

The EU's response to China's Africa safari: Can triangulation match needs?

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Abstract:

China's Africa policy has affected the European Union's (EU) relations with China and with Africa. In response the EU proposed trilateral cooperation to focus on synergies of the EU's and China's contribution to Africa's development. This study conceptualises from an International Relations (IR) perspective this triangular relationship to look at what kind of actor China is in Africa, whether China is in Africa because it is strong or weak, and what the trilateral approach of the EU implies for Africa as a player in international relations.

Keywords??

Introduction

The rapid emergence of China as a dynamic actor in Africa with different approaches from Europe, and the strong reaction to this phenomenon affects the EU-Africa and EU-China partnerships. China's role in conflict and post-conflict situations, most notably Darfur, Angola and DRC has prompted strong public criticism in the EU. China has become an important player in most countries and sectors, not only in resource-rich countries (Asche, 2008). China's cooperation with Africa has mainly focused on economic growth, trade and

investment. A number of studies describe this in detailⁱ. China has concentrated most funding on the infrastructure and resources sectors. These dynamics have brought to the fore misperceptions, media criticism and suspicions about hidden agendas on all sides.

This situation has negatively affected the strategic nature of the EU-Africa and EU-China partnerships. The bilateral EU-China dialogue on Africaⁱⁱ created a dilemma for the relationship with Africa: it is viewed with suspicion as collusion between China and the EU or an attempt by the EU to interfere in the bilateral relations of sovereign countries or even to enlarge the "donor cartel". This in turn limits the intended positive impact of EU-China dialogue as neither side wishes to antagonise their African partners.

Between Africa, the EU and China common objectives exist such as fighting poverty, promoting economic growth and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The EU, China and the African Union (AU) all have a role in the G-20 to deal with the economic crisis and its impacts on Africa. Both the EU and China are urging the international community to respect their commitments to Africa. Yet, besides this cooperative agenda with a potential to enhance global governance, effective multilateralism and sustainable development outcomes, competition for Africa's resources may contribute to the re-emergence of Great Power competition with negative consequences for multilateralism and for global governance. Such a competitive dynamic could be fuelled if the new American President focuses more on Africa than his predecessor with a likely strong value-based agenda and a new economic and energy diplomacy. The EU therefore needs to make a strategic choice to address this main challenge. The options for such a choice were:

1. confronting China where it undermines European interest
2. doing nothing and watching the situation evolves,

3. continuing the present EU dialogue with China on Africa
4. appealing to China to join existing frameworks such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and follow their rules
5. engaging in a process in which China is considered as a partner with legitimate interests in Africa, identifying common interests between the EU, Africa and China and pursuing those through dialogue and cooperation, while also addressing differences through dialogue.

The EU decided to propose the 5th option to its partners, prompting a debate in Africa and in China and providing a new impetus to discussions on aid effectiveness in Accraⁱⁱⁱ and in the Heiligendamm Dialogue Process. The current evolution is still open and a number of assumptions and challenges need to be critically examined to chart the course for a constructive policy that would maximise development outcomes for Africa. The current economic crisis will further challenge traditional assumptions and test the resolve of all partners to contribute to Africa's development and global economic governance. The interruption of the commodity boom will force resource rich countries to think harder about sustainable development paths and request different types of investment and support from third countries.

I. Assumptions – a re-positioning of actors in response to China's drive

To understand the strategic EU initiative it is necessary to go beyond conventional wisdom and the stereotypes which have dominated the "China in Africa" debate (post- versus neo-

colonial motives, Western charity versus Chinese strategy, and good governance versus dictatorship diplomacy). In fact the new dynamics in Africa's relations with outside partners have thrown into light broader issues of global governance and the discussion will gain if one looks at the changing roles of the actors in this new game. The following assumptions shall therefore guide the analysis in section II.

1) The EU – more than a development superpower?

The EU's role in the world is now no longer a matter of *if* it plays a role and *if* it is a subject of international relations, but rather *how* it interacts with the world and with which objectives^{iv}. Even though the EU collectively provides more than half of all Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) to Africa, it has mutated from a "civilian power" to a "normative" or "ethical" power (Aggestam, 2008) as the title of the EU's Security Strategy implies (Europe in a better world). Based on the nexus between security and development, the EU has emerged as a security actor in Africa through its support to the African Peace Facility, election observation, military and civilian European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) missions in several countries (DIE Studies, 2008). The EU is now a globally active security actor willing and able to project security beyond its immediate neighbourhood and in places as far as Aceh and central Africa (Howorth, 2007). This of course raises a number of questions on credibility and conflicts of interest (Läidi, 2008). There is a deeper layer of issues which affects the debate about the objectives of development policy in Europe's foreign relations overall – a debate which pits the pro-poor policy faction against the advocates of development as one of the tools to achieve Europe's strategic interests abroad (OECD DAC, 2007 ; Mayall, 2005).

The European Security Strategy of 2003 and the European Consensus on Development of 2005, stress that security and development are complementary agendas and that neither is

subordinate to the other. China's policy in Africa has helped to bring these issues to the fore as it promotes development without making the nexus between security, good governance, human rights and development.

Finally, the EU is not yet a unitary and effective global actor: Member States have their own diplomacy, but they carry it out more and more in an EU framework (Hill and Smith, 2005). For instance, the "federating" role of the European Commission (EC) in development policy was recently emphasised by the OECD DAC (OECD DAC, 2007).

2) China – the soft superpower of pragmatism?

China's influence in the world is mainly due to its spectacular economic dynamics inspiring both fear and hope across societies everywhere. China tries to blend into an international order with a modest agenda of change for the next decade or so, while opposing the EU and Western countries on normative issues such as in the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR) (Gowan and Brantner, 2008)^v. Indeed, since the 1990s China has made efforts to subscribe to international conventions, to enter international regimes and organisations most prominently the WTO (Delmas-Marty, 2005) and to stabilise its neighbourhood through the settlement of border disputes, bilateral and multilateral dialogues and regional agreements. This pragmatic strategy has brought enormous economic and development benefits and domestic change (legal reform) to China. Another dividend of this effort is that China is increasingly perceived as *the* power of the future, increasing Beijing's influence. This strategy has allowed China to reconcile domestic priorities with dynamic challenges emerging from its ever greater economic, ecologic and social footprint across the globe. In Africa the issue is how can China get access to the resources it needs for its own development without

jeopardising African countries' development chances? (Besada, 2006; Kaplinsky and Morris, 2008)

Contrary to widespread belief that China is a monolithic strategic actor, there is in fact a multitude of actors and constituencies which determine the international relations of China, much like those in Western countries, minus the humanitarian pressure groups and media. As in Chinese domestic policies, the ineffectiveness of a top down political structure based on vertical reporting lines in tackling complex situations which require horizontal coordination and bottom-up participation have become apparent^{vi}.

China's emphasis on sovereignty and non-interference is rooted in its historical experience of foreign domination and its priority to consolidate its territorial sovereignty. For these reasons China considers Africa a "natural" partner given historical ties, the common experience of colonialism and newfound economic complementarity. China has given up its earlier ideological foreign policy which was characterised by its active promotion of socialism and strong interference into political processes in Africa^{vii}. It now pragmatically pursues policies which it believes are in line with long standing Western demands on it: capitalism, development aid, peacekeeping and multilateral diplomacy. Mutual economic benefit is the key driver and characteristic of the China-Africa relationship which extends through global value chains (China as the world's factory) into Western markets. China was therefore surprised at the West's strong reaction, as it had observed the progressive marginalisation of Africa in the years since the Cold War ended. Rather than challenging the West, it was filling a void.

3) Africa – object of desire or subject of international relations?

Africa's diversity needs to be borne in mind, even though we need to simplify for the sake of argument. In general African countries are weak economic and political players in the world, although as an "object" of international relations they have become more prominent in recent years (Wissenbach, 2007b). The public image is associated with hunger, poverty, disease, crime and conflict, but this does not capture Africa's diverse reality. Africa's new found appeal stems from its strong market performance in recent years, driven by better regulatory regimes, structural reforms, higher growth rates, rising foreign investment, robust export performance, and lower debt levels. Progress on the MDGs is uneven, but generally not on track. The origin of this new international strength is linked to the commodity boom and global value chains. Significantly, many African countries are politically stable today compared with a decade ago. Africa is now developing a strategy which allows it to convert the gains of the current commodity boom into durable economic and political currency, something it failed to achieve in earlier decades.

The AU is a credible but weak attempt at unity and integration, albeit without the pooling of sovereignty characteristic of the EU model. Some of the regional economic communities have become functional, while others are "paper elephants". Currently many resource rich African countries are in a position of strength, but this strength is at the mercy of the ups and downs of commodity prices as the financial crisis has impressively demonstrated in 2008. The new dynamics require a real strategy for a country's response to globalisation, based on strong economic and political governance. In Africa and in the development community there is a debate whether China's development model can be applied in Africa given its obvious success, but also its apparent shortcomings (Ravallion, 2008; Dollar, 2008). Finally, the resource poor countries in Africa have little to attract international political attention if it is not their misery itself. They need to find ways out of poverty and aid dependency. Given

these very diverse interests of African countries a consensus on the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and overall relations with outside partners is difficult to reach (Shelton and Paruk, 2008).

II. A common agenda despite value differences? Challenges for cooperation

Globalisation, the commodity boom and the tectonic shifts in global politics in the two decades since the end of the Cold War have profoundly changed the way Africa, China and Europe look at each other. Whether this pattern will be a cooperative one or lead to confrontation is an urgent challenge for policymakers. The way these partnerships are defined will shape both Africa's development and structural patterns of international relations in the coming decades.

The key challenges for EU-China-Africa relations are threefold:

- 1) Can the EU and China use their partnership to address the global challenge of sustainable development and progress towards the MDGs in Africa despite value differences?
- 2) Can China handle economic and trade relations with developing countries^{viii} and avoid confrontation with the US and Europe over critical differences in its approach to Africa?
- 3) Can Africa manage its multiple partnerships in such a way that it becomes a (unified) actor in international relations who can realise her objectives, rather than remaining an object of Great Power agendas?

It is generally assumed that the EU's and China's policies are so far apart that conflict is inevitable and that Africa would gain most by exploiting these differences. But this view may overlook the broader dynamics: the importance of the EU-China relationship, change in

Europe's and China's thinking on development in Africa and the ability of Africa to set a new agenda for development beyond the OECD DAC agenda or that of new external partners.

1. Europe's relations with Africa: in the conditionality trap?

The EU's image in Africa has suffered by the comparison with the new suitor from Asia. Some European states carry post-colonial baggage (Yates, 2006), EU trade diplomacy is perceived as hard-nosed and the misconceptions on development such as the lack of local ownership, duplication of aid and the dogmatic ideas of the international liberal mainstream about political transformation (Kiely, 2007) mean that China has not to do much to be attractive to African policymakers frustrated by their traditional partners. In response the EU, driven by the European Commission to 'europeanise' development and Africa policies, has refocused on ownership at continental, regional and national levels in Africa and started to backtrack from "conditionality" (Mayall, 2005). In the early years of EC-Africa cooperation under the Yaoundé and Lomé Conventions the EC strictly respected sovereignty and non-interference principles in its trade and aid agreements because of sensitivities after de-colonisation. Linklater (2005) rates conditionality as a distinguishing feature of post-Cold War development policy. This conditionality can be explained by the failure of the earlier approaches to yield desired development outcomes in Africa, the success of the transformation of the Central European countries, societal pressure to use taxpayers' money in ways to fight poverty, promote social agendas and fight corruption and the enlargement of the EU to non-colonial powers. The EC now offers political and financial incentives for good governance (The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership, 2007). This is in part due to the confidence in the vitality of African democracy and good governance trends (as embodied in the AU

Charter and developments in many countries); partly it is also due to the realisation that change cannot be imposed from the outside. This marks a change from both the unconditional support to African dictators in return for strategic benefits during the Cold War and the overly prescriptive approach of the Washington Consensus.

Since China has increased its engagement on the African continent^{ix}, dealing with development on the continent has become a more complex undertaking for the EU. The EU has realised that the partnership with Africa requires new foundations and more trust. China's focus on a mutual interest-based, commercially driven and politically high-level partnership with Africa has concentrated minds in Europe and in Africa on how the old donor-recipient partnership could be transformed into a modern or even post-modern partnership. This new kind of partnership is designed to respond to common global challenges and is not only focused on a one-sided, often charity-based approach to development. China thus has become a factor in accelerating a process of re-orientation of the EU-Africa partnership as its no-strings-attached approach provides African countries with alternatives to the post-Cold War development model. In turn the Africa-EU Joint Strategy provides a new, more balanced partnership template which challenges the lopsided FOCAC structure.

2. China's changing approach to Africa – beyond non-interference

China pursues a limited national project (revival, recognition and re-unification) rather than a global vision and implements it with a high degree of pragmatism embellished by rhetoric which caters for domestic constituencies and foreign opinion. China aims at a maximum of stability and predictability abroad which allows its leaders to concentrate on the domestic agenda. China has a limited capacity to deal with external risks and thus often acts from a

well-disguised position of weakness (low per capita Gross Development Products (GDP) and social indicators, widening income gap, environmental and governance problems, lack of hard power to project abroad, limited soft power). To some extent, the often invoked non-interference doctrine may simply provide convenient cover for the lack of ability to influence other countries. Resource rich countries can take advantage of China's needs and lack of alternatives (the evolution in Angola^x and even China's difficulties in convincing Sudan's government to accept the UN/AU hybrid force point to this limited influence (Srinivasan, 2008)). China's only real trump card is its seat in the UN Security Council (UNSC), but given China's interest in not antagonising the other UNSC members, even that is of limited value.

China's fundamental problem is that it has to balance national interest (based on interdependent key domestic and subordinate foreign policy goals) and pressure from international society^{xi} which increasingly includes "friendly fire" from Africans, in particular civil society. China emphasises different international norms than the EU or the AU when basing its policy in Africa on the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs. In terms of values and norms Pang (2007: 24-25) bemoans the EU's tendency to expect China to take on board its norms and policies. He points to the positive, rather than the negative, side of this clash of values arguing that it may lead to the evolution of globally owned norms rather than imposed Western ones. And it seems indeed that China is learning to adapt to new challenges (creation of a consular department, increased research on Africa, more dialogues with traditional donors).

The underlying weakness of China's generally successful approach to Africa has several reasons. China has not conceived a proper development policy, but relies on South-South rhetoric that increasingly contrasts with economic patterns of interaction that resemble

traditional templates. The economic engagement remains dependent on the real business opportunities in Africa and whether Chinese companies can make profits. If this were not the case, the government would have difficulties sustaining the comprehensive engagement it pledged to African leaders. China started by a mechanical transposition of its own development approaches and dated Third World principles, which prioritise the needs and sovereignty of states and economic growth. Beijing ignored the "collateral damage" of unintended interference in social affairs through commercial interaction and lacked contemporary concepts about aid-coordination, ownership-support and concepts of political development including practical concepts of supporting good governance.

The question of non-interference has started to become a dilemma for China as it is engaging more and more in the international field and investing abroad including in countries which are fragile or quasi-states where the concept of sovereignty has only a very limited meaning and may be at the mercy of a coup d'Etat or a heart attack. The sovereignty of governments in producer countries can be an obstacle to sustainable exploitation of resources and increase business and political costs to investors. Hence, China's insistence in principle not to interfere in other countries' domestic affairs works only so far in its interest as these countries do not take decisions which affect vital Chinese interests, such as the security of Chinese nationals or investments. Beyond that point it gets counterproductive, as it creates a credibility trap if China *does* interfere to protect its interests.^{xii} Taylor (2007: 22-23) argues that the notional sovereignty of quasi-states may be an appropriate terrain for China's access to resources, but in the long-run the absence of state rules and power create a dangerous vacuum for all actors in Africa, including China.

3. Africa's re-positioning

China initially assumed that business combined with solidarity rhetoric, modest development assistance and putatively win-win based cooperation would be sufficient to achieve its objectives. It therefore neglected to analyse local political dynamics, state-society relations and social conditions inside countries. This has prompted African criticism of a relationship based on raw material exports with little added value in Africa, strained labour relations and frequent violations of environmental, labour or immigration laws by Chinese companies. Simultaneously, African criticism of the EU has become more vocal, notably on the Economic Partnership Agreements.

One of Africa's key demands on China (and others) is that it helps Africa escape the economic marginalisation and overcome the pattern of exports of raw materials and imports of manufactured products. Africa's priority is industrialisation. So far there are not many signs that China effectively provides a different template from traditional patterns of exchanges. Most experts agree that while Africa at large can benefit from China's engagement in terms of development, important groups lose out (textile industry, workers, small traders; Kaplinsky and Morris, 2008). Civil society challenges the overwhelmingly positive view of China by African leaders as a manifestation of "elite" politics and corruption (Gaye, 2006).

The sustainable management of natural resources is challenged by the surge in demand from China and other emerging countries, the modification of global value chains, and the ways competition over them affects the development strategies and governance situation in African countries (Guenther, 2008). Indeed Africa collectively has a governance and development agenda and wants to oblige all external partners to abide by it. Africa refuses increasingly to be lectured, but has to deal with contradictory national agendas and with an overpowering

China including its businesses that contrary to widespread belief are not easily controlled by China's government.

4. The case for a cooperative agenda

The dilemmas described briefly above show that there is a pressing need for functional multilateral cooperation (Wissenbach 2007, 2007c) to tackle key development challenges: To address the resource curse at the heart of the economy, environment and development nexus in Africa, a division of labour is necessary between the UN, regional organisations (such as the AU), and the external partners including civil society. Driven by the AU, the EU, China and other powers need to improve cooperation on approaches and tools to use in order to address the situations in various countries effectively. Initiatives such as the Equator principles, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and sustainable forest management mechanisms, the Kimberley process and similar tools are useful complements to government-led processes which could be enhanced and expanded. These initiatives started with core groups and actors willing to move forward and are good examples of functional multilateralism. Given the differences in approach such initiatives have to be built bottom-up through pragmatic, project based cooperation in a pilot country and on one issue.

Initially, attempts to invite China to subscribe to rules which were not co-authored by China largely fell on deaf ears as they were perceived as Western attempts to undermine China's economic cooperation with third countries or to deny China access to energy and other resources. China's government started to issue various guidelines for Chinese firms to address criticism at their behaviour. International rules are also increasingly studied and sometimes applied such as the application of the Equator principles by Chinese banks. Some Chinese

companies have joined the UN Global Compact on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Trilateral cooperation can help through workshops and exchanges, training and dialogue to build up knowledge at little cost. Pilot projects can then be conceived in a second stage within existing frameworks by seeking synergies. This would avoid accusations that EU funds are handed over to unaccountable Chinese officials.

On peace and security there is a shared interest and the EU and China can contribute in different ways to the African Peace and Security Architecture (DIE Studies, 2008; Marks, 2009) without sacrificing the differences in approach to some fundamental principles. Their diversity (public pressure and quiet diplomacy) may even have an added value as the Sudan case has shown (Srinivasan, 2008). In initiatives regarding economic development, such as infrastructure, there are obvious advantages for Africa to harness external partners to common objectives on regional and continental infrastructure ventures while enjoying the increased efficiency due to competition between companies from different countries. A war of incentives for investments on the other hand may lead to a race to the bottom in terms of quality standards, with little sustainable benefit for Africa's development. Civil society cooperation between European and African networks can help challenging both the EU and China to better adapt to an African agenda (Dahle and Muyakwa, 2008; Davies, 2007; Heinrich Boell Foundation, 2008)

Conclusion: The EU's and China's dilemmas and Africa's choices

The complex picture of the EU's and China's relations with Africa reveals dilemmas on all sides and weaknesses in their respective policies. The EU carries substantial baggage from colonial and Cold War history and still needs adjustments to the realities of globalisation and

in Africa itself. The EU has struggled more to adapt its policy in the context of its normative and ethical concepts. It has found it difficult to re-define its interests in a credible way and to move away from a charity approach to Africa, long a key feature of public pressure^{xiii}. This is also because its economic interest in Africa is quite limited. Chinese “competition” provides Europe’s policy makers with an opportunity also to address interests which were more difficult to articulate as long as poverty was the sole reference in the discourse about Africa.

With the renewed interest for African oil and minerals, some African countries tend to play off external competitors against each other and often load this game with political overtones (Wade, 2008). Simultaneously, the debate about the resource curse has been fuelled by China's African safari (Yates, 2006).

Chinese Africa policy has taken an almost exclusively economic twist, despite its political rhetoric, and with unexpected negative impacts on some social groups in Africa. This raises questions about the benefits for Africa's industrialisation and the durability of China’s engagement beyond the commodity boom. The current economic crisis and cooperation in the G-20 will be a litmus test and the Chinese leadership has realised this: during his 2009 visit to Africa President Hu has sought to re-assure African hosts about China's resolve to fulfil its commitments while Prime Minister Wen has sought to fend off expectations of new pledges^{xiv}.

In order to overcome these dilemmas the EU has concluded that effective cooperation between the EU and China in taking up common responsibilities is central to the shaping of international affairs and global governance in the future. Hence, the proposed trilateral dialogue and cooperation (European Commission, 2007) can be regarded as a test-case for the Africa-EU Partnership, the EU-China strategic partnership and more generally for the EU's

strategy to promote global security and governance through effective multilateralism instead of prescriptive moral crusades, for China's ambition to be a responsible (great) power, and for Africa's development and position in the world.

In such a dynamic constellation Africans are working on a strategic consensus in the AU framework and of course nationally in order to be in the driving seat of the debate. The African Union Commission (AUC) has laid the groundwork by creating a task force on this topic (AUC, 2006)^{xv}.

The challenge ahead is to build on the positive effects of the EU's and China's engagement and use their willingness to cooperate on the basis of similar objectives for growth and development in Africa in order to ultimately construct a common set of "rules of engagement" in Africa. These rules would promote sustainable peace based on an emerging African security community and the African Union / the New Partnership for Africa's Development (AU/NEPAD) principles for governance and development in Africa. These African rules for engagement applied to all external partners would gradually supersede both the Washington Consensus/DAC rules and China's rigid templates. However, changes in attitudes, path-dependent policies or conditionality will not happen overnight. They may be facilitated by the currently envisaged overhaul of the international financial institutions or a possible regionalisation of these.

This is an opportunity for Africa to collectively assume responsibility internationally for its development. This is what Africans have long claimed, but such an approach is also associated with risk for Africa's leaders: they have to find consensus on how to engage with external partners despite internal divisions and diverse impacts (economic gains and losses are unevenly distributed); they have to exercise these responsibilities and obtain the outcomes, in

terms of development, which the people of Africa and the international community support. Otherwise African responsibility may just become a convenient excuse for disengagement and further marginalisation of Africa (Wissenbach, 2007b). Africa needs to decide whether it wants its partners to cooperate on this agenda or to have them compete for influence, thus perpetuating the post-colonial pattern of African policy-making being driven by outside actors and resulting divisions among and within African countries and races to the bottom^{xvi}. Ultimately, Africa may succeed to ensure a real convergence of values and priorities of the Western donors and China around those of the AU Constitutional Act.

ⁱ Alden and Rothman (2006), le Pere (2007). Fandrych (2007) describes how cooperation with Angola is based on a package of preferential credits, investment, trade, technical support and development of infrastructure. Grión (2007) gives a detailed account of the China-Angola relationship including its risks. Ali (2007) gives a detailed overview of the political economy underpinning Sudan-China relations, which by many critics are reduced to the Darfur issue. Curtis (2008) in his review of the DRC rejects the dichotomy of the partnership-predator paradigm, Guenther (2008) analyses China's impacts on the resource curse in SSA with the DRC as an example.

ⁱⁱ The issue was first raised officially by the European Commission in its 2006 policy paper on China (European Commission, 2006) and on the 9th EU-China Summit. Regular meetings have been ongoing since 2005.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Accra Agenda for Action adopted in September 2008 contains a reference to trilateral cooperation in article 19.

^{iv} Katsioulis (2008) is more critical basing his analysis on 6 criteria: shared norms, principles, capacity to set priorities, to negotiate effectively, to use policy instruments, democratic legitimacy and external perceptions.

^v For the stated strategic foreign policy objectives, their time horizon and underlying assumptions cf. Men (2007), Yang (2007). Sceptics may question these official lines, but no one seriously expects a sudden change of strategy given China's limited capacities and enormous domestic challenges. Indeed looking back at the reform policy, broadly speaking China's policy makers seem to have followed and implemented the masterplan by Deng Xiao Ping. We therefore assume that abrupt changes are unlikely in the absence of a major crisis.

^{vi} Bates and Reilly (2007); Altenburg and Weikert (2006) pp 27-30, Shelton and Paruk (2008) and the author's own findings.

^{vii} For details Li (2007), He (2007). The diplomatic spat with Taiwan still overshadows relations with African countries and causes some prejudice to African integration efforts, as the AU cannot replace the FOCAC as long as some of its members recognise Taiwan and the issue of Morocco and Western Sahara is not solved.

^{viii} China can't risk isolation from developing countries or losing the goodwill of its resource suppliers: Yuan (2007: 12), He (2007) Similarly, but more critically: Alves and Draper (2007:24).

^{ix} Ironically the first FOCAC in 2000 passed almost unnoticed – it was in the same year that the EU and African Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) countries signed the Cotonou agreement and the AU was conceived.

^x The case of Angola is telling in this regard, disproving by the way earlier Western speculation of a take-over by the Chinese: Angola used oil diplomacy to extract concessions from China while rejecting an International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan, then it dealt China's efforts a blow by cancelling the contract for the building of the Lobito refinery and joining Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), while not cutting its ties with the US, IMF, World Bank despite their outrage over the earlier failure of the structural adjustment programme negotiations. Another failure of Sinopec in Angola is described in: "La Chine a manqué de stratégie pour s'implanter dans le secteur pétrolier angolais" Afrique-Asie Janvier 2008 p 20-21.

^{xi} The term "international community" has not been defined and while intuitively it should comprise all countries, it seems to refer to the US and its allies only the way Zoellick (2005) uses it. Cf the similar use in the Princeton Project on National Security (2006).

^{xii} According to Landsberg and Monyae (2006) p 143 South Africa faces a similar credibility gap in Africa ("subimperial agent") between its espoused foreign policy principles and the aggressive pursuit of largely economic national interests. Tension between mediation and peacekeeping efforts and South Africa's arms exports further erode its credibility, again mirroring the Chinese efforts to support UN and AU peacekeeping, but at the same time supplying arms to conflict zones or unstable countries (Control Arms Campaign, 2006).

^{xiii} such as the Make Poverty History campaign and the moralistic overtones of the British G8 Presidency (Africa a scar on the world's conscience).

^{xiv} Work Together to Write a New Chapter of China-Africa Friendship. Address by President Hu Jintao, Dar es Salaam, 16.2.2009.

^{xv} This task force recommends a systematic assessment and an effective and efficient use of Africa's natural resources with a view to pursuing the continent's industrialization process. It proposes to enhance economic cooperation, trade and improved market access for Africa's products, boost agricultural productivity, strengthen Africa's services and private sectors, develop Africa's human resources, knowledge generation, sharing and application and to accelerate the development of infrastructure.

^{xvi} Griñ (2007: 141): 'Is it acceptable that China's involvement in Africa could lead to a degree of conflict of interest with the former colonial rulers, and to a situation in which the Western commitment to fostering good governance and democracy is jeopardised by China's involvement?'

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