China in Africa: African Views of Chinese Entrepreneurship

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China’s exports to Africa have increased dramatically, as have its imports of African raw materials. With over 750,000 Chinese in Africa, the paper models the types and levels of Chinese entrepreneurs and gives descriptions of enterprises by sectors. Views of African leaders, who benefit from Chinese aid, infrastructure contracts, and business deals, are presented. African entrepreneurs see Chinese entrepreneurs as direct competitors, even as African consumers benefit from cheap Chinese merchandise. African textile and mining industries have been undermined, and African marketers and workers have lost jobs. Is the “smiling dragon” dangerous or a contributor to African development and well-being?

INTRODUCTION

Many Chinese intellectuals say “we are just trying to do something good” about their county’s political and financial interest in Africa (Ngomba 2007). But African and other critiques note that anti-Chinese sentiments have grown in Ghana, Zambia, and South Africa because of undercutting textile industries, promulgating labor abuses, and violating human rights (French and Polgreen 2007a,b; Ngomba 2007; Wines 2007). Teke Ngomba notes that harm to textile industries, on one hand, and debt forgiveness and loans, on the other, are confusing, and that China is a “smiling dragon with arms stretched to Africa, at once welcoming, friendly and yet dangerous” (2007).

China is an old friend who combated colonialism shoulder-to-shoulder with Africa and helped independence movements in the 1950s and 1960s. Interaction continued in the 1980s and early 1990s. But since the 1990s, cooperation and economic development dramatically intensified. China’s interest in gaining Africa’s resources “has taken on a significantly ‘profit-centered outlook’” (Sautman 2006:8). Partly a result of China’s own extraordinary domestic growth rate, its foreign policy and development strategies have greatly expanded. In recent years, over one hundred high-level meetings between China and Africa have occurred. China has established several “investment centers” in Africa and is the third largest trader with Africa (after the U.S. and France). In 2000, the Forum on China and Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was established and now has 48 African member countries (Shelton 2005). Chinese Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Africa was US$1 billion in 2006 overshadowing western donors (Zafar 2007). By 2007, China “committed US$8.1 billion to development projects in Nigeria, Angola and Mozambique alone” (Ngomba 2007). China has also forgiven debt (31 countries – $1.4 billion), carried out a peace mission in Liberia, sent medical and agricultural experts everywhere in Africa, trained African students, and funded basic infrastructure (i.e., roads and railways).

China’s policy of is that of non-interference in nation states. China maintains that its assistance to Africa is genuine and unconditional. A high level minister said: “We do not attach conditions to our aid and we will not do it in the future” (Xinhua News 2007). China offers an alternative to the West’s interests in good governance, transparency, and human rights. Hence, China’s non-conditional loans have lured many African countries away from donors who ask for transparency and good governance. Since China does not use its “soft power” to aid political accountability, some argue that the political effects will eventually harm Africa (Thompson 2005; Tull 2006). For example, China has sold sophisticated weaponry and the capacity
to manufacture arms to Sudan, and then shielded Sudan against charges of genocide in Darfur in the U.N. Security Council (Junger 2007; Large 2007).

Most scholars see oil, timber, and metals (copper, iron, platinum) as China’s main interest, but geo-strategic concerns are also paramount (Kaplinsky, McCormick, and Morris 2006). China argues that the western media plays up the “China threat” and the theme of neo-colonization. China extracts African resources and exports its manufactured goods to Africa on increasingly larger scales. As well, China provides development aid to Africa that is reciprocated with mutual favorable votes in the U.N. Scholars now debate whether or not China is an investor (dynamic partner) or a threatening predator. Zafar (2007:103) argues that Africa can “reduce its marginalization from the global economy” because of China, while Brautigam (2007:1) suggests that China can provide “a model for lower-tech industrial development, stimulating the spin-off of manufacturing or acting to jump start local investment.” But there are problems as well. South Africa, Zambia and other countries have experienced decline and demise of its textiles and mining industries (Alden 2007; Ngomba 2007; Sylvanus 2007). China’s projects also cause environmental degradation (e.g., Chan-Fishel 2007). Working conditions for African and Chinese workers may be abysmal. And there are few jobs for Africans in Chinese projects, as contractors bring their own laborers (Gong 2007).

China’s advancement in global trade seems to have spelled losses for the West. The African Growth and Organization Act (AGOA) enhanced U.S.-Africa trade from 2000-2005. Broadman (2007) notes that some capacity was even a result of Asian investors who had the capital and technological expertise, and who established textile factories using African workers. However, AGOA’s apparel benefits were undermined when the Multi Fiber Agreement expired in 2005, which enabled China to dominate the textile trade on a global basis. Similarly, the E.U. and the Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific countries (ACP) gained preferential market access under the Cotonou Agreement. But with its expiration in 2007, the E.U. has less preferential access to ACP markets, while China gained a more advantageous position.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF CHINESE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA
Do China's investments, imports and exports to African countries have implications of colonialism? Africans wonder if such partnerships and unsolicited business are advantageous or not. We examine in a longer paper the advantages of Chinese business development in Africa and ask: (1) Are investments between China and African countries mutually beneficial? (2) Have Chinese investments and entrepreneurs capacitated African countries in terms of infrastructure, labor and employment, capital accumulation, and quality of life? (3) Have low-cost Chinese goods and services improved the business climate and the quality of life for large numbers of Africans?

Out questions also consider the disadvantages: (1) Have Chinese FDIs benefited only certain segments of the population at the expense of others? Have elites prospered with pay-offs at the expense of the middle class and the poor? (2) Have Chinese imports undermined African production and industries, especially in textiles and apparel, household goods, construction, and telecommunications? (3) Have Chinese owners and contractors overlooked safe working conditions of both Chinese and African workers? (4) Have large-scale infrastructure projects caused degradation of the environment? (5) Has China’s quest for resources, as well as its policy of non-interference, bypassed human rights issues? (6) Are China’s arms-for-resources deals with African governments fueling domestic instabilities and border wars?
The above questions have guided this paper that is organized as follows. First, China’s strategy for entering Africa is mentioned. Second, a model of the types and levels of Chinese entrepreneurs (elaborated in our longer paper) in Africa and some descriptions by level are presented. Third, African leaders and local people’s views on Chinese entrepreneurs are discussed. Also, some data on African exports to and imports from China are provided.

CHINA’S GLOBAL STRATEGY
In response to globalization and entry into the WTO in 2001, China’s “opening-up policy” evolved into a combination of “Bringing in” and “Going out.” In this regard, China has not only attracted FDI from developed countries, but also has encouraged and supported outbound investment from its public and private sectors in developing countries. This south-south economic partnership is gaining momentum especially with Africa. The strategy calls for Chinese enterprises and entrepreneurs to think about outbound investments and search for niches in the global market. China is also adjusting the structure of its economy, since many labor-intensive industries (e.g., textiles) are no longer competitive due to increased skilled labor. The government also implemented the “Grab the big, loose the small” strategy, that consolidates and supports large state-owned corporations such as energy, construction and transportation, while privatizing small and medium scale state-owned enterprises (SOEs), a policy known as “SOE reform.” The state also encourages the private sector to increase employment of skilled workers.

Motivations to enter the African market vary by sector. For example, the China National Petroleum Corporation, the China National Offshore Oil Corporation, and the China Petroleum and Chemical Corporation (Sinopec) were turned into ministries housed within the State Economic and Trade Commission to represent the Chinese government in purchasing operating rights in Africa (Taylor 2006). Large private companies are also globalizing their services. Huawei set up regional offices in six African countries, providing telecommunication and network services (www.huawei.com). State-owned and private medium-scale enterprises use their technologies and skills in sectors where interest margins are low to capitalize weak African industries such as agriculture and textiles. Individual entrepreneurs take advantages of low market-entry requirements in African countries.

WHO ARE THE CHINESE DOING BUSINESS IN AFRICA?
There are at least 750,000 Chinese who work or live in Africa (French and Polgreen 2007b). In addition to diplomats doing negotiations and business deals, some of the main categories of Chinese doing business in Africa are: (1) state corporation personnel managing contracts, investments, and projects; (2) owners and managing staff of private sector firms; (3) owners of small and medium formal sector businesses; (4) import-export agents and traders; (5) informal sector hawkers and marketers; and (6) contract workers and laborers. Most are men, but female workers are employed in South Africa and Mauritius (Gong 2007). Few men have brought their families, but those wives who are there may be entrepreneurs in family businesses. Gong notes that some companies prohibit male workers from having any interactions with local women as a way to prevent AIDS and STDs, although some Chinese men in Mozambique have African girlfriends (Fenio 2007 personal communication). And young Chinese women have been lured to South Africa as commercial sex workers. Both researchers and Africans themselves note that most Chinese retain separate cultural lives, and interactions with Africans are limited.

Alden (2007) argues that the Chinese in Africa are a mixture of capitalists, comrades, and “carpet-baggers.” He describes three main waves of Chinese migration to Africa; two are outside the scope of this paper, but the third explains the settlers and business people who are in Africa for the long term. They include laid-off workers as a result of the down-sizing of Chinese corporations, persons displaced by large
infrastructure/dam construction, and those who migrants in their own country who were “already floating.” Alden estimates that in 2004, millions of people had greater freedom to seek employment outside China. By 2006, there were 1,609 licensed companies to send Chinese workers abroad.

Ranging from state-owned corporations to individual entrepreneurs, Table 1 provides a model of Chinese businesses in Africa. To consider levels and scale, the table’s categories cover sector, capital range, number and type of employees (family labor, Chinese or African workers), motivation and strategies, and time duration of their enterprises in Africa.

Table 1: Examples of levels and types of Chinese businesses and enterprises in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Business Sector/type</th>
<th>Capital Range</th>
<th>Number &amp; Type of Employees</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SinoHydro</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>SOE/formal</td>
<td>Energy/construction</td>
<td>$1 mn to 5 bn</td>
<td>500-1500 Chinese</td>
<td>Long</td>
<td>State support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huawei Technologies</td>
<td></td>
<td>Private/formal</td>
<td>Telecommunication</td>
<td>$1-200 mn</td>
<td>100-500 Chinese</td>
<td>Long</td>
<td>Go global</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhongken Farm</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>SOE/formal</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>$1-50 k</td>
<td>50-200 Chinese/African</td>
<td>Long</td>
<td>Go-global</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade company in Nigeria</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Private/formal</td>
<td>International trade</td>
<td>$1-50 k</td>
<td>5-25 Chinese/African</td>
<td>Long</td>
<td>Enterprise assoc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baihuo shops in Cape Verde</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Private/formal</td>
<td>Fixed location Retail</td>
<td>$5-10 k</td>
<td>1-25 Chinese Family network</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Local community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesalers in Johannesburg</td>
<td>Medium to small</td>
<td>Private/informal</td>
<td>Wholesaler</td>
<td>$1-5 k</td>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>Long</td>
<td>Local community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawkers, Vendors</td>
<td></td>
<td>Private/informal</td>
<td>Retail on the go</td>
<td>&gt;$5 k</td>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>Long</td>
<td>Family network</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Spring and Jiao

Informal-sector Chinese entrepreneurs sell apparel and everyday goods in direct competition with large number of African micro- and small-scale entrepreneurs. With limited education, skills, and capital, most are self-employed hawkers who settled in Africa in the 1990s. They are legal and illegal immigrants who took advantage of China’s loosening emigration policy and found African market niches. In any African locale, immigrants from the same place in China support each other through family networks. Some who came at the entry level succeed in moving upward and become wholesalers and business owners (Haugen and Carling 2005; Wilhelm 2006). They go from hawking, to supplying hawkers, to being wholesale suppliers, and then to being importers.

For example, Chinese traders-immigrants in “China City” in Johannesburg and rural South Africa have market stalls, and sell large volumes of Chinese cheap goods to small, informal-sector African traders--blacks and Asians from South Africa, plus Angolans, Botswanaians, Ghanaians, Nigerians, and Zimbabweans (Wilhelm 2006). Uneducated and unskilled, they contrast with Taiwanese who entered South Africa with capital and opened businesses using skilled staff in the 1970s and 1980s.

A study in Cape Verde shows that Chinese do not enter wage-labor markets, but set up their own businesses (retail stores, importer firms, restaurants, medical clinics) (Haugen and Carling 2005). Data from surveys and in-depth interviews show that migrants from Zhejiang province began entering Cape Verde in 1995, and now fill cities and towns with Chinese shops. They hire relatives and other Chinese, who in turn aspire to become self-employed in the same kinds of businesses. Known as baihuo or general merchandize businesses, they sell cheap Chinese textiles, apparel, and household goods undercutting Africans. They have few market entry or regulatory constraints. The standard of living has improved, and even poor people can afford cheap Chinese goods.
Moving up to small businesses in the formal sector are the restaurants, medical clinics, and retail stores where skills and start-up capital are higher. Usually family and other Chinese employees are hired, although some restaurants have Africans workers. Many established businesses were early comers in the 1990s; in recent years younger Chinese came to settle and start ordinary and innovative businesses such as an ice cream factory in Malawi (French and Polgreen 2007b).

Medium size formal-sector firms include international trade, agriculture, manufacturing, textiles, and construction. At this level, start-up capital is higher. These businesses usually have long-term commitments, and many came to Africa because of the shrinking market and high competition in China. Chinese business owners may also hire Africans to go to China to select products suitable for African tastes. A Chinese trading firm in Lagos sent two Nigerians to Guangzhou to select apparel and electronics for the Nigerian market (Wang 2008, personal communication).

China, unlike the West, focuses on agricultural endeavors since its accession to the WTO. These include small to large farms and processing companies for export and local sales, and firms that sell agrichemicals and farm equipment. The China State Farms Agribusiness Corporation owns Zhongken Farm, near Lusaka, Zambia and earned US$600,000 in 2001; its manager encouraged other Chinese farmers to invest in farms (People’s Daily 2002).

Previous cooperative agricultural aid projects between China and African countries date from the 1960s. Current agricultural cooperation focuses on market-oriented enterprises. China’s farming techniques, equipment, agrichemicals, and hybrid species are highly desired for Africa’s crops, livestock, and aquaculture, as well as for its irrigation systems and food processing. Chinese officials note that a decade of farming experience in Africa has provided investment confidence, and they see the 21st century as a business opportunity for African agriculture. One noted “we encourage Chinese companies to invest in the farming sector in Africa through a variety of forms, including joint ventures, joint stock companies or solely-owned companies” (People’s Daily 2002). The successful agricultural company Jiangsu Provincial State Farm Corporation will expand from Zambia to Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Botswana.

Smaller private entrepreneurs may invest in groups to lower their risk. The combined investment from such entrepreneurs in Zhejiang province, which has the most vibrant private sector in China, was $55.7 million in 2005. Investments were in construction and logging, as well as in apparel automobiles, telecommunications, and tourism (QianJiang Evening News 2007).

An example of large-scale private businesses is Huawei Technologies, the largest telecommunications equipment supplier in China. In 2006, Huawei’s gross profit in Africa reached $20.8 billion by selling its products and services to 50 million customers in 40 African countries. It established branch companies in Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Tunisia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Sixty percent of its employees in Africa are Africans. It also established local training centers in Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, and Tunisia (QianJiang Evening News 2007).

Large Chinese state-owned corporations focus on construction (infrastructure projects), heavy industry (oil drilling and logging), and telecommunications. There were over 800 of these in Africa in 2006 (Alden 2007). Some are African contracted projects, while others are Chinese development aid projects financed by the Chinese central and provincial governments who are sometimes paid in resources. Examples of the first category are a Zambian power plant extension project financed by the Zambia National Electric Power Company and the Angolan government-financed Saurimo airport restoration project contracted to
SinoHydro. An example of the second category is the Bui Dam in Ghana, mainly financed by the Chinese government and paid for by a percent of Ghana’s cocoa production (Jiao 2007; Daniel Sarpong 2007 personal communication). The large projects hire hundreds to thousands of Chinese workers. The managers, engineers, and technicians are also Chinese. Some Africans complain that China ships everything from China for these African projects, “even the cement,” and do not hire many Africans (Junger 2007). A distinctive feature of medium and large state corporations is that they all have Party offices in their companies.

REATIONS FROM AFRICAN LEADERS
Africans believe that China is closer to their development realities and conditions, and that China is the new superpower in general and for investment. “From the promulgation of Zimbabwe’s ‘Look East’ policy to the blossoming of Chinese-language studies in Nigeria, the African continent is eagerly embracing Chinese capital, its diplomatic entreaties and even cultural trappings at an unprecedented rate” (Alden 2007:59). Alden delineates three types of regimes with differing relationship to China: “pariah partnerships, illiberal regimes or weak democracies with commodity-based economies, and democracies with diversified economies” (Alden 59-60). Chinese-African partnerships have been welcomed in several dictatorships (e.g., Sudan and Zimbabwe) and in the weak states (e.g., Angola and Chad), where elites have become enriched through Chinese resources.

Angola is China's leading supplier of oil, accounting for 15% of its imports. Now Angola’s large Chinese infrastructure investment projects have tens of thousands (some estimate 200,000 by 2012) of Chinese workers rehabilitating railways and roads damaged by the civil war, and building airports and government structures. In 2005, Angola shunned an IMF loan with market liberalization conditions to take the Chinese one with the only condition being non-recognition of Taiwan (Ngomba 2007; Alden 2007). By 2007, Angolan officials and local people complained that Angolan resources and workers were not being used, repeating that the Chinese shipped in all project “ingredients” (materials and workers) for its endeavors.

China publicly embraced Zimbabwe in 2005. President Mugabe remarked: “We are returning to the days when our greatest friends were the Chinese. We look again to the east, where the sun rises, and no longer to the west, where it sets.” Zimbabwean investors “entered into collaborative agreements with the state-owned companies in the areas of telecommunications and power utilities” (Alden 2007:64). Chinese entrepreneurs leased farms taken from white farmers, and China became the major buyer of tobacco. Chinese farmers have been allotted 386 square miles of farmland (Karumbidza 2007).

In weak democracies that are resource rich (e.g., Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, and Zambia), China is seen as a strategic partner providing FDI. The elites in these countries still “seek rents” and use state resources. Nigeria with its oil, large market size, and political prowess in the African Union and NEPAD is now “a designated partner.” Nigerian President Obasanjo remarked that China was a role model for Africa. “This is the 21st century and China will lead the world. And when you are leading the world, we want to be close behind you. When you are going to the moon, we don't want to be left behind” (Alden 2007:69). Private-sector Nigerian business owners protested that their federal and state governments gave incentives to Chinese competitors. Nigerians also travel, trade, and reside in China, and there are 100,000 West Africans in Hong Kong and Guangzhou.
In democracies with diversified economies (e.g., South Africa (SA), Ghana, Botswana, and Namibia), the relationships are more complicated. They like Chinese FDI but realize that China competes with local enterprises. President Mbeki said: “China is both a tantalizing opportunity and a terrifying threat.” China is South Africa’s main FDI source. Although China is interested in SA’s industries, the loss of jobs has trade unions clamoring for limits to Chinese takeovers.

China built the TanZam railway in the 1970s and began projects and deals in the early 2000s. Zambia’s President Mwanawasa welcomed Chinese entrepreneurs and gave them preferential treatment with “state assets at concessional rates to investors” (Alden 2007:73). Chinese re-privatized the mines and rehabilitated the Zambia’s textile complex. However, the textile venture subsequently failed because of cheap Chinese imports. Safety issues were overlooked for the thousands of Zambians hired for the mines and factories, and in 2004, 46 workers were killed in a mine explosion. National discontent led to threats by Zambia’s opposition political party to bring back Taiwan. China responded by building health clinics and doing HIV/AIDS projects.

Africa’s response to China has not been coordinated or strategic. However, FOCAC, with its 48 African members, and now embraced by the NEPAD secretariat, may bring about common positions. Civil society, including NGOs, labor unions, and ‘the people’ (who feel Chinese competition in jobs and local industry growth) will increasingly get more involved in the debate.

The deals that African leaders have made are reflected in data on their countries exports, but the imports are a combination of smaller business deals by more types of businesses. The data themselves are subject to inquiry because they only account for the formal sector. Table 2 illustrates the trade patterns of exports and imports of eleven selected African countries with China. The original data set is from 1998 to 2006, but only 1998, 2002, and 2006 are given here. The data show that imports by African countries from China increased greatly starting in 2002, and by 2006 escalation was exponential. Imports from China are much higher than exports for all countries except Angola and Sudan that export large quantities of oil to China. Zambia’s export also is boosted in 2006 based on copper and minerals. The main trend is the large increase of goods from China into African markets (Broadman 2007).

Table 2  Exports from selected African countries to China (E) and Imports from China to selected African countries (I) (in Millions of US dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANGOLA</td>
<td>139.7</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>988.2</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>9,937.1</td>
<td>983.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETHIOPIA</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>144.8</td>
<td>119.8</td>
<td>474.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHANA</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>122.5</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>200.5</td>
<td>72.6</td>
<td>883.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KENYA</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>683.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOZAMBIQUE</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>76.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIGERIA</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>393.1</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>739.2</td>
<td>252.5</td>
<td>3141.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENEGAL</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>153.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH AFRICA</td>
<td>168.1</td>
<td>854.6</td>
<td>447.8</td>
<td>1,488.1</td>
<td>2,085.1</td>
<td>7,494.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUDAN</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>384.5</td>
<td>1,052.1</td>
<td>431.5</td>
<td>1,764.9</td>
<td>1,558.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZAMBIA</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>380.7</td>
<td>83.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZIMBABWE</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>45.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Spring and Jiao constructed from original data in the DOT database of IMF; rounded off to two decimals (www.imf.org)
AFRICAN REACTIONS AT LOCAL LEVEL
What has been the reaction of African people as opposed to their leaders who have welcomed and made deals with China? Aside from anecdotal accounts, a case study of 1,000 Cameroonians shows that the influx of Chinese “citizens, goods and money to Africa has been greeted with a lot of consternation and suspicion in most African countries” (Ngome 2007). Seventy percent were “alarmed” by the increasing and uncontrolled numbers; 25% said they liked the Chinese coming, and 5% said it did not matter. Some note that China has many poor people, so “there is no ground for their pretending to want to help African states” and “they come to exploit what the Europeans left untouched” (Ngome 2007). Some fear unemployment, since Chinese are replacing Cameroonians in the informal sector (even prepared street foods!). Others note that Chinese owners of small shops generate employment by hiring assistants and shopkeepers. Some blame their government for allowing the Chinese to trade freely while taxing its own citizens. Yet people like the fact that China builds hospitals, schools, and sports complexes, and also capacitates the military.

While Cameroonians welcome the large influx of products (most households can afford TVs and DVDs now), and even the poor can purchase cheaper goods, people think the goods are low quality and lack durability. Yet buyers do not have to “amass a lot of wealth to buy a single item” (Ngome 2007). Success stories focus on African entrepreneurs who with little capital are able to purchase Chinese products for resale in their shops. Cheap Chinese motorbikes are being used as informal taxis by youth who formerly were unemployed and crime-prone. Cameroonian business owners now desire “to import containers of goods for local markets.” There is also “a fierce competition” between western-trained Cameroonian and traditional Chinese doctors for patients.

Robust civil society organizations (in countries such as Ghana, South Africa, Zambia) are starting to be watchdogs of Chinese investments and hiring practices. Some refute statistics on the undercounting of Chinese workers and argue for hiring Africans in Chinese projects. The South Africa’s Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) showed that 800 businesses employing 60,000 workers closed because the removal of tariffs on textiles resulted in a large influx of Chinese goods. Political opposition parties have also latched onto criticisms of China in their platforms in Botswana, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Alden (2007) notes that the Chinese reactions to such critiques are to offer symbolic gestures such as “financing a social good” like a hospital.

CONCLUSION
To conclude, five images shape China-Africa relations. China is: (1) “the new face of globalization;” (2) a development model; (3) a mirror heightening insecurities for the West; (4) a “partner of pariahs;” and (5) “a stakeholder” as a source of capital and bidder for projects in Africa” (Alden 2007:128-133). Africa is an investment destination in the globalized economy in which the Chinese has been actively participating in order to survive and prosper for the last 30 years. China’s new scramble for Africa’s resources will continue unabated and has the “blessings” of many African leaders. Some argue that the burden is on African leaders who must learn from past mistakes to “use their resources as a bargaining weapon to obtain the best deal,” while not translating their resources into “economic suicide and environmental disaster for African nations” (Ngomba 2007:9-10; Mbaku 2007 personal communication). Are African countries ready? Have they made their own long-term strategies? Festus Ojudun, a senior political reporter with the Nigerian Tribune states “If China can achieve it, why can’t Nigeria?” Ermias Legesse, an executive member of the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front claimed: “Ethiopia is following the Chinese mode in many ways, so these years our economic growth has reached double digits” (Xinhua News 2007).
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