TURKISH REPUBLIC

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INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND AFRICAN STUDIES

The China-AU Economic relationship: a leverage for China’s raise or an emergency exit to Africa’s economic development? Case study of Cameroon and Gabon

Master Thesis

Faroukou Mintoiba

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Debt is an efficient tool. It ensures access to other peoples’ raw materials and infrastructure on the cheapest possible terms

Susan George, *A Fate Worse Than Debt*

Abstract:

Since the 1960, years in which many of the African countries got their independence, the continent got involved in so many models of cooperation, in the ultimate aim of taking part of the globalization process and benefit from its advantage. Regrettably, studies suggest that decades of Africa's cooperation with its partners failed to be productive and rather than actually helping them in their development process, these models of cooperation have been harmed their economies and maintained them in the circle of underdevelopment. With the emergence of China in the international area as what authors have qualified as superpower, Africa's relationship with this latter has been seen and interpreted in various ways in the last two decades as China has been accused of the same thing as Africa's old partners. Yet, some patterns of the Sino-African Cooperation, while refuting the idea of China being a bad influence in Africa, seems to support another theory. In fact, this thesis argued that by institutionalising its relationship with Africa by 2000 through the FOCAC, China presented to Africa a strategic opportunity of a win-win cooperation. However, in studying the case of Gabon and Cameroon, the findings of this thesis suggest that while some countries like Gabon who strategically interact with China might benefit from the cooperation, some other countries like Cameroon because of their domestic factors, put themselves in a situation that does not allow them to fully take advantage of the China's opportunity. Moreover, the study also finds that while some activities like trade can be of a great deal in improving human development, China's cooperation tools like FDI and foreign aid are detrimental. Therefore, the study recommends African countries wishing to truly benefit from the Sino-African cooperation to trade with China by focusing on imports rather than exports, as trade is the only thing that appears to offer an alternative to the Western consensus.

Keywords: African Union, China, Beijing Consensus, FOCAC

Özet:

Afrika ülkelerinin çoğunun bağımsızlığını kazandığı 1960 yıllarından bu yana, kıta, nihai amacı küreselleşme sürecinin bir parçası olmak ve avantajlarından yararlanmak amacıyla pek çok işbirliği modeline dahil oldu. Ne yazık ki araştırmalar, Afrika'nın ortaklarıyla onlarca yıllık işbirliğinin verimli olamadığını ve kalkınma süreçlerinde onlara gerçekten yardımcı olmak yerine, bu işbirliği modellerinin ekonomilerine zarar verdiğini ve onları az gelişmişlik çemberinde sürdürdüğünü göstermektedir. Çin'in uluslararası alanda yazarların süper güç olarak nitelendirdiği şey olarak ortaya çıkmasıyla birlikte, Çin'in Afrika'nın eski ortaklarıyla aynı şeyle suçlanması nedeniyle, son yirmi yılda Afrika'nın bu süper güçle ilişkisi çeşitli şekillerde görülmüş ve yorumlanmıştır. Oysa ki, Çin-Afrika İşbirliğinin bazı kalıpları, Çin'in Afrika'da kötü bir etki olduğu fikrini reddederek başka bir teoriyi desteklediğini ortada görünmektedir. Aslında, bu tez, Afrika ile ilişkisini 2000 yılına kadar FOCAC aracılığıyla kurumsallaştırarak, Çin'in Afrika'ya stratejik bir kazan-kazan işbirliği fırsatı sunduğunu iddia etmektedir. Bununla birlikte, Gabon ve Kamerun örneğini inceleyerek, bu tezin bulguları, Çin ile stratejik olarak etkileşime giren Gabon gibi bazı ülkelerin işbirliğinden faydalanabilecekken, Kamerun gibi bazı ülkeler ise kendi iç faktörleri nedeniyle kendilerini Çin fırsatından yararlanamayacak duruma soktuğunu göstermektedir. Dahası, bu çalışma aynı zamanda ticaret gibi bazı faaliyetlerin insani gelişmeyi iyileştirmede çok önemli olduğunu bulurken, Çin'in DYY ve dış yardım gibi işbirliği araçlarının zararlı olduğunu da ortaya koymaktadır. Dolayısıyla, Western Consensus'un tek alternatif olarak görünmesi nedeniyle, Bu tez, Çin-Afrika işbirliğinden gerçekten faydalanmak isteyen Afrika ülkelerinin Çin ile ithalat odaklı ticaret yapmalarını önermektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Afrika Birliği, Çin, Beijing Consensus, FOCAC

Tables of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

Acronyms and Abbreviations	Definition
AfDB	African Development Bank
AU	African Union
CARI	China Africa Research Initiative
CDB	China Development Bank
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EXIM Bank	Export and Import Bank
FAW	First Automotive World
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FOCAC	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
GDP	Growth Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
ODA	Official Development Aid
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFDI	Outreach Foreign Direct Investment
PRC	People Republic of China
SAIS-	School of Advanced International Studies
SAP	Structural Adjustment Program
SIIC	Shanghai Industrial Investment Corporation
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
WTO	World Trade Organization

INTRODUCTION

The extraordinary raise of China as what some authors (Fuchs, 2019; Schoeman, 2007) have qualified as superpower is since some years, constantly the subject of a considerable attention in the international system and thus, source of so many discussions within the academia as well as in the press and in journals. Seen as an emerging hegemon, the current ambitions of China seem to be perceived to some extent as complex at the point that the international community finds it extremely difficult to state with precision the its role in the global affairs. In fact, the international relations theories, underestimating the role of the Global South in producing superpowers, have always delineated power structure with a focus on Western powers, with Japan as an honorary Western economic power (Schoeman, 2007).

Yet, with the emergence of China with its global influence in fields such as economy, political and military, the debates about its place in the global affairs seems to be apparent from all perspectives, as its influence is more and more observed not only in its relations with other major powers, but also in its interactions with the other countries of the Third World (Chen, 2016). Fuchs (2019) argued that China's activities are being regularly controversial due to its adverse effects on the developing world. Indeed, most of the scholarly work on China's rise as a superpower tends to consider some factors as its economic and industrial capabilities, its energy policies and its impact on the global natural environment etc.

The recently evolved China's relationship with Africa, among the latest indicators of the "Chinese Rise" according to Chen (2016), has been going through a considerable scrutiny in the last decades (Kamal and Haroon, 2019). International views, commentators and scholars have depicted this relationship in a variety of representations, from colonialism to a mutually beneficial partnership. However, in this group of criticizers, whether scholars or journalists, there is a considerable number of authors who believe that since its arrival in Africa, China has always been a bad influence, undermining the several decades of efforts undertaken to promote democracy and good governance (Eisenman and Kurlantzick, 2006).

The situation being so, the ultimate debate has been focused on the argument that China is becoming a threat to African countries (Chen, 2016) or how to prove that it isn't, for those who assume the contrary. While some authors have tried to build a correlation between the current situation of Africa with its relationship with its old investors, others think that as the Western, the Chinese presence in Africa will only be good for under-developing the continent and extracting its resources. Yet, researches in the context of this study inform us that the situation of some African countries before and after the Chinese arrival is at a considerable point very noticeably. The present study aims to look at the impact of the China-Africa relationship on the economic development of Africa with a focus on two case studies.

Apparently, it seems that both Africa and China gain from each other to the extent that China benefits from investment opportunities and access to resources in return. On the other side, African countries benefit from infrastructure construction undertaken by China's investments. However, some observers argued that the China's relationship with Africa is far from being a mutually beneficial cooperation because according to them, African countries lose much more than they actually gain from China due to its cheaper goods dominating the African market and Chinese contractors working to promote the Chinese labour and equipment (Kamal and Haroon, 2019). Moreover, some authors accuse China of having made up a neo-colonial plan in order to exploit Africa as the West has done some decades ago. Can China be really recognized as guilty as it has been accused?

Among the several studies that examined China's role in Africa, although their goals appeared in the form of contributing to the literature on this subject by enlightening people on the ongoing presumptions, the results have always been unfortunately ambiguous (Chen, 2016.), and thus making it hard to have a clear vision on the Chinese ambitions in Africa. It seems that the contradicting findings on China's role in Africa stems from the fact that some authors see Africa as a homogenised entity when studying how China's influence on the continent, while some others interpret the nature of the above-mentioned relationship differently. Yet, China's influence in Africa cannot be understood without a consideration of countries in their specificities, and the nature of their relationship with China.

Chan (2007) argued that the Chinese return to Africa, not only being motivated by the need of industrial resources, but also motivated by the will to encourage African states "to build their economies through trade and investment in infrastructures." However, some previous experiences shows us that the lack of commitment to good governance, which is a major issue in many African countries can be a challenge to the efficiency of the Beijing's approach in an environment of corruption and bad policies, eventually resulting as Chan (2007) putted it, in "a money for nothing dynamic."

Therefore, arguing that the Chinese cooperation with Africa can be both beneficial or not, depending on the country and the nature of its cooperation with China, this study focuses specifically on understanding the role of China as donor and economic partner on the economic development of African countries, in terms of GDP and HDI. To make the point of this thesis, I examine two countries, Cameroon and Gabon, both beneficiaries of China's aid but in different forms. A deep analysis of these countries' respective relationship with China suggests that the Chinese cooperation with Africa can be categorised in two ways. In the context of this study, it has been found that China's FDI and its cooperation loans are more likely to negatively affect economic development of its African partners whereas trade between China and export-focused African countries foster their economic development.

The structure of the thesis is as following. The first chapter provides us with the background, the problem statement, the objective and question of research, the hypothesis, the conceptual framework and the methodology.

In the chapter two a brief literature review is provided with an analysis and discussion of the major and most relevant theories on China-Africa relationship: China as a new coloniser in Africa, as a development partner and finally China as filling a vacuum.

The third chapter addresses the thesis questions by discussing the FOCAC as a strategic opportunity to the Sino-African Cooperation. After presenting a brief overview of Africa's relation with its old investors, it discusses the China-AU relationship as a consequence of the failure of Africa's relationship with its old investors. By studying the actors involve in the China's cooperation, its instruments, the sectors and priorities of the China's investment in Africa, the chapter describes the China-Africa relationship as being sustained by the institutionalisation of the FOCAC, a cooperation mechanism created to promote economic cooperation based on respectful, equal, mutually beneficial, realistic and pragmatic principles aiming at promoting mutual reinforcement and cooperation.

In assessing the cases of Cameroon and Gabon the fourth chapter offers a comparative study by looking at how China's activities influence their respective economic performance and ultimately dresses and discusses the findings.

Based on these findings, the last chapter concludes with the observation that some internal factors have indisposed Cameroon to beneficiate from the Chinese cooperation while it has relatively had a positive impact on Gabon's economy.

1.1. Background

The persisting inequality created by the evolving gap between developed and non-developed countries has been for long time subject of many discussions in international relations. The emergence of new actors in the global arena and the modernisation of relations between its actors seems to suggest that the traditional economic paradigms and the old strategic relationship are being inadequate in many aspects. For example, although the several initiatives from developed countries toward the Third World were supposed to assist the latter in reducing the gap between them, the experiences of the past have led various scholars to worry about the consistence of this assistance which according to them, seems to have caused more negative effects than it was meant to (Edoho, 2011; Moyo, 2009; Rodney, 1973).

Besides, so many people were hopeful that countries take advantage of the globalisation and its benefits in terms of a more interconnected global economy. Yet, despite the interconnectedness of economies, inequalities still persist and various form of political backlash [1] is still observed everywhere around the world and particularly in Africa. Although the dramatically more complex and multipolar world has led to changing dynamics that had implications for the policies, practices and partnerships forged for the inclusiveness and the sustainability of the development that we want, this development seems to face a lot of difficulties, characterised by international challenges and persistent domestic vulnerabilities.

For more than six decades, the African continent has undergone several types of initiatives in the framework of the reconceptualization of an international cooperation that "leave no one behind". Curiously, evidences from the past experiences suggests that decades of foreign aid have done little in changing the socio-economic destiny of African countries, most of which failed to economically perform (Collier, 2008).

To some extents, this could mean that there is more important than just sending money in Africa since it is not likely to make things turn around (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2013). Estimations suggest that the amount of money spent in Africa on foreign aid by the West had reached a trillion dollar as for 2018. But the sad reality of underdevelopment still widespread in its countries worth questioning about the real impact of this aid.

1.2. Problem statement

Some political scientists suggested that bad governance explains foreign aid's failure in Africa. Others argued that it can be explained by the policies which come along with aid (Alesina and Dollar, 1998; D. A. Bräutigam and Knack, 2004). The second hypothesis has led African leaders to seek for another more productive relationship by developing some ties with China. And it is now two decades that China as new a donor is exerting influence in Africa. However, some scholars have been suspecting its presence in the continent by accusing her of being a new coloniser. Yet its relationship with African countries has seemed to have some positive effects with regard to their economic performance. The current debate is therefore understanding to what extent this thesis can be supported or not and if yes, in what conditions?

[1]'Emerging Challenges and Shifting Paradigms. New Perspectives on International Cooperation for Development', 2019.)

1.3. Objective and research question

The objective of this study is to analyse how the China's presence in the last decades has affected the economic development of its African partners. Its findings will help us to support that even if the Chinese activities seem to not have a significant impact on Africa's economy, it is at least much better than the cooperation that this latter had with its old and traditional investors. To be able to do that, we will try to respond to following questions:

1. To what extent has the Chinese cooperation with Africa appeared to be helpful to the development of African countries?
2. To what extent can the Chinese engagement in Africa be considered as competitive or complementary to western aid?
3. How have China's activities influenced the economic development of Gabon and Cameroon in the last decade?

1.4. Hypothesis

The present research is built based on the following hypothesis:

1. African countries trading with China seem to have better economic performance than countries trading with Western powers.
2. While the Chinese FDI and its cooperation loans positively affect the economic growth of countries whose trade openness index's score is higher, it does negatively impact the living standards in most of the African countries.
3. African countries that engage in trade with China seem to be economically advantaged than countries benefiting from its cooperation loans and its FDI. Therefore, it seems that only trade with China appears to provide advantages to African countries as a pathway to their economic development.

1.5. Methodology and sources

Savarese (2006) stated on his book on social sciences methods, that we can't do a professional statement "without bringing the proof from documents on first sources by criticizing them both internally and externally". Therefore, in the study of corpus this research will make use of reliable sources, such as the electronic documents and the information from the official websites of the different organizations working on the issue of the Sino-Africa relationship. This information allows us to analyse the Chinese cooperation modus operandi in Africa by looking to its financing and its policy in this regarding.

In general, when we look at the level of development in countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), we clearly understand that they are not at the same level in terms of their economic growth and political development. But regardless of this fact, the common things they have is an important amount of debt, even if it's from different donors. Hence, the point will be in this regard to study and understand how compared to each other, foreign aid influences their current situation. Some indicators like HDI and GDP with a focus on HDI will be used to measure economic development (See definition in the next session).

In consideration of all the aspects of economic development detailed at the first section of the seven paragraph of this chapter (1.7.1) economists suggest that the most appropriate tool to gauge a country's economic development is the HDI, Human Development Index. In fact, the HDI statistics take in account the overall development in an economy regarding the standard of living, GDP, living conditions, infrastructural and technological advancement, improvement in self-esteem need, per capita income etc. These factors shows that economic growth is much narrower than economic development and therefore cannot serve as a sufficient tool of measurement of an economy's development.

Economic development = Economic Growth + Standard of Living

In the framework of this study; will be taken into account the life expectancy as calculated at the time of birth, the education measured on two level namely the years of schooling for residents of a country and the expected years of schooling that a child has at average age for starting school; the standard of living which represent the GNI per capita based on purchasing power parity (PPP).

1.5.1. Data collection and analysis

Some interviews by mail are planned to obtain information of first-hand. Also, with the documentation from the secondary data that we will try to access, the study will analyse the subject having in mind the unique character of each of the African countries as well as the divergent results from the several studies on the role of China in Africa. China being present in all over the African Continent will make it difficult to try to study how its investment is working in all those countries since it can differ from one to another. Therefore, our sampling population will be gathered from two countries wherein the analysis of the Chinese behaviour will allow us to figure how they are influenced. Cameroon's case is interesting because it has almost the same amount of loan both from Western (52%) and China 48%). Although it had ties with France for the last 60 years, its annual GDP has only been growing since its economic interaction with China. For Gabon**,** the majority of its foreign debt is owed to France but with a few part to China. Although the economic performance of Gabon is low, the analysis of the Data shows that Gabon's cooperation with China has contributed in improving the living standards of its people. And this is a very few examples among so many.

1.5.2. Data processing

The collected data will be interpreted and processed in the form of tables, graphs and charts with tools like Microsoft excel, world and any other computerized software that can be useful for the processing.

1.6. Limitations

Some of the limitations of the present study are the difficult access of data on China-Africa economic relationship, a very high reliance on the secondary data and the lack of personal contact with the officials from both China and the respective African countries.

1.7. Conceptual Framework

This research's main argument is that the China-AU relationship can be a catalyser to the economic development of Africa without preventing China from achieving its objectives of national interests. However, understanding how this relationship impact the continent's economic development implies that one understands the nature of the relationship of China with each country, the actors as well as the mechanisms through which this cooperation is operationalised. Therefore, a focus on providing a clear definition of Economic growth, foreign aid, foreign investment and Economic development will be necessary in supporting this thesis's argument as well as addressing conveniently the questions of research.

1.7.1. Economic development versus Economic growth

Economic development and growth are two important concepts to the extent that they all are indicators of an economy's good health. Simply putted, they indicate how an economy is good or bad taking in account some factors such as investment, technological change, political and social factors, FDI etc. In the elaboration of policies, many economists take in account both economic growth and economic development. Yet, people, supposing that they are identical or too similar, do not actually realize that they are two completely different notions. This confusion comes from the fact that the expressions are sometimes used interchangeably. The interest of this research being focused on economic development, some definitions that will be used will be provided to avoid any confusion with economic growth.

In fact, "economic growth", always referred as the increase in goods and services produced by an economy in a specific period of time, makes appeal to the quantitative aspect of the economic progress of a country (Farzana, 2018: 6). Paul Baron defined economic growth as "an increase over time in per capita output of material goods" [2]. This definition suggests that one of the indicators to measure economic growth can be the gross national output or the per capita output. In other words, economic growth can be expressed in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) and Gross National Product (GNP) [3].

$$\text{Growth Rate} = \frac{(\text{Real GDP in Year 2} - \text{Real GDP in Year 1})}{\text{Real GDP in year 1}} \times 100$$

Even if economic growth is recognized as one of the essential features of economic development, it is important to mention that it is not the only condition for economic development. This latter, which is a much more broader concept than economic growth refers to the progress in the socio-economic structure of an economy. Some authors suggested that economic development is a "a process whereby an economy's real national income increases over a long period of time" (Meler Gerald and Baldwin, 1957). Unlike them, Chowdhury theorised that economic development is "an increase in the real goods and services that is sustained over a long period of time, measured in terms of value added" (Farzana, 2018: 7).

According to Professor Todaro, economic development is "a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes and national institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of absolute poverty"(Farzana, 2018: 6-7). This study conceives of economic development as defined above, where it is showed that economic development, a long-term process, results in both qualitative and quantitative changes while economic growth, apart from being a short-term process, only focus on quantitative changes.

1.7.2. Foreign aid versus foreign investment

Both foreign aid and foreign investment imply the transfer of capital, resources or assets generated by the increasing cooperation among nations and the international investments promoted by the globalisation. Even if the two seem similar in their nature, because involving all capital flows from one country to another, they differ regarding their goals and outcomes, hence the necessity of defining them in order to avoid any possible

[2] Relationship between Economic Growth and Economic Development, https://www.economicsdiscussion.net/articles/relationship-between-economic-growth-and-economic-development/2042
[3] Difference Between Economic Growth and Economic Development, https://keydifferences.com/difference-between-economic-growth-and-economic-development.html

confusion. There is no universal definition of foreign aid. But most of the authors that define it agree on the fact that it refers to funds that are provided to economically less advantaged nations by countries that have the necessary financial strength to assist a country in need with the aim to improve the lives in this latter by contributing to their development in a sustainable way (Roger, 2014: 1).

However, foreign investment can be understood as a kind of system in which a country invests in another country with the main goal of making profits in that country. There are various types of foreign investment. In this study's scope, will be more referred to FDI based on the definition that will be provided. In fact, FDI refers to the flow of capital between countries. According to the UNCTAD, FDI is "an investment involving a long-term relationship made to acquire lasting interests in enterprises operating outside of the economy of the investor"(CNUCED, 2007). To that definition, the IMF adds that "(…) the investor's purpose being to have an effective voice in the management of the enterprise"(IMF, 1993).

Both foreign aid and investment involve some kind of transactions as seen above. Nevertheless, their main difference is related to their terms and aims. While the objective of foreign aid is to help nations in difficulty by providing assistance in nature[4] without necessarily expecting anything in return but the hope that their assistance will be helpful in solving the problems of the receiving country, foreign investment in all its forms always aim at gaining incomes in the form of interest payments, dividends or capital appreciation.

Moreover, some scholars have described the relationship between foreign aid and foreign investment by stating that the provision of aid to a country always results in the development of infrastructures, technological and industrial development, which lead to economic development and as result are developed some opportunities of foreign investments in the receiving countries (Beladi and Oladi, 2006: 3).

Finally, it is also important to distinguish FDI from Foreign Portfolio Investment which actually consists of securities and other financial assets such as warrants, stocks or debentures with the intent to get financial gain. Although both FDI and FPI are two forms of foreign investment, they are different in the sense that contrarily to the direct investors who can have a total control of the domestic firm, portfolio investors do not have the advantage of any control over the firm in which they invest. The interest of this study is FDI and will be used in the sense of the above-mentioned definition.

[4] This can be in the form of funds, low-interest loans and resources etc.

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Overview

Since the 1960, years in which many of the African countries got their independence, the continent got involved in so many models of cooperation, in the ultimate aim of taking part of the globalization process and benefit from its advantage. Regrettably, studies suggested that decades of Africa's cooperation with its partners failed to be productive and rather than actually helping them in their development process, these models of cooperation have been harmful, putting its countries in an endless circle of poverty and misery.

Many studies have focused on Africa's underdevelopment issue. While there has been much studies on the Western aid's impact on Africa's development, few analysed the China-Africa economic relationship in term of its contribution to Africa's development after the post 2008. Hutchison (1975: 347) and Taylor (2007: 11) suggested that most of the literature on this issue only makes use of the conventional foreign-policy and international approach.

Alden (2007) suggested in a study that the China-Africa cooperation can be understood when considered in three perspectives which wants China to be seen in Africa as:

1. A development partner standing for mutual benefits,
2. An economic competitor managing to take advantage of Africa's resources,
3. A great power trying to reposition itself to colonise Africa.

However, regardless of the number of studies, overall, two important approaches are being recurrent as result of the China-Africa relationship's analysis (Elusoji, 2018). In the framework of this study, will be firstly discussed about the approach that wants China to be seen as a Colonizing power. Secondly, will be reviewed the theoretical literature that contends that China is a development partner in Africa. Ultimately, we will discuss a third theory, supported by some few authors among which Hutchison (1975: 340) which sees the presence of China in Africa as explained by the disengagement of the West in Africa.

3.2. China as a new coloniser in Africa

The raise of China as one of the world's largest economies has been an opportunity for it to seek for more economic expansion. As a result of this quest, has been observed in the recent decades a large number of its foreign investment in the Africa, financing some important number of infrastructures, with the aim of building the continent's economy. However, the great will of China as an investor has been criticized by many of its competitors who do not have a good impression of the way its behaves in Africa, most probably because it has been challenging and modifying the world geostrategic scene (Marysse and Geenen, 2009: 372). If there is a place where the Chinese raise is being seriously criticised, it is undoubtedly in the Western countries and especially in the United states (Schoeman, 2008: 74). Some authors even suggested that the Chinese "Neo-colonial plan" in Africa's theory is the product of the western conceptualisation, imagined and aimed to distract the Chinese engagement in Africa (Elusoji, 2018). Whether scholarly or journalistic, analyses on the subject seems to consider China as a bad influence, spending its time undermining the decades of efforts invested by the international community in promoting good governance and decrease the level of corruption in Africa. Moreover, in the recent years, most of the several studies that have appeared directly accused China of being exploiting African countries targeting their resources (Exeter, 2017; Mourdoukoutas, 2019).

In an article in 2008, Hitchen, by stating that China is building a "slave empire" in Africa suggested that it is behaving like an imperial power. This theory was supported by Alden (2007), who described the China-Africa relationship as preparing China to replace the West and emerge as new colonizer. Besides, some authors accused China of supporting the building of dangerous regimes and destroying African economies by establishing ways to unsustainable debt and damaging efforts to end poverty (Chan, 2007: 2; Klare and Volman, 2006: 304; Schoeman, 2008: 80). For Guttal (2008: 38), the ongoing China's aid and foreign investment practices has at some point reach a dangerous level of Colonialism.

In so many occasions, some Western leaders, especially Rex Tillerson and Hillary Clinton have taken position on this issue. Tillerson has warned African nations accepting Chinese loans, saying that while US was "not in any way attempting to keep Chinese investment dollars out Africa", governments could possibility lose control of infrastructure and resources if projects come to go wrong (*BBC News*, 2018). As for Clinton, she once said that "Africans should be wary of friends with elites" and stated that "We don't want to see a new form of colonialism in Africa"(*Reuters*, 2011). In 2013, Sanusi wrote in the Financial Times journal that the Chinese relationship to Africa "carries with it a whiff of colonialism".[5]Contrarily to what so many African leaders have always thought, he argued that China, being seen as the world's second-biggest, is capable of the same forms of exploitation as the west, to the extent that he considerably contributes to the "deindustrialization and underdevelopment of Africa"[6].

[5] Chinese Silk Road: Debt Peonage for Nigeria?' 2018
[6] Chinese silk road: Debt peonage for Nigeria? The Nigeria İnvoice accessible at https://www.thenigerianvoice.com/news/272534/chinese-silk-road-debt-peonage-for-nigeria.html

All this fear raises as in the recent year, we suspected the behaviour of not only the Chinese government, but also after the observation of a large flow of Chinese migrants in Africa(Broadman 2009). As Polgreen and French (2007) would say it, their presence can simply be explained by the fact that the want to replace the West as new colonizer of Africa. Because all those authors believe as Gaye that China is not in Africa for a philanthropic reason. Rather, they are more convinced that China is "another imperial power aiming to accomplish its national interest in Africa"(2007 quoted in Edoho, 2011: 109),thus refute contradictorily the claim of China building a true equal partnership with Africa.

3.3. China as development partner: the win-win relationship's theory.

As previously said, the ongoing involvement of China in Africa has been subjects to several critics and gave results to a large number of perspectives regarding the motives behind this commitment. However, the negative views of the Chinese influence in Africa is being challenged by some nuanced analyses, much more objective on the role of China in the Africa continent (Schoeman, 2008; Chen, 2016: 106-108). These observers argued that the second theory which wants China to be seen as a development partner is a theory shaped by the Chinese foreign policy and executed as a propaganda (Elusoji, 2018). Yet, as an advocate of its own cause, China has never missed an occasion to show to the world that its relations with Africa is a relationship based on respect and mutual interests. Supported by renowned scholars around the world, she is convinced that its partnership with the continent is built taking in account the interests of both actors. For example, Mohan and Power (2008) considered the China-Africa relations as a model of South-South cooperation and development in which both can profit. Alden (2007) argued that China can ameliorate the economic performance of Africa by implementing its economic model to African countries for their strategic development. In fact, this perspective makes of China a successful model (Edoho, 2011: 106; Mohan and Tan-Mullins, 2009: 868) of countries working to support the Buenos air plan of action which promotes the implementation of technical cooperation among the countries of the global south [7]. And effectively, some early studies suggested that there can be evidence that China as a new player in the African continent provide additional windows of opportunity, because of its huge influence spans on economic, political and military spheres (Schoeman, 2007: 92; Lyman, 2005 quoted in McCormick, 2008: 83). In this regard, Tull (2006: 459-460) wrote that the Chinese involvement in Africa appears to

[7] Buenos Aires Plan of Action (1978)

contradict the idea of the international marginalization of the continent. According to him, to the extent that this relationship is based on principles that both of the actor's respect, the future of this cooperation can continue being mutually advantageous for China and Africa.

Among the most prominent authors favourable to the Sino-Africa relationship, Rocha (2007: 25) argued that the Chinese current relationship with Africa is more likely to result in a win-win game, contrarily to the zero-sum outcomes that have been the result of the post-colonial relationships of Africa with the west, particularly in the context of globalisation. Although Alden (2007) stated in a study that China in Africa can be seen both as a competitor that is scrambling for the resources in Africa and China as a new colonizing power, he ultimately concluded that there is no doubt that regarding the Chinese performance in the Continent, he can be considered as a development partner. Brautigam (2016) argued that the reality of China's investment in Africa is very different to the way it is actually described by westerners. In 2018, in an article for the Washington post, she challenged the myth that China is grabbing Africa's land to grow food and send back to feed Chinese. She mentioned three areas to demonstrate that what is being seen in Africa is a story of globalization, not colonization [8]. Recently, some observers also argued that the probabilities for Africa to effectively take advantage of its relations with China is high but if only this latter commit to developing stable policies in pursuing its national interest (Kamal and Haroon, 2019: 12).

3.4. The Theory of China filling a vacuum

The last and rarely encountered theory of China-Africa relations is the perspective of China feeling a vacuum due the western disengagement from Africa. One of the first authors to have theorised this is Hutchison. In 1975, he argued that the China's foreign policy for Africa was drafted and designed by taking in account a multicity of factors linked to each other (Edoho, 2011: 109). In some later studies, he ultimately asserted that China's presence in Africa is more likely to be explained by his will to fill the vacuum created by "the retreat of the colonial power in Africa". Arguably, although the Western engagement has been detrimental for Africa, the least we can say is that the Western have appeared to be the lifeline for Africa (Okafor 2008 quoted in Edoho, 2011: 110). According to Okafor, the capital flights and brain drain from Africa to the Western countries have created a vacuum and thus giving the responsibility to countries like China to fill it. In the light of this studies, Edoho (2011: 109-110) claimed that the economic vacuum created by the Western

[8] U.S. politicians get China in Africa all wrong https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/theworldpost/wp/2018/04/12/china africa/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.5bc57822bce4

disengagement from Africa is the logical result of the post-cold war phenomenon and with it, the globalization. However, he stressed that the economic vacuum observed in Africa is not the result of the decolonization, but is engendered by some other events characteristic of the twenty-first century such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold war and the globalisation. For him, at the end of the cold war, the responsibility of the U.S and the European Union to rebuilt the Eastern Europe have been a major reason explaining they disengagement from Africa, thus leaving the economic vacuum that China is filling now.

3.5. Discussion

Many authors think that the China's embrace of Africa is to a considerable extent motivated by the "former's objective appraisal of the consequences of its colonial experience and the realities of its postcolonial dependent relationships with the West". Among them, Rocha (2007, 19) supported that such an appraisal brings to the acceptance that the old traditional relationship of Africa with the Western has not been helpful to Africa in overcoming the structural obstacles in order to end poverty and underdevelopment. Bauman perceives China's overseas investments as a geopolitical ambition masked as economic development (Mourdoukoutas, 2019). He explained that "China's behaviour is essentially the same as that of the United States in the second half of the 20th century." According to him, China is using its increasing economic power to build political "soft power". In fact, there are so many accounts and allegations of Chinese being treated as a bad influence in Africa both in the economic and governance sphere. However, the fact that the majority of the criticism, if not all is coming from the western countries does not give according to Schoeman (2008: 89), an important credit worthy of great attention.

On the other hand, some authors argued that the political decolonization of Africa by the Western has not been favourable to an economic independence of Africa because the old colonisers through neo-colonialism are still in control of the African countries' economy. Hence, they suggested that to achieve the economic independence that they want, African countries need to design a set of strategies likely to promote an autonomous development.

While the arguments of each and every author can be truth to some extent, this study is founded based on the fact this divergence in the findings depends on some factors such of the period of the study, the countries studied, and even the methodology used in the study. For example, when talking about the China-Africa cooperation, the least that can be said is that the relations are asymmetrical. And obviously, *unequal* relationship can have the potential to be seen as a threat for economic development. Besides, it can even be argued that the Chinese way of doing – especially the assistance and aid “no strings” policy- can hamper the efforts of democratisation and good governance in Africa. If facts like this are to be recognised and accepted, we however have to be careful on how some authors put theories in their studies. Schoeman (2008) argued that one of the most common problems that observers and analysts usually confront with is defining rightly what is Africa. And fairly defining Africa involves that one pays attention to not treating it as a single unit or country. Because, the relationship between China and Africa, far from being a bilateral relationship, is made of a series of bilateral relations between China and more than 40 independent countries in the continent. Obviously, due to some factors upon which the cooperation is build, the nature of this relationship might differ from one country to another country.

In this regard, Zafar (2007, quoted in Schoeman, 2008), by categorising a group of three countries in Africa, based on the economic impact of the relationship with China sorted them as winners, mixed and losers. Although several years passed since this study, the China-Africa cooperation seems to have evolved in this sense. Observations in the context of this study suggests that countries renowned as winners benefit from the Chinese relations because they do have a sustainable development plan. This means that other countries can immensely take advantage of this cooperation if they position themselves to benefit from it. In fact, the project of reinforcing the diplomatic ties for both regions appeared to be reciprocal and this has built a relationship of interdependence with each other. From this perspective, it can be said that the win-win relation’s theory between them is more likely to be accurate even if it is clear that there are much more challenges than opportunities. However, the theory according to which China is a colonial power trying to recolonise Africa is arguably debatable due to some factors and facts that contradict it.

First of all, it has been realised that the cooperation in question is a type of relationship that does not imply for one reason or another, some interferences into the domestic affairs of African states. Secondly, the Chinese government does not impose some kind of sanctions on African governments. As a matter of fact, the above-mentioned relationship has been purely of economic purpose and the actions that has been done so far relatively proved it. With the current state of Africa, it has been theorised that some of the most important things to get it developed are infrastructural projects. Therefore, to the extent that the Chinese investment particularly focuses on energy, agriculture and infrastructure, the relationship can be expected to be a priori what is needed to boost African countries’ markets.

However, some observers deplore this cooperation because they suppose that the Chinese strategy seems to target projects that are collateralized by strategically important national projects fitting into the Belt and Road Initiative. And from a Foreign policy Analysis perspective, one can affirm that this is normal because it is acceptable to countries to use several instruments, ranging from diplomacy to military force (Morin and Paquin, 2018) or as (Nye Jr, 2004) previously argued, from soft power to hard power while pursuing their foreign policy. In fact, provided that their goals gain legitimacy, political leaders will manage to depoliticize foreign policy when communicating about their national interest (Morin and Paquin, 2018: 32). And because soft power is the mean to success in international relations (Nye Jr, 2004), we can't judge the Chinese politics in Africa as neo-colonialist plan.

The presence of China in Africa during the last decades and its actions can be enough to inform us on the goal of China which is to do business in Africa. Knowing that, it is the responsibility of African countries to define the goals in their relationship with China and what they want from it (Edoho, 2011: 112). Therefore, the fact that most of the African countries are not working to take advantage of the Chinese engagement does not mean that China is responsible of this. Rather, it is a proof of how African governments are unwilling to commit to a serious relationship that can help them to build their economies.

Secondly, Africa's relationship with China has nothing in common with the one with the Western. Moreover, all seems to support that those accusing Beijing of using debt trap diplomacy just fail to construct an objective argumentation of how they apprehend China's presence in Africa. The reason being that the Chinese loans are always contracted based on low rates and some are even free interests. In this regard, it would be so simplistic and therefore passionate to affirm that this way of doing isn't helping Africa because there is no proof supporting the fact that it is bad for Africa. Until today, the World Bank and the IMF have never proceeded with such a system and it isn't even part of their Agenda. Yet, nobody is accusing them of trapping Africa with their debt. From an African perspective, it seems more that Africa is more thankful to China than he has been to the Western when it comes to the relevancy of the cooperation they have.

However, one could only deplore the fact that although China wants to be generous in the way it deals with Africa, its loans to this latter are not always used at their best and this might be why the loans seems to be less relevant that it could have been. But saying this does not imply that China is doing wrong. In fact, those who are faulty are the ones who can't be enough responsible to understand how they can make use of the loans they receive from China. Therefore, what can be expected is that African leaders take advantage of the Chinese opportunity to develop Africa's economy and also negotiate in a better way the continental trade and mining deals with key partners.

THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF THE FOCAC AS A STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CHINA-AU RELATIONSHIP

3.1. Introduction

One general argument linking the Chinese presence in Africa asserts that China's strategic goal is to exploit Africa's resources. This argument seems to refer to the assumption that China has emerged out of the blue in Africa and that its relationship with Africa is nothing but a purely pragmatic relationship. Even if the hypothesis according to which China is competing with the West appears to be true, the one that sees China as natural resource seeker is still arguable. As for the concern of this chapter, we support the idea that even if compared to today the Chinese presence in Africa wasn't of a great deal until the 2000's decades, it was because fully engaged in a relationship with Western countries, most of the African states didn't find of necessity a possible relationship with any other actors, including that with China. But then, having realised that its existing ties with Westerns, especially in regard with the IMF institutional conditionalities (revealed to be a failure), weren't as claimed a beneficial relationship, the African Union as whole decided to engage in the search of new form of cooperation. This expression of interest has been welcomed by China who was then seeking for new partners in strengthening its global soft power.

This is why in order to understand this relationship, this chapter will go through the context of the Sino-Africa Economic relationship (Section 2) and how the post-2000's developments have contributed to the sustainability of this cooperation (Section 3) before moving to the analyse of the Chinese cooperation structure (Section 4) and finally discussing what it might means in the last Section.

3.2. The Context of the Sino-Africa Economic relationship

Founded on a mix of historical narratives, win-win relationships and South-South cooperation context, China's policy for Africa can be traced back in several decades before, when the Chinese Communist Party's was signing its adherence to the advancement of its national interests under the national rhetoric of "Great Rejuvenation" [9]. Having evolved from ideologically-driven interactions during the Cold War (Thompson, 2005: 1), the contemporary Sino-African cooperation is built combining pragmatic economic and political means in the pursue of the China's objective of contributing in the establishment of a

[9]Langan 2017, Reeves 2018 quoted in China in Africa: A Form of Neo-Colonialism? https://www.e-ir.info/2018/12/02/china-in-africa-a-form-of-neo-colonialism/

peaceful world order which promote economic growth and stability. In the other hand, we are in a situation where the politics of China's engagement in Africa is being regarded with suspicions, raised with the concerns over Chinese use of aid in exchange of preferential energy deals.

While the traditional debate of China's presence in Africa views it through the confrontation of three different theories as proposed by Alden (See Chapter 3), the Panda-hugger and the Dragon-slayer's perspective on whether China represents an opportunity or a threat for Africa presents interesting and relevant arguments in favour of the two extremes. Unfortunately, the evolution of China's hegemony and its complex status in the global affairs render it more complicated to understand its role and impact in Africa. In this regard, Gifford (2010) argued that comparatively to the 1960's China, the complexity of the today's China seems to have rendered the panda-hugger vs the dragon-slayer debate untenable.

3.2.1. The Western failure and the earlier period of its disengagement

The years following the independence of Africa had been so enthusiastic, full of hope and with the expectation that now free from the colonial yoke, Africa was in the position of successfully pursuing economic development and growth because as stated by the right of people to self-determination [10], the decolonization process involved an attempt at political, economic and intellectual emancipation of the people in general and Africans in particular (Faleye, 2014). Unfortunately, this enthusiasm had turn to be a dream as the African countries was considerably impacted by the economic maladies occurred just after their independence, leaving them with a little or no hope for the economic performances that they've expected for a long time. Allegedly undertaken to assist African countries to integrate their economies into a global capitalist system, international aid from the West in its logic which relied on Africa's resources for its own growth has never fundamentally challenged a relationship that has evolved over centuries to the detriment of the majority of Africans.

A 2014 report[11] stated that while Africa receives about US $133.7 BN each year from official aid, grants, loans (…) some US $191.9 billion is at the same time extracted from the continent in the form of debt repayments, multinational company profits, illicit financial flows (…). Rodney theorised in 1973 that Africa helped to develop the West in the same proportion as the West helped to under-develop Africa. Yet, today again that story remains as true today as in Rodney's time. This can be explained by many reasons, ranging from the

[10] Art 1-2 United Nations Charter
[11] Aid to Africa: donations from west mask $60BN looting of continent, by Mark Anderson, July 2014, available on https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/jul/15/aid-africa-west-looting-continent

African governments implementing neoliberal policies dictated by Western financial institutions[12], to the bastardization of the African culture at the expense of the colonialist's one or "intellectual imperialism" in the words of Faleye (2014: 155). Many studies undertaken on the underdevelopment of Africa suggest that an intellectual decolonization that thoroughly take in account the colonial curriculum of the Continent to accommodate its political and socio-economic structure with its realities is needed. Yet, this isn't actually likely to happen because putted under the control of colonial powers, African countries have been undergoing a new form of colonisation which makes them rely on the external powers to achieve their own development. The logic of this interaction is criticised by a large number of scholars as they found that while it might be a great deal for westerns, it can be detrimental for Africa who has become an important source of raw materials and market for the western industries. This is why some early scholars such as Hegel, Darwin, Ibn Khaldun, Emmanuel Kant etc. argued that Africa was "an android that has for many years immensely contributed to the prosperity of the world while it has never been able to do anything meaningful for its own development"(Mhango, 2017: 179). Likewise, Terreblanche (2011: 1) supported that the exploitation of Africa and Africans by the Western world from the beginning until now has contributed to the building of the economies of the Western powers.

Not only that, Africa's interactions with Westerns have plunged its countries in a vicious cercle of debt which was allegedly given to assist them in developing their economies but have finally revealed to have had much negative impacts than positive. Even if it appears that the causes having led to the debt crisis of African countries is the result of a complex interaction of various factors both endogenous and exogenous (Riddell, 1992: 28), the least that can be said is that the Bretton woods institutions' structural adjustments have played a major role. Yet, a look at the context of the creation of the above-mentioned institutions clearly informed that it was made in a time were the structural adjustments plan proposed by them was expected to be the solution to the African crisis. And the irony is that a great part of this crisis is imputable to the Western countries as colonial powers at that time.

In fact, Africa who used to have the necessary autonomy before its interactions with the Western community, has been with the intervention of colonialism, which impacted directly or indirectly the stability of the its economy by hampering its autonomy (J. A. Ajayi and Austen, 1972; Rodney, 1973) as well as damaging its societal structures, forced to a structural interaction with this latter (Austen, 1987; Amin, 1992; Alemayehu 2000; Leys,

[12] How the West exploits Africa, Tony Iltis, July 18, 2009 available on https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/how-west-exploits-africa

1996 quoted in Geda). Besides, the expansion of the European control also gives the opportunity to use African land and labour with the aim to increase the level of production of primary commodities that will be send to satisfy the demand of the European industries (Amin, 1974).

Having started in the precolonial area, this has become a habit for African states which have been only left with exporting a certain number of primary commodities, while exporting manufactured goods. Unfortunately, this has been prejudicial to them when with their weak economies, African states have been obliged to proceed to the demand for external finances to compensate the export earnings, insufficient to finance the level of expenditures. All this appears with the implementation of the Bretton Woods agreement whose institution's solution to the Third World's crisis has been in the form of structural adjustments as a magic for modernization and growth at all costs. The immediate but temporary way of going out of the crisis was to grant loans, except that the proposed loans, meant for development work as infrastructure projects wasn't made to produce some long-term effects. Not only that, the IMF have accompanied its miraculous solution with some conditionalities supposed to be met by the borrowing nations, although very convinced that those countries might not be able to meet the conditionalities (Riddell, 1992: 27). Left with no alternative, the African countries in need reached a level where they had no choice but accepting to proceed to the adjustments, especially because they were told that it was important for them to become viable members of the international economy (Riddell, 1992; Konadu-Agyemang, 2000).

Moreover, with the onset of the 1979's oil shock, the Third World countries' situation has been more complex because while interest rates was sky-rocketing, the Africa's average nominal interest rate jumped from 4.2% in 1971 to 10.1% in 1981 (Nyerere, 1985: 490) and a probable reason can be that the conditions on which credits could be obtained were simply not appropriate to the circumstances of the Third World in general and Africa in particular.

As the situation was persisting, these countries being put in a situation of need, adopted the habit to turn to the IMF whenever they are in deficit, regardless of the reason. As a consequence, they borrowed more and more to finally be obliged to pay higher and higher rates of interest (Nyerere 1985). Considering this, Africa spends more on debt payments to its Western creditors than it invested in vital sectors such as education and healthcare.[13]

Aware of the facts that the terms of the IMF can worsen their economic situation and put their social and political stability at risk, countries that came to resist the conditionalities

[13] Garikai Chengu, Africa's new struggle against financial imperialism, https://www.chronicle.co.zw/africas-new-struggle-against-financial-imperialism/

because paid a very heavy price. It might be one of the reason why Watts (2013) contented that Africa is suffering from a “Silent Violence” or clearly what Susan George (1988, quoted in Lines 1989) has qualified of a process of “Financial Low Intensity Conflict”.

In clear, as the result of the implementation of the Bretton wood related policies, the continent has been destroyed in several fundamental ways, with the State failing to be an immediate outcome. Many authors as result of their studies have come to a consensus that the effects of SAP in Africa have to a great extent led to worsening conditions (Herbst, 1990, 952; Easterly, 2003: 365), as well as they’ve contributed in crippling their economies by rending it less competitive in the international market (Ghosh, 1984; Terreblanche, 2011) with many countries still struggling with underdevelopment (Riddell, 1992). This is because as some other authors argued, the developed countries have a control over the world economy that allow them to make decisions which they consider as being their own interests. According to Nyerere (1985: 493), the IMF originally created to bring stability to the world trade and encourage its expansion, has become largely an instrument for economic and ideological control of poor countries by the rich ones, in enforcing the unilateral will of the powerful. Simply put, the West does not only limit itself with under-developing and deindustrialising Africa with debt, but goes beyond by making use of its most favourite weapon in its arsenal of financial imperialism by promoting a set of counter-developmental neoliberal economic policies through the Bretton Wood institutions which according to some have been given the right to exert de-facto a control over the economies of African states.[14]

Even if to some points the adjustments could have been necessary due to the fact that financial debts have seriously damaged most of the African countries, an IMF -approved plan which has appeared to not be a prerequisite for all the major sources of funding does not seems to be necessary in helping Third World countries in the making up of their economies.

And in the face of these realities about the nature of their dependent relationship with the Western, Africa has found it right to turn its regard to some other investors, because as it has been suggested in the academia, cooperation within the Third World, even as a long-term process, need to be considered when thinking about solutions to the problems of Developing Countries. This might have probably been one of the reasons bring forward by China in explaining its relationship with Africa. What are the characteristics of this cooperation which has been since some decades the results of so many controversies in the academia? How does China operate in Africa? İn the next section we will have a look the Chinese cooperation

[14] Ibid.

mechanism in Africa, which will eventually allow us to understand whether it can be considered as alternative or not to the western cooperation model.

3.2.2. The Chinese development model as alternative to the Washington Consensus

The modern Sino Africa relationship, has become powerful after the 1950s with some newly independent African and Asian countries having initiated their entry in the world politics. Some authors have qualified this period of "great shift" in the international politics because of the obliteration of some of the great powers and the constitution of a new world which has politically, ideologically and economically transformed the world. Taking advantage of this situation, China has as soon as initiated diplomatic relations with the newly created nations, in the framework of its foreign policy. Quickly, this enterprise had revealed to have been fruitful when in 1955 at the conference of Bandung, Mao Zedong meets some African leaders with the aim of supporting their countries by providing economic, technical and even military support in their struggle for independence, as they were coming out from the colonisation process. It seems that it has been a kind of affinity between all the countries at the conference and the reason was that all the participants, mostly Afro-Asiatic were characterised by the common experiences with colonialization and their willing to fight against imperialism and neo-colonization.

In short, informally, the conference of Bandung has been the event marking the turning point in the Chinese relations with Africa. Furthermore, the conference in its initially agenda, aiming to strength the Afro-Asian economic, political and cultural collaboration (Ayenagbo, 2015: 173) has appeared to has become so important in the post-colonial process of colonised countries because among the ten principles declared, was also appearing the respect of the sovereignty of other nations by not interfering in their internal affairs. This has giving an advantage to China because known to never had colonized any nation, the principles adopted in Bandung was contrary to the traditional colonial masters (Assefa, 2018: 66). In the other hand, the strategic approach of China toward African countries had led her to adopt a considerable number of principles, including supporting the independence of African countries while investing in several projects[15]. In this perspective, the "Four Principles on Sino-African Economic and Technical Cooperation" was adopted with the aim to promote equality and mutual benefit, complementary growth and development in the

[15] China offers Africa billions, 'no strings attached' retrieved https://www.dw.com/en/china-offers-africa-billions-no-strings-attached/a-45333627

pursue of their economic objectives or any other engagement (Brautigam, 2009). Standing against imperialism, China has considerably supported the African Independence Movements and provided a considerable amount of aid to newly independent African states between 1960-1970. The expulsion of Soviet military advisers from Sudan and Egypt in 1970 was much encouraged by China who immediately provided arms to those countries. In the Dragon gift, Brautigam (2009) informed us that financed and build with the help of China the 1,860 km TAZARA Railway was one of China's most prominent early projects. According to her, the amount of aid given by China to Africa was by far, huger than the United States' aid. According to some estimations from 1960 to 2005, a medical team of 15,000 Chinese doctors have treated more than 170Mn patients for the time they stayed in Africa (Thompson, 2005). This modus operandi of the PRC has made Thompson theorises that from the Beijing consensus, China has been undertaking a king health diplomacy through it soft power.

The sincere engagement of China toward African countries in the first years of their cooperation, together with its attitude have seduced African leaders who gradually found it judicious to turn towards China in their seek of a new partnership. According to Thompson, the Consistency of the China's government in the respect of other nations' sovereignty and its refusal to criticize their internal affairs earns the respect of African leaders. As a result of this mutual trust, more and more diplomatic recognitions have been conducted by both actors through official visits which lead to the first official Chinese aid for Africa. This mutual partnership was thus developed in a context where, The PRC was in need of support in international politics from where it was isolated, while the African states after their independence was seeking for recognition and economic support.

This approach of China and the bilateral cooperation it has established with Africa for economic development has been characterised by Ramo (2004) as the "Beijing Consensus", which according to him provides an alternative to the development and the political economic reforms wrongly promoted by the Western countries and branded by the World Bank and the IMF as the "Washington Consensus". Similarly, this assumption seems to be in the straight line with the Hutchison (1975)'s theory of China filling a vacuum created by the west, theory which has been later reconsidered by Edoho in 2011). Even if this cooperation had undergone a sort of deterioration because affected by the Cold War and the communist ideology in the period before 2000, we will see in the next session that in the last decades, the actors have associated their efforts for its prosperity.

3.3. The post Beijing Consensus' dynamics of the China-Africa cooperation

The extraordinary growth observed in the China's relation with Africa is undoubtedly one of the greatest stories of the century. Far from it being out of the blue, one can reasonably assume that it is the result of the profound transformations currently being undergone in the global political economy. Likewise, the least that can be said is that it has been encountered with excitement, consternation and confusion as well as it has been subject of a lot of theories. While the partisans of the normative liberal discourse reproach China of destroying the Western's efforts of good governance and democracy, the anti-westerners refute this theory by supporting that the Western aid by not being morally better and more effective in terms of development outcomes (Tan-Mullins et al., 2010), couldn't have been a beneficial model of cooperation likely to profit Africa. This thesis, while supporting that the Sino-Africa relationship is taking place in the context of the South-South cooperation, recognizes that it is controverted because the ongoing operations in the contemporary international system render more difficult the good functioning of the South-South Cooperation.

3.3.1. The framework of the China's economic development model to Africa

The 2000's of the China-Africa relationship, considered as the period of its consolidation have been characterised by the considerable growth of their respective economies and engagements (Zeleza, 2014: 149). Since then, the engagement of China with African states, marked by it increasing assertiveness in the global politics has been subject of a large number of debates in the academic sphere. Even though China' African policy is an entire part of the 'Going global Strategy' of the Chinese Communist Party's foreign policy, it seems to pose serious problems regarding the role of China as a rising power and its impact in the international system (Chen, 2016: 100). Yet, the China's influence and sound relationships in Africa are the result of many years of investment in building relations through aid, trade, and cultural technical exchange (Thompson, 2005: 2).

In the early 1990s, have been observed some developments which presaged the next stage of the Sino-African relations. The end of the Cold War, having freed African states from many of its conflicts, had as well been the period in which the rival superpower seems to have lost interest in the continent. With this, it has been crucial for Africa to look for a new form of global partners and this explains the opportunity that China got at that time. Likewise, the tensions between China and Taiwan, has played a major role in the development of the China-Africa relationship because when the Western was condemning China was suppressing the Tiananmen protest in June 1989, the Taiwan government took advantage of this situation to embark in Africa with its diplomatic charm (Zeleza, 2014: 154). As the result of this campaign, a dozen of African countries had reportedly recognised Taiwan until 2000. These developments forced the PRC to undertake some measures in containing the damage.

Following this period, some official visits in seven African countries by the Chinese Foreign Minister and three countries by the Prime minister have been made. At the same time, some African heads of state and government as well as various officials had been invited to China. Most importantly, with the rising of the globalisation phenomenon both as a process in the history of humanity and a project of neoliberal capitalist restructure, China has seen opportunities in Africa which were likely to be exploitable in the attainment of its objectives of globalising its economy. Regarding thus all these ambitions, together with the shifting in the relationship from the political to the economic and pragmatic, it has become more important for China to modulate its expansion in Africa.

3.3.2. The institutionalisation of the FOCAC as main catalyser of the contemporary Sino-African relationship

In the high-level conference organised in October 2000, has been instituted thus an organ with the aim of coordinating the rapidly growing Sino-African relationship: Forum on Africa-China Cooperation (FOCAC). The very first FOCAC conference, which according to some analysts, was the biggest diplomatic jamboree ever organised until then, aimed at the creation of "an equitable and just new international political and economic order and was attended by the leaders of 44 African states. As a consequence of these meeting, the "Beijing Declaration of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation" and the "Programme for China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development" were established [16]. Since then, several Forums and Ministerial conferences in which assisted Heads of states and ministers from both China and Africa attended, have been held. In fact, the FOCAC is reflective of the Five Principles of the Peaceful Coexistence guiding the Chinese foreign policy. In the context of this framework, the China-Africa relations are planned to advance through a combination of several programs which promote traditional financial aid and technical support, all together with increasingly growing bilateral trade and investment.

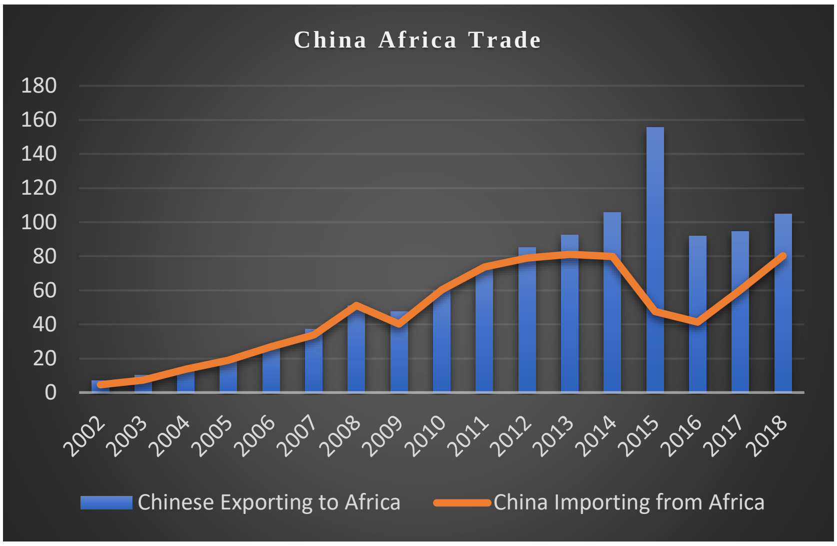
At the end of each FOCAC meeting, are always issued a various measure aiming to deepen the relationship. For example, the Addis Ababa plan Action adopted right after the

[16] The Role of FOCAC - China in Africa - AGE (African Growing Enterprises) https://www.ide.go.jp/English/Data/Africa_file/Manualreport/cia_04.html

second FOCAC makes the promise of increasing China's support to agriculture and infrastructural development, expanding balanced trade by granting zero-tariff treatment toward some countries' commodities, as well as promoting investment in both directions. Likewise, the "China-Africa Joint Business Council" was proposed to be established as an alternative mechanism of trade promotion. Moreover, as China consider special economic zones as essential in overcoming investments obstacles, it has begun to create some of those zones, in the framework of the FOCAC (Cheung et al., 2010, 4; Nowak, 2019: 43). In order to easily establish joint-ventures, it was also proposed the creation of special fund which will be supported by the China, the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Eastern and Southern African Trade Development Bank. However, due the critics that aroused on the Chinese exploitation of African resources, an important attention was accorded to the exploitation and effective use of the natural resources on the continent. At the third FOCAC was proposed the examination of some important subject such as concessionary loans and debt cancellation. As a result, it has been promised the cancellation of $1.3bn of debt to 31 countries (Zeleza, 2014: 155) by China. At the 4th and 5th FOCAC were respectively revealed the provision of a $10bn low-cost loan and the promise of a $20bn credit line to Africa in their efforts to developing infrastructures, agriculture, manufacturing, small and medium-sized enterprises.

The joining of China in the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, regarded as one of the main catalysers of the China's foreign trade has encouraged the Chinese companies to "Go global" by investing overseas, creating factories and buying commodities (Zeleza, 2014: 153; Cheung et al., 2010: 4). Various data on the Sino-Africa economic relationship shows that it has considerably been evolving only since the 2000s (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Evolution of the China Trade with Africa.



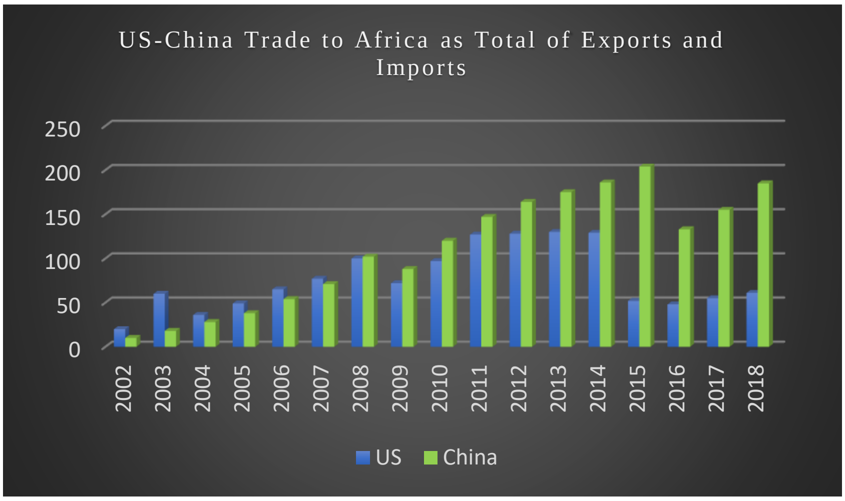
Source: John Hokpins China-Africa Research Initiative

In fact, from $1bn in 1980, the total of the Sino-African trade volume has reached $6.5bn in 1999 and $10bn in 2000. By 2005, the volume was about $39.7bn and jumped to $55bn in 2006. This extraordinary evolution has conferred to China the second largest trading partner of Africa behind the United States (Figure 2), whose volume of trade with African nations worth $91bn. Moreover, China has also passed the traditional West African economic partner France (Assefa, 2018; Dijk, 2009), whose volume of trade worth about $47bn. The value of this trade worth $114bn in 2010 and $185bn in 2018 [17].

Although it is difficult to have access to accurate data, our researches on the volume of the Chinese FDI to Africa, it has been informed that it has been remarkably growing in the same period of time (Shinn and Eisenman, 2012). Studies found that China's cumulative FDI in Africa was about $49m in 1990, but raised up to $820m by the end of the decade. By 2005, the UNCTAD estimations suggested it at $1.6bn, although it had been put at $6.27bn by the Chinese government. Nevertheless, there was a general consensus that it reached $9.33bn by 2009. Besides, since the modernisation of its relations with Africa, China has been giving more financial loans to poor countries (much of which are in Africa) than the World Bank. For example, countries like Nigeria and Zambia, totalised over $100m per year as loan from China in the past few years. The CARI data loan base informs us that China delivered loans to Angola amount of $43,2bn in the period of 2000-2018.

[17] China-Africa Bilateral trade data overview, http://www.sais-cari.org/data-china-africa-trade 27.11.2020

Figure 2: US and China's Trade with Africa.



Source: Author's composition from the John Hopkins China-Africa Research Initiative's data

The official discourse of this relationship has always been in simplistic term with the accusation of China land-grabbing, resource-snatching and neo-colonialism (Geoff, 2020). Yet, when we look at the development process of this relationship, we clearly understand that the Chinese relation offer a certain number of advantages, when we compared to it western rivals (Renard 2011, 30). Furthermore, the institutionalisation of this relationship by the creation of the FOCAC demonstrates that China aims for a long term relationship with Africa (Erşan, 2017; Busse, 2014: 4). However, it appears that although it has been given an opportunity to African countries to become more organised in their relationship with China, it seems that they still do not have a clear strategic perspective on how they can benefit from this relationship. Therefore, in order to understand whether or not this relationship has been sustainability, we will be looking at its actors and its instruments in the next section.

3.4. Chinese cooperation structure

The cooperation differs from the western cooperation in its actors (Paragraph 1) and in the instruments (Paragraph 2) that it uses in the implementation of its projects.

3.4.1. The main actors of the China-Africa economic partnership

As part of the China's global strategy, the Chinese relationship with Africa, more specifically it economic relationship with Africa, is today successful because of the diversity in the coordination and cooperation between the different actors implicated in this relation (Jian-Ye, 2007: 12). In this regard, many authors argued that China proceeding in this way, is being engaged in a diplomacy that most of the other countries cannot match. The main actors in this relationship included but are not limited to the Chinese government, state-owned enterprises, private Chinese companies, the Chinese embassy as institution, and the Chinese people (Dijk, 2009: 11). It is worth noting that although the above-mentioned actors are all from China and thus acting in the interest of the Chinese government, they all have diverse objectives. For example, the Chinese government is in charge of the implementation of the government's national strategy in this regard. It also coordinates the activities executed by different other actors. In fact, in order facilitate its economic activities in Africa, the Chinese government employs two-policy banks, the China Export & Import Bank commonly known as EXIM Bank and the China Development Bank (Cheung et al., 2010: 5). As State financial institution, The Exim Bank, established in 1994, has been responsible of the commercial credits and concessional loans management and in charge of the promotion of the Chinese exports and FDI in the infrastructure sector such as roads, power plants, pipelines, telecommunications etc. (Jian-Ye, 2007: 14). In the other hand, the China Development Bank (CDB) was created in 1994 to assist the Chinese firms with loans. Because the role assigned by it regarding the Chinese firms, Wang (2007) argued that it is by far the most China's most important Bank in this process. In this context, the China-Africa Development Fund was created in 2006 with the aim to support the Chinese FDI in Africa (Renard, 2011: 12; Nowak, 2019). Parallelly the Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) is also in charge of the aid provision (Erşan, 2017: 56). Since 2001, the SINOSURE (China Export and Credit Insurance Corporation) has been operating with the aim to support Chinese exports and investment abroad due to the advantage it has in term of providing insurance against potential risks likely to result from the Chinese exports and FDI. Furthermore, the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Ministry of Defence have been seen offering some aid to many countries. Above all them, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs since the Beijing Summit, has been responsible of monitoring commitments in Africa by focusing on bilateral relationships (Renard, 2011: 12; Chaponnière, 2009: 61). State-owned enterprises enter Africa in the framework of the "Go out" strategy in order to ensure the supply of raw material to China. It is the case of the China National Petroleum Corp which is the leading foreign investor in Sudan and the China National Offshore Oil Company (CNOOC) operating in Nigeria. The Chinese private companies operate in Africa with aim to grasp and exploit the opportunities they see in the Continent. It is the example some multinational corporation such as First Automotive World (FAW), SOE Shanghai Industrial or Shanghai Industrial Investment Corporation (SIIC) which are operating in manufacturing sector in South Africa (Erşan, 2017: 79). Apart from this firms are also small and medium firms which do play an important role in so many ways in Africa.

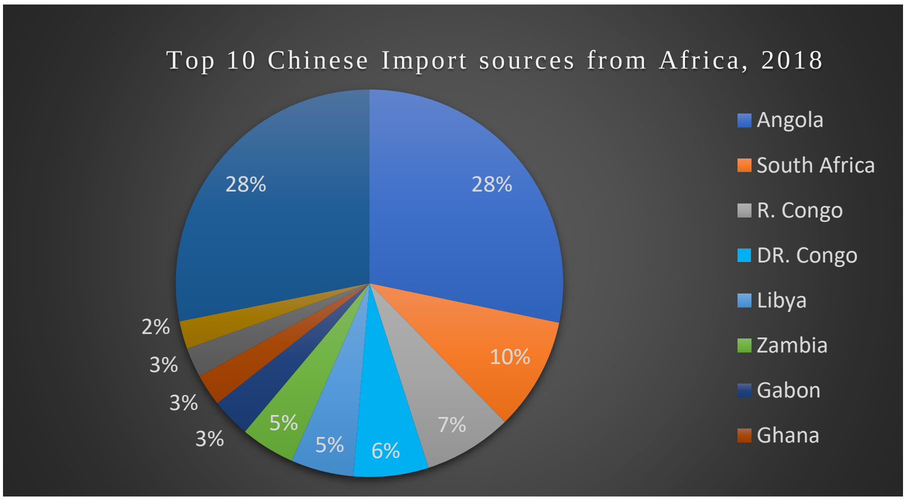
3.4.2. The instruments of the Chinese cooperation in the context of Africa.

China's sudden interest in Africa was reportedly motivated by the need to obtain energy resources to support it economic development in the context of its global economic strategy (Renard, 2011; Cheung et al., 2010: 5). Having been characterised by different periods and developments, the China-Africa relationship has passed from being just a simple traditional cooperation to a more formalised by its institutionalisation. Today, the presence of China in Africa is broadly perceived through different sources of funds flows in the context of its bilateral relations with Africa countries, both in terms of political and economic developments. In fact, due to the diversity of its historical relationship with various African countries, China interacts in diverse ways with different countries and therefore is more visible in some countries than others (S. Moyo, 2016). In general, competitive political advantage, economic diplomacy, and development assistance have been the building pillars of the Sino-African economic cooperation (Nowak, 2019). Therefore, regardless of its pass relationship with its partners, we will constate the Chinese presence in a country by the intensity of its trade (1), the flows of it FDI (2), or the amount of its foreign aid (3). However, it isn't rare to meet both of the three or more in the same country. It is necessary to always look at China's activities in regard with all these three instruments when assessing the economic impact of China in Africa because it economic activities is the result of all this combined rather than "a diversion of existing flows from third countries"(Busse, 2014: 1).

3.4.2.1. Trade

In only the interval of a decade, China has successfully raised as major trading partner for Africa. Even if the Europeans countries still remain the leading trade partners of some African countries, Europe share of Africa's exports has considerably fallen (Figure2). In the interval of the 2001-2007 period, China has worked to increase its merchandise trade with Africa 18 times, by becoming in 2009, the second trading partner for Africa, while in the interval of 2008-2017, its bilateral trade in goods with Africa knew an annual augmentation of 9.8 percent (Nowak, 2019: 45). According to the CARI data, the total value of the Sino-Africa trade was about $185 billion in 2018. The Chinese imports of goods, which was about $4.85 bn. in 2000, grew to $81.11 bn in 2010, then decreased at $41.27 bn. before attaining $80.34 billion in 2018 (CARI, 2020). Being a centre of manufacturing activities, it isn't surprising that its imports activities, varying from a range number of products natural resources product, are concentrated in raw material exporting countries (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Chinese import from Africa.

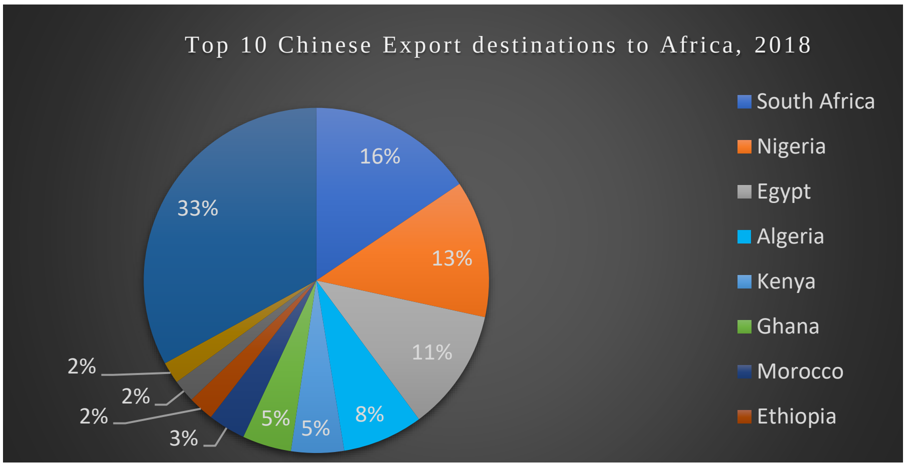


Source: Johns Hopkins China-Africa Research Initiative

In 2012, natural resources accounted for 66 % of the Chinese import from Africa (Busse, 2014: 5), with top exporters as Angola, South Africa, the Republic of Congo, DRC, and Zambia. If South Africa is removed from this list, resource exported accounted for about 90 % of the above-mentioned countries total exports to China (Busse, 2014: 5), clearly given us an idea of how highly the trade is concentrated on natural resources. This has been the norm in last years too. For instance, until today, China still buys some Crude Petroleum in some countries such as Angola (leading exporter), followed by South Africa from where its purchases Gold while 99.3% of the DR Congo's cobalt is amounted in it imports. In 2018, the total share of the Chinese imports in Africa was about respectively 28% and 10%.

Yet, the agricultural imports in the side of China have a modest share, even though they are forming a great part of imports from a large number of African countries. An analyse of the Africa's imports by product to China informs as that more diversified countries import machinery and transport equipment, manufactured goods and handicrafts (Renard, 2011). In other terms, this means that while China is importing natural resources from Africa, African countries import non-resource products from China, which was about 97% of their total imports in 2012 (Busse, 2014: 5). The Machinery and transport equipment imports might be explained by the fact that most of the Chinese firms operate in the infrastructure sector, more precisely in domains like telecommunications, roads and buildings of public utilities. This explains why in 2018, Transportation was the top exported service of China and top imported services of countries like, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya and even South Africa where for example it had a net worth of $6.73 bn. as of the total amount of the services imported due to $15.6 bn.

Figure 4: Chinese export to Africa.



Source: Johns Hopkins China-Africa Research Initiative

When it comes to the Chinese exports to Africa, evaluated in value, it has rose from $51.9bn. in 2008 to 155.7 bn. in 2015 before declining to $94.5bn. in 2017. Compared to its exports, which had surpassed the value of it imported goods from African countries by about $10bn. between 2008-2018 can be seen that China's import from Africa is relatively low. And according to the CARI, this deficit is the result of the weak commodities prices observed since 2014. But this observation, clearly suggest as stated by Nowak (2019) that after the global crisis, "Africa became more of an export than an import market for China." Between the period of 2013-2018, the principal destination of Chinese goods, as of the percentage of the China's export to Africa were as depicted in the Figure 4 as follow: South Africa (15.5%), Nigeria (12.9%), Egypt (10.3%), Algeria (7.2%) and Kenya (5%). The major product going from African exporters, at the exception of South Africa, usually consist of crude oil.

As stated above, the increase in trade volume can provide a lot of opportunities for both parties. Nevertheless, the increase in the imbalance continue raising more and more concerns on the future of the sustainability of this relationship (Erşan, 2017: 46). As a recall, between 2008 and 2017, China had a trade deficit with 17 countries as part of which the biggest deficit recorded was with Angola, South Africa and Congo. This intervenes as in 2016 some statistics reported that while Africa's export amounted for $54 bn., China's export was about $89.8 bn. As China is trying to balance the trade volume, that means it could be riskier for African countries to continue in such a way. Moreover, some authors argued that though the trade between China and Africa has evolved, it remained a one side movement since raw materials go to China and come back as industrial products (Dijk, 2009: 15).

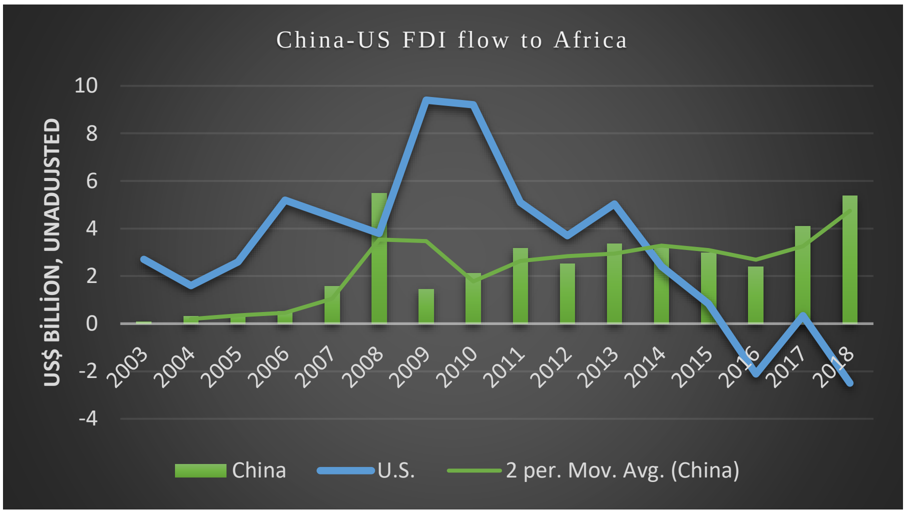
3.4.2.2. Chinese Foreign Direct Investment in Africa

FDI is another form of financial support instrument used by China in its relationship with Africa. generally defined as the investment made by a foreign entity into a business based in another country, FDI should not be confused with FPI, Foreign Portfolio Investment.

The liberalisation and the globalisation have fostered the global growth of the FDI in the recent decades and increased in a considerable way the FDI flows in so many countries, most of which are low and middle-income countries (Pigato, 2000). As a result, Africa has been seen as the third largest destination of the Chinese investment behind Asia and Europe. Most probably because of the foreign-exchange reserves accumulated from its trade surplus with its other partners around the world, China has been in possession of a large amount of Overseas Foreign Direct Investment (Dijk, 2009: 17), which has been used as investment in most of the African countries and Latin America. Dijk (2009), Cheung et al., (2019) and Pairault (2013) suggested that to understand the Chinese investment in Africa, it is so important to take in account the China's "go out" policy. The Chinese government, with it aims to conquer global market has encouraged its financial institutions and other national enterprises both public and private to invest in Africa (Erşan, 2017; Dijk, 2009: 17).

In fact, in the global economy, the FDI is generally classified in two categories: Inflows and Outflows. The outflows are usually perceived as investments flowing out of a one country (home) towards another country's (hosting) economy while inflows are perceived as investments made from a home countries' MNCs. Closely related to trade and development assistance, the annual Chinese FDI has increased over the last decades with the increase in its trade with African countries. This is somehow due to the fact some African countries, have been successful in attracting foreign investors thanks to the abundance of raw materials and markets. According to the CARI data, in the period of 2003 to 2018, it has increased from US $75m from US$5.4 bn. Once again, as the trade volume, China's FDI flows to Africa has known an increase compared to that of the U.S. FDI, with the considerable decline in the U.S. FDI since 2010 (Figure 5). In 2008, China's OFDI flow to Africa was 5.49% out of 9.8% of its global OFDI flow (Leung and Zhou 2014). The stock of foreign investment which amounted about US $7.8m in 2007, reached $ 34.69 in 2015 and US $46.1m in 2018. According to the UNCTD (2019), the stock of China's FDI in Africa increased by more than 50% between 2013 and 2017. Nevertheless, although this increasing in the amount of the Chinese FDI stock in Africa, it is important to recall that this value isn't as meaningful as it appears when compared to its global stock. For example, in 2012 the global OFDI stock of China was about $531.94bn, of which $21.73bn or 4.1% was to Africa. in 2018, this amount as increased to $1982.27bn out of which 46.1 bn or 2.1% go to Africa.

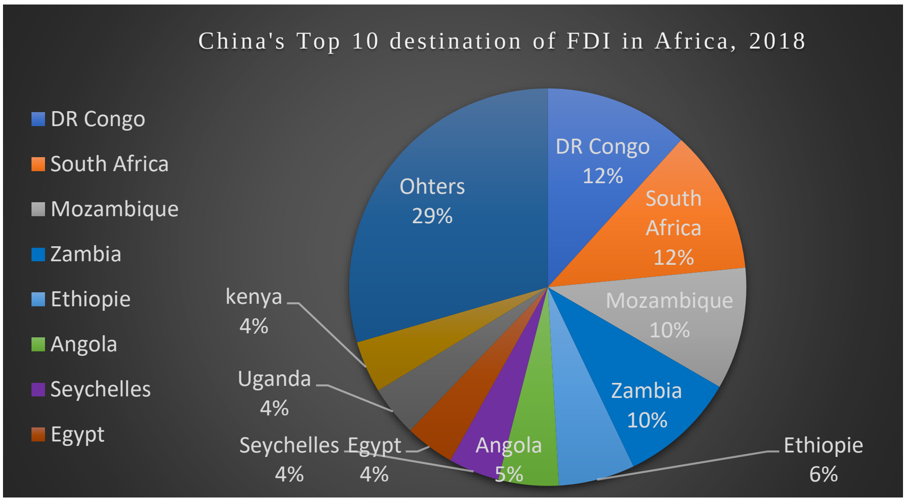
Figure 5: China-US FDI flow to Africa.



Source: Johns Hopkins University SAIS China-Africa Research Initiative

Nevertheless, although the Chinese FDI flow to Africa was about US $5.5bn in 2008, it has experienced a decrease between 2009-2017 before reattaining US $5.38bn in 2018. In the SAIS-POLICY brief N.8 of April 2017, has been argued that this decreased in the amount of the Chinse FDI flow was due to the "falling commodity prices and China's economic slowdown" (Eom et al. 2017: 3). Nevertheless, due to the variations in the estimations, it is difficult to be sure about the amount of the Chinese FDI outflows (Abbink, 2005: 18).

Figure 6: China's top destination of FDI to Africa.

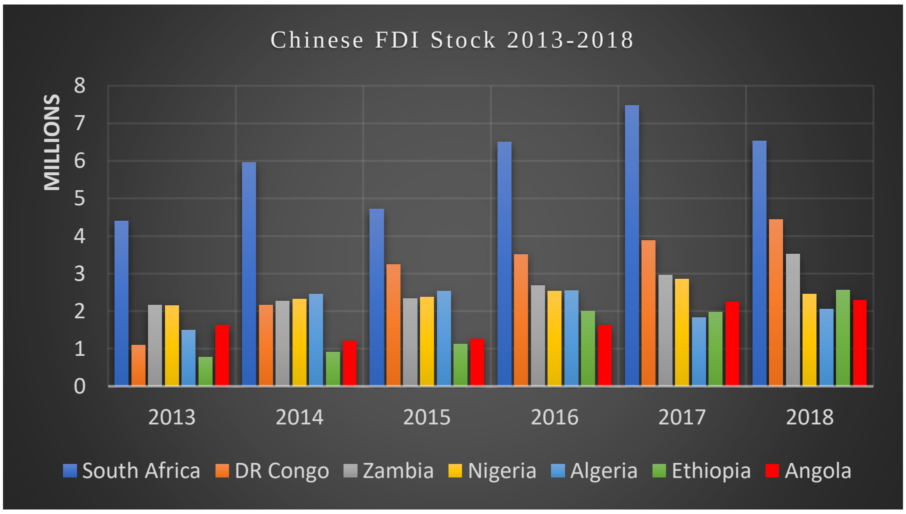


Source: Johns Hopkins University SAIS China-Africa Research Initiative.

As it has been the case about trade, the Chinese FDI to Africa is almost directed to reputed “resource-rich” reputed countries, except South Africa (Figure 6). But this can be seen as totally normal because FDI inflows are in most of the case directed towards advanced and industrialised or resource rich countries which have the advantage of an open market (Erşan, 2017: 94). In 2018, 24% of the FDI flow was in DRC and South Africa and 20% in Mozambique and Zambia.

In 2012, more than a half of the Chinese OFDI stock to Africa was in South Africa, Zambia, Nigeria, Algeria and Angola. The part of OFDI allocated to South Africa only was more than 20% (Leung and Zhou, 2014). Since then, six years have passed and the figure 7 shows as that at the exception of Algeria which has been replaced by Zambia, the total stock of the Chinese OFDI has considerably increased with the majority of the Chinese FDI stock concentrated in those countries. This must be a little intriguing, when we try to understand why China is investing in such countries. But some authors suggest that it is due to the fact that most of the Chinese enterprises are targeting strategic sectors such oil, minerals or infrastructure (Abbink, 2005: 19). This is possible because they are state-owned enterprises and thus benefit from governments grants or loans from state-owned banks which allows them to possess liquidity to operate.

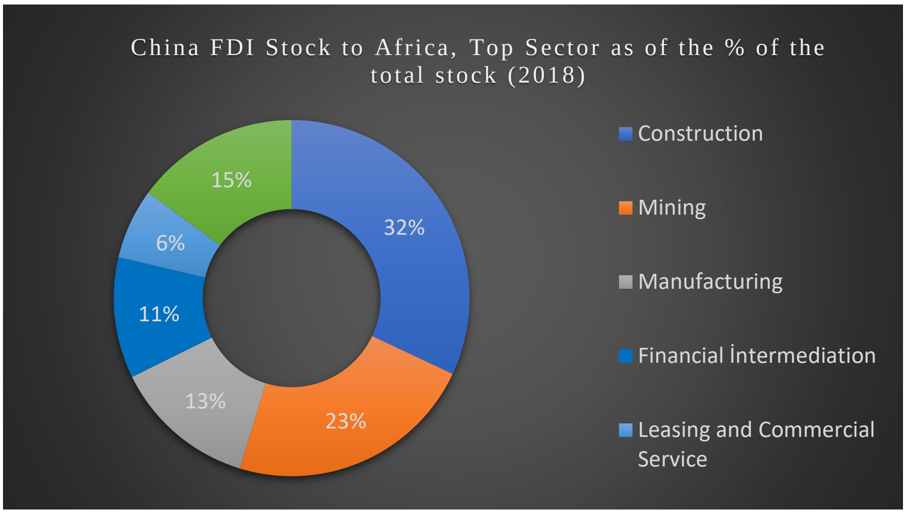
Figure 7: Top countries with the Chinese FDI stock in the selected period.



Source: Johns Hopkins University SAIS China-Africa Research Initiative

Dijk (2009: 17) argued that as well the Chinese investment focus on building the necessary infrastructure for the exploration of resources necessary to its development, it also serve to develop some other activities such of agricultural, telecommunications and manufacture. The Chinese MNCs have in fact invested in so many sectors in Africa. However, contrarily to the UNCTAD data’s suggestion according to which the Chinese investment in SSA is fairly well distributed across different sectors, the figure 8 informs as that in 2018, Construction, mining and manufacturing were the top largest sectors for Chinese FDI stock to Africa with respectively 32%, 25% and 13% (Figure 8). Contrarily to 2015 where the mining was sharing the largest part of FDI with 28%, we can see that in the recent years the construction sector has emerged at the first place.

Figure 8: FDI Stock per sector in Africa.



Source: Johns Hopkins University SAIS China-Africa Research Initiative

This grow in the Chinese FDI flow in Africa is explained by the fact that in the recent years, most of its countries have shifted from foreign aid recipients to FDI beneficiaries since the FDI requires an open economic policy, a minimum state regulation and an economic integration. Also, when we look at FDI stock by sector, we see that the infrastructure construction is the leading the sector. There is no doubt that China focuses on this sector because it has understood the need of infrastructure in most of the African countries for their economic development. The World Bank 2018's report "Lifelines: The Resilient Infrastructure Opportunity" highlighted the different challenges face by fragile countries and they communities from infrastructure disruptions (Hallegatte et. al., 2019).

Similarly, the African Economic Outlook (AfDB, 2018) estimates the Africa's need in infrastructure about $130 and $170 billion per year, with an annual shortage of about $68 and $108 billion. And especially because the China's infrastructure assistance to Africa is not a recent thing (Cheung et al., 2010, 5), we can in this regard, assume that this is one of the positive aspect of the Chinese present in Africa. İt is even argued that infrastructure was one of the very first sectors in which China invested in Africa even back to the 1970's (Cheung et al., 2012: 5; Renard, 2011: 20). This can be seen today though all over Africa, whether in term of the industries developed or in term of competitive services executed in the public sector by building large infrastructural projects, such as railways, roads and divers other infrastructures rehabilitation and construction (S. Moyo, 2016: 64). In all over the continent, more than 35 countries are having official infrastructural contracts with China, with however the largest in term of need being Nigeria, Angola, Sudan and Ethiopia (Pairault, 2014: 20).

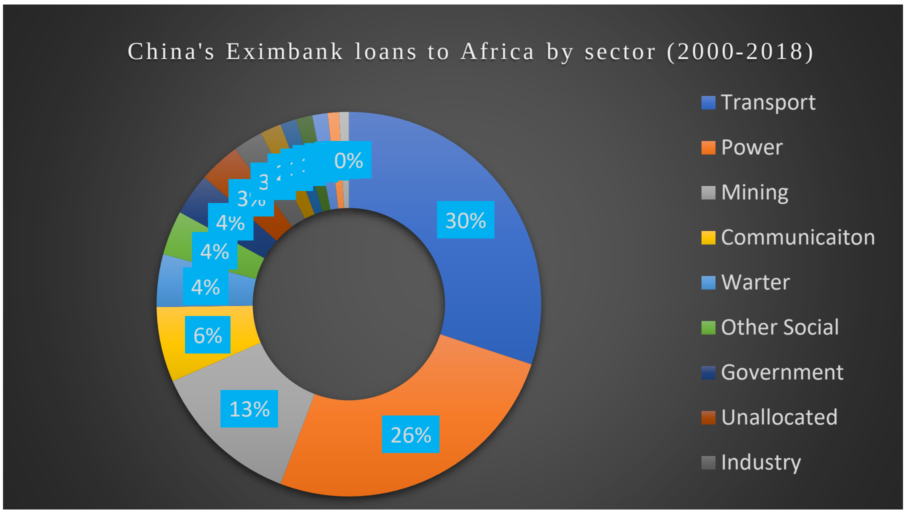
3.4.2.3. Chinese Foreign Aid

The China's relationship with Africa, as seen below has known a lot of development since the founding of the PRC in 1949 and especially in the last two decades. China who was once in the top countries receiving international aid has shift from being a recipient to a successful donor (Manning, 2006; Woods, 2008 quoted in Tan-Mullins et al. 2010, 860). This change in the international system has created a kind of divergence in the way development assistance was provided because this new aid donor's structure came with several features (Erşan, 2017: 15). Contrarily to the DAC donors, the recently emerged donors and particularly China, while refusing to use the term "Donor"(Chaponnière, 2009: 57), wants its assistance to be seen as 'partnership'. As result, the China's aid initiatives in Africa in the form of economic or technical cooperation have increased remarkably in the last decades. This is because with the advent of South-South cooperation, the global South wants it cooperation to be based on mutual benefit in which it sees its economic and technical assistance as win-win instead of one party receiving from another party named donor. It has been considered after the second FOCAC forum in Addis Ababa when in January 2006, the Chinese government release a white paper on China Africa policy emphasising the need for a win-win attitude in the development of their cooperation (Chaponnière, 2009: 60). During the 3rd FOCAC Forum, Beijing announced that its aid to Africa would double between 2006-2009 through the increase in soft loans and other social projects (Chaponnière, 2009: 56).

Although the Chinese aid, unlike the DAC donor are provided in the form of concessional loans, we should however recognize that the other features constitute it aid structure because its modus operandi gives him an advantage in regards to the Western donors to the extent that whereas the poor state of Africa's infrastructure is widely recognized to be a major constraint on its development, only a small proportion of Western aid is devoted to infrastructure improvement. Another thing about the China's aid is that it does not emphasize on political conditions, and this strategy is by far more attractive to African countries in regard to the Westerns (Assefa, 2018: 92). However, Wang and Ozanne (2010: 11) argued that the unconditionality of the Chinese aid does not mean that is comes with no strings attached. It simply means that they perceive it as a self-interest feature that gives the opportunity to the needy countries to have access to its aid. Except from that, the unconditionality policy is also usually perceived as rooted in the China’s foreign policy which is founded with the non-interference principle as core pillar. Since the formulation of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in 1950s, this principle has been the basis of its foreign policy. However, China is also attacked by its detractors for its own human rights record, plus its political system which has nothing in common with the Western donors and thus make it difficult to impose political conditions to others. But China always respond by arguing that a country’s political development is endogenously determined by its level of economic development and therefore, democracy should be promoted once this country reach a certain level of development (Wang and Ozanne, 2010: 11).

This modus operandi has been for a long time a source of polemic and disagreement between analysts about the nature of the China’s ODA and most importantly the motives why choose one country as its main recipients rather than another country (D. Bräutigam, 2011b: 203). As Brautigam highlighted it, the international financial architecture is constituted of numerous kinds of flows. Although she argued that knowing more about the Chinse development ais is crucial in understanding its foreign policy and statecraft (D. Bräutigam 2011b: 203), she recognised unlike Chaponnière (2009: 56) that the lack of transparency of the China’s official aid programme hamper the possibility of understanding the difference of its foreign aid from the ODA as defined by the OECD DAC (Brautigam, 2011 quoted in Carter, 2017: 4). However, it has been widely accepted that the China’s equivalent of ODA is generally provided in the form of three instruments namely grants, interest free-loans and concessional loans (State Council, 2011-2014; Carter, 2017: 2; D. Bräutigam, 2011: 204). It is worth to recall that the grants and interest free loans are managed by the MOFCOM which is in charge of the state finances while the concessional loans are managed by the Exim Bank. China does provide it aids as financial, technical assistance, with an emphasis on the development of the agricultural sector by training farmers in Chinese institutions (Jian-Ye, 2007: 9), and educational programs etc. According to the SAIS-CARI estimations, the Chinese governments, banks and contractors granted about US$ 148bn loans or a total of 1,077 of commitments carried out without financial transfer and affected towards the building of infrastructure in most of the countries that benefit from it. Throughout the continent, Chinese investment is largely concentrated in transport and energy. Some of the countries who benefited much in these sectors are Nigeria, Kenya and Ethiopia. Until today, as depicted in the figure 9, the major sectors financed by the Chinese loans are transportation (44.2%), energy (37.8%) and mining (18.6%).

Figure 9: China's Exim bank loans to Africa by sector



Source: Johns Hopkins University SAIS China-Africa Research Initiative

There are so many of examples of Chinese investment in Africa like mentioned and even, more and more the number is growing. From that, it can be seen that in only some years, China has become one of the main loaners of the continent. But the problem is that the level of the debt in some countries keeps climbing. In Zimbabwe, the indebtment increased from 48% of the GDP in 2013 to 82% in 2017. And in Mozambique in the same period, its doubled to reach 102% of the GDP. In total, according to the World Bank [18], 27 countries of Africa had a worrying increase in the level of their debt in 2017. By receiving more loans than all the other countries, Angola has been Africa's larger loans receiving country from China followed by Ethiopia and Zambia (Fig. 10 and 11). This is why some observers have been worrying that many of the African countries won't be able to pay back these debts, maintaining them in what have been called "debt trap".

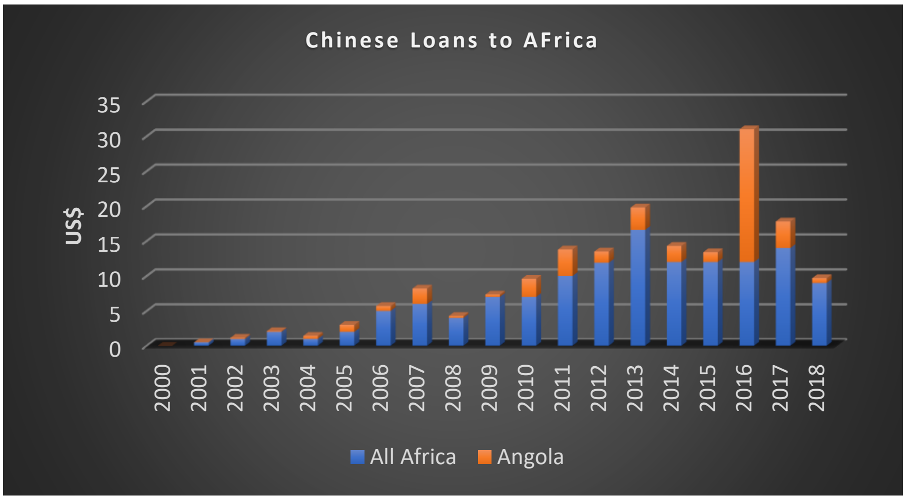
The Jubilee Debt Campaign, campaigning for poor countries debts to be cancelled, estimated that about 20% of debt held by African governments is owned to China. Aware of that, the Chinese government added, concessional loans with aim to favour bilateral aid which was until 1995 in form of donations. In fact, the role of interest-free loans and concessional aid has led China to carry out regular debt relief.[19] In this perspective, and at the occasion of the first FOCAC in 2000, has been announced a debt cancellation of $1.2bn of debt or an equivalent of two years overdue obligations (Jian-Ye, 2007). After this first cancellation, was followed in November 2006 by an announcement of another 1.3bn

[18] International DEBT Statistics 2017 available on https://datatopics.worldbank.org/debt/pdf/ids-2019.pdf

[19] At the China-Africa Forum of 2000, China cancelled 1.4 billion debts for 31 countries.

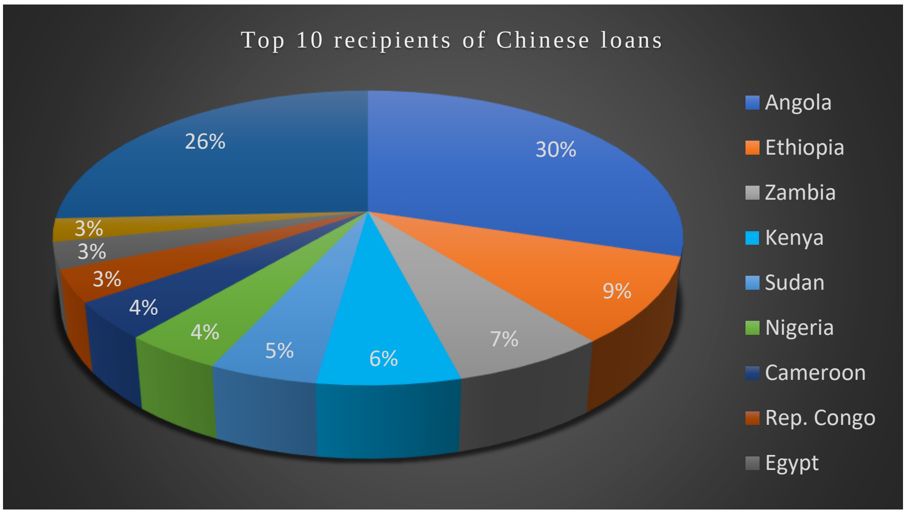
cancellation in debt provided by the end of 2005 as interest free government loans owned by 33 of the heavily indebted and least developed countries.

Figure 10: Chinese Loans to all Africa and to Angola



Source: Johns Hopkins University SAIS China-Africa Research Initiative

Figure 11: Top 10 recipients of Chinese loans



Source: Johns Hopkins University SAIS China-Africa Research Initiative

3.4.2.4. Chinese ODI to Africa

Except from the three instruments mentioned so far, has to be added another important, most of the time overlooked, yet is seen as an important channel through which China interact with Africa (Cheung et al., 2010: 6). In fact, the Chinese private enterprises, investing in term of ODI, also play an important role in the African countries economy and therefore should not be neglected while assessing the effect of the Chinese in Africa since they are under the direct supervision of the Chinese government (Pairault, 2013: 261).

In this regard, a study conducted in 2018 by Chen et al. on the analyse of the "sectoral pattern of the ODI from China to Africa", concluded with not surprising results. Having covered a total number of 2005 deals at the firm level withing 49 countries, the authors found that the top 5 destinations of the Chinese ODI were as shown below (Table 1).

Table 1: China ODI by country in term of the number of the projects

Country	Number of Projects	Number of firms
Nigeria	404	240
South Africa	280	152
Zambia	273	125
Ethiopia	255	114
Egypt	197	99
Congo (DRC)	193	80
Ghana	192	90
Angola	189	80
Zimbabwe	167	68
Tanzania	149	85
Sudan	148	78
Kenya	137	71
Algeria	123	75
Mozambique	94	41
Uganda	89	45
Gabon	71	23
Mali	68	33
Namibia	66	30
Mauritius	65	40
Cameroon	60	28

Source: China's Ministry of Commerce Transaction-level ODI Data in W. Chen, Dollar, and Tang (2018).

As shown in the Table 1, with a total number of 240 deals or 12%, Nigeria is the lead followed by South Africa and Zambia with respectively 152 and 125. Furthermore, the study showed that about 72 % of the total ODI investment are in service sectors, while 15 percent of the projects are in manufacturing sectors, with the remaining portion almost divided among agriculture and natural resources(W. Chen, Dollar, and Tang, 2018: 621).

The Table 2 shows that the two sectors that received the most Chinese Outward Direct Investment (ODI) in terms of the number of projects are business services (1053 projects) and import and export (539 projects). The results of this study aren't so different from another study conducted just some years before. Although the stock of the Chinese ODI to African countries which only represented about 0.6% of its global FDI stock, the authors however found that the destination of these ODI was not identical to those receiving the Chinese FDI. According to this study, the top recipients of the Chinese ODI was South Africa, Nigeria, Algeria, Sudan, Zambia and Angola (Pairault, 2013: 269). These countries accumulated a total percentage of 75% out the total flow between 2003-2009 with only South Africa receiving 50%. Nevertheless, contrarily to Pairault (2013) who explained the large amount of FDI to those countries, Chen (2018) in the straight line of Brautigam (2009), refuted this popular perception according to which a large amount of the Chinese private ODI are only engaged in natural resource-related countries (W. Chen, Dollar, and Tang, 2018: 621).

Table 2: Chinese ODI by sector in Africa.

Sector ID	Sector description	Nb of Deals
	Agriculture	
2	Vegetable products	72
1	Live animals; animal products	41
	Manufacturing	
12	Articles of stone, plaster, cement, etc.	96
15	Machinery and mechanical appliances; electrical equipment; parts thereof.	76
10	Textiles and textile articles	75
3	Prepared foodstuffs; beverages, spirits and vinegar; tobacco	64
11	Footwear, headgear, umbrellas, etc.	54
5	Products of the chemical or allied industries	45
13	Other manufacturing	45
16	Vehicles, aircraft, vessels and associated transport equipment	40
8	Wood and articles of wood.	35
6	Plastics and articles thereof; rubber and articles thereof	22
17	Miscellaneous manufactured articles	17
9	Pulp of wood or of other fibrous cellulosic material	15
7	Raw hides and skins, leather, etc.	9
	Service	
21	Business service	1053
20	Wholesale and retail	693
24	Import and export	539
18	Construction, transportation, storage and postal services	392
22	Finance	68
19	Information transmission, computer services and software	14
23	Social service	12
	Mining	
4	Mineral products	319
25	Petroleum, water and electricity production and supply	45
Total		3841

Source: China's Ministry of Commerce Transaction-level ODI Data (1998–2012), in W. Chen, Dollar, and Tang (2018).

3.5. Discussion and Conclusion

Contrarily to Western engagement in Africa, what we've seen above is that the Chinese involvement with Africa does not implicate any kind of political maneuvers or at least to the best of our knowledge. Even if China is seen in the words of Hufbauer et al (1990, quoted in Levitsky and Way, 2010: 28) as part of the "Black knights" whose aim resided in using soft power to spoil the western efforts in promoting democracy (Ambrosio, Bader et al, Tolstrup, Kavalskiquoted in Börzel, 2015: 520), the truth remain that this group of countries seen as "the illiberal rest" still constitute a source of incredible support to the global south's development. Having emerged from that group, China has developed a unique strategy which allows him to become a success story in Africa. The latest evidence of this evolvement as success story can be the decision of Burkina Faso in 2018 to sever its diplomatic ties with Taiwan and establish relations with China [20]. This is because China sees Africa as a market place where as a partner, both can develop and entertain win-win relations.

Moreover, as Brautigam argued, the strong engagement of China with Africa is somehow based on its belief that economic development can be the cure of conflict and instability (Brautigam 2009 quoted in Erşan, 2017: 65). While the western partners are responsible of conflicts and economic destabilisation in Africa (Nielsen et al., 2011: 220; Nunn and Qian, 2014: 21), Beijing brings infrastructures such as bridges, roads and dams. Contrarily to traditional donors who explicitly show assistance for democratisation by providing aid supposed to improve political institutions and support different types of interest groups (Carothers, 2009 quoted in Ziaja, 2020: 2), China with its reputation of being an autocracy found it more preferable to engage itself in a business perspective with its partners in general and African in particular. Its policy of non-interference has granted him the trust of African government which have progressively seen him as more objective than any partner that they ever had. Moreover, as discussed in the third session of this chapter, one of the most important factors in the China's success is undoubtedly the institutionalisation of its relation with Africa by launching in later 2000 the FOCAC as a mechanism to deal with Africa as a whole at the exception of countries that entertain diplomatic relations with Taiwan. However, it is worth recalling that although China entertains relationship with almost all of the African countries, the impact of this relationship varies and evaluating it necessitate to take in account a diverse number of factors whether it is trade, FDI or Aid and their quantity. It has been argued that China goes in Africa for the natural resources of some of its country and therefore only focus its presence on those countries. Yet it has been observed that it has been considerably investing in some countries such as Kenya, Zambia or Namibia. This suggests that although the energy sector represent a crucial role for the Chinese involvement in Africa, other resource-based engagements such as Cotton plantation, infrastructures, telecommunications or textile manufacturing are also playing an important role (Alden, 2009 quoted in Erşan, 2017: 65). This large number of possibilities that offer African countries in term of business probably explain the fact that China is more present in a

[20] FRANK CHING, Africa is China's success story, 2018. Accessible at https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/opinion/africa-is-chinas-success-story

country another than in another one. Nevertheless, the complexity in assessing the Chinese influence in African countries seems to be caused by some other factors such as of their incapacity to properly develop their institutional capacity, legal and political framework necessary to their development (Meja, 2014: 86).

Although China is being seen as a reliable partner capable of financially supporting Africa in investment and new technologies, the truth is that if its African partners do not seize this opportunity to foster their economic development, their relationship with China won't be much different as that of the Western. This is why is it important to understand what works and what does not work in this relationship so that African countries can be in a position of fully enjoying this cooperation especially because all seems to convince the world that China will remain a major player in the future of Africa in trade, technology and capital development. In the context of this study, we are intending to assess the Chinese impact in Africa by adopting a method which necessitates a country-by-country analysis as we will see in the next chapter. This modus operandi will allow us to closely look at the Chinese impact in the selected countries without losing sight of the complexity of each relationship as well as the specificity proper to each of those countries.

THE CHINESE COOPERATION'S IMPACT ON AFRICA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Assessment in Cameroon and Gabon

4.1. Introduction

The globalisation phenomenon of the world has given the occasion to multinational enterprises to extend their activities for the ultimate goal of maximisation profits. By doing so, it has also given the opportunity to developing countries to attract FDI, which is recognized as being sine qua non in filling the gap between the necessary investment and domestic saving in order "to increase economic growth and poverty reduction"(KOUNOU, 2020). As a result, the importance given to FDI in the process of growth and development process has led so many countries (Ayenagbo, 2015: 177), including those in Africa to adopt a various number of measures, starting by improving their business environment (Ajayi, 2006: 2) for attract foreign investment. Together with this, China's recently involvement in Africa has been argued to have transformed the continent with its investment in various sectors which as expected, promote sustainable growth and alleviate directly or not poverty.

This has been theorised with the changes observed in the growth performance of Africa before and after China's engagement and some studies have even been undertaken in order to understand what some authors have qualified of hazard because right after the 1980-1980's decade, Africa's GDP per capita known an annual growth of 2.4% in the decade 2000-2010 (Busse et al., 2016: 228). But then, with the financial crisis of 2008, the rate from 2010 to 2012 decreased at 1.8% compared to the previous decade. As earlier stated, the development observed after 2000 has coincided with the institutionalisation of the China-Africa relationship and since then has arouse question on whether China's involvement in Africa contributed or not to its economic growth. Many authors in various studies have come to agree that the increase in the Chinese FDI toward Africa is an important factor in understanding this growth in the African GDP in that time frame (Ayenagbo, 2015). Still, the results of the various studies carried out in the impact of China's presence whether in form of FDI, aid or Trade in Africa's economy are unanimous on the fact that it is a country and period specific (Ajayi, 2006: 17) as well as it differs from regions (Gohou & Soumaré, 2012).

One of the most used argument to dismiss the win-win theory of the China-Africa relationship is that with its Belt and Road İnitiative, China is an opportunist seeking to take advantage of the advantage that Africa has in order to development its hegemony. Yet, more than one time China has always rejected this accusation by asserting that its relationship with Africa is based on mutual respect and peaceful economic cooperation. Unfortunately, when we look at the situation in Africa, it seems that as it has been theorised, its countries have not taken the opportunity offered to develop their economies. In this regard, one important question is the extent to which the China's cooperation with Africa can help the countries to take advantage of the economies of scale and develop their performance. An approach to this issue is to first identify the nature of the relationship between China and the selected African countries and then compare the intensity of this relationship which can whether be in the amount of its trade, its FDI or its bilateral aids.

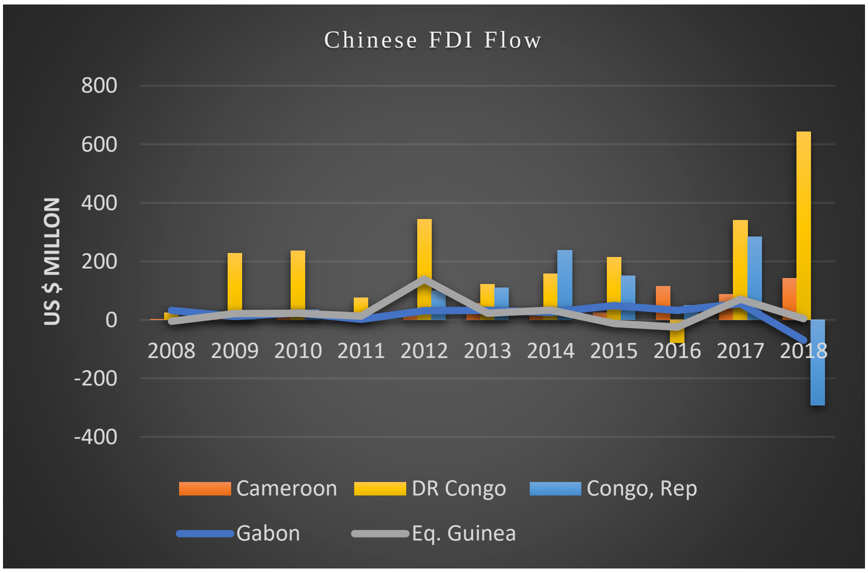
While there is no doubt about the potential of the Chinese economic relationship in shaping the economy of Africa, it has to be noted that contexts matter a lot and the impact that China can have in Africa may differ from a country to another due to several factors such as the policies, the level of development, the population etc. Therefore, in the framework of this study, I will assess the impact of China in Gabon and Cameroon by analysing the intensity of China's activities in both countries between 2008 and 2018. By employing HDI as dependant variable and aid flow, FDI flow and trade intensity, the results of this study will be supported by related studies identified during the literature review.

4.2. Foreign Direct Investment

FDI is important due to the fact that in one hand it is considered as a package of assets, whether tangible or intangible and in the other hand because as MNEs have been working to deploy them as considerable factors in the global economy. Indeed, there are evidence that FDI can impact growth and development by filling the gap between domestic investment and the global economy especially by trade, knowledge and transfer of technology (Ajayi, 2006). African countries have been struggling to attract FDI with the creation of the NEPAD which envisioned the FDI as a key source of growth (Adams, 2009: 178, Ayanwale, 2007: 1). This is particularly true because an important number of the world's fast growing economies has relied on FDI to boost and sustain their economic transformation (Sun, 2006 in Ajayi, 2006: 2). Therefore, one can undoubtedly affirm that this reality has been the motivation behind many of its countries' initiatives in attracting and promoting FDI, as they understood that it could serve as source of capital, thus be helpful in bridging the gap between savings and investment, but most importantly because it appeared that it could provide necessary resources in attaining the SDGs. But then, although the large flow of FDI in African countries in the last decades, the fact remains that instead of growing most the FDI receiving countries seems to be in the starting point or even regressing. One of the arguments used in explaining this is that Africa's Western partners' FDI policies weren't favourable to the development of African countries' economies. Now that most of the African countries have changed their partners, a shifting was expected in the way FDI influences their different economies. Yet, today's reality isn't that different from that of yesterday. What does explain this situation? An exploration of China's FDI influence in our sample countries is made by studying the flow of FDI in those countries between 2008 and 2018.

In Gabon' case, as the Figure 12 shows, China's FDI haven't really been consequent, compared to some countries like DR Congo, South Africa, Mozambique, Zambia, Ethiopia and Angola as we have seen in the section 2 of the last chapter where the above-mentioned countries are classified as top destinations of the Chinese FDI in Africa. Between 2003-2007 the FDI flow has only represented a few part of the Chinese total FDI in Africa. While it surged from 3.31Mn in 2008 to 32.05Mn dollar in the next year, it has drastically decreased to around 2m in 2011 then again surged to 30.69Mn the next year, 48.79Mn in 2015 and a negative flow of 69.54 in 2018. In the case of Cameroon, it has almost been the same between 2003 and 2009 where the annual flow varied from 0.5 to 1Mn. Then in 2010, it surged from 0.82 to 15Mn before coming down to 1.87 the next year, 24.67 in 2015 and 141.79 in 2018.

Figure 12: Chinese FDI flow in the selected countries

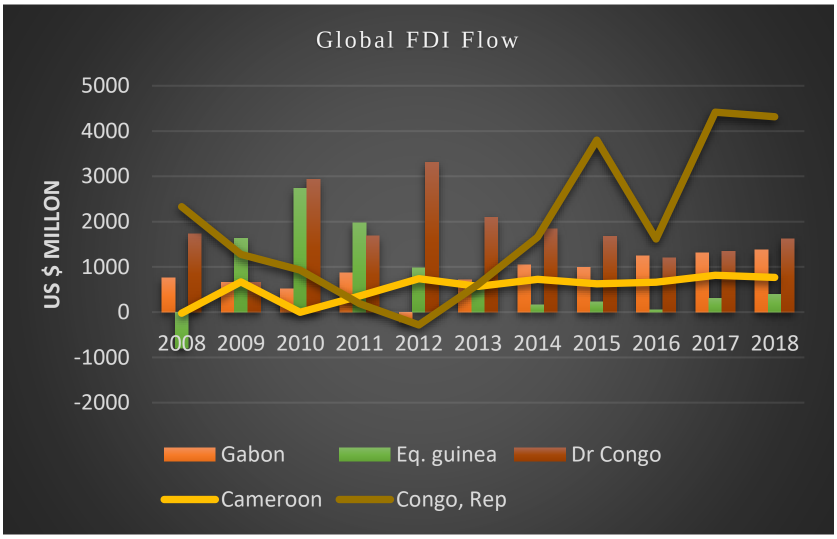


Source: Johns Hopkins University SAIS China-Africa Research Initiative

Likewise, the FDI flow of China wasn't so different from its global FDI flow because as we can see in the figure 13, the global FDI in Gabon amounted about 760 Mn in 2008, negative in 2012 and from 991Mn in 2015 it reached 1379Mn in 2018. Yet, contrarily to China's FDI flow to Cameroon, it seems that the Global FDI flow in Gabon has been higher for all the time, because in 2008 while the global FDI flow of Cameroon was negative, it has amounted of 739Mn in 2012 and after a net decrease in 2015 it reached 814Mn in 2017 before decreasing again the next year. These numbers show that compared to countries like South Africa, DR Congo, Nigeria, Angola, etc. the Chinese FDI stock in Cameroon and Gabon is but of negligible figures likely to have any significant impact on their economies.

When it comes to the Stock of FDI, until the period after the financial crisis, the China's FDI stock in Gabon has increased gradually from 24.05 Mn in 2003 to reach 88.14 Mn in 2008 and then right after the crisis has started surging even though it hasn't been to a really important value, since it was around 128Mn in 2012, 256Mn in 2016 and 385 Mn the next year. But compared to Gabon, the Chinese FDI stock to Cameroon was relatively high, with a nonsignificant stock between 2003 and 2010 with respectively 5.73bn and 59.61bn before increasing to 148.4m in 2013, 366.74Mn in 2016 and almost 300m in 2018.

Figure 13: Global FDI flow in the selected countries

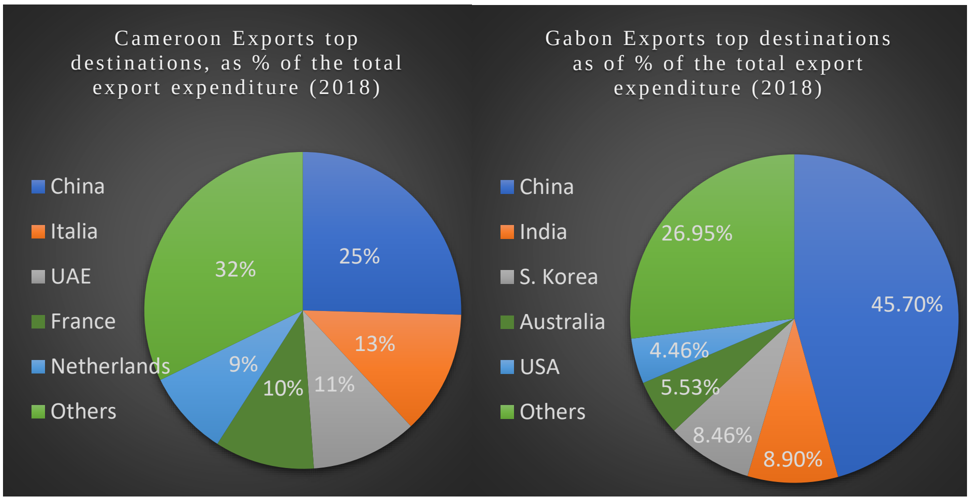


Sources: Author's composition from the UNCTAD stats.

4.3. Bilateral Trade

If there is a field in which China and Africa have developed and maintained a good relationship, it is doubtlessly trade. In fact, over the past decades, some important trade agreements have been signed and thanks to these agreements, trade between China and Africa by growing, has led to important growth rates in African countries economies (Guan and Ip, 2020). The figures and facts in this regard seem to confirm the hypothesis according to which the above-mentioned cooperation has always been beneficial for both Chinese and African actors. Yet, the truth is that there are more than one factors that have been recognised to affect trade between China and Africa at the point that it would be super-realistic to argue about a beneficial relationship in this context. Renard (2011: 23) suggested that an effective assessment of the China-Africa trade's impact on the African economy should take into consideration some factors such as the increased demand for Africa's exports, the rising commodity prices, the reduced prices on consumer etc. These factors seem to suggest that China's impact in Africa is intrinsically linked to the commodity specialization of each of its countries. For example, it has been argued that labour-intensive goods are likely to be less advantageous compared to primary commodities or capital-intensive and technology advanced goods exporting countries (Eichengreen and Hui, 2006). That means that oil, metals and certain industrial inputs exporters having the control in the increase in the prices and volume can enjoy their economic relationship with China. Likewise, a study conducted in 2009 concluded that countries more likely to gain from exporting with China are oil, Ore, metal, cotton and Log timber exporters (Ademola et al, 2009). While Cameroon's economy is more diverse, it's been however realised that instead of exporting these commodities to China, it has preferred to exported towards countries with little impact on its economy.

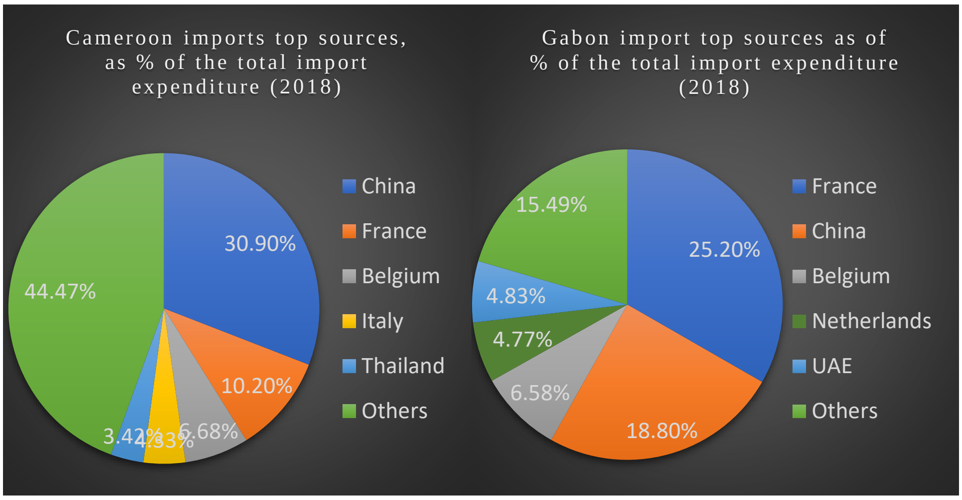
Figure 14: Exports top destinations of Gabon and Cameroon



Source: Author's composition from the Observatory of economic complexity's data

For instance, while Gabon's top 3 export commodities namely Sawn Wood, Manganese, Crude petroleum and were directed toward China in 2018 with respectively 74%, 50.6%, and 47.2%, the top 3 export products of Cameroon were directed to the United States with its refined petroleum, Netherlands with Cocoa Beans and India with petroleum gas respectively with 78.8%, 52.3% and 43.8%. Moreover, 100% of its gold were exported to the United Arab Emirates while its Bananas were shared between Belgium and France with respectively 43% and 30.1%. Overall, Cameroon exports to China amount of 25% of the total export expenditure while Gabon's exports to China represents amount 45% of all it exports expenditure (Figure 14). Yet, when it comes to imported products, as the Figure 15 shows, Cameroon's imports from China represents 30% (First place) of its import's expenditure while that of Gabon is about 18%. (Second place).

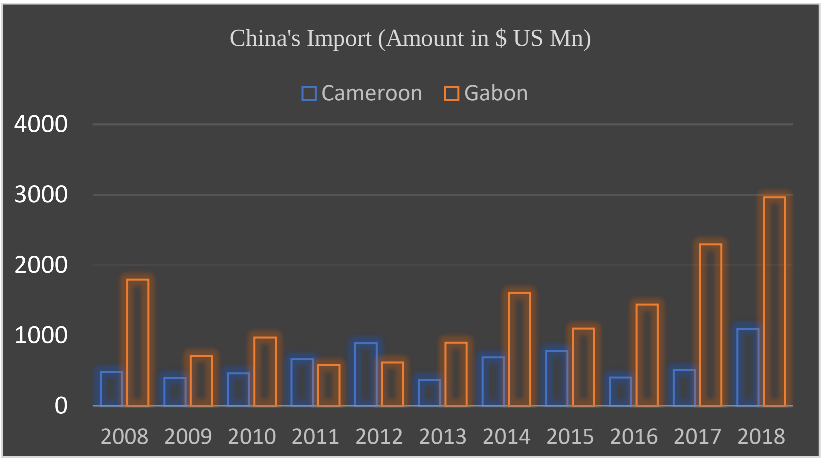
Figure 15: Imports top sources of Cameroon and Gabon



Source: Author composition from the Observatory of economic complexity's data

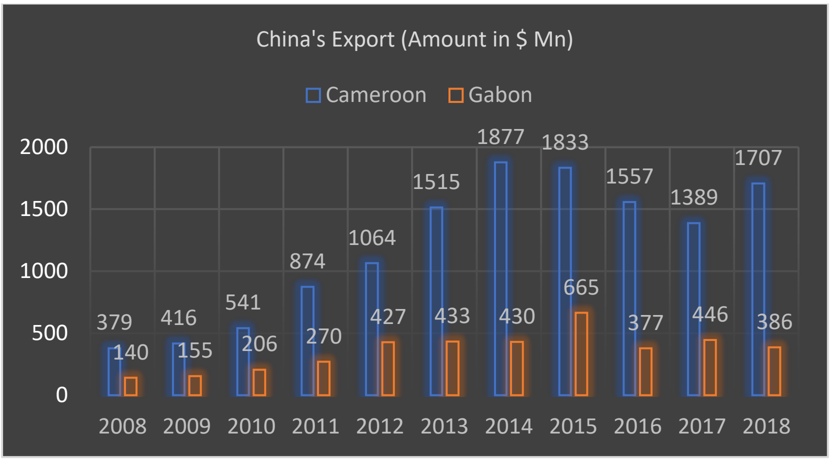
Far from it being a hazard, one could thing that it is a choice made by both Cameroon and Gabon in the way they manage their exports and imports and with whom they do that because a detailed analyse of data's shows us the big difference in term of imports and exports between Cameroon and China and Gabon and China. For example, between 2000 and 2009, Cameroon's export to China barely exceeded the $200bn annually, when in the same interval of time Gabon's export to China gradually approach $2bn. Even if after the 2008 crisis its exports has known a drastic decrease, as depicted in the Figure 16, Gabon has gradually increased in amount the value of its exports to China, which isn't the case for Cameroon who stagnated before difficulty reaching the billion in 2018. And as one could expect, the Figure 17 shows us that instead of working to decrease its import from China as did Gabon, Cameroon as since 2004 annually increased its import from China until 2014 where it dropped to $1.8bn and lately $1.7bn in 2018. In the same year, while the total exports of goods for Cameroon amounted for $4.26bn and its total imports for $5.51 Bn, that of Gabon respectively represented $5.75bn and $2.06bn. From this, we clearly understand that Gabon which has managed to run a trade surplus for several years, enjoys a net surplus of $3.69 in its trade while Cameroon suffers of a deficit of $ -1.25bn. Yet, many economists argued that a positive balance of trade can be a source of employment as it serves in increasing the GDP growth rate. This is explained by the fact that a nations exports drive increases in its GDP, which are not reflected within the exports products.

Figure 16: China's Imports from Cameroon and Gabon in million dollars.



Source: Johns Hopkins University SAIS China-Africa Research Initiative

Figure 17: China's Export to Cameroon and Gabon in million dollars.



Source: Johns Hopkins University SAIS China-Africa Research Initiative

4.4. Chinese foreign aid

The emergence of China as new donor has shaken the order among the OECD countries because from the above-mentioned countries, China is the most outstanding country who while receiving itself international aid, do provide at the same development aid to other countries. It has been able to stand apart from the other countries in the group, principally due to the amount of aid it continue to receive and the long experience it has as donor (Chaponnière, 2009: 55). As it has been seen, the introduction of the "Going out" policy has been the catalyser of the China's economic and development cooperation and as the result of this "unprecedented acceleration" has earned him a place in the world's 10 largest providers of development assistance (Bohoslavsky, 2016 quoted in Carter, 2017: 3). However, it increased development aid to Africa has been subject to a lot of polemic in the academia wherein most of the literature in the recent years focused on the impact of its development aid in Africa (Carter, 2017: 3; D. Bräutigam, 2011b: 203). In fact, aid is an important policy tool used by China among its numerous other engagements with the African continent. Nevertheless, the composition of this aid, its goals and nature have always been source of diverse interpretation from scholars and analysts wondering about what China is up to in Africa. Unfortunately, Beijing's definition of aid and investment render the interpretation of its development aid so complicated and its assessment so delicate (Chaponnière, 2009).

There is no official data on the Chinese total foreign aid expenditures in Africa. However, according to the recent official statistics, Africa has beneficiated in total of 14.41bn of foreign assistance from China, 56 % of which represents concessional loans, 36% grants and 8% interest-free loans. However, the CARI's data informs us that in the period of 2000-2018, Chinese government and banks extended to African governments commercial and concessional loans of $148bn, directed to various sectors of "African development"(Tan-Mullins et. al., 2010) such as agriculture, transportation, education, energy, communications, health etc. and delivered as complete projects, goods and materials, technical cooperation, human resource development cooperation, medical assistance, emergency humanitarian aid, volunteer programs and debt relief, defined as being the different types of Chinese foreign aid (Sun 2014). Therefore, the analyse of the Chinese development's impact must take into account its sectors of investment, the amount allocated and most importantly the amount allocated by each country. In the case of countries of interest, Gabon the CARI loan data informs us that for Cameroon the total amount of loan is evaluated at $5.9 or 44 numbers of loans since 2000 but with the most important amount between 2011 and 2018. For example, the highest amount of loans was earned in 2012, at a value of $1.4 with some relatively highest of $1.2bn and $1bn in respectively 2015 and 2016. The top sectors of these loans have been transport, power, water, Communication and government. In the case of Gabon, the total amount of loan is about $1.3bn or 24 total number of loans since 2000 but with the most important between 2008 and 2016 mostly financed in power, transport, "other social", "Unallocated" and Education. The highest loan of Gabon was of $387 Mn in 2008.

4.5. Findings

The relatively recent presence of China in Africa makes the analyse of the potential impact of its activities in the continent an almost difficult task. Besides, the Africa being made of 54 countries with different histories, development model and socio-political realities makes it more complex to make an objective assessment without taking in account individual factors defining each country and the nature of the relationship that it entertains with China. This because the degree to which each country benefit from China's trade, FDI and development assistance differs to a great extent. There is no doubt that the Chinese engagement in Africa have benefited to a large number of countries in Africa in different ways. The same way, the China's involvement in Africa has been proven to be detrimental to some other countries which failing to maximise their chances of profiting of the Chinese presence, only suffered about the negative impacts of their relationship with China.

The aim of foreign aid is to foster economic and human development in the beneficiary country. However, in most of the cases, it is not easy to tell if yes or no this goal has been attained. Nevertheless, even if the majority of the donor agencies often brag about the success of their projects in their reports, there is little consensus when it comes to the literature on the effectiveness of foreign aid in both enhancing living standards and fostering economic development. In the cases studied in the present research, it has been found that the China's foreign aid didn't product the effect expected.

But before I continue, I would like once again to recall in mind the reasons of choosing to study Gabon and Cameroon. In fact, the choice of those countries was based on criteria such us their political regime, the stability of these regimes, their colonial power. It clear that the economic and political regimes of British colonies differ from that of French colonies. Therefore, it would be unfair to try to compare the impact of whosoever's relationship on the economic development of 2 countries issued from 2 different systems. In the same way, it wouldn't have been fair to compare the economic development of 2 countries, one dictatorship and the other democratic, based on the same criterions. So, in order to avoid confusions, it has been made sure that all the countries sampled in the present studies are ongoing the same regime, which is dictatorship. The point was then to study 2 countries in which China invest the most, but with one failing to improve the economic conditions of its citizens, while the other succeed anyhow. The study has been carried having in mind the difference in the amount of investment, whether from China or the global foreign investment. And the use of the GDP based on PPP helped to avoid irregularities and biases related to the difference in the countries' population.

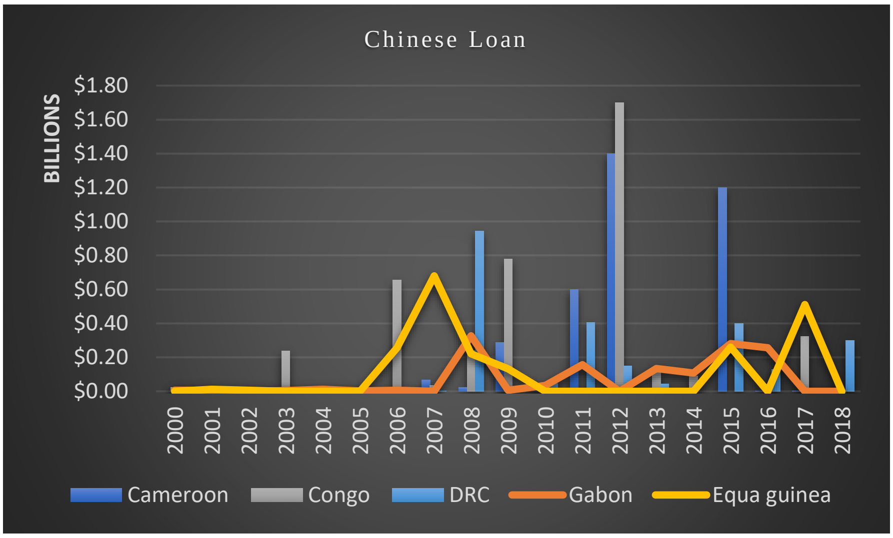
A look at the loans database of Cameroon and Gabon shows that Cameroon's loans from China are more important in quantity than Gabon debt to China. The analyse of these data suggests that the weight of public debt does play an important role in poor countries' economic growth. While it has a relatively positive impact on the GDP growth of Gabon, it negatively impacts Cameroon's economy. But above all this, the most obvious observation is the Chinese ODA impact on HDI growth in both countries, which is nothing but negative.

This study's findings seem to be in line with the "dependency theory of aid's tenants according to which dependency of foreign aid is expected to negatively impact economic growth and the distribution of incomes. But the present study being focus on HDI, it has been more preferable to support its findings with similar studies' results. And once again in this regard, the findings are consistent with some authors who have undertaken diverse work on aid effectiveness in different countries and particularly aid impact on HDI.

For instance, after studying ODA's effect on HDI and GDP per capita in Nigeria, Okon (2012) concluded that developmental aid rather than positively impacting GDP in Nigeria, worsen human development. Simplice (2014) sought to understand the effect of foreign aid on GDP growth, GDP per capita and HDI in the case of 22 countries from 1996 to 2006. Contrarily to Okon, he found that Net ODA (NODA) was positively influencing GDP and GDP per capita but stated that there was no evidence of the NODA's positive impact on HDI. Alves and Couto (2018), over the period of 1994-2014 worked in understanding the effect of aid on aggregate welfare across 28 developing and least developing countries and concluded that there was no evidence that ODA leads to decrease the level of infant mortality and thus, stated that it had not contributed to HDI growth. One would expect that the identic impact of the Chinese aid in both Cameroon and Gabon is due to the fact that their governments have similarities. However, as mentioned, the results of Okon in the case of Nigeria provides evidence that foreign aid is known to have the same effect in most of the countries regardless of their political regime's characteristics. But another argument could be that Cameroon is a conflict affected countries and Gabon has not been affected by any kind of conflict. Yet, in a study, McGillivray and Noorbakhsh (2007) sampled 94 developing countries in the attempt to determine the relation between foreign aid and HDI. In order to understand if ODA has the same impact in countries in war, they extended their research by including conflict as an interaction variable. Not only have they concluded that there is no possible way of aid to counterbalance the negative impact of conflicts on HDI, they also highlighted that aid's impact does not change depending on the conflict or non-conflict scenario. All these findings seem to not be surprising in the presence of such controversy and confusion about aid's impact in general and around the Chinese aid's impact particularly.

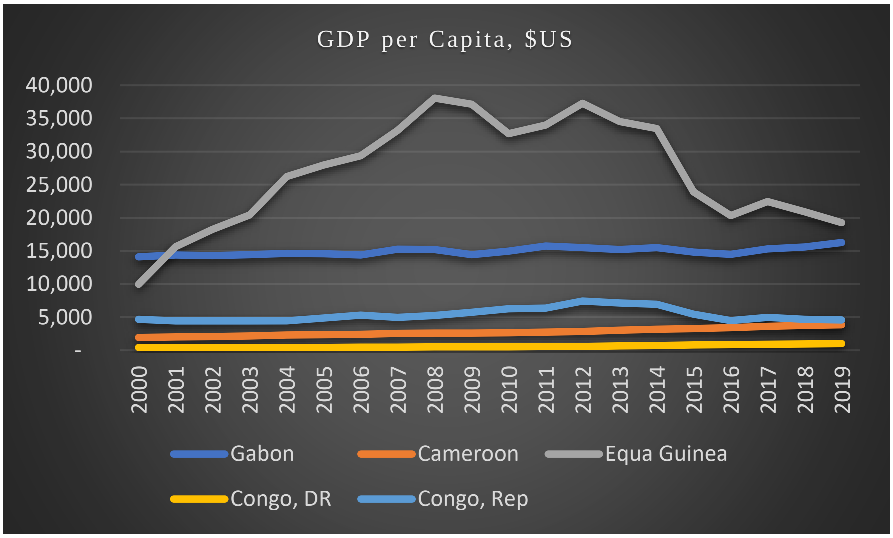
Therefore, the hypothesis according to which China's aid improve socio economic welfare of beneficiary countries seems to not hold water. Instead, the negative impact of ODA on HDI seems to be more credible because as Bräutigam (2011a) put it, "socio-economic welfare improvement is not the priority of aid programs." She even went far by asserting that the Chinese projects weren't design to have a direct impact on poverty alleviation (Brautigam, 2011). However, the findings of this study have to be taken with reserve because it is worth highlighting the fact that while the Chinese ODA does not positively impact HDI, it does have a relative impact on GPA. And the relativeness of this impact might be explained not in the number of projects nor in the amount of loan provided, but in the sector of financing of the loan. In the case of the republic of Congo, the Figure 18 shows that there has been an increased in the GDP growth of Congo in 2012. This has been so appealing because it is not just an increase; in fact, this increases rate represents 16.86% compared to the GDP increase of the previous year which only represented 1.80%. At the same time, a look in the years 2015 and 2016 shows a decrease in the GDP growth rates which are respectively -21.76 and -17.65%. Yet, in the following year has been constated a decrease of 11.20%. From the data analyse, it appears that the growth of 2012 wasn't due to the loan of 1.7b but to an investment of a part of this loan in "other social" and "Communication" sectors. This suggest that only investment in that particular sectors positively impact GDP per capita because once again a look at the Fig. 19 for Eq. Guinea tells that after a drastic decrease of -11.93% in 2010, was performed an increase in 2012 and 2017 of respectively 9.64 and 10.30%. As a matter of fact, the sectors of investment for those years were "other sector" and "multisector." This fact seems to be verified because in a study made on the impact of FDI on Nigeria's Economy, Ayanwale (2007) provided some evidence that "the FDI in the communication sector has the highest potential to grow the economy."

Figure 18: Amount of the Chinese loan in the selected countries



Source*:* John Hopkins University SAIS China-Africa Research Initiative, Feb-2020

Figure 19**:** GDP per Capita growth in the selected countries



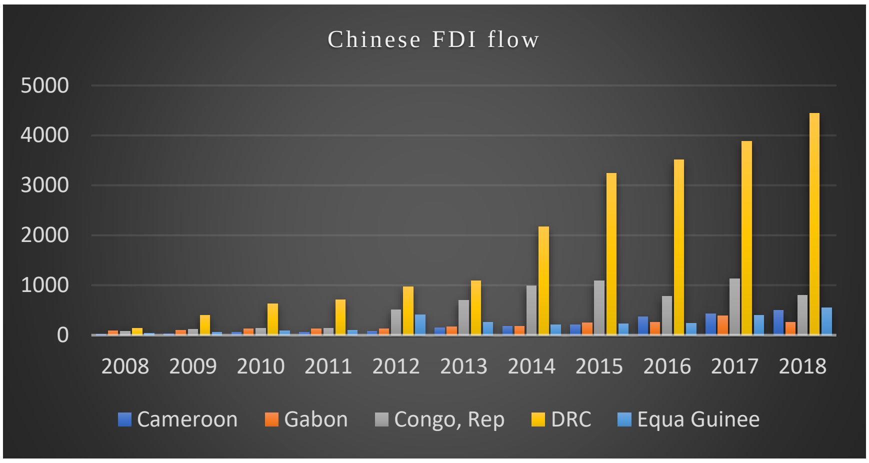
Source: Authors composition from the World Economic Outlook (WEO) database, October 2020 update**.**

Regarding the negative growth in both Congo (2015 & 2016) and Equatorial Guinea (2013, 2014 & 2016), the apparent reason seems to be that the lack of Chinese loan on those year have negatively influenced the growth rate of the GDP per capita. Nevertheless, it worth mentioning that although in 2015 there has been a loan of 261Mn to Equatorial Guinea, the GDP growth rate in the same year has been a negative of -28.61%. We are tempted to believe that this is in part due the fact that all the loan has been invested in electricity for the same year. And this isn't different when we have a look at the loan financing sectors of Gabon and Cameroon. This finding are consistent with some previous studies who concluded that aid has no positive impact on HDI improvement unless when it is used toward social and public expenditures and productive sectors (Asongu and Nwachukwu, 2017; Gomanee et al., 2003)**.**

While in the case of Gabon it has appeared that the Chinese FDI does not have an independent effect on its economic performance and thus does not directly influence its GDP per capita growth, in Cameroon, FDI has revealed to have a non-significant impact on its economy. But in both Gabon and Cameroon, it appears that the FDI flow does have a negative impact on HDI growth. These findings have been confirmed by previous studies (Foster et al, 2008; Adisu et al., 2010) who theorised the foundation of our arguments. However, when taken as example in Equatorial Guinea, the analyse of our data allows to understand that the Chinese FDI does positively impact its GDP growth rate but not its HDI. This observation seems to suggest that the difference is likely to be justify by the amount of FDI flow and stock received by each country. While it can be a probable explanation when we confront Equatorial Guinea with Gabon and Cameroon, this argumentation might not be relevant if we take the case of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Figure 20 shows us that although since 2008 the Chinese FDI have evolved in Africa in general and in our selected countries, DRC have been spoiled with the Chinese FDI.

Yet, as the top 1 recipient of the FDI flow (See Chapter 3) as well as one of the top recipients of China's FDI stock, DRC is one of the last countries in Africa in both HDI and GDP per capita. While it's understandable that DRC might be an exception due to conflicts and political instability that might have not allowed it to economically perform, the point here is that the difference in Cameroon, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea can't be imputed to the amount of their FDI stock. As example, the increase in the FDI flow for Gabon has resulted in the decrease in its HDI growth rate in the years that followed 2014 (Figure 13). However, it is important to understand that in the case of Equatorial Guinea, the FDI has been determinant in the change of its GDP per capita because as shown in the Figure 12 and 13, when its global FDI started decreasing in 2010, a considerable change was realised until China increased its FDI flow from 2012 on. The inconstancy in China's FDI flow has been clear as with time it started to decrease its FDI flow too. When China's FDI flow run negative in 2015-2016, the global FDI in Equatorial Guinea was to a very negligible amount. This has been responsible of FDI growth rate change of respectively -14.85% and -28.61% the same years. However, while the global FDI where still decreasing, in 2017 China came back with 71.08m in investment and again, with a GDP growth of 10.3%, the change has been apparent. The most interesting fact then happened when in 2018, while the global FDI reappeared with 380m and China reduced its FDI to Equatorial Guinea to 3.80m. The negative growth of 6.93% in the GDP per capita growth suggested that China's FDI played an important role in Guinea's economy. However as in the other cases, no evidence has been found about the positive effect of its FDI in Guinea's HDI. In the contrarily, it seems that it has decreased every time that China's FDI increased it.

Figure 20: Chinese FDI flow in the selected countries



Source: Johns Hopkins University SAIS China-Africa Research Initiative

Therefore, as it has initially been found, even if in the case of Gabon and Cameroon, the FDI inflow seems to have no significant impact on GDP nor on HDI as previously confirmed by KOUNOU (2020), the example of Equatorial Guinea and the FDI (China's) impact on its economy demonstrate that it can be effective or not depending on specific countries as previously theorised in recent studies (Gohou and Soumaré, 2012; Fowowe and Shuaibu, 2014; Fauzel et al., 2015; Ayanwale, 2007). Moreover the example of Equatorial Guinea does also suggests that debt quantity is an important factor in the increase or decrease of a country's GDP per capita (Panizza and Presbitero, 2014). It goes then without saying that in Cameroon, nor the Chinese aid, nor its FDI positively impacted its economy and as the benefits have not been shared with the population affected by poverty and low human development (Israel, 2014), the consequence has been a negative impact on its HDI growth.

When it comes to trade, there is a significant difference in both Gabon and Cameroon likely to explain their respective level of economic growth. Except from Crude Petroleum and Rough Wood, all of Cameroon's exports, especially agricultural products are sent toward Europe. This seems to suggest that selected countries with the highest GDP are those who have trade surplus in their balance. Not only that, it does also suggest that the commodities exported are important in understanding how countries benefit while trading with China. In his paper "Growth by destination: Where you export matter", Baliamoune-Lutz (2011) argues that countries concentrating their exports in one particular commodities toward China are more likely to benefit in term of growth compared to those who diversified. This explains for example why throughout the period of 2011 to 2018, the increase in the Cameroon exports has led in a decrease in its HDI growth rate (Figure 23). Not only that, Lutz found that contrarily to what has been commonly argued, China's share in a country's total imports have a strong positive effect on its growth. This explains why while the Chinese exports to Gabon gradually raised from 2012 (Figure 16), it HDI growth did so, by increased from 0,67 in 2012 to 0,70 in 2020 (Figure 22). Consequently, the augmentation in the import of Cameroon toward China has only result in a stagnation of its HDI which remain constant from 2015 to 2018, before going through a negative rate in 2019. (Figure 17). Likewise, Renard (2011: 25) suggested that African countries exporting agricultural products to China are likely to benefit. Finally Busse, et al. (2016) suggested that compared to the rest world, African resources exports to China has a large positive impact on their economic growth and development.

However, although trade surplus is a positive measurement of a country's balance of trade and thus an indicator of its economic health, it does not always guarantee it nor a trade deficit is always translated in economic weakness, all depending on the good investments or not of capital flows. For example, the Rep. of Congo's total exports amounts of $10bn and its imports worth a value of $2.4bn. in 2018. Likewise, these values were of $10.7bn. and 6.97bn. in the DR Congo, making a trade surplus of respectively $7.6 and $3.73bn. Yet, in the same year, the DR Congo with its surplus of 3.73bn. known a GDP per Capita growth rate of 5.20% while the Rep. of Congo with its surplus of 7.6bn. known a change rate of -6.52 in its GDP per capita growth. Therefore, it appears that the trade balance is not of a big importance in some situations, the need to focus on some other factors in order to understand effects related to imports and exports. In the example of the selected countries, it has been found that there is a big gap in the export and import per capita of each country (Table 3).

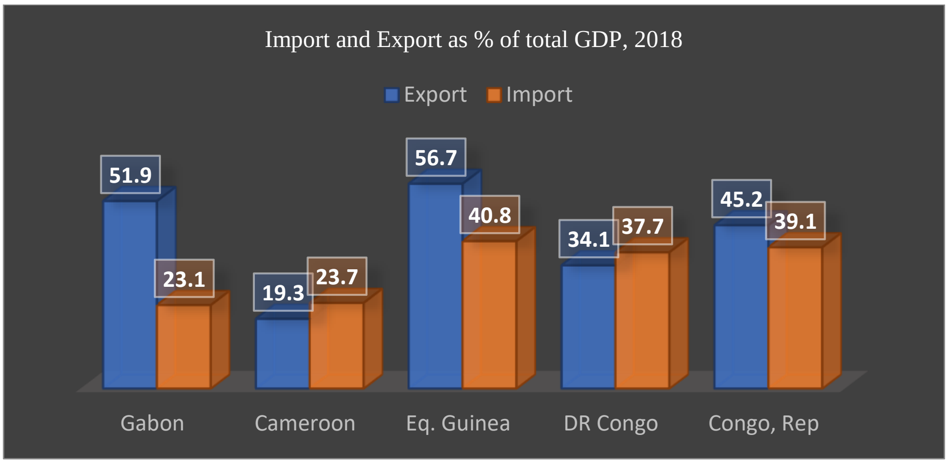
Table 3: Exports and imports per capita in the selected countries

Country	Exports per Capita	Imports per Capita	Products Exported	Products Imported
Cameroon	169k	219k	4.26bn.	5.51bn.
Equatorial Guinea	4.38k	646k	5.74bn.	846m
Gabon	2.71k	970k	5.75bn.	2.06bn.
Congo, Rep	1.91k	457k	10bn.	2.4bn.
Congo, DR	127k	82.9k	10.7bn.	6.97bn.

Source: World Economic Outlook (WEO) database, October 2020 update.

While the exports per capita of Eq. Guinea and Gabon are respectively 4.38k and 2.71k, their imports per capita $646 and $970, this represents $169 and $219 for Cameroon. Knowing that there are a lot of factors that play here, the point in determining that isn't to confront them but to highlight the fact that once again, while the exports capacity per capita of Gabon is by far more important than its imports capacity, it is the contrary for Cameroon whose imports capacity per capita is higher than its exports per capita. Among many other factors, export performance differences in the two countries as represented in the figure 21 is likely to explain economic development disparities between the selected countries.

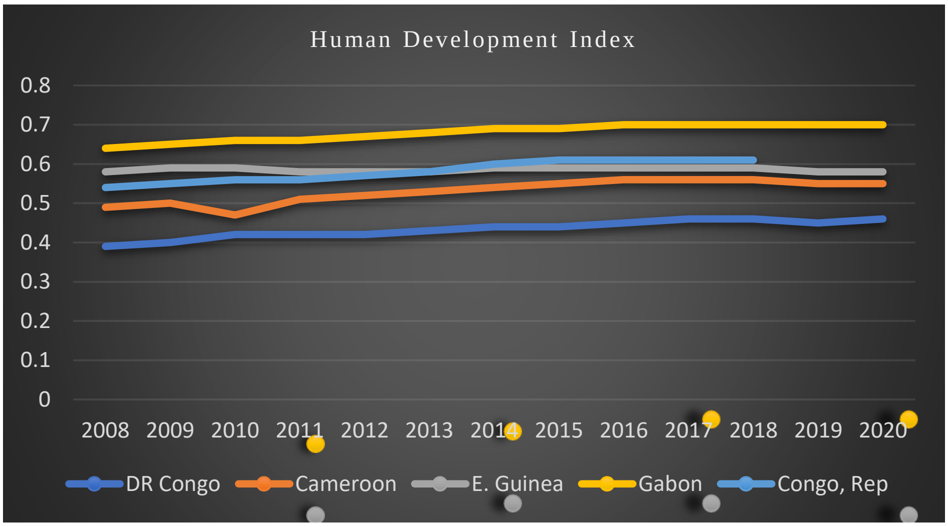
Figure 21: Imports and exports of the selected countries as % of the total GDP



Sources*:* Author's composition from the UNCTAD stats data.

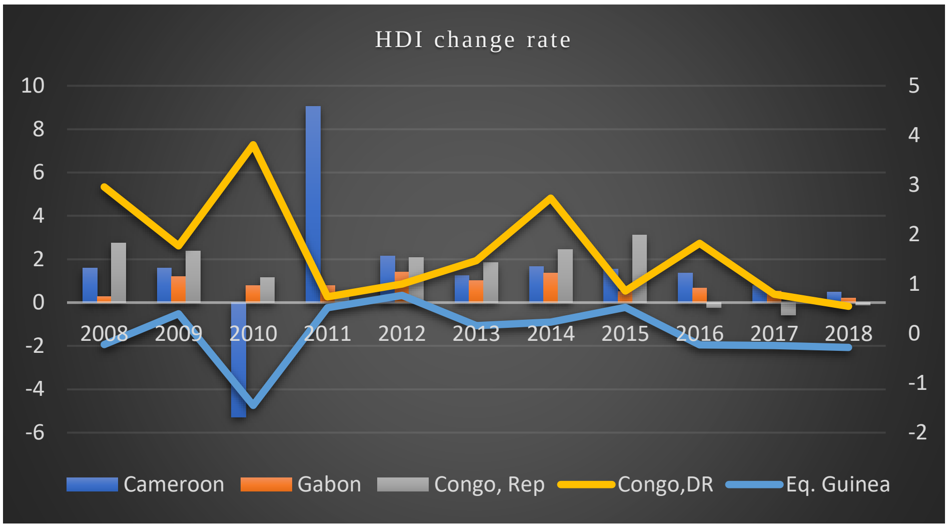
And this, because a country's HDI increase being propelled by the evolution in its GDP per Capita (Sharma and Gani 2007), in the example of Gabon, the empirical data seems to confirm that the growth in its HDI (Figure 22**)** has been possible through the association of divers factors such competitive market, open trade and investment's policies (Tonia & Satish, 2003; Miao et al., 2020), even if as Israel (2014) argues, there is no proof that its taxation from multinationals are reinvested into infrastructural and social projects.

Figure 22: Human development index growth of the selected countries.



Sources: Author's composition from the Human development Report 2019, statistical update.

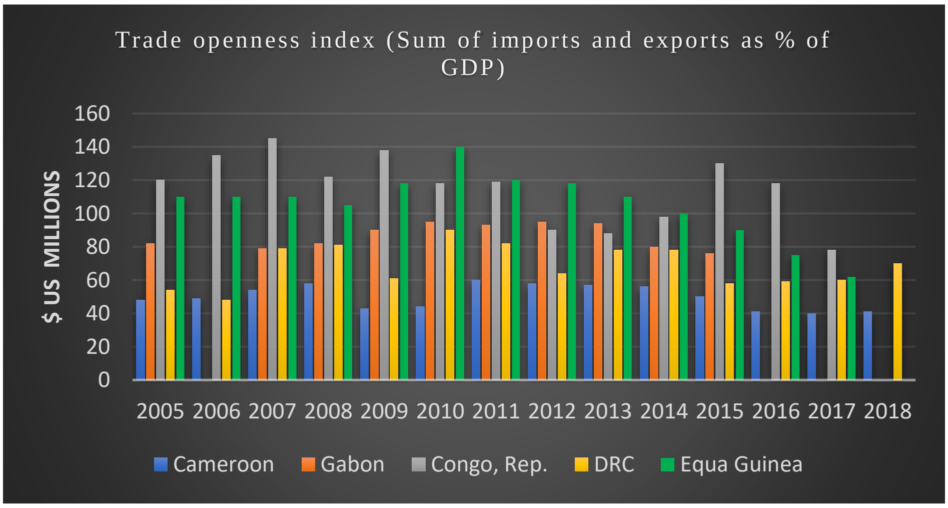
Figure 23: Human Development Index change rate



Sources: Author's composition from the Human development Report 2019, statistical update.

However, what can be sure is that the trade surplus that gained Gabon from its exports played an important role in boosting its growth in a long run, by maintaining constant the evolution of its HDI. Although the trade openness Index of Gabon compared to that of the Rep. of Congo is lower (Figure 24), it shows the apparent difference between that of those whose HDI are higher and those who scored a low level of HDI. This finding is supported by prior studies on the importance of exports on economic growth. Busse et al (2016) argued that an expansion of trade with a partner like China is likely to boost growth by increasing demand for African products. Likewise**,** Iqbal et al. (2013) after studying FDI's impact on GDP in Pakistan, concluded that FDI was likely to have a greater impact on GDP in export-oriented economies. Similarly, Fosu (1990) and He (2013) analysed to which extent the hypothesis giving to which export growth favourably affects growth's rate in less developed countries and found that export growth has a significant impact on economic growth.

Figure 24: Trade openness index for the selected countries.



Source: Author's composition from the UNCTAD stats.

4.6. Discussion

In the previous chapter, has been presented data on China's activities' intensity in both Gabon and Cameroon. The analysis of the data provided and results regarding the potential effects of China's activities in both countries have been supported by previous studies. The quick observation that can be made in regard of the China's cooperation with Africa is that it can be both win-win or win-lose according to countries socio-economic realities and how China interacts with them.

Indeed, so many factors contribute to the increase of human capital and therefore to improving human development. Another reason likely to explain the difference in the HDI of Cameroon and that of Gabon can be the availability or not of human capital. As attempts to analyse the importance of Human capital in economic growth many studies have been recently undertaken based on the 1967 Denison's accounting exercise. Some of these studies especially by Romer (1986, 1990 and 1994) and Lucas (1998) proposed new theories of conceptualising the way human capital can contribute to self-sustaining the per capita income growth (Kounou, 2020: 5). Besides, the interest in the role of human capital can be due to the endogenous theory that provided enough evidence that technology and human capital are important for a country's development (Barro, 1991, Easterly et al., 1994). For instance, one of these theories suggests that for Human capital to be able to play its role, must be created agents who can become enough productive by acquiring knowledge, high skills, better health and nutrition. This, because higher level of individual well-being contributes in increasing in human capital, by raising the level of output in aggregate. Moreover, it has been proved that the increase in output can be source of higher incomes and improve per capita incomes, leading to the general well-being. Ranis et al. (2000), conducted a study at the end of which they stressed that there is a strong connection between economic growth and human development. According to them, economic growth provides the environment for sustained improvements in human development and improvements in the quality of the labour force are factors favourable to economic growth. However, it's important to note that in the acquisition of attributes necessary to human development, foreign investors can play a considerable role. Sen (2002 quoted in Kounou, 2020: 5) wrote that "the importance of global contact and interaction applies to economic relations among others and there is much evidence that global economy has brought prosperity to many different areas of the globe and in overcoming pervasive poverty." In other words, foreign investors can play a huge role in enhancing global contacts by bringing capital investment through international trade. But if that is the case, how can we explain that although Cameroon receives a relatively more important FDI and aid than Gabon, it has appeared that its HDI has been ever since lower than that of Gabon?

As it has been already discussed, the nature of the trade with foreign investors plus the way foreign aid is being used can play a significant role in explaining this. But it seems that there is another factor likely to contribute in explaining the existing disparities between them. The statistical analysis of growth difference initiated in a sample of hundred countries by Barro (2003) shows that initial human capital and especially high levels of schooling strongly impact in a positive way growth. In 2018 the adult literacy rate in Cameroon and Gabon was respectively 77.07 and 84.67% [21].The difference in between although apparently insignificant actually has a real impact in the level of development of the two countries. A look to the data between them has been necessary in understanding how it has been possible. Therefore, it has appeared that Cameroon have being lagging in almost all the field, education included. For example, in 2010 with a value of 71.29% Cameroon was having an approximate literacy rate of that of Gabon (72.23%) in 1993. Likewise, the figure 19 showed that the GPA per capita of Gabon is by far higher than that of Cameroon. To finish, the Table 4 represents some of the socio-economic indicators of the two countries and as shown, while the infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births and life expectancy at birth represent 51 and 59 for Cameroon, these figures represent 33 and 66 for Gabon. Yet, as known, a long and healthy life, education and decent living standards are for the essential, factors of Human development in its basic composition. This might mean that the failure of Cameroon to ameliorate its HDI is reflective of its incapacity to develop policies to ameliorate the socio-economic conditions of its population which has remained in an endless circle of misery for decades. This finding is consistent with the study of Sen (1981) whose results established a positive link between longevity and higher literacy rate. Likewise, the findings of this study are consistent with Barro (1991) who studied “Economic growth in a cross section of countries.” First of all, he found that the real per capita GDP growth rate is positively affected by initial human capital (school enrolment rates) and secondly, he stated that countries with higher human capital are more likely to have a lower fertility rate. Although the difference in the present case studies represent 0.6, it seems that it can be part of factors explaining their economic performance.

[21] World development indicators https://datatopics.worldbank.org/world-development-indicators/themes/people.html

Table 4: Economic indicators of Gabon and Cameroon

Indices	Cameroon	Gabon
Total population (in thousands)	25,216	2,119
Annual population growth (%)	2.60	2.50
Population 15-24 years (in thousands)	4,993	367
Population aged 14 years and younger (in thousands)	10,750	785
Rural population (% of total population)	43	10
Total fertility rate (births per woman)	4.60	4
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	51	33
Life expectancy at birth (years)	59	66
Literacy rate	77.07	**84.67**
Prevalence of HIV (% of population aged 15-49 years)	3.60	3.80
Poverty headcount ratio at $1.90 a day (2011 PPP) (% of population)	23.80	3.40
GDP per capita - PPP$	3,804	15,486
Annual GDP growth (%)	4	3.40
Total debt service (% of GNI)	2.80	4.20
GDP in billions - PPP$	98	34

Source: UNESCO Institute of statistics, 2018

Nevertheless, at the term of this study, its findings seem to suggest that first of all the Chinese foreign aid and FDA does not have a positive impact on African countries' economic development regardless of their structure. Moreover, the Chinese ODI being almost linked to its FDI makes the latter fall in the same category. For example, 2/3 of Chinese development aid to Cameroon has been affected to infrastructure constructions. And it is a fact that in a country like Cameroon, one of the most important things needed to promote economic growth is infrastructure. A 2013 report[22] estimates that a $1 investment on infrastructural projects can raise GDP growth to up to 20% on the long run. Alongside, some earlier studies (Esfahani and Ramírez, 2003; Calderón and Servén, 2008; Canning and Pedroni, 2004) are unanimous on the fact infrastructures can contribute to long run economic of countries. Therefore, regarding the amount invested in Cameroon for the improvement of its infrastructures, worth to be asked what do explain this slow growth rate in its economy? Except that for economic growth to happen, does not only require investment in infrastructures. In fact, searchers from the McKinsey Global argued that infrastructural projects can be expected to have an impact only when it is fully realised and generate tangible public benefits [23]. However, the actual state of infrastructures in Cameroon is reflective of how these projects are managed in this country. Most importantly, it has been argued that this king of projects is likely to become an economic burden when it is not sustainably financed.

Therefore and secondly, African countries' dependency (D. A. Bräutigam and Knack 2004), on aid which is mostly unsustainable (Were 2018) has put them in a situation where

[22] Infrastructure productivity: How to save $1 trillion a year. The McKinsey Global Institute, January 2013 accessible at https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/operations/our-insights/infrastructure-productivity
[23] Four ways governments can get the most out of their infrastructure projects, Mckinsey & Co, Janaury 2020. Accessible at https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/four-ways-governments-can-get-the-most-out-of-their-infrastructure-projects

their vital institutions are unable to provide public services in periods that aid isn't available (FAZZINI, 2019). This issue of dependency is clearly manifestable since most of the African countries are in a situation where their yearly budgetary commitments can't be fulfilled with foreign aid (Andrews, 2009). Moreover, the use of this aid in non-productive expenditure (Svensson, 1999) hampers the capabilities of states' institutions to make its good use. Likewise, Boone (1996) argued that aid's effectiveness is likely to be limited when it is use for consumption rather than tangible investment. In 1995, Jaycox argued that although "the destiny of Africa lies in the hands of Africans", Africa will still need international support to overcome its macro-economic challenges. He highlighted that while international donors can help African countries build the capacity to take ownership of their development, the recipient countries were responsible of making sure that they have certain things that ensure aid effective such as transparency, public expenditure, reviews, public investment programs, donor support of government programs and medium fiscal programming (Christensen, 1995 in Andrews, 2009). But in most of the countries, the lack of such things as resulted in a situation that foreign aid fails to have the expected impact. As depicted in the table 4, the situation has been such as, caught in this trap, the Cameroonian government haven't been in a situation of devoting a proper budget for the education of its citizens for example. And it has probably influenced the literacy rate of its population and how they contribute to the development of their country. And as it is in the case in so many other countries, there is little evidence of effective foreign aid (whether from China or other others) performance in Africa. what is likely to explain this situation? Might it be because both donors and pseudo-development partners have not given consideration to their own recommendations? Or is it because they preferred to keep their good recommendations only on paper? The truth is that in the case of African countries and their development partners, "relationship management is as important for aid effectiveness as money management"(Eyben, 2012).

China's experience with Africa isn't a necessarily transferable experience among its countries. However, the results of this study have proven once again that China's activities can have a relative impact depending on countries domestics policies (Pigato, 2000; Svensson, 1999; Alfaro et al., 2006). Though, saying that does not mean that strong policies are only what is required for African countries to benefit from their relationship with China. In fact, as Ajayi (2006) argued, macroeconomic and political stability are necessary but not sufficient for attracting FDI. And it can be truth that China's aid and FDI isn't helping so much in boosting African countries' economy, but at least if they focus on maximising their efforts in trading with China, there is no doubt that they will come out all winners in this adventure.

Arguably, as a continent, Africa has been underinvested and underserved by international investors (Simon, 2015). And this affirmation is without regard to the Western "pseudo-investments" which has for long time subordinated African countries to the pressure of the Bretton wood institutions and limited their sovereignty to their own interest (S. Moyo, 2016). Having realised that the Western aid has failed, the Chinese government came to Africa with a different model of aid in order to achieve development (Dijk, 2009: 25), and its presence has gradually increased since the 2000 decade (Chapter 3) or the period of comprehensive development as putted by Han & Zhang (2018).

But once again, and it is worth recalling it, aid is definitely not what African countries need for their development. And this, because as I said, the literature exploited allowed this study to prove that decades of aid haven't been effective in developing recipients' economic conditions. Regardless of its provenance, Hayter (1971) argues that as a disguised form of imperialism, aid cannot result in any desired economic benefits. In fact, "the idea that *aid buys growth* is an integral part of the founding myth and ongoing mission of the aid bureaucracy" as argued by (Easterly, 2003). This suggests that even if some kinds of aid can actually be beneficial, the common aid that we know is not necessarily a good thing (Andrews, 2009). Nevertheless, with the opportunity of China having arises for African countries to have aid available, seizing it by making better use of this aid can be a great start. For example, China with its ODI, might be willing to finance infrastructural projects, which most of the traditional investors have always refuse to support because they judged those kinds of project as "unsustainable"(Chaponnière, 2009: 22). Moreover, Chinese capital does offer a valuable source of financing for the development of African countries. That being said, it won't be totally false to assert that in regard of the African economic performance of the last decades, China has played a significant role in this process by improving the state of infrastructure in most of its countries, increasing productivities and boosting exports, even if there is no evidence that this has contributed in the improvement of living standards.

CONCLUSION

Indeed, the assessment of the China's activities impact on the development of African countries is a very delicate task, due to the difference between those countries who might affect judgements on how their economic performance are impacted. And effectively, the findings of this study shows that the impact of the Chinese presence in Africa is strictly a country-based issue (Gohou and Soumaré, 2012; Chaponnière, 2009).

Most of the studies conducted in assessing the impact of China's activities in Africa are unanimous on the fact that there is an important link between trade, FDI and aid flow in Africa. Bigerri and Sanfilippo (2009 quoted in Busse et al, 2014) stated that contrarily to what is generally argued, China's economic activities in Africa are not motivated by countries' resources but by the strategic interaction between trade, FDI and its infrastructure projects. In other words, that means that the existence China's infrastructural projects in a particular country increases its FDI in that country and its FDI in a country increases the chance of good trade relationship or vice versa (Cheung et al. 2012; Busse et al. 2014). This fact is reflective of China's will to really engage with Africa countries in a win-win relationship with regard to its principle of non-intervention and mutual cooperation, provided that the economic policies in a host country (politically stable or not) provide a minimum of guarantee that it will gain its return on investment (W. Chen, Dollar, and Tang 2018). It explains for the example the fact that although the several decades of political instability in DRC, it remains among the top recipient of the Chinese FDI beneficiaries (See figure 7).

As argued by Chen et al. (2018), the principal reason might be that though investment is risky in politically unstable markets, the expected benefits always appear to be high. This could confirm allegations (though refuted authors such as Shan et al. 2018; Sanfilippo, 2010; Asiedu, 2006; Ayanwale, 2007) that the main reason of the Chinese presence in Africa is natural resources seeking. If this is true, it isn't less about the Westerners (W. Chen, Dollar, and Tang 2018). Except that the good thing about China is that unlike other non-democratic powers and contrarily to the Western democracies, it doesn't prioritize stability over change (Börzel, 2015: 520). This is the logic behind optimistic perspectives seeing China as an emerging donor who offer a kind of alternative development model to aid recipients countries in regard of that proposed by the European and American partners (Gülseven, 2020), thus the distinction between "Beijing Consensus" from the "Washington consensus" (Renard, 2011).

In response to the Western accusation of China supporting autocratic regimes in Africa Börzel (2015) argued that China do not necessarily engage in autocracy promotion when dealing with African countries. Occasionally, China might seek to hamper Western efforts at democracy promotion when its political and economic interests are at stake, but does not use its political and military capacities to impose reforms in African countries. And this, because it believes that Africa is the only actor able to solve it governance issues (Were 2018) and thus does not make governance as a prerequisite to its development assistance. The fact that its activities in Africa is not having the effect expected is to a great extent imputed to the hostile domestic factors of most of it partners because as putted by Bhagwati

> "Aid may assist poor nations if it is effectively tied to the adoption of sound development policies and carefully channelled to countries that are prepared to use it properly…(but) if the conditions for aid's proper use do not prevail, that aid is more likely to harm than help the world's poorest nations." Bhagwati (2010: 2)

It goes then without saying that African countries if they wish to seriously pursue their goals toward a real economic development, should take advantage of the Chinese opportunity to adopt an integrate and focused response to the Chinese plan as well as that of other major investors (Kaplinsky and Morris, 2009). After all, as previously suggested, Africa still have the wherewithal for development (Mhango, 2017), hence its responsibility to define what it wants from its partners and not the way round (Edoho, 2011; Were, 2018).

One way in this perspective would be to open up to the world by adopting sound macroeconomic policies that encourage investment and facilitate trade between them and China because ultimately and as suggested by earlier studies, it seems that only an economic relationship with the PRC does provide an alternative to Africa's dependence on Westerners (Renard, 2011). However, they should pay attention on how they manage this trade because as previously discussed, a failure to equilibrate their trade balance could have undesirable consequence as in the case of countries like Cameroon who constructed the base of their international trade on exporting natural resources (Figure 24). Though Meyersson et al. (2008) argued that Africa's resources export to China is more beneficial compared to that to the rest of the world, it could still be detrimental to it economic growth if it continues to heavily rely on the export of such commodities. Nevertheless, although economic growth is a necessary condition, it is not sufficient for the improvement of a country's overall welfare (Gökmenoğlu et al., 2018; Sen, 1995). Therefore, it is important for African countries to improve all the other sectors likely to maintain them on the path of development.

Lastly, from all perspective and within the scope of this study, has to be conclude that the China's way in Africa is respectable and worthy of a particular attention. The relationship isn't certainly equal when the China's leverage is compared to that of African countries, but there is no doubt that China will continue to play an important role in Africa and as Brautigam argued, it is more of a story of globalisation than a matter of colonization.

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