is not a Newcomer to Africa
2. Behind China's state capitalism/ monolithic agent
3. Africa is not passive actor
4. No Chinese model
5. Win-Win?

# Self-reflexivity

- What is your positionality towards China-Africa relations?
- Do you reckon your background shaped/shapes your perspectives on China's presence in Africa?
- Do you align with the claims that China is an no-Western alternative?