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**Contextualising the China Development Model (CDM) in African Paradigms of  
Development: A Research Framework for Analysing China-Africa Relations in a  
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## **1. Introduction: Background and Approach**

Since the beginning of the present millennium, there has been a sharp increase in assumptions that China's rapid economic transformation and its impressive development trajectory may provide a model for other developing countries, particularly in Africa where China's presence has grown immensely over the same period. China's increasing engagement with Africa has given rise to critical inquiries about the lessons that African countries are drawing from their connection with the so-called 'China development model' (CDM) and, in turn, the desirability of its emulation. With the emphasis on 'development' in the conceptualisation of the CDM - as distinct from an essentially economic model - the desirability and prospect for emulation of (aspects of) the CDM can be analysed through a variety of 'development achievement'-oriented perspectives, such as inclusive growth, poverty reduction and improvement in living standards, human capital development, job creation, technological upgrade and industrial development, etc.<sup>2</sup> The main (research) question is to what extent and under what conditions is the CDM transferable to African development settings: this would invariably involve an analysis of the role and influence of those ultimately charged with formulating and implementing national development strategies, programmes and policies, which implies the political leadership and decision-making elite and, to a lesser degree, other key development actors who influence transformation and modernisation such as the business people and technocrats. To explore this question, it is useful first to take stock of what has been written thus far about China-Africa relationship and to find out the degree to which this line of inquiry has been addressed by the literature.

China's growing involvement in Africa has generated heated policy and media debates that have featured in academic literature and attracted political and economic journalistic attention<sup>3</sup>. These writings about China-Africa relations can be grouped into two kinds. The first are writings that seek to influence a particular public or policy audience and

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<sup>2</sup> These reflect commitments of African (and other) member states of the international community to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in New York at the United Nations in September 2015,

<sup>3</sup> For example, Taylor, I. 2004, 2006 and 2009; Tull, D. 2006; Mawdsley, E. 2008; Large, D 2008; Kaplinsky, R. and Morris, 2009; Brautigam, D. 2009, 2011 and 2015; Corkin, L. 2007, 2008a, 2008b and 2011; Maryse, S. and Geenen, 2009; Fioramonti, L. and Kimunguyi, 2011; Hsu, 2012; Kopinski, D., Polus and Taylor 2012; Corkin 2012; Shinn, D. and Eisenman (2012); Asongu, S. and Aminkeng 2013; Chan, S. 2013; Fourie, E. 2014; Soares de Oliveira, 2015; Besada, H. and O'Bright 2017. Also various articles in *The Economist* and *Financial Times* since 2005.

disseminated usually through the media and think tank-type publications. A good deal of this category of writings tends to be critical and rather negative – e.g. denouncing China’s engagement in Africa as “neo-imperialistic” and denoting its development cooperation activities as mirroring a “new scramble for Africa” characterised by “exploitation” of Africa’s natural resources and “land-grabbing”. The writers usually have a specific agenda - normally to get their audience to take note of and support the need to “protect” Western interests by emphasising disturbing features about China’s incursion into Africa that marks it out for special concern. Whenever possible, they provide precise illustrative examples of adverse incidents and tendencies to point out the dangers of China’s growing presence in Africa - both for Africa ( e.g. Chinese businesses displacing local African production and Chinese workers usurping local job opportunities ) and for the existing global order (e.g. China’s financial relationship and economic ties with Africa showing no regard for ethical and moral standards and practices embedded in the established aid architecture and the notion of China largely ‘free-riding’ on the debt-relief efforts of Western donors).

The second type of writings is found mainly in the academic literature, which usually looks at the bigger picture and tends to present a more balanced analysis of China-Africa relationship. While pointing out some of the potential challenges that China presents for African states and the global order, they also acknowledge the many developmental benefits for Africa from the relationship.<sup>4</sup> They also, more or less, agree that the ambition of China in Africa is not a missionary or preaching one that is aimed at imposing Chinese political order or system on the continent, but one of inspiring and assisting African nations to achieve development similar to China’s impressive performance over a relatively short period of time. Analysis of emulation prospects of the CDM, or a China model, by African countries in these writings therefore tends not to emphasise political and official requirements or exaggerate institutional deficiencies, but instead presents a more nuanced view of the CDM’s applicability in different environments. Comments and explanations of the application of the CDM and fundamental elements of the model to Africa also highlight China’s own development experience as a reference for African (and other developing) countries, and some analysts have even gone further to outline reform ‘principles’ and policy ‘guidelines’ for the application of the concept of the CDM to economic transformation and social development (Van Hoeymissen 2008; Breslin 2011; Jianhua 2013; King 2013; Wan 2014).

However, not much of the literature has focused on ‘contextualising’ the CDM within concrete African patterns of development in an empirical manner which, as such, could serve as a basis for assessing and understanding the real influence (and limitations) of the political and modernising elites for emulation of the model.<sup>5</sup> In this regard, the CDM, or any

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<sup>4</sup> For example, Corkin, L. 2007; Davies, M. 2008; Brautigam, D. 2009 and 2011 and 2015; Davis, S. and Woetzel, 2010); Carbone, M. 2012; Asongu and Aminkeng 2013; Lin, Y and Wang 2014

<sup>5</sup> Recent case studies and critical evaluations of China-Africa relations are providing directions toward this approach and type of analysis - see especially Fourie 2014 and 2015, Corkin 2011, Adem 2012, Marysse and Geenen 2012, Corkin 2012 and Soares de Oliveira 2015. These have variously evoked theories of ‘cross-societal emulation’ and ‘lesson-drawing’ and relevant assumptions of modernisation concepts and structural transformation models to find out: if indeed political and modernising elites in a country seek to emulate (aspects of) the CDM in the context of their own development paradigms, and what is driving the process of emulation .

initiative of a China model, may be understood as an approach to development that though peculiar to China has a universal appeal and relevance that makes it open to emulation by other countries and societies. This is quite different from a restricted interpretation of the CDM as a model that is not only peculiar to China but also appropriate (only) to the particular circumstances of Chinese society. This distinction is an important one which should not be ignored, since it has implications for emulation prospects – i.e. whether the model may not be emulated by others or may be emulated only with adjustment to different circumstances and needs.

In seeking to look at the CDM in the context of African development paradigms, it is important to avoid the flaw of trying to present a single China-Africa relationship. First, it is highly misleading to imply that there is a single driver of Chinese interests in the continent and a single consequence. There are multiple Chinese actors in the relationship: both state-owned and private sector institutions and enterprises at national and provincial levels as well as individual citizens all co-existing and even competing with each other within the same national setting in Africa<sup>6</sup>. Similarly, African agency in the China-Africa relationship does not entail just one type of actor – i.e. the political leadership or ruling elite- but it also includes business people, technocrats and other modernising elites in the private sector and technology field, civil society groups and individuals. Methodologically, the aim then should be to identify the different actors and different interests on both sides – not just on a nation by nation case, but also different interests *within* individual African countries. The focus should be on the role of those who can influence change within a particular country setting through seeking to emulate and adopt CDM-type development strategies and policies or otherwise. Furthermore, it should be realised that the CDM, or a China model, evolved from over three decades of systematic reform and transitional economic, political, social and cultural development in China; this is a complex feature of China's development trajectory that is virtually absent from the development path and experience of any African country since independence.

Within the realm of the political economy of African development, a 'case-study' approach is proposed to examine the impact of the CDM on the thinking and action of those ultimately responsible for planning, implementing and evaluating development and modernisation programmes and who influential change in a specific context including civil society activists. The case study approach can draw on relevant theories of development, modernisation and structural transformation, and make use of the concept of emulation to find out if indeed political and modernising elites in a particular country seek to imitate or match the CDM in the context of their own development setting and agenda: what is driving the process of emulation (e.g. development vision, political system, economic model, technological change, historical link, etc. ); what are the prospects of enduring and sustaining this emulation (e.g. how much influence do the modernisers wield in the overall development process); and how pragmatic can the African political and modernising elites be in emulating

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<sup>6</sup> Although at the national level Chinese state-owned and private companies must first secure supervision from the state council in Beijing before allowed to operate in Africa, at the provincial level companies and private citizens and entrepreneurs have more agency scope as they are slightly removed from this scrutiny..

the CDM or aspects of the model to ensure, for example, in terms of the wider distribution of the benefits of development in accordance with new expectations of the people?

The aim of this paper is to present and discuss a *research framework* for understanding the extent to which, and under what conditions, can emulation of the CDM, or features of the model, be accommodated within the context of existing African development paradigms. The framework will be useful for looking at how political leaders and modernising elites, other key stakeholders such as civil society groups and even the general public view the role of China as a development partner. Empirical research guided by this framework can be undertaken to find out if indeed political and modernising elites in a given African country seek to emulate aspects of the CDM in the context of their own development programmes and, if so, what is driving the process of emulation, and what are the outcomes. The application of this framework to a ‘real world’ situation would require empirical investigation of selected African countries with significant and specific development cooperation ties with China, using a qualitative data gathering methodology based on interviews, surveys, etc. and the analysis official policy documents, national development plans media reports, etc. The practical setting of this paper is limited: it identifies a selection of five African countries for the application of the methodology and analytical framework proposed to further empirical research. In each country case-study summary, salient features of the China-Africa relationship are highlighted from the viewpoint of the implication for the prospect to emulate the CDM, or otherwise, and against the background of a changing global order.

This paper is structured as follows. It has two main parts following the above introduction on background and approach. The first part is an overview of China-Africa relationship from three inter-linked perspectives concerning the impact of the China model via development cooperation on: national development path and outcome; regional integration outlook; and ability to respond adequately to the challenges and opportunities of globalisation and a shifting global order. The second part of the discusses salient features of the relationship between China and the selected African countries, namely Angola, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya and Zimbabwe with respect to emulation interest and prospect. The paper ends with some concluding remarks on the chance and broader economic and political implications of a CDM-influenced African development approach.

## **2. Assessing China-Africa relationship: Overview of framework for empirical research**

### **(a) *Chinese engagement in Africa and impact on national development***

The rising prominence of China in the international development landscape over the past two decades is perhaps the greatest direct challenge yet to the Western bilateral and multilateral aid architecture. China’s competitiveness is most prominent in the domain of development cooperation - an area where traditionally the West had been the preferred and privileged economic (and political) partner of Africa. According to a 2010 McKinsey Global Institute report on Africa, *Lions on the Move*, China’s total infrastructure commitments in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) exceeded similar commitments by the World Bank between 2005 and

2010, and since then the gap must have certainly widened as China continues to increase its engagement as a development partner with Africa through investment, trade energy-related agreements and more recently became the driving force behind the establishment of a specific infrastructure financing facility within the BRICS. Whereas Western development assistance to Africa has also included investment and trade-linked projects, aid from the traditional donors has often come with austere macroeconomic and financial regulatory requirements and conditions. The most notorious were the severe IMF-imposed structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s and 1990s which apparently stifled economic growth and restrained living standards in several sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries. Western development assistance to Africa also sometimes comes with democratic governance qualifications – as defined by the donors - attached as a condition for support; this was the case for OECD-DAC support for the establishment and implementation of the African Union’s ‘New Economic Partnership for African Development’ (NEPAD) programme.

China’s development assistance to Africa, on the other hand, represents a different model of engagement. The guiding principles for China’s engagement with Africa were outlined in a government’s White Paper, ‘China’s Africa Policy’ as: sincerity, equality and mutual benefit, solidarity and common development. Development cooperation is built around core ideas of aid and financing for development, combined with concrete economic (trade and investment) relationship and rooted in pragmatic considerations such as non-interference in the internal affairs of African states. The economic prospects of both China and Africa have become increasingly intertwined over time: the path of China’s trade and investment ties with Africa also offers insights into China’s on-going economic reforms and internationalisation.

Foremost in this regard is access to Africa’s raw materials to support China’s rapid economic growth and transformation: one-third of Chinese oil imports comes from Africa and China also gets a significant amount of its raw materials such as minerals and primary commodities from the continent. China has been Africa’s largest trading partner since 2006. According to UNCTAD figures, trade (exports and imports) between China and Africa rose from US\$ 1 billion in 2000 to US\$ 56 billion in 2006, over US\$100 billion in 2010 and surpassed US\$ 200 billion in 2015. Consequently, China’s development cooperation with Africa has been designed to link Africa’s resource wealth to the development programmes and aspirations of individual African countries (Van Hoeymissen 2008; Brautigam 2010). China’s foreign direct investment (FDI) in Africa has therefore been growing, experiencing an average annual growth of some 20 per cent since 2010 to exceed US\$ 6 billion in 2015.

A second factor in the intertwined relationship - of lesser but not insignificant concern to China - is that Africa constitutes new markets for Chinese exports to sustain its industrial production; even though this accounts for only about 5 per cent of China’s global trade, it remains an important number in terms of looking at the rise in a short period of time. Chinese low-cost manufacturers have helped to stimulate consumer markets in Africa and as labour costs increase in China, Chinese manufacturing firms are now beginning to outsource labour-intensive manufacturing through investments in Africa ( and other lower-costing developing) countries. Understanding these trade and investment trends in China-Africa policy relationship, and their domestic drivers on both sides, offers insights into emulation interests and prospects.

A third factor, significant from the standpoint of global foreign policy and political influence in the international system, is that China finds the support of Africa's 54 member states within the international community of nations necessary and important to bolster its role and position in the United Nations system and other key international bodies<sup>7</sup>. Beijing can count on valuable diplomatic support from African governments to defend its interests, for example, at the United Nations Human Rights Council or the WTO (from accusations of 'dumping'), while offering (in exchange) its support to African countries in international negotiations and WTO disputes.

China's unconventional approach to development cooperation, as already noted, has attracted strong criticism within traditional donor and policy circles regarding, inter alia, accusations of exploitation and lack of attention to morality, democracy and governance concerns and criteria. Western media have used terms such as "new capitalists", "rogue donors" and "toxic aid" to describe China's development assistance to Africa, and such reports have tended to focus on problems associated with Chinese investment and commercial ties with Africa, such as lower environmental, social and labour standards, while ignoring physical and human development gains for Africa from Chinese aid and trade in areas such as infrastructure, manufacturing and agribusiness, building of healthcare facilities and provision of technical training to Africans in China. The West generally sees Africa's development as dependent on (its) foreign official development assistance (ODA) and advice on how to use aid. This is at a time when the reality on the ground – both in terms of the budget constraints of Western governments and growing economic opportunities in Africa - dictates that most of the finance for African development is not going to come from ODA, but from banks, private sector investors and export credit agencies in the emerging economies.

A more sober assessment of China-Africa relationship will reveal that China is not a new donor, but has in fact been providing aid in Africa since the end of the colonial period and at least as long as the West and that the complete story of the China-Africa relationship in historical perspective goes back to over a century (Shinn and Eisenman 2012). The Chinese approach to development assistance - which interestingly mirrors China's own past experience as a developing country and recipient of aid and loans, primarily from Japan and may have influenced thinking about its engagement in Africa - is based on a broader platform of 'development partnership' through not only aid, but also trade and investment that can be mutually beneficial to both China and Africa. China is offering an alternative development path to African countries, many of which have ample riches in the form of natural resources but are not using them to their advantage - i.e. to secure finance to build vital physical infrastructure and social investments necessary for modernisation and economic transformation.

Crucially, Africa's role in the relationship has not been, and should not be seen, as "passive" – such as simply a receptacle for Chinese projects. To a significant degree, it is one

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<sup>7</sup> On the diplomatic front, China's link with Africa goes back to the Bandung Conference of African and Asian leaders in 1955 and the support that China subsequently provided to a number of African colonies in their struggle for political independence. In return, the votes of 26 newly independent African countries were instrumental in securing the necessary majority required by China to reclaim its seat at the UN and the Security Council.

in which ‘African agency’ is an integral part of the interaction in the relationship and as such provides a basis for analysts interested in China-Africa relations to identify and explore a range of different types of Chinese interaction with different African actors and interests. In seeking to cultivate external relations with African countries, China has long stressed its commonly shared roots with African nations as a developing country (Jianhua 2013; Wan 2014) and, hence, the symbolic attraction of China clearly reverberates with many African elites who seem to look on China as a positive development model. This approach, coupled with its policy of ‘non-interference,’ has made China an attractive alternative as a development partner in Africa to dictatorial or authoritarian regimes as well as more liberal ones and democratically elected leaders.

While such orientation in the development partnership between China and Africa has clearly benefitted African ruling and political elites, it remains doubtful that it has helped to improve the livelihoods of ordinary Africans. Political (and modernising) elites in African countries have had a disproportionate impact on development outcomes stemming from relationship with China. Insofar as the economic and political determinants of the development trajectory and outcomes in a given context are shaped or influenced by these elites, the critical issue is whether they will use their influence for personal gain and self-enrichment or in the wider national interest such as fighting poverty. This will ultimately be determined by the nature of and the motive behind the engagement of African ruling elites with China and the intended impact on this engagement on development, possibly through emulation.

Many questions have been raised about the nature of and motives underlying the growing and extraordinary relationship between China, a world superpower, and Africa, the world’s poorest region. Will greater China-Africa cooperation widen the policy space and increase benefits for African countries with respect to trade and investment and prospect for inclusive growth and sustainable development? What is the best way that Africa can benefit from China’s strong engagement with the region? What can Africa learn or emulate from China in terms of inclusive growth and reduction of widespread poverty? Are Beijing’s intentions and actions in Africa no different from the behaviour of Africa’s past colonial ‘masters’?

According to evidence from the latest triennial Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) hosted by South Africa in December 2015, the leaders of both sides show continuing interest to maintain and work on the relationship. Even in the context of China’s own economic slowdown, President Xi Jinping tripled China’s financial pledges to Africa to \$60 billion at the last FOCAC– going beyond its tradition of doubling financial commitment to Africa at each FOCAC - with infrastructure, agriculture and manufacturing as new priority sectors for investment. Under the Xi administration, China’s policy toward Africa has shown new trends that illustrate Beijing’s priorities and strategies in the continent. Beyond expanding development financing to Africa, China is now enhancing its direct involvement in Africa’s peace and security interests by contributing troops to UN missions in the continent (e.g. Mali) and engaging in open intervention in the South Sudan conflict through direct mediation

China’s relations with African countries have changed dramatically over the past decade as trade and investment links between China and Africa increased. African public

and private enterprises are becoming more involved in joint-venture arrangements and business relations with Chinese companies that are using Africa as a testing ground for their 'going global' strategy. In seeking to examine emulation of the CDM by African countries to meet their development aspirations, the yardsticks for the analysis should reflect these new and emerging business arrangements as conduits for achieving sustainable development goals such as economic growth, trade and investment expansion, infrastructure and industrial upgrade, human capital development, and improvement in living standards for the larger segment of the population. At the same time, African elites' perceptions of development outcomes and principles expressed or implied in the relationship with China, such mutual benefit, 'win-win' cooperation and shared growth, and the mechanisms introduced for their realisation, should be critically analysed. This is necessary to determine, for example, the extent of ownership of the development process or degree of influence by individual African countries over the 'demands' of China as a development partner and donor.

### ***(b) Chinese engagement in Africa and regional integration efforts***

China has a tendency to deal with individual African countries for purpose of development cooperation, rather than with groups of countries or with the African Union (AU) as a continental political organisation.<sup>8</sup> It seems easier for China to deal with the AU member countries individually than it is for the African countries to deal among themselves and agree on a common position about their relationship with China. There is more coherence in the Chinese approach towards African countries than there is within the African Union. One should therefore not generalise about the relationship between China and Africa, because Africa has 54 countries and there are many different China-Africa relationships within the continent. Nevertheless, in contextualizing the CDM in contemporary African development paradigms account has to be taken of the quest for continental 'unity', common positions and cooperation in areas such as trade, infrastructure development, justice, etc., and the pursuit of regional economic integration within the continent as goals or at least intentions of the AU.

Rather than just look at bilateral relations with China, it is important to recognise the role of the existing African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other regional and sub-regional economic and trade networks - SADC, ECOWAS, EAC, COMESA, etc - as development agents, and examine how these can be or can be integrated into regional and global production structures and supply chains in the analysis of China-Africa relations. As Chinese influence in Africa grows, there are several key areas where Chinese engagement offers potential to enhance the capacity of the RECs and similar inter-country bodies to facilitate regional integration such as through the implementation of cross-border transport networks, trade corridors and energy projects.

China is already Africa's top provider of infrastructure, which as such makes a case for taking advantage of the China-Africa relationship to promote regional economic integration. Going back to the construction in the early 1970s of the 1860 km Tanzania-Zambia (TAZARA) railway - which was financed and supported technically by the Chinese

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<sup>8</sup> China nevertheless funded and built a new and impressive US\$ 600 million AU Headquarters building in Addis Ababa and donated it as a gift from the governments and people of Africa.

as a turnkey project to link the port of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania with Zambia's copper producing central region<sup>9</sup> - there are indications that China has long recognised the importance of cross-border infrastructure projects for fostering economic interconnections across Africa. Furthermore, regional integration tendency within Africa does not just occur at the national level, but often includes integration between sub-national entities – local economies becoming integrated across national boundaries, sometimes based on historical cross-border market and trading activities going back to pre-colonial time as well as in response to new and emerging market opportunities.

There are several areas and ways China's engagement with Africa offers the potential to enhance the capacity of the African RECs. Mention has already been made of the implementation of transport networks and trade corridors as a key dimension of effective regional cooperation. China's official policy towards Africa, as unveiled in the Fifth FOCAC in 2015, pledged to encourage Chinese investors "to participate in transnational and trans-regional infrastructure construction projects in Africa [based on the provision of] preferential loans". Emulation analysis therefore should look at opportunities for African countries to formulate a coherent policy on how to engage China to invest in regional projects such as through the RECs as well as a coordinated approach for grouping Africa's fragmented political entities to replicate the experiences of different regions of the vast country of China in implementing inter-regional development projects to promote economic of regions. This could serve as a building block towards more general integration of Africa into the wider global economy.

### ***(c) China-Africa relationship and the changing global economic order***

The remarkable intensification in the relationship between China and Africa in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has become central to global economic and political discourses. At the same time as China's engagement in Africa is growing, the global economy has been going through a period of transformation that has seen Asia emerge as the most rapidly growing, industrialising and modernising region in the world economy. Whilst the rest of the world struggled during the financial crisis of 2007-9, Asia spearheaded by China played the role of linchpin for global economic recovery. Africa was insulated from the global financial crisis and continued to experience high rates of growth during this period, mainly on account of growing demand for natural resources by an economically robust China. Increasing economic ties and trade links between China and Africa's resource-based economies was therefore crucial for Africa's survival during the global economic crisis, in addition to the continent's limited integration in the world financial system which kept it far from the reach of the global crisis.

The main questions that would arise from the influence of the CDM on the integration of Africa into the global economy mainly through its economic relationship with China are: first, whether this relationship provides an alternative globalisation-driven development

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<sup>9</sup> The TAZARA railway provided the only route for bulk trade between Zambia's Copperbelt to reach the sea without transiting then white-rule territories in southern African region. The project was at the time conceived in the spirit of Pan-African socialism among the leaders of Tanzania and Zambia and the symbolism of China's support for newly independent African countries.

model for Africa; and, second, would this then impact positively on the attainment of the sustainable development goals at country and regional levels. With respect to the first question, China's growing presence in Africa has certainly served to create opportunities for Africa's resource-based economies to be transformed and become more integrated in the regional and global economy system through formal and informal trade links and production chains. On the second issue, though Africa was less vulnerable to past adverse changes in the global economy - due largely to its economic links with China- this fortuitous circumstance does not appear to have translated to benefits for ordinary Africans in terms of job opportunities, better living standards and prospects for moving people out of poverty. This is in contrast to the experience of China and several Asian economies which were able to use the benefits of globalisation to achieve more inclusive and job-creation patterns of development transition. In this regard, the influence of the CDM on African political and modernising elites as evident from the outcomes of their development styles was minimal or even quite the opposite. Looking ahead, Africa's potential vulnerability (as a producer and exporter of primary commodities) to a Chinese economic downturn may be more significant in terms of China's own vulnerability on strategic supplies from Africa on a longer-term basis than in terms of the impact on efforts of African countries to reduce widespread poverty – an objective which most of them so far appear not to have prioritised in their development transition strategies and policies, at least in practice.

In reviewing China-Africa relationship in the context of the changing international development landscape and implications for desirable emulation of the CDM, it should be noted that Africa is the last new frontier of the global economy and that this brings with it both development opportunities and challenges for China and Africa. There are a number of questions that need to be addressed in this regard: what aspects of the CDM should Africa emphasise in emulation to get the greatest SDG-oriented development benefits from its relationship with China; what does China need to do to sustain its African engagement against a backdrop of mounting African expectations; how can concerns from Western donors and interests be accommodated in the international system and ; how should both parties in the China-Africa relationship respond to the rival presence of other emerging players such as India, Korea and Brazil, etc.?

It is no surprise then that China is showing considerable interest in partnering with the West – at both multilateral and bilateral levels – as well as with other emerging powers in promoting “triangular” development cooperation projects in Africa (Mawdsley 2012; Carbone 2012). Within the framework of such tripartite development cooperation arrangement, the EU and China have indicated a willingness to cooperate on their respective bilateral assistance to Africa by launching the ‘EU-Africa-China triangular dialogue’ (Carbone 2012). Similarly, Chinese enterprises have been involved in the execution of World Bank funded infrastructure projects in Africa and Chinese businesses have collaborated with other emerging nations such as Brazil, India and Korea and in triangular development cooperation projects in Africa (Davies and Woetzel 2010; Wysoczanska 2012).

Finally, China's engagement with Africa can also be conceptualised in the mould of South-South cooperation initiatives. While China's perception of South-South development cooperation (SSDC) as a collaboration and partnership among ‘similar’ – i.e. Third World - countries is positive, its approach to SSDC is at the same time pragmatic in the sense of

China looking after its own interest in each particular circumstance just as any state would in an economic or trade relationship. This suggests awareness that SSDC includes a wide range of modalities from strictly market-driven activities, to ideologically-based mutual development programmes, and to resource transfers for humanitarian purposes and it is for partners to identify what is in their best interest on a case-by-case basis. Nevertheless, China's involvement in SSDC-type development assistance seems to be in line with its fundamental principle of non-interference as this type of partnership is executed on an allegedly demand-driven basis, in contrast to a seemingly supply-driven approach of traditional development cooperation between the North and South

### **3. Identified Country Case Studies to assess for CDM emulation: Key issues**

As already observed, the outlook for African countries to emulate the CDM can be examined from a number of 'development achievement' perspectives involving a choice of progress and transformation-type goals and targets. Virtually all African countries see the imperative of a high rate of economic growth as a priority in their national development agenda; this is in accordance with the growth performance of China in its successful development transition.. African political leaders and modernising elites who contribute to the discourse and practice of development at country level have been effectively exploiting China's involvement in Africa as a basis to stimulate high growth achievement and expectation. In several cases over the past, this particular characteristic of the CDM has been successfully emulated especially during periods of commodity boom in the global economy when income and revenue benefits of growth have accrued to national economies in the region. However, and unlike China, the benefits of high growth have gone more in the direction of the ruling elites than to the average African citizen. Lesser attention and interest appears to have been given by elites in Africa to the possibility of using the benefits of growth and resource wealth for meeting basic human needs, creating job opportunities and improving living standards for the larger segment of their population.

The countries identified for empirical investigation of CDM-emulation interest and prospect, based on the China-Africa relationship, reflect a range of different types of Chinese interaction with different African actors and interests. The selected countries are not mutually exclusive, but together they serve a useful purpose of calling for caution in making generalisations about Africa (or China) in analysing the relationship.. The typology and motive for Chinese intervention in Africa ranges from China's (state) role as a traditionally conceived aid donor supporting economic and social development programmes including infrastructure and prestige projects, to a forgiver of debt, to a natural resource-seeking investor including land, to a provider of concessional capital intended to benefit commercial activities and the interests of Chinese firms including the export of major industrial plants and technology ( e.g. energy), to a supplier of affordable consumer goods, to a promoter of special economic zones and manufacturing to produce exports to other markets, and a source of independent Chinese traders and distributors operating in Africa.

***China and Angola relationship: A strategic and pragmatic partnership?***

A wide range of different African (and other developing) countries have demonstrated different capabilities and experiences of engagement with China. Angola is generally considered the most successful in securing China's engagement as a financier of a variety of large-scale economic and social development projects. China's engagement in Angola has accordingly received significant media attention as well as been the subject of scholarly analyses of the so-called 'Angola Model' (Taylor 2006; Kiala 2010; Corkin 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2011). The bilateral relationship between the two countries has been essentially economic-driven and mainly pragmatic, more so in the light of China's earlier misjudged and untidy involvement in the Angolan civil war<sup>10</sup>. Under the original arrangement, the Chinese government has been heavily involved in Angola's post-conflict national reconstruction and development programme financed mainly through the China Exim Bank and other financial institutions. These deals have served as a means to ensure closer relations with Angola and access to its oil. China's strategy as such is ostensibly to accumulate political capital through the provision of infrastructure, financed by oil-backed concessional loans extended by Chinese state-owned banks.

Strategic and pragmatic partnership underlined the concept of the Angola Model which represents the Chinese government's preferred method of financing - whereby funds for large infrastructural development projects in African countries are secured and guaranteed using natural resources as collateral (oil in the case of Angola). The arrangement undoubtedly entails potential benefits as well as risks for both Angola and China - with the two countries seeing each other as necessary strategic allies for the foreseeable future but apparently in the context of an uneasy marriage of convenience.

After the Angolan civil war, the new government approached the IMF in 2003 for money to finance its large-scale infrastructure reconstruction programmes; IMF was prepared to offer loans to Angola but insisted on Angola accepting conditions which included attainment of a robust fiscal status and transparent commercial transactions based on Western standards. These conditions were not acceptable to the Angolan political leadership of President Dos Santos, and he turned to the Chinese instead. Hence, Angola secured a number of oil-backed credit lines from China's Exim Bank between 2004 and 2010 that exceeded US 13 billion. These loans which were mainly for public investment programmes (roads, railways, ports, electricity generation and even social housing) provided an alternative for Angola which was then experiencing difficulties to secure other sources of capital. Angola has been China's leading African trading partner for China extractive industries and soaring imports for Chinese products. In return, most of Angola's big development projects have been financed and managed by a special financing facility created by the Chinese, the China International Fund (CIF). Also, and more crucially from a political perspective, the injection of Chinese capital served a useful political purpose for the ruling elite in terms of the delivery

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<sup>10</sup> China's earlier role in Angola during the country's civil war was as a supporter of the resistance movement UNITA against the main liberation movement MPLA which was backed by the Soviet Union. This earlier intervention of China in Angola - in an unwitting alliance with apartheid South Africa and 'imperialist' USA - was catastrophic for China's relations with African countries; with the accession of the MPLA to power, China was keen to have an economic pact in favour of the political elite to compensate for its miscalculated involvement in Angola's civil war.

of an impressive array of vital infrastructure and social projects that could attract the attention of population and votes.

As to be expected, the 'Angola Model' attracted concern and criticism from the IMF and the other Bretton Woods institutions (World Bank and GATT/WTO), which felt that financing of development projects through Chinese state institutions was lacking in transparency, paid no regard to commercial risk and loans extended instead on the basis of access oil equity, and that this arrangement in turn gave China preferential status as a trade and investment partner. But it is also worth pointing out that at one stage, the CIF was halted because of disagreement between the two partners over control of spending and the Angolan government had to cancel several contracts. Thus, in spite of China's dominant presence and strategic role presence in the Angolan economy, this did not make it immune from criticism by the Angolan political elite. This indeed shows that the influence of the Angolan political elite should not be underestimated. By examining China's involvement in Angola, it should be possible to assess how different African states exploit the China-Africa relationship to their advantage as well as identify missed opportunities for more inclusive development.

### ***China and Ethiopia relationship: A mutually convenient political relationship while thinking about the future***

China's increasing engagement in Ethiopia over the past two decades is significant from two respects. First, it debunks the popular perception that the motive behind China's increasing engagement in Africa is essentially to secure much-needed raw materials, mainly oil and minerals, for its own economic growth and transition – the 'infrastructure for natural resources' model - as Ethiopia is not richly endowed in the type of natural resources needed by China,<sup>11</sup> Yet, Ethiopia is one of the top four African countries that China has been investing with respect to infrastructure development –next to Angola, Nigeria and Sudan, all of whom are major oil producers. Since 2005, China has been Ethiopia's main trading partner, and Chinese investments have been instrumental in driving the impressive and rapid development transition and structural transformation of the Ethiopian economy recently. Second, China's increasing engagement in Ethiopia seems to be linked to China's interest in Ethiopia's perception of a common political ideology with China. This is rather unusual, as China's recent increasing presence in Africa has generally been attributed to economic and business interests than to seeking political influence. From about 2005 until the death of the late Ethiopian leader Meles Zenawi in August 2012, Ethiopian elites from the upper echelons downwards were engaged in a "conscious and voluntary attempt" to emulate ideological features of the CDM and its developmental successes (Fourie 2015).

Ethiopia's desire to emulate China as an example for its own development path is deeply rooted in what Fourie referred to as "enabling historical factors", which can be traced to the period of the 19th and the early 20th centuries. This is when Ethiopia's feudal emperors used emulation of foreign models – Western and Japanese – to centralise power and

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<sup>11</sup> China's interest in Ethiopia as a development partner has nevertheless been linked to access to agricultural land to grow food crop and animal feed destined for Chinese consumption at home.

consolidate their authority to deal with both political pressures from below and external military threats through nation-building projects (Fourie 2015). More recently, the political elite in the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRD) of Meles found the emulation of the CDM and closer political ties with China as a useful tool for consolidating its grip on power over an inherently fractious and potentially fragile federal system of government. Sino-Ethiopian relationship blossomed under Meles, including the sending of senior members of Ethiopia's ruling party China to learn from the Chinese "practice of market-led socialism and agricultural development" and the establishment of a China-Ethiopia Joint Commission charged with the task of reviewing and assessing bilateral relations and suggesting measures for enhancement (Adem 2012). China was seen as by Ethiopian governmental and non-governmental elites as the main source of potential lessons for achieving economic growth and development.

### ***China and Ghana relationship: Supporting habits of democracy, while managing thriving natural resources with cracks appearing***

Ghana is a country with a strong democratic tradition, built around successful multi-party elections, and one of Africa's most vibrant and active civil societies.. The country is also a booming natural resources exporter – gold, bauxite, cocoa and more recently oil. It has also been reclassified upward by the UN as a middle-income country. Why then has it embarked on an economic embrace of China that might have implications for its s future development path?

As an important African economy, Ghana was one of a number of African countries that China found attractive for replicating the 'Angola Model' in terms of structuring huge package of loans and infrastructure investments to gain access to natural resources needed to fuel and sustain China's rapid growth and dramatic economic transformation. Like Angola and Congo Brazzaville, the attraction for China centred around Ghana's recently tapped commercial production of oil. However, unlike Angola and Congo, Ghana's lively political system and its strong democratic tradition, compounded by a relatively informed and dynamic civil society, meant that any possible resource-for-development deal with China was likely to come under greater scrutiny by the opposition in parliament as well as through public debate. These conditions inherently present in the Ghanaian political system in fact helped the political elite to steer the Ghana oil-for- aid swap deal arguably toward a more prudent direction. The agreement reached with China was that Ghana's oil would not be used as direct collateral for Chinese funds, but Ghana would be free to sell its oil and gas on the international market and the oil wealth will be paid into an escrow account from which Ghana's debt to China will be serviced. However, under the terms of the contract between China and Ghana, China legally reserved the right to access income from Ghana's oil production if Ghana fell behind in its repayment. The particular arrangement also meant that Ghana, unlike the case of some other African countries locked in fixed-price barter trade and investment relations with China, could avoid the likelihood of being underpaid in kind or cash for its oil over the long-term. Ghana's robust democracy, vibrant civil society, fast-growing middle class, as well as its relative openness and transparency, helped to put Ghana

in a position where it could have a loud voice as the African partner in its business relationship with China.

Soon after Ghana started exporting oil, the then President of Ghana, John Atta-Mills, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for a US\$ 13 billion loan package from China in 2011 which he said would “transform our country’s economy and the lives of the people of Ghana. The first tranche of this loan package, a US\$ 3 billion line of credit for infrastructure investment projects (transmission pipeline for natural gas, aluminium refinery plant, hydroelectric dams, rural electrification, water supply, etc.) was formalised a few months after the MoU was signed. This amount was by far the largest loan Ghana had received since independence in 1957, and exceeded the total of IFC (the private sector lending arm of the World Bank) loans to all of sub-Saharan Africa in 2011 by almost a billion US dollars.

Scepticism about the soundness of the deal and questions on the loan details were voiced from some quarters within and outside Ghana soon appeared after the projects were unveiled: it was felt that the package was essentially drawn up by the Chinese, who appeared to have identified interested Chinese firms ahead of the bidding process, and with minimal inputs from the Ghanaian side and lack of transparency (French 2014). There were also concerns whether this type of investments will lead to transformative and inclusive growth and lift many people out of poverty. There were also local resistance and protest concerning some of the projects on environmental safeguard and quality control grounds. When the price of crude oil plummeted the source of financing for the entire facility became insufficient, so disbursement was stopped after the Ghanaian government had utilized about half of the US\$ 3 billion facility which it had repaid through deliveries of crude oil to China. The Ghana government still needs funds to finance its development projects in the energy and other key sectors. The outgoing government was already in talks with the Chinese about reviving the remaining US\$ 1.5 billion loan to be repaid through gas supplies.

Focusing on the emergence of China as a major and alternative source of development finance for Ghana under three successive Ghanaian governments, it will be important to analyse this trend from two main perspectives: (1) the extent to which Chinese presence in Ghana framed the perceptions of Ghana’s political and modernising elite on the ‘development effectiveness’ of foreign assistance and development cooperation; and (2) the extent to which these perceptions have influenced and shaped policy choice and the development processes. If you consider the elite as the focus of the analysis, do they think that relationship with China is the key to Ghana’s future development?

### ***China and Kenya relationship: An alternative path for seizing the opportunity for economic diversification and international competitiveness***

Kenya represents a country with strong political and economic ties with both the West and China. As a regional powerhouse in the East African Community (EAC) context, beneficial trade relations and economic ties will be central to China-Kenya relationship, and China’s policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of partner countries will be viewed as attractive in this relationship in areas of good governance and security – noting the turmoil and civil conflict resulting from the disputed elections of December 2007 and more recently

security concerns following attacks by El Shabab linked to Kenya's military presence in Somalia . When the West (EU and OECD DAC members) shunned Kenya as a development partner and suspended development cooperation programmes and projects in the aftermath of the contested December 2007 Presidential and general elections, the serious implications of this action was somehow cushioned by the growing economic relationship between China and Kenya. Both the dynamic business elite in Kenya and the country's vibrant civil society, while broadly appreciating the stance of the EU to hold the government accountable, were critical of certain sanction-related policies that they perceive will harm the economy. The same groups (business elites and civil society leaders) plus parliamentarians across parties also later criticised the EU trade policies towards Africa (EPA) and denounced the union's common agricultural policy and its linked subsidy regime that had a distorting effects on Kenya's trade and made local products uncompetitive in European and global markets.

Against this background, business relationship with China (and India) is becoming more and more important for Kenya's economy in the perception of both the political and business elites and even in the eyes of the ordinary Kenyan – challenging the privileged economic and political relationship that the West enjoyed in past decades. The placement of China within the Kenyan economic space is therefore worth noting, as it is Kenya's first emerging and alternative partner to the traditional Western counterparts. Kenya sees an advantage in increasing relationship with China and India as a way to attract investment flows to enhance its manufacturing sector, including possibility to benefit from China's policy to progressively transfer the production of consumer goods at the lower end of global manufacturing to low labour-cost developing countries in Asia and Africa as relevant to its economic diversification programme. Admittedly, Kenyan political and business elites are reported to express a strong preference for China as a development and economic partner, mainly because of its less complicated financial, political and bureaucratic criteria for doing business and lesser concern about institution building and good governance (Fioramonti and Kimunguyi 2011).

For a country with the recent political history of Kenya, but one which has trade and investment high on its economic agenda, the fact that the Chinese do not go into issues of governance and human rights for investment considerations is significant for the political and business elites. Next, the availability of alternative cheaper and affordable consumer goods from China (and India), such as in the case of essential medicines and other pharmaceutical products, is seen as an advantage by the political elite. Kenya also sees China's growing middle class as a source of new additional visitors for its tourism industry. Then there is the Chinese soft power diplomacy in the form of cooperation in education and training with Kenya: China has been offering about 100 scholarships annually to Kenyan students to study and train in China in medical, agriculture, information and digital technology, management, etc. (King 2010 and 2013). The growing popularity of China as a destination for both long- and short-term training for Kenyans, and the increasing interest by Kenyans in learning Chinese, cannot be separated from the wider involvement of China in Kenya's infrastructure development and growing Chinese business and foreign direct investment in Kenya and the EAC region. These considerations and trends go a long way toward enhancing the credibility of China as an alternative development partner among Kenya elites.

While China is becoming more relevant in the Kenyan economic sphere and increasing Chinese engagement is seen as an opportunity to diversify foreign economic linkages and reduce historical dependence on Western finance and markets, it may still be too early to say conclusively that China's support for Kenya's short-term economic needs could help the country diversify its economy further with longer term implications for sustainable economic and social development. Nevertheless, there is a wide range of sectors in which Kenya has been drawing lessons from China mainly through its soft power diplomacy focusing on cooperation in human resource development. Students studying and being trained in China are invariably exposed through knowledge transfer to the "best practice" and the Chinese approach to a wide variety of technical and scientific processes and related development practices for emulation when they return home.

***China and Zimbabwe relationship: China's African ally- complicated friends or best friends forever?***

Since independence in 1980, following a prolonged national liberation struggle aided by China among others, Zimbabwe's political elite led by Robert Mugabe had shown strong political affiliations with China. Mugabe had met with Deng Xiaoping in 1981 and the ex-freedom fighter now leading a ZANU-PF government had subsequently referred to himself as a "Marxist-Leninist of Maoist thoughts" and declared his commitment to socialism (Youde 2007). Mugabe later faced widespread international criticism and sanctions for his economic, political and human rights policies which eventually led to broken relations with Western states and international financial institutions. Zimbabwe's deteriorating economic and political situation and the virtual collapse of the economy precipitated a process of regime survival that prompted Mugabe to find a much-needed development partner and ally in China to provide his regime with credit for investment in politically-driven development projects and for the purchase of mining and security equipment and military supplies. Zimbabwe also enjoyed political support and solidarity from the Chinese government for its controversial land distribution programme, which China saw as efforts to bring about social justice through land reform. In return, Chinese state-owned enterprises were accorded a privileged position and portfolio of shares and mineral concessions in lucrative, but in some cases risky, Zimbabwean natural resource assets.

Zimbabwe's desire to develop a stronger relationship with China provided a gateway for the Chinese government to make use of its good inter-governmental relations with the Zimbabwean leadership to encourage and guarantee investment flows from China even under rather risky conditions. From the Zimbabwean perspective, it was of particular significance that Chinese development assistance and support came with no conditionality related to democratic governance and respect for human rights. It was equally in China's interest to protect Mugabe's dictatorial regime as an ally and to ensure its survival. Within the framework of Zimbabwe's 'Look East' foreign policy which advocates stronger ties with Asian countries, the Mugabe regime became one of Beijing's staunchest supporters in international fora.

From the onset, China had seen the potential of Zimbabwe to emulate the Chinese model of economic transition and structural transformation, but it would appear that Mugabe

was showing more interest in ideological issues rather economic investment opportunities for both countries in its relationship with China (Taylor 1997). This is significant, as it shows some difference in interests and motivation of an African state and demonstrates a measure of agency in its relationship with China. Without necessarily ignoring the pragmatism behind Mugabe's turn toward China for development assistance, it is important to situate this pragmatism within a broader context of Zimbabwe's situation at the time of independence. The country already had a fairly good infrastructure inherited from the colonial and later illegal white regimes, and it was through the lens of nationalism and political self-determination that Mugabe initially identified with and embraced China rather than through infrastructure development projects.

Although Zimbabwe's need for aid has increased as its economic situation worsened, and hence a need to cultivate a stronger relationship with China, it would appear that China's enthusiasm for Zimbabwe is beginning to wane. There are reports that the relationship is under strain due to economic mismanagement and incompetence on the part of the Zimbabwean government and over its failure to service its huge Chinese debts (Taylor 2008). China has more recently attracted a lot of criticism from opposition and human rights groups within Zimbabwe for propping up a repressive and corrupt regime. With an ageing President and increasing uncertainty about the nature and orientation of the Zimbabwean political landscape after Mugabe, it now seems as if the Chinese part of the relationship is beginning to think about the need to build a decent relationship with any post-Mugabe regime after what could almost certainly be a chaotic transition. The scenario of weak political elite with little interest in business opportunities (even though rich in mineral resources) but in need for immense financial aid, is of little interest to China in terms of emulation of the inclusive development and investment aspects of its own transition experience.

#### **4. Concluding observations: A CDM-influenced African development approach?**

From China's perspective, and hence its interest in the continent, Africa is a vast expanse of land with rich natural resources and huge potential for development. China also sees Africa as a region that is playing an increasingly important role international affairs and one that it shares similar historical experiences. The five country case-studies summarised above to illustrate salient features of China-Africa relationship and emulation interest and prospects indicate that: (1) China has shown interest in supporting African countries to explore economic systems and models of development suitable to their own conditions; and (2) China has also been willing to share its own experiences in development while not consciously seeking to impose its own ideological or political system on Africa. It was reported that Deng Xiaoping (widely regarded as the chief architect of China's reform and transformation) on meeting a visiting African head of state advised the African leader not to adopt the socialist system since socialism was not suitable for his country.<sup>12</sup> China has been reluctant to see itself as a traditional donor handing out aid, and prefers to be identified instead as a partner in

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<sup>12</sup> Cited by Ambassador Liu Guijin, Chinese Special Envoy to Sudan, in an article "China seeks 'Win-Win' ties with Africa" *The African Executive*, March 2010.

Sino-African cooperation providing development assistance without economic and political conditions

The case-studies also confirm that China-Africa relationship has primarily been driven by China's interest in Africa's natural resources including land for its own economic growth and development transition programmes, and China has been able to sustain that interest with a pragmatic external relations policy and innovative individual country-oriented development cooperation packages. This has worked well for China in the sense of using Africa's raw materials to fuel its own development and also for Africa through Chinese investment, trade, financial aid and technical assistance that have enhanced physical and infrastructure development and contributed to high growth in several African countries. However, while Chinese investments and interventions in Africa have produced physical development and growth, and generated lots of goodwill, the impact on Africa's human development needs has so far been little in terms of job creation and poverty reduction on a sustainable basis and resentment of Chinese presence by local African populations is on the increase. This unplanned outcome of the relationship may have more to do with the development approaches - strategies and policies - of the ruling elites in Africa than with the impact or effect influence of Chinese engagement on national development prospects. This brings into focus the issue of emulation.

The prospect of emulation of the CDM is linked to the main question of whether China provides an alternative development model for Africa, or is China's growing influence in the continent nothing but a new era of African economic dependency. For example, can any pattern be observed in the expansion of Chinese investments and increasing presence of Chinese enterprises operating in Africa? As a development partner that has successfully transformed its own economy exceptionally and rapidly and at the same time progressively improved the living standards of a sizeable segment of its vast population, China has the comparative advantage in development cooperation to help diffuse 'tacit' knowledge on the 'how to do' issues of development. China does not claim to offer an alternative to development, nor a development model at all (Jianhua 2013). There are elements of influence that African countries can emulate or draw upon for their own transformation, but they are not to be taken as a model (Lin and Wang 2014). The consensus among China's African specialists in both government and academia is that China will remain an alternative economic partner, but not a development model for Africa. In this regard, China is seen as having the ability help its African partners.

Looking ahead, China will continue to be seen by African countries as an alternative development partner that can play an important role in helping to transform and upgrade their economies, but for many African countries the support provided by China for their development process would have to fit within the context of their own development *styles*, aspirations and resources. At the same time as Chinese investments in infrastructure development in Africa flatten and slowdown, in response to both economic downturn in China and political and civic pressure from within Africa, China will intensify efforts to extend its soft power diplomacy in the continent, such as through the establishment of Confucius and language institutes. In a move to improve its image in Africa, China's global 24-hour TV network, CCTV News, now has an African hub in Nairobi that broadcast daily 'focus on Africa' segments in which senior Chinese diplomats and African specialists feature

regularly to explain and propagate China's development cooperation with Africa and benefits to the continent. These efforts by China to extend its soft power in Africa are aimed essentially to ensure that China remains an attractive alternative economic partner of Africa, though but not a development model (Jianhua 2013; Lin and Wang 2014) in the midst of competition from other emerging powers and any possible resurgence of influence by the West.

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