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Li Xing

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Announcement:
The Forthcoming JCIR Special Issue on China-Latin America Relations

This normal issue of the *Journal of China and International Relations* (JCIR) consists of comparatively fewer articles than the previous issues. This is due to the fact that a forthcoming special issue of JCIR is due in August 2016.

The forthcoming special issue focuses on China-Latin America relations. Historically, this relationship has been rather unimportant for both sides, but this situation has changed. As China has emerged as an increasingly important emerging power and emerging market, its relevance for Latin America has grown dramatically. Likewise, with China's economic rise and growing political role in the international system, Latin America has also gained more importance for China. This tendency has been particularly marked after China's accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001. Scholarly interest in this theme initially focused on China's economic impact on Latin American development and, later, also on geopolitical aspects of the relationship. Since then, more themes on this relationship have emerged.

This special issue of JCIR seeks to engage with the more diversified thematic interest in the studies of China-Latin America relations that has emerged throughout the recent years. It brings contributions with different emphases such as China's economic impact on Latin American development, China's Latin America strategy from economic and geopolitical perspectives, Latin American political reactions to China, the relevance of China-Latin America relations in the realm of climate change and human rights, and China-Latin America relations as South-South cooperation or as North-South dependency, etc.

Li Xing
Editor in Chief
Journal of China and International Relations

China's People-to-people Diplomacy and Its Importance to China-EU Relations: A Historical Institutionalism Perspective

*Shichen Wang*¹

Abstract: People-to-people exchange has become a heated topic of the Chinese foreign policy. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, China has established people-to-people dialogues with the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, France and Russia. In 2012, China and the EU established a high-level dialogue for people-to-people exchange, making people-to-people exchange the third pillar of China-EU relations. However, China is not a newcomer to people-to-people exchanges with Europe. Why does China launch the people-to-people diplomacy? Is it a plus or a must for China as well as for China-EU relations? The author reviews the history and current situation of China's people-to-people exchange and investigates China's motivations behind the policy. Using the historical institutionalism as an approach, this paper argues that people-to-people diplomacy is a key component of the contemporary Chinese foreign policy towards Europe. China has long been an unequal counterpart to Europe since the 1840s. After the development of bilateral political and economic cooperation in the past four decades, people-to-people diplomacy is the last part that China needs to finish in order to regain equal status with Europe. In addition, it is also a step towards realising the "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation".

Keywords: Chinese Foreign Policy, China-EU Relations, People-to-People Diplomacy, Historical Institutionalism

Introduction

Speaking of diplomacy, the first scenario that comes into mind is usually two national leaders shaking each other's hands and smiling to the press, which is formal, political, elegant, and far away from the general public. However, diplomacy is far more than just dialogues between national leaders or international summit for foreign ministers. Among all the methods, people-to-people diplomacy has been one of the heated topics especially since Joseph Nye defined "soft power" and pointed out its importance to foreign affairs (Nye, 2004). All major powers in the world have been devoted to the spreading of their soft power through people-to-people exchanges including the People's Republic of China and the European Union (EU).

People-to-people diplomacy, a pathway of public diplomacy, has been widely used when there are obstacles to establish hard diplomacy. People-to-people diplomacy used to be a complementary method to hard diplomacy such as political dialogue between government officials, economic relations between nations and corporations and military practices between

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allies. It refers to two or more individuals having a conversation in an effort to further understand what they have in common, as well as developing mutual respect for their respective differences (Brown, 2002). This approach of soft diplomacy includes various forms such as cultural events, academic exchange, and sports competitions. However, it substitutes hard diplomacy as the first choice under certain circumstances when hard diplomacy cannot be conducted. Examples include South and North Korea's reunion of family members (Bae, 2011), Cross Taiwan Strait economic negotiations (Hickey, 1994) and US-Iran interactions on topics other than nuclear issues (Chehabi, 2001).

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, China has been a major player on the international platform and an active one to use people-to-people diplomacy. Five generations of Chinese top leaders from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping all attach importance to people-to-people diplomacy in Chinese foreign affairs. Various institutions have been established since the founding of the New China in 1949 to conduct people-to-people exchange. Before the 1970s, these institutions were mainly used to handle the Cross Strait relationship with Taiwan and relations with other Communist countries. After China launched the Reform and Opening-up, these institutions have been expanded to cover a larger scale. Along with the changing of the international structure, China needs to master people-to-people approach in order to survive in the emerging multipolar world.

The EU is an important partner which China wants to get closer to through people-to-people diplomacy. If we take the EU economy as a whole, it is the largest economy in the world followed by the United States and China as the largest economies of a single country. The diplomatic bilateral relationship was established in 1975 and celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2015. Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a milestone visit to the EU's headquarters in Brussels in 2014, which was the first time that a Chinese President visited the EU's headquarters. The visit symbolises that China-EU relations are better than ever. The Chinese government has added people-to-people diplomacy as a "third pillar" to the China-EU strategic partnership along with the High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue ("first pillar") and the High-Level Strategic Dialogue ("second pillar") (European Commission, 2012). Although the bilateral relationship between China and the EU has been discussed widely among scholars, people-to-people diplomacy is a new topic for the academic (Meng, 2006; Balducci and Men, 2010; Pan, 2010; Chen, 2012; Smith, 2014). The importance of people-to-people diplomacy in the China-EU relationship may need more attention (Xinhua, 2015b).

This paper tries to investigate the motivations behind China's people-to-people diplomacy using historical institutionalism. It is hard to understand the current China-EU relations without taking the historical background into consideration. This paper consists of three main parts. The first part briefly introduces the historical institutionalism as a theoretical approach in political science. The second part reviews China-EU relations from a historical institutionalism perspective and investigates China-EU people-to-people exchange since the Ming Dynasty with a special focus on the development of China's people-to-people diplomacy from the 1950s to the present. The third part examines China's driven powers of people-to-people diplomacy in the twenty-first century based on historical institutionalism in order to reveal its importance and the potential.

A Historical Institutionalism Perspective

Historical institutionalism is a major approach in institutionalism which has been widely used in political science since the 1950s. Different from other schools of institutionalism, historical institutionalists "analyse macro contexts and hypothesizes about the combined effects of institutions and processes rather than examining just one institution or process at a time" (Pierson and Skocpol, 2002: 696). In other words, historical institutionalists take history into consideration when conducting research. In addition, they argue that all actions should be explained by all kinds of institutions and processes, not only the states or elites, which are the method of rational choice institutionalism and other schools of institutionalism (Shepsle, 2008).

Historical institutionalism consists of two major parts, history and institutions. First, what is the role of history in historical institutionalism? Historical institutionalists argue that history always provides the grand context to all topics. Historical institutionalists take history seriously, "as something much more than a set of facts located in the past" (Pierson and Skocpol, 2002: 698). They also argue that to "understand an interesting outcome or set of arrangements usually means to analyze processes over a substantial stretch of years, maybe even many decades or centuries" (Ibid.). Without history, from their perspective, argument is unconvincing. Therefore, using historical institutionalism always refers to taking several decades of history into consideration (Ibid.).

Second, what is institution? Historical institutionalism has loosened the definition of institutions. In this approach, institutions can take the shape of a formal bureaucratic structure but also an ideology or an informal custom (Pierson and Skocpol, 2002). For example, the American government can be regarded as an institution. The traditional thoughts of the Chinese scholars can also be regarded as institutions. In emphasizing the participation of all kinds of groups, not just elites or states, historical institutionalism offers a dynamic approach to history. “Historical institutionalists, meanwhile, probe uneasy balances of power and resources, and see institutions as the developing products of struggle among unequal actors” (Ibid.: 706).

Historical institutionalism has been widely used to investigate domestic politics, especially American politics. John Mark Hansen’s *Gaining Access: Congress and the Farm Lobby (1919-1981)*, Theda Skocpol’s *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* and Stephen Skowronek’s *The Politics Presidents Make* have made great contributions to the development of historical institutionalism (Hansen, 1991; Theda, 1995; Skowronek, 1997). It has also been used in other countries’ and continents’ politics, such as Peter A. Hall’s book *Governing the Economy: The Politics of State Intervention in Britain and France*, Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier’s *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America* and Thomas Ertman’s *Brith of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Early Modern Europe* (Hall, 1986; Collier & Collier, 1991; Ertman, 1997).

Historical institutionalists have raised and highlighted the idea of “critical juncture”. Collier and Collier defined critical juncture “as a period of significant change, which typically occurs in distinct ways in different countries (or in other unites of analysis) and which is hypothesized to produce distinct legacies” (1991: 29). They also stressed the importance of specifying the duration of the critical juncture as well as the effecting historical legacies and highlighted the timing of the critical juncture, in relation to other developments, being consequential to subsequent politics (Ibid.: 31-34). Critical juncture is key to the explanation of historical institutionalism since “they may be the initial markers of path-dependent processes” (Fioretos, Falleti and Sheningate, 2015: 10).

Historical institutionalism argues that powers can change from unbalanced to balanced or vice versa, which is exactly how China views the China-EU relations. (Pierson and Skocpol, 2002). Since the EU consists of the UK, France, Germany, Italy and many other European countries which have invaded the “Central Kingdom” in the Qing Dynasty, China regards the economic, political and military development of itself as steps towards an equal China-EU partnership again. The twenty-first century is a “critical juncture” for China to regain its dignity in the bilateral relations.

People-to-people diplomacy is not only based on elite politics but rather on all kinds of groups of people, which is exactly what historical institutionalists point out in their theory. It is conducted by the general public in the society of globalisation, owing to the development of modern technology and transportation. Nevertheless, the importance of people-to-people diplomacy is no less than political and economic interactions in national foreign policy. Impacting the life of the general public, people-to-people diplomacy can accelerate the forming of public opinion on certain issues.

People-to-People Diplomacy: Not New to China

China's People-to-People Diplomacy since Mao

People-to-people diplomacy is not a new approach in the foreign affairs of the People's Republic of China. Back in the 1950s, soon after the establishment of the People's Republic of China, President Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai regarded people-to-people diplomacy as an important component in China's foreign affairs because China was weak in political and economic power. Meanwhile, as a newly born country at that time, China wanted to gain international recognition as quickly as possible. People-to-people diplomacy was one of the few measures it could afford. However, due to the historical background of the Cold War, the people-to-people diplomacy of China then was mainly targeted at African countries and the Communist countries between the 1950s and 1970s (Chen, 2005; Kobayashi et al, 2011).

In order to handle people-to-people diplomacy between China and other countries, institutions were established soon after the founding of the New China. One of the most famous cases is the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (CPIFA) which was established in 1949. It was led by the then Premier and Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai and was the first organisation in

China in charge of people-to-people exchanges. It also carries out research on international affairs and foreign policies. Today the CPIFA is still one of the major actors in Chinese public diplomacy. According to China's former State Councillor Tang Jiaxuan, the CPIFA should "know more about situation in grass roots and play the role of a bridge between the people and the government" (Xinhua, 2004).

In the 1970s, people-to-people diplomacy played a key role in the normalisation of the bilateral relationship between China and the US. In 1971, during the World Table Tennis Championship held in Nagoya in Japan, Glenn Cowan, an American player missed his own team's bus and accidentally got on the bus full of Chinese players. Both Glenn and the Chinese players were embarrassed until one of the Chinese players, Zhuang Zedong, stood up and welcomed Glenn to have a seat. (DeHart, 2013; BBC, 2013) This dramatic encounter is called "Ping-Pong Diplomacy" and is a household story in China now. It paved the way for the American President Nixon's historic visit to China the following year (Zhu, 2015).

After Deng Xiaoping's Reform and Opening-up Policy launched in the late 1970s, China's people-to-people diplomacy has entered a new era. Due to the trade with western countries and investment from foreign corporations, the Chinese economy started to boom. More government funding could be allocated to conduct people-to-people diplomacy while some non-governmental organisations also appeared to facilitate people-to-people exchanges (Wang, 2013). When the Cold War ended in the 1990s, the international environment turned to be more favourable to China's development. Since China's population and potential as the world's largest market, the US, Japan and European countries needed to understand China as well as China's curiosity to the outside world. Chinese people-to-people diplomacy expanded from Communist countries and developing countries to the whole world (Ibid.).

As mentioned above, a lot of institutions have been built in China in order to conduct people-to-people diplomacy. Besides the CPIFA, some other institutions have been established after the launch of the Opening and Reform Policy. These institutions and organisations participating in people-to-people diplomacy include the Confucius Institutes and the China Scholarship Council as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the National Bureau of Tourism and Ministry of Education as government bodies. Both NGOs and government bodies are actors nowadays in Chinese people-to-people exchanges. Foreign NGOs are also

coming to China for certain targets. For example, Greenpeace has established a China office and contributed to the environment protection and sustainable development of China (Greenpeace China, 2015).

In recent decades, China has stressed the importance of people-to-people diplomacy in China's foreign affairs. During the last administration led by Hu Jintao, China attached importance to "non-governmental diplomacy" so as to "give full play to the advantages of the people-to-people exchanges with other countries" (Xinhua, 2004). China has tried its best to host the 2001 Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) conference in Shanghai, the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, the 2010 Shanghai World Expo and the 2013 Nanjing Youth Olympic Games, thus encouraging more foreigners to visit China and better understand the country. The number of international students coming to China to have a degree or short-term study is increasing substantially while Chinese students have already become one of the largest groups of overseas students in the US, the United Kingdom, France and many other European countries (Jiang, 2014).

The new Chinese leadership has inherited the tradition of foreign policy to further develop people-to-people diplomacy. For example, High-Level People-to-People Dialogue has been established as a major compound of strategic partnership between China and the United Kingdom, China and France, China and Germany as well as China and the EU (Zhang, 2012; Xinhua, 2015a; Xi, 2014a; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of PRC, 2015). In July 2015, Beijing was named as the host city of the 2022 Winter Olympic Games, thus becoming the first city to host both summer and winter Olympics (International Olympic Committee, 2015). Although the bidding result arouses controversies (Capps, 2015; Pramuk, 2015), it reveals China's ambition and confidence to use people-to-people diplomacy as a major tool to influence the world in the future. As the Chinese President Xi Jinping mentioned in a speech: "we should strengthen inter-civilisation exchanges and mutual learning" and "people-to-people diplomacy represents the most profound force in promoting such exchanges and mutual learning" (Xi, 2014).

People-to-People Exchanges between China and Europe

When discussing China-EU relations, one should not neglect the historical background of China-Europe relations, especially the interactions since the 1840s. For the Chinese people,

China-Europe relations have long been unequal. The European powers used military power and ordered China to open to the west. The Opium War and the separations of Chinese territories such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, etc. are major historical events in China's contemporary history. Even after the end of WWII, these problems were not solved. Hong Kong and Macau were handed over by the British and Portuguese authorities at the end of the twentieth century. Yet, Taiwan still remains a major problem in Chinese politics and foreign affairs.

China-EU has established bilateral relations for four decades. In 1975, the European Community (EC) and China built up formal bilateral diplomatic relations. Since then, China and the EC/EU have been cooperating in numerous areas including politics, economy, trade, technology, education, climate change, etc., and have achieved great success owing to both parties' efforts (EEAS, 2015). Besides, although China experienced leadership change from 2012 to 2013 and the EU from 2014 to 2015, both China and the EU's new administrations attach great importance to their bilateral relationship (Ibid.). After the new Chinese President Xi Jinping took office, he has reformed China's foreign policy strategy and made China-EU relations as important as China-US, China-Russia and China-neighbouring countries relations. His historic visit to the headquarters of the EU in Brussels in 2014 symbolises that China-EU relations have never been better.

People-to-people diplomacy is not a newcomer to China-EU relations. Back in the seventeenth century, early Ming Dynasty China and early modern Europe have already communicated via people-to-people diplomacy (Zhang, 2014; Jiang, 2015). Hundreds of European missionaries came to China and brought modern knowledge and technology to the dynasty. However, the Chinese people did not embrace the European culture until they lost the Opium War in 1842 against the British. Concessions were built afterwards in major cities such as Shanghai, Tianjin and Qingdao. The Chinese people started to have direct people-to-people exchanges with the Europeans. Some of the European cultures and languages successfully integrated into local cultures and languages especially in Shanghai, which is the main reason why it became the economic centre and most international city of China (Xu, 2014).

Yet, during the colonisation century from the end of the First Opium War (1840-1842) to the end of WWII, Chinese people struggled to regain independence and terminate the colonisation. The UK, France, Germany, Italy and other European countries were interested in China's raw materials, cultural heritages and large market to export their own goods. Economics and trade were the motivations behind the European colonisation. During WWII, China was an ally of the Anti-Fascist countries. Without its resistance in Asia, the former Soviet Union Red Army would have needed to invest more troops in the Far East against Japan. If this had been the case, it would have led to a possible defeat of the Allies in Europe, resulting in a longer period of war time for European countries. After the two world wars, all European countries eventually gave up their concessions in Mainland China.

The end of the civil war of China in 1949 changed China's relationship with the European countries dramatically. When the New China was founded in 1949, all European countries still had diplomatic relations with the Republic of China's government in Taipei. France was the first major European country to recognise the People's Republic and establish diplomatic relationship with it under President Charles de Gaulle's command. But the ideology fight between the Communism led by the Soviet Union and Capitalism led by the US divided China and European countries into two camps, respectively. The "Iron Curtain" between the East and the West prevented the two continents from communication. This situation changed after the People's Republic became the legitimate representative of China in the United Nations in 1971. The European Community also established diplomatic relationship with China in 1975 which encouraged more European countries to follow.

After launching the Opening and Reform Policy in the 1980s, China has welcomed overseas investment, especially from European countries and corporations. The normalisation of political relations between China and European countries paved way for economic and trade cooperation. European investment and corporations started to enter the Chinese market while Chinese products began to be sold to Europe. During the past 30 years, the trade between China and European markets have boosted. Almost all major European corporations have started their businesses in China. In recent years, Chinese businessmen started to buy European companies due to the economic and Euro crisis. The investment is moving towards a more balanced and healthy status. In 2003, China and the EU upgraded their relations and entered into a strategic partnership. Nonetheless, the reality is not as sound as the appearance.

Economy and trade have been emphasized while other areas' potential are still underestimated (Hoslag, 2011).

The strategic partnership's main question is: politics, economy, trade, technology, and then what? Although China and the EU have maintained a relatively healthy relationship in recent years and celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2015, there are few fields which China and the EU could use to improve their bilateral relations substantially in the future. In political and economic areas, China and the EU are already Strategic Partners and have become each other's most important trading partner. Yet, the EU has still neither recognised China's marketing economy status, nor lifted sanctions on arms embargo. In other fields, such as military and technology, cooperation between China and the EU has been limited to a low level due to the sensitivity of these areas. Therefore, both sides are eager to find a new way to improve their bilateral relations and people-to-people exchange is the most doable measure.

People-to-people diplomacy is a new and maybe the only channel for both China and the EU to improve their relations further. China as the main economic engine of the world is playing a more and more important role in international politics. However, there are still conflicts between the Western world and China on several issues such as human rights, rule of law and political system. China regards the Western opinion on these issues towards China are bias (Xinhua, 2016). People-to-people diplomacy is a smart way to avoid leaving the impression of being assertive and ambitious. The EU sees itself as a normative power in the world (Manners, 2002; Diez, 2005). Its core values are its power and attractiveness to other regions. Trying to become an international normative power, the EU has to create more contact with countries outside of Europe. People-to-people exchange is an effective measure to influence the growing Chinese civil society.

Plus or Must: Motivations of China's People-to-People Diplomacy

Before drawing a conclusion on whether people-to-people diplomacy is a plus or must for Chinese diplomacy, the author would like to define "plus" and "must". It is necessary to set up a standard before judgement. If China does not include people-to-people diplomacy into its future interaction with the EU as well as other countries, and China's relations with the EU and other countries can still be improved, then people-to-people diplomacy is a "plus" to China. If using only the current measures in its diplomatic toolbox without people-to-people

diplomacy, China will encounter difficulty in dealing with bilateral or multilateral relations, or domestic problems and appeals may arise, then people-to-people diplomacy is a “must” to China. It is worth to point out that both the international and regional situation as well as domestic elements should be taken into consideration.

China is facing a new international structure with two characteristics: a multipolar world and a rising Asia. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the international structure has long been described as “unipolar”, where the United States is the only superpower worldwide. However, along with the economic development of China and other emerging markets, the structure is changing gradually. The five BRICS countries, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, are joining the list of the world’s largest economies. Other fast growing economies include Turkey, Indonesia, Nigeria, etc. Among these developing countries, there is no doubt that the significance of China to the world economy and trade is vital. Europe, the US and even other BRICS countries are depending on China’s import and export. Meanwhile, China could no longer be a free rider of the international order and avoid shouldering international responsibility. Its foreign policy focus should not be limited to Asia or neighbouring countries but rather the entire world. The second characteristic is an intense regional situation especially between China and neighbouring countries on the South China Sea. In recent years, Japan, the Philippines, Vietnam and other countries are in conflict with China over territory on the South China Sea. Although China has maintained harmonious relationships with South Korea, Russia and Central Asian countries, the conflicts in the South prevent China from becoming the dominant power in East Asia. Also, the US is backing its allies in territory claims against China which has worsened the regional situation from the Chinese perspective (Mazza, 2015).

Borrowing from the historical institutionalism, a “critical juncture” is faced by China. In response to such an international and regional environment, is people-to-people diplomacy a plus or a must for China? There have already been discussions among Chinese scholars (Wang, 2008; Zhao, 2015). This paper argues that it is a must, especially when China needs to deal with the ever deteriorating neighbouring relations. There are four main reasons for China to take people-to-people diplomacy as a necessary measure in foreign affairs.

First, people-to-people diplomacy is a good measure to improve China’s international image. In the past, China tried to use political or economic power to improve its image but in vain.

For example, China has sent more soldiers to participate in the United Nations peacekeeping troops than any other countries. However, this contribution has hardly been mentioned or appreciated by the international society. Thus, China needs new methods to reach the goal, in this case, to improve its national image. People-to-people exchange provides China with a new and smarter method, exporting the Chinese culture in a soft way. In recent years, China has tried its best to host international events such as the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, the 2010 Shanghai World Expo and the 2014 Nanjing Youth Olympic Games. Holding these eye-catching international events, China has attracted hundreds of thousands of foreign people to visit it. In addition, China has not only held events inside its territory but also overseas. In the recent decade, China has held Chinese language year or cultural year in other countries such as Russia, the United Kingdom and France with the support from the local government. In practice, these activities act as “institutions” in exporting Chinese culture, language and history to the general public via people-to-people exchanges.

Second, people-to-people diplomacy is a complementary part to the current Chinese foreign policy. As one of the major powers in the world, China needs plenty of tools in its diplomacy toolbox. People-to-people should be one of the tools since almost all major powers have been using it for a long time. Before the “Ping-Pong Diplomacy” and the normalisation of the China-US relationship, people-to-people diplomacy was only conducted between China and non-western countries and mainly African countries. Since the 1980s, China has had much more contact with the outside world. Its diplomatic tools are also transferring from politics and ideology to economics and trade. Becoming key economic partners of almost all countries in the world and the largest exporter, China has become more confident when dealing with negotiations. Yet, the economic growth of China is very difficult to remain on a high level. It needs to find another way when it faces the “new normal” of economic growth (Xinhua, 2015c). Therefore, enhancing the influence of people-to-people diplomacy in Chinese foreign affairs is vital in order to diversify the Chinese diplomacy toolbox.

Third, people-to-people diplomacy could influence the future generations of both China and the world. People-to-people exchanges involve activities which are mainly targeted at young people, such as academic exchange and international tourism. For example, more and more international students are coming to China to study. However, compared to Chinese students in the EU and the US who mainly study degree programs, international students in China are

normally enrolled in short-term programmes such as language programmes and culture programmes (Ministry of Education of China PR, 2015). Although it is effective for them to increase their interest in China and acquire basic knowledge about China, this is far from the idea of actually getting them to understand China better. Instead of Chinese language and culture, learning about politics, economic and society would be more useful to them. Through people-to-people diplomacy, the younger generations could acquire more information about China and not be biased due to the influence of western media alone. Again, using historical institutionalism, both short and long term study programmes could be regarded as “institutions” here. If China wants to change its image in the world, it needs to cultivate the next generations when they are still forming their impression of the international society.

Last but not least, people-to-people diplomacy between China and the EU could help the Chinese people have higher recognition towards the governing party. As mentioned above, people-to-people diplomacy is conducted by the general public. Hence, it is easier for them to form public opinion when they are participants of the diplomacy activities. The Chinese government uses its strong economic and political power to influence Europe. For example, most major European international airports, including Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris, Frankfurt Airport and Schipol Airport in Amsterdam, all provide customer services in Chinese. All of these measures can act as institutions and influence the Chinese people’s opinion towards its own country and government. Therefore, people-to-people diplomacy between China and the EU not only has impact on the European countries and people but also on the domestic society. Comparing the interaction experiences of past generations, most of the Chinese people nowadays would agree that the international prestige of China has grown significantly and a more equal partnership between China and the EU has appeared.

For the new generation of Chinese leaders, adding people-to-people diplomacy to the Chinese diplomatic strategy can complement its toolbox. It is not just a plus to the traditional diplomacy but a necessary new method that the government should employ in order to improve China’s image and provide more diplomatic options. After the new administration took office in 2012, new institutions of people-to-people diplomacy have been established. The most eye-catching institution is the high-level people-to-people dialogue between China and the EU. Since the China-EU relations have been upgraded in Chinese foreign strategy as well as the importance of people-to-people exchange in the three-pillar system of the strategic

partnership, China-EU relations will focus more on people-to-people exchanges in the near future.

Conclusion

This paper reviews the development of people-to-people exchanges in Chinese history and also investigates its significance in current relations with the EU. China is not a newcomer to the technique of people-to-people diplomacy. Back in the early days of the new China, Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai have paved way for future people-to-people exchanges. People-to-people exchanges have played a vital role in China's foreign affairs. However, comparing with political, military and economic measures, people-to-people diplomacy's effectiveness has been underestimated. Until recent decades, China reconsidered its international strategy and valued the importance of people-to-people exchanges. When dealing with strategic partnership with the EU, High-Level People-to-People Diplomacy has been established to boost bilateral cooperation in culture, education and youth. It even becomes the "third pillar" of the strategic partnership. In the near future, new policies and initiatives in people-to-people exchanges between China and the EU will accelerate the cooperation process.

Facing a multipolar international structure, China has to use people-to-people diplomacy and cooperate with the EU. It is no longer the era when countries competed with each other by ideology. Rather, politics, economics and people-to-people exchanges are measures more commonly used. People-to-people diplomacy is a good choice for China to improve its neighbouring environment and images abroad. In addition, since China has taken the EU as a partner to balance the power of the US, it needs people-to-people exchanges alongside political and economic dialogues to influence the European people.

Under the new leadership, both China and the EU have great potential for closer bilateral cooperation in economic and security issues. However, beyond the economic and political aspect, the need for mutual understanding and further cooperation in other fields, such as higher education, energy and environment, and civil societies, still exists. People-to-people exchange is a good way for both sides to have deeper understanding of each other and narrow the gap caused by misunderstandings in the past. If this "third pillar" could be strengthened, a more healthy and fruitful China-EU strategic partnership is foreseeable in the near future.

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Great Power Management and China's Responsibility in International Climate Politics

Sanna Kopra¹

Abstract: By exploring international practice of great power management, this paper examines how the U.S. (an established power) and China (an emerging power) discursively frame great power responsibility in the context of international negotiations on climate politics. Firstly, this paper will argue that the American discourse on “responsible great powerhood” attempts to redirect and constrain China’s position in global politics. Secondly, this paper claims that China defends its interests and responds to Western demands by advancing two, partly conflicting, climate discourses simultaneously. On the one hand, despite its growing international status, China emphasizes its status as a poor developing country. On the other, the rhetoric of being a “responsible major power” is used to assure other nations of China’s credibility and benevolence; China is neither a threat to other countries nor to the environment.

Key words: China, climate change, great power, practice, responsibility

Introduction

China’s “rise” has heated theoretical and political debates about its implications for the global economy and world politics. Due to vague definitions of great powerhood, however, there is no consensus whether or not China has achieved a great power status. If defined as a “power (of some sort) that people at the time thought was great, that is, thought needed to be taken into account seriously in policy-making” (Black, 2008:1), it would be foolish not to call China a great power. At the same time, China’s great power status is questionable in ideational terms; it has not (yet) enough soft power to spread collective ideas and change international practices. That is why David Shambaugh (2013) calls China a “partial power” that is not really influencing world politics. As for international climate politics, China plays a crucial role. First, it is the biggest CO₂ emitter in the world, and has an important role in setting the tone for other emerging powers, namely BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India, and China) countries, and more broadly, for all developing countries. Second, China has emerged as the major candidate for challenging the superpower status of the U.S., and the contemporary practice of great power management is chiefly articulated in interactions between China and

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the U.S. Third, climate change is the biggest threat of our times. Given that great powers have the special collective responsibility to “ensure that the conditions of international peace and security are upheld” (Jackson, 2000: 203), great powers have a special responsibility to respond to climate change.

This paper examines global responsibility as an emerging rule of the international practice of great power management from the theoretical perspectives offered by the English School (ES) of international relations (IR). Methodologically, it joins “in the belief that such phenomena as knowledge, meaning, human activity, science, power, language, social institutions, and historical transformation occur within and are aspects or components of the *field of practices*” (Schatzki, 2001: 2, emphasis original). I argue that great power responsibility is chiefly an international discourse, and I do not provide any kind of list of actions that would demonstrate whether or not China is a responsible actor in international climate politics. Like all discourses, international discourse of (great power) responsibility is created in through social practices. It is produced, reproduced, and transformed through UN conferences and other official meetings, academic conferences, political statements, and so forth. In other words, responsibilities are *constructed* in social interaction; they are not given or static but they evolve in social context when actors talk over their definitions of reality and their justifications for practices. Through language, parties attempt to create a common understanding of responsibility. From this perspective, state representatives’ pronouncements such as speeches and white papers are important political actions, which create and allocate responsibilities. Without language, practitioners could not express meanings, intentions, reasons, and beliefs that are important factors of social construction of responsibility, weaving together the discursive and material world (Adler & Pouliot, 2011: 6-8).

The empirical part of the paper focuses on China’s responsibility in international climate politics: it analyzes Western and Chinese media reports, official strategies, and political statements, and examines how the U.S. and China discursively frame great power responsibility in the context of international negotiations on climate. First, I argue that the American discourse on “responsible great power” attempts to redirect and constrain China’s position in global politics including international negotiations on climate. Second, I investigate how both Chinese political leadership and media have welcomed the American discourse and how they have responded to it. Finally, I claim that China defends its interests

and responds to American demands by advancing two, partly conflicting, climate discourses simultaneously. On the one hand, despite its growing international status, China emphasizes its status as a poor developing country. On the other hand, the rhetoric of being a “responsible major power” is used to assure other nations of China’s credibility and benevolence; China is neither a threat to other countries nor to the environment.

International Practice of Great Power Management

For the purposes of this paper, I define international practices as shared goal-oriented temporal learning processes which develop meanings, negotiate rules, and organize the social world. We can identify at least the following characteristics of international practices: First, practices exist only in and through social participation. They create new relations and connections with and in the world. Second, practices are temporal and situational. They are not intentionally designed nor do they appear from scratch. They are historical, ongoing, patterned processes which both generate new circumstances and are affected by changing circumstances. Practices have a life cycle - they emerge, diffuse, institutionalize, and fade away (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998). The lifecycle is not necessarily linear and stable but may involve discontinuity; some practices do not comprise all the stages, and some practices change substantially during their lifecycle as participants are replaced, new ideas emerge, unexpected events happen, and so on and so forth. Third, practices are both material and discursive, and there is no need to distinguish between doing and saying. Practices are thus performances and enactment of discourses. They define issues by constructing meanings and relationships, legitimate knowledge, and outline appropriate choices of actions (see Dryzek, 2005). Sometimes they materialize in artifacts such as laws or other procedures, sometimes not. They are also learning processes. Knowledge does not only give impetus to the emergence and change of practices but learning is also “enclosed” in the “very execution” of the practice (Adler & Pouliot, 2011: 15). Finally, practices are goal oriented and they are based on and bound up with power. They negotiate meanings, define rules, and produce relations of accountability. Collectively created and negotiated rules of the practice form a moral basis to which participants’ moral agency is to be evaluated by themselves, other participants of the practice, and/or any interpreter of the practice. For example, “medical ethics”, “business ethics”, “family ethics” and “international ethics” are subject to a very different kind of standard of conduct, and make the participants look at the world in certain ways. Participation in these practices involves ethical evaluation about possible and morally

acceptable choices of action. If participants fail to follow these rules, they are accountable to, but not necessarily sanctioned by, at least the other participants of the practice.

Although ES theorists have only recently started to consider practices directly (see Navari, 2010; Little, 2011), they have always considered institutional practices as fundamental to the constitution of international society. Almost all ES scholars have formulated their own lists of institutions that can be seen as patterned sets of shared practices, which organize and sustain international society. As the ES concept of practice is a “purposive goal-orientated conception” (Navari, 2010: 3), Schatzki’s (1999) conception of integrative practice seems to capture best the ES notion of practice. Integrative practices are “complex practices found in and constitutive of particular domains of social life” (Schatzki, 1996: 98). In addition to social understanding related to the specific practice, they include “explicit rules, principles, precepts, and instructions”, and “teleoaffective structures comprising hierarchies of ends, tasks, projects, beliefs, emotions, moods, and the like” (Ibid.: 99). The ES conception of great power management conforms to all the requirements of Schatzki’s integrative practice. First, there is, at least to some extent, a shared understanding of how to identify the members of the “great power club”. Second, it has its rules of membership albeit they are not expressed in legal terms (other than procedures of the UN Security Council). Finally, it is teleoaffective; the goal of the practice is to maintain international peace and security. In contrast to Schatzki, from the ES perspective, the rules of practice do not necessarily have to be explicit.

There have always been great powers, but in the ES terms of primary institution, great powers have formed an international club of “legalized hegemony” only since the early nineteenth century (Reus-Smit, 1999: 109; Simpson, 2004: 73). In its contemporary form, it started to evolve after the Second World War, when the great power club was institutionalized with the establishment of the UN Security Council. It gradually changed with the ending of the Cold War and the beginning of China’s reform era. At the moment, the practice is again in flux as China is in the process of joining the community of practice. As a newcomer, China does not enjoy the status of full member of the great power club. Its competence is not clear yet - does it engage in peaceful interaction and is it going to follow the rules of the practice? Classic realists think that great powers tend to behave in a similar manner and hence the rise of China inevitably leads to hegemonic war. From the ES perspective, the “China threat” view is too simplified because both circumstances and ideas influence how great powers behave. First,

historical practices set up the scene in which great powers can operate. A rising China is faced with a very different international society from previous rising powers. Second, national identity, norms, and values shape how great powers see the world and how they behave. Therefore, the world is not “condemned to perpetual great-power competition” (Mearsheimer, 2001: 2) but China’s rise can be peaceful.

“When we speak of great powers”, Bull (1977: 194) writes, “we imply...the existence of a club with a rule of membership.” These rules are not given or static, but are produced and transformed in social interaction. Even if a state reaches a certain level of material capacity, it does not automatically become a great power, but has to be accepted to the great power club by other members of international society. From the ES perspective, the most important rule of great power management is that great powers are “recognised by others to have, and conceived by their own leaders and peoples to have, certain special rights and duties” (Bull, 1977: 196). However, these rights and responsibilities cannot be formalized and made fully explicit (i.e. by writing hegemonial rights of great powers) because international society is anarchical and, hence, rejects the idea of a hierarchical ordering of states. To become an accepted member of the great power club, at least two conditions have to be met. Firstly, club members must enjoy substantial institutional privileges in international decision making, as China undoubtedly already does (Suzuki, 2014: 637). Secondly, members of the club must “be treated as a *social* equal” with other members of the club, which is the “primary reason” for questioning China’s membership in the great power club (Ibid.). If others do not recognize China’s competence as a great power, it cannot be accepted into the club. That is why the next section looks at how the U.S. (an established power) defines the rules of membership which China (an emerging power) must follow in order to be, and be seen as, a great power.

Expectations to China’s Global Responsibility

At the beginning of China’s reform era, the U.S. was optimistic about China’s reforms and believed that “China would learn to be more like us” but the Tiananmen incident in 1989 changed the U.S.’s China policy dramatically (Zheng, 1999: 126). The “containment policy” was, however, replaced with the “engagement policy” in 1993. After the Taiwan Strait Crisis (1995-1996), the Clinton administration announced that its long-term goal was to integrate China into international society “with all the privileges and responsibilities of a major power” (Ibid.: 128). In practice, that meant that the U.S. “would make efforts to bring China into the

world power club, but China has the obligation to honor the existing international rules in its own behaviour” (Ibid.: 128-129). Despite skepticism over U.S. motivations, China welcomed the U.S. policy as a way to become a real great power (Ibid.).

Debate over China’s global responsibility became heated when Robert B. Zoellick, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State during the George W. Bush administration, introduced the concept of responsible stakeholder to international politics in 2005:

All nations conduct diplomacy to promote their national interests. Responsible stakeholders go further: They recognize that the international system sustains their peaceful prosperity, so they work to sustain that system (Zoellick, 2005).

The concept was primarily an attempt to describe China’s international responsibilities and to urge China to carry them out. Zoellick warned that China should neither attempt to challenge the existing international system nor to promote competing norms and world order. Zoellick (2005) also noted that: “China has a responsibility to strengthen the international system that has enabled its success”. Although there is no clear understanding of what China will do or what it will stand for when it finally achieves great power status, Zoellick was optimistic about China’s potential to become a responsible stakeholder. He called the U.S. to help foster China’s reforms:

We now need to encourage China to become a responsible stakeholder in the international system. As a responsible stakeholder, China would be more than just a member – it would work with us to sustain the international system that has enabled its success (Zoellick, 2005).

In the following year, the concept of responsible stakeholder was incorporated into the U.S. National Security Strategy of 2006 that gave an order:

As China becomes a global player, it must act as a responsible stakeholder that fulfills its obligations and works with the United States and others to advance the international system that has enabled its success (White House, 2006).

The U.S. has not offered a unanimous definition of what it means to be a responsible power but it seems that the meaning and purpose of the concept of responsible stakeholder is to evaluate China’s policies in the context of the U.S. interests and expectations (Gill, 2007).

The first Obama administration followed with similar ideas and James Steinberg, Zoellick's successor as a U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, introduced his own China paradigm, "strategic reassurance" in 2009. Steinberg (2009) defined the principle as the following:

Just as we and our allies must make clear that we are prepared to welcome China's "arrival", as you all have so nicely put it, as a prosperous and successful power, China must reassure the rest of the world that its development and growing global role will not come at the expense of security and well-being of others (Steinberg. 2009).

On the one hand, Steinberg affirmed that the U.S. is "ready to accept a growing role for China on the international stage"; On the other hand, he reminded that "we will also be looking for signs and signals of reassurance from China. If China is going to take its rightful place, it must make those signals clear" (Ibid.). In contrast to Zoellick, who did not mention climate change or environmental issues at all, Steinberg acknowledged the importance of effective U.S.-China cooperation on climate change mitigation, "driven by the knowledge that the United States and China are the two biggest emitters of greenhouse gases" (Ibid.).

The second Obama administration defines the building up of a "productive and constructive relationship" with China as one of its strategic aims. A week after President Obama's re-election in November 2012, U.S. National Security Adviser Thomas Donilon encouraged "Beijing to define its national interest more in terms of common global concerns and to take responsibility for helping the international community address global problems" (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2012). He continued by urging China to become a responsible international citizen:

Now, we've been clear that as China takes a seat at a growing number of international tables, it needs to assume responsibilities commensurate with its growing global economic impact and its national capabilities (Ibid.).

Donilon (2013) reaffirmed this statement in March 2013 and called for U.S.-China cooperation "to build a new model of relations between an existing power and an emerging one". He pointed out that there is not a natural law according to which "rising power and an established power are somehow destined for conflict" (Ibid.).

After China became the world's biggest CO₂ emitter in 2006, Western leaders have started to urge China to shoulder more responsibility in climate change mitigation as well. Notably, after the UN Copenhagen Conference in 2009, China was the main target of harsh international criticism. For example, both the British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and the British Climate Change Secretary Ed Miliband clearly blamed China for being irresponsible and for "blocking progress" at the UN Climate Conference in December 2009 (see Lynas, 2009; Porter 2009; Vidal, 2009). In September 2014, president Obama linked climate responsibility and great power status together by addressing the fact that the U.S. and China "have a special responsibility to lead" the global efforts to tackle climate change because that is "what big nations have to do" (Obama, 2014). As the U.S. has not really demonstrated this leadership by action, the issue of climate change could provide China with an opportunity to prove to the world its emerging global leadership.

Chinese Notions of Responsibility

External expectations of China's international behavior cannot alone help us to understand China's evolving notions of climate responsibility. In order to understand what kind of responsibility China has and why China is willing to shoulder it in the context of international climate politics, we have to explore the state's identity. Identity is a subjective and objective discourse of the self; it is how both one and another perceive oneself to chiefly establish what she or he is. It is both material and ideational; it is based on a material site of a human body (or the territory of a state) but what makes it so special are ideas - values, beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, memories, and so on and so forth. Because identity is a "lived experience of participation in specific communities" (Wenger, 1998: 151), it is shaped by the practices one takes part in. Identity determines what kind of choices of action one perceives as appropriate. The balance of power itself does not dictate how great powers use their power in relation to each other and to minor states but their socially constructed identities shape their policies and actions. Thus, the practices, including great power management, shape and transform participants' identity, notions of morality, and sense of appropriate choices of actions. Furthermore, "interests presuppose identities", Wendt (1999: 231) notes, "because an actor cannot know what it wants until it knows who it is".

Along with reforms and open-door policies, China's national identity changed gradually during the 1980s and 1990s. Although the identity transformation was chiefly pushed by

economic interests, it completely changed China's membership in international society (Qin, 2004). As China began to see international institutions as beneficial to its development, it did not want to be seen as a threat and started to cultivate an image of a responsible major power globally (Deng, 2008; Gries, 2004; Johnston, 1998). The identity change also led to debate over the state's international responsibilities in China in the 1990s (Xia, 2001). For the time being, Chinese academics and the political elite have not agreed on the scope of China's global responsibility. The main reason for this is that both Chinese political leaders and the general public believe that "China is a nation with a dual-identity"; it is both a developing country and a major power (Wu, 2001: 293). The Chinese argumentation in international climate politics reflects this dichotomy by building up a very dualist image for the state. On the one hand, the Chinese government responds to Western expectations by emphasizing the state's active and cooperative image as a "responsible stakeholder". On the other hand, the government highlights China's image as a "developing country".

Major Country Responsibility

In the early 1990s, China's international status started to increase rapidly in both material and ideational terms. First, China's economic wealth began to rise rapidly because of economic reforms. Second, with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, international society started to regard China as a new potential great power and wanted to integrate China into international practices. Hence, both internal and external developments put in motion a learning process that led to China's accession to the great power club. At the moment, China is in the process of learning new ideas and ways of being in the world in accordance with this new identity. At some point, this learning process will lead to China, a "relative newcomer", becoming a "relative old-timer" in the great power club. This promotion is usually unmarked and implicit; suddenly you realize that you are in a position to teach new newcomers and, at the same time, other participants start to expect you to know and do "more than you are sure you do" (Wenger, 1998: 90). It is hence usually others who give a new status and newcomers cannot themselves decide when they are ready to become old-timers and bear more responsibilities within the practice. This is exactly what is happening with China as the West expects it to shoulder heavier global responsibilities while China still regards itself as a developing country unable to respond to these demands.

In world politics, China is now increasingly identifying itself as a great power and the government has started to signal that it is willing to shoulder more global responsibilities in the future. In general, both the Chinese government and Chinese scholars have generally reacted positively to Zoellick's conception (Jin, 2006). As an evidence of this, the State Council Information Office released a white paper entitled "China's Peaceful Development Road" to elaborate on the country's peaceful development philosophy shortly after Zoellick's speech. The white paper highlighted China's development needs and declared that "China's development will never pose a threat to anyone" because "peaceful development is the inevitable way for China's modernization". The paper recognized that, "Active in the settlement of serious international and regional problems, China shoulders broad international obligations, and plays a responsible and constructive role". However, it targeted the main responsibilities to developed countries. It stated:

The developed countries should shoulder greater responsibility for a universal, coordinated and balanced development of the world, while the developing countries should make full use of their own advantages to achieve development (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2005).

In 2007, Zhao Qizheng, a former Minister of the State Council Information Office of China, defined China's responsibilities as follows: Due to China's developing country status, the state's "first and foremost responsibility is to develop its economy to give the Chinese people a better life" (Zhao, 2012: 197). The 2011 White Paper on China's peaceful development echoed: "For China, the most populous developing country, to run itself well is the most important fulfillment of its international responsibility" (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2011). The paper continued to underline China's developing country status and suggested that China should not be expected to shoulder broader global responsibilities before it has met domestic challenges and achieved a higher level of development. The statement illustrates the Chinese position that global responsibility depends on a state's development stage rather than its global impacts. However, the white paper did not indicate when China would achieve such a high development stage that it would assume more global responsibility.

In June 2013, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi's speech at the World Peace Forum pledged that China's fifth generation of leadership is going to take a more proactive approach to

diplomacy. According to Wang (2013), China is “ready to respond to this expectation of the international community” “to undertake its due responsibilities and make greater contribution to world peace and common development”. Wang also recognized that China’s permanent seat in the UN Security Council brings it special responsibilities that it cannot escape.

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China is always conscious of its international responsibilities and obligations and stands ready to offer more public goods and play its unique and positive role in addressing various issues and challenges in the world (Wang, 2013).

In line with China’s rising international status, the Chinese government has started to formulate new concepts and ideas, such as “harmonious world”, “the China dream”, “the Asia-Pacific dream”, and “the new type of major country relationship” to organize international society. In addition, China has suggested alternative sources of global governance by proposing new foreign policy initiatives, such as One Belt, One Road, or New Silk roads, and by establishing new multilateral financial institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the BRICS New Development Bank. Time will tell if these new concepts and institutions manage to reorganize international practices so that they will become “less Westernized” and accommodate the Chinese values and interests better. From this paper’s point of view, the concept of the “new type of great power relationship” is of interest. It was first expressed by then China Vice President Xi Jinping in February 2012. He claimed:

We should work hard to implement the agreement between the two presidents, expand our shared interests and mutually beneficial cooperation, strive for new progress in building our cooperative partnership and make it a new type of relationship between major countries in the 21st century (Xi, 2012).

Xi Jinping highlighted four areas in which both countries should make greater joint efforts to build such new type of relationship: First, increasing “mutual understanding and strategic trust”; second, respecting “each side’s core interests and major concerns”; third, deepening “mutually beneficial cooperation”; fourth, enhancing “cooperation and coordination in international affairs and on global issues” including climate change (Ibid.). Right after his nomination to China’s Premier, Li Keqiang reaffirmed that the 5th generation of Chinese leadership would “work with the Obama administration to work together to build a new type of relationship between great countries” (Reuters, 2013). The conception of the new type of

great power relationship, however, does not provide anything new. It focuses on “core interests”, not common interests that could be translated into new responsibilities for the both sides. Implicitly, it is about hard power and an attempt to persuade the U.S. to respect China’s sphere of interests in East Asia.

In international climate negotiations, the Chinese government has become “more proactive, more engaged, and more flexible” since the Bali Conference in 2008 (Liang, 2010: 68). Since 2008, China has launched annual white papers on climate change which all emphasize that as the “largest developing country”, China has played a responsible and constructive role in international negotiations on climate. Only recently, China has started to refer to itself as a major power in international negotiations on climate change, although it continues to emphasize the development first principle. In September 2014, at the U.N. Climate Summit, Special Envoy Zhang Gaoli declared: “responding to climate change is what China needs to do to achieve sustainable development at home as well as to fulfil its due international obligation as a responsible major country” (Zhang, 2014). Moreover, as China has published its major climate commitments in joint statements with the U.S, it seems that it has made them in a reference to its great power status (see White House, 2014; White House, 2015). On the one hand, the National Climate Change Plan (2014-2020) confirmed China’s great power responsibility in climate change mitigation; on the other hand, it defended the state’s “legitimate development rights and interests” (National Development and Reform Commission, 2014: 4-5). At Paris Conference in 2015, China’s Head of the State (instead of the Premier) took part in the negotiations for the first time and represented China as a responsible stakeholder and a determinate facilitator of international climate agreement. Notably, Xi Jinping (2015) called for all states to “assume more shared responsibilities for win-win outcomes”, which indicates that China no longer focuses only on historic responsibility of developed countries but is willing to shoulder more responsibility in international climate negotiations.

The pursuit of a favorable international image is clearly an important factor in China’s climate discourse (Kopra, 2012). To assess responsibility, however, we cannot just focus on words but real responsibility has to be demonstrated by actions. Due to the space constrains, however, I am able to describe China’s actions to tackle climate change only in outline. Since the late 2000s, the Chinese government has taken important steps towards moderating the

future growth of the country's greenhouse gas emissions. It has encouraged central and local governments, businesses, and individuals to practice a "low-carbon lifestyle" living by issuing a wide variety of policies and action plans. In June 2007, the government published its first comprehensive climate policy document entitled the National Climate Change Programme. In August 2009, the top legislative body, National People's Congress of China Standing Committee, adopted the first climate change resolution which underlined the principle of scientific development and vowed to strengthen China's legal framework addressing climate change. In November 2009, China announced a "voluntary" but "nationally binding" target to reduce carbon emission intensity per unit of GDP in 2020 by 40-45% from that in 2005. It was estimated that there would not be a reduction in China's overall emissions as China's GDP (and emissions as well) was expected to double by 2020, but the target would prevent greenhouse gas emissions to double by that time (Xinhua, 2009). In March 2011, the target was incorporated into the 12th Five-Year Program (2011-2015), which decided to cut energy consumption per unit of GDP by 16% by 2015, and CO₂ emissions by 17%, respectively. In addition, the proportion of non-fossil fuels in the overall primary energy consumption was raised to 11.4% (compared to 8.3% in 2010). In 2012, China issued preliminary carbon emission trading system regulations and launched pilot programs for carbon emissions trading in five major cities (Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Chongqing and Shenzhen) and two provinces (Guangdong and Hubei). The carbon trading system is planned to be expanded nationwide in 2017 (White House, 2015).

In 2014, the Energy Development Strategy Action Plan (2014-2020) included, for the first time, a cap coal on national coal consumption by 2020, and pledged to raise the share of non-fossil fuels in the total primary energy mix to 15% by 2020 from 9.8% in 2013 (Xinhua, 2014). In November 2014, China and the U.S. made a historic agreement in which China announced that it will halt the growth of CO₂ emissions around 2030 (White House, 2014). It means that China no longer focuses on reducing relative "carbon intensity" but it has instead pledged to make a reduction in its absolute emissions. Last, but definitely not least, in June 2015, China published its intended nationally determined contribution (INDC) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in which it pledged to peak CO₂ emissions around 2030 and to reduce its carbon intensity, the amount of CO₂ per unit of GDP, by 60% to 65% from the 2005 level by 2030. In addition, the government committed to increasing the share of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption to around 20%, and

increasing the forest stock volume by around 4.5 billion cubic meters on the 2005 level (National Development and Reform Commission, 2015: 5). Notably, in September 2015, China also announced that it will “make available ¥20 billion [about 3 billion USD] for setting up the China South-South Climate Cooperation Fund to support other developing countries to combat climate change, including to enhance their capacity to access GCF funds” (White House, 2015).

This brief outline demonstrates that China takes climate change seriously. In order to understand the Chinese position on international negotiations on climate change, however, we must look at China’s developing country identity.

Development First

For China, climate change is an “issue involving both environment and development, but it is ultimately an issue of development” (National Development and Reform Commission, 2007). According to my interpretation, this definition has two aspects. First, climate change is caused by the historic development of developed countries, and second, climate change poses a severe obstacle to the development of developing countries. Therefore, the Chinese government argues that the “ultimate solution to climate change can only be achieved through common sustainable development of all countries” (Xie, 2010). This has two implications: First, developed countries have to change their consumption path to be more sustainable and implement serious emissions reductions. Second, developing countries have to adapt themselves, with the help of developed countries, to climate change in order to achieve better levels of development despite the severe effects of climate change. The idea follows the Kuznets curve - the higher the development stage a state achieves, the more capability to mitigate and adapt to climate change they have due to greater resources and better access to technologies to cope with climate change. Recently, the Chinese government has also started to recognize the security impacts of climate change. However, China opposes securitization and formal discussions on climate change at the U.N. Security Council because it does not operate under the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) and its decision-making is not based on universal participation. For China, it is important that the voices of all developing countries are heard (Wang, 2011).

In international negotiations on climate change, the Chinese government assures that it is a “responsible developing country” that takes climate change very seriously, yet has neither a historical responsibility nor the financial resources to mitigate climate change, and that it is in need of financial and technological support (Kopra, 2012). It underlines the CBDR principle and opposes binding emission reductions for developing countries. For years, China refused to commit to any kind of emissions reduction and demanded that developed countries shoulder all responsibility for climate change mitigation for historical reasons. China compromised its position in the 2007 UN Bali Conference, where it and other developing countries committed themselves to implement nationally appropriated mitigation actions in the context of sustainable development that are supported and enabled by measurable, reportable, and verifiable technology. Since adaptation is “an essential component in the framework of sustainable development to address climate change”, China demands that developed countries provide developing countries with technological and financial support to develop their adaptation capacity (National Development and Reform Commission, 2008).

Despite its increasing wealth, China continues to represent itself as a developing country by aligning its climate politics with all the developing countries’ (the G77) interests in international climate negotiations. The Chinese government emphasizes that it has a moral responsibility to maximize economic growth. To some extent, China’s climate discourse is affected by the burden of “the Century of Shame”. The government indicates that China is not a capable actor but a powerless, poor country unable to tackle the “unprecedented” difficulties caused by climate change. As an innocent “victim”, China “faces” both the severe consequences of climate change and unfair policies of developed countries, whereas developed countries are dominant actors who should take action. As China’s then Premier Wen Jiabao put it in 2008:

If we look at the world history of development, we will see that developed countries encountered their resource and environmental challenges in phases in the course of 200 years of industrialization. But we are confronted with the challenges all at the same time. In addition, we have to address in a much shorter timeframe the issue of energy conservation and pollution control which has taken developed countries decades to tackle after their economies became highly developed. The difficulties we face are therefore unprecedented (Wen, 2008).

Undoubtedly, China is not a very typical member of developing countries due to its rapid economic growth and increased global status. However, the Chinese government continues to use rhetoric intended to entwine developing countries' interests with its own. It stresses its friendship with developing countries and argues that "China has never separated itself from other developing countries and will never do so" (Wang, 2013). Yet, China's participation in the G77 is becoming more and more questionable. Naturally, the Chinese government wants to ensure that it will not be left alone in international negotiations. Both BASIC group (Brazil, South Africa, India and China) and Like-Minded Developing Countries on Climate Change (including Argentina, Bolivia, China, Cuba, El Salvador, Ecuador, Iran, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Malaysia, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia and India) provide important support for China, which does not want to have legally binding emission reductions nor abdicate its financial and technological benefits. In particular, both groups see no sub-categories between developed and developing countries. Sub-categories would obviously weaken their position in international climate negotiations.

Chinese media has taken a more straightforward position and argued that global expectations of China's responsibility should be closely linked to the state's development stage. As a People's Daily Online columnist Li Hongmei (2009) puts it, "China is still a developing country feeding a large population and has to be responsible for the well being [sic] of its own people before benefitting others." That is why China Daily argues that:

[N]ational strength and international status should determine the international responsibilities China should accept. Given China's developing country reality and the current West-dominated world order, it is far-fetched, if not ill-timed, to demand that the country undertake [sic] duties that are beyond its prowess (China Daily, 2010a).

Some Chinese journalists have warned that Western countries' calls for China's greater responsibility aim to hinder China's economic development, to advance their own national interests, and to pass on their own responsibilities to China:

[T]he concept of 'great powers' responsibility' is defined by the Western world completely on the conditions of satisfying its own needs and interests. Simply put, whether to be responsible for the world, from the Western perspectives, is literally evaluated by how much responsibility you have assumed for the West (Li, 2009).

The strategic point of the “China economic responsibility” theory lies in some Western countries’ attempt to distract world attention from facts and burden Beijing with more responsibilities that it should not and could not shoulder. In other words, some Western countries are too eager to shirk their responsibilities and pass on their burden to China (China Daily, 2010b).

Some western countries have been throwing out various “China responsibility” theories after the global financial crisis. These responsibilities form a system that seem [sic] to grant China a responsibility to save the world.... Some western countries are also exaggerating China’s position as the world’s largest greenhouse gas producer and are asking it to shoulder obligatory requirements of emission cuts; at the same time these countries don’t want China to enjoy preferential treatments available to developing countries. They believe that China’s demand for “common but differentiated responsibilities” is an attempt to shed responsibility (Xinhua, 2010).

For China, as these examples illustrate, the most important factor in international climate politics is its developing country status, not its major power identity. As Xie Zhenhua, China’s chief negotiator to the UN climate change talks, puts it, it would be “unfair and unreasonable to hold China to absolute cuts in emissions at the present stage, when its per capita GDP stands at just 5,000 U.S. dollars” (Xinhua, 2012). In June 2015, China’s INDC also described China as a developing country and made no reference to great power responsibility. Although China represented itself as a developing country at the Paris Conference in 2015, it made substantial compromises that enabled states to adopt a new, international climate change agreement. Indeed, it seems that China is now increasingly identifying itself as a great power also in international climate negotiations.

Conclusion

During the last decade, there have been a lot of speculations about whether the rise of China will represent a threat or opportunity for the world. Since Zoellick’s speech in 2005, Western countries have urged China to become a “responsible stakeholder” and shoulder more global responsibilities, including climate change. Although the conception of “great power responsibility” is undoubtedly a Western discourse, it is not insignificant for China. It constrains China’s policies since the Chinese government does not want to be perceived as a threat but wishes to be seen as a “responsible major power” instead. Because coping with environmental degradation is one of the biggest challenges contemporary China faces today, the Chinese government has no choice but to take climate change seriously. As China’s national identity is in flux, it has been domestically very difficult to agree on the scope of

China's global responsibility. However, the Paris Conference indicated that China is now increasingly living up to its emerging great power identity. China portrays an image of a "responsible stakeholder" assuring the world that it takes climate change seriously and that it is a credible and benevolent member of international society. The discourse aims to persuade others that China is a trustworthy partner both in business and politics. The motive of the discourse is clear - if others do not regard China as a responsible and credible stakeholder, they are probably not willing to deepen economic cooperation or accept China as a major player in global political decision-making.

At the same time, China argues that international expectations of its global responsibility should be closely linked to its development stage. According to China's "development first" principle, developing countries do not have an obligation to control emissions before they achieve a certain level of development. As the government wants to avoid any legally binding requirements in international climate politics, it aligns its interests in conjunction with other developing countries. The "development first" principle claim is naturally justified from the least developed countries' point of view, but one can wonder if China is a typical representative of developing countries. At its current level of development, China's wealth and capability to take ambitious climate actions will continue to increase and makes it more and more difficult for the Chinese government to assure the world that it is a developing country. Again, a significant proportion of Chinese emissions are "offshore emissions" and thus Western consumers are partly responsible for increasing GHG emissions in China.

Because practices anchor identities "in each other and what we do together", it is not easy for China to transform identity without the support of the other participants of the practice (Wenger, 1998: 89). "We need *recognition* for the persons we take ourselves to be, and only *as recognised* can we conclusively come to establish an identity", Ringmar (1996: 13, emphasis original) explains. Therefore, the U.S. should recognize China's membership in the great power club by allowing China to play a more important role in international politics. It would encourage the Chinese government to shoulder more responsibility on contemporary global issues. In contrast to realists, who often emphasize the role of causality in international relations, I do not believe that norms inevitably cause certain behavior. Even if states achieved some kind of common understanding of what kind of (climate) responsibilities great powers and emerging powers ought to shoulder, it would not inevitably mean that states

would demonstrate their responsibilities by action. Although states do not always act responsibly, the “responsibility” means that they are always answerable for their policies and actions, and, at minimum, they are accountable to their citizens and international society (Jackson, 1995: 137). Therefore, China has to take global expectations and needs into consideration if it wants to be seen as a cooperative and responsible member of international society. In order to halt the rise of global CO₂ stock, all major countries including China, are required to take serious actions as soon as possible. Developed countries’ ambitious greenhouse gas reduction commitments would encourage China to shoulder more responsibility as well. In the end, in addition to the U.S., China is the only country of which a national policy can make a global difference.

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Soft Power and Tourism: A Study of Chinese Outbound Tourism to Africa

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Abstract: The increase of Sino-African interactions in trade, aid and investments has attracted Chinese tourists to Africa. The Beijing Action Plan of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) outlines China's cultural diplomacy in Africa, delineating a number of areas of cultural cooperation: education; press, publishing and media; and tourism and people-to-people exchange programs in academia and think tanks among young people, women and athletes. Though scholars of International relations (IR) have detected that tourism is one way of manifesting soft power, they do not feel comfortable nor ready to place the promotion of tourism into standard IR discourse. This is in contrast to scholars of tourism studies who have recognized the political nature of China's outbound tourism, particularly to less-developed areas such as Africa. In this paper, we have argued that the Chinese government uses outbound tourism to perform its perceived relationship with African countries; that is, Beijing aspires to be seen as a benign rising power willing to help weaker countries develop and establish harmonious ties. It is hard to separate the economic and cultural functions of outbound tourism, each of which reinforces the other, although not without limits. We find that not all African countries' national tourism policies are capable of, or willing to prioritize, attracting Chinese tourists. Moreover, we find that South Africa is most active in working with public relations companies in China to promote South Africa as a tourist destination.

Keywords: China, Africa, tourist promotion, soft power, South Africa

Introduction

Sino-African relations have increasingly become a subject of exploration among scholars, journalists and development policy practitioners (Large, 2008: 57). The focus of this article is to examine an area of Sino-African relations that has not been fully researched – that is, how China exercises its soft power using outbound tourism to Africa. As a part of the foreign policy strategy of peace and development of the People's Republic of China (PRC), China has been cultivating various relationships with developing regions. In Africa, China's policy aims to secure natural resources and consumer markets and to establish China's status as a leader in the developing world (Duggan, 2015).

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The increase of Sino-African interactions has attracted Chinese tourists to Africa. The Beijing Action Plan (2013-2015) of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) outlines China's cultural diplomacy in Africa, delineating a number of areas of cultural cooperation: education; press, publishing and media; tourism; etc. (Li & Rønning, 2013: 2). Non-academic reports on this genre of topic usually emphasize commercial marketing. Scholars who specialize in tourism studies (e.g. Tse, 2013; Arlt, 2013), interestingly, have pointed out clearly that Chinese outbound tourism cannot be understood as mere commercial activity. It is unique with regard to its political nature. Tse (2013) in his paper entitled "Chinese Outbound Tourism as a Form of Diplomacy" gave a number of examples of how the Chinese government uses outbound tourism to achieve its political aims, such as granting foreign countries Approved Destination Status (ADS) and encouraging mainland Chinese citizens to visit Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan, as well as discouraging Chinese tourists from visiting Japan. There is growing agreement among scholars in tourism studies that both outbound and inbound tourism as a forum of people-to-people exchange is a tool of soft power (Stumpf & Swanger, 2015; Gou, Li & Wang, 2014; Weaver, 2015; Kwek, Wang & Weaver, 2014). Facilitating visits to less-developed countries is another example of how China uses soft-power diplomacy (Tse, 2013).

"Soft power" in this article builds on Joseph Nye's definition: "It is the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. It arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals and policies" (2004: x). Soft power is developed and maintained over time through such medium as public diplomacy, the export of culture, and people-to-people exchanges (Melissen, 2005; Watanabe and McConnell, 2008). While soft power is not a tool for all states to deploy, states – China in particular – do take steps to increase their soft power (Paradise, 2009; Kurlantzick, 2007; Gill & Yanzhong, 2006). While many international relations (IR) scholars have indicated that tourism is one way for states to increase and maintain soft power, they do not feel comfortable nor ready to place the promotion of tourism into standard IR discourse. Scholars, such as Hollinshead & Chun (2012), who do research tourism as a source of soft power tend to focus on inbound tourism. The focus of this article is to fill that gap by examining the often-overlooked political effect of outbound tourism promotion (Richter, 1983).

Methodologically, we rely on desk research of relevant policy papers and campaign materials, as well as on two semi-structured interviews. The first was with an (anonymous) representative working for the South African Tourism Bureau to promote Chinese inbound

tourism. The second was with Tichaona Chifamba, news director of the Xinhua News Agency in Zimbabwe. Chifamba frequently comments on Sino-African tourism in the media. In the next section, we will begin with a literature review to provide a context on how the influx of Chinese tourists to Africa has taken shape.

Literature Review

Our literature review deals with two topics: 1) Sino-African relations and 2) the increase of Chinese tourists to Africa.

Sino-African Relations: A Historical Overview

Since the founding of the PRC, Africa has played a major role in China's international politics. This relationship, which has deep roots in history, has blossomed in recent years. From the establishment of the PRC in 1949 to the opening of China's economy in 1978, Beijing's African policy was heavily influenced by ideology (Li, 2007: 70). "There was the perception that the Third World offered China an arena in which to achieve its political/ideological objectives" (Yu, 1988: 850). Many scholars working in the area of Sino-African relations, such as Bruce D. Larkin (1971), believe that China had an ideological commitment to world revolution, and that this commitment was the driving force behind China's role in Africa (Larkin, 1971: 8). Mao himself claimed that China needed to play a role in the struggle against colonialism, imperialism and revisionism in the Third World.

Another crucial factor was the international isolation that the PRC experienced after the Chinese Civil War. George T. Yu explains that Africa offered the PRC "international recognition and support as the sole legitimate government of China" (Yu, 1988: 851). In a search for allies to break its diplomatic isolation, the fledgling PRC found in anti-colonialism a *cause commune* with African countries fighting for their independence. The colonial question, which concerned the peoples of Africa and Asia that convened in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955, accelerated the PRC's involvement with Africa. The Bandung Conference laid the ideological and philosophical foundation for South-South cooperation (Choucri, 1969), a spirit and logic that are still evident and invoked by the Sino-African relationship today.

China's engagement on the continent also had technical and economic dimensions, albeit limited or symbolic. A large number of Chinese technicians and doctors have been shipped to Africa since the foundation of the PRC. The improvement to the lives of the people of the

poorest countries in the world as a direct result of this aid has been palpable (Snow, 1988: 159). Most independent African countries had officially recognized the PRC as a nation by the 1960s.

In the 1980s, Chinese involvement stagnated briefly as the PRC underwent major modernization in the wake of the Cultural Revolution. Deng Xiaoping's reforms distracted China from working on its relations with Africa. When Gerald Segal (1992: 126), a leading thinker and writer on international affairs, wrote that Africa "will remain the least important area for Chinese foreign policy," he seemed to have good grounds to believe so. However, China returned to Africa – if indeed it had ever left – with force in the early 1990s.

Two factors brought about a change in China's attitude toward African states from the 1990s onward: First was the relative diplomatic isolation that ensued after the Tiananmen Square incident. Unlike Western countries, most African governments displayed a certain level of understanding toward Beijing's handling of the Tiananmen Square incident (Taylor, 2006: 62). A convergence of views as to the relativity or non-universality of the liberal democratic model revived the spirit of Bandung between China and Africa.

The second factor concerns economic matters. China's phenomenal economic growth resulted in a mounting need for energy and raw materials to fuel the Chinese economy, and a subsequent need for markets in which to sell Chinese products. In the late 1990s, the Chinese government launched a strategy, which encouraged Chinese state-owned enterprises and privately owned companies to expand into foreign markets. Africa became a top destination for a number of these companies. In 2009, China became Africa's number one trading partner. From 2009 to 2011, the scale of Sino-African trade expanded rapidly. During this period the total volume of China-African trade reached US\$198.49 billion. Of this, US\$85.319 billion consisted of China's exports to Africa, up 16.7% from the previous year, while China's imports from Africa accounted for US\$113.171 billion, up by 21.4% (Information Office of the Chinese State Council, 2013). Natural resources accounted for the lion's share of Africa's exports to China, and huge Chinese demand has raised the price of these products, increasing overall GDP growth in Africa. In 2014, bilateral trade reached US\$221.88 billion, two percentage points higher than China's total foreign trade in the same period. Moreover, the export of mechanical and electronic products and high-tech products increased by 13% since 2013. The turnover from completed Chinese contract projects in Africa was US\$46 billion, up by 26% since 2013 (Chinese Ministry of Commerce, 2015). This has resulted in more kinds of exchanges (e.g., education, aid) and has encouraged more Chinese tourists to entertain the

possibility of exploring the African continent (Ministry of Tourism of South Africa, 2012). This paper will examine this phenomenon in the following sub-section.

Why Are More Chinese Tourists Visiting Africa Now?

Personal interests as well as institutional factors incorporating political and commercial interests are driving forces behind this increase. First, as China's economy rises, Chinese citizens can increasingly afford trips to other parts of the world. China is the world's current top spender in outbound tourism. According to estimates from the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in early 2015, China's expenditure in outbound tourism in 2014 was US\$165 billion, a 20% increase on 2013's expenditure (World Tourism Organization, 2014).

In 2014, cultural similarities, geographical proximity and hence lower travel costs continued to make Asia the most popular destination for Chinese tourists. The second most popular continent for Chinese tourists in 2014 was Europe. Africa surpassed America to take third spot in attracting most Chinese tourists in 2014 (Travel China Guide, 2014).

The appreciation of China's currency and the depreciation of some African currencies in recent years have made travelling to Africa more affordable for Chinese tourists (Edinger & Lu, 2013). Many middle-class Chinese travellers are likely to have visited Europe, America and Asia. Some start to search for destinations that are more "exotic" for their growing appetite. For the Chinese, being able to travel to exotic foreign places and having adventures is something that one can show off to family members, colleagues and friends. The burgeoning of various Chinese social media platforms fosters this culture (Hou & Wang, 2014). Africa is a continent with natural landscape and cultures that are starkly different from Asia, Europe and America. Countries such as Egypt, Kenya and South Africa offer novel experiences that have caught the attention of Chinese travel agencies. Kim, Guo and Argusa's 2005 survey found that Egypt is the third most attractive destination for Chinese tourists (after Germany and Australia) due to its rich history and culture. However, respondents to this survey also revealed that Egypt is their least preferred destination in terms of "good weather" and "safety".

Apart from the increasing capacity and interest of Chinese tourists to visit Africa, the rise of Chinese commercial activities in Africa has allowed the establishment of new flight routes, such as non-stop flights between Beijing and Johannesburg launched in January 2012 by South African Airways (SAA). This makes travelling to Africa much easier.

Institutional supports at various levels from both the Chinese government and African governments are also crucial. For instance, the FOCAC has encouraged closer tourism. Beijing has also granted more and more countries the Approved Destination Status (ADS), which is designed to encourage outbound Chinese tourism.

Chinese Outbound Tourism's Inherent Political Nature

Scholars in the discipline of tourist marketing and management (e.g. Tse, 2013; Arlt, 2013, Mak, 2013) have already recognized that China's granting of ADS is inherently a political decision, closely linked to China's strategic relations with a foreign country. Chinese citizens' overseas leisure trips are mostly guided by the ADS policy.

Outbound Tourism as a Political Tool

The ADS policy permits citizens to take overseas leisure trips on group package tours to countries that have negotiated an ADS agreement.² Beijing considers several criteria when giving the ADS to a foreign country (Kim, Guo & Argusa, 2005). Needless to say, the candidate country should have a good relationship with China politically. Benign political relations between states pave the way for cooperation.

In addition, several criteria gauge whether Chinese visitors can enjoy attractive tourist amenities, travel safely and freely without discrimination, and gain easy access to transportation. Finally, there are criteria to guarantee reciprocity, meaning that not only does the number of Chinese tourists to African countries increase, but the number of visitors from African countries to China should also increase (Kim, Guo & Argusa, 2005).

Despite the principle of reciprocity, China understands that it cannot attract equivalent numbers of tourists and obtain equivalent economic returns from less-developed countries. Table 1 gives us an overview of countries that have received the ADS throughout the years. Egypt was the first African country to be granted the ADS (in 2002). The latest African country to receive the ADS was Rwanda in 2013. Globally, China granted its most recent

² Between 1949 and 1982, few Chinese citizens travelled overseas except government officials, students and some businessmen. After 1990, leisure travel was finally approved as a legitimate reason for Chinese citizens to travel abroad. Since then, China takes an incremental approach in liberalizing overseas leisure travel. That entails negotiating agreements with different countries to permit Chinese tour groups to visit foreign destinations (Arita, La Croix, Mak, 2012: 3).

ADS to Ukraine in 2014, bringing the number of countries with ADS to 117. In total, 19 African countries have an ADS (Table 1).

Table 1: ADS Agreement by Year

Year	Recipients	Cumulative Numbers of Recipients
1983	Hong Kong, Macau	2
1988	Thailand	3
1990	Malaysia, Singapore	5
1992	Philippines	6
1998	South Korea	7
1999	Australia, New Zealand	9
2000	Brunei, Cambodia, Japan, Myanmar, Vietnam	14
2002	Egypt , Indonesia, Malta, Nepal, Turkey	19
2003	Croatia, Cuba, Germany, Hungary, India, Maldives, Pakistan, South Africa , Sri Lanka	28
2004	Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Ethiopia , Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kenya , Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mauritius , Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Seychelles , Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania , Tunisia , Zambia , Zimbabwe	63
2005	Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Brazil, Chile, Fiji, Jamaica, Lao PDR, Mexico, Northern Mariana Islands, Peru, Russia, United Kingdom, Vanuatu	76
2006	Bahamas, Grenada, Mongolia, Tonga	80
2007	Andorra, Argentina, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Uganda , Morocco , Monaco, Namibia , Venezuela, Oman, Syria	91
2008	French Polynesia, Israel, Taiwan, United States	95
2009	Cape Verde , Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ghana , Guyana, Mali , Montenegro, Papua New Guinea, United Arab Emirates	104
2010	Canada, Lebanon, Federated States of Micronesia, North Korea, Uzbekistan, Serbia	110
2011	Iran	111
2012	Madagascar , Columbia, Samoa, Cameroon	115
2013	Rwanda	116
2014	Ukraine	117

Source: Re-organized from China National Tourism Administration (<http://www.cnta.gov.cn/html/2009-5/2009-5-13-10-53-54953.html>)

Note: African countries are marked in bold.

It would be hard to imagine that a government would encourage its citizens to visit places like Rwanda and Ukraine and expect reciprocal returns. While elaborating on Beijing's logic to

sign each ADS agreement is beyond the scope of this paper, we aim to explain that outbound tourism to African countries is often used a tool for Beijing to exercise its soft-power diplomacy, as noted by Tony Tse (2013), a scholar of tourism studies.

Outbound Tourism as Soft Power Diplomacy

Soft power, according to Joseph S. Nye, occurs “when one country gets other countries to want what it wants” via “intangible power resources such as culture, ideology, and institutions” (Nye, 2005: 11). For Nye, soft power primarily relies on three resources: a country’s culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority). But combining these resources is not always easy (Nye, 2005). Nye has modified and enriched his definition of soft power several times in his intellectual journey, sometimes as a result of the criticisms and comments from other scholars. Among his critics, for example, is Todd Hall (2010). Hall is not satisfied with the pure effect of “attraction,” which Nye believes is the main mechanism for soft power to work. The effect of attraction might sound intuitive, but it is not empirically testable (Hall, 2010). There might be discrepancies between the soft power messages sent to the target audience and the target audience’s subjective understanding of the message. The question of how attraction can be translated into foreign policy outcomes is thus debatable (Ferguson, 2003).

The soft-power message that Beijing seeks to convey to African states is that China is a benevolent power that is willing to take care of weaker and smaller countries and form harmonious relations with others. In recent years, IR scholars such as Shih and Ying (2013) have argued that to understand the Chinese foreign policy, one has to recognize that pre-modern Confucianism and modern socialism have deep imprints on the Chinese perspective of international relations. While China may have successfully been socialized to become a nation-state and act like a nation-state, it still has a “civilizational” way of perceiving world order (Wang, 2008; Shih & Yin, 2013). Harmonious relations with other players are inherently important. This means that China does not wish to be seen as rising at the expense of others (Shih & Yin, 2013). It often unilaterally makes compromises, particularly vis-à-vis smaller players, to demonstrate its willingness to make sacrifices for the common good of the harmonious world (Ibid.). Previously, we noted that Chinese tourists bring more economic benefits to African countries than vice versa. This is one example in which Beijing shows that it makes sacrifices to help weaker counterparts. Apart from this, performing the role of a

donor, trade partner, counterhegemonic power and developing state vis-à-vis weaker African counterparts all serve such political purposes (Barr, 2011; Holyk, 2011; Kurlantzick, 2007; Huang & Sheng, 2006; Sheng, 2010; Paradise, 2009; Wang, 2008; Guo, 2007; Luo, 2012). These factors have all been highlighted as part of China's soft power, used without coercion to convince African counterparts of China's benign nature.

Politics dictate China's usage of outbound tourism to different African countries. The medium that allows Beijing to reach its political aim is not just economic but also cultural, as tourism essentially encourages the encountering of peoples from China and African countries. In this process, exchanges of cultures occur. In fact, since China's return to Africa in the mid-1990s, cultural exchange has become a factor in Sino-African relations. The head of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs' African Department, Counsellor Wang Shiting, stated that "Africa has always been a top priority of China's foreign policy agenda because there is not only the common interest but most importantly there is a shared emotional bondage between China and Africa that spans over centuries" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Liberia, 2011). Much cultural interchange occurs naturally, either through immigration or tourism between China and Africa.

Not all scholars and experts (Corkin, 2014; Toh, 2013), however, are optimistic about China's ability to improve its soft power and using it as a mean to achieve the harmonious world order to which China aspires. Nye and Wang (2009) outlined the need for China to develop a strategy with soft power at its core to counteract growing fears among its neighbours of China's growing economic and military might. Nye (2013) highlights that, despite China's intention to increase its soft power, the areas in which it has invested have not created soft power due to their actions in other areas of international affairs. Consider the Philippines: Nye (2013) stated that "establishing, say, a Confucius Institute in Manila to teach Chinese culture might help produce soft power, but it is less likely to do so in a context where China has just bullied the Philippines over possession of Scarborough Reef" (Nye, 2013). Despite Nye's comments on the development of Chinese soft power, there seems to be an overall increase in Chinese soft power on the global stage. Even Nye noted that Chinese soft power in Africa and Latin America is increasing (Ibid.).

He (2009:11) argues that it is only in Africa where soft power has had an impact. Many others, however, do not believe that Chinese soft power in Africa is so highly developed. Academics, such as Corkin (2014), claim that "China has a moderate amount of soft power in

Africa”. Some have gone further to state that China has no soft power in Africa, just economic power (Toh, 2013).

Our stance is in line with Li Mingjing (2009), who argues that whether a certain source of power becomes soft or hard depends on how one uses it. This is different from Nye’s (2005) resource-based soft power. Economic incentives, such as those provided by Chinese tourism to Africa, can be considered soft power. This is because those economic incentives are not used to coerce African counterparts. If economic tools are used to coerce, they will be considered hard power.

To maximize economic benefits for African countries, local tourist operators need to learn Chinese language and culture, as well as to understand Chinese preferences and behaviours (Kings, 2014). Part of this knowledge is accumulated via interaction with Chinese people and learning by doing.

While those economic and cultural activities do facilitate exchanges between peoples of China and African countries, how these can actually meet Beijing’s foreign policy aim is hard to measure. The effectiveness of such exchanges cannot be exaggerated either. For instance, the expectation that Chinese tourists will serve as “ambassadors for China” (Dynon, 2013) is more a beautiful slogan than reality. Chinese tourists in Africa generally come in groups on packaged tours. Their destinations and routes are normally fixed. They do not get to meet the locals who have no experience with China. Rather, they meet locals who have been more or less trained to meet their needs. Accordingly, the outreach of “Chinese ambassadors” is actually rather limited.

Furthermore, cultural encounters are not always peaceful. Misunderstandings and cultural clashes can damage the relationships between peoples and create unpleasant impressions of one another. Again, how such individual-level and cultural-level of exchanges can affect state-level relations is unclear and difficult to measure. There is great ambiguity in evaluating the soft-power influence of China’s outbound tourism to Africa. We do not think we can offer a comprehensive measurement. What we attempt to do in the following is only to examine how African countries respond to the idea of attracting Chinese tourists to Africa. After all, China cannot unilaterally wield its influence. African countries need to make sense of China’s rise and intention and to decipher what China’s move implies for one’s relationship with China (Shih, 2013). This understanding is eventually linked to each African state’s self-understanding, interest and capability to interact with China.

An Examination of African Countries' Efforts to Attract Chinese Tourists

African countries have different levels of capability to lure Chinese tourists (Fu, Xue & Deng, 2014). Here we draw from existing global indicators, the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI) created by the World Economic Forum every two years. The TTCI is generated on the basis of a number of indicators, ranging from a country's general environment (e.g., business environment, safety and security, health and hygiene, human resources and labor market, availability of information, and communication technologies), to travel and tourism enabling conditions (e.g., prioritization of travel and tourism, international openness, price competitiveness, environmental sustainability), to infrastructure (e.g., air transport infrastructure, ground and port infrastructure, tourist service infrastructure), to natural and cultural resources.

According to the TTCI, Europe as a region normally fares much better than other regions of the world in terms of competitiveness in travel and tourism. Africa, by contrast, often fares worse in terms of global competitiveness. Although Africa has much to offer in terms of its nature and cultural heritage, the continent as a whole has much to improve with regard to its infrastructure, safety, health and hygienic conditions to attract tourists from other continents (Blanke & Chiesa, 2013: xxv-xxvii).

Table 2 compares African countries' performance in the 2013 and 2015 TTCI reports.³ South Africa, Seychelles, Mauritius and Morocco are the top four African countries, although the order of ranking varies in both years. These four countries also have received China's ADS. South Africa has the best TTCI in the African region, but its global ranking is actually only 48 out of 141 countries in the latest (2015) report. Egypt, Cape Verde, Namibia, Botswana and Kenya feature among the top 10 African nations in both the 2013 and 2015 reports. Gambia was ranked 8th in the 2013 Index but fell to the 15th in the 2015 Index. Tunisia, not surveyed in the 2013 report, was ranked 7th in Africa in the 2015 report.

³ The measures for TTCI are not exactly the same in 2013 and 2015. The coverage of countries being analyzed in 2013 and 2015 are not exactly the same either due to absence of data. For detailed information of the research data and methodology, please consult the World Economic Forum's reports directly.

Table 2: Africa's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Indexes 2013 and 2015

Country	2015 Index		2013 Index	
	Regional Rank	Global Rank	Regional Rank	Global Rank
Seychelles*	2	54	1	38
Mauritius*	3	56	2	58
South Africa*	1	48	3	64
Morocco*	4	62	4	71
Tunisia*	7	79	No data	
Egypt*	8	83	5	85
Cape Verde*	9	86	6	87
Namibia*	5	70	7	91
Gambia	15	109	8	92
Botswana	10	88	9	94
Kenya*	6	78	10	96
Rwanda*	12	98	11	105
Senegal	16	112	12	107
Zambia*	13	107	13	108
Tanzania*	11	93	14	109
Uganda	17	114	15	116
Ghana*	21	120	16	117
Gabon	25	124	No data	
Zimbabwe*	18	115	17	118
Swaziland	14	108	18	119
Ethiopia*	20	118	19	120
Cameroon*	23	122	20	121
Malawi	26	126	21	124
Mozambique	29	130	22	125
Ivory Coast	19	117	23	126
Nigeria	30	131	24	127
Burkina Faso	No data		25	128
Mali*	27	128	26	128
Benin	No data		27	130
Madagascar*	22	121	28	131
Algeria	24	123	29	132
Mauritania	33	137	30	134
Angola	34	139	No data	
Lesotho	28	129	31	135
Guinea	35	140	32	136
Sierra Leone	31	132	33	137
Burundi	32	135	34	138
Chad	36	141	35	139

Sources: Re-organized from Blanke & Chiesa (2013) and Crotti & Misrahi (2015).

Note 1: Top ten countries in each category of measurement are marked in bold.

Note 2: * means a country has received China's ADS.

African Responses

If China's soft power is really working, this should be evident from both governmental and non-governmental African actors (An, 1998). These actors should accept the importance of increasing Chinese outbound tourism to Africa and prioritize it in their policies. In other words, the target audience of China's soft power, such as governmental and non-governmental agents from African countries, start to feel that they are stakeholders of the issue of promoting Chinese visits to Africa. What we are examining here can be considered as the representational side of soft power, which Hall (2010: 210) defined as the ability of a state to "frame issues, advance their own interpretations, and consciously seek to shape the beliefs of others" (Hall, 2010: 210). Representational power can overlap with reputational power, defined as the manner in which reputations of a state can make it influential in some specific issues (Ibid.: 209). On the issue of Chinese outbound tourism to Africa, China's reputation as a top spender in the world makes many countries interested in tapping into the Chinese tourist market. The representational soft power of China, however, can be explored by examining whether African governments would prioritize attracting Chinese tourists in policies.

Our finding shows that while some African countries have formal or informal policies towards promoting tourism, not all of them have considered attracting Chinese tourists as a policy objective. This, however, does not mean that private or commercial actors in these countries are not interested in luring Chinese visitors.

Tanzania, for instance, has had a National Tourism Policy in place since 1991. Nevertheless, the document mentions nothing about China (Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism of Tanzania, 1999). Mauritius has a document that discusses how to position and brand Mauritius in the world in general, covering issues including trade, investment and tourists. China is identified as an important trade partner (Government of Mauritius, 2015). However, nothing related to attracting Chinese tourists is specified in the governmental document. It is worth noting, though, that private actors such as Lux Hotel Group has strategically tapped into the Chinese market to compensate for the declines of European visitors to Mauritius after the global financial crisis in 2008 (Kromberg, 2014).

The most active African government in luring Chinese visitors appears to be South Africa. In fact, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Morocco are the only four African countries that have set up promotion agencies in China (Ibid.). Among these four countries, South Africa was the first to be awarded the ADS in 2003. China is identified by the South African tourism policy as one of the target markets due to the growth of China's middle class, whose

members might be able to afford travel to South Africa. In 2011, the opening of two new visa applications in China and the South African travel promotion campaign targeting China further boosted the number of Chinese tourists (Shankman & Ali, 2013).

One year after South Africa received the ADS, Zimbabwe followed suit. In the absence of foreign direct investment, tourism has been identified by the government of Zimbabwe as one of the areas in which it can generate much needed foreign currency. Also, in the face of Western-backed economic sanctions targeting President Robert Mugabe, the Zimbabwean government adopted a Look East Policy under which it seeks to boost its economy by engaging with Asian countries.⁴

The Victoria Falls is one of Zimbabwe's prime attractions. Some Chinese believe that the famous waterfalls are in South Africa, however, due to strong marketing by the South Africans.⁵ According to the statistics available (Shankman & Ali, 2013), Zimbabwe received around 30,000 Chinese tourists in 2011, more than three times the 2007 figure. In 2015, Zimbabwe is expecting 50,000 Chinese arrivals. Zimbabwe's tourism bureau has a Chinese-language website that provides information about travelling in the country.⁶ Despite reports about plans for a new online visa application system and Air Zimbabwe's offer of flights between China and Zimbabwe (Wang & Yuan, 2006; Xinhua News, 2013), these are not in place currently in 2015. At one stage, Air Zimbabwe did launch direct flights between Harare and Beijing, but they came to a halt due to operational challenges.⁷

Both Namibia and Morocco received the ADS in 2007. Since then, the Namibia Tourism Board has been active in luring Chinese tourists. Namibia participated in the 2009 Chinese International Travel Mart, the largest professional travel mart in Asia, as well as the 2010 Shanghai Expo Mart to try to raise the country's visibility (Chinese Website of Namibia Tourism Board, 2009). Morocco is the only country among the four that does not have a Chinese website to provide tourism information. Morocco planned to ease visa applications and to offer direct flights by Royal Air Maroc. However, like Zimbabwe's plans, Morocco's plans did not come to fruition in 2014 (Kromberg, 2014). Overall, South Africa appears to be

⁴ Interview with Tichaona Chifamba, news director of Xinhua News Agency Zimbabwe on July 30, 2015.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Please see Chinese Website of Zimbabwe's Tourism Bureau, <http://zimbabwetourism.cn>.

⁷ Interview with Tichaona Chifamba, news director of Xinhua News Agency Zimbabwe on July 30, 2015.

the most receptive country that is willing to and capable of promoting Chinese outbound tourism. In the following section, we look further into the case of South Africa.

The Case of South Africa

The South African government recognizes tourism's significance for fuelling economic growth. After South Africa obtained the ADS in 2003, however, arrivals from China to South Africa did not increase. In 2010, the South African Tourism China Office was set up.⁸ The role of the China office is to conduct research on the Chinese market and to guide Chinese travel agencies to develop new and high-quality products and itineraries to satisfy the varied needs of Chinese consumers.

Since the China office came into being, Chinese visitations to South Africa grew with momentum. In 2012, China has become the 4th-largest overseas source market for South Africa. In 2013, Chinese arrivals, including those from Hong Kong, to South Africa reached 151,847, representing a 14.7% increase over 2012. In 2014, China also became a core market for South Africa along with the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany and India.

Among the four African countries with a China office, South Africa's China office documents its marketing strategy most closely (South African Tourism, 2010). It has identified special "segments" of the Chinese population that it believes are most likely to visit South Africa. The China office provided us with a summarized statement during our research in 2015. The document clearly differentiates between short-term and medium-to-long-term targets. Short-term targets are jetsetters and worldly travellers with the highest probability to visit South Africa in the near future. Medium-to-long-term targets are middle-aged travellers who would normally travel with a spouse and children to exotic places.⁹

In cooperation with public relations companies in China, the China office has held a number of activities, not directed towards individual consumers, but towards travel agencies and their agents instead. Targeting travel agents is understandable, as most outbound tourism

⁸ South African Tourism also has offices in cities such as Amsterdam, Mumbai, Sydney, Frankfurt, London, and New York.

⁹ In the medium-to-long term, South African Tourism China Office also intends to reach out to Hong Kong, Macau as well as neighboring countries such as Japan and South Korea. The idea is to use China as a hub to extend the market. From an operational point of view, the strategy plan for China can serve as a benchmark for these neighboring markets, although there is still a need to tailor to the different conditions (e.g., cultural nuances) of neighboring countries.

conducted by Chinese visitors is through approved travel agents. Travel agents can serve as vehicles to disseminate information to interested travellers.

For instance, in 2012, a South African Travel Experts Competition was held in Beijing. In the first phase, travel agents took training courses, and after a test, they were granted the title of an “expert”. In the second phase, travel agents designed travel itineraries for visiting South Africa.

As China has the largest online population in the world, and Chinese consumers heavily use the Internet when making travelling decisions (South African Tourism, 2010), the China office also held a contest on Weibo, a popular Chinese microblogging platform that enables travel agents to compete in promoting vacations to South Africa. The winning agents were awarded with free visits to South Africa (Luo & Lu, 2009: 202).

Apart from direct promotion in China, at the state level, both governments also tactically designated 2014 as “the Year of South Africa in China” and 2015 as “the Year of China in South Africa”. This strategy is used to increase the communications and exchanges between China and South Africa. As the bilateral relationships in the aspects of politics, economics, art and culture are enhanced, it is expected that a heightened level of tourism, trade flow and investments between the two countries will be achieved.

Challenges for African Countries

While throughout the years there were efforts from both the South African and the Chinese governments to make visa application easier and more convenient, the new South African visa policy that came into place in 2015 is actually going to offset the efforts exerted before. The new visa policy is more stringent and imposes stricter immigration laws. This will negatively affect South Africa’s travel and tourism competitiveness. The changing of institutions and policies at the governmental level, which might not intentionally aim to harm tourism, does have negative impacts on the attraction of foreign visits to South Africa. In fact, South Africa is not alone. Zimbabwe and Morocco, as previously noted, have also failed to ease visa application.

The inherent instability of most African countries in terms of safety and health conditions is detrimental to South Africa’s as well as other African countries’ efforts to attract Chinese visits. The Ebola outbreak, although it did not occur in all African countries, has tarnished the positive image of Africa that some tourism promotional campaigns seek to establish (Imminews247, 2015). The same is true for the terrorist attacks in Kenya and in Mali.

Negative reputations in the international community are detrimental for African countries politically and economically. Sustainable tourist destinations are hard to maintain in Africa. These macro-structural challenges are hindrances to attracting Chinese visitors.

Conclusion

Compared with scholars of tourism studies, IR scholars are relatively slow in exploring the linkage between Chinese tourism, foreign policy and soft-power diplomacy. In this paper, we have argued that the Chinese government uses outbound tourism to perform its perceived relationship with African countries; that is, Beijing aspires to be seen as a benign rising power that is willing to help weaker countries develop and establish harmonious ties. It is hard to separate the economic and cultural functions of outbound tourism, both of which reinforce each other, although not without limits. While we did not explore China's hard power in Africa, the reality is that soft power, as much as the hard power of economic exploitation and military build-up, has enabled China to extend its global influence.

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Resource Curse and China's Infrastructure for Resources Model: Case Study of Angola

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Abstract: Resource-rich Sub-Saharan countries have found themselves trapped in the so-called resource curse. The importance of the aforementioned countries both as sources of natural resources and as consumer markets has been recognized by major world powers. It is rational to assume that the world power that manages to assist Sub-Saharan countries in dealing with the aforementioned curse will be given a preferential treatment in their future economic interaction. Thus finding an instrument that can deal with the resource curse has become of large importance. One of the major powers that has been present in Africa for a long time is China; which has recognized this opportunity and thus enhanced its engagement in the Sub-Saharan region, primarily through the Infrastructure for Resources model. This model enables developing countries to expand their infrastructure by relying on their resource wealth. Thus, it partially subdues the resource curse, which is empirically verified through a case study on its implementation in Angola. It is important to note that there is no consensus among scholars regarding the nature of China's involvement in Africa. However, this research avoids ideological debates, and focuses solely on the efficiency of the model in dealing with the resource curse.

Keywords: Infrastructure for resources, oil for Infrastructure, resources for loans, resource curse, tied loans

Introduction

It is a widely held view that the majority of resource-rich countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Angola, the Sudan, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and others) have been trapped in the so called resource curse, which has hindered their development.¹ Thus, it is unsurprising that many authors, such as Mabikke (2012), Kelley (2012), Cheru (2013), Kennan (2009), have recognized the importance of finding a way to subdue it. In fact, now there is an extensive amount of literature available on the causes and consequences of the resource curse, and this research does build upon that foundation.² However, only a small share of the literature makes the connection between Chinese presence and the resource curse in Africa, while none focuses specifically on the role of China's Infrastructure for Resources model. The authors that did draw a connection between China and the resource curse in Sub-

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¹ See: Mailey (2015) and McKay (2012).

² See: Ross (1999), Kelley, (2012), Auty (2002) and Kennan (2009).

Saharan Africa came to negative conclusions. For example, Kelley dealt with the increase in Chinese investment in African infrastructure, and concluded that it “has the potential to exacerbate the misgovernance aspect of the resource curse” (Kelley, 2012: 39). Furthermore, Meyersson, Padró and Qian highlighted how exporting to China does benefit economic growth, but with regard to human rights their results “show that exporting natural resource to China has an adverse effect” (Meyersson, Miquel and Qian, 2008: 4). Kennan put forward that, in Angola, China’s involvement allowed the government to evade implementing the IMF required reforms, which he claims would have improved Angola’s governance and thus helped it deal with the resource curse (Kennan, 2009).

In fact, the majority of researchers have taken a skeptical approach towards China’s involvement while the stance that resources are the primary reason for China’s growing involvement in Africa has become almost unanimous (Butts and Bankus, 2009; Cheru, 2013). As Cheru correctly pointed out, African countries are encountering considerable obstacles, but also opportunities, owing to the worldwide increase in demand for natural resource (Cheru, 2013). A divergence in opinion is noticeable between Western and African researchers, with African researchers portraying this involvement in more positive terms.³ This is unsurprising when bearing in mind the fact that the local population holds correspondingly positive views (Egbula and Zheng, 2011). On the other hand, authors such as Hughes Butts and Bankus are more cautious towards this interaction and highlight the potential damage that China’s actions might have on the democratic development of African countries (Butts and Bankus, 2009). Egbula and Zheng also share this view (Egbula and Zheng, 2011).

Rather than add to the amount of research done on the nature of China’s involvement, and its side-effects, this research will focus on a specific characteristic of the Infrastructure for Resources model. More precisely, this research claims that the Infrastructure for Resources model can partially subdue the resource curse, and thereby remove one of the main obstacles to the development of resource-rich African countries. This research utilizes an empiricist/positivist approach, and as stated in the rational choice theory, presupposes that both parties act solely on the basis of their own rational interests. The first half of the paper, which presents the key characteristics of the model and of the resource curse, is based on qualitative data, while the latter part utilizes a quantitative analysis of data in order to, through

³ For examples of African researchers that present a favorable view of Chinese involvement see: Mthembu-Salter (2009), Umejei (2013) and Adekola (2013).

the Angola case study, to empirically verify the main hypothesis. This research will not delve into the obstacles to its implementation nor its implications for the political development of countries. The motivation for this research stems from the aforementioned lack of such an analysis of the Infrastructure for Resources model, which has become an integral part of China's contemporary economic interaction with African countries.

Historical Background

Two key factors, China's domestic experience with a specific type of Japanese economic involvement, and the inefficient Western developmental assistance policies in Africa, were behind China's decision to reformulate its economic policy towards Africa. In 1973, concerned about its energy security in the wake of the first oil price crisis, Japan decided to branch out its supply sources by importing oil from China, thus becoming the first country to move into the Chinese market. Few years later, oil represented almost half of Japanese imports from China. A step further was made in 1978, when China and Japan agreed upon a long term trade agreement. The trade agreement was based on Japan providing China with low interest loans as a way for China to finance technology imports from Japan, while China was to subsequently repay these loans by exporting oil and coal of a corresponding value (Brautigam, 2009). It was said that "the construction of an oilfield will be paid for with oil, construction of a coal mine will be paid for with coal, and construction of a factory will be paid for with the products of the factory" (Brautigam, 2009: 49). Japan's initial loans were used to build infrastructure for facilitating the export of raw materials to Japan. More precisely, China used the loans to expand its transport and export capacity. Subsequently, Japanese companies thrived while China's infrastructure expanded to facilitate the growth of its economy (Brautigam, 2009).

China has drawn from the aforementioned experience in shaping the Infrastructure for Resources model. However, it was the lagging development of African countries and the policies being implemented by international institutions and Western countries that created the grounds for the implementation of the model. In the 1970s, Africa's industrial growth started to slow down. During this period, structural adjustment programs that came in tandem with demands for market liberalization and privatization were the most common instruments of economic assistance, even though their effectiveness was increasingly being questioned (Brautigam, 2009). Thus, some researchers hold the World Bank and IMF's structural

adjustment policies responsible for such a development.⁴ The situation was especially precarious in Sub-Saharan countries, whose economies were negatively influenced by a mixture of vast debt, austerity measures and the aforementioned structural adjustment policies demanded by international financial institutions in exchange for access to loans (Ibid.). Furthermore, inadequate funding for infrastructural development has been restraining the pace of African economic development (Africa Finance Corporation, 2015; Deloitte, 2014; Mbaku, 2013).

By the late 1980s, World Bank loans came with around sixty various conditions (Kelley, 2012). These conditions included economic and/or governance reforms, which unsurprisingly made it unpopular among African leaders (Brautigam, 2009). One Ugandan government employee specified: “The fact that a country gives you aid makes them think they have a license to tell you how to run your affairs. These conditions are probably well-intentioned, but they are humiliating” (Ibid.: 149). Nowadays, many economists are questioning the effect that conditions attached to aid had during the previous decades.⁵ Jeffrey Sachs, a proponent of providing assistance to Africa, stated that: “The idea that aid should be heavily conditioned with political conditions was a mistake. The best way to end conflict is to end poverty” (Reuters, 2006). Even before the onset of the global financial crisis, the World Banks’ projects in Sub-Saharan Africa had a realization rate smaller than 50 % (Brautigam, 2009: 230).

If we focus our attention only on resource-rich Sub-Saharan countries, which were among those receiving aid, then we can argue that the reason why such resource-rich countries required economic assistance from the international community is due to them being trapped in the so-called resource curse. Otherwise, such countries, due to their resource wealth, were supposed to be in no need of assistance.⁶

The Resource Curse

In fact, through time we have been able to spot patterns highlighting how resource-rich countries with lacking democratic institutions, have trouble translating resources into development (Kennan, 2009). Such countries tend to do a poor job of building efficient state

⁴ See: Stone (2004), Woods (2008), Kanbur (2000) and Havnevik (1987).

⁵ See: Mbaku (2013), Bovard, (1986) , Prokopijevic (2007); for an overview of the academic debate see Andrews (2009).

⁶ See: DRC, the Sudan, Nigeria and others.

institutions. This is because governments that gain most of their revenues from the export of natural resources are freed from the pressure of taxing their citizens. Furthermore, such countries are vulnerable to civil wars since political parties (also called elites) in such countries build loyal political networks through the distribution of patronages. More specifically, the political parties will use bureaucracies as instruments for patronage, and will try to make them as big as possible. Such a situation has been termed the resource curse (Ibid.).

A short-sighted emphasis on the extraction of natural resources as an instrument of economic development is an enticing option for many resource-rich African countries. However, it is an approach that might endanger their long-term growth (Cheru, 2013). For decades, such countries have experienced various negative side effects of their reliance on exports of natural resources; these effects were later jointly termed the resource curse (Kelley, 2012). The widespread view among the researchers is that without the simultaneous growth of the manufacturing sector such countries can find themselves unable to evade the resource curse (Ibid.).

The resource curse includes three main aspects: 1) Dutch disease⁷, 2) vulnerability due to commodity dependence, 3) and adverse effects on the governance of the country (Ibid.). According to the so-called Dutch disease, income from the export of natural resources drives a country's currency to appreciate, resulting in its exports becoming uncompetitive (Condon, 2012). The subsequent higher price of the products decreases international demand and thus the domestic manufacturing sector gradually decreases. Therefore, the inability to produce competitive manufacturing exports prevents such countries from attaining a sustainable long term economic development (Kelley, 2012). Furthermore, the inability to create a stable economic growth is closely related to the vulnerability of resource-reliant economies to the oscillations of prices on the global market (Ibid.).

In addition, because the government of a resource-rich country does not have to tax its citizens, they are not as likely to ponder over how and on what the government budget is used (Kelley, 2012). Thus, such large resource revenue can also interfere with the governance of a country (Condon, 2012). Some would say that "the heart of the resource curse is that resource

⁷ Termed after the negative influence that the extraction of gas had on the Dutch economy in the 1960s.

rents make democracy malfunction.” (Kelley, 2012: 37). More specifically, corruption and bad governance are the consequence of patronage politics, which come into play due to the aforementioned revenue from resource exports. In addition, the more a country is fragmented with different ethnicities, the larger the influence of patronage politics; this is the reason why Africa is plagued by widespread corruption. Together, patronage politics and ethnic division enable political parties to use the resource revenues for gathering political support (Kelley, 2012).

Western developmental approaches have been unable to efficiently tackle these issues, and therefore have been unintentionally hindering African development (Kelley, 2009) However, China has recognized the importance of utilizing an economic approach that would subdue the resource curse. In the next part of the research we shall examine how China managed to develop an economic model that can subdue the resource curse and thereby immensely help these resource-rich developing countries.

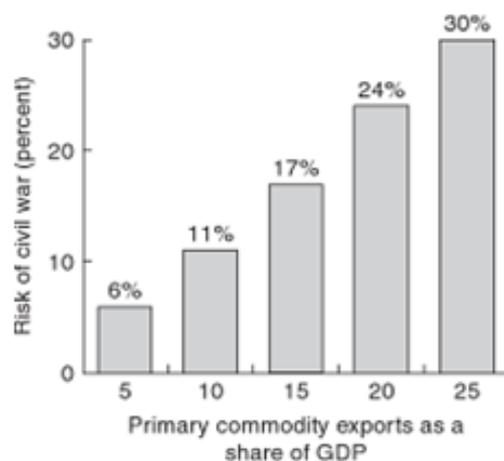


Figure 1: Causality between Resource wealth and Conflict.⁸ This figure highlights the resource curse that threatens resource-rich developing countries. It does so by linking overreliance on resource exports with the potential for internal conflict; the bigger the share of resource based exports in the overall export volume, the higher the chance of internal conflict.

⁸ Source: World Bank, Angola: Oil, Broad-based Growth, and Equity (World Bank Country Study, Washington DC, 2007), p. XXXVII.

The Infrastructure for Resources Model

The Chinese government noticed that Western countries and institutions were moving funding away from infrastructure in Africa (Brautigam, 2009). Seeing an opportunity for a different approach, China started using resource-backed loans as a practical instrument for diversifying its supply of natural resources (Butts and Bankus, 2009). Thus, it would provide economic assistance while simultaneously gaining long term access to sources of natural resources (Brautigam, 2009). The primary motivation behind the creation of this model was that economic growth was overtaking China's natural resources production, and thus in 1993 China turned into a net importer of oil (Alden, 2009). This was the starting point of the Infrastructure for Resources model.

The Infrastructure for Resources model is a framework in which the repayment of the loans utilized for infrastructure projects is done through natural resources (OECD, 2011). This deal was innovative since, for the first time, it seemed like African countries' resource-wealth could be directly converted into development projects. Therefore, the contemporary China-Africa relationship highlights an era in which countries have an additional option for financing their development. The fact is that African countries need to extend their infrastructure and that China is fulfilling this demand. These countries are incapable of attracting enough donor aid and nobody else is willing to provide funding for infrastructural development (Brautigam, 2009). Ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone Alhaji Momodu Koroma elaborated on the difference between China and other donors by stating: "There is a difference, and it is huge. What they want to help you with is what you have identified as your need. With Britain, America, they identify your needs" (Ibid.: 140).

However, to consider infrastructure as a sort of prerequisite for economic development is not a novel approach. The "Four Modernizations" that China embarked on in the 1970s put an emphasis on infrastructural development (Ibid.). Infrastructural development is a key feature of China's economic engagement with Africa, just as it was for other actors, like the World Bank. Between 1946 and 1961, 75% of World Bank loans were given for infrastructural projects, but the focus was shifted to other areas prior to the independence of most of the African states (Ibid.).

Since then, China has experimented with various approaches, and its Infrastructure for Resources model revolves around implementing successful experiments (Ibid.). Thus, while

the West has shifted its efforts from infrastructure to distributing food and medical assistance, Chinese engagement remains focused on extending the infrastructure (Ibid.).

China's decision to enhance its interaction with Africa is based on the pragmatism of the Infrastructure for Resources model, which envisages developing countries using their natural resources as a foundation for their development, in the same way as China did previously. More precisely, the model shows African countries how to develop by using natural resources as collateral in loans aimed at infrastructural construction (Tapula, 2013). Such an approach allows partaking African countries to avoid spending their limited foreign exchange reserves for infrastructural development (Brautigam, 2009). The reason why the model emphasizes infrastructure is in order to decrease the local production costs, and subsequently boost the local production and the need for Chinese manufacturing equipment (Ibid.). China is also assisting African countries in extending their energy infrastructure, thus reducing electricity shortages that were once hindering their economic growth (Information Office of the State Council, 2013; World Bank, 2004).

Today, resource-backed loans are a key instrument in the increasing Chinese interaction with Africa. This is because they form the Infrastructure for Resources model. Such loans use natural resources as collateral for the construction of infrastructure (Brautigam, 2009). In fact, through the Infrastructure for Resources model, the Chinese government can use the same funds twice. First, China can use the funds to import resources, and second, to reimburse Chinese companies for the infrastructure that they constructed overseas (Ibid.). Furthermore, as mentioned before, the loan is used both to pay the companies and as payment for resources (Corkin, 2011). Thus, it is used twice by the Chinese government while never leaving its full control. Furthermore, it is also considered a tied loan because involved companies (usually constructor companies) are generally Chinese ones, and have to use Chinese goods (Brautigam, 2009).

Hence, it is understandable why the Infrastructure for Resources model requires careful coordination between the various participants. In addition to the two governments, a Chinese company is utilized for building the infrastructure, and another one is required for extracting the resources (see Figure 2). Furthermore, the resource backed loans are dispensed through Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs), the main one being the Export-Import Bank (EXIM

Bank). EXIM Bank is one of China's three policy banks, and by 2007 it had developed into the World's biggest export credit agency (Ibid).

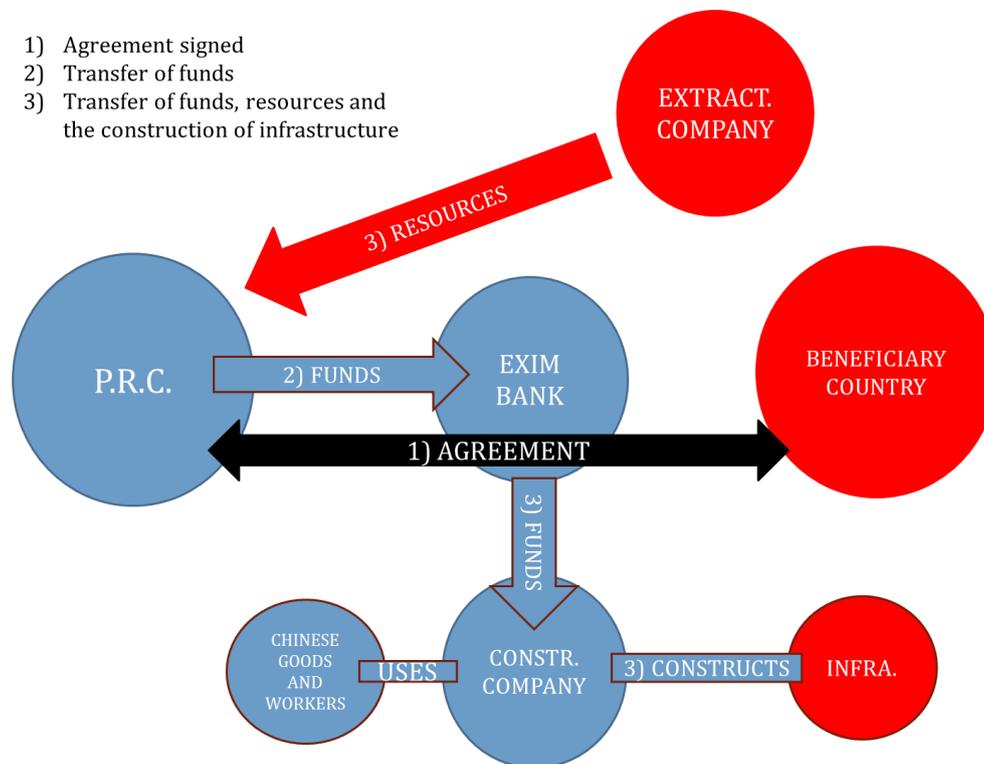


Figure 2: Framework of the Infrastructure for Resources Model⁹.

As per the terms of the Infrastructure for Resources model, Chinese companies carry out infrastructural projects and are reimbursed by the EXIM Bank, which deducts the construction expenses from the value of resources that African countries transfer to the Chinese government (Tan-Mullins, Mohan and Power, 2010). Therefore, instead of transferring the loan funds to the African governments, the funds are transferred directly to the companies undertaking the construction work (Corkin, 2011). Thereby, the Infrastructure for Resources model reduces the chance of corruption occurring, which in turn helps to subdue the resource curse (Tan-Mullins, Mohan and Power, 2010). These payments by the EXIM bank are guaranteed by, and based on, the resource backed loans (OECD, 2011).

According to the terms of the aforementioned resource backed loans, 30% of the contracted companies have to be domestic ones, and thus Chinese construction companies have become

⁹ Made by the author.

comprehensively involved in the on-going projects (Campos and Vines, 2007). This was incorrectly recounted as being inherent to the Infrastructure for Resources model; actually, the guarantee of a 30% involvement for local companies was the condition that Angola had included into the agreement (Brautigam, 2009). Even though such an arrangement sounds good, it also has a drawback. The aforementioned 30% guarantee leads to subcontracting, which implies that when a company wins a contract, it then contracts another smaller company to do the job instead, but for a smaller fee than it received. In Angola, Angolan companies that receive the contracts due to the 30% clause, subcontract them to Chinese companies that can do the same job more efficiently, and less costly (Ibid.). Other important aspects of the model are that three Chinese companies bid for each project. The aforementioned Chinese construction companies are selected by EXIM Bank and the Chinese Ministry of Commerce and are later approved by the African government (Thompson, 2012). The price of the resources that back the loan is not determined up-front, but calculated at the market price on the day it is sold (Brautigam, 2009). Furthermore, loans that form this model are tied, and this model shows how China has learned how to assist foreign countries while also fulfilling its own rational national interests. Loans that are tied to products and services which originate from the benefactor country have a lot of critics, and for objective reasons (Ibid.). Tied loans ensure that recipient countries have to spend them on goods and services from the benefactor country. One research argues that tying loans reduces their efficiency from 15 to 30% (Kegley and Blanton, 2014). If the benefactor country is a highly-developed country then its products have a comparatively high cost, thus reducing the real value of the loan (Brautigam, 2009).

The Model and the Resource Curse

As stated previously, there are three main characteristics of the resource curse. This section will present the effect of the model, from a theoretical standpoint, on the aforementioned aspects of the resource curse.

Theoretical effect of the model on the resource curse:

1. Dutch disease – Positive effect

The model would not lead to inflation, since the funds are not to be transferred to the recipient country; rather the funds are to be used to reimburse the companies constructing the

infrastructure. Furthermore, by expanding the infrastructure the model is to create the foundation for the expansion of the manufacturing sector.

2. Vulnerability due to commodity dependence – No effect

Resource-rich countries would still be vulnerable to the change in prices of commodities due to the fact that the price of the resources that back the loans would not be determined up-front, but rather it would be calculated at the market price on the day that they are sold (Brautigam, 2009; Economy and Levi, 2014).

3. Adverse effects on the governance of the country – Positive effect

Having a loan administered by the lender can ensure that it is not used for other purposes (Brautigam, 2009). This model does not function in the same manner as loans from the IMF or the World Bank, which are transferred directly into the government's account, from where they can be misused. Revenues from sales of natural resources at the international markets are vulnerable to the same risks (Ibid.). In the case of Chinese resource-backed loans, the funds are never physically transferred to the African governments. Thus, by keeping the funds in China, the chance that any misuse of funds would transpire is reduced. Furthermore, this aspect of the model would also help African leaders endure patronage pressures coming from their populations, because the funds would stay in China for the duration of the project, preventing them from being used for other purposes.

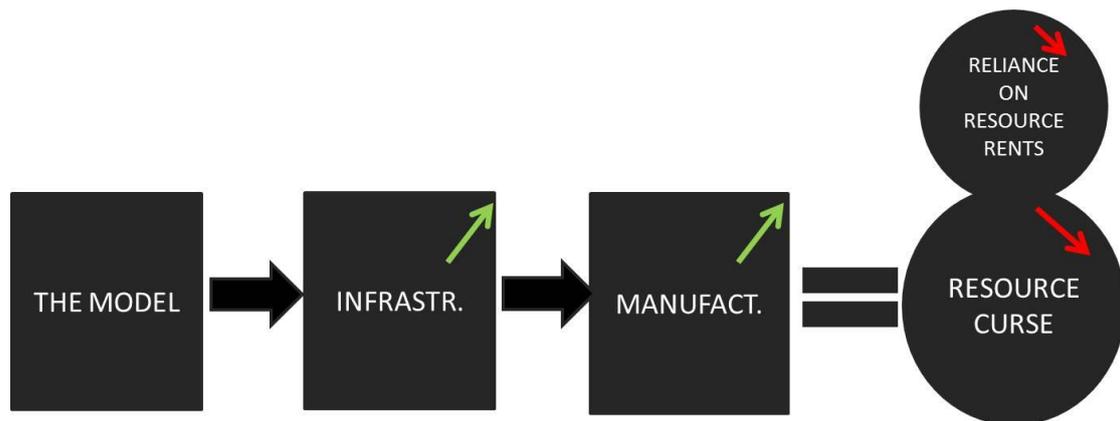


Figure 3: The Ideal Outcome of the Infrastructure for Resources Model¹⁰. The implementation of the Infrastructure for Resources model leads to the expansion of the infrastructure in the recipient country. Since infrastructure is a prerequisite for manufacturing activity, it eventually leads to a growth of the manufacturing sector. Thus, a resource-rich country becomes less dependent on the resource rents, and enjoys a more diversified economy. Overall, the resource curse loses its grip on a resource-rich, developing country.

Angola Case Study

A case study on Angola will be utilized to empirically verify the previous claims about the Infrastructure for Resources model and its effect on the resource curse. Angola is a resource-rich developing country, exactly the type of a country that is most often trapped by the resource curse. More precisely, for the Angolan economy oil is of utmost importance. According to the African Development Bank, oil production and supporting activities are responsible for 38% of GDP, 98% of exports, and almost 80% of government income in 2012 (African Development Bank, 2012). Another characteristic of countries trapped in the resource curse is instability and civil conflict, in fact, Angola experienced one of the longest civil wars in Africa (Newitt, 2000). A key player since the end of this 25-year long civil war has been China, which has been instrumental in the reconstruction of Angola (Stead and Rorison, 2010). This relationship has become so important that, since 2004, the Infrastructure for Resources model has also become known as the “Angola model” (OECD, 2011).

Effect of the model on the resource curse in Angola:

1. Dutch disease – Positive effect

¹⁰ Made by the author.

Angola has been experiencing inflation, but the model itself did not lead to inflation neither did it inhibit local production; rather, by expanding the infrastructure it is creating the prerequisite for attracting FDI and increasing local manufacturing (see Table 2). In fact, Angola's manufacturing sector experienced the fastest growth in Africa in the period from 2005 till 2013, expanding on average by 18.3% (KPMG, 2015). This data carries substantial weight if we have in mind that the model is being implemented since 2004. Furthermore, electricity production is constantly increasing, highlighting the infrastructural expansion in the field of energy (see Table 2).

Indicators	Year							
	2004	2006	2007	2008	2010	2012	2013	2014
Electricity Generation ¹¹	2.1	3.2	3.1	4	5.3	5.4	-	-
GDP From Manufacturing ¹²	-	-	241	303	464	726	-	-
% Inflation of Consumer Prices ¹³	43	13	12	12	14	10	8	7

Table 2: Angola: Dutch Disease Related Indicators. The indicators highlight an increase in electricity production, an expansion of the manufacturing sector and a relatively constant inflation rate.

2. Vulnerability due to commodity dependence – Slightly positive effect

In 2011, the Angolan Trade Minister stated that Angola's foremost challenge and task is diversification of its economy beyond oil (People's daily, 2011). Nevertheless, Angola is still vulnerable to the volatility of oil prices, due to the fact that, as a part of this model, the price of resources that back the loan is not determined up-front, but calculated at the market price on the day it is sold (Brautigam, 2009). Thus, it is not surprising that the falling oil prices have led to a slowdown of the economic growth (Muzima and Mendy, 2015). However, the

¹¹ Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration; In Billions of Kilowatthours.

¹² Source: National Bank of Angola; In Billions of Dollars.

¹³ Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators.

dependence of the Angolan economy on oil rents has been reduced, thus, albeit in a limited manner, easing this aspect of the resource curse on Angola (see Table 3).

Indicators	Year					
	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2013
GDP per capita ¹⁴	1300	2800	4400	3900	5500	5900
Oil Rents as % of GDP ¹⁵	53.9	65.3	38.1	45.5	41.1	34.6

Table 3: Angola: Commodity Dependence Related Indicators. The indicators point to an overall positive economic development, which includes a reduction in the reliance on oil rents, even though that reliance is still significant. The fact that the GDP per capita continues to grow while, at the same time, the dependence on oil rents subsides is of significant importance.

3. Adverse effects on the governance of the country – Inconclusive

Angola has done a poor job of building efficient state institutions. One of the main reasons being that the ruling party (MPLA) builds loyal political networks through the distribution of patronages (Paul, Clarke and Serena, 2014). However, revenue that funds such patronage politics originates from oil sales on the international market, not from the deals made through the Infrastructure for Resource model. It can be said that the corruption would be worse if the model was replaced by the traditional cash for oil sales on the international market.

On the other hand, there are reports of social housing, which is built through the model, being allocated preferentially. If proven correct, that would imply a negative influence of the model on the quality of governance in Angola. In the aforementioned example, the purchase cost of the housing was initially very high; it catered to a small middle class and thus excluded the majority of the people. However, recently the prices have been decreased and funding criteria eased (Benazeraf and Alves, 2014). Claims that the model has a negative effect on governance are not backed up by the Country Policy and Institutional Assessments, Worldwide Governance Indicators and Corruption Perceptions Index, which highlight the relatively stable level of governance since the beginning of this model’s implementation (see

¹⁴ Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators.
¹⁵ Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators.

Table 4). Thus, more research is needed into the nature of the allocation of the housing built through the Infrastructure for Resources model. At this point, the most precise answer that this research can give is that perhaps the effect of the model on the quality of governance, even if negative, is not of sufficient significance to have an effect on the aforementioned governance indicators.

Indicators		Year					
		2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
Country Policy and Institutional Assessments ¹⁶		-	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.3	-
Corruption Perceptions Index ¹⁷		20	22	19	19	22	19
African Governance Index ¹⁸		28	34	38	40	41	40
Worldwide Governance Indicators ¹⁹	Control of Corruption	-1.3	-1.2	-1.3	-1.3	-1.3	-1.5
	Government Effectiveness	-1.3	-1.4	-1.1	-1.1	-1.0	-1.1

Table 4: Angola: Governance Indicators. Three of the indicators state that the quality of governance has remained relatively the same since the model started being implemented, which challenges the initial assumption that the model would have a positive effect on governance. On the other hand, the African Governance Index highlights a relatively large improvement in the quality of governance; however, there is no other data available that would back such a result.

¹⁶ Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators; CPIA public sector management and institutions cluster average; (Score 1-6, 6=best).

¹⁷ Source: Transparency International; (Score 0-100, 100=best).

¹⁸ Source: Ibrahim Index of African Governance, 2014; (Score 0-100, 100=best).

¹⁹ Source: World Bank, World Governance Indicators; (Score -2.5 to 2.5, 2.5=best).

Aspects of the Resource Curse	The Effects of the Model
Dutch Disease	Positive
Vulnerability due to commodity dependence	Slightly Positive
Governance	Inconclusive

Table 5: Findings of the Angola Case Study. Even though the model does not successfully tackle all the three aspects of the resource curse, it still is a valuable instrument that can partially subdue the resource curse.

Conclusion

To conclude, China's economic involvement in Sub-Saharan Africa is increasingly based on the Infrastructure for Resources model, through which the Sub-Saharan countries' infrastructural needs are being fulfilled. Furthermore, this model directly transforms resources into development projects and thus it is an efficient instrument for dealing with the resource curse that hinders the development of many Sub-Saharan countries. However, further research needs to be undertaken on the nature of the allocation of the housing that is built through this model, with the focus on whether, and to what extent, it can be used as a tool of patronage politics. Even though the model does not tackle all three aspects of the resource curse, the ones that it manages to tackle demonstrate its substantial potential in, at least partially, subduing the resource curse. That is why the Infrastructure for Resources model highlights China's innovative approach to the economic development of Sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, to many Sub-Saharan countries it is an enticing alternative when compared with loans from international institutions with democracy-promoting conditions attached to them. Bearing in mind the fact that many Sub-Saharan countries possess vast deposits of resources, we can anticipate an ever greater interaction between China and Africa, primarily through the Infrastructure for Resources model.

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