



universität
wien

DIPLOMARBEIT

Titel der Diplomarbeit

Debating “China in Africa”

A Comparison of Chinese, ‘African’ and ‘Western’ Perspectives

Verfasserin

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angestrebter akademischer Grad

Magistra (Mag.)

Wien, 2013

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt: A 057390

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt: Individuelles Diplomstudium Internationale Entwicklung

Betreuer: Uni. Prof. i.R. Dr. Walter Schicho

Acknowledgements

First of all I would like to thank my supervisor, Walter Schicho, for his academic support and help with this thesis. I would especially like to thank my interview partners for their cordiality, time and willingness to share information. I want to thank my friends for the discussions, support and fun during our studies as well as my parents for their financial and moral support during all these years. Finally, I would like to thank all those who helped to revise the language, my sister Anntke for her helpfulness and Jan who is always there for me.

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Abbreviations

ADB	African Development Bank
AU	African Union
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of North Korea
ExIm Bank	Export-Import Bank
FOCAC	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
GIZ	German Development Cooperation (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit)
IFI	International Financial Institution
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MofCom	Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
PRC	People's Republic of China
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SPTTP	Special Preferential Tariffs Treatment Programme
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
USA	United States of America
WTO	World Trade Organisation

*Beyond right and wrong there is a field.
I will meet you there.*

- Dschalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi
(13th Century)

1 Introduction

China's engagement with African countries is widely criticised in media discourse in countries of the 'Global North'¹. However, such criticism barely scratches the surface of this extensive topic. For example, in 2006, "The Economist" published the article "Never too late to scramble" in its rubric "China in Africa", stating that in the 1950s and 1960s, *"China's main aim [...] was to gain influence. Now China wants commodities more than influence."*² The German magazine "Der Spiegel" published an article titled "China's Role in Africa: The Rush of the Greedy Helpers", declaring:

*US diplomats suspiciously observe China's forward march in Africa. With large amounts of money and rough methods the second world power secures raw materials and political influence – without concern for the workers or the environment.*³

Similarly, former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, in 2011, warned African countries about a *"'creeping colonialism' [by foreign governments] interested only in extracting natural resources and enriching themselves"*.⁴

The indicated rhetoric on 'China in Africa' is widely used by the scholarly community as well, the debate however is not limited to it. Further relevant topics in the academic discussion cover the Chinese ideology and values, including human rights and competition between different countries 'over Africa', economic and political cooperation, including the question of trade in general as well as with natural resources, and the Chinese image and soft power.⁵

Arguments and opinions by media, politicians from countries of the 'Global North' and

¹ The usage and notions of the term 'Global North' is provided at the end of this chapter.

² The Economist (2006) China in Africa. Never too Late to Scramble. Online: <http://www.economist.com/node/8089719> – accessed on 04/26/2013.

³ "Argwöhnisch beobachten US-Diplomaten Chinas Vormarsch in Afrika. Mit viel Geld und rauen Methoden sichert sich die zweite Weltmacht Rohstoffe und politischen Einfluss - Ohne Rücksicht auf Arbeiter und die Natur." Knaup, Konrad (2010) China's Rolle in Afrika: Der Ansturm der Gierigen Helfer. Online: <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/chinas-rolle-in-afrika-ansturm-der-gierigen-helfer-a-728609.html> – accessed on 04/26/2013

⁴ Huffington Post (2011) Hillary Clinton Warns Africa of 'New Colonialism'. Online: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/06/11/hillary-clinton-africa-new-colonialism_n_875318.html – accessed on 04/26/2013.

⁵ These topics were defined as the most recurring in the used sample within this research.

academia, such as the aforementioned, merely present a fraction of the existing views on China's engagement with African countries. The personal experiences I gained while working with the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) in China in the field of corporate social responsibility in outbound investments by Chinese companies, do however suggest that the idea of only one Chinese reality does not do the complexity of the issue justice. **Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyse the discourse on China's engagement with African countries by discussing and comparing the different perspectives of four defined groups of actors, namely *the Chinese government, African government officials, African academics* and *academics from the 'Global North'*, thereby highlighting the complexity and entanglements inherent within the topic.**

1.1 Research Approach

As the discourse takes place in the context of 'Africa', it is necessary to present the dominant 'Western' perspective as well as to equally display the African and the Chinese perspectives. Therefore, the particular interest of research consists in portraying the discourse as it is led by 'Western', African and Chinese academics and practitioners. Several scholars from the 'Global North' integrate interviews with African trading partners and recipients of Chinese aid into their research, as 'Western' and African scholars increasingly focus and publish on the topic. According to the scholarly community, 'African' arguments include the appreciation of receiving alternative sources for development finance on the one hand, as well as warnings about neo-colonialism and exploitation by the Chinese on the other. However, such statements mainly serve the purpose of supporting or weakening predefined perceptions.

In contrast, this thesis will point out specific recurring arguments of the defined groups of actors in order to contrast them. By systematically defining and comparing the arguments by different actors, the danger of repeating myths unquestioned, significantly decreases.

Different perspectives from the donating and receiving side of Chinese assistance and trade will be gathered and compared. This is achieved by analysing literature of the Chinese government, 'Western' and African academics as well as transcripts of self-conducted interviews with African government officials.

Considering the aforementioned, the following **research questions** arise:

- What are the specific perspectives of different groups of actors on 'China in Africa'?
 - To what extent can specific perspectives for each group be identified?
 - Which arguments are made?
 - Which similarities and differences can be identified between the various groups?

- How are China and ‘Africa’ portrayed?

These research questions will be answered using qualitative methods, mainly consisting of primary and secondary literature analysis.

The application of **qualitative content analysis** as outlined by Philipp Mayring generates content-related categories derived from the literature of the various actors and allows for a systematic comparison. Based on the analysis of these categories, well-founded answers to my research questions are obtained. Qualitative content analysis, following a systematic approach and inherent rules, allows for transparency as well as the comparison of different kinds of material used in this study.

1.2 Contribution to the Current Academic Discourse

Many scholars and journalists have published articles and books on the topic of ‘China in Africa’ in recent years. However, most stay focused on narrow aspects of China’s engagement with individual African countries, merely presenting subjective opinions. This thesis will display, analyse and compare a selection of these opinions, thereby identifying recurring arguments as well as similarities and differences between the identified groups. Many authors deliberately include different perspectives and opinions in their publications, for instance by citing Chinese and Africans, more specifically politicians as well as civilians in their publications. However, a systematic comparison of these perspectives is still lacking. As it is the aim of the study at hand is to present the current discourse on “China in Africa”, represented by the perspectives of the different groups, merely a brief overview of issues relevant for the topic will be provided prior to the analysis.

A distinctive characteristic of the examined discourse and challenge for my research lies in its up-to-date relevance. As the Chinese engagement with African countries has increasingly received attention since 2000, most publications on the topic date back to 2005 at the latest. Research in the past years struggles to keep up, owing to the fast pace of the developments and changes in the field. Therefore, the most recent literature is used for the analyses, covering the period between 2000 and 2013.

As the study presents the academic discourse on “China in Africa” by discussing fundamental articles and publications by academics from the ‘Global North’ and African countries, a literature review is not included at this point.

The topic of ‘China in Africa’ is debated within various academic fields, most prominently, Political Science, International Relations, Development Studies, African Studies and Sinology. In these various domains, this research can further contribute to the following current debates and theories:

- Politics of power/theories of international hegemony
- Debates on global values and ethics, especially regarding state sovereignty
- Resource politics
- Development theories
- Human rights
- Economics

1.3 Structure of the Content

After having presented a general introduction into the topic, the applied research approach and its contribution to the academic discourse, the following section outlines the further content of the thesis.

Chapter 2 introduces the applied methodology, qualitative content analysis as outlined by Philipp Mayring and provides definitions for important aspects of the thesis. These include outlining the difficulties in defining ‘Africa’ as well as the definitions and parameters for each analysed group of actors.

Background information on the history and an overview of the Chinese engagement with African countries is presented in **Chapter 3**. Presenting China’s foreign policy interests, development assistance and trade, as well as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, will provide an overview of general developments.

Chapter 4 contains the description and analysis of the perspectives of the Chinese government, African government officials, African academics and academics from the ‘Global North’, according to the defined topics.

The comparison of the analysed perspectives and the evaluation of the research questions are presented in **Chapter 5**.

Finally, **Chapter 6** contains a summary of the study and its findings as well as recommendations for further research.

1.4 Final Remarks and Further Considerations

Before going ahead with the research at hand, I would like point out some considerations. The deliberate limitation of the analysis to the four defined groups of actors - due to the restricted size of the thesis - confines the possibilities of deriving generalising conclusions.

I will use the terms ‘Africa’ and ‘Global North’⁶, as important components of this topic. While the difficulty of defining ‘Africa’ will be discussed in Chapter 2.2, a definition for the term ‘Global North’ is equally necessary. ‘Global North’ (and ‘Global South’ for that matter) are not strictly geographic demarcations, but describe the position of countries in the global world order. While ‘Global South’ refers to a disadvantaged political, economic and social position, countries of the ‘Global North’ are ascribed a privileged position. The application of these terms does not directly implicate the hierarchy present between ‘developed’ and ‘less developed’ countries from a Eurocentric perspective. However, the term ‘Global North’ is by no means neutral, but reflects global inequalities based on the unbalanced international distribution of labour.⁷ It should be kept in mind, that even though subsumed in one group, countries of the ‘Global North’ are by no means homogenous.

Within the literature, most authors use the phrase ‘China in Africa’. This phrase implies a activity of China in contrast to passiveness of African countries and presents ‘Africa’ as one unit. However, power relations are never one-dimensional. China has specific interests towards African countries, equally African countries have specific interest towards China. While the interests of African countries play a significant role within the research material and are accordingly included in the analysis, the main focus of this thesis however, lies in the Chinese engagement. As these issues are discussed as part of the analysis, I want to distance myself from the phrase ‘China in Africa’ and its implications in the thesis at the outset and will therefore refer to forms of the Chinese engagement with *African countries*.

⁶ However, sometimes the term ‘Western’ is applied, intending the same meaning and implications as ‘Global North’.

⁷ See for example Komlosy, Andrea (2007) *Das Werden der “Dritten Welt”*. Geschichte der Nord-Süd-Beziehungen. In Fischer, Karin et al., editors *Entwicklung und Unterentwicklung. Ein Einführung in Probleme, Theorien und Strategien*. Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag and Englert, Birgit, Grau, Ingeborg and Komlosy, Andrea (2009) *Globale Ungleichheit in historischer Perspektive*. In Englert, Birgit/Grau, Ingeborg/Komlosy, Andrea, editors *Nord-Süd-Beziehungen. Kolonialismen und Ansätze zu ihrer Überwindung*. Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag.

2 Methodology and Definitions

The following chapter outlines the applied method in particular providing an overview of qualitative content analysis as outlined by Mayring, its advantages for the research and its application, followed by an outline of the problematic nature and definition of ‘Africa’ and definitions of the analysed groups of actors.

The research questions will be answered using qualitative methods. These will consist of primary and secondary literature analysis regarding the publications on China’s engagement with African countries by the different groups of actors. Primary sources will mainly extend to policy papers by the Chinese government as well as transcripts of interviews with African government officials from Kenya, Liberia, Ghana and Tanzania, while secondary sources take the form of academic articles.

2.1 Qualitative Content Analysis (Mayring)

In research at hand, the method qualitative content analysis is applied. This method produces categories of dominant topics mentioned by the various actors, facilitating a comparison and subsequently the answers to the research question. Before beginning with the analysis, the emergence, background and practical application of the method are introduced, thereby facilitating a better understanding of the process of analysis and subsequently of the results.

The object of qualitative content analysis can be all sorts of recorded communication, which can take various forms, including the language itself and the way of speaking. Next to verbal expression, communication can be musical, pictorial, plastic or gestural. Essentially, any fixed form of communication is suitable, provided it is recorded in some manner, either as interview transcripts, discourses, protocols of observations, videotapes, documents, etc.. Qualitative content analysis follows a systematic approach and therefore specific rules, which allow others to understand the process of analysis. The research is carried out referring to a research question and/or a theoretical background. In addition, the various phases of analysis rest upon theoretical considerations. These rules are applied in order to maintain the standards of social science, especially regarding intersubjective plausibility.⁸

Qualitative content analysis originated in the field of communication studies and journalism. Researchers began analysing newspaper articles using this approach at the School of Journalism at Columbia University. The method gained popularity in the 1920s and 1930s by publications of studies conducted by Paul Laszarsfeld and Harold Lasswell, both known

⁸ cf. Mayring, Philipp (2008) *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse: Grundlagen und Techniken*. Volume 10. Edition, Basel: Beltz Verlag, 12.

for their communication models. Bernard Berelson published the first work focusing on content analysis as a proper method in 1952, describing it as an objective, systematic and qualitative analysis of the manifest content of communication. At the Allerton House Conference, organised by the University of Illinois in 1955, the participants further developed the method, emphasising the importance of describing the material itself prior to the analysis, as well as the inference of the material regarding its origination and impact. Further improvements included contingency analysis, and measuring the correlation of symbols as well as the meaning of the symbols themselves. At the Annenberg Conference 1966 at the University of Pennsylvania, the analysis of the process of analysis itself was added to the crucial aspects of the method.⁹ This aspect is described in great detail by Klaus Krippendorff (2004).¹⁰ Following the 1960s, qualitative content analysis, as a methodological approach found its way into linguistics, psychology, sociology, history and arts.¹¹ Today, qualitative content analysis is a commonly used instrument for surveying social reality and considered a systematic method for analysis avoiding rash quantifications. The analysis aims at allocating the text in a model of communication following certain rules. The researcher decomposes the material in units of analysis, while following the pre-described structure and a step-by-step process. The determined categories are justified and explained during the analysis itself, while the allocation of text fragments in these categories is in itself part of the interpretation.¹²

Philipp Mayring is considered one of the most influential academic in the current development of qualitative content analysis in German speaking areas as well as the scientific community as a whole. The analysis in this study therefore focuses on the set of rules and processes as outlined by Mayring in several publications.¹³ Mayring describes the idea of the method as a possibility to preserve the advantages of quantitative content analysis as developed within communication science and to transfer and further develop these advantages into qualitative-interpretative steps of analysis. The method qualitative content analysis follows certain hermeneutic implications. These include analysing the provenance of the material at the beginning of the process, the obligation of the scientist to explicitly outline his or her previous understanding of the topic as well as understanding qualitative content analysis as a process of comprehending not only the superficial, but also the latent meanings of communication.¹⁴ Regarding the provenance of the material used in this research, the authors within the groups of actors are described in Chapter

⁹ cf. Mayring (2008), 24f.

¹⁰ See Krippendorff, Klaus (2004) *Content Analysis. An Introduction to Its Methodology*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc..

¹¹ cf. Mayring, Philipp (2000) *Qualitative Content Analysis*. Online: <http://qualitative-research.net/fqs/fqs-e/2-00inhalt-e.htm> – accessed on 07/04/2013, 2.

¹² cf. Mayring, Philipp and Gläser-Zikuda, Michaela (2005) *Die Praxis der Qualitativen Inhaltsanalyse*. Weinheim, Basel: Beltz Verlag, 9f.

¹³ See among others Mayring (2008), Mayring and Gläser-Zikuda (2005) and Mayring (2000).

¹⁴ cf. Mayring (2008), 29.

2.3. The material itself will then be introduced in Chapter 4, which also contains the analysis as such. The previous understanding of research topic will be provided in form of a brief overview of the topic in Chapter 3, as it is the goal of the research to approach the analysis as impartial as possible (keeping in mind that objectivity can only be achieved to a certain extent).

As described in great detail by Mayring, qualitative content analysis follows a systematic approach, in which the analysis follows a fixed set of rules regarding the sequence of analysis. Nevertheless, this method does not present a standard instrument as it is adapted to the material and the respective theoretical question answered by the researcher.¹⁵ By fitting the material into a model of communication, the researcher can determine on what part of communication inferences should be made. These, for instance, can include aspects of the communicator, the situation of text-production, the socio-cultural background, the text itself or the effect of the message. In the next phase, the material is analysed step by step, following the rules of procedure, devising the material into content analytical units.¹⁶ A general model provides a better understanding of the method demonstrating the separate steps of interpretation. The first step consists of determining the units of analysis by the coding unit. These are the coding unit, the smallest analysed and categorised part of the material, the context unit, the largest categorised part of a text, and the unit of analysis itself, the sequence of the analysed text parts. The researcher develops these categories in a reciprocal relationship between theory, the research question and the material. These categories are furthermore produced according to defined rules for construction and allocation, but redefined during the analysis and re-revised (feedback loops). Finally, the researcher interprets the results in light of the main research question and the validity of the analysis and assesses them by certain quality criteria. Furthermore, Mayring distinguishes three basic forms of interpretation, namely summarisation, explication and structuration. While summarisation reduces the volume of the material significantly yet keeping significant content, explication provides additional material to questionable text fragments such as sentences and certain terms. This enhances the understanding of the text and provides an explanation thereof. Structuration aims at filtering certain aspects from the material and applying cross-sections by prior defined criteria in order to assess the material according to this criteria.¹⁷

In this chapter the emergence, background and approach of qualitative content analysis were introduced. As this method is applied as outlined by Philipp Mayring in several publications, his approach is described in greater detail. My analysis focuses on this last aspect of Mayring's method of qualitative content analysis, structuration. According to the defined categories - in this research determined according to topics - will then allow

¹⁵ cf. Mayring (2008), 43.

¹⁶ cf. Mayring (2000), 2f.

¹⁷ cf. Mayring (2008), 56f.

for a founded comparison. In addition, explication is applied where appropriate. In these cases, additional material is provided to certain statements to discuss and enhance the understanding thereof.

2.2 Defining ‘Africa’

The two geographical entities significant for my research are China and ‘Africa’. In common speech, the term ‘Africa’ is frequently used without questioning its meaning and connotations. This chapter raises the topic of defining ‘Africa’ in order to demonstrate how the term ‘Africa’ is contested and its usage is not reflective of the wide range of divergent cultures, peoples and political attitudes. While China is a well-defined term for a nation state, namely the People’s Republic of China¹⁸, researchers and journalists frequently use China in one phrase with the term ‘Africa’. By using these terms in one phrase the impression of an equally precise definition of ‘Africa’ arises. On the contrary, crucial concepts of Africa involve manifold notions of discourse, power, location, representation, geopolitics and identity. Before going into the main research topic, the difficulties of defining ‘Africa’ will be briefly elaborated. This chapter will not only support the definition of one of the groups of actors, but help to contrast the perspectives on and images of ‘Africa’. Based on these perspectives and images, the research question “how is ‘Africa’ portrayed” will be answered? However, the reader should keep in mind, that even though China presents a single actor in my research, the engagement of China in one African country cannot automatically be considered the equal to the engagement in another (African) country. In the interests of completeness it should furthermore be mentioned that even though the Chinese central government is the main Chinese actor in this research, partly independent initiatives by the Chinese provinces exist as well.

For Martina Krenceyova (2013) the definition of African academics as one group already raises the expectation of difference, while Miller (1985) writes that only recently ‘Africa’ became the sole representative of a single continent, differentiated and circumscribed.¹⁹ Homogeneous ‘African’ positions cannot exist to the same degree that academics ascribe exclusively to ‘Africans’ or unified European responses.²⁰ As any constructed unit, ‘Africa’ must be seen as an act of imagination, an invented idea as well as a physical reality, which is linguistically, culturally and politically diverse.²¹ Any meaning of ‘Africa’ is hegemonic

¹⁸ China, in this context stands for the People’s Republic of China including Taiwan (Republic of China). Recognising only one China marks a condition for establishing diplomatic relations with the PRC. Most countries recognise the People’s Republic of China including Taiwan thereby denying Taiwanese independence.

¹⁹ cf. Miller, Christopher (1985) *Blank Darkness. Africanist Discourse in French*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 6.

²⁰ cf. Krenceyova, Michaela (2013) *Africa and the Rest: Imaginations Beyond a Continent in African Scholarship on Human Rights and Development*. Ph.D thesis, University of Vienna, 16f.

²¹ cf. Parker, John and Rathbone, Richard (2007) *African History: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

and contested.²² ‘Africa’ constitutes more than ‘just’ the sum of its several countries; therefore, any discourse on ‘Africa’, constructed and perceived as African, establishes ‘Africa’ as a discourse category. African scholars, as any scholars, possess their own ideas and positions, often ambiguously subsumed into the category of “one Africa”. ‘Africa’, from an ‘African’ perspective, seems to aim at legitimising the validity of the author’s opinion and knowledge on ‘Africa’ by assuming proximity to ‘Africa’ as an object of study and simultaneously creating an alleged African identity.²³ Africanity stands for the imaginary unity of ‘Africa’. Eno and Eno (2010) provide examples of different types of Africanity or Africaness existing on the continent:²⁴

1. Persons who either live on the continent regardless of the reason (Africanity by accident of geography),
2. Persons who were born in Africa (Africanity by birth),
3. Settlers which came to Africa in the course of colonisation and stayed after independence (Africanity by settlers),
4. Culture as an instrumental factor, including the possibility of acculturation (Africanity by culture or acculturation),
5. Persons who may not be African by other mentioned factors such as birth but understand the sentiment of Africanity based on values, ideology and thought (Africanity by ideology),
6. Persons who use African identity pragmatically when suiting their purposes (Africanity by pretension or circumstantial Africanity)

Thereafter, people attain Africanity either as a matter of choice or if efforts are made.

For my research the idea of an African discourse is specifically important. An African discourse does not differ fundamentally from ‘Western’ discourse, neither in its content nor form. However, it differs from ‘Western’ discourse in the subjective positions entailed and created from within. Again, African discourse is not in itself homogeneous, static or unchangeable.²⁵ Most academics define African discourse as created by authors of African origin, including the (new) diaspora. African scholars from this perspective represent and create concepts of ‘Africa’. These concepts are connected with the conditions they face, consequently, their collective and strategic meaning must be understood against the described backdrop. The conditions under which ‘African’ knowledge emerges differs from those in which hegemonic knowledge is produced, based on the historical and political developments and not on an ascribed difference of ‘Africa’ or ‘Africans’ themselves. Defining

²² cf. Krenceyova (2013), 37.

²³ cf. *ibid.*, 31.

²⁴ cf. Eno, Mohamed A. and Eno, Omar A. (2010) *Surveying Through the Narratives of African Identity*. Online: http://www.academia.edu/1221204/Surveying_through_the_Narratives_of_African_Identity – accessed on 08/29/2013, 3f.

²⁵ cf. Krenceyova (2013), 55.

African scholars then makes it necessary to define Western scholars against their material and political constraints.²⁶ Research linkages between South and North remain rare. Even if they exist, academics from the ‘Global North’ tend to ‘use’ African scholars for local research and data collection, while the research itself and projects are decided and developed alongside writing and publication in the ‘Global North’.²⁷

This chapter demonstrated that the meaning of ‘Africa’ is not as precise as many academics and journalists presume. The analysed documents use the term ‘Africa’ seemingly unquestioned as will be shown in more detail in Chapter 6. In the research at hand ‘Africa’ is regarded as an inclusive and dynamic concept, allowing identities to develop flexibly and for the contingency of knowledge.²⁸ From this perspective, ‘Africa’ is a signifier, situated in a discourse from which it gains a meaning.²⁹ To not perpetuate the constructed unity between the different countries on the continent, I will instead refer to *African countries*. Again, for my research, the idea of an African discourse and subsequently an African perspective is essential. However, this idea does not exclusively pertain to ‘Africa’ but equally to the ‘Global North’.

2.3 Definition of Actors

In the following chapter the groups of actors referred to are defined, before analysing their published materials. The presented groups are by no means exhaustive, but rather examples of actors engaged in African countries, thereby representing a cross-section of actors mentioned frequently in current publications. The sample chosen for this research are the Chinese government, African government officials, African academics and academics from the ‘Global North’.

2.3.1 The Chinese Government

Presenting the perception of the Chinese government not only demonstrates precisely this, the Chinese perception, but at the same time enables a direct comparison with other sources commenting and assessing the ‘Chinese approach’. The Chinese government is represented by official government documents published between 2006 and 2013 by the current and former central governments of the PR China, as well as published transcripts of interviews and speeches by Chinese government representatives and officials. Most of the included government documents were published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Commerce. Additionally, Chinese media sources are included. Due to the tight governmental control over media in China, these sources equally represent the gov-

²⁶ cf. Krenceyova (2013), 75f.

²⁷ A definition of ‘Global North’ can be found in Chapter 1, the researchers included in my analysis are further defined in Chapter 2.3.

²⁸ cf. *ibid.*, 151.

²⁹ cf. *ibid.*, 242.

ernment's opinion, or, are at least in line with the official policies. Further sources of the group are documents issued within the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the official political framework for China-Africa relations.³⁰ The Chinese and African governments jointly issue policy papers within the individual fora every three years. These publications do not solely represent the Chinese perception on its engagement with African countries but rather demonstrate different aspects and hierarchies within the relationships. FO-CAC documents especially allow for insights in the interaction between the Chinese and African governments.

2.3.2 African Government Officials

This group contains people working in and for the governments of African countries. The material for this group was obtained from interviews with bureaucrats from Kenya, Liberia, Ghana and Tanzania. All interviews were conducted personally in Spring 2013 as semi-structured expert interviews, using a flexible questionnaire adapted to the respective country of each interview partner. For reasons of data protection no further identifying characteristics other than a general explanation of their common background is provided. All bureaucrats work in or for the governments of the named countries, either directly in a ministry and governmental bodies or for another governmental employee. These officials were chosen as a group to be analysed as they represent an African perspective not directly outlined in other literature. The perception of African government officials can to a certain extent demonstrate the views of governments of African countries without being bound to the usual political rhetoric nor the official positions and policies. Due to their exposition to issues regarding China in within their occupation, they are not only involved in decision-making processes of their countries, but possess a certain amount of information about these decision-making processes regarding China within their governments. Therefore, my interview partners can provide insights into the implementation and cooperation of their respective governments with China, within the government bodies themselves and the Chinese engagement with their countries. All interview partners have been to China and possess broad knowledge on aspects of China's own development as well as personal experiences in the described context. During the interviews I encouraged my interview partners to express their views, to recount their personal experiences with the Chinese engagement with their respective countries. Nevertheless, the reader should keep in mind that the interviewed officials are in an ambivalent position due to their primary loyalty to their governments and their openness to express their thoughts might have been impaired.

2.3.3 African Academics

Whereas defining the Chinese government and African government officials was relatively simple due to the precise definitions of these groups, determining African academics proves

³⁰ A description of the development and cornerstones of FO-CAC can be found in Chapter 3.3.

more complicated. As discussed in Chapter 2.2, the question who is considered an African academic is based on the definition of ‘Africa’ itself and located within the discourse on African identity. African scholars, are in the described context, defined as authors of African origin, even though the meaning of African origin retains the same complex question of Africanity. In the analysis literature by academics considering themselves as African is used for this group. For example, the Center for Conflict Resolution in Cape Town, South Africa, commissioned the book “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon” (edited by Kweku Ampiah and Sansha Naidu). This collection of articles aims at giving an overview of Chinese activities in African countries, including many country examples and analysis’ regarding the interests of different actors. From this collection, articles written by academics of African origin (in this case born in an African country) were chosen, the majority having completed their doctoral studies in Great Britain or the USA. This identifying characteristic applies to most authors of the included articles apart from the anthologies as well. The second anthology included in my analysis already identifies its authors in the title: “African Perspectives on China in Africa”. The editors (Firoze Manji and Stephen Marks) note in the preface that much has been published on ‘China in Africa’, yet most publications do not take into account the voice of independent African analysts and activists and are not visible in the general discussion. Most authors solely assess the diminished influence of the ‘Global North’ or denounce Chinese practices but do not include this ‘voice’. Consequently, for their anthology, Manji and Marks identified leading institutions, activists and academics within ‘Africa’ who worked and published on China, and which, as the editors emphasise “[...] *are united by their concern for, and commitment to, social justice for Africa’s people.*”³¹ African academics, for the research at hand are not subsumed into one category because they are expected to voice the same opinions per se, but due to their origin. It is furthermore the purpose of this research to identify differences and similarities of the arguments between the different groups of actors as well as within these groups.

2.3.4 Academics from the ‘Global North’

The authors of the analysed books and articles in this group were mostly born and educated in countries of the ‘Global North’, especially Great Britain and the USA. The authors for the present sample were chosen according to the frequency of mentioning in other publications on the topic. The example of Horace Campbell however, demonstrates that with this group again a strict delineation proves difficult (Campbell was born in Jamaica and educated in the Caribbean, Canada, Uganda and the UK and taught at universities in the USA, Tanzania, South Africa, Ireland and Uganda.) He would, from his origin, not be included neither in the group of African academics nor in the group of academics from the ‘Global North’. Since he is affiliated with an American university

³¹ Manji, Firoze (2007) Preface. In Manji, Firoze/Marks, Stephen, editors African Perspectives on China in Africa. Cape Town, Nairobi, Oxford: Fahamu. Pambazuka News, vii.

and the pattern of his arguments can be considered ‘Western’, his article is included in the analysis of this group.

This chapter described the applied methodology and provided definitions of the chosen groups of actors. In particular the definition of ‘Africa’ highlighted difficulties within the process of this research. The next chapter concludes the background information supporting the analysis, providing an overview of Chinese relations with African countries, the Chinese aid system and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.

3 Historical Background

China and African countries share a long history since Admiral Zheng He made first contact with African countries as early as the 15th century. This chapter will provide a brief overview of China's engagement with African countries following the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The overview is kept short as it serves the purpose of introducing the topic, thereby providing background information on the foreign policy context necessary to better understand the following analysis. As first exchanges mainly included development assistance and barter trade, further focus is placed on the Chinese aid system. A separate paragraph is dedicated to the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) presenting the current political framework for relations between China and African countries. The primary focus of this chapter is to provide an overview of the historical background of China's relations with African countries. However, the reader should keep in mind that all literature used in an introductory chapter already presents the topic from certain perspectives.

3.1 Foreign Policy Context

China's engagement with African countries today becomes visible in foreign trade statistics, diplomatic meetings of government officials and heads of state, growing numbers of Chinese immigrants in African countries and large infrastructure projects such as ports, roads and oil pipelines.³² The meeting of the African Union in Banjul, The Gambia, in 2006, demonstrated the Chinese interest in African countries in an unprecedented manner: for the first time, a large Chinese delegation participated in a meeting of the African Union.³³ These examples are the latest developments in the Chinese engagement with African countries, which have developed during a long period of time, persisting through changing world orders.

After the PR China was founded in 1949, China initiated formal diplomatic ties with African countries following the Bandung Conference 1955 in Indonesia.³⁴ Today, 50 African countries maintain formal diplomatic relations with China, while four countries (Burkina Faso, Sao Tome, Gambia and Swaziland) maintain official ties with Taiwan and consequently not with China. Trade flows in both directions, although asymmetrically. African countries tend to export natural resources, while they receive Chinese manufactured goods. Some countries, for instance Angola, maintain a positive trade balance with

³² cf. Mayer, Harald (2008) Die Rückkehr nach Afrika: Chinas aktuelles Engagement in Afrika aus entwicklungspolitischer Sicht. Master's thesis, University of Vienna, Vienna, 3.

³³ cf. *ibid.*, 28.

³⁴ cf. Marafa, Lawal Mohammed (2007) Business and Development Relationship with China: Seeking Moral and Capital Values of the Last Economic Frontier. Paper proposed for the 2007 African Economic Conference; November 15th-17th 2007. UN Conference Centre, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Information Office of the State Council of the PRC (2011) China's Foreign Aid. Online: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-04/21/c_13839683.htm – accessed on 03/13/2013, 2.

China by exporting large volumes of oil, but for most African countries the volume of imports exceeds the volume of exports.³⁵

China has been providing development assistance to African countries since the 1950s.³⁶ At the Bandung Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Conference in 1955, 29 Asian and African countries convened with the purpose of confronting colonial and Cold War issues. At the conference, the participants established the Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence as the basis of the Non-Aligned Movement.³⁷ Some authors interpret China's attendance at the Bandung conference as an attempt to undermine US hegemony in Asia³⁸ as the declared goals of the conference included promoting Afro-Asian economic and cultural cooperation and discouraging colonialism in Africa and Asia. One year later, in 1956, Egypt established diplomatic relations with China as the first African country.³⁹ During the following years, China provided aid to a number of countries, most of them 'fellow socialists'. Providing aid served the purpose of playing receiving countries off against Taiwan as officially recognising Beijing and not Taipei was made a precondition.

In the 1960s, ideological differences and the growing concern about an increasingly dominant Soviet Union spurred the aid flow. By breaking from Moscow and increasingly interacting with newly founded countries on the African continent and the Non-Aligned Movement, the Chinese government sought to establish a balance between the USA and the Soviet Union in the bipolar world order. In this political environment China supported leftist and political movements in 'Africa', spending a modest amount of covert funding as well as sending materials and advisors to several independence movements.

China not only shipped money and goods to African countries but also sent delegations, workers and medical teams. Chinese Delegations visiting Africa in the 1960s saw numerous similarities with their own country, among them the need to build production capabilities for food, clothing and other daily necessities. During their visits, the Chinese

³⁵ cf. Mayer (2008), 30.

³⁶ cf. Yiagadeesen, Samy (2010) China's Aid Policies in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges. The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs 99, Nr. 406.

³⁷ The Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence include: mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence. People's Daily Online (2007) Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. Online: <http://english.people.com.cn/92824/92845/92870/6441502.html> – accessed on 07/18/2013.

³⁸ cf. Ampiah, Kweku; Naidu, Sansha (2008) The Sino-African Relationship. In Ampiah, Kweku; Naidu, Sansha, editor Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon. China and Africa. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 6.

³⁹ Interestingly, China includes all countries on the African continent in its Africa policies, whereas the USA, when referring to Africa usually only includes sub-Saharan countries. Northern African countries such as Egypt are instead considered as Middle East. cf. Council on Foreign Relations (2006) More than Humanitarianism: A Strategic U.S. Approach toward Africa. Independent Task Force Report No. 56. Online: <http://www.cfr.org/world/more-than-humanitarianism/p9302> – accessed on 04/28/2013, 3f.

delegations recommended a mix of aid to meet urgent and long-term needs, offered a balance of technical training and modest turn-key projects in industry and agriculture that could be constructed quickly by Chinese experts and then handed over. During this period, the Chinese government sent the first medical teams to African countries as well. The projects largely reflected China's domestic idea about development and consisted of centrally planned interventions to boost production, health and infrastructure.⁴⁰ As a first guideline for Chinese development cooperation, Zhou Enlai announced the "Eight Principles for Economic Aid and Technical Assistance to Other Countries".⁴¹

Already in the 1960s, trade between China and African countries was arranged as barter, swapping Chinese goods for raw materials.⁴² The 1970s were dominated by decolonisation and economic self-reliance of African countries on one, and the sino-soviet split and Chairman Mao Zedong's theory of the intermediate zone on the other hand. This theory claimed a space of 'oppressed' non-'Western' countries between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War and their fight over influence in the international arena.⁴³ In this context, the importance of the African continent for China grew, as Beijing sought to distance itself from its previous pro-soviet policy of "leaning to one side" (*pianxie*) and instead moved towards "three worlds" (*sange shijie*), which recognised the growing importance of the developing world in international affairs.⁴⁴

3.2 The Chinese Aid System

In the 1960s, China was a receiving country of development assistance provided by countries of the 'Global North', yet, as previously described, already provided assistance to other countries itself. According to the Chinese government, its foreign aid programme was initiated in 1950, material assistance to the DPRK and Vietnam being the first donations.⁴⁵ Starting in the late 1970s, China gradually began to mirror the pattern of the 'Global North'. In particular Japan's early commercial engagement with China, based on mutual economic benefit in providing aid to other countries was imitated.⁴⁶ The term 'aid' in the context of China as a donor to African countries include a wide range of instru-

⁴⁰ cf. Bräutigam, Deborah (2009) *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 31f.

⁴¹ The Eight Principles for Economic Aid and Technical Assistance to Other Countries can be found in Appendix A. See Information Office of the State Council of the PRC (2011).

⁴² cf. Bräutigam (2009), 55.

⁴³ cf. Ampiah (2008), 6.

⁴⁴ According to Mao's theory, the USA and the Soviet Union made up the First World, smaller developed states, such as Canada, Japan and European countries were counted as the Second World, whereas China and the majority of developing nations including African countries comprised the Third World. cf. Lateigne, Marc (2009) *Chinese Foreign Policy: An Introduction*. Routledge.

⁴⁵ cf. Information Office of the State Council of the PRC (2011).

⁴⁶ cf. Bräutigam (2009), 24; China-DAC Study Group (2009-11) *Economic Transformation and Poverty Reduction: How it happened in China, helping it happen in Africa*. Volume 1: Main Findings and Policy Recommendations. Online: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/povertyreduction/49528585.pdf> – accessed on 03/11/2013, 28.

ments. The Chinese government does not define aid according to Official Development Assistance (ODA) as laid out by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and its Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC). Chinese aid therefore can include ODA as well as other fundings, for instance foreign direct investments and contracts with Chinese companies.⁴⁷

From a ‘Western’ perspective, the nontransparent Chinese policy making process makes an understanding of the Chinese aid system more difficult.⁴⁸ The Chinese aid system is organised as follows: The State Council oversees all aid programmes, while the Ministry of Finance, after consulting the Ministry of Commerce (MofCom), is responsible for drawing up the foreign aid budget. Strategically, however, the Ministry of Commerce is seen as the leading agency governing China’s incoming as well as outgoing aid programmes. The Bureau of International Economic Cooperation manages incoming, the Department of Foreign Aid supervises outgoing aid.⁴⁹ MofCom develops foreign aid projects, regulations, overall and annual plans as well, examines and approves projects and manages the project execution. While China’s Export-Import Bank (ExIm Bank) is in charge of projects with concessional loans from allocating to recovering the loan, Chinese embassies or consulates abroad coordinate and manage the projects locally.⁵⁰ Deborah Bräutigam (2009) notes that both MofCom and ExIm Bank are primarily tasked with building China’s domestic economy.⁵¹

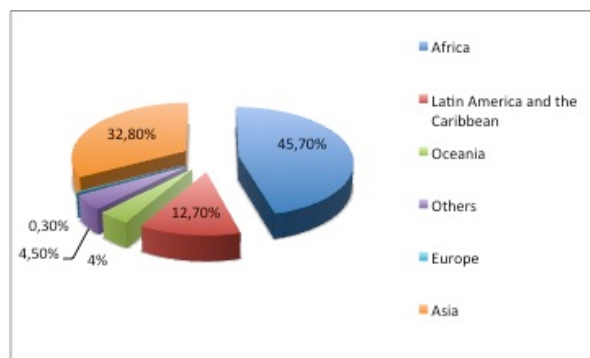


Figure 1: Geographical Distribution of China’s Foreign Aid Funds in 2009⁵²

⁴⁷ The term aid in my research refers to Chinese aid as outlined by the Chinese government. Likewise, when adopting the term aid (and/or development assistance) from other authors, these concepts will not be distinguished from each other. Changing the term (from aid to development assistance) does not change the content for the actors relevant in this research. Therefore, a reflection of the usage of the term is not necessary in each case.

⁴⁸ cf. Davies, Martyn (2008) How China Delivers Development Assistance to Africa. Online:: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Stellenbosch http://www.ccs.org.za/downloads/DFID_FA_Final.pdf – accessed on 03/13/2013, 2f.

⁴⁹ cf. Information Office of the State Council of the PRC (2011), 1; Davies (2008).

⁵⁰ cf. Information Office of the State Council of the PRC (2011), 17.

⁵¹ cf. Bräutigam (2009), 15.

⁵² Information Office of the State Council of the PRC (2011), 12

Figure 1 visualises the geographical distribution of Chinese foreign aid funds in 2009. Aid to African countries noticeably makes up the largest proportion with 45.7% of all funds.

Chinese aid is mostly provided bilaterally, although a portion is allocated through multilateral institutions such as UN Agencies and the African Development Bank (ADB), as well as through trilateral and regional cooperation. While the scope of Chinese international aid for development gradually expanded, South-South cooperation in parallel developing rapidly.⁵³

The Information Office of the State Council distinguishes eight types of aid: complete projects, goods and materials, technical cooperation, human resource development cooperation, medical teams sent abroad, emergency humanitarian aid and debt relief.⁵⁴ Fields of development cooperation include agriculture, industry, economic infrastructure, construction of public facilities, education, medical and health care as well as clean energy and coping with climate change. Gifts of aid packages are frequently announced along with other agreements during high-level visits. Chinese aid is still shaped by the “foreign policy framework” established in the 1950s, based on the principle of non-interference in internal affairs.⁵⁵ Between 2004 and 2011, the volume of foreign aid increased by 29.4% annually on average and is mainly provided in three forms:⁵⁶

1. Grants (aid gratis),
2. Interest-free loans (both provided by the State Bank) and
3. Concessional loans provided by Exim Bank

In 1995, the Chinese government implemented a major aid reform, not only creating new instruments to link aid, trade and investment more closely (State Bank, Exim Bank and the Agricultural Development Bank), but to combine aid and mutual cooperation through trade. After 2000, the Chinese government further advanced this reform, facilitated by China’s entry into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001. From 2000 to 2012, the proportion of China-African trade within Africa’s total foreign trade volume increased from 3.8% to 16.3%.⁵⁷ Within these reforms, the government promoted ‘common prosperity’ by creating regional organisations, refining the portfolio of tools for domestic restructuring and pushing mature “sunset” industries offshore. Public management reforms went well beyond traditional aid and emphasised competition, efficiency and market oriented principles in the use of foreign money domestically as well as abroad. For example, corporations formerly owned by Chinese ministries were further separated

⁵³ cf. Information Office of the State Council of the PRC (2011), 18.

⁵⁴ cf. *ibid.*, 6f.

⁵⁵ cf. Bräutigam (2009), 23f.

⁵⁶ cf. Information Office of the State Council of the PRC (2011), 3f.

⁵⁷ Information Office of the State Council of the PRC (2013) China-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation (2013). Online: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-08/29/c_132673093_3.htm – accessed on 09/26/2013.

from each other and pushed to operate as independent companies, responsible for their own profits and losses.⁵⁸

Within the Chinese aid system, traditional forms of aid (ODA) and trade are closely linked, but data is clouded by differing accounting methodologies practiced by Chinese bureaucracies and the more streamlined methodologies adopted by OECD-DAC.⁵⁹ Aiming at the goal of closely linking aid and trade, the Chinese government established overseas economic zones as the key platforms of China's "going global" programme. These are built and operated by Chinese enterprises as profitable ventures, but receive considerable (financial) support and subsidies from the Chinese government. For example, by establishing special economic zones (SEZs), the Chinese government can transfer their domestic experiences to other countries while promoting economic development. The SEZs create a protective bubble in which the government can experiment with new economic policy approaches without needing to change policies on a national level.^{60,61}

The Chinese government legitimises its interest in African countries not only with the shared historical experience regarding colonial oppression, but its own experiences in successfully using foreign development assistance to speed up its transformational process and economic development. As an aid recipient, China sought to specify and obtain particular contributions from individual donors, beginning with infrastructure building and industrial modernisation. At a later stage, China also received know-how in technology, agriculture, higher education, urbanisation, transport and public administration.⁶²

Figure 2 shows the distribution of Foreign Direct Investment in Africa in different sectors. The largest amount is invested in mining (30.6 %), followed by finance (19.5%), the building industry (16.4%) and manufacturing (15.3%). China's engagement in African countries advanced progressively over time. China has advanced to Africa's largest trading partner in 2010, as well as a leading source of foreign direct investment to African countries.⁶³

⁵⁸ cf. Bräutigam (2009), 78f.

⁵⁹ cf. Alden, Chris (2012) China and Africa: The Relationship Matures. *Strategic Analysis*, 36, Nr. 5, 702.

⁶⁰ cf. Bräutigam (2009), 97f.

⁶¹ The SEZs established in Africa do not play the role of a Chinese semi-peripheries as do those in East Asian countries. Nevertheless, the development of these zones should be mentioned as they can function as an experimental ground for economic policies. Since SEZs have substantially supported China's economic growth, they are seen as a possibility to create growth and attract industries in African countries. Furthermore, SEZs present a unique experimental model of development cooperation in African countries building on market-based decisions and investments. See for example Bräutigam, Deborah and Xiaoyang, Tang (2011) African Shenzhen: China's Special Economic Zones in Africa. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 49.

⁶² cf. Davies (2008), 26.

⁶³ cf. Alden (2012), 702.

⁶⁴ Information Office of the State Council of the PRC (2013), 3

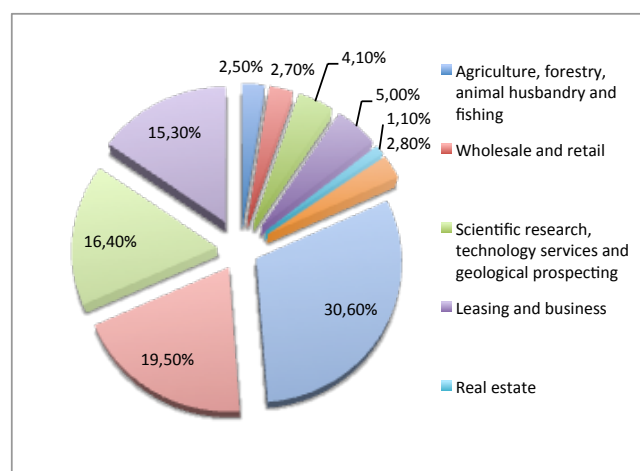


Figure 2: Distribution of China's Direct Investment in Africa (by the end of 2011)⁶⁴

3.3 The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation

Today, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) is the main political forum for China-Africa relations. In the following, the development and features of the forum are described as it has gained great importance over the past 13 years.

FOCAC was formally established in the year 2000 under the joint initiative of China and African countries with the purpose of strengthening friendly cooperation, jointly meeting the challenges of economic globalisation and seeking common development. The initiative has the following objectives: equal consultation, enhancing understanding, expanding consensus, strengthening friendship and promoting cooperation. Today, FOCAC members include the governments of the PR China and 50 African states as well as the Commission of the African Union. The FOCAC dialogue and consultation mechanism contains three levels, the most important being the Ministerial Conference. The Ministerial Conference is held every three years, alternatively convening in China and African countries. Previous meetings took place in Beijing (2000), Addis Ababa (2003), Beijing (2006), Sharm el Sheikh (2009) and again in Beijing (2012). the Senior Official Follow-up Meeting and the Senior Official Preparatory Meeting.⁶⁵ FOCAC serves the purpose of creating an effective mechanism and the institutional vehicle for dialogue between China and African countries. At each of the FOCAC summits, China and African countries made a series of commitments, strengthening trade and investments as well as cooperation in other fields such as diplomatic support in international fora. China for example announced the Special Preferential Tariff Treatment Programme (SPTTP), which removed import tariffs on 190 different items from 25 African nations. This programme was implemented in January 2005 and presumably boosted Sino-African trade and economic relations substantially. Further declarations by the Chinese government within FOCAC frequently

⁶⁵ cf. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013a) FOCAC ABC. Online: <http://www.focac.org/eng/lttda/1tjj/t933522.htm> – accessed on 08/28/2013.

include relief of mature governmental debts of African countries as well as plans for infrastructure and other aid projects and pledges to train professionals.⁶⁶ At the same time FOCAC presents a unique opportunity for companies to acquire business. 1500 business people already participated in the first FOCAC in 2000. Along side the third Ministerial Conference in Addis Ababa (2003), a China-Africa Business Conference was held.⁶⁷ In the context of the first meetings of head of states in 2000, the conference passed the “Beijing Declaration of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation” and the “Programme for China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development”, which are included in the analysis of Chapter 4.1. The third ministerial meeting of FOCAC, the Beijing Summit of 2006, took on particular importance. The date commemorated 50 years of official relations between China and Africa since the initiation of first diplomatic relations with Egypt in 1956. Demonstrating the wide range of issues discussed and included in FOCAC, the former Chinese president Hu Jintao announced eight measures to strengthen practical cooperation at the conference:

1. Support national development in Africa
2. Increase assistance
3. Provision of preferential loans and preferential buyer’s credit
4. The establishment of the China-Africa Development Fund
5. Assistance in building the African Union conference center in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
6. Debt and customs exemption
7. Establishment of economic cooperation and trade zones
8. Increased engagement in human resources development, cooperation in education, health care and other regions

In 2012, UN General Secretary Ban Ki-moon joined the opening ceremony acknowledging the growing importance of FOCAC.⁶⁸ In addition, the Commission of the African Union took part in FOCAC for the first time, indicating a deeper institutionalisation of FOCAC despite its missing secretariat⁶⁹. Furthermore, Hu Jintao introduced the “new type of China-Africa strategic partnership”. This new strategy aims at supporting Africa’s peaceful development and strengthening China-Africa cooperation in five major areas:

1. Investment and financing
2. Assistance
3. African integration

⁶⁶ cf. Davies (2008), 9f.

⁶⁷ cf. Naidu, Sanusha (2007) The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC): What Does the Future Hold? China Report, 43, Nr. 3, 284.

⁶⁸ cf. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013a).

⁶⁹ cf. Alden (2012), 703.

4. Non-governmental exchanges

5. Peace and security

Alongside the ministerial conference, various sub forums were initiated on a wide range of issues such as agriculture, science and technology, law, finance, culture, Think Tanks, youth, NGOs, women, media and local governments.⁷⁰

This chapter provided an overview of the foreign policy context in which China's present relationship with African countries emerged as well as the institutional structure and the development of the Chinese aid system and major developments within the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. Since the 1950s, China continuously provided assistance to African countries, thereby strengthening its respective position in a continuously changing world order. The description of the Chinese aid system demonstrates the mixture of ODA and trade, as well as China's approach in providing aid while applying the experiences made a recipient country itself. FOCAC presents the main political forum for China's relations with African countries, gaining importance with each gathering since its creation in 2000. This Chapter concludes the first section of this thesis outlining the methodology and providing necessary background information for the following analysis.

⁷⁰ cf. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013a).

4 Perspectives

The following Chapter presents the perspectives of the different groups of actors, as previously defined, on the Chinese engagement with African countries. The examined material of all groups is comparatively current, most dating from 2005 to today. The rapid changes and evolvments in China-Africa relations led to the decision to concentrate on the most current publications. For example, the Chinese government published its first policy paper on foreign aid as recently as 2011, its African strategy dates back to 2006. For each perspective or group of actors, the same approach based on Mayring's qualitative content analysis described in Chapter 2.1 is applied.

First, the content of each defined topic of the material of the respective group is presented, introducing the original material and providing the basis for the following analysis. The analysis discusses the content and, where necessary, provides additional information from secondary sources. The chapter commences with the perspective of the Chinese government as the initiator and directly involved actor in this topic, followed by the African government officials as practitioners involved as respective counterparts. Next, the academic views of the Chinese engagement in African countries are discussed, beginning with African academics and finally presenting the view of academics from the 'Global North'.

4.1 The Chinese Government

The following chapter analyses the position of the Chinese government expressed through policy papers on African countries. Owing to the limited number of policy papers, published transcripts of interviews, speeches and media reports were included, creating a diverse pool of sources. As described in Chapter 2.3, the tight state control over Chinese media allows the usage of these articles and reports as sources representing a Chinese government perspective. Government documents used for the analysis are:

- China's Africa Policy (2006)
- White Paper China-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation (2010)⁷¹
- White Paper Foreign Aid (2011)
- White Paper Foreign Trade (2011)
- Ministry of Commerce: Year-end Review VIII of Commerce Work in 2012: China-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation Further Developed with Mutual Benefits (2012)

⁷¹ During the course of this research, the Chinese government published its most recent White Paper on the "China-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation (2013)". The changes relevant for my analysis, in comparison to the included White Paper published in 2010, are only minor. The content is accordingly reflected in the analysis, focusing to a greater extent on the White Paper published in 2010.

Additional sources include media accounts, interview transcripts and speeches from China's current Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, the Chinese President Xi Jinping, the former Counselor Du Xiacong of the Chinese Permanent Mission to the UN, Jia Qinglin, Chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and Lu Shaye of the African Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Further analysed the documents include the "Programme For China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development" and "The Fifth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Beijing Action Plan (2013-2015)". These two documents were published by the Chinese government together with the African governments present at the FOCAC in 2009 and 2012. They therefore portray not only the Chinese policy but the Chinese policy in line with the 'African' policy. My aim is to present the Chinese view of its engagement with African countries in this chapter, which is simultaneously part of the official FOCAC declarations. In the aforementioned documents, the following topics contain the main aspects: *Chinese Values and Ideology*, *Economic Cooperation*, *the Chinese Image* and *China's Relationship with other Actors*. The last subsection before summarising the Chinese perception contains the analysis of the FOCAC documents.

4.1.1 Chinese Values and Ideology

All the examined documents describe the values and ideology behind China's foreign policy in general and also regarding its engagement with African countries in particular. Most documents highlight the good nature of the relationship between China and African countries, but in fact refer to African countries as one unit: Africa. Regular high-level visits between Chinese and African leaders are presented as evidence of the good relationship between China and 'Africa'.⁷² Du Xiacong, former Counselor of the Chinese Permanent Mission to the UN, emphasises at the "Symposium on Africa-China Relations" (Syracuse University, 2010):

*Over the past 20 years, successive Chinese Foreign Ministers have paid their first visit abroad every year to Africa. Why? Did they do so with a hidden agenda? No! The objective is to show that the Chinese government attaches great importance to China-Africa relations. [...] I think Africa must be the most-frequently visited continent for Chinese Foreign Ministers successively. Moreover, the frequency of African visits by the heads of state and government of China is maybe higher than that of other countries.*⁷³

The Chinese government perceives these high-level visits as important to maintain the friendship that evolved through historical ties and shared experience of colonial oppression on one hand and the similarities as developing countries on the other.⁷⁴ Government

⁷² cf. Government of the PRC (2006) China's African Policy. Online: <http://www.focac.org/eng/zfgx/dfzc/t481748.htm> – accessed on 03/13/2013.

⁷³ Du, Xiacong (2010) China's Role in Africa. Online: <http://www.china-un.org/eng/czthd/t681822.htm> – accessed on 07/17/2013.

⁷⁴ cf. Information of the State Council of the PRC (2010) China-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation. Online: http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2010-12/23/content_1771603.htm – accessed on

officials contrast this friendship with the United States of America: “[W]hile the Americans are busy preparing for their Christmas holidays in mid-December each year, we Chinese diplomats responsible for African Affairs are occupied with the upcoming visit of our Foreign Minister to Africa.”⁷⁵ China not only shares a common fate with African countries but strategical interests as well.⁷⁶ The Chinese-‘African’ friendship is underlined by the same values forming the basis of China’s foreign policy. These values are frequently reflected in all documents and include equality, effectiveness, mutual benefit, reciprocity, mutual development, common prosperity, complementarity, sincerity, win-win cooperation and mutual respect.⁷⁷ For example, the “*China-Africa friendship is embedded in the long history of inter-exchange Sharing similar historical experience, China and Africa have long sympathized*”⁷⁸ with and supported each other in the struggle for national liberation and forged a profound friendship.”⁷⁹ These values refer to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, namely:⁸⁰

1. Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity,
2. Mutual non-aggression,
3. Non-interference in each other’s internal affairs,
4. Equality and mutual benefit,
5. Peaceful coexistence.

In addition to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, former Chinese prime minister Zhou Enlai announced the Eight Principles for Economic Aid and Technical Assistance in 1964. These accentuate the previously named Five Principles and further stress the intention of the Chinese government to support the development of recipient countries’ self-reliance through Chinese aid, using materials of the best quality manufactured by China at market prices for projects, including local personnel, especially in technical aspects of the projects, and assuring Chinese experts reside under the same conditions as local experts.⁸¹ Many documents refer to these principles as well, especially China’s

07/17/2013; Government of the PRC (2006); Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013c) Transcript of Director-General Lu Shaye of the African Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with Phoenix TV (March 25, 2013). Online: <http://www.focac.org/eng/zfgx/dfzc/t1035499.htm> – accessed on 07/17/2013; Information Office of the State Council of the PRC (2011); Bi, Mingxin (2012) Full text of top Chinese political advisor’s speech at AU summit. Online: http://www.gov.cn/english/2012-01/29/content_2053803.htm – accessed on 07/17/2013; Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2010) Time Magazine Interview with Mr. Lu Shaye, Director General of Department of African Affairs. Online: <http://wcm.fmprc.gov.cn/pub/zflt/eng/jlydh/sjzs/t755832.htm>. [lastchecked07/20/2013] – accessed on 07/20/2013.

⁷⁵ Du (2010).

⁷⁶ cf. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013c).

⁷⁷ cf. Du (2010); Information of the State Council of the PRC (2010); Government of the PRC (2006).

⁷⁸ British spelling rules are applied in general. However, in citations, American spelling is tolerated.

⁷⁹ Government of the PRC (2006).

⁸⁰ People’s Daily Online (2007).

⁸¹ cf. Government of the PRC (2006), Appendix I. The full text of the principles can be found in Appendix A.

respect for the efforts of African countries to resolve their issues independently, not interfering in internal affairs, respecting the sovereignty of all countries and not attaching strings to development and other financial assistance.⁸² However, the one-China principle as the political foundation of each relationship must be respected, hence the countries must refrain from establishing official diplomatic relations with Taiwan.⁸³

*The one-China principle is the political foundation for establishment and development of China's relations with African countries and regional organizations. The Chinese Government appreciates the fact that the overwhelming majority of African countries abide by the one-China principle, refuse to have official relations with Taiwan and support China's great cause of reunification.*⁸⁴

While the described condition applies to all African countries wishing to receive support from China, the Chinese government indeed sees support as a mutual factor. Many documents thank African countries for their longstanding firm support of common causes and selfless help provided to China. China and African countries support each others “just demands and reasonable propositions”⁸⁵. For instance, China continues appealing to the UN to take into account and support African causes.⁸⁶ Furthermore, cooperation in international affairs should be strengthened:

*China will continue to strengthen solidarity and cooperation with African countries in the international arena, conduct regular exchange of views, coordinate positions on major international and regional issues and stand for mutual support on major issues concerning state sovereignty, territorial integrity, national dignity and human rights.*⁸⁷

But, “[a]ctually the help goes both ways. China provided assistance to Africa, and in return Africa supported China. For example, China received strong support from African countries in its drive to restore its legitimate seat in the United Nations in 1971.”⁸⁸ China shows its strong support of African countries’ efforts to grow stronger through unity,⁸⁹ as China intends to “vigorously support African countries in seeking strength through unity and the integration process.”⁹⁰ One way of expressing support lies in establishing and enhancing the FOCAC.⁹¹ Due to the fact that the official documents issued within

⁸² cf. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013c).

⁸³ cf. Government of the PRC (2006); Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013c).

⁸⁴ Government of the PRC (2006).

⁸⁵ Government of the PRC (2006).

⁸⁶ cf. Bi (2012); Yang, Jiechi (2012) Africa: Yang Jiechi – Take the New Type of China-Africa Strategic Partnership to a New High. Online: <http://www.focac.org/eng/lttda/dwjbzjjhys7ZYJH7t957813.htm#> – accessed on 07/16/2013; Government of the PRC (2006); Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013d) Xi Jinping Delivers a Speech at the Julius Nyerere International Convention Center in Tanzania, Stressing China and Africa Will Always Remain Reliable Friends and Faithful Partners. Online: http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2010-12/23/content_1771603.htm – accessed on 07/16/2013.

⁸⁷ Government of the PRC (2006).

⁸⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2010).

⁸⁹ cf. Government of the PRC (2006); Du (2010).

⁹⁰ Du (2010).

⁹¹ cf. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013d).

the framework of FOCAC, as previously explained, need to be considered separately, an individual section is dedicated to these documents at the end of this chapter.

The Chinese government emphasises its friendship and partnership with African countries, building on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. The principles of sovereignty and non-interference do not allow for conditionalities in China's engagement, however, the one-China principle remains a prerequisite.

4.1.2 Economic Cooperation

While values and ideology refer to a more theoretical and, as the name suggests, ideological component of China's engagement with African countries, economic cooperation rather relates to material and financial issues. Trade, as one cornerstone of China-‘Africa’ relations today is regarded as a *“major component of South-South cooperation.”*⁹² Africa not only constitutes the emerging destination for overseas investment of Chinese enterprises, but the Chinese government equally emphasises trade in the opposite direction. For example, already, free duties exist for 60% of Africa's export commodities to China.⁹³ The Information Office of the State Council notes that *“advantageous products have successfully entered each other's market”*⁹⁴ and, even though the total volume of African imports dropped due to the international financial crisis in 2009, the import of agricultural products increased by 25%. The effective and facilitated access of African commodities to the Chinese market caused the rapid growth of African imports to China in recent years. In addition, exports, from a Chinese perspective, meet the needs of African development as they possess good quality and reasonable prices.⁹⁵ China's investment in African countries is growing fast and is diverse, having already expanded to over 50 countries. Investment of African countries in China is likewise growing and enforcing complementary advantages, thereby promoting China's exports to Africa.

The extraction of natural resources is described as mutually beneficial. China emphasises its engagement in setting up resource-processing industries, which add value to export commodities.⁹⁶ Natural resources are furthermore described as Africa's strength, which should be developed and exploited rationally. China intends to develop this advantage of African countries into a competitive strength.⁹⁷ *“[The Chinese government] supports competent Chinese enterprises [...] to develop and exploit rationally their resources, with*

⁹² Information of the State Council of the PRC (2010).

⁹³ cf. Ministry of Commerce (2012) Year-end Review VIII of Commerce Work in 2012: China-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation Further Developed with Mutual Benefits (2012). Online: english.mofcom.gov.cn/article/newsrelease/significantnews/201212/20121208507300.html – accessed on 07/17/2013.

⁹⁴ Information of the State Council of the PRC (2010).

⁹⁵ cf. Government of the PRC (2006); Information of the State Council of the PRC (2010) Information Office of the State Council of the PRC (2013).

⁹⁶ cf. Information of the State Council of the PRC (2010).

⁹⁷ cf. Government of the PRC (2006).

a view of helping African countries to translate their advantages in resources to competitive strength."⁹⁸ At the same time, the development of natural resources serves China's self-interest and therefore poses an example of the win-win relationship between China and Africa. As Lu Shaye explains,

*China has also gained resources and markets necessary for its own development. It is perfectly normal that China has economic interests in Africa. [...] As China acquires its interests in Africa to fulfill its own development, actually China also acquires more capacity and means to help Africa. That is why we can call this mutual beneficial and win-win.*⁹⁹

Furthermore, Chinese investments, as many policy papers state, provide jobs to local people. These are necessary to realise industrialisation, which for the Chinese is, in turn, necessary to realise development.¹⁰⁰ Further areas of Chinese investment, which often overlap with the mentioned areas of Chinese aid include, among others, public welfare, agriculture, medical assistance/health care, debt cancellation, disaster relief, humanitarian aid, tourism, banking and civil aviation. While Chinese aid suits China's actual conditions (referring to China's self-ascribed status as a developing country), as well as the needs of the recipients, "[h]owever, China remains a developing country with a low per-capita income and a large poverty-stricken population. In spite of this, China has been doing its best to provide foreign aid."¹⁰¹ Providing development assistance serves the goal of enhancing the recipients' self-development capacity through South-South cooperation. The White Paper on Foreign Aid emphasises the intention to foster local personnel and technical forces, and stresses that "*China never uses foreign aid as a means to interfere in recipient countries' internal affairs or seek political privileges for itself.*"¹⁰²

Chapter 3 already briefly introduced the Chinese aid system, therefore only the most important information provided in the White Paper on Foreign Aid is repeated at this point. The Chinese government provides grants for small projects, especially social welfare projects, while interest free loans are mainly granted for the construction of public facilities and concessional loans are provided for large (infrastructure) projects. Chinese aid can take eight forms, listed in Chapter 3. The Chinese White Paper on Foreign Aid assures that provided goods and materials always are of highest quality and technical cooperation provides a manner of guidance as well as training for local personnel. Regarding financial issues, debt relief plays an important role. The Chinese government assures its African partners and never urges any country to pay back its governmental debts. Another focus lies on education, human resource development as well as research and training.¹⁰³ Education and capacity development are among the most extensively

⁹⁸ Government of the PRC (2006).

⁹⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2010).

¹⁰⁰cf. Government of the PRC (2006); Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013d).

¹⁰¹Information Office of the State Council of the PRC (2011).

¹⁰²Information Office of the State Council of the PRC (2011).

¹⁰³cf. Government of the PRC (2006).

covered topics in the sources used for the present chapter. Aside from training courses in a wide scope of areas, government scholarships and student exchanges, emphasis lies on the aim of helping recipient countries train qualified personnel themselves.¹⁰⁴

4.1.3 The Chinese Image and Soft Power

The process of training national African personnel within the framework of Chinese aid supports China's focus on the localisation of its projects and the further development of good relations with the local people.¹⁰⁵ Especially in the more recent documents a greater focus lies on the issue of the Chinese image and soft power¹⁰⁶ in African countries. The Chinese government regards people-to-people exchanges as important initiatives to improve Chinese soft power.¹⁰⁷ In addition, cultural exchanges, especially for media, NGOs and Think Tanks, on an institutional level, as well as the establishment of Confucius Institutes and provision of scholarships on a more individual level, were frequently mentioned. These approaches intend to form a favourable public opinion of China in African countries and equally of African countries in China. The Chinese government attaches particular importance to the issue as 'unfair' media accounts have increased in recent years.¹⁰⁸

*Some people criticize China for opening Confucius Institutes abroad as cultural penetration and invasion against other countries. Such perception is shallow and prejudiced. As a carrier of the intellectual wealth of mankind, culture can only develop and bloom through exchanges and learning from each other.*¹⁰⁹

Furthermore, *"China wishes to encourage multi-tiered and multi-formed exchanges and cooperation between the media on both sides, so as to enhance mutual understanding and enable objective and balanced media coverage of each other."*¹¹⁰

Criticism of large numbers of immigrated Chinese workers, from the Chinese perspective, seems partly exaggerated by the media and partly

¹⁰⁴cf. Government of the PRC (2006); Information of the State Council of the PRC (2010); Information Office of the State Council of the PRC (2011).

¹⁰⁵cf. Information of the State Council of the PRC (2010).

¹⁰⁶Soft power is in my research understood according to the concept provided by Joseph Nye. For Nye, soft power is *"the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than through coercion."* He further notes soft power can be developed through relations with allies, economic assistance, and cultural exchanges. Soft power rests on three resources: culture (in places where it is attractive to others), political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and foreign policies (when others see them as legitimate and having moral authority). Soft power is established in contrast to hard power, namely military and economic might. See Nye, Joseph (2011) *The Future of Power*. Reprint edition. New York: Perseus Books. In 2007, the former Chinese president Hu Jintao announced to further enhance the Chinese culture as part of its soft power for the first time in Chinese politics. Cf. Xinhua; Guodong, Du, editor (2007) Full text of Hu Jintao's report at 17th Party Congress. Online: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-10/24/content_6938749_6.htm – accessed on 09/26/2013.

¹⁰⁷cf. Yang (2012); Du (2010).

¹⁰⁸cf. Du (2010).

¹⁰⁹Du (2010).

¹¹⁰Government of the PRC (2006).

*[b]ecause many projects require a fairly high level of technical expertise, and need to meet tight deadlines. The reason we bring in some Chinese workers is to ensure meeting deadlines and standards. [...] As China has more projects in Africa, people feel there are more Chinese workers, but the actual proportion is not so high.*¹¹¹

The Chinese government further rejects critique presuming ignorance for social and environmental concerns by Chinese enterprises. In this context, the White Paper on China-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation states that the government urges Chinese enterprises to adhere to social and environmental standards but the enterprises ultimately undertake their corporate social responsibilities on their own initiative:

*Chinese enterprises operating in Africa pay special attention to good relations with the local people, by operating within the rule of law, adhering to credibility, and enhancing resource conservation and environment protection. [...] Chinese enterprises undertake social responsibilities on their own initiative.*¹¹²

The Chinese government recognises the need to improve its image in African countries and emphasises the importance and benefit of exchanges of people, organisations and media in both directions.

4.1.4 Relationship with Other Actors

The Chinese image, as described above, is not only relevant for the relationship of the Chinese government with African people, but equally for its relationship with other actors in African countries. Official documents call for more cooperation with the ‘Global North’ regarding China’s engagement in African countries. These ask for more exchange with other actors as well as fewer suspicions and fewer accusations by other actors against Chinese conduct. China emphasises complementarity with other actors, investing in industries and areas, where countries and companies of the ‘Global North’ are not investing.¹¹³ Not only regarding China’s engagement with African countries, but in a broader sense as well, South-South cooperation effectively supplements North-South cooperation.¹¹⁴ Lu Shaye of the African Affairs Department at the Chinese Ministry of Commerce even notes that the international community should strengthen their cooperation as China is not capable of promising African development alone but should be achieved together with the ‘Global North’:

[China does its] best to help Africa realize industrial upgrade and industrialization. What I want to stress is that China is not omnipotent. We are not capable of promising development for Africa all alone. China’s cooperation

¹¹¹Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2010).

¹¹²Information of the State Council of the PRC (2010).

¹¹³cf. Chen, Zhi (2013) Chinese FM urges respect of Africa’s choice for partners. Online: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-03/09/c_132220574.htm – accessed on 07/16/2013.

¹¹⁴cf. Information Office of the State Council of the PRC (2011).

*with Africa is only part of all countries cooperation with Africa. We hope Western developed countries will shoulder their historical and present-day responsibilities to help Africa develop itself.*¹¹⁵

By supporting African self-development the Chinese government intends to decrease the dependency of these countries on countries of the ‘Global North’ such as the USA, as demonstrated in the following example: *“There was a time when conventional wisdom had it that when America sneezed, the world caught a cold. Today, the global economy rests largely with China.”*¹¹⁶ At the same time, Jia Qinglin, Chairman of the CPPCC, describes the North-South imbalance as the principle cause of global economic injustice.¹¹⁷ Therefore, China, with its growing presence, providing loans and grants to African countries, offers these countries bargaining power against the ‘Global North’. Moreover, *“cooperation with China has not only raised their [African countries’] international status, but increased the prices for their products, especially for their natural resources, thus delivering more real benefits for African countries.”*¹¹⁸ Lu Shaye affirms the more practical approach by China, stating:

*[I]n the cooperation on the development of energy and resources, China has helped develop an industrial system of energy integrating the upper and lower streams of the industry, while the West has simply taken resources away. Besides, [...] China treats them as equals. [...] the West often exerts pressure under the pretense of democracy and human rights and uses various means to interfere in the internal affairs of African countries including military means.*¹¹⁹

Other papers reiterate the accusation of the ‘Global North’ being primarily interested in Africa’s natural resources, for instance: *“Europe’s primary interest is to get these African resources as cheaply as possible for their own development.”*¹²⁰ At the same time Jia Qinglin implies ignorance of the ‘Global North’: *“Although Western media often claims that Africa is more close to the West in terms of culture, concepts, political systems, and ideology, do they really know what African people are thinking?”*¹²¹ In addition, countries of the ‘Global North’ still dominate African economies: *“Western countries are now still controlling the larger lion’s share of Africa’s economic activities.”*¹²² In another defensive account Lu Shaye notes:

Some Western theory is that Africa’s industrial decline is caused by the influx of Chinese products and the competition thereof. However, results of Western

¹¹⁵Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013c).

¹¹⁶Li, Nuer (2012) Special Report: African countries welcome growing Chinese presence despite West’s criticism. Online: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-10/10/c_131897962.htm – accessed on 07/16/2013.

¹¹⁷cf. Bi (2012).

¹¹⁸Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013c).

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Li (2012).

¹²¹Bi (2012).

¹²²Li (2012).

*research institutions show that there is little similarity between Chinese and African products, with the similarity rate being only 4% to 7%. Therefore, the impact of Chinese exports to Africa is not on African products, but on products exported to Africa from other regions. That is to say, even if Chinese products do not enter Africa, products from other countries will do. If Chinese products exit from the African market, they will be replaced not by African products but by products from other countries. Therefore, it is not right to say Chinese products have led to “de-industrialisation” in Africa. It is Western policies that cause it.*¹²³

In addition, Chinese officials observe that African countries are very willing to engage further with China, especially due to China’s differing approach, the historical ties and the shared experience. The Chinese wish to further deepen these ties and offer to share governance experience with African countries as well as in regional integration.¹²⁴

4.1.5 The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation

As mentioned above, one initiative regarding the support of African unity is the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). Official documents within the framework of FOCAC are jointly issued by the Chinese government and African governments. Therefore, they do not present solely the opinion of the Chinese government. In the following, the latest FOCAC documents are discussed apart from the aforementioned. FOCAC represents China as well as the African governments (referred to as Africa) taking part in FOCAC. The values reiterated in FOCAC documents such as the Beijing Action Plan (2012-2015) remain the same as in the other documents: mutual trust, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and especially non-interference into internal affairs: “*The two sides [...] reiterated their support for their efforts in independently resolving regional conflicts and strengthening democracy and good governance and oppose interference in Africa’s internal affairs by external forces in pursuit of their own interests.*”¹²⁵ Important topics dealt within the Action Plan are fighting illegal immigration, protecting business, encouraging mutual investment, capacity building and realising a fair, just and inclusive international financial system as well as ensuring a greater representation and say of African countries. Furthermore,

*[t]he two sides will strengthen dialogue and exchanges in the area of human rights. They reaffirmed respect for the principle of universality of human rights and support for all countries in choosing the path of human rights development in the light of their own national conditions with the priority on the right to development, and oppose politicizing human rights issues and setting double standards.*¹²⁶

¹²³Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013c).

¹²⁴cf. Chen (2013).

¹²⁵FOCAC (2012) The Fifth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Beijing Action Plan (2013-2015). Online: <http://www.focac.org/eng/zxxx/t954620.htm> – accessed on 03/13/2013.

¹²⁶Ibid.

The trade imbalance between China and African countries is explicitly mentioned with concern and as an issue that needs to be addressed as soon as possible. In 2009, the ministers “pledge[d] to collaborate and share experience in overcoming Africa’s export dependence on primary commodities, single products and raw materials.”¹²⁷ To reach this goal, special efforts should be made in the area of processing natural resources, such as adding value to export products. The enhancement of human resource capacity is recognised as a priority for African countries and large efforts are allocated to this area. In addition to education, cultural exchange should further be fostered by establishing and developing Confucius Institutes and Classrooms in African countries. People-to-people exchange is regarded as an important factor in shaping the public opinion on both sides as well as enhanced media and press exchange and cooperation with the goal of encouraging objective and fair coverage of each other.¹²⁸

4.1.6 Analysis of the Chinese Perspective

The following chapter discusses the Chinese perspective as presented above. While the sources of the analysed documents vary greatly, ranging from official documents and White Papers to interviews and speeches, the content remains similar. The Chinese government regards high-level visits as an important symbol for the nature of the Chinese relationship with African countries. The Chinese government however, perceives the relationship of the US with Africa critically as the US maintains personal contact with African countries on a less frequent level. While the Chinese government does not further define ‘friendship’ in this context, evidence of frequent high-level visits between government members from China and African countries support the argument, especially in contrast to the USA: Obama, after being elected in late 2008, only visited Egypt and Ghana briefly in 2009. Senegal, Tanzania and South Africa were only part of his six day tour this year. In contrast, during Obama’s first term, the then Chinese president Hu Jintao visited Africa seven times. In the first few weeks after his succession of Hu’s presidency in March 2013, current president Xi Jinping included Tanzania, South Africa and the DR Congo in his inauguration tour¹²⁹. China emphasises its friendship with African countries, based on common values and interests, a similar history indicating empathy and a relationship founded on mutual benefit and support.

Enhancing the self-reliance of recipient countries belongs to the main intentions of China’s engagement. Therefore, capacity building belongs to the topics most extensively covered. The **values of the Chinese government** create the impression of a noble approach.

¹²⁷FOCAC (2009) Programme for China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development. Online: <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zflt/eng/wjjh/hywj/t157834.htm> – accessed on 07/17/2013.

¹²⁸cf. FOCAC (2012).

¹²⁹Luce, Edward (2013) Obama’s Trip to Africa is Too Little - and Very Late. Online: <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/621a46dc-de93-11e2-b990-00144feab7de.html#axzz2d4Fy19XG> – accessed on 08/26/2013.

However, the fact alone that China remains the donor and African countries the receivers implies an imbalance in the relationships, which despite the goal of equality inevitably persists at least to a certain extent. To demonstrate that Chinese interests are not the decisive reason of providing aid, the Chinese government proclaims not to attach economic strings or conditions to its engagement. Yet, one fundamental condition does exist as a non-negotiable requirement: the **one-China principle**. This condition is adhered to by 50 out of 54 African countries, which consequently enjoy a good relationship with China. However, the Chinese documents refer to the named principle as the sole political foundation of the respective relationships. This enhances the credibility that China indeed does not demand economic sanctions. The example again demonstrates that China dominates the relationship by imposing a condition (political, not economic), thereby reflecting an imbalance of power. But, African countries, as China recognises, provide support to China as well, endorsing Chinese interests and causes in international organisations. In a way, support does go in both directions, albeit on different levels. The Chinese government furthermore emphasises that Chinese aid suits the conditions of China and ‘Africa’. The Chinese practice of referring to African countries as one unit, namely Africa, will be discussed later on. At this point, the discrepancy between the goal of providing aid to suit the conditions of Africa (as a continent?), while the 54 individual countries on the continent surely have different needs, should be highlighted. Since the documents do not refer to this issue in greater detail, I would assume these needs are not individually addressed.

Trade remains a cornerstone of China-‘Africa’ relations and the documents clearly demonstrate that trade flows in both directions between China and African countries. The continuous imbalance is recognised and mentioned that steps to overcome the asymmetry are planned for the future. The imbalance could, however, be overcome by adding value to African exports, especially to **natural resources**. The Chinese government continuously emphasises its recognition of natural resources as Africa’s theoretical strength and ensures its continuing efforts in building up value-adding industries in African countries to in fact realise this strength. African natural resources are at the same time an issue of Chinese self-interest. As explained by Lu Shaye, in their support of Chinese development they thereby indirectly support African development¹³⁰, as a more developed China in terms of economy, infrastructure and industries, can provide more assistance to African countries. The development of natural resources is described as necessary and beneficial for African countries and at the same time in China’s political self interest, leading to mutual beneficial cooperation and a win-win situation. Here the question arises if the resources could not be used effectively for this purpose at least to the same degree by African countries themselves. This example furthermore demonstrates the strategic political interest of the Chinese government in African natural resources. While governments may in many cases

¹³⁰cf. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2010).

be indirectly and directly involved in resource extraction, this involvement is not always made public. Therefore, the Chinese acknowledgment of this factor is in particular noteworthy.

The Chinese government in most current publications recognises the need to influence the **public opinion in African countries**, especially through media, as it feels many media accounts present a faulty picture. For the government it is crucial to enable objective and balanced media coverage. One initiative to ensure a positive public opinion and balanced media coverage includes exchanges for people and media institutions as well as establishing and developing Confucius Institutes and Classrooms in African countries. Here the focus clearly lies on promoting Chinese language and culture in African countries and not the other way around. Practically speaking, the described approach is only logical within the framework of FOCAC, which deals with ‘Africa’ as one unit, as there is no one ‘African’ language that could be promoted in this context in China.

Reasons for the need to ensure a positive public opinion of China in African countries are not directly provided in the documents. A positive public opinion however, is an effective soft power tool and cannot only support the success of Chinese projects but ensure stability in the respective countries as well. Stability in turn benefits Chinese enterprises operating in African countries. Even though Jonathan Holslag (2011) explains that China does not perceive political instability in African countries as a threat to its economic interests, he admits the Chinese to be showing a growing sense of vulnerability¹³¹. In addition, political instability is not only detrimental to Chinese values, the goal of building a ‘harmonious world’ and its foreign policy aspirations described below¹³².

Many documents mention the **social conduct of Chinese enterprises**, defending these against critique, which implies ignorance for social and environmental concerns. Even though the frequency of such statements indicate the importance of the issue for the Chinese government, no detailed information is published. The Chinese government does not provide data on the social conduct of Chinese enterprises nor Chinese labour employed in the projects, as these issues are rooted in the respective companies behaviour. It does, however, refer the responsibility of these issues to the enterprises themselves. The Chinese government has only in recent years begun to address the issue of corporate social responsibility, especially regarding its “going global” programme for Chinese enterprises operating abroad¹³³. In this regard, as with other topics, the Chinese see themselves in

¹³¹cf. Holslag, Jonathan (2011) China and the Coups: Coping with Political Instability in Africa. African Affairs, 110, Nr. 440.

¹³²cf. Han, Ling (ed.) (2003) Hu Jintao addresses Moscow diplomatic institute. Online: <http://www.cctv.com/english/news/TVNews/MorningNews/20030529/100080.html> – accessed on 04/10/2013.

¹³³Government of the PRC (2011) China’s 12th Five Year Plan. Online: Full English translation by the British Chamber of Commerce in China <http://www.britishchamber.cn/content/chinas-twelfth-five-year-plan-2011-2015-full-english-version> – accessed on 09/16/2013.

a defensive role, justifying their actions while at the same time bringing up accusations against the ‘Global North’. In the official documents however, China does not openly confront the ‘Global North’ but calls for more cooperation. The Chinese government does not describe the relationship China enjoys with African countries as a competition with ‘traditional actors’ and China does not compete over Africa regarding control of the continent in a foreign policy context, but sees the engagement as complimentary, calling for more cooperation between the different actors.

Lu Shaye defends China against yet another accusation that industrial decline is caused by the growing competition by Chinese products. Lu Shaye notes that ‘Western’ research institutions themselves proved only a low degree of similarity between Chinese and African products (See page 32). Indeed, an article by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (which itself uses data by the OECD) states that Chinese and African exports overlap only in a few industries such as clothing and textiles. According to this article exports overlap about 7.3% (See Figure 3 in Annex B) between China and African countries (excluding South Africa). In addition, manufacturing accounts for only 20% of Africa’s exports, as compared to China’s 95%. From these statistics, indeed African and Chinese exports hardly compete in third markets. However, the authors debate the impact of Chinese imports within African countries controversially. On the one hand they cite studies proving fiercer competition in manufacturing and subsequently bankruptcy of African manufacturers, and on the other suggest that Chinese products in African countries merely substitute imports from other countries, implying less displacement of local enterprises.

Nevertheless, negative statements about China’s engagement with African countries seem to touch a raw nerve. As previously described, authors of different documents accuse the ‘Global North’ of publishing unjustified negative articles about China’s human rights conduct or Chinese labour in African countries. Despite China’s defensive position, it demonstrates self-confidence. In the analysed material this is explicitly expressed, especially in contrast to the USA. This contradictory behaviour, on one hand asserting complementarity and denying competition with countries of the ‘Global North’ but on the other defending itself against accusations and in return verbally attacking countries of the ‘Global North’ needs to be considered in a nuanced light. Official government documents only refer to complementarity versus competition but do not include accusations against other countries. These are made in interviews and speeches by government officials. The defensive attitude can be explained within the foreign policy context. China does not operate in a vacuum and therefore cannot distance itself completely from any existing international regime. Following its goal of building a harmonious world as proclaimed by Hu Jintao in 2003, Xi Jinping in March 2013 emphasised that as China’s

strength grows, it will assume more international responsibilities¹³⁴. To keep the image of a responsible international power, it is necessary for the Chinese government to keep negative impacts and headlines on its engagement with African countries within limits.

The FOCAC documents demonstrate African unity not only by explicitly stating the unity, but by referring to African countries as one group: ‘Africa’. The documents mention “the two sides”, China and Africa, instead of China and the number of African states participating in the forum. In this context again, China represents the donor and African countries the receivers, or rather ‘Africa’ the receiver. China pledges to uphold its promises and proposes measures to strengthen cooperation with ‘Africa’, implying the same imbalance aforementioned. Furthermore the FOCAC documents refer to human rights as an issue that needs to be regarded in light of the national conditions of each country with the priority on the right to development. This view reflects the strong opinion of China on human rights, whereas an ‘African’ position on human rights has not been expressed that precisely in the context of the analysed material. Indeed, the African Human Rights Charter declares it essential for African countries to pay particular attention to the right to development and states that civil and political rights cannot be disconnected from economic and cultural rights. As is proclaimed by China as well, the satisfaction of economic, social and cultural rights will then support the enjoyment of civil and political rights¹³⁵. This document supports the statements made by China regarding a common notion of human rights between China and African countries and to a certain extent justifies Chinese complaints about critique from countries and authors from the ‘Global North’ on this issue.

This chapter presented documents of the Chinese government and government officials according to the topics: the Chinese Values and Ideology, Economic Cooperation, the Chinese Image and China’s Relationship with Other Actors, followed by a discussion of the Chinese perception. The Chinese government especially emphasises its friendship with African countries and the underlying values and ideology in its engagement. FOCAC documents however, indicate an imbalance in the relationship rather than equality. Economic cooperation is regarded as important for both trading partners, though needing improvement from the African sides. The Chinese image requires improvements as the Chinese government recognises its image as an effective soft power tool. Finally, the Chinese government does not confront other actors in African countries, but calls for more cooperation.

¹³⁴cf. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013b) President Xi Jinping Gives Joint Interview to Media from BRICS Countries. Online: <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx/t1023070.shtml> – accessed on 09/12/2013.

¹³⁵cf. Organization of African Unity (1981) African [Banjul] Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, adopted June 27, 1981, OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3 rev. 5, 21 I.L.M. (1982), entered into force Oct. 21, 1986. Online: University of Minnesota <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/z1afchar.htm> – accessed on 08/24/2013.

4.2 African Government Officials

This chapter will analyse the interviews I conducted with government officials from Kenya, Liberia, Ghana and Tanzania on the engagement of China in their respective countries. For reasons of personal data protection, the quotations are not linked to the specific country of my interview partners and all identifying characteristics were omitted. This practice may on one hand impair the traceability and comprehensibility of my research as well as limit the credibility of generalising conclusions drawn from the analysis. On the other, it was crucial to assure complete anonymity to my interview partners for their participation. This chapter is intended to present cross-section of perceptions of government officials. One important characterising factor, which applies to all interviewed officials, is having visited China in the past and therefore possessing an awareness of many aspects of ‘Chinese’ thinking and culture. The perceptions allocated in the according categories are *Trade* (especially in terms of Africa as a market for Chinese products), *Competition - Ideology and Values* and *the Chinese Image and Soft Power*.

4.2.1 Trade

*“Everything is now from China! I mean, everything, every product, almost everything is now from China! Clothing, shoes, electronics, furniture, [...] name them! Everything!”*¹³⁶ One of the first topics my interview partners mentioned almost in every case referred to Chinese products and goods. From general impressions that Chinese goods are everywhere to specific products that have created special colloquial terms, such as ‘Chinese phone’, the topic of Chinese goods created emotions, surprise and disbelief among my interview partners. Not only are Chinese products believed to be largely fake replicas of other products, but also of mostly low quality. This perception was primarily developed in the respective African countries and I was told that many Africans believed all products and goods in China accordingly to be of low quality. *“If you talk about China and the first thing you see is a fake thing, especially in electronics, [...] you relate China to low quality products.”*¹³⁷ To my interview partners’ surprise, they saw expensive and high quality products in China as well, which triggered a valuable learning process. One official noted that China produces one and the same product in different qualities, depending on the target market. Mainly higher quality is for example delivered to the USA, mainly lower quality to African countries. Inequalities, which here manifest themselves in bargaining and purchasing power, determine the respective product quality according to the target market. Accordingly, the deliberate decision by the Chinese to sell low quality products to African countries raised criticism and negative sentiments.¹³⁸ But at the same time the quality of the goods, which are exported to a country depend on how much the traders

¹³⁶Interview no. 4 (2013) Interview on ‘China in Africa’..

¹³⁷Interview no. 1 (2013) Interview on ‘China in Africa’..

¹³⁸Ibid.; Interview no. 4 (2013); Interview no. 5 (2013) Interview on ‘China in Africa’..

and in the end the consumers are willing to pay. It is then the choice of the buyers which quality they obtain and not alone a decision made by the Chinese producers.

*I was talking to somebody here and he said: ‘You know what? Your people come to our industries and we show them, we have such qualities. We have grading, Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 3, and depending on how much you want to pay they give you the best grade.’ But our people go for the lower grade, you see. So at times, it’s a two-sided thing, you can’t just blame the Chinese; we also have to blame ourselves. If you want quality, you can have quality. If it’s China or Europe or whatever region [...] it depends on us, we should know what we want, it’s not like we should allow people to dump things into our market.*¹³⁹

At the same time, the possibility of receiving these cheap goods is seen as a chance, as it offers the poorer populations of the importing countries the possibility to receive goods they would otherwise not be able to afford: “[T]he Chinese will give you poor products, but [...] you can afford them. The money is so minimal, anyone can afford it.”¹⁴⁰ But, as equally acknowledged, not only the Chinese bring low quality products to African countries, but many Africans travel to China to purchase goods and import them to their home countries as well.

For my interview partners trade is of importance for China as China’s economy is based on exporting industries. Although they emphasised the value of their countries trade with China, as most African countries, Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana and Liberia export mainly raw materials to China, while “*practically everything*”¹⁴¹ is imported. The resulting imbalance leads to a trade deficit. Additionally, especially small-scale trade by Chinese individuals was mentioned, as the lesser bureaucratic complexity, for instance when applying for visas, facilitate individual trade and business in comparison to countries of the ‘Global North’ such as the USA. My interview partners expressed their hope that oil exports to China can improve the trade balance of their countries in terms of export volume in the future. A number of African countries have recently discovered (off-shore) oil, hiring Chinese companies for the extraction. When asked about China’s greatest interest in their country, nearly all interview partners stated the extraction of and trade in natural resources first, the second being trade with other products. One official, for example, assessed that China is especially in need of natural resources for its heavy industries in order to maintain the pace of its development.¹⁴² “*It’s all about natural resources. And we just discovered oil, so probably this is boosting their interest*”¹⁴³, was the response of another. An interest in natural resources does not only pertain to the Chinese government and its mining companies, but also to Chinese individuals as small-scale miners, often

¹³⁹Interview no. 4 (2013).

¹⁴⁰Interview no. 4 (2013).

¹⁴¹Ibid.

¹⁴²Interview no. 2 (2013) Interview on ‘China in Africa’..

¹⁴³Interview no. 4 (2013).

engaging in illegal mining activities.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the respective official acknowledged that the illegal miners do not operate on their own but must have help from locals, as the mining sites are located far in the hinterlands and a Chinese person arriving from abroad would not know where to find them.

*[B]ut the question is: who introduced these Chinese people into the mining sites? Definitely there are some [locals] behind it who lead them to these places. Because the Chinese will get to the capital city, but they don't know where the mining sites are, so there are some [locals] behind this.*¹⁴⁵

In one of the interviews, trade, especially with natural resources, was referred to as one way of “giving something back”¹⁴⁶ to China in a different form than just repaying loans with cash.

4.2.2 Competition - Values and Ideology

Within the interviews, my partners mainly referred to the Chinese values and ideology in contrast to countries of the ‘Global North’. China provides loans and grants mainly for the development of infrastructure, for instance to extract raw materials, which are then exported to China and other countries. Some officials regarded this ability to return something to China according to Chinese needs as a source of pride. Aside from trade, diplomatic support presents another possibility of this kind of trade.¹⁴⁷

*China helped build our national theatre. It was more like a compensation for helping them gain a seat in the UN Security Council and especially during the Tian'anmen Square riots [...]. So it's hand go, hand come. You help me, I help you. That's how I would describe it.*¹⁴⁸

My interview partners considered China - in this regard - as different from other international actors in the respective countries, due to the proclaimed intention of creating mutual benefit and a win-win situation. Not only has China always adhered to its Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence¹⁴⁹, especially the principle of non-interference, the basis for its foreign relations, but is generally perceived as a partner.¹⁵⁰ The immanent interests of China were acknowledged as well. In the words of one official:

I think every country that will come into another country will have an underlying reason. There is nothing like a free lunch, that I know. They are not doing it just for free, it is not Christmas. But then, if they come in and they will really help you, they will take away your resources, but you also get something

¹⁴⁴In Ghana for example, small-scale mining is reserved for nationals, forbidding any foreigner to extract natural resources. This is however, not the case for large international corporations.

¹⁴⁵Interview no. 4 (2013).

¹⁴⁶Interview no. 2 (2013).

¹⁴⁷Interview no. 3 (2013) Interview on ‘China in Africa’; Interview no. 4 (2013).

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

¹⁴⁹For the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence see Chapter 3.

¹⁵⁰Interview no. 1 (2013); Interview no. 2 (2013); Interview no. 3 (2013).

*out of it, it's cool. So they should not just come and take our oil away, at least they should also do something for us. There should be an exchange.*¹⁵¹

The interests of external powers have for a long time influenced African countries. Nevertheless, the long time period of the relationships, especially with the respective colonial power, facilitated the establishment of many links and connections. In one case, the official viewed the former colonial power even today as the “*backbone of the economy*”¹⁵², and the country in particular dependent in the financial sector. Further criticism included the continuous exercise of power and assertion of interests by the former colonial power. In one interview I noticed particular discontent, as, in the words of the official, the colonial power has had ‘interest’ in the country for over 150 years and not only still regarded the respective country as quasi-colonial territory, but initiated many agreements without following visible implementation. Chinese investment on the other hand seems very visible and has a “major impact”.¹⁵³ While countries of the ‘Global North’ intervened in internal politics, the interest of the Chinese lies not so much in politics, but in business.

*But, of course in the last years [we are] also looking to the east: to China, to India. So this means the over-reliance on those Western countries is coming to an end. There are alternatives. So the majority of African countries is also looking towards those countries in the east now. Especially as it appears that the Western countries really try to intervene in politics or are conditional in their economical engagement, whereas China is interested in doing business, rather than in politics.*¹⁵⁴

Even though these former colonial powers remain among the largest trading partners of African countries today, trade with China is growing in numbers and importance. Trade with China is not yet equal in size, but the applied values and the different approach make China the preferred trading partner.¹⁵⁵ With other alternatives to ‘traditional’ trading partners and donors appearing, the dependence can be decreased in the future. However, my interview partners perceive China as still “emerging” and not yet equal to the former colonial powers, but the possibility of “taking over” exists.¹⁵⁶

*You know, China is emerging. They haven't got to [that] level yet. So from now, I can't say they are equal, I mean you can't do that comparison now. But as a possibility, with time, China will take over. Because one thing about [my country] is, it is all about the UK. [...] let somebody come from the UK, they respect them. 'Hey, he is from abroad.' You don't really have that respect for China. [...] Let's see if China will stand the test of time.*¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹Interview no. 4 (2013).

¹⁵²Interview no. 1 (2013).

¹⁵³Interview no. 3 (2013).

¹⁵⁴Interview no. 1 (2013).

¹⁵⁵Interview no. 2 (2013).

¹⁵⁶Interview no. 4 (2013).

¹⁵⁷Interview no. 4 (2013).

Of the ‘emerging actors’¹⁵⁸ China stands out as the most important. India enjoys a long history of trade and diplomacy, especially with East African countries, as wells and I was told that: “[t]here are definitely more Indians [...] than Chinese, they started business much earlier than China. This long relationship is also especially important for trade.”¹⁵⁹ Also, often people in African countries tend to overlook differences between the nationals of Asian countries as they “look alike” and are therefore all ‘branded’ as Chinese:

*I think China is on top now. Because a lot of times we run to China. [...] India is also a topic, but not so much. India is also giving scholarships, South Korea is giving scholarships, almost all of the emerging nations are doing these things, but China is more visible than all of them. And one thing, too, the Asians, they look alike. So most of these people might not even be Chinese people, they see illegal miners and brand them Chinese illegal miners. So I think most of them are not really Chinese. Once you see their face, you see their structure and everything, we generalise it and they are Chinese. So, to just say it's the Chinese on top, it's maybe because we see every, maybe not as an intellectual but as a commoner on the street, we see every Asian as Chinese. Maybe that is why the Chinese are having more of a name now, even in the media. They like to use China more than other countries. If you are bringing products from Korea, people will say China, China. So there is also that twist to it.*¹⁶⁰

4.2.3 The Chinese Image and Soft Power

Many of these Asians referred to by my interview partner work in infrastructure projects. As these visibly represent the Chinese engagement in African countries, they substantially impact the Chinese image and the superficial knowledge of Chinese labour. As China intensively engages in construction and other projects in African countries, one of the topics mentioned in the interviews is employment and the percentage of Chinese labour used in projects in African countries. Because actual numbers on the percentage of Chinese labourers in contrast to locals are not available I asked for estimations, which were roughly made at 1/3 Chinese and 2/3 locals.¹⁶¹ A consensus furthermore existed on locals largely being employed for manual labour, whereas Chinese remain in charge of technical aspects. Even though my interview partners assumed that most Chinese in African countries are bound to a certain project and are therefore directly or indirectly sent by the government, many arrive as individuals as well, for example as traders. Another rumour mentioned during one interview referred to Chinese workers in African countries being - in China sentenced - prisoners, sent by the Chinese government to work on (infrastructure) projects in African countries:

¹⁵⁸A growing number of actors are engaging with African countries, which are divided into ‘traditional actors’, usually former colonial powers and states of the ‘Global North’, and ‘emerging actors’, usually so-called industrialising countries.

¹⁵⁹Interview no. 1 (2013).

¹⁶⁰Interview no. 4 (2013).

¹⁶¹Interview no. 1 (2013).

*[B]ut what goes around in [my country], and this was also topic of another forum last week: the allegation that the majority of the Chinese workers are prisoners. Actually that was one of the things I knew when I was still back in [my country]. So this is a very widespread belief in my country and I believe also in other parts of Africa.*¹⁶²

Next to this rumour, all interview partners expressed admiration and astonishment for the “hard-working nature” of the Chinese: “Because even when they do construction, they work day and night, they work day and night! I just love the hard-working nature of the Chinese. Its very impressive!”¹⁶³ Or: “Because they work hard, the Chinese, they work hard [...] especially compared to our countries [...]. So what I learned from China is, they work very hard, I think that is the secret that made them develop in so few years.”¹⁶⁴ Next to this admiration, a number of issues were noted critically. Among them, the government officials mentioned illegal activities, such as illegal mining, as well as conflicts with the local populations. These include demonstrations and discontent against the Chinese “taking local work”¹⁶⁵ in several countries, upon which some (local) governments intervened and engaged in efforts restricting the work-permits of the Chinese.¹⁶⁶

*So there was some conflict and they [the government] tried to restrict them to do business, so at that time some Chinese didn't even open their shops in fear, because they knew people might harm them. But after this the government sat down and talked to the people to help them understand. Although they come and do this business [...] it is not restricted to do business. You are allowed to do so, so if you want you can do it and they can do it. Everyone has that right.*¹⁶⁷

Similar to the impression of the hard-working Chinese, they were described as entrepreneurial, creative and in some cases as aggressive in doing business: “The Chinese appear as very aggressive and hard-working. They can convert anything into money. So they saw an opportunity which they exploited.”¹⁶⁸ Further critique however was mentioned as even though these small businesses might have a good impact on the general business environment, the African governments can hardly collect revenue from them as they only pay low taxes in comparison to larger construction projects, hence, leading to the belief that the Chinese are benefiting more than the respective local government.¹⁶⁹ Further mentioned troubles included the smuggling of ivory,¹⁷⁰ land grabbing and construction on land without obtaining permits beforehand, as well as violence against Chinese labourers and businessmen.¹⁷¹ These negative examples find repercussion in the African media, and are

¹⁶²Interview no. 1 (2013).

¹⁶³Ibid.

¹⁶⁴Interview no. 5 (2013).

¹⁶⁵Ibid.

¹⁶⁶Interview no. 1 (2013); Interview no. 5 (2013).

¹⁶⁷Interview no. 5 (2013).

¹⁶⁸Interview no. 1 (2013).

¹⁶⁹Interview no. 5 (2013).

¹⁷⁰Interview no. 1 (2013).

¹⁷¹Interview no. 4 (2013); Interview no. 5 (2013).

therefore well known among the populations and consequently influencing the perception of the general public on the Chinese in African countries:

*Talking about the general perception of the population, they do not have a good perception of the Chinese because you always hear bad things. When we receive a \$3 mil. loan from ExIm Bank, how many people hear of this? Only the elites! And then of course there are the Chinese illegal miners. This is news! Everybody will hear about this and you know how local people react: why are these people coming from their country, taking everything belonging to us and all of this. But when the Chinese government is doing something great, nobody will hear it.*¹⁷²

Although some initiatives aim at influencing the general perception of the populations towards the Chinese exist, they remain scarce. A radio station broadcasting in Chinese language was established in Kenya. Africans also work for Chinese Radio International (CRI) in China and CRI broadcasts radio shows in East Africa in Swahili as well.¹⁷³

*Just two weeks ago a minister [...] was in the news saying [...] on the governmental level there is a good cooperation, so people should keep in mind the mere fact that some people come and are criminals [...] but that doesn't mean that is how the Chinese are. So I think, at a governmental level we are trying to vary that perception, they are really working on that.*¹⁷⁴

Another large area of engagement is human resource development. For some countries alone about 600 scholarships are awarded annually for Africans to study in China. China provides scholarships not only for academics, but also funds trainings for professionals such as nurses, doctors, teachers or technicians. These usually take place in China for one to three months.¹⁷⁵ From their own experience, my interview partners recognised that a visit to China to a great extent influences the perception of Chinese living in China as well as of those living abroad. Also, the Chinese plan to train more locals within the respective countries of my interview partners for the purpose of infrastructure maintenance.¹⁷⁶

At the same time, opposition parties use the topic of China in African countries for national politics :

China has been one of the campaign tools of the opposition. Just last year the opposition was using China, because they didn't understand why almost every contract was going to China. They were very critical about it. Sometimes there is a fear that China might take over our oil because they are giving us so much loans now [...] and one of the guarantees was oil. [...] So the opposition was critical about this with the ruling government. [...] but it doesn't really mean that the opposition is against the government of China.

¹⁷²Interview no. 4 (2013).

¹⁷³Interview no. 1 (2013); Interview no. 5 (2013).

¹⁷⁴Interview no. 4 (2013).

¹⁷⁵Ibid.

¹⁷⁶Interview no. 1 (2013).

*At the end it is politics. You talk about and do what will bring you to power. If your population is saying that the Chinese are taking over and you realise, if I hammer on this issue you can win a lot of votes, why not? So that is politics [...]. When politics come to play you have to dance to the tune that the people want. [...] I think they say all those things because it is politics. If they should come to power and it's the Chinese government that helps you to survive, they will go to China. It doesn't really matter [...]. And how many people can really understand these games?*¹⁷⁷

When asked, which policies applied during the Chinese development process they regard as possible measures for the development in their own countries, China's protectionism was the most frequently mentioned issue. My interview partners admired the system of an open market, whereas sensitive industries, such as telecommunication, transportation and health care, remain protected.

*There are so many things we need to learn from China. [...] China is developed now, they still say they are developing but I see them as developed. So if we want to develop, we also have to learn a lot of things from the Chinese. [...] Even though we also practice an open market, the Chinese government still has control on some of the sensitive parts of the economy. It's not like they are privatising everything. There are some things that you dare not touch. I think we can learn something like that, because we are privatising almost everything. [...] It is about time we reserve some for the government. The government needs to put its feet on the ground and control some of these enterprises. [...] If I have a [private] hospital in a village that people cannot pay, why should I have it there. That's where government has to come in. Governments don't have to privatise health care. When those in the village cannot pay for it, [the government] will provide it for them.*¹⁷⁸

As my interview partners all previously visited China and are well informed about Chinese policies that led to China's own rapid economic development, I was interested in learning about the possibilities they see for further developing their countries through Chinese engagement. When asked, what type of assistance they further wished for their country by the Chinese, my interview partners demonstrated great interest in regional development, not least stemming from the knowledge that China successfully facilitated its own rapid economic development through its regional development scheme. While specifically attracting investors, employment opportunities for locals could be created, further accelerating the processing of raw materials within the country. By local value-addition, the economy would be boosted through enhanced export and rural-urban migration could be reduced. Nevertheless, the described model requires infrastructural development, especially in remote rural areas, as well as efficient and reliable transport, sectors, in which the Chinese could likewise support African countries with their know-how. By fostering regional development according to the Chinese model, local governments would be empowered and strategic industries attracted according to the local resources of each region.

¹⁷⁷Interview no. 4 (2013).

¹⁷⁸Ibid.

Further recommendations included increasing investment in the energy sector, green technologies, tourism and environment conservation, improving conflict management as well as improving the transfer of skills, technology and knowledge.¹⁷⁹

4.2.4 Analysis of the Perspective of African Government Officials

My interview partners presented a very nuanced view of the activities of China in their respective countries, not shifting the responsibility and ‘blaming’ other actors such as the Chinese or countries of the ‘Global North’ (for instance for maladministration or poverty) but acknowledging the responsibility of their own governments and even more importantly, their own people. The statements made regarding the influx of Chinese products in their countries provide evidence by using phrases such as “dumping of goods” and strongly criticising the quality of the products. My interview partners ascribe this aspect not only to the Chinese but also to African traders and customers. The description of not only Chinese coming to African countries bringing goods, but of Africans going to China to bring back these goods as well, distorts the picture of the ‘bad’ Chinese exploiting the ‘poor’ Africans. Equally, the recognition of the availability of affordable products to a larger portion of the population as a positive outcome shows an additional aspect of Chinese-African trade.

Natural resources are recognised as the main trade imperative of China and the general trade deficit, which is visible in all of my interview partner’s countries, is likewise criticised. At the same time it is seen as an opportunity. Trade with raw materials, next to the creation of revenues, are regarded as investments of African countries into the relationship with the Chinese from which African countries in return gain loans and grants otherwise not available. This demonstrates a pragmatic perspective acknowledging interests of *realpolitik* in contrast to the picture of altruistic Chinese generated by the media and African governments and presents an additional factor in assessing if a win-win relationship is possible. Natural resources were referred to as one way of “giving something back”¹⁸⁰ to China in a different form than just repaying loans with cash. Diplomatic support was in this regard equally seen as a possible mode of repayment.

My interview partners emphasised the **difference between China and countries of the ‘Global North’**, especially regarding its adherence to the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence. They perceived China as a partner in general. These statements imply a more equal relationship than for instance with countries of the ‘Global North’, which according to my interview partners, dominate the relationship with African countries, especially due to their history of colonialism. While the officials recognised an imbalance within the relationship with China, the idea that the relationship does not imply merely

¹⁷⁹Interview no. 1 (2013); Interview no. 2 (2013); Interview no. 3 (2013).

¹⁸⁰Interview no. 2 (2013).

a donor and a receiver but an exchange of goods, support, etc. in both directions as mentioned above, was viewed positively. Criticism was expressed against the ‘Global North’, especially regarding the colonial history. The continuing importance and influence of the former colonial powers proved to be an emotional topic. The officials complained about the questionable impact of ‘Western’ aid and contrasted the ‘West’ interfering in national politics with the Chinese values outlined in theory as well as the fact that the Chinese adhere to these values and the visible achievements of their engagement. They further recognised the strong linkages of the (colonial) history to still affect the respective countries to a great extent, especially through trade. Today, countries of the ‘Global North’ still present the more important trading partners with closer cultural ties. While the government officials perceive China to be growing more powerful and influential, increasing its engagement with African countries, it does not yet reach the level of countries of the ‘Global North’. This was illustrated by the difference in respect towards foreigners from China, in contrast to other foreigners from countries of the ‘Global North’. The quotation on page 42 highlights not only the perceived hierarchy between China and countries of the ‘Global North’ in terms of trade volume or development assistance, but especially regarding the respect and acknowledgment towards foreigners. While foreigners from countries of the ‘Global North’ are granted a superior status, Chinese are regarded as comparatively inferior.

No statements were made regarding this status in comparison with other ‘emerging actors’ such as India, although other actors are seen as increasingly gaining importance. However, China stands out as the most important of these ‘emerging actors’ indicating a slight distortion of perception, as for example, one official assured more Indians to be engaged in his country. Intensive engagement between his country and India proves to have a longer history than with China. A look into the future on the other hand, reveals the impression that as trade with China grows it will become the largest trading partner of many African countries. This development appears as a fact in the statements by my interview partners, not evaluating possible developments in this regard positively or negatively. China appears as the most visible of the ‘emerging’ actors, even though this perception might not be supported by a quantitative analysis in all countries. Here again, the question of truly ‘emerging’ actors’ status as such arises, as the longstanding relationship with China and many African countries would suggest differently and the factor at hand equally applies to India.

According to the officials **Chinese labour in African countries** during the interviews, Chinese labour makes up about 30% in certain projects, and although the remaining 70% are perceived as locals, they are appointed to manual activities, whereas Chinese assume technical responsibilities, therefore reducing the possibilities for knowledge transfer. Even though my interview partners assumed that most Chinese in African countries are bound

to a certain project, hence are therefore directly or indirectly sent by the government, many are said to arrive as individuals as well, for example as traders. This demonstrates an important difference, namely between individuals who decide to immigrate to African countries for personal reasons and usually remain in the respective countries for a longer period of time, versus Chinese sent by their companies or the government, then staying only for the duration of the project.¹⁸¹ In one interview, the rumor that Chinese workers in African countries are - in China sentenced - prisoners, sent by the Chinese government to work on (infrastructure) projects was mentioned. This rumor is widely circulating on the Internet, even though the authors do not present evidence. Yan Hairong and Barry Sautman (2012) trace the origins of the rumor to the grass roots-level. Cultural differences in work and living habits leads people to believe Chinese workers to be convicts. The rigorous work pace, discipline and collective living style among Chinese employees, especially in contrast to the luxurious living style of many other foreigners in African countries, adds to this impression.¹⁸² The accuracy of this rumor aside, my interview partners admired the “hard-working nature”¹⁸³ of the Chinese and ability of the Chinese government to utilise this to rapidly advance the Chinese development. This gives the impression of a positive perception of the Chinese government and individual Chinese in African countries by my interview partners in general and indicates comprehension for Chinese individuals seeking business in African countries.

On the issue of **the Chinese image in African countries**, my interview partners drew a precise distinction between the Chinese government and Chinese individuals in their countries. While the Chinese government is perceived positively as a partner upholding its values, striving for mutual benefit and peaceful co-existence and offering a great chance for African countries, this view does not automatically pertain to the individual traders and other Chinese that come to African countries and vice versa. Potential illegal activities of the Chinese government were not criticised, in contrast, the issue arose regarding Chinese business people and traders, often leading to conflict in the respective countries. Nevertheless, my interview partners, while noting that these Chinese displace local businesses, showed apprehension for the Chinese, taking the arising opportunities and turning them into businesses. On this issue, once again, the officials pointed out the responsibilities of the African governments in protecting their businesses and industries. However, not all African governments and African government officials, which can be at least to a certain extent regarded as independent of the official government position, have a purely positive view on China in general as well as on China’s engagement with African countries. As the statement on page 46 demonstrates, China’s engagement with African countries is not only praised by African governments, but used as an instrument in na-

¹⁸¹This is for instance described by Deborah Bräutigam in Bräutigam (2009), 86.

¹⁸²cf. Hairong, Yan and Sautman, Barry (2012) Chasing Ghosts: Rumours and Representations of the Export of Chinese Convict Labour to Developing Countries. *The China Quarterly*, 210, 210.

¹⁸³Interview no. 1 (2013).

tional politics as well. Nevertheless, the statement demonstrates dependency from China: *“They say all those [critical] things because it is politics. If they [the opposition parties] should come to power and it’s the Chinese government that helps you to survive, they will go to China.”*¹⁸⁴

China and its own development present a valuable role model, especially in terms of its state-control over the economy. In these statements an indirect critique against the Bretton Woods institutions and their strategy of structural adjustment and privatising enterprises and industries becomes visible, even though not explicitly expressed. This can be said though, as the officials praised the nationalising and protecting certain industries, which stands in contrast to the policies of IFIs and their Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). My interview partners viewed China’s regional development strategy as especially valuable for development in African countries as it is perceived to have substantially supported China’s rapid economic development. The exact causes thereof are still debated. Nevertheless, many see the decentralised structures of government and public finance as well as parallel, diversified provincial economies as beneficial. For example, decentralisation presumably reduced dislocations, stimulated competition and allowed for local reform experiments, including ideas from the grass roots-level. At the same time, by stimulating economic growth and thereby demonstrating the success of their policies, local party leaders could advance in the central party hierarchy. Thereby, local leaders were provided an additional incentive to foster economic growth. In addition, the economic self-sufficiency of the Chinese provinces may have rendered them less vulnerable to disruption. The Chinese decentralisation policies, can however, not provide a complete explanation of China’s rapid economic development, especially between the 1970s and 2000.¹⁸⁵

The previous chapter is based on personally conducted interviews and contains the perspective of African government officials on the Chinese engagement with their respective countries, namely, Kenya, Tanzania, Liberia and Ghana. Chinese manufactured goods and trade with natural resources were among the first aspects my interview partners mentioned. The officials especially viewed China as different from countries of the ‘Global North’ with respect to ideology and values. Former colonial powers were harshly criticised, but their engagement remains larger than that of China. In the interviews, the difference in actions and perceptions of the Chinese government on the one and Chinese individuals on the other hand, became especially apparent. In this regard, the poor Chinese image is perceived as unjustified. However, a number of Chinese national policies are viewed as possibly equally beneficial for development in African countries.

¹⁸⁴Interview no. 4 (2013).

¹⁸⁵cf. Cai, Hongbin and Treisman, Daniel (2006) Did Government Decentralization Cause China’s Economic Miracle? *World Politics*, 58.

4.3 African Academics

For the group of African Academia, two anthologies comprising articles on China in Africa by African scholars were used. These anthologies aim at providing a comprehensive overview over the topic from an African perspective. The articles chosen for the analysis that do not focus solely on one country but those referring to general topics and cross-cutting issues. An exception was made for articles referring to the four countries of the interviewed government officials, namely Kenya, Liberia, Ghana and Tanzania.

- “African perspectives on China in Africa” edited by Firoze Manji and Stephan Marks (2007)
- “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon” edited by Kweku Ampiah and Sanusha Naidu (2008)

From these volumes chosen articles are analysed, defining thematic categories, following the rules of qualitative content analysis outlined in Chapter 2.1. The main topics referred to by the African authors and discussed in the following subsections are *Competition over Africa - Values and Ideology*, *Economic and Political Cooperation*,¹⁸⁶ *African Empowerment* and *The Chinese Image and Soft Power*. First, the content of the named topics will be described, thereby presenting different views and statements from the authors and then summarise the results with the goal of identifying common perceptions and assessments.

4.3.1 Competition over Africa - Values and Ideology

The first topic will focus on the perceived competition between China and other actors, mainly countries of the ‘Global North’, over natural resources and influence in Africa as it is the most frequently mentioned topic. The authors debate the effects of this competition controversially. The comparison of differences and similarities between the approaches of China and the ‘Global North’ towards African countries regarding ideology, trade, foreign policy and development assistance therefore seem to be a priority issue. Adam Habib (2008) in this context argues that competition over ‘Africa’ is not in the interest of African countries but instead leads to conflict and the waste of resources of donors and investors, as was the case during the Cold War. Instead, efforts should be aligned in order to maximise positive effects using these resources for the benefit of African countries.¹⁸⁷ Contrary to this position most authors see the ‘new’ competition as a presentation of alternative ideas and models for African countries to choose from, as well as a leverage point, which

¹⁸⁶This includes investments and development assistance as part of the special composition of Chinese ‘aid’ as described in Chapter 3.

¹⁸⁷cf. Habib, Adam (2008) *Western Hegemony, Asian Ascendancy and the New Scramble for Africa*. In Ampiah, Kweku; Naidu, Sanusha, editor *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon. China and Africa*. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 273; Chidaushe, Moreblessings (2007) *China’s Grand Re-entrance into Africa – Mirage or Oasis?* In Manji, Firoze/Marks, Stephen, editors *African Perspectives on China in Africa*. Cape Town, Nairobi, Oxford: Fahamu. Pambazuka News, 111.

can be used for African empowerment.¹⁸⁸ Within the foreign policy context of this competition, China's engagement with African countries is not only regarded useful for African countries in gaining comparative advantage and thereby empowering and emancipating themselves from states of the 'Global North', but it is noted that "*China also needs Africa as an ally in the struggle against the hegemony of the United States.*"¹⁸⁹ At the same time, according to the authors, the 'Global North' is at least challenged by China's increased engagement with African countries as "[t]he West is keen to criticise China's stance in Africa [...]. It is, however, doubtful that this criticism is a result of genuine concern for African welfare rather than the jealousy of a competitor."¹⁹⁰ Regarding their value systems and ideology, the 'Global North' with its history in colonising many countries on the continent and its patronising approach to investments and development assistance is contrasted with the values and underlying principles of the Chinese engagement focusing on equality and mutual benefit.¹⁹¹

*The historical record will show that European and American policies in Africa were characterised by a mixture of exploitation, hubris, injustice and oppression, organised mostly for economic gain, and buttressed by political expediency rather than ethical restraint.*¹⁹²

Or, as Chidaushe, referring to conditionalities of aid and sanctions for non-compliance imposed on African countries, puts it: "*Constant interference in the domestic affairs has been a typical feature of Western aid.*"¹⁹³ The Chinese, despite their long-standing historical relationship with African countries, were never motivated by a colonial or settler project. Trade relations between China and African countries commenced as early as the 15th century, without any intention to colonise African countries. After the creation of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and, subsequently, the resumption of trade relations with African countries, China's involvement consisted of moral and material support based on the principle of non-interference.¹⁹⁴ The authors discuss the Chinese political background in particular detail, often listing the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence,¹⁹⁵ and referring to a shared historical experience of colonialism and the

¹⁸⁸cf. Adebajo, Adekeyo (2008) *An Axis of Evil? China, the United States and France in Africa*. In Ampiah, Kweku; Naidu, Sansha, editor *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon. China and Africa*. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 232; White, Lyal and Alves, Phil (2006) *China in Africa: A Relationship of (Un)equals in the Developing World*. South African Journal of International Affairs, 13, Nr. 1, 61.

¹⁸⁹cf. Baregu, Mwesiga (2008) *The Three Faces of the Dragon. Tanzania-China Relations in Historical Perspective*. In Ampiah, Kweku; Naidu, Sansha, editor *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon. China and Africa*. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 164.

¹⁹⁰Chidaushe (2007), 117.

¹⁹¹cf. Adebajo (2008), 230; Chidaushe (2007), 109; Lumumba-Kasongo, Tukumbi (2011) *China-Africa Relations: A Neo-Imperialism or a Neo-Colonialism? A Reflection*. African and Asian Studies, 10, 241.

¹⁹²Le Pere, Gareth (2008) *The Geo-Strategic Dimensions of the Sino-African Relationship*. In Ampiah, Kweku; Naidu, Sansha, editor *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon. China and Africa*. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 27.

¹⁹³Chidaushe (2007), 117.

¹⁹⁴cf. Le Pere (2008), 22; Baregu (2008), 152.

¹⁹⁵For more details see Chapter 3.

ideological and political alignment of China alongside African countries.¹⁹⁶ Due to the principle of non-interference, China opposes linking investments and aid to economic conditionalities.

These topics are brought up, as China's perceived indifference to these issues presents a sharp contrast to the conditionalities of the 'Global North'. The authors debate the question of conditionalities and their usefulness controversially, mostly regarding democracy and human rights. The authors mainly criticise China for its missing interest in fostering democracy and ascribe weak accountability in African states and high levels of corruption to this issue.¹⁹⁷ The list of China's non-compliance regarding human rights includes engaging with dictators and 'rogue states', as well as missing concern for environmental issues,¹⁹⁸ illegal activities and a lack of corporate social responsibility by Chinese companies. According to Ampiah and Naidu (2008), the Chinese approach viewed from a different angle demonstrates that, in spite of its ideological background, China has never forced its approach, neither in terms of ideology nor its developmental model upon any country.¹⁹⁹ China's 'no strings attached'-attitude is seen sceptically. For the authors, China attaches at least one string, namely the political recognition, or better, non-recognition of Taiwan.²⁰⁰

One of the largest differences is seen in China's main focus on trade and especially fostering trade and business of Chinese state-owned and private companies with and in African countries. Some authors conclude the alternative Chinese concept will have a greater positive impact than previous approaches by the 'Global North': *"Having called for more trade than aid, Africa is therefore more likely to benefit from China's approach, which differs significantly from the West's"*²⁰¹ Contrary to this view, one group of authors defines the Chinese approach in practice as more similar to the West than different:²⁰² *"The emerging pattern of trade and investment between China and Africa is more 'North-South' than not, implying limited developmental benefits for African economies."*²⁰³ Chidaushe likewise questions the mutual character of Chinese-African relations: *"[L]ogic and experience suggest that it is impossible to engage on an equal footing as long as the parties are not on*

¹⁹⁶cf. Le Pere (2008), 22; Lumumba-Kasongo (2011), 242.

¹⁹⁷cf. Le Pere (2008), 30; Baregu (2008), 161; Rocha, John (2007) A New Frontier in the Exploration of Africa's Natural Resources: The Emergence of China. In Manji, Firoze/Marks, Stephen, editors African Perspectives on China in Africa. Cape Town, Nairobi, Oxford: Fahamu. Pambazuka News, 26.

¹⁹⁸cf. Le Pere (2008), 31.

¹⁹⁹cf. Ampiah (2008), 331.

²⁰⁰cf. Obiorah, Ndubisi (2007) Who's afraid of China in Africa? Towards an African Civil Society Perspective on China-Africa Relations. In Manji, Firoze/Marks, Stephen, editors African Perspectives on China in Africa. Cape Town, Nairobi, Oxford: Fahamu. Pambazuka News, 36; Baregu (2008), 153; Vines, Alex (2006) The Scramble for Resources: African Case Studies. South African Journal of International Affairs, 13, Nr. 1, 65; Chidaushe (2007), 116; Lumumba-Kasongo (2011), 242.

²⁰¹cf. Chidaushe (2007), 112.

²⁰²cf. Rocha (2007), 32.

²⁰³White and Alves (2006), 61.

the same level. China is coming as a donor and Africa as a recipient, much as it has been with the West”²⁰⁴, or, in another example: “[China’s soft-power initiatives] clearly suggest a relationship that is asymmetrical, despite the lofty Chinese rhetoric and presumptions of the African people.”²⁰⁵ A mutually beneficial relationship cannot develop because of a lack of capacity on the African side, although Adam Habib (2008) argues

*is the lack of administrative capacity not just one symptom of a broader unequal distribution of power between China and African countries? If the goal is to construct a more mutually beneficial relationship, this unequal distribution of power between the parties has to be addressed.*²⁰⁶

Garth Le Pere (2008) counters, Africans need to overcome many obstacles including weak regulatory mechanisms and administrative systems, but China should not be held accountable for these shortcomings.²⁰⁷ In favour of the Chinese and criticising ‘Western’ hypocrisy and double standards,²⁰⁸ many authors praise China for filling gaps with its investments in areas neglected by ‘Western’ donors. The construction of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway during the 1970s provides a frequently mentioned example.²⁰⁹ *“Beijing [...] provided long-term, interest-free loans to complete the project, after the World Bank, Washington, London and Ottawa had turned down requests from Lusaka and Dar es Salaam.”*²¹⁰

The authors make largely varying estimations, but most warn about over-estimating the size and importance of China’s engagement, especially in comparison to other countries. Although China’s trade with African countries is growing at a fast pace, in all statistics it yet appears second to the US or other former colonial powers.²¹¹ The conclusions drawn from economic data are equally projected to other aspects of the relationship, indicating prevailing remainders of colonial structures. The authors especially identify these structures regarding the language used in ex-colonies, as well as cultural traditions, as serving to preserve the ideological bond between the former colonial power and the ex-colony. This bond is then translated into an advantage for exercising influence as

it should be noted that many African countries are still politically, economically and culturally tied more closely to the West than with China. Anglo-Saxon and French culture are far more pervasive in Africa than Chinese influence [...]. Washington and Paris also still have much larger, often long-standing military and trade ties on the continent than Beijing. One should, therefore,

²⁰⁴Chidaushe (2007), 110.

²⁰⁵Ampiah (2008), 334.

²⁰⁶Habib (2008), 270.

²⁰⁷cf. Le Pere (2008), 35.

²⁰⁸Adam Habib (2008) for example writes: “And, while [Western powers are] making loud noises about some policies of China, none of them is pursuing a policy of disengaging China or stopping doing business with China. Not accidentally, those who singled China out for blame did not enjoy a glorious history in Africa.” Habib (2008), 263.

²⁰⁹for example see Baregu (2008), 155 and Adebajo (2008), 229.

²¹⁰Adebajo (2008), 229.

²¹¹e.g. in Equatorial Guinea cf. Vines (2006); Lumumba-Kasongo (2011), 237.

*not exaggerate China's ability to dislodge Western interests from Africa in short term.*²¹²

Also, as Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo (2011) notes, the 'Global North', in particular the former colonial partners, remain more important in the respective countries as the colonial legacy remains as a structurally functioning factor, which the Chinese lack.²¹³ China strives to overcome cultural and linguistic differences through establishing Confucius Institutes, as well as the promotion of tourism. Already today, an increasing number of Chinese tourists travels to African countries.²¹⁴ Further China applies soft power by providing peacekeeping troops to the UN.²¹⁵ The Chinese focus on soft power seems necessary as due to China's lack of colonial ties, *"the Chinese arguably face more natural barriers than Europeans"*²¹⁶ and China has not yet been able to establish any institutional and cultural alliances with the African elite.²¹⁷

While most authors focus on 'China in Africa' further mentioned emerging actors and competitors are (most frequently) India, followed by Brazil, Malaysia and South Korea²¹⁸ and in one case, North Korea.²¹⁹ These actors are primarily seen as competitors to China and not so much of the 'Global North', possessing weaker ties to African countries in comparison with those of the 'West'.

4.3.2 Economic and Political Cooperation

Economic cooperation plays an important role in China-Africa relations for this group, as African scholars portray natural resources as the main focus and interest of the Chinese in Africa.²²⁰ *"[R]eliable access to natural resources is essential and in large part determines China's relations with all resource-rich developing countries, not just those in Africa."*²²¹ And *"[C]hina's intent is first to exploit African security resources as much as possible and not necessarily to exploit the African cheap labour."*²²² China's increasing demand for commodities provides an explanation, although some authors acknowledge that the Chinese focus on resources is not inclusively on raw materials, but on agricultural produce as well. Some authors 'warn' African countries to be aware of the increasing danger

²¹²Adebajo (2008), 253.

²¹³cf. Lumumba-Kasongo (2011), 239.

²¹⁴cf. Le Pere (2008), 32.

²¹⁵Adebajo (2008), 231.

²¹⁶White and Alves (2006), 58.

²¹⁷cf. Lumumba-Kasongo (2011), 258.

²¹⁸cf. Rocha (2007), 29.

²¹⁹cf. Adebajo (2008), 229.

²²⁰cf. White and Alves (2006), 24; Obiorah (2007), 50.

²²¹White and Alves (2006), 259.

²²²Lumumba-Kasongo (2011), 258.

of the so-called ‘dutch disease’.^{223,224} African academics describe trade between African countries and China as imbalanced and in need of diversification from the African side.²²⁵ Furthermore, the “*dumping of cheap imports*”²²⁶ undermines African business, affects the image of the Chinese in Africa negatively and in the worst case leads to conflict.²²⁷ Cheap products imported from China increasingly displace local products and in consequence displace local manufacturing industries, as they become uncompetitive. As rising unemployment in these sectors usually follows, Chinese traders and business people are blamed, worsening the image of the Chinese in general.

On a political level, FOCAC is mentioned in nearly all articles. Lumumba-Kasongo in particular criticises FOCAC and the language used in policy documents by China, pointing out the potential danger of falling under the spell of the “*deceptive language of south-south cooperation*”.²²⁸ While FOCAC focuses largely on trade, issues of the aid business such as debt relief are brought up within the forum as well. As discussed in Chapter 3, the Chinese definition of aid is not based on ODA criteria, the same goes for mentioning of Chinese aid by many authors. For this reason, the following chapter includes references of the analysed authors made to development assistance and investments. While the definition of Chinese aid remains vague, the scholars praise the diversity of the aid projects especially in scale and area:²²⁹

*A range of direct and unconditional aid projects was initiated in areas as diverse as agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, textiles and other light industries, energy, transportation, broadcasting and communication, public and civil construction, education and health.*²³⁰

The authors write positively about these projects as, government scholarships, for example, “*will increase the potential pool of labour that China can draw from in its African development and business projects*”²³¹, thereby reducing the need to import Chinese labour. Promises of waiving debt as well as infrastructure projects and loans, often declared as investments, are further examples. The academics equally praise China for being less

²²³This term is today commonly used to describe harmful consequences of a large increase in a country’s income. It emerged during the 1960s, when the Netherlands discovered natural gas in the North Sea. As consequence, the Dutch Gilder became stronger, making non-gas exports more expensive and in consequence less competitive. Even though the ‘dutch disease’ is often associated with resource discovery it can occur with any development resulting in large inflow of foreign currency. Cordon, W. Max and Neary, J. Peter (1982) Booming Sector and De-Industrialization in a Small Open Economy. *Economic Journal*, 92, Nr. 368 cited from Ebrahimzadeh, Christine (2012) Dutch Disease: Wealth Managed Unwisely. Online: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/basics/dutch.htm> – accessed on 07/08/2013

²²⁴cf. Rocha (2007), 31.

²²⁵cf. Baregu (2008), 160; Lumumba-Kasongo (2011), 253.

²²⁶Le Pere (2008), 31.

²²⁷cf. Obiorah (2007), 51; Ampiah (2008), 64.

²²⁸cf. Lumumba-Kasongo (2011), 261.

²²⁹cf. Rocha (2007), 259.

²³⁰Le Pere (2008), 23.

²³¹Le Pere (2008), 29.

risk averse and possessing a longer term view regarding investment return than Western providers, even though Alex Vines (2006) estimates that many projects incur financial losses. Nevertheless, these are nevertheless lucrative for China, as it gains political standing in return.²³² As the Chinese government officially does not include political and economic conditions in their contracts and agreements, as do countries of the ‘Global North’, some authors warn about a possible debt crisis aggravated by Chinese loans. With accompanying measures insuring sustainable usage, a debt crisis could more easily arise as the cash inflow could unsettle the balance of payments. The conditionalities applied by the ‘Global North’ on the contrary are meant to prevent such a debt crisis.

As political and governance issues are some of the conditions frequently applied specifically to aid by traditional donors, the question of Chinese tied or untied aid is raised as well.²³³ As Chidaushe points out, traditional donors equally tie “[up] to 60 per cent of aid to developing countries [...] to technical expertise, consultants and procuring machinery and spare parts from the donor country.”²³⁴ The authors debate the issue of Chinese labour in African countries heatedly, especially regarding imported labour. For Chinese projects or loans in infrastructure, the employment of Chinese labour - at least to a certain extent - seems mandatory. As these contracts remain undisclosed, verifying the information proves difficult. Therefore, Chinese labour in general is a frequently discussed topic. Mostly sceptical, the authors mention Chinese labour as displacing locals, to be as high as 70% in certain projects and Chinese projects to import more workers than required.²³⁵

4.3.3 African Empowerment

Another thematic block are strategies leading to “African Empowerment”. This includes recommendations and ideas for African countries as well as the mere observation that Africans are in charge of their own destiny and African leaders should increase the public benefit, even though their interests are not necessarily in line with the interests of the citizens: “China’s close affinity with African governments might not necessarily be in Africa’s interest.”²³⁶ And: “The African leadership sees this rekindled relationship as a golden opportunity to escape Western domination and make the West less relevant to Africa. But Africa’s people have yet to see if they or just the leadership will benefit from this relationship.”²³⁷ Nevertheless, the authors recognise African leaders as accountable to the African people - at least in theory. Accountability should be reinforced and monitored by the civil society.²³⁸

²³²cf. Vines (2006), 64.

²³³cf. Rocha (2007), 25.

²³⁴Chidaushe (2007), 113.

²³⁵cf. Adebajo (2008), 231; Rocha (2007), 25; Lumumba-Kasongo (2011), 256.

²³⁶Ampiah (2008), 335.

²³⁷Chidaushe (2007), 107.

²³⁸cf. Lumumba-Kasongo (2011), 262.

4.3.4 The Chinese Image and Soft Power

The mentioned aspects for African empowerment include not only ideological strategies and rethinking the African position but also political recommendations, some referring to former and existing Chinese policies. Further recommendations by the authors for African policy makers include the need to develop a better understanding of China in order to be able to evaluate China's actions in African countries²³⁹, which is mentioned by nearly all authors. Most articles dedicate a substantial proportion to the history of African-Chinese relations and China's own development. In this regard China is described as a role model for African countries, mainly due to its rapid development and its success in poverty reduction.²⁴⁰ One of the initiatives working very well for China and which China implements in certain African countries are the Special Economic Zones, although these are mostly mentioned in articles referring to the respective countries of implementation.²⁴¹

Even though many authors describe China as embracing capitalism, its slow transition to a market economy poses an example for the development of African countries while protecting certain areas of its economy. *"Tanzania should develop a 'resource nationalism' [...] in response to its own economic transformation and China's resource hunger."*²⁴² Regarding economic theory, the authors mostly criticise IMF and World Bank with their proclaimed wisdom of structural adjustment programmes and dogma of free trade, which, from this perspective, has failed to reduce poverty in African countries.²⁴³ China, with its success in reducing poverty levels substantially in its own country, presents an even more compelling alternative political and economic model:²⁴⁴

*China's breath-taking, state-led development reinvigorates African critics of the Washington consensus and encourages those who advocate for Africa look to East Asia for inspiration and political and economic models. [...] A failure to re-establish the primacy and legitimacy of liberal democracy and strong human rights protection among Africa's intellectuals, media and civil society as the most appropriate path for Africa's development may ultimately lead to popular disillusionment with Western-inspired political and economic perceptions that are perceived as unable to put bread into the mouths of hungry infants while communist China becomes the workshop of the world.*²⁴⁵

China is at the same time referred to as "leader of the developing world" and for this reason is assumed to have achieved an aspired level of economic development,²⁴⁶ although as Chidaushe points out, *"it has not depended on aid to the same extent as Africa,"*²⁴⁷

²³⁹cf. Obiorah (2007), 53; White and Alves (2006), 60.

²⁴⁰cf. Le Pere (2008), 25; Adebajo (2008), 229; Lumumba-Kasongo (2011), 239.

²⁴¹e.g. in Tanzania. cf. Baregu (2008), 160.

²⁴²Baregu (2008), 165.

²⁴³cf. Obiorah (2007), 43; Baregu (2008), 158; Chidaushe (2007), 111; Rocha (2007), 17.

²⁴⁴cf. Ampiah (2008), 331.

²⁴⁵Obiorah (2007), 40f.

²⁴⁶cf. Le Pere (2008), 23.

²⁴⁷Chidaushe (2007), 112.

and therefore China's policies should not be transferred without adjustments. On a critical note, some authors discuss the question and provide evidence regarding China's development without democracy, which poses a sharp contrast to the ideology of the 'Global North'. At the same time China's state control over the economy is regarded as beneficial for African countries as its engagement is not being "*complicated by private domestic constituencies and interest groups.*"²⁴⁸ On an extreme account, for Obiorah (2008) "[i]t may become necessary to re-establish or revalidate across Africa the legitimacy of democracy and human rights per se and also as the most appropriate and effective path to Africa's development."²⁴⁹ Again, this represents one of the more extreme views while the mainstream takes a more moderate stance. The main recommendations regarding internal policies include diversifying the economy and regional integration. These issues are particularly emphasised by identifying the need for African countries to act collectively, in order to benefit to a greater extent from the Chinese engagement:²⁵⁰ "*China represents more of an opportunity than a threat to Dar es Salaam, if Tanzania and other African countries act as a collective group in their engagement with Beijing.*"²⁵¹ T is Dealing with 'Africa' as a group is described as China's interest as well,²⁵² presumably evidenced by the creation of FOCAC, which is seen as an "*indication, that, unlike Western countries, China prefers to interact with Africa as a whole.*"²⁵³

4.3.5 Analysis of the Perspective of African Academics

On the basis of the above presented topics and statements the analysis of the perspective of African academics is presented. The authors generally made welcoming statements on China's increased engagement with African countries. The mere presence of another type of actor provides African countries with leverage against the imposed conditions of the 'Global North' in exchange for loans, investments and development aid and is therefore viewed positively. China is the main alternative actor, as the authors regard China as the leading power of other 'emerging actors', such as India, Brazil and South Korea. From the topics identified in the analysed articles, competition over Africa, especially regarding the different approach in values and ideology applied by China in comparison to the 'Global North', is the most extensively covered issue. For example, some authors critically discuss the question and provide evidence regarding China's development without democracy, which poses a sharp contrast to the ideology of the 'Global North'.

While the **difference of China's approach** and its values in foreign policy appears obvious in theory, its putting into practice is debated among the authors. For example,

²⁴⁸Le Pere (2008), 33.

²⁴⁹Obiorah (2007), 46.

²⁵⁰cf. Adebajo (2008), 254; Lumumba-Kasongo (2011), 260.

²⁵¹Baregu (2008), 163.

²⁵²cf. Vines (2006), 67.

²⁵³Baregu (2008), 163.

nearly all authors mention, several even emphasise, that China does attach one string, namely political non-recognition of Taiwan to its engagement. The frequency of mentions indicate the importance of the issue for this group. Many authors show scepticism that the relationship between China and African countries can be mutual in its present form and see it much like with the ‘Global North’, as based on structural inequalities. The difference may not depend so much on a more (China and African countries) or less (countries of the ‘Global North’ and African countries) mutual relationship, but in the Chinese approach focusing to a larger extent on trade than on aid, as is noted by Chidushe cited on page 53 of the research at hand. As the ties of the former colonial powers with African countries prevail, the size and scope of the Chinese engagement should not be over-estimated. The authors demonstrate the difference in importance and size of China’s engagement to the ‘Global North’ through the multitude of references to China’s soft power deficit. One example that is provided regards general administrative structures and that languages prevailing from the former colonial powers in many African countries. Especially languages still play an important role in the societies today, as in most countries the colonial language remains the official and administrative language. Language here has a gate-keeper function, for instance when used in parliament and other offices, excluding all non-speakers.

Chinese soft-power in African countries is mostly mentioned to the extent that it is lacking, at least in comparison to countries of the ‘Global North’, which usually possessing the advantage of remainders of their colonial systems. Chinese peacekeeping troops provided to the UN are however mentioned positively as an approach to consolidate Chinese soft power in African countries. Additionally, in June 2013, the Chinese government committed to sending combat troops to Mali for the first time. The Chinese justify this action in light of a more flexible foreign policy approach despite the principle of non-interference²⁵⁴. Some authors praise China for filling a gap with its investments in areas neglected by ‘Western’ donors, in which case Africa is not so much regarded as a battleground, but the engagement of different actors proves complementary. The construction of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway during the 1970s is one such example. Statements on this issue, like the one cited on page 54, need to be treated with caution as they in some cases reflect a lack of awareness on the part of the authors regarding the actual contracts and in some cases the effort to let these projects appear in a better light.

African authors remain critical of the ‘Global North’ with its history in colonising African countries and its patronising approach, applying conditionalities. However, according to Le Pere, due to China’s state-control over the economy, its engagement is not complicated

²⁵⁴cf. Hille, Kathrin (2013) China commits combat troops to Mali. Online: http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/e46f3e42-defe-11e2-881f-00144feab7de,Authorised=false.html?_i_location=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ft.com%2Fcms%2Fs%2F0%2Fe46f3e42-defe-11e2-881f-00144feab7de.html%3Fsiteedition%3Dintl&siteedition=intl&_i_referer=#axzz2cdZrbUIc – accessed on 08.07.2013.

by private domestic constituencies and interest groups, which might prove beneficial for African countries. On the other hand, the ‘no strings attached’ approach by China likewise does not identify many declarations of praise. Rather African scholars criticise China for not fostering democracy and accountability by its approach. Further criticism is directed at China’s presumed negligence of protecting human rights, presumably regarding human rights in a ‘Western’ sense, as well as in taking appropriate measures against corruption. The question of Chinese conditionalities is debated as well, although the topic of recognising Taiwan as an independent country as requirement is merely stated as a fact. In contrast, conditionalities of the ‘Global North’ are criticised, indicating a double standard or rather a different view on this condition. The condition of the usage of Chinese labour is debated more heatedly. Serving as possible explanation, these labour issues are specified in contracts not publicly available and as a result not easily verifiable.

African scholars mention **economic issues** as topics of great importance, however, they are mostly only briefly mentioned and do not go into detail. The authors recognise natural resources as China’s main interest in African countries, at the same time positively evaluating its aid projects, especially due to their variety and filling the gaps left by other donors. A consensus furthermore exists on the perception that a deeper understanding of Chinese history and politics must be gained in order to understand the implications for its possible position as a role model in poverty reduction, decentralisation and even protectionism. The aspect of protectionism proves the most controversial, as it is diametrically opposed to the policies of the ‘Global North’ and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), which advocate free trade as key to economic development. However, the authors advise against transferring China’s policies without making adjustments. Adjustments likewise seem necessary due to differences in the political systems.

While the discussion above mainly refers to donors as the active part and the recipients as the passive part of the relationship, African academics included recommendations and statements regarding African empowerment as well. Main recommendations by the authors regarding internal policies of African countries include diversifying the economy and regional integration. It is worth to mention here that both concepts, a diversified economy as well as regional integration, originated in the ‘Global North’ and belong to the approaches used by World Bank and IMF to foster the integration of ‘less developed countries’ into the global free market economy.²⁵⁵ A unified opinion furthermore consists in the view that African countries must **act collectively in order to gain the greatest benefits** according to their needs and the interests of their people. However, recommendations of this kind do not refer to FOCAC as a forum for African countries

²⁵⁵See for example International Monetary Fund Topic 6. Growth through Diversification. Online: <http://www.imf.org/external/np/res/dfidimf/topic6.htm> – accessed on 09/16/2013 and World Bank (2013) Regional Integration in Africa. Online: <http://go.worldbank.org/GT6RFXXKWZ0> – accessed on 09/16/2013.

to act collectively towards China. Scepticism remains regarding the observation that the Chinese engagement focuses on African elites and questioning if African leaders have the best interests of their citizens at heart.

Forming a cross-cutting vision, these very diverse authors see China as following a more pragmatic than ideological approach, possibly beneficial to African countries. Many authors try to take a most neutral stance. For instance Le Pere writes: *“This overview is meant to sketch and provide a factual account of the main features of a diverse and enduring historically grounded relationship.”*²⁵⁶ Obiorah likewise takes a more protective attitude on the Chinese engagement in writing: *“Much of what appears in the African (and Western) media or information provided by NGOs tends to be recycled, outdated, mono-dimensional – and sometimes a little short of China-bashing.”*²⁵⁷ Taking a look at the sources used by the authors it becomes evident that these accounts are not without bias. They often refer to the aforementioned media reports, strongly advocating either in favour or against China. When taking a negative stance via China, the authors provide numbers and examples, which, at a second glance, often do not necessarily support the argument made. For example, while assessing China’s aid in African countries, Chidaushe writes: *“It is sobering to point out that benefit from China’s aid is minimal. For example the proposed 100 schools will only translate to two schools per country.”*²⁵⁸ Here the question seems justified why the numbers are projected to the whole continent, while in a different account the author states that Beijing *“opened four Confucius institutes in sub-Saharan Africa to help promote the teaching of Chinese language and culture on the continent, evidently in an attempt to expose as many Africans as possible to Chinese values and ideas.”*²⁵⁹ In this case, four Confucius Institutes across the continent are painted as a threat, whereas their impact seems as minimal given the size of the population they attend to. Without doubt, China is attempting to change its image in African countries and introduce its culture and language to a larger portion of the people. Nevertheless, the effects of some initiatives seem to be over-estimated.

At the same time, many authors present an idealised picture of values between African countries and China: *“[i]n Africa, the people’s struggles are essentially about how to improve their social conditions. In China it is about economic growth and world politics.”*²⁶⁰ While in the example, China is presented as pragmatic, mainly interested in economic growth, this factor does not seem to concern people in Africa as they pay more attention to idealistic values and social conditions.

²⁵⁶Le Pere (2008), 24.

²⁵⁷Obiorah (2007), 39.

²⁵⁸Chidaushe (2007), 111.

²⁵⁹Ampiah (2008), 334.

²⁶⁰Lumumba-Kasongo (2011), 239.

I do not intend to demonise African authors as using, in my opinion, unsuitable examples or collectively engaging in China-bashing. Many accounts present a more nuanced perception, for example, Africans need to overcome many obstacles, China should not be held accountable for, e.g. weak regulatory mechanisms and administrative capacities.²⁶¹ In his Chapter “Western Hegemony, Asian Ascendancy and the New Scramble for Africa” in “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon” (edited by Kweku Ampiah and Sanusha Naidu), Adam Habib (2008) comments on the views presented in the other chapters of the book. Regarding Garth Le Pere and Garth Shelton, he states *“This attempt to correct the overly paranoid analyses of China must be welcomed. But care must be taken not to replace paranoid analyses with romanticised ones.”*²⁶² Following the approach of realism in international relations, Lyal White and Phil Alves (2006) write:

*China should not be simplistically interpreted as an alternative to imperialist or colonial powers and their various credit lending agencies. It should not be touted a saviour, or as always having the interests of African countries at heart. To be sure, Africa-China relations should be based on mutual reciprocity that will ensure long-term sustainable development in Africa, but at the same time satisfy the economic requirements and unrelenting appetite of China through reliable access to commodities. China’s growth is, after all, in the interest of the world at large.*²⁶³

Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo equally acknowledges the significance of the surrounding context and complexity of China’s relations with African countries:

*However, no international relations theory holistically explains the unorthodox nature of [the] relationship between China and Africa. These relations are not characterized by the free lunch law of the ecology. The movements and activities of China and Africa are not static. They should be localized within their historical, national and global contexts. Both China and Africa and their peoples in the 21. century are positively changing with new tools to respond to the local and international imperatives of the “free” market, national politics, and global transnational institutions. The nature of the relationship is not fixed and cataloged in a simplistic dualism, uni-dimensionality or uni-linearity of the world system in which capital is supposed to come mainly from the North, labor and primary raw materials from the South, and the control of the markets and systems of production by a few capitalists and multinational cooperations.*²⁶⁴

The conditions and characteristics of China’s engagement vary from country to country, therefore, the possibility of making generalising statements is further impaired. The fact that many articles create an un-balanced account of China’s engagement may be based on the small sample of articles used for this research. Nevertheless, a significant reason

²⁶¹See for example Le Pere (2008), 35.

²⁶²Habib (2008), 269.

²⁶³White and Alves (2006), 56.

²⁶⁴Lumumba-Kasongo (2011), 258f.

for the selected sample lies in its limited availability. This indicates that at least in Austria, not many publications by African scholars on the topic of China's engagement are readily available. In conclusion, African academics do not present a unified "voice", nevertheless from their perspective, the 'Global North' remains dominant in many African countries reinforcing existing inequalities. Another common view shows inequalities of some kind existing within the relationships between African countries and China, although the authors assess the dimension and meaning of these inequalities differently. In order to improve the position of African countries in enforcing their own interest against other countries, two conclusions are drawn. First, a better understanding of the Chinese engagement, including policies, history, cultural aspects and language must be gained. Second, collective action is regarded as a way to increase bargaining power not only towards China but towards the 'Global North' as well.

Chapter 4.3 provided a description of the topics Competition over Africa - Values and Ideology, Economic and Political Cooperation, African Empowerment and the Chinese Image and Soft Power, as well as a discussion of the material. African academics see the greatest difference between China and countries of the 'Global North' in their engagement with African countries in their diverging concepts, the Chinese focusing on trade instead of aid. The Chinese interest in natural resources is viewed sceptically and African countries are warned about potential dangers. A separate section includes African empowerment strategies, such as collective action of African countries, and China's position as a role model for the development of African countries.

4.4 Western Academics

The following chapter analyses articles and books of academics from the 'Global North' on the topic "China in Africa". The books "The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa" (2009) by Deborah Bräutigam and "China in Africa" (2007) by Chris Alden can be considered fundamental works on China's engagement with Africa since both are cited regularly by the scholarly community. Therefore, they present the basis of the analysis of this perspective. While "The Dragon's Gift" focuses on Chinese aid, it provides a detailed description of various aspects of this issue and the Chinese engagement with African countries in general. The slimmer book by Chris Alden, in contrast, gives an overview of various 'Western' and 'African' views. Additionally, journal articles by Chris Alden and Daniel Large, Chris Alden and Ana Christina Alves, Horace Campbell and Ian Taylor are included. This approach enables the identification of topics and the interpretation of the views of academics from the 'Global North' on the topic of 'China in Africa'. The main topics for this group of actors are *Ideology and Values*, *China's Foreign Policy Strategy*, *Political and Economic Cooperation* and *Difference and Competition with the 'Global North'*.

4.4.1 Ideology and Values

Academics from the ‘Global North’ often mention issues regarding the Chinese ideology and values in the context of its engagement with African countries in comparison to the ‘Global North’. As this group of authors provides very detailed descriptions and examples of this issue, “Ideology and Values” and “Difference and Competition with the ‘Global North’ ” will be treated separately. Core values which are mentioned include mutual benefit, win-win cooperation, equality, sovereignty, non-interference, and the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in general, as well as the Key Principles of Foreign Aid.²⁶⁵ For Deborah Bräutigam (2009) China even possesses a “ *distinctly different set of core ideas about development* ”²⁶⁶ than the ‘Global North’. According to the authors, China’s experience with state-led development serves as an incentive for the Chinese government to defend the principle of sovereignty and ensure that prerequisites for nation-building are in place in African countries.²⁶⁷ The principle of equality implies and explains China’s commitment against conditionalities and its aversion against imposing political ideologies upon state partners.²⁶⁸ In her book, Deborah Bräutigam recounts many interviews in which her interview partners state that the Chinese working in Africa spent almost no efforts trying to convince African people to adopt their model as well. Similarly, development aid, in these interviews, is perceived as partnership and not a one-way transfer of charity.²⁶⁹

Some authors reiterate the Chinese statement and impression that China and African countries share a common sense of human rights,²⁷⁰ while at the same time the authors attribute a lack of interest in human rights to the Chinese, quite in contrast to NGOs of the ‘Global North’. Ian Taylor, for example, criticises that the adherence to the mentioned values, especially the interpretation of sovereignty and non-interference, legitimise human rights abuses and undemocratic practices.²⁷¹ While human rights are part of conditionalities by the ‘Global North’, China does not attach political strings to its engagement as

[t]he West’s employment of conditionalities [is] merely the latest in decades of humiliating experiences at the hands of former colonial powers and the United States, [and] echoes the humiliations of the ‘unequal treaties’ foisted on China

²⁶⁵cf. Taylor, Ian (s.d.) Unpacking China’s Resource Diplomacy in Africa. Volume Working Paper No. 1, Online: http://www.cctr.ust.hk/materials/working_papers/WorkingPaper19_IanTaylor.pdf – accessed on 05/02/2013, 5, 10; Alden, Chris and Large, Daniel (2011) China’s Exceptionalism and the Challenges of Delivering Difference in Africa. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 20, Nr. 68, 21, 28; Alden, Chris (2007) *China in Africa*. London: Zed Books, 23; Bräutigam (2009), 30.

²⁶⁶Bräutigam (2009), 24.

²⁶⁷cf. Alden, Chris and Alves, Ana Christina (2008) History and Identity in the Construction of China’s Africa Policy. *Review of African Political Economy*, 115, 36.

²⁶⁸cf. *ibid.*, 28.

²⁶⁹cf. Bräutigam (2009), 30f.

²⁷⁰cf. Alden (2007), 16.

²⁷¹cf. Taylor (s.d.), 32.

*by the West in the nineteenth century.*²⁷²

But, as Deborah Bräutigam argues, while the Chinese government does not impose economic conditions, “*economic engagement usually does come with conditions, some even (indirectly) governance-related.*”²⁷³ Likewise, Chinese financiers and investors do have preconditions before investing or financing commercial projects in any country.²⁷⁴ According to Bräutigam, adhering to the one-China policy does not necessarily apply to doing business with Chinese companies: “*Even in Swaziland - which, alone among African countries, has never had diplomatic ties with Beijing - Chinese state-owned companies began to win contracts as early as 1991, a clear sign that the practicalities of business were taking priority over politics.*”²⁷⁵ Some authors, such as Chris Alden, contrast the “Beijing Consensus”, including the Chinese development model and its values such as non-interference and the promotion of sovereignty and integrity -and therefore no conditionalities-, directly with the “Washington Consensus”, representing economic and political conditionalities.²⁷⁶

The ‘no strings attached’-approach by China is widely criticised among academics from the ‘Global North’. On one hand, because the authors perceive it as incompatible with human rights, on the other, they see an inconsistency between the values in theory and China’s experience on the ground.²⁷⁷ According to Chris Alden and Daniel Large (2011), China’s rhetoric of intention rather than real-world effects

*can not only generate raised expectations about China’s relations with developing countries but additionally underlines, in the face of domestic economic and political imperatives, the constrained ability of China to contribute to the development of developing countries.*²⁷⁸

Alden further explains that the principle of sovereign equality and actual asymmetries of power, perceived as evident in China’s relations with African countries, are incompatible with each other.²⁷⁹ In another publication, Alden doubts the credibility of China’s claim of acting with a “clean historical slate”.²⁸⁰ The argument of a clean historical slate is not valid anymore, as all involved actors will assess China’s engagement according to benchmarks set in the light of its current announcements and actions. For Ian Taylor, China merely reacts to greater pressure (from the ‘Global North’ and/or African countries), becoming more defensive while the contradictory nature of its “no questions asked policy” becomes more and more apparent. Taylor observes: “*whilst China emphasises the notion of sovereignty, this is most enthusiastically applied to countries where the empirical*

²⁷²Alden (2007), 20.

²⁷³Bräutigam (2009), 21.

²⁷⁴cf. *ibid.*, 150.

²⁷⁵Bräutigam (2009), 69.

²⁷⁶cf. Alden (2007), 105.

²⁷⁷See for example Alden and Large (2011), 29; Taylor (s.d.), 5.

²⁷⁸Alden and Large (2011), 25.

²⁷⁹cf. *ibid.*, 30.

²⁸⁰Alden (2007), 135.

properties of the state are lacking."²⁸¹ As another example, China's abandonment of the principle of non-interference in the light of the crisis in Sudan is mentioned.²⁸² For Taylor, China's progressive integration into the global order makes it more difficult to maintain its previous position on strict non-interference. In addition, Taylor regards China's doctrine of equality as potentially awkward for a large and powerful state in dealing with relatively small and poor states.²⁸³ Deborah Bräutigam uses the term 'sovereignty trap' to describe this same phenomenon. According to Bräutigam, the Chinese are well aware of the problem and are flexibly adjusting their behaviour as, in the past, the direct involvement of Chinese, for instance in managing aid projects, was already seen as an interference in internal affairs. Later, the Chinese government revised this view and regarded the Chinese involvement in project management as helping to build self-reliance.²⁸⁴

4.4.2 China's Foreign Policy Strategy

In many articles, 'Western' scholars see China's engagement with African countries in relation to a broader foreign policy strategy. The foundation of this strategy is based on the earlier mentioned values and ideology on the one, and a long-term strategy of positioning China as a global player, successful within the global competition, on the other hand.²⁸⁵ For the authors, China, emerging as a global power, contradicts China's the self-ascribed identity as a developing country.²⁸⁶ At the same time the progressive integration into the world economy as an emerging global power implies the necessity to follow essentially 'Western' rules.²⁸⁷ Again, the perspective of competition with the 'Global North', in which China's behaviour mirrors the conduct of the 'Global North', dominates the articles.²⁸⁸ Alden identifies patterned responses to China divided into three different types of regimes, namely pariah partnerships, illegal regimes or weak democracies with commodity-based

²⁸¹Taylor (s.d.), 28.

²⁸²China's conduct in Sudan is of special interest and frequently cited, especially as an example for China's changing engagement with African countries. During the ongoing conflict in Sudan China placed investments, especially in oil, sold arms and delivered further military support to the Sudanese government, holding on to its principle of non-interference in internal affairs. Furthermore, China supported Sudan diplomatically and used its power in the UN Security Council to water down or abstain from sanctions and hindered resolutions on dispatching UN peacekeeping troops. In early 2007 though, China held discussions with Sudan's President Bashir, after which Sudan agreed to UN and AU peace keepers in Darfur and China appointed a special envoy for Sudan. The change in China's attitude is attributed to its recognition that continuing instability in Darfur would not only hurt its economic interests in Sudan but the conflict could damage China's relationship with other African countries as well. See for example Holslag, Jonathan (2007) China's Diplomatic Manoeuvring on the Question of Darfur. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 17, Nr. 54; Large, Daniel (2008) China and the Contradictions of 'Non-interference' in Sudan. *Review of African Political Economy*, 35, Nr. 115 and Bräutigam (2009).

²⁸³cf. Taylor (s.d.), 14f.

²⁸⁴cf. Bräutigam (2009), 57.

²⁸⁵cf. Campbell, Horace (2008) China in Africa: Challenging US Global Hegemony. *Third World Quarterly*, 29, Nr. 1, 93; Taylor (s.d.), 3.

²⁸⁶cf. Alden and Alves (2008), 53.

²⁸⁷cf. Taylor (s.d.), 6.

²⁸⁸cf. Bräutigam (2009), 24.

economies and democracies with diversified economies.²⁸⁹ Deborah Bräutigam describes China's foreign policy strategy as not only seeking natural resources and selling cheap products but in exporting value-added products reflecting its stage of development and industrialisation:

*The Chinese government wants exports of Chinese machinery and equipment to overtake cheap consumer goods in the export mix, moving up the value chain. [...] it wants mature industries to move offshore. Setting up factories that process African raw materials in Africa is part of this strategy.*²⁹⁰

In 2011 however, Alden and Large wrote in a nuanced account: “China’s official foreign policy rhetoric as a discursively enacted normative ideal relates to and coheres with discourse as a descriptive feature of increasingly multifaceted, complex Chinese experience throughout the African continent.” But at the same time “the Chinese government’s foreign policy rhetoric does not always reflect or comfortably accommodate the trajectory of change in today’s comparatively new historical phase of relations.”²⁹¹ Especially China’s approach towards developing African countries is

*grounded not in the development discourse as formulated by economists and an ensemble of development industry experts but rather one constructed in line with practical experience. This practice-based methodology is mirrored by an outcomes based approach: impact is ultimately the only worthwhile focus for assessment.*²⁹²

The direct involvement and influence of the Chinese government in projects is equally disputed. However, Deborah Bräutigam recounts a ‘Beijing-based Chinese insider’ admitting that at least regarding development aid, for most new projects funded in African countries, foreign affairs (in terms of direct involvement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) are irrelevant.²⁹³

The Chinese interest-based approach is seen as very opportunistic by Horace Campbell (2008). Campbell states that China places its energy needs ahead of the needs of the people.²⁹⁴ Alden warns China that its pragmatism could prevent it from recognising the vulnerability and frailty of African states. In the case of a state collapse or excessive debts, the effects would have an unforeseen impact on China as well.²⁹⁵ Regarding China’s engagement with African countries in general and development aid in particular, Bräutigam calls attention to prevailing ignorance as misinformation and mislabeling of aid spread rumours and half-truths:

²⁸⁹cf. Alden (2007), 59f.

²⁹⁰cf. Bräutigam (2009), 223.

²⁹¹Alden and Large (2011), 26.

²⁹²Alden and Large (2011), 37.

²⁹³cf. Bräutigam (2009), 111.

²⁹⁴cf. Campbell (2008), 99.

²⁹⁵cf. Alden (2007), 70.

*[A large number of programs] are often labeled as “aid” in the media. They need to be disentangled from the official aid program, and viewed for what they are: part of the portfolio of tools used by an activist, developmental government with a clear vision of what it needs to do to promote its national goals overseas.*²⁹⁶

The aforementioned examples show disagreements between the different authors but also in the arguments by Chris Alden himself, which have changed over time. Natural resources are still seen as an important factor of the Chinese engagement with African countries but are now regarded as on part of an optimistic and pragmatic approach and not as China’s only imperative.

4.4.3 Economic and Political Cooperation

The authors often ascribe the pragmatism of China’s approach towards African countries to China’s need for natural resources. China discovered this need recently, desperately needing oil and natural resources to maintain its fast expanding economy. For Alden (2007) the singular focus on resource acquisition and commercial opportunism, energy resources being the most important focus, characterise the Chinese engagement with African countries not by ideological considerations.²⁹⁷ Equally, this publication views the aim of construction projects at improving access and exploiting natural resources.²⁹⁸ Likewise, for Alden and Large the *“Chinese engagement to resource supply needs [is] bolstered by geopolitical imperatives [...] but in and entirely of themselves do not provide a full explanation for the form and trajectory of China’s Africa policy.”*²⁹⁹ But, as Ian Taylor notes, China’s quest for oil and other resources in particular concerns countries of the ‘Global North’ and confronts foreign competition, especially because *“Chinese companies must go [to] places for oil where American and European companies are not present.”*³⁰⁰

Taylor likewise mentions the danger of a ‘resource curse’ taking effect as these are associated with the broader character of the oil industry, presumably resulting in undermining democracy and accountability in the developing world, in particular in Africa. Additionally, according to Taylor, resource rich governments currently have little incentive to diversify the economy and promote development outside of the resource sector.³⁰¹ Bräutigam, as mentioned above, gives a more careful explanation, again regarding Chinese aid: *“They are undoubtedly interested in gaining access to Africa’s petroleum, minerals and other natural resources but there is little evidence that aid is offered exclusively, or even primarily, for that purpose.”*³⁰² At the same time, the often used term ‘scramble for

²⁹⁶Bräutigam (2009), 14.

²⁹⁷cf. Alden (2007), 8.

²⁹⁸cf. *ibid.*, 38.

²⁹⁹Alden and Large (2011), 25.

³⁰⁰Taylor (s.d.), 9.

³⁰¹cf. *ibid.*, 30.

³⁰²Bräutigam (2009), 21.

resources' suggests rushed actions. On the contrary, for Bräutigam, Beijing's engagement follows a well-thought-out and long-term strategy.³⁰³ Nevertheless, statements regarding trade and investments are focused on China's goal of acquiring natural resources, especially when describing China's African trading partners. "*Chinese trade and investment is concentrated in a comparatively small number of resource-rich states, which produce a majority of Africa's trade with China.*"³⁰⁴ Consequently, the authors observe that China's trade pattern with African countries produces a substantial trade deficit for African countries and replicates Africa's economic relations with other powers.³⁰⁵

Another concern for the authors is individual trade, resulting largely from Chinese entrepreneurs staying behind after having completed construction projects in African countries. These small-scale traders, setting up individual businesses, often have a great impact on the lives of ordinary Africans as they expand into sectors and markets formerly dominated by Africans. Using Chinese networks and supply chains as well as the exploitation of family labour, the cost of consumer products can be lowered substantially in this manner, thereby putting pressure on the markets and in consequence, lowering prices of the products in question in general. This 'problem' especially arises in the textile sector as, according to Alden, due to Chinese influx, more than 80% of Nigerian textile factories were forced to shut down.³⁰⁶ The authors mention tensions in African countries resulting from rising competition for Nigeria and South Africa, while at the same time, cotton exporting countries such as Mali, Benin and Togo benefited.³⁰⁷ However, Alden acknowledges that these cheaper products present a new opportunity for ordinary Africans as well, as the surge in affordable consumer products changes and often facilitates their lives.³⁰⁸ Bräutigam sees the problem not only in the effects of the competition in the textile industry in domestic African markets but especially in third markets in which both China and African countries export.³⁰⁹ While academics from the 'Global North' recognise competition as severe in many cases, in some, it helped catalyse industrial transition. Here, for instance Bräutigam criticises the 'Global North' whose private sectors "*have shied away from investing in African factories.*"³¹⁰ The Chinese government encourages companies to move into manufacturing because an increase in manufacturing is seen as central for the eradication of poverty in African countries.³¹¹ These initiatives in industries and infrastructure are at the same time welcomed by African countries as they are without alternatives and infrastructure is urgently needed.³¹²

³⁰³cf. Bräutigam (2009), 78.

³⁰⁴Alden and Large (2011), 30.

³⁰⁵cf. Alden and Large (2011), 30f; Alden (2007), 14, 86.

³⁰⁶cf. Alden (2007), 37f.

³⁰⁷cf. Alden (2007), 48; Campbell (2008), 81.

³⁰⁸cf. Alden (2007), 56.

³⁰⁹cf. Bräutigam (2009), 215.

³¹⁰Bräutigam (2009), 92.

³¹¹cf. *ibid.*, 190f.

³¹²cf. Taylor (s.d.), 22.

The growing businesses of Chinese traders with their expansion into African markets and the large infrastructure projects carried out by state-owned companies mutually influence the issue of Chinese labour and migration to African countries. Alden and Alves give a historical explanation for the long standing relationship between China and African countries: *“New China-Africa contacts were made in the early 20th century when European powers took Chinese labour to work in mines and plantations in their African colonies and where they shared the same fate of Africans as colonialism’s victims.”*³¹³ For Horace Campbell *“the struggles for democracy in Africa are being widened by African workers who are in the forefront of opposing the slave-like conditions of Chinese workers employed on contract in Africa.”*³¹⁴ Following these Chinese labourers, family members and (illegal) migrant brokers are perceived as heightening Chinese migration into African countries. Chinese labourers in African countries are in general regarded as minimally trained or skilled.³¹⁵ Most authors mention varying but growing numbers of Chinese immigrants:

*“Chinese migrants are settling in Africa in growing numbers. Though data on this phenomenon is still sorely lacking, anecdotal evidence suggests that the bulk of them seem to be moving into retail trade, taking advantage of superior connections with the world’s manufacturing hub in coastal China, and importing all manner of low-cost consumer products to feed the insatiable demand in Africa.”*³¹⁶

Alden further states that Chinese migrants view their time in African countries as temporary, but are increasingly integrated into the local economy and even society.³¹⁷

Returning to the question of Chinese labourers, a consensus seems to exist on reasons for employing Chinese, namely: fast completion of projects, less language or cultural barriers and the opportunity to profit from strong Chinese work ethics.³¹⁸ While Chinese do routinely use more own nationals as staff than projects funded by other countries, Bräutigam denies the accuracy of the common perception that only Chinese labour is used. The number rather depends on how long the respective company has been working in the African country, how easy it is to find skilled local workers and especially on local government policies regarding work permits for foreigners. According to Bräutigam, *“evidence suggests that Chinese textile factories and those owned by others are likely to employ a small core of Chinese labor, if allowed, but the vast majority of workers across the industry are likely to be African.”*³¹⁹

The authors describe civil vigilance as the best guarantee of preventing Chinese promises

³¹³Alden and Alves (2008), 46.

³¹⁴Campbell (2008), 102.

³¹⁵cf. Alden (2007), 50f.

³¹⁶Alden (2012), 704.

³¹⁷cf. *ibid.*

³¹⁸cf. Alden (2007), 83; Bräutigam (2009), 156, 277.

³¹⁹Bräutigam (2009), 229.

for Africa from turning counter-productive for ordinary people. While the African civil society is beginning to raise its voice, Alden advises to work more closely with ‘Western’ NGOs.³²⁰ Elite ties could prove dangerous for Chinese economic interests, which are under threat whenever a host government changes.³²¹ The question of benefit for elites versus ‘the people’ arises in the context of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). FOCAC is led by nearly all authors and described as a “*very public diplomacy*” event³²², which proves useful for announcing new cooperation deals and China’s strategy in dealing with African countries. FOCAC presented an impulse for the ‘Global North’ to reflect China’s and their own engagement with African countries as it is a symbol for dynamic in China-Africa relations.³²³ While FOCAC constitutes a forum in which all African countries with official ties with China are invited, it is seen as the manifestation of China’s embrace of the notion of pan-Africanism. ‘Western’ authors mention a contrasting approach by China, usually preferring individual bilateral approaches.³²⁴ Alden especially demonstrates this “[a]s disputes over textiles and Darfur have demonstrated, there is a real possibility of conflicts of interest between, for instance, Chinese economic concerns and pan-Africanist aspirations.”³²⁵

4.4.4 Competition with the ‘Global North’

China is often depicted as a power “*being categorically different to all previous external powers engaged in Africa, a difference based fundamentally on its seminal experience as a developing country with a similar experience of (semi-)colonial subjugation.*”³²⁶ Therefore, for academics from the ‘Global North’, Ideology and Values and Competition with the ‘Global North’ are presented in separate chapters. According to Alden, China’s approach follows classic modernisation theory by laying its focus on political stability while modernising agriculture and furthering industrialisation. In contrast the ‘Global North’ seeks a form of utopian intervention that ‘does no harm’ and absolves itself of acting as anything other than what it defines as the interests of the target population.³²⁷ According to Horace Campbell, already very early contacts between China and African countries qualitatively differed from the African experiences with European countries resulting in plunder, war and destruction. China applied its alternative approach from the beginning of its relationship with African countries over time until today. China never participated in the transatlantic slave trade, does not possess a history as colonial power, genocide or occupation in African countries and has furthermore embraced the liberation process with diplomatic, political, material and military support. Additionally, China and African

³²⁰cf. Campbell (2008), 101; Alden (2007), 60, 134.

³²¹cf. Alden (2012), 704.

³²²cf. Alden (2007), 27.

³²³cf. Alden (2007), 23, 30f; Campbell (2008), 90; Bräutigam (2009), 78, 87, 134.

³²⁴cf. Alden (2007), 32; Alden (2012), 703; Bräutigam (2009), 77f.

³²⁵Alden (2007), 79.

³²⁶Alden and Large (2011), 27.

³²⁷cf. *ibid.*, 36.

countries form the South-South bloc within the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and China is not identified with structural adjustment programmes and the presumed resulting impoverishment of African countries.³²⁸ Still today, ‘Western’ imperialism in Africa is represented by an array of cultural, financial, gendered, religious and military forces, whereas China on the other hand does not yet possess this broad-range presence.³²⁹ While firms from the ‘Global North’ once ruled virtually undisputed over financial resources and requisite political ties to dominate global business, they are now challenged by the Chinese.³³⁰ In Alden’s book “China in Africa”, he describes Chinese multi-national companies as late-comers with a relative lack of experience in comparison to companies from the ‘Global North’ which benefit from remainders of colonial infrastructure.³³¹

As aforementioned, China is criticised for its lack of interest in human rights and its embracing of African dictators, for instance in Sudan and Zimbabwe.³³² Even though most authors describe the values and ideology between the Chinese and ‘Western’ approach as fundamentally different, Horace Campbell shows that the USA use the exact same term of ‘mutual benefit’ when describing their relationship with Africa under the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA). Nevertheless, Campbell states that even though this term was used under Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, their governments never showed any respect for Africans.³³³ ‘Western’ hypocrisy, such as this example demonstrates, is mentioned by the other authors as well.³³⁴

Further differences that are constructed between China and the ‘Global North’ include the perceived contrast between the “Beijing Consensus”, describing China’s approach, with the “Washington Consensus”, describing the basis of the engagement of the ‘Global North’. As Bräutigam describes it, “[t]he comparative performance of China with its five-year plans and emphasis on experimentation rather than certainties, stands as a rebuke to the Washington Consensus policies.”³³⁵ Bräutigam further aims at setting issues straight, for example, China’s engagement with African countries builds on China’s steady presence on the continent,³³⁶ throwing a different light on China’s activities and the perception of a competition with the ‘Global North’ as well. In particular, Bräutigam emphasises that China doesn’t compete with countries from the ‘Global North’ in certain areas, but stepped in where traditional donors left a vacuum. Bräutigam explicitly mentions man-

³²⁸cf. Campbell (2008), 90, 100; Alden and Alves (2008), 47.

³²⁹cf. Campbell (2008), 102.

³³⁰cf. Alden (2007), 15, 38; Bräutigam (2009), 16.

³³¹cf. Alden (2007), 42.

³³²cf. *ibid.*, 61f.

³³³cf. Campbell (2008), 90.

³³⁴see for example *Ibid.*, 91 and Bräutigam (2009), 276.

³³⁵Bräutigam (2009), 16.

³³⁶ “[The historical foundation] gave China a steady presence, credibility, and a strong foundation that Beijing would build on in the years after 1995. China’s increased visibility in Africa should be seen in this context: **China never left, we just stopped looking.**” Bräutigam (2009), 54.

ufacturing and agriculture in this regard, but also other industries and trade. According to Bräutigam, less than 5% of all World Bank loans were allocated to industry and trade from 2002 to 2005. Regarding traditional donors, these only allocated less than 1% of foreign aid to industry.³³⁷ All these differences aside, she concludes that in many ways “*surprisingly, it seems the Chinese are a lot more like traditional donors than either side is willing to admit.*”³³⁸ (Chinese and ‘Western’) Reasons for giving aid (for example, strategic diplomacy, society’ ideologies and values and commercial benefit) as well as the observation that the Chinese engagement does come with preconditions as noted throughout the whole book, serve as examples of the differences between development policies in China and the ‘Global North’.

After having described different (historical) aspects of the Chinese engagement with African countries from the view of ‘Western’ academics, many mention a changing Chinese conduct as well. For example Alden writes that it was the first impulse of Chinese officials to seek out easy deals which would allow them to capture natural resources quickly and foster elite ties, but which only provided for low legal security. Especially in reaction to growing criticism, Alden reports a change in the Chinese conduct.³³⁹ This change is also described by Bräutigam who notes that China was taken aback by the wave of criticism in recent years and that Chinese leaders begun to actively debate and adjust their engagement. This is in particular prominent in China’s alliance with Sudan as well as in the conduct of Chinese enterprises in African countries under the keyword ‘corporate social responsibility’.³⁴⁰

The authors refer to China’s rapid rise, which is seen as a “*testament that poor societies can rise beyond colonial exploitation and the mangled priorities of societies which ensure that colonial societies remain a producer of raw materials.*”³⁴¹ According to Campbell, China succeeded in transforming its economy while retaining aspects of the Chinese knowledge system that emanated from a long history of Chinese society.³⁴² Alden describes China as an inspiration for African development, and its approach as better suited to African conditions.³⁴³ Bräutigam further supports the argument: “*China’s leaders had a vision of a modern future, they held the reins of their own development tightly in their own hands, and they used the aid offered by the West and Japan to build a foundation that lifted 400 million people out of poverty.*”³⁴⁴ Also, “*Beijing is following directly in the footsteps of the earlier Asian successes, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, who all used development finance*

³³⁷cf. Bräutigam (2009), 91.

³³⁸Ibid., 132.

³³⁹cf. Alden (2007), 90; Alden and Large (2011), 37.

³⁴⁰cf. Bräutigam (2009), 19, 309.

³⁴¹Campbell (2008), 100.

³⁴²cf. ibid., 103.

³⁴³cf. Alden (2007), 25.

³⁴⁴Bräutigam (2009), 51.

to “pick winners” in the globalization race.”³⁴⁵

4.4.5 Analysis of an Academic ‘Western’ Perspective

The articles and books used for this research frequently refer to the **differences between Chinese and Western values**. All articles list these values, which are named above. These values are seen in connection with China’s perception of human rights, which equally differs greatly from the ‘Western’ notion of human rights. Many authors accordingly criticise the Chinese human rights conduct in Africa, often maintaining their rather rigid view on ‘Western’ human rights. For instance, China is criticised for its lack of interest in human rights and its embrace of African dictators. This critique is applied, seemingly as a contrast to countries of the ‘Global North’ which presumably adhere to international standards and sanctions. Furthermore, the topic of human rights is, for example, brought up in the context of **conditionalities**, which are usually seen as applied by countries of the ‘Global North’ and not by China. But, as Bräutigam remarks, China uses political conditionalities as well, even though she does not provide examples. Other authors argue for a lack of economic conditionalities. The one-China policy, however, is viewed as a condition which is not implemented strictly when it comes to business. Then again, businesses do apply conditions before investing.

While Bräutigam opposes other authors’ perceptions that Chinese investors do not impose conditionalities, it is generally acknowledged that China’s rhetoric and values are not in line with its actions or at least that it will be impossible for China to stand to its commitments in the future due to its ongoing integration into the global economy. As mentioned before, China’s foreign policy, values and ideology are often presented in contrast to the values and ideology of the ‘Global North’. China’s progressive economic integration into the global economy, for the authors, leads to an adaption of ‘Western’ values. As ‘Western’ values imply imposing conditionalities in order to protect democracy and human rights, China would break with its principle of non-interference. This implies that the world economy is dominated by the ‘Global North’, assuming an extension of this status quo into the foreseeable future. The examples of China’s conduct in Sudan (Chapter 4.4.1, page 67) and Mali (Chapter 4.3.5, page 60) do however demonstrate a change in Chinese conduct. To what extent pressure from countries of the ‘Global North’ can provide an explanation is debatable. However, this explanation does to a certain extent match with China’s foreign policy strategy as a responsible international power, creating a ‘harmonious world’ as discussed in Chapter 4.1.6, page 38.

The understanding of China’s rise among the authors is increasing and the progress of China’s development is recognised. However, in most articles, China is not directly appreciated as a possible role model for African countries. This is the case, even though the

³⁴⁵Bräutigam (2009), 80.

authors appreciate the changes in Chinese conduct and these changes could have great effects according to the wishes and critique of the ‘Global North’ for African countries. However, these changes are not mentioned regarding China’s position as a possible role model for African countries.

Either China does not possess a precise **foreign policy strategy**, or ignorance on the authors behalf arises regarding the efforts to classify the Chinese foreign policy strategy. For instance, Alden identifies three types of African regimes: pariah partnerships, illegal regimes or weak commodities with commodity-based economies and democracies with diversified economies. While he includes the type and intensity of China’s dealings and engagement with African countries in these three categories, in every one of them the focus on China’s engagement seems to lie in securing natural resources for its domestic needs and the benevolence of African elites. On the other hand, in 2011, Alden and Large stated that China’s foreign policy rhetoric “*does not always reflect or comfortably accommodate the trajectory of change*”³⁴⁶ in today’s engagement. As previously described, academics from the ‘Global North’ do recognise China as a rising economic power, not as a developing country in accordance with China’s self-description. However, the authors assume that China does not adopt a strict strategy because its rhetoric and actions are at times contradictory. Rather China appears to follow an opportunistic and pragmatic path, adapting its policies according to its experiences. China as a rising power indicates a perception of threat for countries of the ‘Global North’. While competition is mainly described merely regarding the Chinese ideology and values, as well as in contrasting the ‘Beijing Consensus’ and the ‘Washington Consensus’, for Ian Taylor the Chinese engagement confronts foreign competition as Chinese companies go must go to places where the West is not, for instance investing in sectors neglected by ‘Western’ companies.

Natural resources are regarded as a very important incentive, but, in contrast to earlier publications not included in the analysis, they are no longer seen as China’s only imperative in African countries.³⁴⁷ This shows a slight shift in the opinions of the authors from classifying resources as the imperative of China’s actions to natural resources being one important aspect among others. For instance, the articles included (co-authored) by Chris Alden exemplify the shift. Additionally, this issue changes the perception of the Chinese being a threat to countries of the ‘Global North’, implying a greater threat not only in natural resources, but other areas including soft-power.

Authors from the ‘Global North’ frequently provide advice to African countries: Ian Taylor mentions the danger of a ‘resource curse’, as African governments currently have little

³⁴⁶Alden and Large (2011).

³⁴⁷The analysis primarily includes most recent literature (in some cases dating back to 2007) as the topic of the Chinese engagement with African countries is very current and changed fast over few years. Therefore, it is important to give an up-to-date account using most recent material.

incentive to diversify the economy, while Alden argues that a new cycle of debt linked to the commodity boom is preventable. Though both arguments may seem plausible, caution should be exercised in blaming the effects of either crisis (arising from a ‘resource curse’ or debt crisis) on the Chinese government and its engagement with African countries. Furthermore, concerns about China’s presumed preference in dealing with African countries on a bilateral basis are discussed, as pan-African interests are assumed to conflict with Chinese economic interests, even though the creation of FOCAC indicates otherwise. Nevertheless, even within FOCAC contracts are made on a bilateral basis, supporting the argument.

Portraying **China in contrast to the ‘Global North’**, China suddenly doesn’t appear as the ‘evil power’ disregarding human rights any more, as the ‘Global North’ is harshly criticised for its colonial history and imperialism. This is however not the case for today, as China is declared a ‘new-comer’ to African countries, whereas ‘Western’ powers can resort to colonial infrastructure and due to their long (though criticised) engagement, already having experience in African countries. This view is again contradicted by Bräutigam’s view of China’s long-term presence as “China never left, *we just stopped looking*.”³⁴⁸ A concern expressed in many articles and which refers to the aforementioned discrepancy between the Chinese rhetoric and its actions lies in the question whether China can really create a win-win situation going beyond African elites and benefiting the general public. However, articles by academics from the ‘Global North’ indicate that China is primarily interested in dealing with African elites, which for one marvel at Chinese development and for the other are disappointed by the countries of the ‘Global North’. The question asked by the authors remains unanswered: is benefit from the Chinese engagement noticeable for African populations besides the elites, creating a ‘real’ win-win cooperation?³⁴⁹ Interestingly, this question does not arise regarding the ‘Global North’ but is not brought up in the context of the Chinese case, implying that the question does not affect the actions of the ‘Global North’.

The authors describe African countries as largely dependent (from external powers, finance and advice). However, the statements made regarding the topic of Chinese labourers in African countries, suggest the possibilities for exertion of influence and not powerlessness of African governments in dealing with foreign powers and issues occurring in their own countries, as the quote from Deborah Bräutigam on page 71 shows. Bräutigam notes the difference between Chinese workers sent by the government and individual workers and traders coming to African countries on their own decision.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁸Bräutigam (2009), 54.

³⁴⁹This question for example arises in: Alden and Large (2011), 34; Campbell (2008), 51 and Alden (2007), 19, 129f.

³⁵⁰“*The pattern we see today of Chinese presence in African markets is partly due to the success of government programs to push Chinese export businesses to expand into Africa, but there is no evidence that the Chinese government also sends workers to Africa under a plan to have them remain behind*

From the mentioned topics no real differences appeared between the statements made by the various authors. Many aspects are raised and the authors are naturally not completely in line with each other. It appears however, that many uncertainties and information gaps remain. Therefore it is impossible for the scholarly community to draw an exhaustive picture of the engagement of the Chinese government in African countries. While this is the case for aspects where the Chinese government is not directly involved, for instance individual migration and trade, the analysis was able to identify one bloc as more offensive and Deborah Bräutigam on the other side as more defensive. For example, several authors (in this case including Bräutigam) criticise Chinese trade in African countries as it enters markets formerly dominated by Africans which are now displaced as their products are not competitive enough. Nevertheless, Bräutigam brings new arguments into the discussion, recognising that at least the Chinese invest in African countries, in contrast to countries and businesses from the ‘Global North’, thereby bringing much-needed infrastructure and filling a vacuum left empty by ‘traditional donors’. This again indicates complementarity of the Chinese engagement, although only competition is explicitly mentioned by the authors. As a second example, diverging numbers of Chinese employees in different projects and countries are mentioned, but it seems that these can only reflect the situations in specific projects and should not provide the basis for drawing generalising conclusions. Bräutigam, however, bases her estimations on a large number of projects, concluding that the Chinese use a larger number of their own nationals than other donors, but that across the industry (especially in the textile sector) the majority of workers are Africans. These examples demonstrate Bräutigam’s aim: to produce a nuanced account of China’s engagement with African countries and research with as many facts as possible, because over the last years a large number of “[m]yths sprang up and were rapidly accepted as facts.”³⁵¹ Throughout her book she gives examples of ‘wrong’ stories and data which are often cited but seldom controlled.³⁵² This proves not only a large degree of misinformation but also the over-reliance on assumed ‘facts’ by many authors. This point partly explains why Bräutigam in several points deviates from the perception of the other authors.

This chapter presented and discussed the perception of academics from the ‘Global North’. Chinese values and ideology are mainly discussed regarding human rights and conditional-

as traders. *These are individual decisions.*” Bräutigam (2009), 89.

³⁵¹Ibid., 3.

³⁵²for example: “An International Monetary Fund study cited the World Bank Report as its source for [the volume of Chinese aid]. Apparently, no one checked to see if there had actually been any official statistics reported by China in 2002 or at any point or since for its annual aid to Africa (there were not). The \$1.8 billion figure circulated for African aid was nearly three times higher than the amount the Chinese actually provided in their official 2002 budget for external assistance for all developing countries.” Ibid., 178 Or: “The [Chinese] tradition of secrecy fuels misunderstandings, rumor and speculation. The media assume (mistakenly) that China’s aid program is huge. Some report that China gives aid mainly as “quid pro quo” in exchange for access to natural resources like oil (this is largely incorrect). “Rogue regimes”-Sudan and Zimbabwe- feature as notorious examples of typical countries enjoying large amounts of “no strings attached” aid from China (in fact, they get very little aid.” Bräutigam (2009), 12.

ities. However, the latter do not seem as firmly rooted in the Chinese ideology as presumed by most authors. The authors furthermore discuss China's foreign policy strategy, whose exact contents cannot be precisely determined. Natural resources serve as an economic incentive but not as an exclusive reason for the Chinese engagement. Finally, competition with countries of the 'Global North' is framed with the 'Beijing Consensus' opposing the 'Washington Consensus'.

5 Discussion of the Research Questions

In the following chapter I will compare the perspectives of the afore analysed groups of actors and, based on this comparison answer the posed research questions:

- What are the specific perspectives of the different groups of actors?
 - Which arguments are made?
 - Which similarities and differences can be identified between the various groups?
- How are China and ‘Africa’ portrayed?

To these questions multiple answers are possible as the opinions of the authors are diverse between and within the defined groups. While the documents of the Chinese government present a congruent view, the interviewed African government officials elaborated on different aspects of the Chinese engagement in according to their diverging personal experiences. Difficulties arise when trying to converge the statements made by academics (those classified as ‘African’ as well as those from the ‘Global North’), as these not only come from diverse backgrounds but focus on different aspects of the Chinese engagement. In the following chapter I will compare the arguments and perspectives according to the defined recurring topics in order to outline similarities and differences as well as contradictions, guided by my research questions.

5.1 Comparison of the Perspectives

I will begin by comparing the arguments of the groups of actors according to summarised categories, which are the same or similar to the ones identified afore: *Ideology and Values*, *Economic and Political Cooperation*, *Competition with Other Actors* and *The Chinese Image and Soft Power*.

5.1.1 The Chinese Ideology and Values

All groups discuss the topic of Chinese *Ideology and Values*, which demonstrates the importance attached to it. Likewise, the Chinese ideology and values are important to the Chinese themselves as well as other authors.³⁵³ Because these values form the basis of the Chinese engagement, this topic is highly relevant for my research in general as well as for the authors. Specifically, the ideology and values offer a counter argument against and challenge the presumed ‘common values’ of the ‘Global North’. Therefore, the academics from the ‘Global North’ remain critical. From their perspective, they allow the Chinese government to disregard ‘Western’ human rights and bypass conditionalities imposed by

³⁵³As I have already recounted the main values and principles in the previous chapters I will not repeat them again at this point.

countries of the ‘Global North’. In addition, they are contradictory to the Chinese engagement with African countries in practice. For instance, the principle of equality seems paradox in light of the actual asymmetries which inevitably exist in a donor-receiver relationship and which are reflected in the trade imbalances of African countries with China. However, academics from the ‘Global North’ recognise a changing attitude when it comes to Chinese ideology and values. Due to China’s progressive integration into and participation in the global economy, China must and does adapt to now dominating ‘Western’ values.

African academics view this contrast to ‘Western’ values largely as empowering and the existence of a (viable) alternative to financial aid from the ‘Global North’ alone as of great value. They however share the scepticism of their colleagues from the ‘Global North’ if **mutually beneficial relationships** between China and African countries are indeed possible. The perceived lack of capacities of African countries however, make mutually beneficial relationships appear unlikely.

For the African government officials mutual benefit seems possible, or at least can be achieved to a greater extent than believed by ‘Western’ and African academics. Their interpretation of mutual benefit suggests a slightly different understanding of the term. For instance, the Chinese government pursues equality and a win-win cooperation in its relationships with African countries. This attitude leads to the perception of partnerships rather than the hierarchy perceived in the relationships with countries of the ‘Global North’. In these partnerships, natural resources and diplomatic support are seen as assets and currency, exchangeable for Chinese loans and grants. This exchange is often criticised instead of acknowledging natural resources and diplomatic support as a source of pride a country possesses and is willing to invest. The specific circumstances in each case have to be approached critically, as they often do not fit in the ‘Western’ model of values, proclaiming universal human rights. This approach is however criticised by many ‘developing countries’, contradicting the idea of universal human rights. Leaving this ‘Western’ idealistic perception aside, one should acknowledge the fact that the existence of an exchange of any kind may indeed be of great value to African countries, regardless of complying or not complying with ‘Western’ values and norms.

From the view of the interviewed government officials, even though an imbalance in the relationship between African countries and China unmistakably exists, the relationship is viewed as exchange rather than based on donations. The Chinese government recognises the existing trade imbalance, though emphasises that support goes both ways. The Chinese documents are not only very explicit about the various values, which constitute the basis of China’s foreign relations, yet emphasise the support of common causes and the importance of friendship between China and African countries as well. In this con-

text China expresses gratitude for support received from African countries such as voting support in the UN.

Regarding Chinese values and ideologies, the analysed authors discuss the question of **conditionalities** rigorously. Whereas countries of the ‘Global North’ commonly apply conditionalities, most authors (of all groups) agree that China refuses to attach strings to its engagement with African countries. This practice would contradict the principle of non-interference into internal affairs. Academics from African countries and of the ‘Global North’ interpret this attitude as a missing interest in democracy and human rights. From this perspective, conditionalities protect democracy and human rights. In turn, other authors criticise these same conditionalities, when applied by countries of the ‘Global North’ as humiliating. Deborah Bräutigam expresses the most nuanced evaluation: on the one hand the Chinese government does not apply economic but rather governance related conditions, on the other, Chinese private businesses do apply economic conditions while investing in African countries. For Bräutigam it is therefore important to differentiate between the existing actors and the kind of conditionality applied in each case. The same differentiation is necessary regarding the one-China policy requested by the Chinese government. Here again, most authors reiterate the imperative to adhere to the one-China policy and not to maintain diplomatic relations with Taiwan. While the Chinese government indeed bases its relations with African countries on this policy, Bräutigam again distinguishes between the Chinese government and Chinese businesses. The one-China policy is mandatory in order to maintain diplomatic relations with China and receive government fundings, however, this does not necessarily seem to be the case for investments by Chinese companies, in some cases even including state-owned enterprises.

5.1.2 Economic and Political Cooperation

Under the topic *Economic and Political Cooperation* I subsumed all issues regarding trade (official and individual), as well as Chinese aid, the question of Chinese labour and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. All groups of actors emphasise China’s need for **natural resources** as an important reason for China’s engagement with African countries. The ‘Western’ and Chinese view are in particular noteworthy. The analysis revealed that many ‘Western’ academics in previous publications perceived resources to be China’s only interest in African countries. This view however has been revised, admitting that African resources cannot give an exhaustive explanation for China’s engagement. This shift is for instance visible from Alden’s book “China in Africa” in 2007, to the article published Chris Alden and Daniel Large (“China’s Exceptionalism and the Challenges of Delivering Difference in Africa”) in 2011. The Chinese assessment of natural resources is equally interesting. The Chinese government perceives natural resources as a cornerstone of South-South cooperation though more importantly, as source of African strength. At the same time, natural resources remain a strong political interest of the Chinese govern-

ment. The possible conflict arising from this view is however not addressed.

Aside from trade with resources, all groups acknowledge the existing **trade deficit** of most African countries in their trade with China. The Chinese government emphasises the development of trade flows in both directions. Chinese investments aim at diversifying African economies and setting up resource processing industries in African countries. Thereby value is added to export commodities in the countries of origin. In contrast, for the academics from the ‘Global North’, the trade relationships reproduce those of African countries with countries of the ‘Global North’. This again refers to the contradiction between the aim of establishing mutually beneficial relationships and the existing asymmetries. They are especially wary of an over-reliance of African countries on primary commodities, possibly leading to a ‘resource curse’ or ‘dutch disease’, as labeled by African academics. The latter give warning of a possible debt crisis and recommend diversifying African economies. ‘Western’ academics likewise recommend diversification, although remaining pessimistic while identifying a lack of incentives for diversification. This advice is seemingly put into practice by Chinese investments as mentioned above. However, this is not acknowledged by the authors. In turn, the lack of diversification leads to an over-reliance of African countries on Chinese imports. This criticism by African government officials is mentioned alongside appreciation for availability and affordability of these products. Accordingly, for the government officials, resources are not only ‘taken away’ by the Chinese but form the basis for exchange and trade, shaping the relationship towards a partnership, as explained under *Ideology and Values*. The government officials do not perceive official resource extraction but rather illegal activities by Chinese individuals as a much greater problem.

In the political relationships between China on one and African countries as one unit on the other side, the **Forum for China-Africa Cooperation** constitutes the main instrument. For academics from the ‘Global North’, FOCAC within itself contains a possible conflict of interests: African countries presumeably gain strength in negotiations towards China when acting as one group. This however, would contradict the Chinese interest of making the largest possible profit out of trade. According to the interest of the greatest profit, China supposedly prefers to organise its relations with African countries on a bilateral level even though FOCAC gathers African countries as one group. Indeed FOCAC presents a framework in which all African countries with official ties with China come together and the official declarations represent African countries as one unit. Consequently, FOCAC is perceived as an opportunity to voice a strengthened unified African position. However, even within FOCAC, specific contracts are made between China and the respective African country on a bilateral level. In addition, the Chinese documents do not express the imperative of gaining profits over the principle of strengthening the self-reliance of African countries.

For academics from the ‘Global North’, FOCAC furthermore confirms the often mentioned hypothesis of China’s primary interest in engaging with African elites. African academics debate the Chinese affinity with African elites as well, presuming a conflict of interest between governments and African elites on the one and African citizens on the other side. Nevertheless, African academics emphasise the independence of African countries from all powers, as Africans are in charge of their own destinies. In this regard, they report more detailed about FOCAC and its agreements, though remain wary of the ‘dazzling’ Chinese rhetoric. Many issues, such as collective action of African countries and Chinese preferring elite ties, arise within the framework of FOCAC as well as beyond. However, the authors do not directly associate these issues with FOCAC. The Chinese government goes into great detail on FOCAC and accordingly presents FOCAC as a successful, public platform. At the same time, Chinese documents address shortcomings and possibilities for improvements. The documents by the Chinese government, as well as the official FOCAC documents, emphasise Chinese support of African unity. This support of African unity is indicated by addressing African countries as one party. The documents display a donor-receiver relationship. However, the previously mentioned points of criticism, such as the trade imbalance, are explicitly mentioned areas where improvements is necessary. Another focus is placed on the importance of fostering cultural exchange.

Chinese aid is an issue largely discussed within the FOCAC framework, while at the same time referred to within the documents of all groups. Whereas most authors from the ‘Global North’ only briefly discuss Chinese aid, it constitutes the main topic of Deborah Bräutigam’s book. Bräutigam discusses various aspects of China’s relationships with African countries in connection with Chinese aid in detail and in a nuanced manner. African academics mostly praise Chinese aid for the variety and scope of issues addressed. The government officials share this attitude, especially regarding loans, grants and scholarships. The Chinese government dedicates a White Paper to its aid and includes aid in various other documents as well. The Chinese documents generally emphasises that Chinese aid is suited to the needs of both sides and intends to strengthen the developmental capacity and self-reliance of recipient countries. Consequently, education and capacity development pertain to important aspects of Chinese aid. While providing aid with the aim of improving self-reliance of a country may seem a noble approach, the effects of the Chinese efforts on African countries are hardly discussed.

The issue of illegal activities and other **businesses by Chinese individuals**, demonstrates the complexity of China’s engagement in African countries. As these are private activities, they are not mentioned in the government programs. However, when restricting the Chinese engagement not solely to the Chinese government, they form part thereof. Many authors include individual activities of Chinese citizens in African countries, even though they are often not distinguished from official government activities and projects.

For instance, trade by individual Chinese cannot be directly linked to the Chinese government and is therefore not mentioned in the government documents. For ‘Western’ and African academics, as well as the interviewed government officials however, individual trade has the largest impact on the lives of ordinary Africans. African academics remain critical, warning about potential conflict arising from increasing unemployment and a poor Chinese image in African countries. In turn, ‘Western’ academics additionally mention potentially arising opportunities. The academics, as well as the Chinese government, claim investments are decisive for development, especially in manufacturing. However, such investments are to a large extent neglected by companies from the ‘Global North’. The Chinese government, as mentioned, regards manufacturing as essential for eliminating poverty in African countries and therefore supports investments by Chinese companies in this sector in African countries. This engagement is however largely criticised as displacing African businesses. The interviewed government officials mentioned both sides of the argument. They were critical about the multitude of cheap Chinese imports entering their countries, mostly of low quality, and accuse China of deliberately selling low quality products to African countries. At the same time, they acknowledged availability and affordability of the products for poorer populations. This problem is not limited to the Chinese but persists among Africans themselves. In contrast, the Chinese government assures that its exports not only meet the needs of African development but are of good quality and reasonably priced. As explained previously in my analysis, this example demonstrates the difficulty of distinguishing individual and government activities from each other. This in some cases leads to false allegations against the Chinese government. However, at the same time, the example demonstrates the fragmentation of responsibility between the Chinese government and private actors, making an analysis more difficult. The following subject again confirms the assessment.

As the previous illustration indicates, the Chinese involvement in African countries is largely associated with African unemployment. This issue equally concerns individual businesses and large, government supported, projects. All groups discuss the question of **Chinese labour in African countries** in this context to a certain extent. Even though not directly a governmental responsibility, a Chinese official is cited, claiming low numbers of Chinese workers in African countries. Many policy papers emphasise that Chinese investments provide jobs to local people. Academics from the ‘Global North’ refer to varying numbers, but, most importantly, Deborah Bräutigam demonstrates that these numbers differ largely in the projects. As mentioned in greater detail in Chapter 4.4, these numbers depend on various factors. In addition, estimations often lack credibility. Information on the nationality of Asian workers is not always trustworthy when determined by phenological characteristics. African government officials estimate that Chinese account for about 30% of the labour force in Chinese projects - African academics mention numbers up to 70%. Adding to these numbers, the African government officials observe

that Chinese are largely in charge of technical responsibilities whereas mostly Africans are used for manual labour.

5.1.3 Competition with Other Actors

The topic of competition between China and other actors over ‘Africa’ and especially African resources, is often brought up in the context of Chinese ideology and values. This topic is equally often discussed regarding the question of **similarity or difference of the Chinese engagement with other actors**, in particular countries of the ‘Global North’. African academics identify a different approach applied by China, including alternative ideas and development models to African countries. For instance, China focuses its engagement on trade rather than aid. The trade pattern however, is recognised as similar by most authors. For the African government officials, differences predominate: countries of the ‘Global North’ possess soft power and linkages remaining from their colonial history, which the Chinese government lacks. Most academics from the ‘Global North’ mention a variety of differences, for instance, China’s own experience as a developing country and sub-colonial history, its differing view on human rights as well as the inexperience of its multi-national (often state-owned) corporations in outbound operations. Again, Bräutigam diverges from the general opinions, arguing that in most issues the Chinese and ‘Western’ engagements are very similar rather than different. Another particular argument in favor of similarity is specified by Horace Campbell: the USA uses the same rhetoric of mutual benefit in their relationship with African countries under the African Growth and Opportunities Act as does China. Even though most authors support the argument of difference between the engagements of China and countries of the ‘Global North’, many see China as adapting to values and practices of the ‘Global North’. China’s progressive integration into the global economy dominated by countries of the ‘Global North’ seemingly makes an adaptation necessary. In contrast, from the view of the Chinese government, the global economy today largely depends on China. Although the issue of China’s foreign policy strategy is only discussed in detail by academics from the ‘Global North’, it essentially covers the dualism of China as a global power versus China as a ‘developing country’ itself.

The question of difference versus similarity of actors in their engagement with African countries however, does not directly provide insights into the question of (or the extent of) **competition** between these actors. The Chinese government only indirectly acknowledges an existing competition between the proclaimed values, especially in contrast to the ‘Global North’. Rather than openly admitting to competition, the Chinese government instead calls for more cooperation between all involved actors. Consequently, South-South cooperation is regarded as an addition to North-South cooperation, nevertheless with the goal of reversing the dependency of African countries on the ‘Global North’. African academics and Deborah Bräutigam prove the complementarity of the actors, listing areas of

Chinese investments neglected by countries of the ‘Global North’. While the statement cited from Ian Taylor - Chinese companies must go to places for oil where the ‘West’ is not - could likewise be interpreted in light of complementarity, Taylor proclaims evidence for competition. This difference in interpretation demonstrates the subjective nature of the discussed issues and subsequently of their interpretation. For academics from the ‘Global North’, the ‘West’ was over a long period largely undisputed in location and method of its engagement with African countries. Due to China’s economic rise, it’s increased demand for primary commodities and its stronger assertiveness, this dominance is now being challenged. African government officials even assume an end of the dependence on former colonial powers in the future. In turn, African academics, government officials and the Chinese government recognise that, even though China is becoming a greater global player and its engagement with African countries is growing, it still does not measure up to the engagement of countries of the ‘Global North’. Therefore, China’s engagement should not be over-estimated.

Interestingly, other actors, apart from China and countries of the ‘Global North’, are only seldom mentioned in greater detail. Authors from the ‘Global North’ usually refer to other actors as a side issue. In the articles of African academics however, they appear as competitors to China, though not as competitors to countries of the ‘Global North’.³⁵⁴ African government officials included other actors in their countries in their statements as well. They in particular mentioned the large numbers of Indians in East Africa as well as other Asians, often assumed to be Chinese.

Most authors classify China as ‘emerging’. As the Chinese policy papers discussed in Chapter 4.1 and the creation of FOCAC in 2000 shows, ‘emerging’ does not necessarily mean that China was not present previously, but rather that its engagement is now increasing at a faster pace. Bräutigam even stresses that China’s presence has been steady as “China never left, *we just stopped looking*.”³⁵⁵

5.1.4 The Chinese Image and Soft Power

The importance or negligence of the Chinese image and soft power in African countries varies largely between the groups. ‘Western’ and African academics seldom discuss the issue apart from racism or criticising Chinese business conduct regarding labour conditions or the lack of corporate social responsibility perceived by ‘Western’ academics and declaring the need for a better understanding by African academics. In turn, African government officials and especially the Chinese government place greater emphasis on this topic. The Chinese business conduct, especially in connection with (or the lack of)

³⁵⁴In the preface of the Book “African Perspectives on China in Africa” (2007) the editors (Firoze Manji and Stephen Marks) explicitly state the focus of the book on China in ‘Africa’, whereas further actors such as India, Venezuela, Brazil and South Africa are issues for other possibly upcoming publications.

³⁵⁵Bräutigam (2009), 54.

corporate social responsibility, is often mentioned but no specific information or data is provided.³⁵⁶ The perception of the interviewed government officials alternates between criticism and admiration. While on the one hand, Chinese ‘take’ African jobs or engage in illegal activities, they are admired for their work ethics and sense of business on the other. The perceptions of the populations in their countries however, are described as sceptical. Negative media coverage, for example news reports focusing solely on illegal mining or trade of restricted wildlife products by Chinese individuals, adds to the described view. The Chinese government has recognised the issue, noting the importance of assuring positive public opinions and objective media coverages in African countries in its documents. For this reason, a large portion of the documents is dedicated to exchange programmes for people, media, NGOs and Think Tanks, the establishment of Confucius Institutes and the provision of scholarships.

These exchange initiatives are, according to the Chinese government, set in place for the purpose of learning from each other. The Chinese government especially emphasises the possibility of learning from its governance experience and approach to regional integration. In the context of **China as a role-model for African countries**, academics from the ‘Global North’ recognise China’s success in poverty alleviation. African academics stress this factor as well, although adding many examples of Chinese achievements, African countries should learn from. These examples reach from the Chinese development model per se and the reputation China’s as self-proclaimed ‘leader of the developing world’, which has reached an aspired economical state, to detailed approaches such as the initiated Special Economic Zones or the suggestion of ‘resource nationalism’. African government officials recommended protecting sensitive industries, the Chinese model for regional development and the establishment of streams of local value addition as possible models for African countries.

5.2 Similarities and Differences

The answer to my first research question is derived from the perceptions and statements analysed and compared according to the identified topics in Chapters 4 and 5.1. Chapter 5.1 specifically addressed the question of similarities and differences between the various groups in the comparison of the perspectives. Similarities can largely be defined within the recognition of competition between China and countries of the ‘Global North’ on an ideological basis. Some ‘Western’ authors however, argue in favor of a Chinese adaptation of ‘Western’ values. All groups furthermore state that the Chinese engagement is largely perceived negatively by the populations (often reinforced by the media) in African

³⁵⁶This is partly due to the fact that business conduct varies from company to company, partly because awareness of corporate social responsibility is only in recent years becoming an issue in China and for Chinese enterprises. Today however, the Chinese government is increasingly supporting and encouraging corporate social and environmental responsibility in businesses operating within China and abroad.

countries and recognise the existence of a trade imbalance to the disadvantage of African countries.

The topic of ideology and values is at the same time issue of difference between the perceptions of the authors. The Chinese ideology and values establish the Chinese engagement in contrast to countries of the ‘Global North’ and are particularly discussed controversially. Regarding economic and political cooperation, the trade deficit is acknowledged by all authors, even though the implications of the deficit are assessed differently. The evaluation of the perceived competition between countries of the ‘Global North’ and China, as well as in determining difference or rather similarity between these two actors, constitutes further controversy. Another issue of dispute is the acceptance of China as a role model for development in African countries.

Authors from the ‘Global North’ appear mainly critical of the Chinese engagement with African countries. Nevertheless, they see China as adapting to values and approaches of the dominating ‘Global North’, while threatening the dominating position. In turn, African academics officials regard the Chinese engagement as empowering and are grateful for Chinese aid as well as the availability of alternatives to the dominating countries of the ‘Global North’. At the same time they recognise the necessity of obtaining more (reliable) information and to learn more about the Chinese engagement. African academics furthermore remain critical and wary of an arising (trade) dependency on China. The interviewed government officials are the most positive on an existing ‘mutual benefit’ of the relationship between their countries and China as they recognise an exchange taking place, though expressing critique as well. This critique included the trade imbalance and illegal activities by individuals. The officials applied self-criticism and recognised that many issues and perceived problems could (at least in theory) be changed by Africans themselves. Finally, the Chinese government is self-confident in its approach towards African countries and believes to be tackling many issues recognised by themselves though criticised by other actors. As a result of this evaluation and criticism, a changing conduct, as described by academics from the ‘Global North’, can be confirmed, although it does not necessarily include an adaption of presumably ‘Western’ values.

5.3 Images of China and ‘Africa’

The following section will present the descriptions of China and ‘Africa’ made by the groups of authors within the analysed material and focuses on the remaining research question “How are China and ‘Africa’ portrayed?”. Here again, the images of the different groups of actors will be outlined, concluding with a comparison.

5.3.1 Images of China

The Chinese government, as expected, depicts China as a benefactor to African countries. Hereby it especially emphasises China's friendship, high-level visits and common values. At the same time, China is portrayed as a beneficiary of the relationship with African countries, profiting from trade (especially in natural resources) and diplomatic support. Contrast becomes visible in China's self-description between its self-ascribed status as a developing country on the one and the demonstration of power on the other hand. The documents describe China as a developing country with a low per-capita income and high levels of poverty, therefore contributing to South-South cooperation in its engagement with African countries. At the same time however, China displays self-confidence and resistance against the 'North-South' imbalance, described as the principle cause of global economic injustice. In addition, China demonstrates strength through its pledges within FOCAC and its position as a donor. The Chinese government does not perceive this contrast as such (as described by the 'Global North') but feels misunderstood and treated unfairly. It therefore rejects accusations, largely constructed by the 'Global North' and the media in African countries.

The government officials almost instantly associated China with cheap products. The next association included trade (perceived as an imbalance) and especially China's need for resources. Nonetheless, China is presented as a benefactor as well. The officials especially showed gratitude for the respect displayed in the relationship of China with their countries and the business opportunities resulting from the Chinese engagement. The government officials do not categorise China as a developing country, especially in the direct comparison with their own countries. They described China as emerging, though still not as powerful as countries of the 'Global North'. The greater respect displayed for foreigners of former colonial powers for the Chinese in African countries in particular exemplifies the hierarchy between countries of the 'Global North' and China. In contrast, admiration was demonstrated for the work ethics and entrepreneurialism of Chinese individuals on the one and China's rapid economic development on the other hand. In addition, the officials expressed sympathy and understanding for the unjust Chinese image in African countries, as the media is perceived to overwhelmingly focus on negative headlines, leaving aside the difference between actions of individuals and of the Chinese government. My interview partners however, emphasised the difference, criticising individual Chinese in partaking in illegal activities, but generally showing gratitude and a positive attitude towards the Chinese government.

In comparison with the first two perceptions of China, the one of African academics is more complex. For **African academics**, China depends on African countries (for instance due to its need for natural resources for its own development) but at the same time presents a threat to countries of the 'Global North'. However, China's relative economic power

and the volume of its engagement with African countries should not be over-estimated. The question, if countries of the ‘Global North’ and China are more similar or different is not answered. Authors arguing in favor of difference between the Chinese and ‘Western’ engagements display optimism, whereas those arguing in favor of similarities between these actors remain critical of all actors. Especially the asymmetry in China’s relations with African countries (and its ‘deceptive approach faining equality’), its human rights conduct and elite ties are perceived negatively. Nevertheless, African academics express gratitude for Chinese aid. While China is indeed perceived as a possible role model for the development of African countries, China’s engagement in its entire complexity has yet to be understood. African academics therefore describe China as a still mysterious, not yet comprehensible actor on the African continent.

Academics from the ‘Global North’ again differ in their images of China. Positive notions are provided on China’s perceived difference from countries of the ‘Global North’, while the implementation of Chinese values as well as China’s opportunism and pragmatism are criticised. For these authors, the Chinese government over-estimates itself, for example by raising expectations through its foreign policy rhetoric which then cannot be met. Therefore, academics from the ‘Global North’ describe China’s goals as unrealistic. China’s lack of experience leads to a progressive adaption of ‘Western’ norms and approaches. These descriptions show that most authors do not perceive China as a global power yet. At the same time, China is not regarded a developing country any more. And yet, China is already seen as powerful enough to present a threat to countries of the ‘Global North’.

5.3.2 Images of ‘Africa’

The Chinese image of ‘Africa’ is largely positive. **The Chinese government** emphasises its friendship with African countries building upon common interests, respect and values. They furthermore demonstrate the importance ascribed to African countries by regular high-level visits, which at the same time represent mutual friendship as these visits occur in both directions. ‘Africa’ is associated with a certain strength of its own, as the Chinese government believes that ‘Africa’ *can* resolve its issues independently and posses valuable assets such as natural resources. However, this theoretical strength, for instance natural resources, must be claimed and put into practice by African countries. Though real possibilities of African countries in actually translating natural resources into a strength might be limited, they remain undiscussed. African media appears as another source of strength in the Chinese documents. This perception can be indirectly deduced from the importance the Chinese attribute to African media. The Chinese government recognises the important role of African media in shaping the opinions of the people, in particular by presenting a negative image of China. Media can therefore be classified as an African strength. Despite these strengths, a hierarchy is demonstrated in the relationship between

China and African countries. The Chinese government describes African people as needing knowledge and training (which can be provided by the Chinese) as well as ‘unskilled’ (partly demonstrated by the employment of Chinese workers). At the same time, it emphasises mutual support by showing gratitude for support received from African countries. FOCAC documents, describing China as the donor and African countries as the receivers, reflect the imbalance between China and African countries as well. However, the Chinese government not only recognises the imbalance as such but acknowledges the necessity for adjusting the asymmetry as well, especially regarding trade.

In the descriptions by **African government officials**, a distinction between African governments and the African peoples is apparent. They create the impression that African governments not only *could be stronger*, but *need to be stronger*. For instance, strength should be asserted regarding policies in their own countries, for example, protecting certain industries. African peoples should recognise their own strength as well, which they can exercise through their power as consumers of Chinese products and realising their responsibility and possibilities of changing the (economic, social or political) situation in their countries. In contrast to China, the officials describe their countries as poor and with less power than China. Even though a partnership might exist between their countries and China, African countries remain largely dependent on external powers. These external powers include China as well as countries of the ‘Global North’, which are perceived as ‘worse’ than China in their engagement. A lack of power is demonstrated by African countries’ inability to turn theoretical strength into practice (for instance to collect revenue from individual Chinese traders) and gain greater benefit from the Chinese engagement. Statements such as “*we run to China*”³⁵⁷ exemplify the imbalance of power and possibly a dependence of their countries from China. This new dependence was, however, seen as reciprocal to a certain extent, due to China’s need for African resources. My interview partners demonstrated the pride of African countries, not wanting pittance and charity, as well. For instance, they showed great appreciation for the possibilities of ‘paying back’ grants and other financial support with natural resources and diplomatic support. The officials described the people in their countries as uninformed and credulous that need to learn more and be better informed about the Chinese engagement with their countries as well as learn from the Chinese. While the Chinese are presented as very hard working and entrepreneurial, the inverse conclusion would be that African people are not as hard working.

African scholars largely describe African countries as in need of help. In this context one author describes the competition between China and other countries as a waste of resources, African countries cannot afford. Others see the Chinese engagement as a leverage point which can be used to support African empowerment. But here again, African coun-

³⁵⁷Interview no. 4 (2013).

tries are dependent on external help to be able to empower themselves. This group not only shows African countries in a weaker position (in comparison to China) and as dependent on aid, but also criticise African governance (especially weak regulatory mechanisms and administrative systems). African scholars find it necessary to warn African countries about possible consequences of the Chinese engagement such as the ‘dutch disease’, a debt crisis or the implications of solely elite ties, and provide recommendations to African governments. African countries are tied closer to countries of the the ‘Global North’ than China and should (or could) be in a stronger position. However, the accountability of African leaders towards the people in many African (democratic) countries remains weak. As a result, it becomes more difficult for African people to assert power through the political system.

Academics from the ‘Global North’ not only present their own views but insert ‘African’ views in their publications. This group often describes African countries as passive and dependent, vulnerable and frail. These last two issues are especially noted as possibly having negative consequences for China, while the authors do not show the consequences for African countries themselves. Furthermore, ‘Western’ academics describe African democracies and accountability as easily undermined and their economies as in need of incentives to diversify. This last issue can be interpreted as Africans not knowing what would be best for their economies, or as African countries not being able to enforce what they believe to be best. This lack of power of African countries is further demonstrated by the impact of Chinese traders. Africans are described as not being able to defend themselves. For instance, African manufacturers were “*forced to shut down*”³⁵⁸ as a result of Chinese investments in manufacturing and trade and the following pressure exerted on prices. Bräutigam, however, highlights African empowerment and strength. For instance, African governments can (in theory) decide to grant or deny permits for foreign labour.

5.4 Comparison

In the following section compares the images of China and ‘Africa’ by the different groups of actors and thereby answer the last research question. China is for one presented as a benefactor but at the same time as beneficiary of its engagement with African countries. Mainly the Chinese government and the African government officials argued in favor of China as a benefactor. The Chinese description is in itself ambiguous describing China as benefactor and beneficiary. In addition, while China sees itself as a developing country it exerts a great portion of self-confidence. African government officials do not regard China as a developing country anymore, but does not measure up to countries of the ‘Global North’ either. Both groups of academics largely share this perception and warn

³⁵⁸Alden (2007), 38.

about over-estimating the possibilities and effects of China's engagement. However, the ascribe China enough power to present a threat to countries of the 'Global North'. For African academics, China depends on African countries, just as African countries depend on China. The African government officials expressed regret about the unjust image of the Chinese government in many African countries as well as critique against the behaviour of Chinese individuals. Critique by African and 'Western' academics was, in contrast, expressed not against Chinese individuals but against the Chinese government. African academics additionally acknowledged that reliable information on the Chinese engagement with African countries is still scarce and more knowledge needs to be produced.

In describing 'Africa', only the African government officials and the Chinese government used attributes such as poverty, pride (due to the ability to pay back) and friendship. Most descriptions instead focused on perceived strengths and weaknesses of African countries. Strengths include natural resources as well as African media (by the Chinese government), the possibilities of African governments (for instance in allowing or denying permits for foreign labour) by African government officials and Deborah Bräutigam, as well as the power of African individuals as consumers (by African government officials). On the other side of the equation, a large number of weaknesses were listed. The academics from the 'Global North' describe the position of African countries as especially passive, accentuating weak governance structures. African government officials and the Chinese government lamented the lack of skills of African people. The government officials as well as both groups of academics criticised the dependence of African countries on countries of the 'Global North' as well as increasingly on China. Nonetheless, for the government officials and African academics, the dependency on China might be balanced by the Chinese dependency on African resources. African academics additionally mention the African dependency on development assistance and aid and emphasise the necessity of help and warnings for African countries. For African government officials the inability of African governments to put their theoretical strengths into practice and gain greater benefit from the Chinese engagement, in particular supports the dependency of African countries.

In Chapter 2.2, the difficulties of defining 'Africa' and an African discourse in light of Africa as a constructed, imaginary unity were discussed. 'Africa' was described as a signifier, gaining its meaning in the respective discourse it is situated in. The discourse is in this case the one described above. From a perspective of *realpolitik* the imaginary unity of 'Africa' here appears as political reality. China, in other policy papers assures to support African countries efforts to grow stronger in unity. This is implemented within FOCAC, in the context of which the Chinese government considers African countries as one unit. China, in other policy papers assures to support African countries efforts to grow stronger in unity. Here, it is not only the Chinese perception of unity but this perception is

equally ascribed to African countries themselves. Equally, for African academics, African unity presents an empowerment strategy for African countries.

This chapter provided the comparison of the perspectives and therewith answered the posed research questions. Differences exceed similarities in the perspectives in frequency and detail of mentioning. These similarities and differences are expressed between the groups as well as within. The image of China is characterised by the attempt to classify China as ‘developing’ or ‘developed’ country. Respectively, images of ‘Africa’ focus on strengths and to a greater extent, on weaknesses ascribed to African countries.

6 Conclusion

The present chapter contains a methodological conclusion including a summary of the answers to my research questions, encountered problems and recommendations for further research. The results of my analysis are provided in Chapter 5 in detail. This thesis outlines the history of Chinese-African relations and gave an overview of China's engagement with African countries. As the definition and perception of 'Africa' plays an important role within the topic at hand, the difficulty of defining 'Africa' has been discussed as well. Definitions for the groups of actors were presented and subsequently their perceptions were discussed and compared according to the defined topics. In the following, the main findings according to the identified topics and the research questions posed in the introduction are summed-up.

The **perspectives of the defined groups of actors** are outlined and discussed in Chapter 4 and compared in Chapter 5. The analysis reveals the multitude of perspectives not only between, but equally within the defined groups. However, inclinations of the authors in certain arguments can be observed. These are presented as such, taking note of divergent views within a group. **Similarities** between all groups are merely visible regarding an existing competition between the Chinese and 'Western' engagements in African countries on an ideological basis, the recognition of a trade imbalance to the disadvantage of African countries and a largely negative image of China within African populations and media. In contrast, **differences** include the question whether the Chinese engagement is similar or rather different to 'Western' engagements, the implications of the mentioned trade deficit as well as the extent to which policies that supported the Chinese development are accepted as possible models for policies in African countries. In their arguments, 'Western' authors are the most critical in their assessment of the Chinese engagement in African countries. African academics and government officials express criticism, while noting opportunities and self-criticism as well. The Chinese government is self-confident in its approach, though likewise mentioning areas for improvement.

The **descriptions of China** are multi-layered. While focusing on different aspects of the Chinese engagement and China's political ideology, all groups reflect the difficulty of classifying China according to prescribed categories such as 'developing' or 'developed country'. Consequently, these difficulties in classification occasionally provoke indecision and inconsistencies in the descriptions of China. The **images of 'Africa'** primarily focus on 'Africa's' strengths and weaknesses. Strengths include the possession of natural resources and the power of media in shaping opinions as leverage points, as well as the capabilities of African governments in policy making and of African peoples as supervisory bodies. In contrast, weak governance structures in African countries, a lack of skills of African people and the dependency of African countries on external powers, were de-

scribed as weaknesses. Strengths and possibilities were for the most part mentioned by the government officials and the Chinese government, to a lesser extent by both groups of academics. In their descriptions, ‘African’ weaknesses prevailed.

The research at hand demonstrates the complexity of ‘China in Africa’, beginning with China as a country, Chinese politics, culture and finally, the Chinese engagement with African countries. This in particular becomes apparent in the attempt to define whether or not China is a ‘developing country’. The thesis therefore confirms the existence of multiple realities inherent in different perspectives, stemming from the subjective opinions existing in literature and interviews, the different pieces of information available to the authors, as well as their personal interests and interpretations. The insufficient access to official data (from the Chinese government) reflects one of the gaps identified within the academic discourse, another being the lack of nuanced argumentation going beyond established ‘Western’ values, for instance regarding human rights.

In the thesis, recurring arguments as well as similarities and differences within the arguments of different authors were defined, thereby providing a systematic comparison of the perceptions between and within defined groups of actors. It can thereby serve as an overview of different perspectives on ‘China in Africa’ on the one hand and as an illustration of the inherent complexity and entanglements, on the other. My research further intended to contribute to various debates within the fields of Political Science, International Relations, Development Studies, African Studies and Sinology. This study could do so by applying a trans-disciplinary approach, regarding the information of different sources of documentation (academic literature, policy papers and interview transcripts from government bureaucrats) from these fields equally side-by-side.

The research combines issues regarding politics of power and international hegemony, global values and ethics, especially regarding state sovereignty, resource politics, development theories, human rights and to a lesser extent, economics, by a variety of authors. The following difficulties and shortcomings were noticed: Firstly, the difficulty of providing a strict definition of the groups of authors (described in Chapter 2.3), as is especially the case regarding a definition of ‘Africa’ and of African academics, but equally of ‘Western’ academics. Secondly, a strict demarcation of the defined topics equally posed a challenge. In addition, as discussed in my introduction, the topic ‘China in Africa’ underlies fast-paced changes. Accordingly shifts in the literature over time were identified, modifying the perception of some authors. Further difficulties in the analysis and especially in answering my research questions stem from the finding that the perspectives of the various authors subsumed in each group, already within themselves, present a great variety of opinions and arguments. These can only be condensed into one joint perspective, while sacrificing the complexity of the arguments. For the sake of this research, the arguments

are condensed to a great extent, thereby taking note of diverging opinions in specific arguments where appropriate. While the applied method, qualitative content analysis, does not take the different background of the documents into account, the definition of categories made a systematic comparison possible in the first place.

Considering these reflections, areas for further research are identified. In order to receive a more detailed picture of the Chinese engagement with African countries, more data is needed, not least from the Chinese government itself. A greater focus on economic issues, especially by academics without an economic background, would increase the accuracy of presented economic information. I further suggest extensive research including extensive case-studies on Chinese projects could in order to avoid repeating half-truths from other authors. Yet, also in conducting these studies, it must be kept in mind that the Chinese government does not necessarily follow a coherent strategy. Furthermore, differences between the actions attributable to the Chinese government in contrast to Chinese private businesses or even individuals, need to be taken into account. Finally, the effects of the Chinese engagement must be assessed in greater detail according to the Chinese intention.

Concluding, any debate on ‘China in Africa’ must be conducted in a nuanced manner in order to do the inherent complexities justice. I have experienced these complexities personally during my stay in China as well as during my research and believe to have taken them into duly consideration. I therefore hope to contribute to a nuanced debate with my thesis.

*Everything we hear is an opinion, not a fact.
Everything we see is a perspective, not the truth.*

- Marcus Aurelius (2nd Century)

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Appendix

A China's Eight Principles for Economic Aid and Technical Assistance to Other Countries

(January 1964)

1. The Chinese government always bases itself on the principle of equality and mutual benefit in providing aid to other countries. It never regards such aid as a kind of unilateral alms but as something mutual.
2. In providing aid to other countries, the Chinese government strictly respects the sovereignty of recipient countries, and never attaches any conditions or asks for any privileges.
3. China provides economic aid in the form of interest-free or low-interest loans, and extends the time limit for the repayment when necessary so as to lighten the burden on recipient countries as far as possible.
4. In providing aid to other countries, the purpose of the Chinese government is not to make recipient countries dependent on China but to help them embark step by step on the road of self-reliance and independent economic development.
5. The Chinese government does its best to help recipient countries complete projects which require less investment but yield quicker results, so that the latter may increase their income and accumulate capital.
6. The Chinese government provides the best-quality equipment and materials manufactured by China at international market prices. If the equipment and materials provided by the Chinese government are not up to the agreed specifications and quality, the Chinese government undertakes to replace them or refund the payment.
7. In giving any particular technical assistance, the Chinese government will see to it that the personnel of the recipient country fully master the technology.
8. The experts dispatched by China to help in construction in recipient countries will have the same standard of living as the experts of the recipient country. The Chinese experts are not allowed to make any special demands or enjoy any special amenities.

B Export Similarity between China and Africa

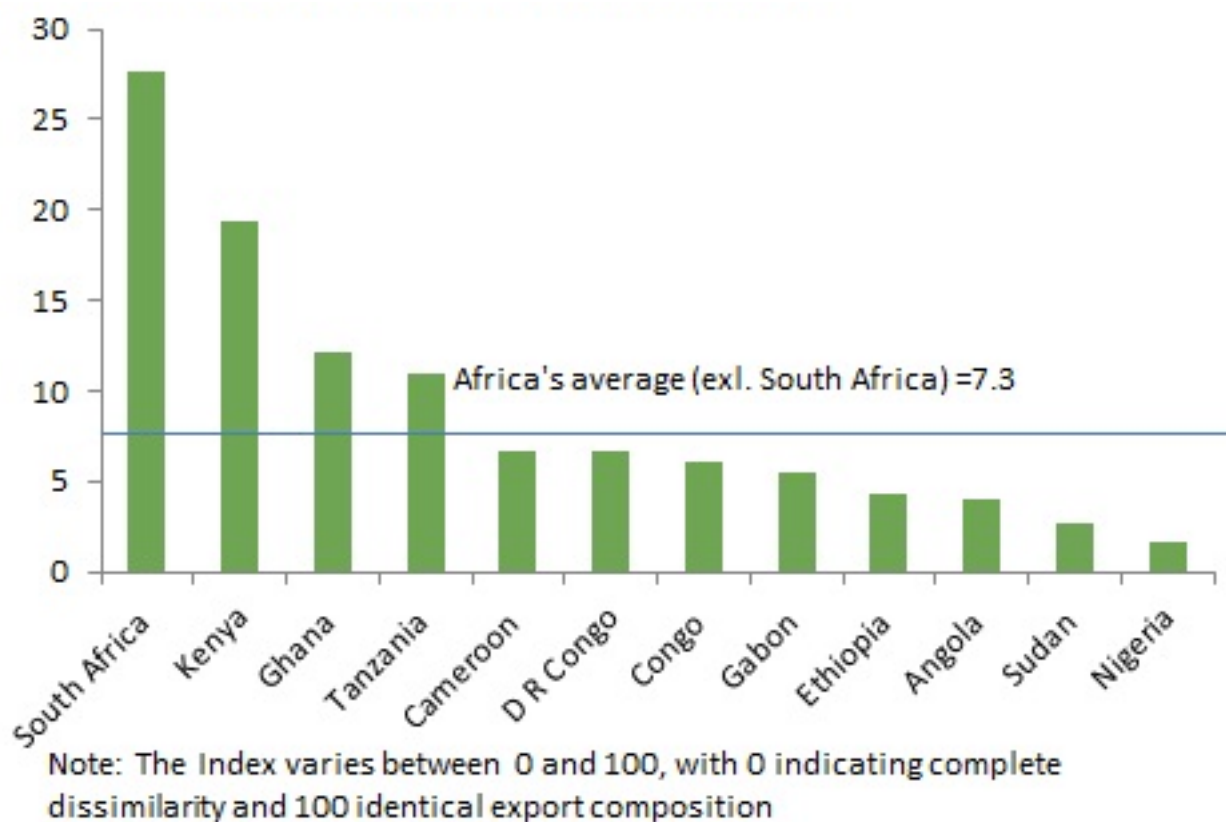


Figure 3: Export Similarity Index Between China and Africa³⁵⁹

³⁵⁹Goldstein, Pinaud and Reisen (OECD): The Rise of China and India: Whats in it for Africa? Cited from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (2012) China's Growing Role in Africa: Myths and Facts. Online: <http://carnegieendowment.org/ieb/2012/02/09/china-s-growing-role-in-africa-myths-and-facts/9j5q> – accessed on 09/13/2013

C Abstract

Many journalists and scholars have published articles and books on China's engagement with African countries in recent years. However, most stay focused on narrow aspects and do not do the complexities of the issue justice. **This thesis analyses the discourse on China's engagement with African countries by discussing and comparing the perspectives of four groups of actors, namely, Chinese government, African government officials, African academics and academics from the 'Global North'.** By providing a systematic comparison of these perspectives the complexities and entanglements inherent in this topic are highlighted. The research questions, to which extent specific perspectives as well as similarities and differences in the arguments of the defined groups can be identified, as well as how China and 'Africa' are portrayed, are answered by literature analysis of primary and secondary sources, in particular, policy papers and self-conducted interviews as well as academic literature.

The main part of the thesis contains the presentation, discussion and comparison of the specific perspectives according to methodologically defined topics. Recurring topics are the *Chinese Values and Ideology*, *Economic and Political Cooperation*, the *Chinese Image and Soft Power* as well as *Competition with other Actors*. The analysis reveals the multitude of perspectives not only between, but equally within the defined groups. **Similarities** between all groups are merely visible regarding an existing competition between the Chinese and 'Western' engagements on an ideological basis, the recognition of a trade imbalance to the disadvantage of African countries and a poor image of China within African populations and media. In contrast, **differences** include the question whether the Chinese engagement is similar or rather different to 'Western' engagements, the implications of the mentioned trade deficit as well as the extent to which policies that supported the Chinese development are accepted as possible models for African countries. In their arguments, 'Western' authors are the most critical. African academics and government officials express criticism, while noting opportunities and self-criticism as well. The Chinese government is self-confident in its approach, though likewise mentioning areas for improvement. **Descriptions of China** focus on different aspects of the Chinese engagement and ideology. Thereby all groups reflect the difficulty of classifying China as 'developing' or 'developed country'. This difficulty occasionally provokes indecision and inconsistencies in the descriptions. **Images of 'Africa'** primarily focus on 'Africa's' strengths and weaknesses. Strengths include the possession of natural resources and the power of media in shaping opinions as leverage points, as well as the capabilities of African governments in policy making and of African peoples as supervisory bodies. In contrast, weak governance structures in African countries, a lack of skills of African people and the dependency of African countries on external powers, were described as weaknesses. Strengths and possibilities were for the most part mentioned by the government officials and the Chinese government, to a lesser extent by both groups of academics.

This research demonstrates the complexity of ‘China in Africa’ and therefore confirms the existence of multiple realities inherent in different perspectives stemming from the subjective opinions existing in literature and interviews, the different pieces of information available to the authors, as well as their personal interests and interpretations.

D Zusammenfassung

Zahlreiche Journalisten und Akademikerinnen haben in den letzten Jahren zum Thema ‚China in Afrika‘ publiziert. Die meisten kratzen jedoch nur an der Oberfläche der Vielschichtigkeit dieses Themas und werden der inhärenten Komplexität nicht gerecht. **Diese Arbeit analysiert die Debatten zu Chinas Engagement mit Afrikanischen Ländern, indem die Perspektiven von vier Akteursgruppen diskutiert und miteinander verglichen werden.** Durch den systematischen Vergleich der verschiedenen Perspektiven kann die Komplexität des Themas veranschaulicht werden. Bei den untersuchten Akteursgruppen handelt es sich um die chinesische Regierung, Afrikanische Regierungsmitarbeiter, Afrikanische WissenschaftlerInnen, sowie WissenschaftlerInnen aus dem ‚Globalen Norden‘. Durch die Analyse werden die Fragen beantwortet, inwiefern einzelne Perspektiven, sowie Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede in den Perspektiven festgestellt werden können und auf die Darstellungen von China und ‚Afrika‘ eingegangen. Dazu werden anhand einer vergleichenden Literaturanalyse ausgewählte Primär- und Sekundärliteratur, insbesondere Policy Papers und Transkripte selbstgeführter Interviews, sowie akademische Texte zum Thema untersucht.

Der Hauptteil der Arbeit umfasst die Präsentation, Diskussion und den Vergleich der spezifischen Perspektiven anhand methodisch definierter Themengebiete. Wiederkehrende Themen sind *chinesische Werte und Ideologie, wirtschaftliche und politische Zusammenarbeit, das chinesische Image und Soft Power, sowie Wettbewerb zwischen verschiedenen Akteuren*. In der Analyse wird die Vielzahl der Perspektiven der Akteursgruppen sichtbar. **Gemeinsamkeiten** bestehen lediglich in dem Bestehen eines Wettbewerbs zwischen China und Ländern des ‚Globalen Nordens‘ auf einer ideologischen Ebene, die Anerkennung eines Handelsbilanzdefizits zu Ungunsten afrikanischer Staaten, sowie eines schlechten Images Chinas unter afrikanischen Bevölkerungen und Medien. Im Gegensatz dazu beinhalten die **Unterschiede** in den Perspektiven die Frage nach Ähnlichkeit oder Differenz zwischen den Aktivitäten Chinas und Ländern des ‚Globalen Nordens‘, sowie nach den Auswirkungen des Handelsbilanzdefizits. Ein weiterer Unterschied besteht in dem Grad der Anerkennung von chinesischen Politiken, welche die rasche ökonomische Entwicklung Chinas unterstützt haben, als Modelle für afrikanische Länder. In ihren Argumentationen konnte unter WissenschaftlerInnen des ‚Globalen Nordens‘ die meiste Kritik festgestellt werden. Afrikanische WissenschaftlicherInnen und Regierungsmitarbeiter erwähnen ebenfalls Kritik, äußern jedoch auch Möglichkeiten und Selbstkritik. Die chinesische Regierung tritt selbstbewusst auf, erwähnt aber ebenso Verbesserungsmöglichkeiten. Die **Darstellungen von China** konzentrieren sich auf verschiedene Aspekte des chineschen Engagements. Dabei werden Uneinigkeiten ob China noch als sogenanntes ‚Entwicklungsland‘ zu werten ist sichtbar. Dies führt teilweise zu Widersprüchen in den Beschreibungen Chinas. **Darstellungen von ‚Afrika‘** fokussieren auf ‚Afrika‘ zugeschriebene Stärken und Schwächen. Der Besitz natürlicher Ressourcen, die Macht der Medien

auf die Meinungen der Menschen Einfluss zu nehmen, sowie die Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten afrikanischer Regierungen und die Rolle der Bevölkerungen als Kontrollinstanzen werden als Stärken genannt. Schwächen beinhalten hingegen schwache Regierungsstrukturen, der Mangel an bestimmten Fähigkeiten Afrikanischer Bevölkerungen, sowie die Abhängigkeiten von anderen Ländern. Stärken und Möglichkeiten wurden vor allem von den afrikanischen Regierungsmitarbeitern, sowie der chinesischen Regierung genannt, in geringerem Ausmaß von afrikanischen sowie ‚westlichen‘ WissenschaftlerInnen.

Diese Arbeit zeigt die Komplexität des Themas ‚China in Afrika‘ auf und veranschaulicht die vielfältigen Realitäten der verschiedenen Perspektiven. Diese stammen nicht zuletzt von den subjektiven Meinungen sichtbar in Literatur und Interviews, dem unterschiedlichen Zugang zu Informationen, sowie den persönlichen Interessen und Interpretationen der AutorInnen.

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