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# Enhancing Solidarity and Cooperation Social Identity Theory and China's Involvement in Africa

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ENHANCING SOLIDARITY AND COOPERATION  
SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY AND CHINA'S INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA

by

David Thomas Aston

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

of

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in

Political Science

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## Introduction

China has increasingly intensified engagement with Africa since 2000. In 2001, trade between Africa and China was at \$10.6 billion. In 2011, trade had exploded to over \$160 billion.<sup>1</sup> Chinese investment in Africa has grown from tens of millions of dollars to over \$10 billion.<sup>2</sup> This surge of trade and investment in Africa has not yet been matched by any other global power. Recently, Hu Jintao doubled China's loan commitment to Africa to over \$20 billion. This increase of trade and investment reflects a growing Chinese influence in Africa.<sup>3</sup> What caused this increased Chinese interest in a continent that has been overlooked by the rest of the world?

As China increases its influence among the world's major powers, many argue that it will soon confront the United States. Whether or not this happens will be determined by how successful China is at creating new "friends" in the international system. As the United States' primacy maintains a high level of cultural and economic influence throughout the world, China may have to create new economic, political, and social norms in order to attract new partners. These partners will help offset the United States' dominating influence over the global political order. This paper argues that an increased level of trade and investment in Africa is one of China's strategies to create a new identity by engaging in *Social Creativity*, as Social Identity Theory (SIT) specifies.

First, current theories of why China is engaging in Africa will be evaluated. This evaluation includes theories of Liberalism, Colonialism/Neo-colonialism, and Neo-

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, David. "China's booming trade with Africa helps tone its diplomatic muscle." *The Guardian*. 22 March 2012. Online.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Perlez, Jane. "With \$Billion Loan Pledge, China Strengthens Its Ties to African Nations." *The New York Times*. 19 July 2012. Online.

realism. The most effective at answering the question of why China invests so heavily in Africa is neo-realism, arguing that China engages Africa to ascertain resources and gain a geopolitical advantage in the region,. However, this does not fully explain Chinese behavior in the region. The paper will then explain the origins and applications of Social Identity Theory in explaining China's Africa policy. After laying out the theoretical discussion, the paper will analyze two case studies. The first is a comprehensive look at China's behavior and policy towards Africa as a group of states. The second is an investigation of how SIT applies on a micro level, using statements and news sources to analyze the case of Zimbabwe.

## **Theories**

### ***The Power of Liberal Institutions and Economic Interaction***

China is getting more involved in international institutions. Following the founding of the People's Republic of China, Mao Zedong led the Chinese into several decades of isolationism. This began to change when President Nixon visited China in 1972. Negotiations between the two countries had been going on in secret, culminating with National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger making a secret visit to China to negotiate with Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai. These visits marked the beginning of a trend for China. Following over two and a half decades of relative isolationism, China was ready to interact with the rest of the world.

With China's opening up to international trade and investment came invitations to join several distinguished international institutions. Today, China is influential in a number of international organizations. Most prominently, it sits as one of the permanent members of the UN Security Council. In the 1980's, China joined the World Bank and

the International Monetary Fund. By the end of the decade, China had joined other prestigious international institutions such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, the World Intellectual Property Organization, and the International Olympic Organizational Committee. The US-China Economic and Security Review Commission of the United States Congress released a report on the “Evolving Role of China in International Institutions,”<sup>4</sup> stating, “China’s growing role not only supports its strategic interests, but, it should be acknowledged, is also frequently constructive and helpful for the organizations in which it participates. Furthermore, to the extent that these organizations accomplish work that is beneficial to the global community at large, China rightfully deserves its fair share of credit for its support and contributions.”<sup>5</sup> Recognition of China’s economic influence by the United States has allowed the Chinese to increase their status among other states as well.

One of the greatest turning points in China’s history of involvement in international institutions came when it joined the World Trade Organization in 2002. After joining the WTO, Chinese goods saw a renewed access to markets never before available. “With the easing of rules, a high savings rate, and accumulating capital, more Chinese companies, public and private, are investing abroad.”<sup>6</sup> This gave them access to liberal nations as well as many international organizations. Their behavior in the market directly reflects the relationship they maintain with these international institutions.

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<sup>4</sup> Stephen Olson, Clyde Prestowitz. “The Evolving Role of China in International Institutions.” (Prepared for: The U.S.-China Economic Security Review Commission, January 2011), 4.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Jiang Wenran. “China’s Emerging Partnerships in Africa,” in *China into Africa, edit. Robert I. Rotberg* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008), 59.

International institutions do not bind China's behavior. Classical theories of liberalism suggest that international institutions directly influence states to adopt international norms, but the Chinese disregard many sanctions and trade restrictions implemented by the United States and the United Nations. China continues to support African regimes that engage in human rights abuses of their citizens. The People's Republic of China (PRC) uses those international institutions that serve its own best interests. China does not engage in trade for charity, rather it uses these organizations to benefit the Chinese economy. Many critics say that the Chinese are exploiting, or raping the African continent.<sup>7</sup> Others state that the Chinese are engaging in neo-colonialist behavior.

### ***Colonialism and Neo-colonialism***

One of the most prominent arguments concerning China's increased interest in Africa is that China is attempting to colonize Africa. Chinese leadership meets almost every claim with the Chinese principle of "non-interference."<sup>8</sup> One of the key attributes that separate China's behavior from past colonial behavior is that it focuses on governmental control over markets. The Western media has painted China as a colonizer, however, Chinese behavior does not reflect historic examples of colonialism, nor does it follow the pattern of economic domination formulated by neo-colonists.

Traditional definitions of colonialism stem from the behavior of ancient countries that attempted to gain complete domination over another nation. Ancient Rome differs from old forms of colonialism, nineteenth century colonialism, and neo-colonialism in

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<sup>7</sup> "More than minerals: Chinese trade with Africa keeps growing; fears of neocolonialism are overdone." *The Economist*, Mar. 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013.

<sup>8</sup> Li Nuer, Tichaona Chifamba. "Special Report: African countries welcome growing Chinese presence despite West's criticism." *Xinhua*, Nov. 10, 2012.

several key areas. First, the Roman Empire sought not to gain economic domination, but rather attempted to expand geographically into contiguous areas.<sup>9</sup> Even though conquered people were not Roman citizens, they still had rights.<sup>10</sup> European colonization lasted for around 400 years and spread across every continent. While ideology was a central motivation for the spread of European power, economic incentives were also a major driving force behind their colonial behavior. Great Britain, Spain, and France all moved large numbers of their citizens to different parts of the world. These foreign populations made it possible for their respective countries to gain political and economic control over satellite regions. European pilgrims settled large communities<sup>11</sup> and their nations' respective militaries occupied restless regions.<sup>12</sup>

China's military has not taken over territory on the African continent. Aside from the workers living in Africa, there are no Chinese occupiers or settlers. Western leaders and media pundits who claim China is engaging in colonialism do not understand traditional colonialism and its specifications. What they are most likely referring to is neo-colonialism. Neo-colonialism refers to a state attempting to gain control over another nation in an attempt to insure economic dominance. Growing out of classical theories of Marxism are two main critical theories that articulate the position of neo-colonialism: *Dependency Theory* and *World Systems Theory*.

Dependency Theory postulates that poorer countries export raw materials and cheap labor and purchase higher quality goods from developed nations. This allows poor

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<sup>9</sup> P.A. Brunt, "Reflections on British and Roman Imperialism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 7, (1965): 267-284.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. (New York: Knopf, 1993): 8.

<sup>12</sup> T.R. Young, Bruce Arrigo, *The Dictionary of Critical Social Sciences* (Boulder: Westview, 1999): 50.



states to remain constantly inferior to advanced countries. Economic activity in rich countries is often damaging to the development of poor countries, conflicting the Ricardian economic theory of Comparative Advantage. David Ricardo postulates that if each nation focuses on producing the good that it is most efficient at producing, and then engages in trade with another state, both nations benefit economically. Raul Prebisch's Dependency Theory contradicts Comparative Advantage Theory by postulating that developing states with high amounts of resources become dependent on developed states who import resources and export completed goods.<sup>13</sup> Western newspapers have introduced the idea that Africa has become thus dependent on China. "Many African businesses complain Chinese companies dump cheap end-of-the-line stocks, often bypassing customs and import duties. Not only does this drive locals out of business, the cheap items are often of poor quality. The influx of cheap Chinese goods to Africa decimates the struggling local manufacturing industry."<sup>14</sup> Many of these international news organizations accuse the Chinese of creating small working communities that directly benefit only the Chinese that have been shipped in to fulfill the need for labor and technology. "Exclusive, gated compounds, serving only Chinese food, and where no blacks are allowed, are being built all over the continent. 'African cloths' sold in markets on the continent are now almost always imported, bearing the legend: 'Made in China'"<sup>15</sup>

Others claim that China exports the cheap goods that African companies should

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<sup>13</sup> Vincent Ferraro, "Dependency Theory: An Introduction," in *The Development Economics Reader*, ed. Giorgio Secondi (London: Routledge, 2008): 58-64.

<sup>14</sup> William Gumede, "China Colonizing Africa?" *The Washington Post*, (Washington D.C.), Dec. 29, 2006.

<sup>15</sup> Andrew Malone, "How China's taking over Africa, and why the West should be VERY worried." *MailOnline* July 18, 2008. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1036105/How-Chinas-taking-Africa-West-VERY-worried.html>.

be making. “China is also exporting huge volumes of finished, manufactured goods — T-shirts, flashlights, radios and socks, just to name a few — to those same countries, hampering Africa’s ability to make its own products and develop healthy, diverse economies.”<sup>16</sup> Even many Africans view the economic relationship of African Exports-Chinese Imports to be unfair. Africans have claimed that the goods with which the Chinese have flooded the continent are poorly made. “Chinese goods sent to Africa are notorious for their poor quality. None of a shipment of 50 buses to Zimbabwe is still working and an order for 250 more has been suspended. Of three MA60 passenger jets the Chinese sent to Mugabe, one has never managed to fly, one had to make an emergency landing at Victoria Falls, injuring many passengers, and the third caught fire on take-off in Harare last week. All are now grounded.”<sup>17</sup>

A good example of dependency theory is the situation that arose concerning how the African clothing market was deeply affected by the flooding of cheap Chinese clothing. The Agreement on Textiles and Clothing Act initiated by the WTO was created to allow developed countries to adjust to the price of imports from developing countries.<sup>18</sup> Because China was the main target of the agreement, some developing countries directly benefited from the newly imposed quotas, including many countries in Africa. After the agreement expired in 2005, China began immediately to seize the opportunity by mass producing more goods to trade in Africa, causing direct harm to the African clothing export market. Wilfred Collins Wonani, leader of the Chamber of

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<sup>16</sup> Lydia Polgreen, Howard W. French, “China’s Trade in Africa Carries a Price Tag.” *The New York Times*, (New York, NY), Aug. 21, 2007.

<sup>17</sup> RW Johnson, “China’s empire-builders sweep up African riches.” *Sunday Times*, (The United Kingdom), July 16, 2006.

<sup>18</sup> See the WTO “Agreement on Textiles and Clothing.” [http://www.wto.org/english/docs\\_e/legal\\_e/ursum\\_e.htm#cAgreement](http://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/ursum_e.htm#cAgreement).

Commerce in Kabwe, Zambia, a city that focused its economy on a central cotton gin, said, “We are back where we started, sending raw materials out, bringing cheap manufactured goods in. This isn’t progress. It is colonialism.”<sup>19</sup>

Drawing inspiration from Dependency Theory, Immanuel Wallerstein’s World System Theory criticizes the concept of a ‘third world’ by postulating that the regions of the world are divided into four categories: Core, semi-periphery, periphery, and external. Out of these four, core and periphery, are the most applicable to the modern international system. Periphery refers to low developed regions, feeding the capital-intensive production of the core regions. What have been traditionally labeled as “1<sup>st</sup> world,” or developed nations, fit under the definition of core regions. The first core region rose out of Western Europe as the states within that region developed strong central governments with extensive bureaucracies supported by large armies. The rural population was directly controlled by local governments who had utilized their power to gain control over international commerce. Shortly after China instituted economic reforms in the early 1980’s and began producing high amounts of low-end products, they fit under the categorization of a peripheral state. As China has increased the strength of its economy, however it has moved out of the peripheral region.

A third region that exists between the two extremes of peripheral and core is semi-peripheral. Semi-peripherals can either represent areas that are in decline leaving core regions or are rising out of the peripherals into the core region. China’s economic boom has allowed it to leave the peripheral region. Whether China is a member of the core is a matter of dispute. China constantly refers to itself as being a part of the third

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<sup>19</sup> Lydia Polgreen, Howard W. French, “China’s Trade in Africa Carries a Price Tag.” *The New York Times*, (New York, NY) Aug. 21, 2007.

world. Most of its economic output consists of low-end manufactured products. According to the World Bank, 31% of China's economy is based on exports.<sup>20</sup> While China remains a developing country, its powerful economy allows it to take advantage of weaker states. Therefore, it is arguable that China is in the semi-peripheral region.

While Dependency Theory, World System Theory, and proponents create compelling explanations of China's behavior, several issues cannot be accounted for by these perspectives. The Chinese are not attempting to dominate the African continent, which is proven by several different points. First, communist leaders frequently proclaim Africans as equals. Although ordinary citizens do not receive the benefits of the Sino-African relationship, African elites do.<sup>21</sup>

Given the constraints that both China and Africa nations have encountered in their relations with Euro-American nations and institutions that require neoliberal political and economic structures, relations between China and African nations offer a complementary partnership. While relations between individual African states and China are not balanced because of China's sheer demographic and economic weight, relations are increasingly intertwined and interdependent.<sup>22</sup>

Second, China has forgiven \$3.83 billion dollars worth of developing countries, debt.<sup>23</sup>

Third, within China, 30% of scholarships given to foreign students goes to Africans, even though Africans make up only a small percentage of the foreign student population.<sup>24</sup>

Fourth, China continuously attempts to portray Africa as equals. The current relationship

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<sup>20</sup> See the World Bank Website of China: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/china>.

<sup>21</sup> Stephanie Rupp, "Africa and China: Engaging Postcolonial Interdependencies," in *China into Africa*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008), 83.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Yang Lina, "Wen says achieving MDGs remain long, uphill journey, promises to expand China's foreign aid." *Xinhua*, (Beijing, China), Sept. 23, 2010.

<sup>24</sup> See report released by the *China Scholarship Council* titled "Statistics of International Students in China in 2011." Feb. 29, 2012, <http://site.ebrary.com.dist.lib.usu.edu/lib/usulibraries/docDetail.action?docID=10338461>.

between Africa and China does not constitute colonialism or neo-colonialism. Rather, China is attempting to secure an export-import market to fuel its booming economy.

### ***Resource Security: Neo-realism***

China is rising despite all its domestic problems. The communist party's main form of legitimacy comes from its ability to fuel an economic boom that has brought over 500 million Chinese citizens out of poverty.<sup>25</sup> China's rapid development has relied heavily upon its ability to secure natural resources in places such as Africa. While Deng Xiaoping introduced economic reforms in 1978 that allowed for rapid economic development, his regime also implemented harsh social policies aimed at controlling the population. One of the most controversial policies he implemented that continues to this day has been the one-child policy to counterbalance the population boom that China had experienced under the leadership of Mao Zedong. In 1989, his regime halted the democratic movements initiated by students at Tiananmen Square. Religion has been suppressed; members of the communist party are not allowed to be members of any religious movement. The Falun Gong movement, seen as an insurrectionist threat to the ruling government, has been condemned and suppressed by leading Chinese politicians.<sup>26</sup> 'The Great Fire Wall' of China attempts to censor Internet access to the hundreds of millions of Chinese Internet users.<sup>27</sup>

Corruption among communist party leaders has become a major concern among Chinese citizens. In the fall of 2012, following the once-a-decade leadership change

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<sup>25</sup> Qi Shuwen. "China's efforts to lift people out of poverty "unprecedented": Australian PM." *Xinhua* (Beijing, China) April 24, 2010.

<sup>26</sup> Andrew Jacobs, "China Still Presses Against Falun Gong." *The New York Times*. (New York, NY), April 27, 2009.

<sup>27</sup> Keith Bradshier, "China Toughens Its Restrictions on Use of the Internet." *The New York Times*, (New York, NY) Dec. 28, 2012.

among top communist officials, newly selected President Xi Jinping called for wide sweeping anti-corruption policies.<sup>28</sup>

In recent years, the long pent-up problems in some countries have led to the venting of public outrage, to social turmoil and to the fall of governments, and corruption and graft have been an important reason..A mass of facts tells us that if corruption becomes increasingly serious, it will inevitably doom the party and the state. We must be vigilant. In recent years, there have been cases of grave violations of disciplinary rules and laws within the party that have been extremely malign in nature and utterly destructive politically, shocking people to the core.<sup>29</sup>

The problem of corruption within the government was made most evident when Bo Xilai fell from power after being indicated in the murder of a British businessman.<sup>30</sup> Bo had been a charismatic leader who called for a return to the ideology of Mao Zedong. Public outcry against Bo came almost immediately. Social media became an invaluable tool of spreading and shaping public opinion concerning his case.

The gap between wealthy and poor continues to grow in China. Although 90% of people enjoy a higher standard of living than their parents, there is a rapidly growing concern over the gap between rich and poor.<sup>31</sup> The growing corruption exacerbates the disparity between rich and poor, however, public concern is mainly aimed at local government officials. Tony Saich of Harvard University conducted surveys on Chinese satisfaction in the government between 2003 and 2009. During the six-year period, satisfaction in the central government slightly increased to 95.9%. Comparatively,

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<sup>28</sup> “Xi outlines anti-corruption plan, says arduous task ahead.” *Xinhua*, (Beijing, China), Jan. 1, 2013, <http://english.sina.com/china/2012/1231/543688.html>.

<sup>29</sup> Edward Wong, “New Communist Party Chief in China Denounces Corruption in Speech.” *The New York Times*, (New York, NY), Nov. 19, 2012.

<sup>30</sup> Tania Branigan, “Bo Xilai and corrupt cadres a ‘profound lesson’ for Chinese Communist party.” *The Guardian*, (Beijing, China), Nov. 7, 2012.

<sup>31</sup> Richard Wike, “China inequality causes unease-Pew survey.” Printed by *BBC*, (Pew Research Center, Global Attitudes Project), Oct. 16, 2012. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-19953634>.

satisfaction in the local government was at 62%.<sup>32</sup> While it is highly likely that satisfaction has decreased slightly since 2009, the poll is significant because it represented positive attitudes during the global economic downturn. In order for the government to maintain this high level of public support, it must continue to sustain economic growth. This requires seeking out any and all resource markets.

The major powers of the world are at a turning point. The United States, while more powerful than ever before, is seeing its relative influence and power decline. Terrorism and the wars in Afghanistan and in Iraq have crippled its international image. Many scholars debate the United States' ability to remain the most powerful state in the world.<sup>33</sup> The decline of the United States could open the way for another state to become the most powerful nation in the world. One of the most complex questions in the field of international relations regards how China will react to changing dynamics in the international system. While China's international influence is likely to increase, deep societal pressures will also significantly affect its ability to obtain power in the international system:

China is like a vessel being carried forward by strong currents into fast flowing rapids. Only by navigating these dangerous waters successfully can it gain greater freedom of action and achieve safety on the other side. The task facing today's leaders is to steer their country unscathed through a period of turbulence and uncertainty. If they succeed, China will emerge stronger, more secure, and, perhaps most important from the perspective of the current regime, with the Chinese Communist Party still firmly at the helm.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Tony Saich, "Chinese governance seen through the people's eyes," *East Asia Forum*, July 24, 2011, <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2011/07/24/chinese-governance-seen-through-the-people-s-eyes/>.

<sup>33</sup> Martin Jacques, *When China rules the world*. (New York: Penguin Group, 2009).

<sup>34</sup> Martin Jacques, *When China rules the world*. (New York: Penguin Group, 2009).

In order to maintain legitimacy while instituting oppressive social policies, the government is forced to insure robust economic growth. Today, China is the largest exporter of cheap manufactured goods and the third largest of all produced goods in the world.<sup>35</sup> Communist leaders have said that China's autocratic, social, and political policies have been necessary to promote economic growth.<sup>36</sup> They claim their state-controlled economy is preferable for developing countries to adopt. "Beijing is prepared to defend autocratic regimes that commit human rights abuses and forestall democratic reforms for narrow ends of regime survival."<sup>37</sup> At the core of China's economy is cheap manufactured goods. In order to fuel the production of these goods, China is buying vast amounts of resources from various regional markets. As articulated in the previous section on colonialism, China does not seek direct control of resource markets, rather, similar to other states in need of natural resources, it seeks to secure access to African resources.<sup>38</sup>

China consumes a vast amount of resources. Shortly after the founding of the PRC, China became an oil-importing country, securing large amounts of oil from the Soviet Union. As the relationship between these two countries soured, China began looking inward for oil. "This led to the exploration of Daqing oil field and production began in 1963. In 1965, the output of China's crude oil reached 10 mts/year or 97% of

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<sup>35</sup> "China's efforts to lift people out of poverty "unprecedented": Australian PM," *Xinhua*, (Beijing, China), April 24, 2010.

<sup>36</sup> Tull. "China's engagement in Africa: *scope significance and consequences*." *Journal of modern African studies* 44, no. 3 (2006): 476.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Power, Marcus and Mohan, Giles. "Towards a critical geopolitics of China's Engagement with African development." *Geopolitics* 15, no. 3 (2010).



the country's oil needs; China became self-sufficient."<sup>39</sup> However, the economic reforms instituted by Deng Xiaoping eventually led China to become a net-importer of oil in 1993.<sup>40</sup> In 2010, China overtook the United States to become the number one consumer of energy in the world.<sup>41</sup> The United States had been the world's top consumer since the early 1900's.<sup>42</sup> Today, China consumes around nine million barrels of oil a day.<sup>43</sup> In 2011 China imported 253 million tons, or about 1.9 billion barrels of oil. This represents a 6 percent yearly increase according to custom calculations.<sup>44</sup> By 2035, estimates suggest that China's oil consumption will increase 65% from 2011 levels.<sup>45</sup>

To compete in the international oil market, China has negotiated with many states with which the US refuses to do business. This has brought tension to the US-China relationship. China's third largest oil trading partner is Iran. The United States has placed economic sanctions on Iran in an effort to pressure the Iranian government to end its nuclear program. These include sanctions against specific shipping companies and banks. President Obama recently said, "Today, because of concrete steps that I and my Administration have taken, Iran is under greater pressure and is more isolated than ever. We have led the international community in putting in place the toughest and most

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<sup>39</sup> Zhao, Hong. "China's Oil Venture in Africa." *East Asia* 24, (2007): 400.

<sup>40</sup> Christopher Alessi, "Expanding China-Africa Oil Ties," *Council on Foreign Relations*, Feb. 8, 2012. <http://www.cfr.org/china/expanding-china-africa-oil-ties/p9557>.

<sup>41</sup> Spencer Swartz, Shai Oster, "China Tops U.S. in Energy Use," *The Wall Street Journal*, July 18, 2010.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Du Juan, "China's oil demand to rise as economy picks up," *China Daily*, Nov. 9, 2011. [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-11/09/content\\_15899103.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-11/09/content_15899103.htm).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

comprehensive sanctions in history on Iran.”<sup>46</sup> Under Obama’s administration, the US congress has passed four rounds of unilateral sanctions against Iran.<sup>47</sup> The sanctions have seemed effective. As of September 2012, Iranian oil exports had decreased to a new low of only 860,000 barrels a day.<sup>48</sup> China remains one of the largest importers of Iranian oil, limiting the success of sanctions imposed against Iran by international organizations. Although Chinese oil imports declined towards the end of the year, in 2012 they continued to import around 20 million barrels of Iranian crude oil a month.<sup>49</sup> This assists the Iranian economy in staying afloat in the midst of crushing international sanctions. Iran is probably the most salient example of how the Chinese undermine economic sanctions placed on “rogue nations” by international institutions; however, Africa is home to many governments that fit the same criteria as Iran.

Initially, China focused on securing the flow of oil exports from the Middle East. Following the United States’ invasion into Iraq, however, China began looking outside the region for more stable sources of oil. This included looking into several African countries that could possibly be an alternative to the Middle East. China now receives one-third of its oil imports from Africa.<sup>50</sup> China’s largest trading partner is Angola,

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<sup>46</sup> Jennifer Rubin, “Hagel’s inexplicable position on Iran sanctions.” *The Washington Post* (Washington D.C.), Jan. 14, 2013. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/wp/2013/01/14/hagels-inexplicable-position-on-iran-sanctions/>.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> James Ball, “Sanctions against Iran are clamping down on oil exports, agency says.” *The Washington Post*, (Online) Oct. 16, 2012. [http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-10-16/world/35502574\\_1\\_oil-exports-oil-imports-iranian-oil](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-10-16/world/35502574_1_oil-exports-oil-imports-iranian-oil)

<sup>49</sup> Rob Sheridan, “China Keeps Buying Iran’s Oil as US. And EU Intensify Sanctions.” *Bloomberg*, (Online) Jul. 30, 2012. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-07-30/china-keeps-buying-iran-s-oil-as-u-s-and-eu-intensify-sanctions.html>

<sup>50</sup> Christopher Alessi, “Expanding China-Africa Oil Ties,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, Feb. 8, 2012. <http://www.cfr.org/china/expanding-china-africa-oil-ties/p9557>.

where oil constitutes 90% of exports.<sup>51</sup> In the global race to secure access to oil, the Chinese have taken a different tactic than their Western counterparts. Howard W. French of Columbia University said China “has focused on trade and commercially justified investment, rather than aid grants and heavily subsidized loans.”<sup>52</sup> This has allowed the Chinese to make friends among many developing nations who have become disillusioned by the Western powers.

### **Angola**

China’s search for strategic resource partners has led it to become friends with Angola. Both countries benefit deeply from this friendship. Angola has experienced tremendous growth over the last decade. In 2002, after being engulfed in a civil war that lasted for over 27 years, the government focused on rebuilding the infrastructure and stimulating economic growth.<sup>53</sup> Between 2006 and 2010, the Angolan economy experienced around 10 percent annual GDP growth.<sup>54</sup> This rapid growth is the result of an economy that relies upon the export of oil, minerals, diamonds, timber, and coffee.<sup>55</sup> Oil constitutes 58% of Angolan GDP and 80% of government revenue.<sup>56</sup> In 2006, Angola became a member of OPEC and currently holds a production quota of 1.65

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<sup>51</sup> Shelly Zhao, “The China-Angola Partnership: A Case Study of China’s Oil Relations in Africa.” *China Briefing*, (Online), May 25, 2011. <http://www.china-briefing.com/news/2011/05/25/the-china-angola-partnership-a-case-study-of-chinas-oil-relationships-with-african-nations.html>

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> “Angola: Transparency Snapshot.” Revenue Watch Institute, accessed January 31, 2013, <http://www.revenuwatch.org/countries/africa/angola/overview>

million barrels of oil a day.<sup>57</sup> About 16% of China's oil imports come from Angola, constituting 30% of Angola's total oil exports.<sup>58</sup> This situation has made China and Angola strategic allies. China needs Angola's oil to fuel its booming economy and Angola benefits financially by selling the Chinese oil. "Indeed, the ruling party now has strong ties to Beijing due to China Exim Bank's and several other Chinese financial institutions' sizeable loans to the Angolan government."<sup>59</sup>

China's behavior of establishing natural resources as collateral for infrastructure investment has been termed the "Angola Model" by several academics.<sup>60</sup> Following the end of the Angolan civil war, the IMF insisted on increased financial transparency before it would provide loans to Angola in order to insure efficiency.<sup>61</sup> \$4.5 billion in oil-backed credit lines were granted to the Angolan government by China Exim Bank in 2004. In 2010 the bank added an additional line of credit worth \$6 billion.<sup>62</sup> China has been criticized for this behavior because it is seen as preventing the distribution of wealth among the average Angolan.<sup>63</sup>

## Sudan

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<sup>57</sup> "CIA World Factbook: Angola." CIA, accessed February 2, 2013,

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ao.html>

<sup>58</sup> "Countries:China," U.S. Energy Information Administration, last updated Sep. 4, 2012,

<http://www.eia.gov/countries/analysisbriefs/China/china.pdf>

<sup>59</sup> Corkin, Lucy. "Uneasy allies: China's evolving relations with Angola." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 29, no. 2, (April 2011): 171.

<sup>60</sup> Burke, C., L. Corkin, N. Tay, *China's engagement of Africa: Preliminary scoping of African Case studies: A scoping exercise evaluating China's engagement of six African case studies*. Prepared for the Rockefeller Foundation, Stellenbosch: Centre for Chinese Studies, Stellenbosch University (2007).

<sup>61</sup> Corkin, Lucy. "Uneasy allies: China's evolving relations with Angola." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 29, no. 2 (April 2011) 171.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. Angolan Minister of Finance, Carlos Alberto Lopes, broadcast on Radio Nacional de Angola, 4 PM, 9 July 2010.

<sup>63</sup> "The Queensway syndicate and the Africa trade." *The Economist*, Aug. 13, 2011, <http://www.economist.com/node/21525847>

Angola is not the only African nation from which China imports a great deal of oil. While Sudan remains a highly unstable area, China continues to import oil from the region. The conflict in Darfur has brought international criticism upon Beijing. Trading with Sudan has been profitable for China simply because the Western powers refuse to do business there. The West has placed sanctions on Darfur because of alleged human rights abuses:

Why is China soft on genocide? The essential reason is oil. China traditionally was self-sufficient in oil, but since 1993 it has been a net oil importer and it is increasingly worried about this vulnerability. So China has been bustling around the globe trying to ensure oil supplies from as many sources as possible. And partly because most of the major oil fields are already taken, China has ended up with the world's thugs: Sudan, Iran and Myanmar. China has been particularly active in Africa.<sup>64</sup>

One of the most controversial news stories leading up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics was when Steven Spielberg left his post as artistic advisor to the games. His reason for stepping away was that China had not used its influence over the Sudanese government to end the conflict in the Darfur region. While the Olympics would continue to be a great success without his help, his departure brought negative exposure to the event. Spielberg stated:

I found that my conscience will not allow me to continue business as usual. At this point, my time and energy must be spent not on Olympic ceremonies, but on doing all I can to help bring an end to the unspeakable crimes against humanity that continue to be committed in Darfur. Sudan's government bears the bulk of the responsibility for these on-going crimes, but the international community, and particularly China, should be doing more.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Kristoff, Nicholas D. "China and Sudan, Blood and Oil." *The New York Times*, Apr 23, 2006, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=990CE3D9153FF930A15757C0A9609C8B63>

<sup>65</sup> "Spielberg in Darfur snub to China," *BBC*, Feb 13, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7242016.stm>

Many western newspapers postulated that Spielberg's departure would tarnish the image of the games, decreasing the status of the Chinese. However, the games would continue and are now viewed among the most successful Olympics in the modern era.<sup>66</sup>

Spielberg's departure represented an international attack on China over its policy in Sudan. Two-thirds of Sudan's oil goes to China.<sup>67</sup> In 2005, China vetoed a United Nations resolution to refer the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court.<sup>68</sup> While the Olympics and celebrities' critiques brought new exposure to Chinese-Sudanese relationship, cooperation between the two nations deepened. Sudan sells China oil and buys arms from the Chinese using the money from oil sales. Sudan began exporting oil to China in 1997. By 2003 the Sudanese military expenditures had gone from \$15.4 to \$104 million.<sup>69</sup> The following three years witnessed the worst human rights abuses by the Sudanese government while the Chinese military sold over \$55 million worth of small arms to Khartoum.<sup>70</sup>

Wenran Jiang outlines several characteristics that China's resource deals in Africa share.<sup>71</sup> First, China is willing to invest in energy markets located in "trouble zones."<sup>72</sup> Angola and Sudan are perfect examples. Second, the Chinese are investing large

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<sup>66</sup> Katie Thomas, "I.O.C. Issues Glowing Review of Beijing Games," *The New York Times* (New York, NY), Nov. 26, 2008.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid

<sup>68</sup> "China defends decision not to veto Darfur ICC referral." *Sudan Tribune*, Nov. 11, 2009, <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article33085>.

<sup>69</sup> "Facts on International relations and Security." Accessed on Feb. 8, 2013, [http://first.sipri.org/non\\_first/milex.php](http://first.sipri.org/non_first/milex.php), Information regarding Sudanese military expenditures past this date are unreliable.

<sup>70</sup> "China's arms Sales to Sudan: Fact Sheet." Accessed on Feb. 8, 2013, <http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/our-work/crimes-against-humanity/stop-arms-to-sudan/the-facts-chinas-arms-sales-to-sudan/>

<sup>71</sup> Wenran Jiang, "China's Emerging Strategic Partnership in Africa," in *China into Africa*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008).

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. 55

amounts of capital into resource-rich states. Third, the Chinese mainly cooperate with both state-owned and private companies to establish a long-term, local presence. Last, Jiang states that the Chinese do not select the same kind of energy cooperation partners as the United States does.<sup>73</sup>

The relationship between China and Africa has been widely criticized by academics and politicians. However, China's recent behavior in Africa does not indicate that China is attempting to exploit those countries. The booming Chinese economy necessitates the accumulation of resources. Its activities in Africa reflect a desire to secure resources, however, China also invests in other sectors of African society that do not directly relate to policies of resource acquisition. Over the last ten years, the PRC has invested billions of dollars in African civic infrastructure, as well as educational and health sectors. The Chinese have gone to great lengths to insure that African leaders are accorded equal diplomatic recognition. Figure 1.1 shows the dispersion of Chinese investment across different African states. For example, Ethiopia receives Chinese investment in not only the oil and natural resource sectors, but also in medical, infrastructure and railroads. Why does China go to such great lengths to please its African trading partners? If China were attempting to directly control the continent, it could simply use its money and political influence to gain leverage over individual African states. Therefore, this paper hypothesizes that the Chinese engage Africa in an effort to create a new identity in the international system that directly contrasts the superior status identity of the United States. Social Identity Theory (SIT) is used to clarify Chinese behavior in Africa that does not fit under theories of Realism.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid 54-55

## Social Identity Theory

SIT complements the neorealist argument that self-help directs the behavior of states. However, SIT has supported the neorealist theory “by suggesting a social rather than a structural basis for self-help.”<sup>74</sup> Waltz theory of neorealism postulates that all states are constantly fighting for survival. Without a sovereign governing international body that has legitimate power to oversee the behavior of all states, states seek survival by engaging in self-help.<sup>75</sup> Self-help is the one core-defining characteristic that all states share. “Neorealists characterize international politics as a competitive arena where insecure states are more concerned with the relative distribution of power than with their individual gain.”<sup>76</sup> The central argument of this thesis agrees with structural realist arguments. China acts out of an interest of increasing their self-interest by gaining a strategic geopolitical advantage in Africa. However, the concept of self-help cannot fully evaluate the reasons for Chinese behavior in Africa.

Nations regard their self-interests as central to the survival of their regime. Constructivists have made promising arguments that processes, as opposed to inherent attributes, shape the formation of a state’s identity of self-help based on what cultural and cognitive norms those states perceive as important. Alexander Wendt articulated this principle in his influential article “Anarchy is What States Make of It.”<sup>77</sup> Each state perceives needs and threats differently based on cultural and cognitive psychological

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<sup>74</sup>Jonathan Mercer. “Anarchy and Identity.” *International Organization* 49, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 230.

<sup>75</sup> Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.:1979).

<sup>76</sup> Jonathan Mercer, “Anarchy and Identity.” *International Organization* 49, no. 2 (Spring 1995):231.

<sup>77</sup> Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construct of power politics.” *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992).



indicators. Jonathan Mercer referenced Wendt when postulating that neorealist's conception of self-help does not factor in agency and the changing nature of the international system.<sup>78</sup> While anarchy may be a central attribute of the international system, it is not a controlling attribute that fully defines states' behavior. Psychological factors may be more efficient at defining what the behavior of China is in relation to Africa. The Chinese are attempting to secure resources in order to maintain robust economic growth, however, Chinese investment in cultural, educational, and civic infrastructure sectors suggest that they are also trying to achieve a relationship of mutual respect with the Africans.

Social identity refers to the portion of a person's self-concept that comes from membership in a social group. According to Social Identity Theory, first postulated by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the late 1970's, individuals desire to achieve a "positive, social identity, ...defined as that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership."<sup>79</sup> Individuals will attempt to create an in-group that is both *positive* and *distinct*.<sup>80</sup> The creation of in-groups and out-groups continuously occurs with individuals both interacting and being affected by, membership in a particular group. The concept can be simplified into the proposition that people desire to be part of a group that is positive and they will work to insure the unique nature of that group.

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<sup>78</sup> Jonathan Mercer, "Anarchy and Identity." *International Organization* 49. No. 2 (Spring 1995):231.

<sup>79</sup> Henri Tajfel, "Social Identity Theory," in *Theories of Intergroup Relations: international social psychology perspectives*, ed. Donald Taylor (Westport: Praeger, 1978), 63.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid* 61.

The fields of sociology and psychology take very different approaches to the subject of social identity. Psychologists tend to focus on how the individual interacts with the group, while sociologists investigate the individual as a part of a group. The sociological approach has proven to be more useful for the field of Political Science (specifically the study of power relationships between states) because of its ability to analyze the individual at the level of group interaction. Although psychologists have been analyzing the behavior of humans for hundreds of years, the study of social identity has only recently arisen in academia. Traditionally, European social psychologists have been overlooked by their American counterparts.<sup>81</sup> The fact that SIT has become such a viable theory in the world of social psychology is a testament to the salience of Tajfel and Turner's research.

In the early 1990's Turner elaborated on Social Identity Theory (SIT) by postulating:

the original intergroup theory, which is an analysis of intergroup conflict and social change and focuses on individuals' need to maintain and enhance the positively valued distinctiveness of their in-groups compared to out-groups to achieve a positive social identity...and the more recent self-categorization theory...which represents a general theory of group processes based on the idea that shared social identity depersonalizes individual self-perception and action.<sup>82</sup>

Tajfel focused a great deal of his work on how humans categorize nonsocial stimuli. In order to simplify the world so that it is functional, humans will select specific information to process. Because of this, they shape their own identity through a process of selections:

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid 63.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid 62.

People actively select information from the environment and simplify the task of processing it by ignoring certain dissimilarities and giving priority to, or exaggerating, certain similarities between objects. This process orients and assists our actions. For example, if we are camping and we need a hammer with which to knock tent pegs into the ground, we might start searching for any hard object, such as a piece of wood or a stone, to serve our purpose. During our search we may ignore many dissimilarities that objects may have, such as what they are made of or their shape, and concentrate on those qualities that would make them equivalent to one another for the purpose of hammering a tent peg. That is, there are certain features that objects should have in order to fit into our category of “objects that can serve the purposes of a hammer.” By ignoring those characteristics that are irrelevant to it, we are speeding up our search enormously. This process leads to our simplifying the environment, a simplification that is essential if we are to be able to process effectively, and act upon, the potentially endless amount of information available to us.<sup>83</sup>

In the case of in-group analysis, individuals will seek out the distinctive positive attributes of individuals within their own group. This relies upon comparison with an out-group that is of equal or slightly superior value.<sup>84</sup> In SIT experiments, groups that were of completely equal value, but belonged to different nationalities, were asked to respond objectively to art created by people of different nationalities. The groups responded positively to the artist that represented their own nationality. “Though they have nothing personally to gain in the experiments, subjects again and again perceive fellow in-group members (as opposed to out-group members) as having more correct motives for their actions, as doing better or more successful work, and as meriting a proportionately larger share of goods.”<sup>85</sup> The inherent characteristics of the group directly reflect upon the status of the individual. Therefore, the individual will seek out

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid 67.

<sup>84</sup> Rupert Brown, Gabi Haeger, “Compared to What? Comparison Choice in an International Context,” *European Journal of Social Psychology* 29,(1996).

<sup>85</sup> Hymans, Jacques. “Applying Social Identity Theory to the Study of International Politics: A Caution and an Agenda.” Paper originally prepared for presentation at the International Studies Association convention, New Orleans, Louisiana, March 24-27, 2002.

and focus on those attributes that are positively distinctive. As groups become more distinct the likelihood of conflict breaking out increases.

This thesis argues that, although China's behavior can mostly be explained by their need to secure resources, many of their commitments and activities in Africa reflect a unique Chinese motive to improve its social status within the international system. They desire to create a new identity that is both positive and unique. Social Identity Theory (SIT) outlines three strategies that a state may engage in to build up its status: *Social Mobility*, *Social Competition*, and *Social Creativity*.<sup>86</sup>

### ***Social Mobility***

*Social Mobility* refers to a state's ability to move into a new group. The Chinese are unable to move into the current world dominant group led by the United States. This elitist group is impermeable because of several distinct attributes that China does not possess. When individuals desire to enter an elite group, they mimic behaviors and habits of that group.<sup>87</sup> States will engage in similar behavior by adopting the economic and political norms of dominant powers in order to be inducted into prestigious institutions.<sup>88</sup> Following the end of World War II, both Japan and Germany pursued social mobility. Japan sought to gain entrance into international institutions in order to increase its economic comparative advantage.<sup>89</sup> Germany eventually rejoined the elite Western group

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<sup>86</sup> Gries, Peter Hays. "Social Psychology and the Identity-Conflict Debate: Is a 'China Threat' Inevitable?" *European Journal of International Relations* 11, no. 2, (2005): 240.

<sup>87</sup> Henri Tajfel, "The psychological structure of intergroup relations," in *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, ed. Tajfel, (London: Academic, 1978) 27.

<sup>88</sup> Deborah Welch Larsen, Alexei Shevchenko, "Status seekers." *International Security* 34, no. 4 (Spring 2010): 71.

<sup>89</sup> Yoshiko Kojo, "Japan's policy change in multi-layered international economic relations" in *Global Governance: Germany and Japan in the International System*, ed.

because of shared history and culture. The ease with which a group is able to move up or down in the social environment reflects the openness of the liberal system:

Social Mobility is rightly seen as a positive factor of societal development because it attracts gifted and dynamic people of the lower orders to engage in responsible activity. As a rule, this stabilizes a specific historical society and makes it more adaptable to changing situations in the technologies of production and economic and social relations. At the same time, in and of themselves, social movements do not change the character of social stratification.<sup>90</sup>

China's unique cultural and historical identity has prevented it from joining the current international liberal system led by the United States. The CCP's form of governance separates China from the elite Western group because of its connection to the ancient themes of Confucianism as well as the influence of thousands of years of imperial rule. The Chinese have refused to adopt Western liberal ideology and have therefore not been accepted as equals with the United States. While the Chinese have joined the WTO and the United Nations, they frequently use their economic power and influence to prevent policies from being implemented that might directly conflict with Chinese interests.

### ***Social Competition***

The second option is *Social Competition*. Occasionally a group's borders are impermeable. A lower-tier group may attempt to join the elite group by engaging in social mobility, but may find that it is unable to do so because of the impermeable borders of the prestigious group. "Groups may also turn to competition when they

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Saori N. Katada, Hanns W. Maull, Takashi Inoguchi (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2004): 144-145.

<sup>90</sup> Shkaratan, O.I. "Expectations and Reality: Social Mobility in the Context of Equal Opportunities." *Russian Social Science Review* 53, no. 5.

regard the higher-status group's position as illegitimate or unstable."<sup>91</sup> Because this strategy calls for direct confrontation between the two groups, it is the most likely to lead to conflict.<sup>92</sup> States may engage in traditional forms of geopolitical rivalries including arms races, competition for spheres, and military engagement against states of lower power to demonstrate the more powerful states' military influence.<sup>93</sup> States that engage in social competition attempt to delegitimize a central unique attribute of the elite group that separates the two groups. During the Cold War, both the Soviet Union and the United States invested trillions of dollars to achieve recognition. The Chinese were members of the communist group that attempted to negate the influence of the democratic capitalist group led by the United States. The Western powers exited the Cold War as ideological victors causing the Chinese to reevaluate their social strategy.

### ***Social Creativity***

The third strategy, *Social Creativity* (SC), involves attempts to create new social norms that are not in direct conflict with the identity of the current hegemony. In order to accomplish this, the initiator of social creativity must establish an alternative identity that is not only positive, but also salient. SC occurs when the dominant social group's status is legitimate or stable. Therefore, if an inferior group desires to move up in the social order it cannot engage in competition with the superior group. Social creativity can be achieved by implementing two strategies: 1) reevaluating the meaning of a perceived

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<sup>91</sup> Deborah Welch Larsen, Alexei Shevchenko, "Status seekers." *International Security* 34, no. 4 (Spring 2010): 72.

<sup>92</sup> Henri Tajfel, "Social Identity Theory," in *Theories of Intergroup Relations: international social psychology perspectives*, ed. Donald Taylor (Westport: Praeger, 1978).

<sup>93</sup> Deborah Welch Larsen, Alexei Shevchenko, "Status seekers." *International Security* 34, no. 4 (Spring 2010): 73.

negative attribute or characteristic, and 2) finding a new characteristic that marks the new group as superior.<sup>94</sup> The second strategy is particularly significant for the field of international relations. To improve social standing by establishing a unique and positive identity, states will have to find specific attributes unique to their own society and culture, and market their superior qualities in the international system. This allows individual states to achieve prominence in the same system based on their mutually unique and positive attributes.

States can engage in a variety of behaviors in an effort to create a new international identity or establishing new norms. China's soft cultural diplomacy is an example of how states can evangelize one of their unique attributes to the rest of the world. In 2004 the Chinese government opened its first Confucius Institute in Seoul, South Korea. The purpose of these institutes is to spread Chinese language and culture to increase China's influence in the world. There are over 300 such institutions, with several hundred more "Confucius Classrooms" located in dozens of different countries. About one fifth of them are located in the United States.<sup>95</sup> These institutions are not intended to directly compete with American cultural institutions, but rather to make the US more aware of the cultural uniqueness of China.

This thesis will argue that China's engagement and investment into Africa is an attempt at trying to create a new international identity that is not only positive, but also distinctly different from the current hegemonic identity controlled by the US. This new identity is directed at the developing world. China has many reasons for feeling isolated

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> "Rectification of Statues," *The Economist*, Jan 20 2011, <http://www.economist.com/node/17969895>.

from the international community. The United States is the current hegemony. The influence of the US reaches almost every part of the globe in both soft and hard power. The American military's budget is by far the largest in the world, allowing for it to have a presence almost everywhere. The US's culture significantly impacts the shaping of international culture.

The Chinese language is distinctly different from English, French, or Spanish. To become fluent in Chinese requires the memorization of thousands of detailed characters. Writing Chinese characters is even harder than learning how to read, as each character has a specific 'stroke' order. This creates a significant burden preventing most foreigners from learning Chinese. English has become the language of international business, even in China. In a letter printed in the *Beijing Legal News*, one Chinese businessman showed his anger when a Chinese employee of an international company spoke to him in English. Chinese leaders have instituted policy attempting to counter the influence of English in China. In the fall of 1996, China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs called for the end of English translation at news conferences, forcing foreign media correspondents to learn Mandarin.<sup>96</sup>

Not only does the Chinese language separate China from the rest of the world, but also its selected mode of governance. One of the most significant moments in China's modern history came as the government tried to suppress the student protestors in June of 1989. Thousands of students, having organized themselves to gather at Tiananmen Square to push the government towards democratization, faced a steadfast military. The resulting massacre caused an international uproar. The United States initiated

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<sup>96</sup> Robert Ross, *New directions in the study of China's foreign policy*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 321.



international economic and political sanctions. The military crackdown led the international community to view the PRC as a reluctant government that would not follow the move away from communism as championed by Eastern European nations. Even today, one of the first images that comes to the average Westerner's mind when considering the communist government in China is that of a lone student standing in front of an advancing tank.

### ***Independent Variables***

The independent variable for this thesis will be the ingroup-outgroup dynamic between China and the United States. Identity change as postulated by Social Identity Theory will be an intervening variable. These two variables will help test the central hypothesis. The United States and China share many distinct differences. As the power of the United States decreases, and China's international influence increases, these differences will become more relevant to international security discourses. This paper will evaluate briefly differences of language, government, religion, economy, and history.

### ***Dependent Variables***

In order to ascertain whether or not China is engaging in a strategy of Social Creativity in Africa, it is necessary to measure three behavioral variables: political investment, economic investment, and social investment. China has provided billions of dollars worth of aid to Africa. This aid is not only important for its monetary value; the Chinese also add a "no strings attached" clause to their contributions. While many Western nations require that African nations prove that they are encouraging the protection of human rights before they can receive economic aid, China claims no such

requirement. This has led many Western leaders to accuse the Chinese of being irresponsible investors.

China has funded massive infrastructure projects on the African continent. While these investments are often required to insure efficient production and distribution of resources, many are being built in areas with no foreseeable immediate economic advantage.

The third and last variable deals with the enormous amount of educational investment the Chinese have made in the last ten years. The Communist government has founded 31 schools in 26 Africa countries. Thirty percent of Chinese government scholarships have gone to African students.<sup>97</sup> This is a significant number considering that African students make up only a few percent of the foreign student population in China.<sup>98</sup>

This paper will also investigate how Africans have responded to China's increasing interest and investment there. It is important to ascertain whether or not African elites have perceived China's increased investment as positive. Therefore, it is necessary to look at the policies the Chinese have for Africa as a whole as well as for individual countries. China's behavior in Africa is motivated by a need to create a unique and positive identity in the international system.

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<sup>97</sup> Lin, Jenny. "Chinese Regime Courts Africa With Confucius Institutes and Scholarships." *The Epoch Times*. 7 Oct 2012.

<sup>98</sup>"International Students in China's Universities." *US-China Today*. 19 April 2012. On the University of Southern California website: [http://uschina.usc.edu/article@usct?international\\_students\\_in\\_chinas\\_universities\\_18104.aspx](http://uschina.usc.edu/article@usct?international_students_in_chinas_universities_18104.aspx).

## **Case Studies**

I employ a case study method to test my hypothesis that China is engaging in social creativity in Africa. In order to accomplish this I have selected two cases: the whole of Africa and Zimbabwe. The first case study investigates China's behavior towards the whole of Africa. China has laid out specific policies towards the continent of Africa that reflect the Chinese desire to increase their status. It does this by frequently referencing a common history, engaging in economic dialogue with pariah states, and hailing African nations as political equals. The second case study will look at Zimbabwe, a nation that has benefited significantly from its relationship with China. The Zimbabwean government led by Robert Mugabe needs the support of the Chinese, with both sides working together to create a new positive identity.

## **The Whole of Africa**

The Chinese government has created a specific policy for conducting affairs with the African continent as a whole. This policy is generalized in the document referred to as "The White Paper" by academics and government officials. Released in 2006, this document officially labeled "China's Africa Paper" has five main parts with topics ranging from "Africa's Primary Role" to "China's Relations with African Regional Organizations." At the core of the document it is clear that the Chinese wish to meet the Africans as equals:

Enhancing solidarity and cooperation with African countries has always been an important component of China's independent foreign policy of peace. China will unswervingly carry forward the tradition of China-Africa friendship. Proceeding from the fundamental interests of both the Chinese and African peoples, China will establish and develop a new type of strategic partnership with Africa which

features political equality and mutual trust, economic win-win cooperation and cultural exchange. The general Principles and objectives of China's African policy are as follows:

-Sincerity, friendship and equality. China adheres to the Five Principles of Peaceful coexistence, respects African countries' independent choice of the road of development and supports African countries' efforts to grow stronger through unity.

-Mutual benefit, reciprocity and common prosperity. China supports African countries' endeavor for economic development and nation building, carries out cooperation in various forms in the economic and social development, and promotes common prosperity of China and Africa.

-Mutual support and close coordination. China will strengthen cooperation with Africa in the United Nations and other multilateral systems by supporting each other's just demand and reasonable propositions and continue to appeal to the international community to give more attention to questions concerning peace and development in Africa.

-Learning from each other and seeking common development. China and Africa will learn from and draw upon each other's experience in governance and development, strengthen exchanges and cooperation in education, science, culture and health. Supporting African countries' efforts to enhance capacity building, China will work together with Africa in the exploration of the road or sustainable development.<sup>99</sup>

The White Paper makes it clear that China views Africa on an equal level as itself.

By establishing a partnership that features "political equality and mutual trust, economic win-win cooperation and cultural exchange," the Chinese are attempting to create a new group with Africa that is both distinct and salient. This policy directly contrasts those instituted by Western nations. Led by the United States, the West has focused its African policies on addressing human rights, administering aid, conflict resolution and to a lesser

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<sup>99</sup> "China's Africa Policy" Jan 2006, available at:  
[http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200601/12/eng20060112\\_234894.html](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200601/12/eng20060112_234894.html)

extent, developmental programs.<sup>100</sup> When President Obama was elected in 2008, Africa had renewed hopes in the United States' ability to assist Africa's development. The previous Bush administration largely focused on the global war on terror. Obama has initiated policies that affect the developing world but not specifically Africa. Therefore, it seems while the United States focused on other regions in the world during the past decade, the Chinese engaged in bold strategic policy movements to gain the favor of Africa.

In October 2000, over 80 governmental representatives from China and 44 African countries met in Beijing at the first ministerial conference of the Forum On China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC).<sup>101</sup> Conferences were held every three years (2003: Addis Ababa, 2006: Beijing, 2009: Sharm el-Sheikh, 2012: Beijing). The overview of the FOCAC states "the purpose of the Conference was to deepen mutual understanding, expand consensus, strengthen friendship and promote cooperation through equal consultation."<sup>102</sup> The Conference has allowed the Chinese to engage the African continent via historical and cultural connections, creating unique economic dialogue and cooperation, and providing educational assistance.

### ***The Role of History***

History and its modern applications have always played a role in Chinese policymaking. Communist leaders frequently refer to it in their public statements. Even

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<sup>100</sup> Mwangi S. Kimenyi and Nelipher Moyo, "Favorite or Prodigal Son? U.S.-Africa Policy under Obama.," *Brookings Up-front* (blog), July 6, 2011 (10:53am), <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2011/07/06-africa-policy-obama-kimenyi>

<sup>101</sup> Jiang Zemin, Speech given at the 1<sup>st</sup> Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, October 2006, <http://english.sina.com/p/1/2006/1026/92709.html>

<sup>102</sup> "FOCAC ABC," Charter of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, <http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/ltjj/t933522.htm>

when Mao Zedong launched the Cultural Revolution, which attempted to destroy everything related to ancient, imperial China, he still frequently studied the works of ancient philosophers and continued to read history books about ancient Chinese warriors. Chinese leaders still frequently reference ancient history as an example of how to run a nation today. The Chinese national identity is centered on a civilization that has existed for thousands of years. Communist leaders consistently use idioms that are rooted in history to articulate modern problems and issues. Most importantly, Chinese leaders cite historical examples to give their own actions legitimacy and to increase the status of their positive identity. China has used historical examples to draw comparisons to Africa and thereby reaffirm their relationship with the continent.

One of the common historical links that the Chinese share with Africa is that they both claim a past of being colonized. Many different countries throughout hundreds of years semi-colonized China. The last imperial power before the foundation of the Republic of China in 1919 was the Qing dynasty under Manchurian rule. The Qing had taken control of the capital Beijing in 1644. Before the fall of the empire, various European powers invaded many of the most important Chinese seaports, gaining a large degree of control over the Chinese economy. The Opium Wars of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century were fought between foreign powers and China over control of the flow of opium and trade in general. Modern China was shaped by these experiences and Communist leaders cite their country's colonial past as a reason to stay out of the affairs of other nations.

Colonialism in Africa is the most classic example of colonialism in the history of the world. Large parts of Africa were colonized by several countries over the course of hundreds of years. Even today, European influence can be seen in the national languages

and architecture of the various government buildings of countries once colonized. In dialogues between Chinese and African leaders, the Chinese often refer to the common history of being victims of colonial aggression to create commonalities between Africa and China.

Chinese leaders have frequently attempted to connect China's history with that of Africa. At the Times CEO Summit on Africa in 2011 in London, Ambassador Liu Xiaoming said, "China's interaction with Africa is by no means something new. Over 600 years ago, Admiral Zheng He, the famous Chinese navigator, reached East Africa 4 times. China firmly stood with its African brothers in the 1950's in their independence struggle. China-African partnership has since stood the test of time and gone from strength to strength."<sup>103</sup>

Ambassadors frequently refer to China's history with specific African nations in an effort to establish a deeper connection and closer relationship between those two states. The content of these speeches varies from broad sweeping statements of the unity between China and Africa, to specific historical incidence that brought the two groups closer together. For Example, in an effort to create ties with South Africans, Chinese ambassador to South Africa Zhong Jianhua talked about Premier Zhou Enlai's tour of Africa in 1963:

Let me tell a true story. In 1963, the same year when St. Alban's College came into existence, the late Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai paid his first visit to the African continent. During the 3-month long visit, he touched the soil of 10 countries and advanced for the first time the principles for Chinese aid towards Africa. The centerpiece of these principles is to help African countries to win freedom and fight against the legacy of colonialism. Premier Zhou even risked his life to visit Ghana when there was a coup d'état and showed firm support of the

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<sup>103</sup> "Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Liu Xiaoming at the Times CEO Summit: Africa." Given on March 30<sup>th</sup> 2011. <http://www.focac.org/eng/jlydh/t810807.htm>.

Chinese people to the Ghanaian people in their just pursuit of freedom and liberation. Bear in mind that this was an era when most African countries had barely earned their independence and were eager in anticipation of exterior support by all means.<sup>104</sup>

The relationship between Africa and China has become strong only recently. However, the Chinese are attempting to portray the relationship as having existed at its current strength for a long time. This historical connection is intended to cement the relationship between the two as distinct and positive. China attempts to assert that no other nation has had the same relationship with Africa for the same amount of time as China has, as referenced by the last sentence of the quote from ambassador Zhong Jianhua above. Shortly following the fall of the Western colonial presence in Africa, China claims that it wanted to support the African countries to recover. The most salient historical examples of cooperation are alleged by the Chinese as having happened after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Former Premier Wen Jiabao said at the FOCAC 4<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference in November 2009:

The rapidly growing relations and cooperation between China and Africa have attracted the world's attention in recent years. I would like to point out that it was not just a few years ago that China suddenly started its presence in Africa or Africa started its support for China. As early as in the 1950s and '60s, China and Africa fought shoulder to shoulder in the historic struggle against imperialism, colonialism and hegemony and worked side by side in the hard endeavor to revive our respective national economies. The Tanzania-Zambia Railway, the Chinese medical teams and the young Chinese volunteers in Africa are vivid examples of China's selfless assistance to this continent.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Zhong, Jianhua. "Chinese Ambassador to South Africa Speaks at St. Alban's College." Given on Aug 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010. <http://www.focac.org/eng/jlydh/t721360.htm>

<sup>105</sup> Wen, Jiabao. "Speech by H.E. Wen Jiabao at the Opening Ceremony of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation." Given on Nov 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009. <http://www.focac.org/eng/lttda/dsjbzjhy/zyjh/t627391.htm>.



The Tanzania-Zambia Railway has become a connection that exists between China and Africa in overcoming a past of colonialism to establish modern lines of economic development. The Chinese not only provided the money to fund the project but have also provided the intellectual support and technical staff required for the engineering aspects of the project. Chinese media has claimed that the project was a point of unity between workers from the two countries.<sup>106</sup> After assisting the Africans in building it, the Chinese handed the management of the railroad to the Tanzanian and Zambian governments. During a celebration marking the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the railroad, Ambassador to Tanzania Liu Xinsheng said:

China and Africa have both suffered foreign invasion, oppression and enslavement in the past and, therefore, the Chinese people have deep understanding of African people's aspiration to safeguard their countries' independence and develop their economies. This is why China would mobilize the whole country in helping African people construct the Tanzania-Zambia Railway when China itself was not so well off. Such selfless aid to Africa fully showcases the Chinese people's sincere friendship with the Tanzanian and Zambian people as well as with African people in general. Nyerere and Kaunda, the then Presidents of Tanzania and Zambia, both spoke highly of Tanzania-Zambia Railway, claiming it "a great contribution to the African people" and praising it as a "Road of Freedom" and a Model of South-South Cooperation.<sup>107</sup>

In this statement, Ambassador Liu is sure to not only note the Chinese 'selfless aid' and 'sincere friendship' with the peoples of these two nations, but also to recognize the support given to the project by the presidents of these two countries.

Chinese leaders also frequently refer to the fact that many African countries assisted them in gaining entrance into the United Nations and the Security Council. This

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<sup>106</sup> Liu, Xinsheng. "Liu Xinsheng, Chinese Ambassador to Tanzania: Celebrating 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Tanzania-Zambia Railway Operation." Given on July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011. <http://www.focac.org/eng/jlydh/t842630.htm>.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

was a turning point in the development of modern China. Following the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, many Western nations, including the United States, would not recognize the ruling Communist party as having legitimate authority over Chinese affairs. Recognition was given to Taiwan. This was a huge slap in the face for the Communists who thought they were the legitimate rulers of the mainland and should be recognized as such in the world ruling institutions. Eventually, many African nations recognized the People's Republic of China as the legitimate ruling government of China. Africa has supported other Chinese behaviors and activities that have been shunned in the West. The torch relay around the world leading up to the Olympics in Beijing was boycotted by some Western governments and many NGOs. "Africa's tremendous effort in helping restore China's seat in the United Nations, the successful Beijing Olympic torch relay in Africa and Africa's generous donations to the victims of the Wenchuan earthquake in China give full expression to the friendship of the African people toward the Chinese people."<sup>108</sup>

Chinese reference to history may be useful in the fact that the populations of most African nations base their opinion of China on the perceived historical interaction that has occurred between China and Africa.<sup>109</sup> Africans with close ties to their respective governments will be more likely to have high opinions of the Chinese.<sup>110</sup> Jiang Zemin effectively articulated the historical connection that the Chinese have attempted to create with Africa:

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<sup>108</sup> Wen, Jiabao. "Speech by H.E. Wen Jiabao at the Opening Ceremony of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. Given on Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009. <http://www.focac.org/eng/ltada/dsjbzjhy/zyjh/t627391.htm>

<sup>109</sup> Mario Esteban. "A Silent Invasion? African Views on the Growing Chinese Presence in Africa: The Case of Equatorial Guinea." *African & Asian Studies* 9, no. 3 (2010): 234.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

The Chinese and African peoples once fought courageously for their national independence and freedom. They have since made strenuous efforts for peace and development. They have scored remarkable achievements and made historical progress in building up their countries. During the Second World War, the Chinese people and the African people fought an anti-Fascist war bravely on their respective fronts and contributed tremendously to the final victory of the war. Having smashed the shackles of the colonial rule that lasted for several centuries, the African people won their national liberation and independence. They have since registered gratifying progress in social and economic development. The Chinese people did away with imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, known as the “three big mountains” weighing down on the backs of the Chinese people. And founded the People’s Republic of China where the people become the masters of the country. They have finally found a development path of building socialism with Chinese characteristics and become the masters of the country. They have finally found a development path of building socialism with Chinese characteristics and have been marching along this path confidently. We have come to the conclusion after a review of the history of the past one hundred years that the Chinese people and the African people both treasure independence, love peace and long for development and that they are both important forces for world peace and common development.<sup>111</sup>

### ***Economic Dialogue and Exchange***

While China is a member of the group of nations making an Asian Miracle,<sup>112</sup> Africa is seen as an economic failure.<sup>113</sup> However, China has only recently (within the last twenty to thirty years) risen to economic relevancy. Although the Chinese have significant impact over international economic affairs, they have only achieved this after suffering several decades of economic stagnation. Following the founding of the PRC, Mao Zedong led the country in several industrial and social movements that would lead

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<sup>111</sup> Jiang Zemin. “China and Africa-Usher in the New Century Together—Speech by President Jiang Zemin of The People’s Republic of China at the Opening Ceremony of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.” Given on Oct. 11<sup>th</sup>, 2000.

<http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zflt/eng/zyzl/zyjh/t157712.htm>

<sup>112</sup> Robert W. Fogel. “The Impact of the Asian Miracle on the Theory of Economic Growth.” *The National Bureau of Economic Research*, NBER Working Paper No. 14967, <http://www.nber.org/papers/w14967>

<sup>113</sup> Elsa V. Artadi, Xavier Sala-i-Martin. “The Economic tragedy of the XXth Century: Growth in Africa.” *National Bureau of Economic Research*, NBER Working Paper No. 9865. July, 2003.

to widespread famine and starvation. Millions of people died during the decades that Mao ruled the country.

Deng Xiaoping's wide sweeping reforms are responsible for China's rapidly growing economy. While Deng had specific goals, his economic reforms remained general. This allowed them to mature naturally and adapt to different circumstances.<sup>114</sup> Because of the general applicability of his reforms, China has been able to produce economic growth that no other country has ever achieved. What the Western powers achieved over a hundred years, China has accomplished in less than forty. This dramatic turnaround has been hailed by many of the world's powers as an economic miracle, even a US Vice President has called it a "remarkable-absolutely remarkable transformation."<sup>115</sup> Chinese leaders often state that the Africans are going through the same process of development as the Chinese have gone through. Many African nations are currently experiencing devastating famine and drought. They have a high amount of resources and a large workforce. The African economy could theoretically follow the same path of development as China's. However, Chinese leaders decline to imply that Africa follow the exact policies that China adopted. The desire to not directly influence the creation of an economic development policy stems from the Chinese policy of non-interference. Although the Chinese do not say Africa should copy the Chinese model, they have attempted to point out similarities between both sides' economic

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<sup>114</sup> Naughton, Barry. "Deng Xiaoping: The Economist." *The China Quarterly* Sep., no. 135 (1993): 491-504.

<sup>115</sup> Joe Biden. "Remarks by Vice President Joe Biden to the Opening Session of the U.S.-China Strategic & Economic Dialogue." Given on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2011/05/09/us-china-strategic-and-economic-dialogue#transcript>

circumstances, and expressed willingness to offer any assistance Africa would ask for. Specifically, China's message is that developing countries should look out for themselves and not rely on the developed nations. By staying out of internal affairs, or at least claiming to remain neutral, the Chinese support the principle that developing nations should not become dependent upon the developed world. Minister Shi Guangsheng of China's Ministry of Commerce at the first FOCAC Ministerial Conference encouraged the global south countries to work towards economic development together and create policies that fit each state's national environment:

Developing countries should build up a sense of self-protection, learn to make correct assessment of situation; they should prevent and convert risks, revive and develop national economy and safeguard economic security by formulating economic policies which conform to their national situations. Facing the new century, China is willing to work with African countries to expand common views, deepen cooperation and speed up development so as to continuously sharpen the competitive edges and have the initiative in competition.<sup>116</sup>

Minister Shi places emphasis on the developing countries to create policies themselves that fit unique national conditions. He does not suggest that other nations adopt the Chinese model. Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade recently articulated the same opinion from the African side:

When it comes to China and Africa, the EU and the US want to have their cake and eat it. In an echo of its past colonial rivalries, European leaders and donor organizations have expressed concerns that African nations are throwing their doors open too wide to Chinese investors and to exploitation by their Asian partners. But if opening up more free markets is a goal that the West prizes – and extols as a path to progress – why is Europe fretting about China's growing economic role in Africa?<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Shi Guangshen, "To Intensify China-Africa Cooperation for a Brilliant Future," Speech given at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Sep. 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009. <http://www.focac.org/eng/ltada/dyjbzjhy/SP12009/t606809.htm>

<sup>117</sup> <http://africanbusinessmagazine.com/features/asia/how-the-sino-african-relationship-is-influencing-the-rest-of-the-world>

While many of the leaders in China do not claim that Chinese economic policy should be a model for all nations, many African leaders claim allegiance to China's superior economic model. China's government controlled economy has been hailed by some and criticized by others. Compared with the United States, which have gone trillion of dollars into debt, the Chinese are viewed as a responsible model of economic success. Ethiopian Ambassador to China, Seyoum Mesfin said "China proved to be everything for Africa- 'a friend, donor, financier, builder, investor, and trade partner on a win-win strategic partnership.' But, above all, China is an inspiration as well as an alternative model for modernization and exclusive socio-economic transformation."<sup>118</sup> China is portrayed as an all-weather friend that will stand with Africa as both regions develop side by side. Not only is the economic assistance unconditional, but China also endeavors to portray the African nations as equal. This reaffirms the Chinese policy of non-interference; the concept that the Chinese expect mutual respect of nations' sovereign ability to govern themselves.

### ***Equal Diplomatic Respect***

While China's policy of non-inference has received a lot of criticism from Western press and government leaders, it is largely appreciated in Africa. In contrast with China's policies toward Africa, the United States attaches conditions to aid and imposes international sanctions upon specific African governments. The West's

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<sup>118</sup> Speech given by Ethiopia ambassador to China Seyoum Mesfin at a ceremony to launch the Africa Communication Research Center of the Communication University of China. [http://www.ethiopiaemb.org.cn/pdf/Communication\\_University\\_of\\_China.pdf](http://www.ethiopiaemb.org.cn/pdf/Communication_University_of_China.pdf)

conditionality-based aid approach has largely been a failure.<sup>119</sup> The aid packages coming out of the United States originate from developmental agencies closely tied to the US State Department. On the other hand, Chinese aid to Africa comes from the Ministry of Commerce and the China Export-Import Bank. Unlike the developmental agencies in the United States, the Chinese Ministry of Commerce and the China Import-Export Bank have the central mandate to strengthen the economy, rather than further political and social objectives.<sup>120</sup> Madison Condon spelled out the Chinese position on human rights: “China has refused to use its economic or diplomatic power as leverage against governments that commit even the most extreme human rights abuses or corrupt practices. It justifies its ‘clean hands’ stance by pointing to its longstanding policy on noninterference.”<sup>121</sup>

The Chinese, by strictly following their policy of non-interference, will conduct business with any nation, regardless of that country’s human rights record. Unlike their Western counterparts, the Chinese do not set anti-corruption requirements on the aid they give.<sup>122</sup> If they were to condemn administrations of other nations it would only show hypocrisy on their part, as China constantly struggles with rampant corruption. Instead of focusing on political reform and change, the PRC engages in dialogue with pariah states focused on economic development. China’s leaders believe that economic and

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<sup>119</sup> Madison Condon. “China in Africa: What the Policy of Nonintervention Adds to the Western Development Dilemma.” *The Felthcher Journal of Human Security*, 27 (2012):6.

<sup>120</sup> Deborah Brautigam, *The Dragon’s Gift*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 15.

<sup>121</sup> Madison Condon. “China in Africa: What the Policy of Nonintervention Adds to the Western Development Dilemma.” *The Fletcher Journal of Human Security* 27, (2012): 6.

<sup>122</sup> Ian Taylor, “China’s oil diplomacy in Africa,” *International Affairs* 82 (2006), 937.

social rights should take precedence over civic and political rights.<sup>123</sup> This stems from the Chinese desire to keep other nations and international organizations out of China's internal affairs. International outcry frequently protests the treatment of minorities in Xinjiang and Tibet. Although Western leaders assail China's censorship of media and their inability to uphold other basic human rights, the relationship between China and Africa has received increasing recognition from international organizations in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Compared with the Western model of economic development, China's focus on no-strings-attached investment has arguably been proven more successful.<sup>124</sup> Several other Asian nations have also taken notice of the improvements the Chinese have helped Africa achieve. The current president of the United Nations General Assembly Ban Ki-Moon, a Korean, has hailed the cooperation between China and Africa as an example of an economic developmental plan that can be mutually beneficial. While commenting on the success of the FOCAC, Ban said:

Even before I became secretary-general, as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, I have been very closely following how China has been cooperating with many developing countries, particularly African countries, this is a great example of South-South cooperation. Despite this world (is facing) economic difficulties, most of the African countries have been making steady economic development. They need more trained human resources, they need education, and they need political stability. Therefore, by providing and transferring technology and expert-know-how, they can fully utilize their potential -- their human potential, natural resources, this is what we expect China, and Chinese government through this African-China forum. China can transfer technology, China can transfer your experience of economic development -- this is exactly what I expect through (the) China-Africa Cooperation Forum. Many African leaders can learn from Chinese experience. In spite of all this, research by

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<sup>123</sup> Fareed Zakaria, "Culture is Destiny: A Conversation with Lee Kyuan Yew," *Foreign Affairs*, 73 (1994): 109-126.

<sup>124</sup> Dambisa Moya, *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009).



the Swedish Institute of International Affairs shows that Japan is rapidly changing its attitude towards the Western donor club and is increasingly following the Chinese footsteps. Under the auspices of JICA, Japan is currently planning to establish two special industrial zones in Zambia in partnership with Malaysia – a well-known strategy employed by Beijing to ease its economic transaction with Africa.<sup>125</sup>

According to SIT, social creativity requires that the group attempting to create a new identity receive recognition of the new identity's positiveness from the elite group. Secretary Ban represents the leading international body. While China's involvement is highly controversial and its economic advantage to Africa is questionable, China has nonetheless attempted to create a common identity with the continent as a whole. By creating a perception of a common history and developmental path, along with solidifying cultural and political ties, China and Africa establish a new positive identity among nations from the Global South.

## **Zimbabwe**

The reigning ruler of the Southern African country of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, is frequently listed in Western media as one of the world's worst dictators.<sup>126</sup> He is on the list primarily because he is known throughout the world as the leader who led the once successful economy of Zimbabwe, formerly known as Rhodesia, into ruin and its people to become one of the world's most oppressed societies. The United States and many other major powers consider Zimbabwe a pariah state. The decline of Zimbabwe

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<sup>125</sup> Gu Zhenqiu, "Interview: China-Africa cooperation forum is 'good example' of South-South cooperation: UN chief," *Xinhua*, July 13, 2012.

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-07/13/c\\_131712137.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-07/13/c_131712137.htm)

<sup>126</sup> "The World's Worst Dictators," *Parade*, 2011,

<http://www.parade.com/dictators/index.html>, and "The World's 10 Worst Dictators," *Forbes*, Aug 22, 2011, Tim Ferguson, "The World's Ten Worst Dictators." *Forbes*, Aug. 22, 2011. <http://www.forbes.com/pictures/mim45eeke/president-of-zimbabwe-robert-mugabe/>

has altered the whole of Africa. In order to remain in power, Mugabe has been forced to seek out countries that will support his regime. The Chinese and their policy of non-interference are perfect partners.

One of the main reasons Zimbabwe has been excluded from the international system is that they have been accused of numerous human rights abuses. While the government is technically a constitutional republic, the US Department of State has stated:

The government, dominated by President Robert Mugabe and his Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) since independence, was not freely elected and was authoritarian. The last four national elections--the presidential election in 2002, the parliamentary elections in March 2005, the harmonized presidential and parliamentary elections in March 2008, and the presidential run-off in June--were not free and fair.<sup>127</sup>

This report, published in 2008, claims that 193 people representing the opposing party had been murdered. None of these killings resulted in trials against alleged perpetrators. The current government led by Robert Mugabe has been accused of engaging in bribery, violence, and coercion to remain in power. The state sanctions abductions, violence, and excessive force in order to achieve and maintain political dominance.

In 2003, President Bush issued executive order 13288 against specific people in the Zimbabwe government who were impeding the growth and development of democratic institutions.<sup>128</sup> On November 23, 2005, President Bush issued new orders that expanded “the list of sanction targets to include immediate family members of any designated individual of the Zimbabwe sanctions, as well as those persons providing

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<sup>127</sup> The United States Department of State’s 2008 Human Rights Report: Zimbabwe, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/af/119032.htm>

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

assistance to any sanctions target.”<sup>129</sup> These sanctions sought out individuals that were engaging in direct conflict with the interests of the United States. Any US citizen that assisted or dealt with individuals on this sanctions list would face judicial action, including up to ten years in prison.

The European Union has also placed a wide range of sanctions on the Zimbabwean government. These sanctions include the freezing of government and business accounts and prohibiting the travel to the EU by specific Zimbabwean officials.<sup>130</sup> Zimbabwean government leaders condemn the sanctions, stating that they are unfounded. In February 2012, the EU eased travel restrictions on 21 unnamed individuals in the Zimbabwe government. Instead of expressing gratitude or recognition, ZANU-PF (Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front, the controlling party of the Zimbabwean government) spokesman Rugare Gumbo said “our position is that the partial lifting of the ban on either individuals or companies is outrageous and preposterous, we don’t accept any conditional lifting of these illegal sanctions. This is mischievous and it does not answer the question of why they were put in the first place.”<sup>131</sup> Members of the ZANU-PF see the sanctions as being an illegitimate interference in their country’s sovereignty. Sanctions by the US and the EU constitute an international rejection of the Zimbabwean government.

In 2002 the European Union instituted an arms embargo against Zimbabwe for not supporting democratic reform and for using brutal and suppressive tactics of

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Adrian Croft, “EU eases Zimbabwe sanctions, gives pledge on diamond firm,” *Reuters*, Feb 18, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/18/us-zimbabwe-eu-idUSBRE91H0JB20130218>.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

influencing elections.<sup>132</sup> Robert Mugabe has used the military to insure his continuous rule. In 2008, Prime Minister Gordon Brown of Great Britain urged the United Nations to place stronger sanctions and a more comprehensive arms embargo on Robert Mugabe's government. "What is happening in Zimbabwe - failing to announce an election result - trying to rig an election result-is completely unacceptable," Brown said. "I call on the whole world to express its view that this is completely unacceptable to the whole of the international community."<sup>133</sup> His view reflects a general feeling of contempt among other world leaders.

In 2008, the United States attempted to pass new sanctions against Mugabe's government through the United Nations. While the US was sure they had the nine votes of the Security Council locked in, Russia and China vetoed the motion.<sup>134</sup> China has been a political ally of Robert Mugabe's government since before the ZANU-PF party overtook the Zimbabwe government in 1980. Originating during the Cold War in the late 1970's, this support stemmed from the fact that the Soviet Union backed ZANU's opposition, the Zimbabwe African People's Union.<sup>135</sup> "Seeking to emerge from the Soviet shadow and establish itself as a credible international player, especially with regard to Third World states, China positioned itself as the leading patron of the global South by countering Soviet moves and supporting groups that opposed Soviet-sponsored

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<sup>132</sup> "Zimbabwe an issue for UN, not just Africa: US Secretary of State," *Economic Times*, Jun 30, 2008, [http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2008-06-30/news/27721036\\_1\\_zimbabwe-robert-mugabe-arms-embargo](http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2008-06-30/news/27721036_1_zimbabwe-robert-mugabe-arms-embargo).

<sup>133</sup> "UK 'would back Zimbabwe embargo.'" *BBC*, Apr. 13, 2008. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/politics/7362912.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/7362912.stm)

<sup>134</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/12/world/africa/12zimbabwe.html?pagewanted=all>

<sup>135</sup> Engel 1994: 51-52. The Foreign policy of Zimbabwe.

liberation movements.”<sup>136</sup> During this time, the Chinese and the Soviets were engaged in a geopolitical rivalry, with both sides attempting to be the emerging face of communism. China’s liberation movements throughout Africa during the Cold War were influenced by its desire to offset the impact the Soviets were having on the continent.

### ***China’s Current Involvement in Zimbabwe***

China has frequently sided with Zimbabwe against international sanctions aimed at the distribution of arms and the exports of oil, diamonds, and other natural resources. This is particularly important for Robert Mugabe who is constantly looking for partners to sustain the legitimacy of his ruling government. “The Chinese have always been our good friends, having walked with us through the thick and thin of our liberation struggle right up to our fight against the Western-imposed illegal economic sanctions of today,” Mugabe said on Sept 14, 2012. “We greatly value their support and will strive to nurture our mutually beneficial relationship with them.”<sup>137</sup> Not only have the Chinese helped sustain the Mugabe administration by vetoing the UN resolution against Zimbabwe, they also have drafted wide-ranging trade agreements to help its economy stay afloat.

### ***Education and Culture***

Both Chinese and Zimbabwean leaders have hailed the success of educational exchange between the two nations. Referring to the FOCAC, Robert Mugabe has stated that China, through the forum, has been directly beneficial to individual Zimbabwean citizens. “FOCAC has been able to improve the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans by contributing to the educational sector through the establishment of two friendship schools

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<sup>136</sup> Zimbabwe Look east, Jeremy Youde.

<sup>137</sup> “Zimbabwean president hails mutually beneficial relationship with China,” *Xinhua*, Sept. 15, 2012, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-09/15/c\\_123718771.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-09/15/c_123718771.htm).

and the establishment of the Agricultural Demonstration Center at Gwebi College.”<sup>138</sup> Currently over ninety students from Zimbabwe are studying in China.<sup>139</sup> The largest investment in Zimbabwe’s educational sector is not the number of scholarships provided for average students studying China, but rather the technical assistance and investment into educational facilities provided for different Zimbabwean governmental institutions. In the summer of 2012, the Chinese People’s Liberation Army(PLA) provided a \$98 million loan to help build a military college.

The facility was built by the Anhui Foreign and Economic Construction Company of China. The Chinese government donated information communication technological equipment and provided busses and an ambulance for the college. The PLA is also going to donate furniture.<sup>140</sup> This investment has been praised as strengthening the bonds between Zimbabwe and China. “Defense Minister Emmerson Mnangagwa said the establishment of the NDC (National Defense College) would buttress Zimbabwe’s prominence in international politics,”<sup>141</sup> thus improving the status of Zimbabwe and China in the international system.

Communist Party leaders in China have also reached out to their Zimbabwean counterparts by offering training in governmental administration as well as in various technical fields. Although China is still perceived as being a member of the Global

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<sup>138</sup> “Zimbabwe gov’t hails China-Africa co-op,” *Xinhua*, Nov. 17, 2010, <http://www.focac.org/eng/zt/10th/t769873.htm>.

<sup>139</sup> Lawson Mabhena, “China investment in Zimbabwe to increase,” (Guangdong, China) Sept. 8, 2012, [http://www.sundaynews.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=30877:china-investment-in-zimbabwe-to-increase&catid=39:opinion-a-analysis&Itemid=132#.USEowK5IHj0](http://www.sundaynews.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=30877:china-investment-in-zimbabwe-to-increase&catid=39:opinion-a-analysis&Itemid=132#.USEowK5IHj0)

<sup>140</sup> Takunda Maodza, “Zimbabwe: President Officially Opens National Defense College,” *The Herald*, Sept. 15, 2012, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201209150070.html?page=3>.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid*

South, Zimbabwean leaders view China as having developed farther and therefore capable of providing sound financial and economic advice about how a developing country can rise out of poverty. China has invited over two thousand Zimbabwean officials and technical staff to China to receive instruction and participate in seminars focused on a variety of topics including economy, administration, health education, and environmental protection.<sup>142</sup> The purpose of this exchange is twofold. First, these seminars are meant to assist Zimbabwean officials to strengthen their ability to stimulate development in their own countries. Secondly, they consolidate ties between the two nations and their peoples. In August 2012, China and Zimbabwe engaged in a series of meetings and visits in an effort to increase mutual awareness and appreciation. A delegation of top ZANU-PF and provincial chairpersons desired to “learn a lot from the success that their CPC counterparts have built in their country.”<sup>143</sup> Local Zimbabwe law enforcement has also received instruction from Chinese experts. Both countries signed a plan to engage in cooperation over law enforcement and judiciary sectors, including plans to instruct and train Zimbabweans in prison management.<sup>144</sup>

Agriculture is one of the key centers of Zimbabwean economy that China has attempted to help substantially. The Demonstration Center of China Agricultural Technology built in Harare in summer 2010 has been hailed by the chairman of the

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<sup>142</sup> “China working towards a better Zimbabwe.” *The Herald*, (Harare, Zimbabwe) Sept. 11, 2012. [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=52047#.USvnVKBnBY8](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52047#.USvnVKBnBY8)

<sup>143</sup> “Zanu PF Chairpersons off to China for re-education” *The Zimbabwe Mail*, Aug. 28, 2012. <http://www.thezimbabwemail.com/zimbabwe/13081-zanu-pf-chairpersons-off-to-china-for-re-education.html>.

<sup>144</sup> Michael Wines, “From Shoes to Aircraft to Investment, Zimbabwe Pursues a Made-in-China Future.” *The New York Times*, (New York, NY) July 24, 2005.

Zimbabwe Soya Bean Taskforce as an opportunity to “work closely with universities, colleges and research institutes to promote agricultural technology and ensure that farmers are better equipped for their jobs.” Also, it will “target farmer leaders and agricultural extension officers who will further impart knowledge to other farmers.”<sup>145</sup>

Along with the construction and maintenance of the center itself, China has sent 25 senior experts of agricultural products to help instruct Zimbabwean agricultural officials on how to improve output efficiency.<sup>146</sup> Farmer Toendepi Mugari said that the government could “ensure that the center takes agricultural extension officers for retraining so that they can impart the new knowledge to the farmers they interact with during the course of their duties.”<sup>147</sup>

Independent Chinese organizations have also been investing in the educational and cultural sectors of Zimbabwean society. In December of 2010, the China Women Development Foundation worked with Matthew Rusike’s Children’s Home to bring Zimbabwean Shona stone art to sell in China. The profits were used to fund educational improvements in Zimbabwe.<sup>148</sup> The two nations have used a variety of cultural mediums to strengthen their inter-state relationship. On April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010, a photo exhibit opened in Harare marking the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between

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<sup>145</sup> Tichaona Chifamba, “Feature: Zimbabweans place high hope on Chinese-funded agricultural center.” *Xinhua*, July 19, 2010, (Harare).

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/indepth/2010-07/19/c\\_13405005.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/indepth/2010-07/19/c_13405005.htm)

<sup>146</sup> “China working towards a better Zimbabwe.” *The Herald*, (Harare, Zimbabwe) Sept. 11, 2012. [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=52047#.USvnVKBnBY8](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52047#.USvnVKBnBY8)

<sup>147</sup> Tichaona Chifamba, “Feature: Zimbabweans place high hope on Chinese-funded agricultural center.” *Xinhua*, July 19, 2010, (Harare).

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/indepth/2010-07/19/c\\_13405005.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/indepth/2010-07/19/c_13405005.htm).

<sup>148</sup> “Zimbabwean Stone Carving Exhibition in Beijing Raises Fund for African Children.” *Sina Philanthropy*, Dec. 27, 2010, <http://www.focac.org/eng/zfgx/rwj1/t781701.htm>.



Zimbabwe and China. Zimbabwean minister of Media, Information and Publicity, Webster Shamu said that “the exhibition will help our people to review the road our two countries have traveled over the past 30 years, as well as capturing the success story of Zimbabwe’s traditional friendship with China.”<sup>149</sup> The exhibit included photos of economic and trade cooperation, political exchanges, important political events, and cultural interactions. It was lauded across Zimbabwe as representational of the growing level of cooperation between these two nations.<sup>150</sup> Although the cultures of Zimbabwe and China differ significantly, the two countries are attempting to celebrate those delineations while at the same time establishing unique cultural connections in an effort to create a new identity.

### ***Look East Policy***

In 2003, Robert Mugabe launched a policy to counteract a loss of Western investment and to increase economic growth in a country that had been hit hard by sanctions. His goal was to gain from Asia’s growing economic power. At that time, China, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, and India were all experiencing rapid economic growth and expansion. Mugabe believed that he could not only learn from these different countries but also that he would receive an increasing flow of investment into his own country. Initially the focus of the “Look East” policy was centered on Malaysia.<sup>151</sup> However, Zimbabwe has now almost completely shifted that focus to China.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Mu Xuequan, “Zimbabwe says happy over ties with China.” *Xinhua*, Apr. 16, 2010, (Harare), [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-04/16/c\\_13253517.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2010-04/16/c_13253517.htm).

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Jeremy Youde, “Why look east? Zimbabwean Foreign Policy and China.” *Africa Today* 53, no. 3 (Spring, 2007):2.

<sup>152</sup> “Zimbabwe’s ‘Look East’ Disappoints.” *Forbes.com*, Dec. 28, 2007, <http://www.forbes.com/2007/12/27/zimbabwe-harare-mugabe-cx-1228oxford.html>

Although there has never been any formal document released concerning the policy, it was a carefully calculated decision and continues to have a significant impact on Zimbabwean international relations to this day.<sup>153</sup>

Robert Mugabe was eager to engage in tighter relations with Asian nations for several reasons. The Western countries had for the most part severed diplomatic connections with Zimbabwe. The crippling international economic sanctions placed on Zimbabwe have made China, who has also been the ‘victim’ of international sanctions, a perfect partner. “Zimbabwe had already gone through difficulties with the Western world, for example the imposition of economic sanctions, and China became a natural partner,” Desire Sibanda, secretary of Zimbabwe’s department of Economic Planning and Investment Promotion said in July 2012.<sup>154</sup> Also, Mugabe hailed the Asian countries as sharing similar histories with Zimbabwe. Jeremy Youde writes of this connection: “*The Herald*, a state-owned newspaper, asserts that the policy is a direct result of the British government’s failure to support Zimbabwe’s land-redistribution program as promised in the 1979 Lancaster House agreement.”<sup>155</sup> He continues by claiming that Asian states “sympathize with Zimbabwe’s plight because they share a history of exploitation and misallocation of resources at the hands of British, French, and American interests.”<sup>156</sup>

This line of thought, playing the victim of colonization, allows for both Zimbabwe and

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<sup>153</sup> Jeremy Youde, “Why look east? Zimbabwean Foreign Policy and China.” *Africa Today* 53, no. 3 (Spring, 2007):10.

<sup>154</sup> Tichaona Chifamba, “Top Zimbabwean official defends China’s partnership with Africa.” *Xinhua*, July 19, 2012 (Harare), [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/indepth/2012-07/19/c\\_131726057.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/indepth/2012-07/19/c_131726057.htm).

<sup>155</sup> Jeremy Youde, “Why look east? Zimbabwean Foreign Policy and China.” *Africa Today* 53, no. 3 (Spring, 2007):10.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*

China to claim Western sanctions as illegitimate. No one has proselytized this idea more than Robert Mugabe:

It is very important for us in Zimbabwe to develop the Look East Policy because that is where people who think like us are, same history of colonialism as ourselves, people who have started developing their economics, are more advanced than Africa, and relations with them will be reciprocal and rewarding.<sup>157</sup>

The Look East policy brought China influence in almost every sector of Zimbabwean economy, society, and politics. Robert Mugabe sees China as a compassionate partner that is aware of the specific developmental needs of the global south:

The West is not the only source of assistance, nor is it the only area of market. Time has now come not just for Zimbabwe, but for the Third World to realize that the sun rises in the east. Let's look to the East where the sun rises. That's where the majority of the world are, that's where we also get the greatest support because the East is the Third World. It sees things the same way we see them, thinks as we do, dreams as ourselves, so they are our greatest friends.<sup>158</sup>

In this statement he makes clear that the future of both Asia and Zimbabwe lie in cooperation with each other. Not only do China and Zimbabwe share the same history, but they are also on an identical trajectory of development.

As a result of the perceived connection between Zimbabwe and East Asia, Mugabe has allowed the Chinese to invest billions of dollars in different aspects of the economy. One of the most salient memories in the minds of Zimbabwean leadership of China's assistance for Zimbabwe was the Chinese investment in the 60,000-seat national stadium in 1987. Starting in 2007, the Chinese began investing \$10 million to restore the

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Agence France-Presse, "Mugabe vows to Defy Western Sanctions," *The Herald*, Aug. 15, 2005.

stadium to its original state.<sup>159</sup> China has awarded millions of dollars of concessional loans to Zimbabwe to develop its infrastructure and telecommunication sectors. In 2012, a loan of \$45 million dollars was awarded to 2G and 3G base stations across the country in order to increase cell phone reception, bringing coverage to new cities at the same time.<sup>160</sup>

Perhaps the most prevalent impact that the Chinese have had in Zimbabwe is economic engagement. In 2011, the two countries signed trade agreements worth over \$585 million. Zimbabwean Vice President Joice Mujuru said “We acknowledge the efforts by the China Development Bank to engage government in supporting Zimbabwe’s most critical areas of energy, mining, transport, agriculture, manufacturing and tourism. These areas would assist in the growth of our economy.”<sup>161</sup> Chinese Vice-Premier Wang Qishan responded by assuring the Zimbabwean leadership of continued support and cooperation. “China will continue to support and grow your economy. China will continue to impress on countries that have imposed sanctions to lift them at an early date,” Wang said.<sup>162</sup> The economic connection between these two nations has proven to be invaluable to the stability of Mugabe’s regime.

While many African nations have questioned whether or not Chinese immigration is damaging to local economies, Zimbabwe recently announced that it has created a new

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<sup>159</sup>“China working towards a better Zimbabwe.” *The Herald Online*, Sept. 11, 2012 (Harare), [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=52047:china-working-towards-a-better-zimbabwe&catid=41:business&Itemid=133#.US5ppq5IHj0](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52047:china-working-towards-a-better-zimbabwe&catid=41:business&Itemid=133#.US5ppq5IHj0)

<sup>160</sup>Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> “Zimbabwe, China sign \$585-million trade agreements,” *Mail & Guardian, Africa’s Best Read*, Mar. 21, 2011, <http://mg.co.za/article/2011-03-21-zimbabwe-china-sign-585million-trade-agreements>.

<sup>162</sup> *ibid.*

system to increase the number of visas awarded to Chinese citizens. The new computer system allows Chinese applicants to bypass visiting the Zimbabwean embassy in Beijing, and get their visas online. “We will be introducing a new visa management system where Chinese visa applicants can apply on-line. While applicants have had to travel to Beijing where the Embassy of the Republic of Zimbabwe is housed to apply for visas, this will be a thing of the past as this will now be done on-line thereby reducing inconveniences for the potential traveler,” said the Principle Director of the Department of Immigration, Mr. Clemence Masango.<sup>163</sup> The Department expects to increase the number of Chinese visas from 30,000 to 50,000 in two years. The visiting Chinese bring not only tourism money, but also investment money. Director Masango continued by saying “China is known as Zimbabwe’s all weather friend in Asia and these bilateral relations which date back to the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe need to be nurtured for mutual benefit of the two countries and tourism can be the gateway to achieve this.”<sup>164</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The billions of dollars that China has invested in Africa, alongside the extensive cultural and political investment, are all part of China’s attempt to create a new, distinct, and salient identity that contrasts from the elite Western identity embodied most prominently by the United States. This paper has looked at specific policies and statements by elite officials to ascertain whether or not China has engaged in social creativity. Both China and Africa are outside of the elite international group. They are

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<sup>163</sup>Isdore Guvamombe, “Zim to set up new visa system.” *The Herald Online* Nov. 22, 2012 (Harare), [http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=57855:zim-to-set-up-new-visa-system&catid=41:business&Itemid=133#.US5wMq5IHj1](http://www.herald.co.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=57855:zim-to-set-up-new-visa-system&catid=41:business&Itemid=133#.US5wMq5IHj1)

<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

both developing regions that share a history of colonialism. In order for China to increase their status in the world system, they have attempted to create a new identity with Africa.

China uses historical-example rhetoric to create social connections with different African states. The Forum of China-Africa Cooperation was created to insure that the friendship between Africa and China would continue to grow. The PRC has forgiven billions of dollars of African loans. The Chinese engage in educational exchanges, investing in the building of universities and technological research institutions. Although China makes no claim that its model of economic development should be copied, many African leaders, as well as other elite international leaders, assert that the Africans should follow the Chinese model of development. China frequently argues that it is a developing nation. This allows China to claim the role of leader among the world's developing nations. While Western development policies for Africa have been widely viewed as a failure, China's policies are hailed as being highly beneficial for Africa.

Theories of neo-liberalism are inadequate to explain China's behavior in Africa. International institutions hold little power in shaping Chinese policy in Africa. China has consistently disregarded UN sanctions as well as Western-established norms when engaging Africa. It does this in an effort to secure the resources necessary for insuring domestic economic development. China therefore attempts to secure strategic geopolitical allies on the African continent. However, the Chinese have also engaged in behavior not congruent with realism theories of geopolitical allies. SIT assists in deepening the understanding of why China works so hard to secure a unique identity, beyond a simple partnership based on the exchange of natural resources, with Africa.

Although SIT has theoretical shortcomings when applied to the field of international relationships, it can be extremely useful for understanding China's behavior in the international system. As the global political context becomes more complex, and as China becomes more powerful, it will be necessary to look outside standard theories of international relations. The rise of China presents political scientists with a host of new questions. Social Identity Theory can serve as a framework for understanding complex IR problems in the future.

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