



Portuguese Journal of International Affairs

SPRING/SUMMER 2012

- 52 TWO GIANTS ON THE SAME SOIL: A CLOSER LOOK AT AFRO-ASIAN RELATIONS VIA COMPARING CHINESE AND JAPANESE INVOLVEMENT IN TANZANIA
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Portuguese Journal of International Affairs

Portuguese Institute of International Relations and Security (IPRIS)

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Europress

ISSN

1647-4074

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Chapters in books: Manuel Ennes Ferreira, "China in Angola: Just a Passion for Oil?", in Christopher Alden, Daniel Large and Ricardo Soares de Oliveira (eds.), *China Returns to Africa: A Rising Power and a Continent Embrace* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), pp. 295-317.

Articles in journals: Paulo Gorjão, "Japan's Foreign Policy and East Timor, 1975-2002" (*Asian Survey*, Vol. 42, No. 5, September/October 2002), pp. 754-771.

Articles in newspapers: Paulo Gorjão, "UN needs coherent strategy to exit from East Timor" (*Jakarta Post*, 19 May 2004), p. 25.

5. Diagrams and tables should be avoided, or kept to a minimum.

Two Giants on the Same Soil: A Closer Look at Afro-Asian Relations via Comparing Chinese and Japanese Involvement in Tanzania

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“The connection between Asia and Africa has always been close. [...] So for a thousand years Asia and Africa strove together, renewing their spirits and mutually fertilizing their cultures from time to time [...].”¹

Africa is a priority for China. It is not the continent as such that matters, but rather individual states in the evolution of a vibrant Global South, bringing closer together emerging economies and developing states with a stronger voice heard in the transnational-global community. China's Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (FOCAC) offers partnership for states as well as regional blocs of states, underlining that Africa's development, together with mutual benefits for all the parties involved are at the heart of the matter.

It is not true that China merely extracts African raw materials; there is much more to the 'Chinese package', including partnerships with African firms. It is also not valid to say that African states are only interested in 'easy money' from the Asian economic giant – Africa wants more from any partner. To better understand, Chinese relations with African nations an important philosophical-ideological framework needs to get created: the principles and heritage of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) – often called the 'Bandung Spirit' – which still matters today, at least in the way political actors behave and communicate – though in real ideological terms it may have been emptied. Also, the idea of self-reliance is re-visited. An 'African Renaissance' is at hand, while in China the rise of an alternative development model comes in the rubric of Comprehensive National Power (CNP, or *zonghe guoli*).

China's growing presence across the African continent is motivated by more factors, among which securing the supply of its own resource-hunger economy is key, but Chinese multi-faceted partnership undoubtedly offers more. For instance, Chinese investments have promoted African industries, special tariff treatments have allowed African goods to enter Chinese markets, and “fuelled the revival of a global interest in Africa

because of high commodity prices".² Also, China offers a kind of alternative vision for development – the Beijing consensus – popular in parts of Africa, and it may be a model for the future. On the basis of peaceful co-existence and the heritage of Bandung, China uses a different language and tone, backed by a 'charm offensive'³ to achieve peaceful development, attended by China's own peaceful rise. Cultural diplomacy has become a decisive tool to convince the world that China's economic rise should not be seen as a threat.⁴ In addition to Chinese FDI in all sectors, construction and infrastructure development projects, culture-related programs make Chinese involvement more persuasive. These include scholarships, training initiatives, sister city collaboration, volunteering, and numerous other schemes of an ever-increasing people-to-people contact.⁵

Governance issues perhaps account for the greatest number of misconceptions about China in Africa. It is important to note that China has been implementing its policies along the lines of non-interference, as opposed to the sometimes harsh conditions and former Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) instituted by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. It is recognized that the Chinese do not seem to make governance worse.⁶ Second, although China does not tie aid programs to democratic requirements or market liberalization policies,⁷ economic engagement usually does come with conditions, some of it even governance-related.⁸ Third, the people-centered discourse is not only in Beijing's official rhetoric, for the Chinese it represents a task to better understand the local needs of Africans so that both parties feel on the winning side, and therefore more joint projects can be encouraged. The result of this approach of China can be seen in diversified FDI, as well as in the growing number of instances with local participation. This article confirms this statement with examples from East Africa, based on individual field research in Tanzania and Kenya in 2006, 2009, and 2011.

The article also aims to give an overview of Chinese-Tanzanian relations with an eye toward current developments and future plans. The argument is centered around the new dynamics of South-South co-operation, which offers opportunities on both ends of the bilateral tunnel, and offers even more connections in a regional context. China is undoubtedly a stronger player, but it can offer an alternative way of prioritizing development ideas. Tanzania – a founding member of the East African Community – demonstrates a number of important considerations about how long run co-operation with China can be planned and managed – in most of cases – well enough.

Discussing Sino-African relations in the case of Tanzania draws another context, namely the collaborative framework set by Japan since the 1960s. Japan's presence in line with its own Africa policy has always been a framework of reference for many actors – both emerging and advanced. It is particularly interesting to look at Japan's refined Africa policy today in light of a stable and gradually increasing Chinese involvement in the last decade or so. In particular, how Japan can stay a significant partner for the East African country is closely connected to its leading role in terms of development programs, which include high levels of official development assistance (ODA). In this respect, Africa is important for Japan.

Japan's foreign aid policy fosters local ownership and partnership, peace building and human security, and it is a policy that is based on a non-military dimension.⁹ When we look at the recent changes in methods of development, we have to consider various factors, such as human aspects of development, equity, sustainability, and human rights or freedom.¹⁰ Human development has become a core concept of our transnational world. As the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) emphasizes: "The human development approach is as relevant as ever to making sense of our changing world and finding ways to improve people's well-being. Human development is an evolving idea, not a fixed, static set of precepts. And as the world changes, analytical tools and concepts will also continue to evolve. Yet the core insight at the centre of the human development approach remains constant and as valid today as it was two decades ago: Development is ultimately best measured by its impact on individual lives".¹¹

During the 1980s, a number of factors, such as austerity measures coming along with the structural adjustment regime mentioned above, or the social pressures arising from the international donor institutions, the African continent was losing ground, and Japan tried to step into and help.¹² Japan's strategy for Africa has been closely tied to the first ever large-scale conference series in the Asia Pacific, "Tokyo International Conference on African Development" (TICAD), first held in 1993. TICAD has grown into a key repository of thought on African development. And while most donors, curbed their support over time because of "aid fatigue", Japan has kept it up. As Ichiro Tambo of JICA summarized: "For Africa, Japan was a star, a dream!"¹³ Japan's original approach to co-operating with Africa set the scene for China.

The Issue of Cultural Experience in African Development

It is Africa that needs to make its own decisions, and not other entities that should drive Africa's path forward. If Africa does not set its house in order first, there is no way it will achieve anything.¹⁴ After a troubling, fragmented history the onset of the African Renaissance, which supports Africa's new "self-definition",¹⁵ is something that hints at African development driven by Africans themselves.¹⁶

Drawing upon Seifudein Adem's 'cultural modernist' approach to African development, we can accept that the African Renaissance could be realized if the effort is geared toward linking the new to the old, and re-modeling past or existing institutions and modernizing them, rather than merely transforming or dismantling the old.¹⁷ In this respect, Adem argues, Japan's experience can be useful to reassuring Africans that their cultures should be the basis for their own development models.¹⁸ It is good that Africa has a preparedness to learn from others,¹⁹ but more faith and confidence are needed to really use its cultural resources. Culture is a true asset that is best used for any development if self-confidence, therefore hope are fostered across society at large. To slightly rephrase Adem's statement: new ideas should rather be systematically linked to the cultural foundations of the society in order to realize their potential.²⁰

What can be experienced today on the field while making interviews with different people describes a similar approach on behalf of a number of actors with projects in Africa. In particular, the Asian attitude toward Africans resembled this way of thinking. For China, there should not be any doubt that national interests prevail when constructing any strategy about African partnerships. However, Chinese foreign policy and China's presence in Africa are guided by the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence (*Pancha Sila*) agreed upon by Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai and Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in June 1954.²¹ These principles do not only guide China's relations with other states.²² It is rather noticeable that when Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan forcefully argued in 1999 to the UN General Assembly that these principles are by no means out-of-date,²³ and offer a decisive base for building partnerships.

Moral Economy, Ownership-Based Development and Aid

In our era of globalization Africa is part of the transnational system via its states and non-state actors, as well as its groupings of local and continent-wide organizations. Today, every remote corner of Africa is a part of the global economy to such an extent that even peasants in the most remote villages of Africa drink Coca-Cola.²⁴ In such an interwoven and interconnected global society we can still witness African states struggling²⁵ to manage themselves. The question needs to be asked again and again: can development be self directed, and can the involvement of foreign stakeholders reach the level of the individuals and their local communities so that there will be sufficient "society-wide repercussions?"²⁶ What kind of development is most feasible in the African context? How much do – in case of our current investigation – Japan and China understand what really matters, and what are their strategies for making that happen?

Once "development" was synonymous with "economic development".²⁷ Connected with it, development economics was born at a time when government involvement in fostering economic growth, especially industrialization, was very rare, and when rates of capital accumulation were typically quite low.²⁸ According to Amartya Sen's approach, the core issue here is the individual who can possess and use 'entitlements' and 'capabilities', as this can prove helpful in economic development.²⁹ When economic development projects failed to increase "material production" the outcome shifted to the idea of "social development", which today is refined in the form of the already exposed "human development".³⁰ Japan is one of the lead advocates of this approach, and its activities and projects across Africa are evident. Japan focuses its strategic approach on human security and 'inclusive development', and as part of this it promotes 'African ownership', which can be a significant step towards sustainable development on the continent.

The core idea of 'ownership' was rooted in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) study entitled "Shaping the 21st Century: the Contribution of Development Cooperation", which recommended a new approach to development and aid. It emphasized partnership and local 'owner' involvement in project management.

Along with structural changes to bolster coordination and collaboration among stakeholders, this is seen as a new form of partnership for development.³¹

This philosophy resonates with Goran Hyden's thesis on the "economy of affection", which rests on communal action rather than collective action, so that persons band together not as autonomous individuals trying to achieve a common goal but as interdependent actors anxious to satisfy each other's sense of fairness.³² This underlines the importance of local needs and actions, and draws attention to informal institutions, which are evident daily life in Africa. Stemming from Hyden's original idea, the theory of 'moral economy' leads us beyond African peasants and their behavioral characteristics and tells us more about the norms and sentiments regarding developmental responsibilities.³³ This serves as an important ground for long-term African development, which any donor or partner needs to take into consideration.

Nicolas van de Walle stresses the criteria that are needed for the promotion of ownership: donors should wait for the governments to make explicit requests for assistance, not anticipate government needs.³⁴ Governments have to possess access to informal channels and institutions, and they need partnership from civil society and local communities in order to integrate those needs with development programs. Now and in the future, Wangari Maathai's words should ring strong: "Africa needs to move beyond aid and the culture of dependency it has helped create in Africa's leaders and her people. While I applaud the motives of the international community in providing technical and financial assistance to developing countries, including those in Africa, I do question how much good aid does versus how much damage it may do to the capacity of the African peoples to engineer their own solutions to their many problems".³⁵

How can Japanese aid contribute to African development beyond the obvious gains to ODA policy, which could buoy its own aspirations for a leadership role in international institutions? How does the Chinese aid system assist African development on the most local level possible? How can donors contribute to a different image of Africa? Examples from Tanzania will shed light on these issues.³⁶

Japanese-African Trade and Aid Relations in the Past: Japan in Tanzania

In the first decades of the Meiji period (1868-1880s),³⁷ Japan established a consular report system. Industrialization started, and as a result, for example, trading houses and manufacturers were looking for export markets. The government established a diplomatic and trading network, spreading out from North America and Europe after World War I, which began to see the Middle East and African countries as buyers of Japanese goods. Prior to industrialization, major exports included tea and silk. After World War I cotton goods were put on the list, too, in particular to East-African countries, but mainly to Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika. After 1951 the Japanese government promoted the export of light industrials, especially artificial textiles. As heavy industry was gradually developed, this changed to automobiles.³⁸

After WWII, Japan's position in world diplomacy was substantially influenced by the US, which seems to be the basis for understanding Japanese position towards Africa. During the Cold War, the US exerted strong pressure on Japan to increase aid to Africa.

Another important consideration for Japan was the process of industrialization after World War II: Japan's reliance on raw materials is crucial to understanding its foreign relations. One major motive for Japan to engage with Africa is its economic vulnerability in the face of scarce natural resources.³⁹ Especially after the first oil shock in 1973 domestic economic interests laid emphasis on securing markets for Japan's goods and establishing and maintaining friendly relations with countries endowed with energy and natural resources.⁴⁰ Also, the historic wounds Japan had caused to a number of Southeast Asian nations obviously presented a heavy burden for Japan, so building up friendships across Africa was logical.

Since the launch of TICAD Japan has indeed been a major actor in Africa, and as globalization has elevated China's role in Africa – directly challenging Japan's unique status⁴¹ – Japan has had to refine its Africa policy. Since the 1970s, when successive Japanese foreign ministers visited many countries in Africa for the first time, Tanzania and Kenya have appeared critical. Japan embarked on aid to Africa primarily motivated by the long-term economic security considerations, then it gradually came to see African countries as possible Japanese supporters in the international political scene, particularly at UN meetings.⁴² In 2000, among 46 African countries Tanzania was by far the biggest recipient of Japan's ODA (also the 8th largest recipient of Japanese aid).⁴³ This included large volumes of loans, grants and technical co-operation, and focuses on agriculture, infrastructure development and governance. Japan has been extensively supporting the improvement of infrastructure, for example, in the construction of paved roads or assisting power transmission and distribution. An interview with Hungarian Honorary Consul Obedie Solomon Kimaro in Dar es Salaam,⁴⁴ who as owner of one of Tanzania's largest, East Africa's fastest growing and most prestigious construction companies (Mac Contractors Ltd.), underlined that in the construction sector Japan has been extremely active and has been financing numerous projects, many of which so far have offered the opportunity for his company to get involved in sub-contracting ventures. He also supported the view that Japan respects the Tanzanian ownership in every sphere, and has been trying to adapt its aid so that it could be more suitable to Tanzania's specific situation.⁴⁵ However, it is also obvious that Japan safeguards its own interests in the sense that it remains a lead partner for Tanzania in terms of development. To be able to successfully keep its position, Japan needs to refine its policy toward Tanzania. Although aid and ODA remain central themes for Japan in dealing with Tanzania, the emphasis on partnerships rather than one-sided aid has become crucial in bilateral and regional cooperation. Japan's refined and deep engagement with Africa generally, and East Africa in particular, is partly explained by American disengagement, which after the 1990s came along with China's more prominent role in promoting development in Africa.⁴⁶

China in Tanzania

China established diplomatic relations with Tanganyika in 1961, and with Zanzibar in December 1963. (Tanganyika and Zanzibar merged in 1964.) After the obligatory 'friendship' agreement that typified China's relationships with African countries in that era⁴⁷ was signed in 1965, in the 1970s Tanzania had accelerated co-operation with China; it probably had more developed ties with China than any other non-African state.⁴⁸ The base for such a pace centered on the ideology of non-alignment, strongly advocated by Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere. Tanzania's chose path – the *ujamaa* way of development – and the country's explicit support for the liberation of Southern Africa exacerbated the growing hostility between Tanzania and the West and led to the need to secure new sources of external assistance.⁴⁹ In this respect, China immediately and fervently offered partnership, and provided Tanzania with much need aid.

The first phase involved Tanzania obtaining aid from the Asian 'brother'. The customary scheme included the construction of factories, a football stadium, and first and foremost a railway of 1,860 kilometers connecting Zambia with the Indian Ocean. After the Aswan and Volta Dams, the third most expensive aid project of China happened to be the TAZARA (Tanzania-Zambia Railway), finished in 1976 after eight years of construction. TAZARA was a Pan-African project, intended to serve as a symbol of Third World solidarity and resistance to the forces of colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism.⁵⁰

Although the TAZARA project has been hampered by poor management, this railway has enormous development potential as it provides a route for regional transport. This railway project certainly opened up numerous other channels for investment, trade and other types of projects in Tanzania and elsewhere in the East African Community: China has increased its presence in all sectors in this part of the continent.⁵¹ Such developments can catalyze other resource-based commercial engagement with Africa, resulting in trade and investment ties in cotton and sisal plantation agriculture,⁵² for example. China was able to 'win' Tanzania⁵³ through a series of aid projects, and today maintains a firm comprehensive framework of relations with the East African country. In recent years, the Chinese started supporting investment in local business, minerals, agriculture and irrigation, and also have helped Tanzania with the development of an Export Processing Zone.⁵⁴ China has also helped develop the health and education sectors, together with recent involvement in responses to climate change. The Tanzanian government realized the opportunity in long-term co-operation with the Asian giant, and encouraged the education sector – especially higher education institutions – to launch programs, special courses in business skills and entrepreneurial culture. The University of Dar es Salaam has been successfully managing such programs for more than five years.

China is undoubtedly a major partner in Tanzania's education sector. Through the FOCAC Action Plans, Beijing has offered over 600 Tanzanian students the chance to study in China since relations were established between the two countries, with more than 70 new Tanzanian students studying in China in 2008. Many of the Tanzanian graduates from Chi-

nese universities are fluent in Mandarin Chinese and are currently working with Chinese businesses in Tanzania, notably construction companies. These graduates are valuable assets to the Tanzanian economy. Not only can they help bridge the gap in language and culture, but their experiences can assist the government in devising strategies to achieve more effective Sino-Tanzanian engagement. It can also be noteworthy that Mandarin is currently taught at the University of Dar es Salaam.

Tanzania faces a serious shortage of teachers. Approximately 52,000 additional teachers are needed in the country, and officials hope that Beijing could help to address this. Other possible areas of assistance could be the provision of teaching materials and establishing teacher resource centers. According to a senior Chinese official, a framework agreement established under the Beijing Action Plan is already in place for China to deploy volunteers to Tanzania, especially in the area of education.

In 2008, Tanzania had 12 public universities and university colleges or institutes; 21 private universities and university colleges; and 11 non-university higher education institutions (including technical colleges, but excluding non-university institutions in Zanzibar), in total 44 tertiary education institutions. In 2006-2007 total student enrollment in private and public universities and university colleges and institutes was around 50,000.⁵⁵ While quality lags, increased government expenditure is promising – in 1999 it spent only 2.2% of the GDP on education; in 2008 it was 6.8%.⁵⁶ China seems to be a reliable partner in this venture, too.

Triangular Relationships

In a discussion with Japanese experts in December 2010 one of the interviewees pointed out that Japanese “look at Africa as a continent of hope and opportunities”.⁵⁷ In this sense Japan’s perception is rather positive. However, as far as the future of Japanese-African relations are concerned, TICAD and its continuation should be settled in a proper and sustainable way. It is unavoidable that Japan will not be able to double its ODA to Africa again (as it did at the fourth TICAD in 2008). TICAD has been a convincing instrument of Japanese foreign policy, and it has influenced how other Asia countries – China, South Korea, Singapore or India – tried to foster co-operation with African states. There has been an academic debate over the issue of triangular co-operation. One of the examples Japan often refers to is its project focused on the integrated regional development model in Nacala, Mozambique, advocated by the Japanese government and its aid agency, JICA. However, criticism has been aired about the existing Japan-Africa-third party triangle relationship and its utility to establish a better and deepened bilateral relationship between Japan and African countries.⁵⁸ Also, Japan has formulated its Africa policy by responding to events, pressure and activities of third parties outside Africa itself.⁵⁹

In the case of China the TAZARA provided the Chinese with the experience of triangular co-operation, as European and American experts were also participated in the Chinese Railway Expert Coordination Team (CRET). This was perhaps the first instance of the ‘tri-lateral co-operation’ among Western, Chinese and African counterparts.⁶⁰

Potential triangular thinking among China, Japan and African countries will be valuable over the coming years, as building a peaceful Africa is in everyone's interest. One of the central issues for all parties has become the question of maintenance. It is also in everyone's interest that projects are well monitored, and developments are maintained. The peaceful environment is required also for maintaining Japan's relation with China, as well as to keep up with the sustainability of the East Asian economy.⁶¹

As for Africa, triangular co-operation can be a new method for development in the 21st century. Emerging economies often shape the new transnational global order. Besides China and India, which have become Africa's most important economic partners, other emerging economies, such as Brazil, South Korea, Malaysia and Vietnam, together with Turkey and Russia have become increasingly active in Africa, a clear indication that North-South relations are being superseded by the South-East and emerging Africa-Gulf-Asia triangular relations, with profound implications for Africa's development.⁶²

Conclusions

Chinese aid to Africa has undergone a historical process of transformation, as new contents and meaning have constantly been injected into the Chinese approach to South-South co-operation.⁶³ A strategic approach to development is badly needed from the African side: African actors, both on an individual, regional and continent-wide basis must develop and re-develop their own China, Japan, etc. strategies.

If we compare how reactive Japan is to China, in a number of cases it is evident that Japan takes a more cautious position, as an observer rather she reacts slower. China, as opposed to this, has a different dynamic and pace, which has become part of its pragmatic foreign policy. In other cases, China follows the footsteps of Japan, but always adds a peculiar Chinese pragmatic touch to its offers. On China's behalf, the message is crystal clear: increased Sino-African cooperation will inevitably result in a win-win for both sides. The power of this argument is enhanced by a subtle discourse that positions China not only as an appealing alternative to Western partnership, but also as a better choice for Africa.⁶⁴

Criticism mainly from the West about China's African involvement is extensive, ranging from arms trade to the support of autocratic regimes with significant records in human rights abuse, to the low quality of many Chinese goods. The picture, however, is more complex as there are numerous benefits to co-operating with China. Chinese involvement in Africa's development is good for Africa as it involves debt cancellation, foreign direct investment, infrastructure and private sector development. It depends on Africa how much it can win from such co-operation, which does consider important to involve the local levels and to foster African ownership. This philosophy is in line with Africa's traditional roots and needs, therefore, for the long run can offer the ground for substantial development. Tanzania can serve as a good example of a win-win, and even win-win-win scenarios, and can show how an African state should use Asian competition for partner-

ship. Competition can be good and bring profit in this respect. Any African state can be in such a situation, and how successful it will be depends on how self-confident that entity is. As has been discussed, culture is an asset, and as the late Wangari Maathai argued: The challenge for many parts of Africa that were stripped of culture is to rediscover their cultural heritages, and use them to both reconnect with the past and help direct them in their political, spiritual, economic, and social development.⁶⁵ The task for Africans is to reclaim their cultures, the opportunity for Africans is to redefine their identities, and by doing so, a new type of African development is possible – most probably with the enhanced involvement of their Asian partners.

(Endnotes)

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