

# CHINA IN AFRICA

## Affirming Dependency Theory

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### Introduction:

#### CHINA'S BURGEONING ROLE IN AFRICA

Although Sino-African relations can be traced back to the establishment of China's diplomatic ties with Egypt in 1956, then increasing amidst the ideologically-fueled support of various liberation movements throughout the 1960's and 70's, an appropriate beginning for the modern incarnation of Sino-African relations began in 1993: China's booming economy pushed it beyond its ability to remain energy self-sufficient.<sup>1</sup> A need for energy supply diversification drove China to look toward Africa for petroleum and other raw materials. Trade has since exploded, with trade value climbing from a mere US\$10 million in the 1980's to an astounding US\$100 billion in 2008. China now accounts for more than 60% of oil exports from Sudan and 35% from Angola, with Angola now China's largest foreign source of oil.<sup>2</sup> However, China's craving for raw materials in Africa stretches beyond oil. China has shown interest in cobalt from the Congo, copper from Zambia, timber from Mozambique, and iron ore and manganese from South Africa. In agriculture, Benin, Burkina Faso, and Mali supply 20% of China's cotton imports; the Cote d'Ivoire serves as an important source of cocoa; Kenya supplies a substantial amount of tea and coffee beans; and Namibia supplies large shipments of fish and fishmeal.<sup>3</sup>

However, China's investment in Africa extends beyond energy and raw materials. In fact, China has made conscious efforts to convince African leaders and observers that it is not engaging in a "new colonialism," characteristic of Western powers' past behavior of raw material extraction with little or no regard for African development.<sup>4</sup> The diplomatic vehicle for Sino-African relations, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), established in 2000, has instead pushed the message that cooperation will yield considerable benefit for all countries involved. Beijing's 2006 publication, *China's African Policy*, characterizes China as the world's "largest developing country," desiring "sincerity, equality and mutual benefit, solidarity and common development" as the guiding principles of Sino-African relations.<sup>5</sup> Armed with the rhetoric of "third world solidarity," China has promised African states access to Chinese markets, a dramatic increase in infrastructure investment, and intensified agricultural cooperation. China's policy

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statement also includes provisions promising cooperation in tourism, education, science, health, security and the environment.

This rhetoric is certainly not without some substance. Chinese investments in infrastructure throughout the continent are vast, building “roads in Ethiopia, railway lines in Angola, stadiums in Mali, Djibouti and the Central African Republic and government offices in Mozambique and Uganda.”<sup>6</sup> State owned companies have worked in joint-ventures to lease agricultural land in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Tanzania, and build a thermal station in Zimbabwe to counter energy shortages. At the most recent FOCAC summit held in Beijing in 2006 and attended by 48 African delegations, China promised an ambitious program including doubling its 2006 support to Africa by 2009, providing US\$3 billion of preferential loans and US\$2 billion worth of export credits, and establishing a China-Africa Development Fund of US\$5 billion to facilitate investment in Africa by Chinese firms.<sup>7</sup> This approach, along with the failed legacy of Western assistance, has succeeded in wooing many African leaders. “There is something refreshing in China's approach,” noted a Nigerian diplomat, “They don't attach all those conditionalities that accompany Western loans.”<sup>8</sup>

In his most recent visit to Africa in mid-February of 2009, Chinese President Hu Jintao visited Mali, Senegal, Tanzania, and Mauritius, calling it a “fruitful journey of friendship and cooperation.” The President attended ceremonies celebrating the success of several Chinese-aided projects: the Mali Malaria Prevention and Treatment Center, the National Stadium of Tanzania, the Chinese Cultural Center in Mauritius, and a newly-built bridge in Bamako. Despite the international financial crisis, President Hu assured African states that China would not falter on fulfilling the goals laid out at the 2006 summit, and that China will continue to invest in mutually-beneficial projects aimed at improving overall living standards and states' self-development capacities.<sup>9</sup>

#### FORCES DRIVING SINO-AFRICAN RELATIONS AND CONTROVERSY

The ability to create a “win-win” relationship seems simple enough. China can gather raw materials to fuel its development, access export markets to sustain development, attain political alliances to isolate Taiwan, and gain the trust of developing countries in its ascendancy to superpower status. Having the largest single block of votes in both the United Nations (UN) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), Africa plays an important role in facilitating China's rise to superpower status, particularly in downplaying China's human rights abuses. As Li Anshan of Peking University explains: “Over the past decade, humans rights proposals against China were defeated 11 times at the United Nations [...] without African nations' support, China could not have defeated those proposals.”<sup>10</sup> Reciprocally, China has become a “de facto champion of African interests in the WTO,” exemplified by its support for a permanent seat for South Africa and Nigeria on the UN Security Council.<sup>11</sup> In return, African states can improve lacking infrastructure, access a large market for agricultural exports, raise their global status, and strengthen their ability to grow.

Facilitating the joining of mutual interests, Vancouver-based senior energy and environmental consultant Jianjun Tu identifies three “legitimacies” shaping China's Africa policy.<sup>12</sup> First, China holds an *historical legitimacy*, in which Africans view China sympathetically because of its historic ties to liberation movements. Second, an *ideological legitimacy* shaped by China's heritage as a Third World nation, crafting a relationship of “mutual respect” rather than paternalistic hierarchy. Lastly, a *political legitimacy* arising from China's policy of “mutual respect” and non-interference. Arguably, these three legitimacies have made China a more attractive ally than Western states, whose colonial legacies many African countries are still toiling in.

However, to stop discussion of Sino-African relations on a note of mutual benefit would be intellectually dishonest, for the growth of Chinese investment certainly has not been free of controversy. While some scholars and policy makers argue that Sino-African relations have been the natural result of pursuing common interests, others have questioned the sincerity of China's rhetoric of benevolent solidarity, arguing that China is single-mindedly pursuing an imperialistic drive for the extraction of raw materials – namely oil – without consideration for much else. Critics argue that China's policy of “non-interference” consolidates the rule of non-democratic regimes, as in Sudan and Zimbabwe, in turn obstructing any real economic progress.<sup>13</sup> Beyond its notorious military support for Sudan and Zimbabwe, China also supplied weapons to both Ethiopia and Eritrea during those countries' civil wars.<sup>14</sup> “With all of the money China throws at Africa for infrastructure and general economic aid,” argues journalist and political commentator James Kirchick, “its more modest backing for African dictators is the least noticed aspect of its involvement [...] yet it is also the most unsettling.”

Critics also point to African backlashes, such as in Zambia, where anti-Chinese sentiment exploded after the death of 51 miners due to a poor working environment.<sup>15</sup> Channeling this anger, opposition leader Michael Sata centered his 2006 presidential campaign on the Chinese, charging them with destroying the country. Although his bid was ultimately unsuccessful (though voter fraud is suspected), his rhetoric demonstrates the stewing hatred of the Chinese many Africans feel. In fact, President Hu abandoned a planned visit to the “copper belt” five months later while touring the continent in fear that workers would revolt again.<sup>16</sup> Although often pushed into the background, events like this are not entirely uncommon. In 2004, shopkeepers in Dakar, Senegal protested against Chinese merchants whose prices they could not compete with, going so far as setting shops on fire.

Additionally, China has been criticized from environmental groups like the international Friends of the Earth for its “massive ecological footprint [...] consuming 46% of Gabon's forest exports, 60% of timber exported from Equatorial Guinea and 11% of timber exports from Cameroon.”<sup>17</sup> China's state-run oil company, Sinopec, has been charged with mass pollution and prospecting for oil in Gabon's protected national parks.<sup>18</sup> “Chinese companies are quickly generating the same kinds of environmental damage and community opposition that Western companies have spawned around the world,” argues Michelle Chan-Fishel, program manager of Friends of the

Earth.<sup>19</sup>

Others have pointed to the effect of cheap Chinese imports on African communities, flooding local markets and destroying livelihoods. In many instances, China's penetration of African markets has caused the price of raw commodities to rise while depressing the price of manufactured goods – causing mines and oilfields to prosper over factories and assembly lines.<sup>20</sup> The end of the WTO's Multi-Fibre Agreement in 2005 ended all advantages held by African producers and permitted cheap foreign goods to undercut African markets. Chinese textile exports have crippled industries in Lesotho, Swaziland, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Zambia, and Morocco – shrinking Africa's textile capacity by 37%.<sup>21</sup> How can African states possibly develop, critics ask, when China is working to prevent democratic reform and transparency, devastating the environment, and hindering industrialization through cheap imports? This imbalance led South African President Thabo Mbeki to warn that “China cannot only just come here and dig for raw materials and then go away and sell us manufactured goods.”<sup>22</sup>

Initially driven by ideology, Sino-African relations have since become much more complex and multidimensional. With a record of both generous infrastructure projects and unquestioning support for odious regimes like that in Sudan, accused of executing genocide by the United States, the complexity of China's motives and strategy cannot be understated. The seeming duality of China's strategy is appropriately characterized by the deputy chairman of the South African Institute of International Affairs, Moeletsi Mbeki, when he stated, “China is both a tantalising opportunity and a terrifying threat.”<sup>23</sup> Whether or not one description is more accurate than the other depends upon one's interests. However, one thing is certain - China's communist-driven foreign policy has long expired and a new era of rational self-interest is rising. As a diplomat from Benin expressed: “We're a socialist-Marxist state, and we've had 30 years of ties with the People's Republic of China, and yet they bypassed us to go to Gabon. This tells me that China has no friends but rather only interests.”<sup>24</sup>

#### TOWARD A CLEAR, THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING

As China's investment in Africa has grown to an immense degree, a thorough examination of investment patterns and their effect on African peoples and economies has become increasingly important. In order to test whether China's Africa policy truly is supporting African states' “self-development capacity,” or rather reinforcing traditional inequalities and underdevelopment, the following examines case studies of three of China's largest African trading partners, Angola, South Africa, and Sudan. As the most advanced and influential theory of underdevelopment, each case study will be viewed through the lens of dependency theory. After considering what dependency theory brings in helping to create a theoretical understanding of China's Africa policy, the conclusions will be used to discuss possible solutions and the long-term challenges ahead.

## ADOPTING THE FRAMEWORK OF DEPENDENCY THEORY

It would be a mistake to assume that one definitive interpretation of dependency theory exists. Since its formulation in the late 1950's, vigorous and thorough debate has prompted serious disagreements about what dependent relationships look like and what the fundamental cause of these relationships is. Debate surrounding political and economic solutions regarding dependent relationships has been the most divisive. While some theorists have posited an ability of periphery states to advance within the confines of the capitalist system, other theorists argue for a complete rupture with core-capitalist states and adoption of a state-planned socialist model by the periphery. However, this active debate among theorists by no means renders its application useless. There exist core similarities that most dependency theorists share, which provide a stable foundation for theoretical application. Theotonio Dos Santos, a Brazilian economist and researcher, offers a clear definition that gets to the core of the theory:

[Dependency is] [...] an historical condition which shapes a certain structure of the world economy such that it favors some countries to the detriment of others and limits the development possibilities of the subordinate economies [...] a situation in which the economy of a certain group of countries is conditioned by the development and expansion of another economy, to which their own is subjected.<sup>25</sup>

Building off this fundamental understanding, Vincent Ferraro, professor of international politics at Mount Holyoke College, presents five “central propositions” of dependency theory:

1. *Underdevelopment* does not equal *undevelopment*. That is, whereas the latter refers to resources not being used, the former denotes a use of resources to benefit the dominant state.
2. Underdevelopment is not a condition in which poor states are “developing” and “catching up” to richer countries, as neoliberalism might posit. Rather, their poverty is the result of being “coercively integrated” into being only producers of raw materials and/or suppliers of cheap labor, with a complete disregard to the diversification and development of the subordinate state.
3. Given these conditions, dependency theory suggests that preferable alternatives to current resource allocation and use exist.
4. Dependency theory, like other international relations theories, is based upon the notion that a “national interest” is identifiable. Unlike realism, a state's “national interest” is not determined in terms of power, but rather derived from a class perspective and concern for the poor.
5. The exploitative nature of dependent relationships does not necessitate violent enforcement. Rather, these relationships can often be described as “voluntary,” in which the interests of an elitist minority within the subordinate state coincide with the interests of the dominant state. However, this does not necessarily mean a “betrayal” of a state's poor by the elite class. Although this is often the case, examples throughout the 20<sup>th</sup>

century show a genuine belief of the ruling minority in the neoliberal economic doctrine that the prosperity of one sector of society would inevitably benefit all.

While modernization theorists argue that underdevelopment is mainly due to poor stewardship and lack of capital, dependency theory condemns rich nations for actively encouraging underdevelopment, a practice established under colonialism. That is to say, underdevelopment is not caused by cumbersome “traditional” society; instead, underdevelopment is the result of integration into the capitalist world economy that generally takes a feudal character in the periphery. Moreover, the enforcement of dependent relationships has since evolved beyond brute force; exploitation is now institutionalized through organizations like the WTO and International Monetary Fund (IMF), along with the implementation of “free trade” contracts and deregulation policies.

Although specifics vary according to political and economic context, a general narrative of the coercive integration of dependent states into global capitalism follows. As lesser developed countries are subordinated under a core state, traditional local industries are destroyed and replaced by foreign multinational corporations. The introduction of these corporations transforms the economy into being increasingly export-oriented and one-dimensional. The dependency of economies on exporting raw materials leaves them to the vagaries of the capitalist cycle. The domination by foreign corporations leads to the surplus value of raw materials and other goods to fall into the hands of rich nations. The dependent country is in many cases left with literally 'just a hole in the ground,' aside from the trade revenue concentrated in the hands of a small ruling elite.

Above all, the key component to a dependent relationship is a complete disregard for necessary regulations and practices to promote real, lasting development in the subordinate country (like economic diversity). Instead, dominant states practice to reinforce and intensify social and economic inequality, forcing the state into chronic underdevelopment.

## Case studies:

### ANGOLA

China's economic ties with Angola began with the support of Angolan liberation movements in the 1960's. Following the triumph of the USSR-backed Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) in 1975, which secured Angolan independence from Portugal, China initially refused to establish diplomatic relations with Angola. However, relations were eventually established in 1983 and the first trade agreement was signed in 1984. The establishment of a Joint Economic and Trade Commission followed in 1988. Throughout the 1990's, defense cooperation formed the largest segment of trade.<sup>26</sup>

Since the resolution of its 27 year-long civil war in April 2002, Angola has become one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. The annual growth rate has sustained an average of 15%

since 2000, and despite the international economic crisis, growth is expected to reach an impressive 11.8% in 2009.<sup>27</sup> Angola's enormous growth is mostly driven by the oil industry, which accounted for 95% of exports and 83% of GDP in 2008.<sup>28</sup> Eager to meet its growing demand for oil, China has been quick to capitalize on Angola's oil-driven growth. Although the United States remains Angola's largest importer of oil, China's role as a key partner continues to grow. In return for oil access, China has played a major role as a creditor in rebuilding Angola's war-torn infrastructure – a role that the IMF has largely abandoned. In 2008, bilateral trade had jumped to US\$25.3 billion, making Angola China's largest African trading partner.<sup>29</sup>

Like many of China's African relationships, the primary focus has been on the extraction of raw materials – in this case, oil. China is the second largest importer of Angolan oil, which accounts for 18% of China's total oil imports.<sup>30</sup> Equally important, Chinese exports to Angola have grown exponentially through recent years. In early 2007, China surpassed Brazil and South Africa to become Angola's second-largest trading partner (behind Portugal). Steel and iron bars, batteries, cement, and automobiles are the principal imports. The penetration of Chinese products is expected to rise significantly in the coming years, and China will likely match the level of Portuguese imports.<sup>31</sup>

In part due to increased economic stability, Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI) has dramatically increased. Although oil exploration and extraction account for the majority of FDI, other sectors have received investment. This investment has been aided by the encouragement of private-sector development by the Angolan government, including an investment law requiring equal treatment for foreign and Angolan firms and a system of tax incentives to promote growth in targeted industries.<sup>32</sup> Although Chinese FDI to Angola remains small relative to larger players like Portugal and South Africa, new agreements are expected to rise exponentially. From 2006-2007, the number of visa requests to Angola by Chinese businessmen increased by 30%. According to the Chinese ambassador to Angola, Zhang Bolun, more than 50,000 workers are currently in Angola along with 50 major Chinese companies and near 100 smaller firms.<sup>33</sup>

In March 2004, the Export-Import Bank of China promised a US\$2 billion oil-backed loan to fund reconstruction throughout the war-torn country. The first phase of the loan, US\$837 million covering the period December 2004 to March 2007, has funded 31 contracts on public works, energy, water, health, education, and communication. The 50 projects funded by the first phase now value US\$1.1 billion. The largest project led by a Chinese firm was the restoration of 371 kilometers of road between Luanda and Uíge valued at US\$211 million. Other projects include the improvement of hospitals, schools, irrigation systems, and the acquisition of new agricultural machinery.<sup>34</sup>

The second phase will oversee 17 contracts for over 52 projects, including the continuation of some from the first phase. A total of US\$267 million will be used to obtain 36 large fishing trawlers, 10 coast guard vessels, and an additional 3,000 boats, which are estimated to create direct employment for 20,000 people and indirect employment for 100,000. The second phase

also includes the use of US\$276 million for constructing optical transmission networks, Internet protocol, very small aperture terminals, and intelligent networks across 13 provinces.<sup>35</sup>

In September 2007, another oil-backed loan of US\$2 billion was signed. This new line of credit will fund an additional 100 projects authorized by the Council of Ministers in 2007. Angolan finance minister, Jose Pedro de Morais, stated that the government would continue to prioritize health and education by building and renovating schools and hospitals throughout the country, along with investments in energy and water.<sup>36</sup>

Relations between the two countries remain strong, even as recession plagues the international economy. Commenting on the current economic crisis, President Eduardo dos Santos stated, “The crises comes to reveal once more the enormous dependence of our economy on oil and diamonds is not convenient and that there is need for diversifying.”<sup>37</sup> On a visit to Angola in January 2009, Chinese Minister of Commerce, Chen Deming, stated that the Chinese government would help Angola to revive agriculture and diversify its economy.<sup>38</sup> This was followed in March 2009 with President of the China Development bank, Chen Yuan, meeting with President Eduardo dos Santos to discuss a possible loan of US\$1 billion for Angolan agricultural development.<sup>39</sup> Chen assured dos Santos that the global financial crisis would not result in Chinese retreat; on the contrary, he urged it to be an opportunity to increase and strengthen cooperation.

#### ANGOLA AND DEPENDENCY THEORY

Although Angola is rich in natural resources, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) considers it one of the poorest and least developed states in the world; it ranked 157<sup>th</sup> out of 179 states in the 2008 Human Development Index.<sup>40</sup> In 2006, The Mo Ibrahim Foundation ranked Angola a low 34.4 out of 100 on its human development scale.<sup>41</sup> Under these conditions, and the common failure of simple economic *growth* to produce *development*, one must view Angola's booming economy with a critical eye. The lack of economic diversity and level of human development are more telling indicators of whether or not Angola faces a chronic state of underdevelopment and whether foreign capitalist powers are reinforcing it.

Most Chinese and Angolan officials cast their relationship as being “pragmatic” and “strategic.” When the Chinese Prime Minister visited Angola in June 2006, Angolan President Eduardo dos Santos stated simply that “China needs natural resources and Angola wants development.”<sup>42</sup> The existence of a simple, synergistic relationship seems natural enough; however, China has played a dubious role in facilitating lasting, sustainable development.

Central to the persistence of Angola's underdevelopment is insidious government corruption. Many observers hoped that the sustained peace found in 2002 would begin to change what is considered to be one of the world's most corrupt governments; however, early indications were despairing. An internal report by the IMF revealed the disappearance of nearly US\$1 billion

from government finances in 2001 alone.<sup>43</sup> This sum is nearly three times the amount of humanitarian aid Angola received in 2002. The report adds that from 1996-2001, US\$4 billion were unaccounted for. The report particularly criticizes the Angolan state oil firm, Sonangol: “The company assumed some time ago complete control of foreign currency receipts from the oil sector and stopped channeling them through the central bank as mandated by the law.” The “extensive corruption” found in Angola brought the 1998 IMF-monitored program to a halt in 2001.

Some indicators show a gradual improvement. For example, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation's 2008 index of African Governance documented an annual decrease of public sector corruption between 2000 and 2006; Angola's ranking climbed from 44<sup>th</sup> to 33<sup>rd</sup>, respectively (with 1<sup>st</sup> place being the least corrupt).<sup>44</sup> However, Angola received the lowest possible score by the Foundation for “free and fair executive elections.”<sup>45</sup> Since independence from Portugal in 1975, Angola has been run exclusively by the MPLA under José Eduardo dos Santos. Although international observers lauded the latest legislative election held in September 2008, in which massive amounts of voters turned out to give a landslide 81% victory to the ruling party, the MPLA's monopoly on the media and campaign financing warrant suspicion for this “free election.” Moreover, President dos Santos has pushed for a constitutional reform to allow his successor to be elected by parliament rather than by popular vote. Given that the MPLA holds 191 of the 220 legislative seats, the de facto single-party state would remain intact.<sup>46</sup>

Government corruption and exclusive MPLA rule continue to hinder the process of effecting lasting, democratic institutions to facilitate the development-centered growth so needed in Angola. According to the U.S. Agency for International Development: “Angola continues to exhibit a disjointed social order, limited effectiveness of civil and commercial law, and a persistent gap between formal rules of the state and de facto “rules of the game” exploited by power holders, all of which erode democratic principles of governance and contribute to a national budget that fails to reflect the country's true wealth.”<sup>47</sup> The further entrenchment of MPLA rule may provide the political stability necessary to develop a long-term growth strategy; however, especially given that the Angolan government is not dependent on tax revenue, the absence of political accountability makes a future of insidious corruption and elite enrichment a more likely outcome.<sup>48</sup>

As with other African states (see Sudan), China's policy of “non-interference” has obstructed democratic reform under the guise of respecting state sovereignty. By not using its economic leverage to press for greater transparency and democratic accountability in Angola, China's policy is helping to secure the rule of Angola's elite minority. This has had severe consequences for Angola's development. Although more current data is largely unavailable, a report sponsored by the UNDP documents a widening gap between Angola's rich and poor through 2006.<sup>49</sup> According to *Angolese*, a Luanda-based newspaper, 49 Angolans have fortunes exceeding US\$49 million, and 10 have more than US\$100 million. The seven richest men are all members of Angola's ruling MPLA government – with President dos Santos at the top.<sup>50</sup> These facts are

very revealing of Angola's extreme inequality, for in 2006, more than two-thirds of the population lived on US\$2 or less a day.<sup>51</sup> In establishing close ties with Angola's elite and sustaining their ability to consolidate wealth, China fits squarely within dependency theory's explanation of foreign capitalist states actively perpetuating underdevelopment.

Although many laud China's investment in oil as an opportunity to alleviate underdevelopment, the reality is that the capital-intensive oil sector has created few jobs. Senior economist of the UNDP, Michel Botomazava, explains: "There are very few people working in the [oil] sector. This is the main reason why inequalities are widening, as oil revenues benefit only very few groups."<sup>52</sup> Of greater importance, China's praised investment in Angolan infrastructure has had mixed results. Augusto Santana, county director of the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa, has criticized China's role in rebuilding Angola, arguing that the reconstruction "is not reflecting on people's lives." Although China has offered US\$2 billion of oil-backed credit, Santana argued that the projects have done little to tackle local unemployment because China has brought its own experts and laborers for the projects.<sup>53</sup> Currently, tens of thousands of Chinese people are working in Angola, in both private and state-supported projects.<sup>54</sup> The wedding of Chinese and Angolan elitist interests has produced a key condition of underdevelopment. Angola's "lack of [government] policy" has left the Chinese to operate in their interest, countering a more mutually beneficial relationship.

Many Angolans have seen an increase in access to basic health and educational services. Electrical and hydro-electrical infrastructure built by the Chinese has expanded electricity access to over 60,000 residents in Luanda. The improvement of water supply systems has granted thousands of people throughout the country greater access to clean water. The rehabilitation of roads, bridges, and railways has provided the needed foundation for commercial activity to thrive. China's emphasis on the rehabilitation of schools, hospitals, and health centers has given a valuable resource to many who have previously been deprived of it.<sup>55</sup> However, although Chinese investment has allowed for some infrastructure rebuilding, the real effect of investment on poverty reduction is difficult to measure.

In many cases, the social cost of "development" has been high. Poor areas outside the capital, Luanda, have been demolished by bulldozers to make room for lavish condominiums. Expanding development projects such as "Nova Vida," a development reserved for members of the army and wealthy foreigners, have left thousands of residents homeless, and many have lost their belongings.<sup>56</sup> A 103-page report written by Human Rights Watch and the Angolan organization, SOS Habitat,<sup>57</sup> documents 18 mass evictions in Luanda carried out by the Angolan government between 2002 and 2006. In all, 20,000 people were affected, with more than 3,000 houses destroyed and many small-scale plots of land seized. The evictions violated both Angolan and international human rights law; however, the government has refused to give legal justification and has offered no compensation.<sup>58</sup>

The report gives evidence that these evictions were not sporadic; rather, they demonstrate a larger

pattern of planned, systemic abuse. Although the government claims to be spending billions “to facilitate development and 'beautification' in the public interest,” the evictions have had the opposite effect of making residents extremely vulnerable. “Most of the evictees are poor and vulnerable Angolans; their houses were demolished and many were left only with the clothes they were wearing,” said Luiz Araujo, director of SOS Habitat.<sup>59</sup> A 22-year-old evictee from the neighborhood of Cambamba II describes:

“I ran to get my wife and my child and take them out of the house. We left holding each other, and they came to beat us with batons. We continued to hold each other, and they continued to beat us, pushed us and threw us to the ground. At the end, there were eight policemen hitting me and my wife, holding our one-year -old baby. Then they threw me into the police car ... At the police station, they beat me with broom sticks ... They said we would receive 30 catanadas (beatings with the flat part of a catana, or machete) each one. Fifteen in the hand and 15 on the backside.”<sup>60</sup>

Many have experienced similar evictions, as the Angolan government has forcefully evicted more than 10,000 families since 2001, when the government began returning land to the church that had been seized by the former Marxist state. According to Muluka Miti of Amnesty International, many people were detained arbitrarily and, in some cases, tortured.<sup>61</sup> In addition, thousands more Angolans remain vulnerable to future evictions, as the majority of Luanda's estimated 4 million residents possess no formal title to their home.<sup>62</sup>

By deriving the “national interest” from a class perspective and concern for the poor, dependency theory leads observers to conclude that China's support for Angola's kleptocratic elite has created a less than optimal allocation of resources to serve the “national interest.” The poor have suffered disproportionately in the “development” of Angolan infrastructure, while government officials profit enormously from oil sector investment and other “development” projects.

On the whole, China has served Angola's lacking infrastructure necessary for self-development, but has also reinforced traditional inequalities and certain aspects of underdevelopment. In determining the nature of economic relationships, dependency theory poses the question of whether or not a more mutually-beneficial relationship could exist. Undoubtedly, the domination of Chinese interests has forged an unequal partnership. Given China's role in intensifying Angola's oil-exporting dependence, preferable economic alternatives clearly exist. Although arguing that China is forging a dependent relationship with Angola is premature, the relationship is certainly tilted in favor of China and is exploitative in many aspects.

## SOUTH AFRICA

Like many other African states, China supported leftist liberation movements in South Africa beginning in the 1950's; however, official diplomatic relations between the two states were not established until January 1998.<sup>63</sup> The signing of the Pretoria Declaration in April 2000, during a

visit to South Africa by Chinese President Jiang Zemin, formalized the relationship through the establishment of a Bi-National Commission aimed at enhancing the partnership. Four sectoral committees now exist within the Commission: foreign affairs, economy and trade, science-technology, and national defense.<sup>64</sup>

Trade between China and South Africa has been increasing at around 20% to 30% annually over the last 12 years, making South Africa China's second largest trading partner in Africa. Trade rose from a low US\$800 million in 1998 to a staggering US\$14 billion in 2008.<sup>65</sup> In early 2008, China surpassed Germany to become South Africa's largest source of imports. Reciprocally, China is the fifth largest destination for South African exports.

Incessantly expanding its reach, China has established more than 80 companies in South Africa since 1998.<sup>66</sup> Chinese FDI reached its highest level in 2007, when the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China announced that it would be purchasing a 20% (US\$ 5.6 billion) stake in Standard Bank. South African investment in China is also on the rise, reaching more than US\$200 million in 2006.<sup>67</sup> South African based SAD-MILLER operates 55 breweries in China. Sasol is developing coal-to-oil plants, and other resource-based companies, such as Anglo-American and Kumba Resources, are increasing investments in China.<sup>68</sup>

As the most industrialized and diversified economy in Africa, South Africa's relationship with China has been qualitatively different from that of other states. As noted by Moeletsi Mbeki, deputy chairman of the South African Institute of International Affairs, South Africa does not have a peasant class; meaning, it does not have a passive, chronically-poor class to exploit. In addition, as an unintended result of sanctions and divestment in the 1970's and 80's, the private sector is overwhelmingly owned by South African citizens "whose rights are entrenched constitutionally and are enforceable by the propertied classes themselves through the franchise; through the judiciary; and through the independent mass media that sees itself as a watchdog over the rights of citizens."<sup>69</sup>

However, regardless of some major differences in South Africa, a close reading of economic relations with China reveals some familiar patterns. According to Chris Alden, professor of International Relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science, "The emphasis of South Africa-China trade has been on the Chinese acquisition of minerals, agricultural goods and related commodities while South Africa absorbs imports of low-end consumer goods."<sup>70</sup>

Others share this impression. Kobus van der Wath, business director of the South Africa-China Business Association, in a 2008 interview with China Daily acknowledged that: "South Africa has more resources than China can get elsewhere. The biggest relationship at the moment is that we buy a lot of manufactured goods from China and China buys a lot of energy resources from us. That's the fundamentals of the relationship."<sup>71</sup> Indeed, this is the pillar of China's relationship with the majority of African states.

Although some uncertainty regarding the “win-win” rhetoric of the Chinese occupies the minds of many South Africans, relations between the two states show no sign of slowing. On March 17th, 2009, the China-Africa Development Fund opened its first office in Africa in Johannesburg, in what was called “a major step for Sino-African co-operation.”<sup>72</sup> The representative office, which is expected to encourage Chinese companies to invest in African industries, is the most recent step China has taken to win the hearts of South Africans, and the continent more broadly.

#### SOUTH AFRICA AND DEPENDENCY THEORY

In 2008, South Africa ranked the 32<sup>nd</sup> richest state in the world by measure of GDP.<sup>73</sup> However, devastatingly low social indicators resulted in a ranking of 125<sup>th</sup> out of 179 countries in the 2008 Human Development Index.<sup>74</sup> Not unlike Angola, wealth polarization, lacking infrastructure, underdeveloped industry, and government corruption have made holistic development an enormous challenge. Regarding the economy, a history of distorted and exploitative practices has created “two economies” within South Africa, a concept reintroduced by President Thabo Mbeki in 2003.<sup>75</sup> As the 2005 UNDP report, *Overcoming Underdevelopment in South Africa's Second Economy*, explains:

“Three hundred years of colonialism, and fifty of internal colonialism, had hard-wired a duality into the system, whereby two domains coexisted: on the one hand, a globally integrated world of production, exchange, and consumption, and on the other, a constrained world of informality, poverty, and marginalization.”<sup>76</sup>

Despite the triumph of majority government in 1994, wealth inequality continues to remain at inordinately high levels, with little sign of reversing. Reflecting on the UN Habitat's 2008 *State of the World's Cities* report, executive director, Anna Tibaijuka, stated that inequality in South Africa's urban centers was not only widening, but becoming more entrenched, “which suggest that failures in wealth redistribution are largely the result of structural or systemic flaws.” Casting a bleak future for South African development, Tibaijuka continued: “South Africa stands out as a country that has yet to break out of an economic and political model that concentrates resources.”<sup>77</sup>

China's role in aiding South Africa in breaking away from that model is questionable. Although China would have observers believe otherwise, the South Africa-China relationship has drawn criticism and persistent skepticism. Professor Chris Alden has argued that conflict within the ruling African National Congress, in addition to crime and xenophobia, has produced “an undercurrent that is introducing a degree of uncertainty to this nascent partnership.”<sup>78</sup>

One major concern has been the effect of heavily-subsidized imports from China on South African textile industries. At the beginning of 2005, quotas on Chinese textile imports were lifted, causing an explosion in Chinese imports, which rose from 500 million rand in 2003 to 6.6 billion rand in 2005. According to a 2006 article by the *Wall Street Journal*, textile workers had

diminished in number down to 50,000 from 120,000 a decade earlier.<sup>79</sup> “We've just been downsizing and downsizing and downsizing, and we can't downsize anymore,” said director of BMD Textiles Ltd, Peter Hausle, “I fear we just can't compete with these unfair imports from the Far East.”<sup>80</sup>

Although lobbying by unions and the textile industry has brought discussion of greater protection for South African industry to the forefront, South Africa is in a much weaker position to bargain with its Chinese counterpart. “South Africa is trying to increase its exports of iron, copper, gold, aluminum, manganese and other commodities to China,” writes William Echikson of the *Wall Street Journal*, “and there are worries that China might buy those products elsewhere if South Africa raises too many barriers to Chinese textiles.”<sup>81</sup>

The inability of South Africa to negotiate and promote a more equitable relationship reveals a key tenet of dependency theory. However, China has not been entirely unresponsive to South African concerns. In June 2006, China agreed to cut textile imports to South Africa by a third and erect quotas to be imposed over the following three years.<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, these measures have been insufficient to stop the devastation caused by the dumping of unnaturally low-cost Chinese imports.

Struggling to protect its industry, in July 2008, South Africa launched an anti-dumping investigation into imports of stainless steel sinks from China; it was the first countervailing investigation of Chinese products ever by a developing country.<sup>83</sup> The probe was led by Franke Kitchen Systems after China's market share grew to 60% from zero three years earlier. Franke initially argued on anti-dumping grounds, but later alleged that the level of subsidization for China's imported sinks was as high as 47.7% of the product value.<sup>84</sup> Franke revealed 36 subsidies in 10 subsidy programs that directly benefited the imported sinks, allowing them to enter South Africa at a cost lower than stainless steel itself. Although Franke had a strong case, the company withdrew its application at the end of 2008. The content of the reached agreement remains confidential; however, according to Mathabo Le Roux of Business Day in Johannesburg, Franke stepped down “apparently because the Chinese government threatened the future success of its operations in China if it pressed on with the application.”<sup>85</sup>

The withdrawal of Franke's investigation dealt a crushing blow to South Africa's power in what is increasingly appearing to be a hegemonic dominance by China. Le Roux continues: “The situation leaves local manufacturers vulnerable as China's action undermines South Africa's trade remedy tools, which means manufacturers have no recourse against unfair competition from Chinese imports.”<sup>86</sup> Without the support of the state or other means to challenge China's unfair trade practices, South African manufacturers will continue to suffer. The “national interest,” as defined by dependency theory, is clearly being trumped by the interests of the upper class.

Moreover, the compromising of South Africa's sovereignty in pursuit of maintaining a positive dialogue with China has extended beyond protectionist measures for South African industry. In

March 2009, a diverse mix of Nobel laureates, American celebrities, and other notable guests gathered for a peace conference in Johannesburg, organized by South African soccer officials to promote the 2010 World Cup. Not wanting to upset China, the Dalai Lama was refused admission. Thabo Masebe, spokesperson for President Kgalema Motlanthe, offered the justification that “South Africa would have been the source of negative publicity about China ... We do value our relationship with China.”<sup>87</sup>

By “value,” Masebe is clearly referring to the embedded interests that have compromised South Africa's sovereignty. Ann Crotty of *Cape Times* denounced the decision as making South Africa “no better than Robert Mugabe-run Zimbabwe.” Moreover, she warned that “once you succumb to the demands of a bully – however implicit or explicit – they never cease.”<sup>88</sup> An article published in the South African-based *The Star* was much more frank: “Our government has sold the country's soul to an oppressive regime.”<sup>89</sup> Whether or not South Africa will fall increasingly under China's hegemony is undetermined; however, early signs are despairing. In applying dependency theory, obedience to core capitalist states is by no means unexpected. On the contrary, hegemonic submission is the only result possible in peripheral capitalist integration.

Also of concern, South Africa has continuously held a large trade imbalance with China. In 2007, South African imports of Chinese goods totaled US\$7.5 billion while South African exports to China were valued at only US\$3.64 billion.<sup>90</sup> The lack of reciprocal investment, in addition to the stunting of South African textiles by China, reveals an exploitative tinge to China's economic policies. In judging the nature of economic relationships, dependency theory presses observers to question if more equitable alternatives exist. Characterizing the nature of China-South Africa relations, Neva Seidman Makgetla, economist for the Congress of South African Trade Unions, stated plainly that, “There's no question that for upper classes, it's a boon ... The problem is any lower-class South Africans would rather have a job.”<sup>91</sup> The existing relationship demonstrates a far less than optimal allocation of resources in regards to the protection and prosperity of the poor.

Clearly, although China has been the cause of some major improvements, the interests of China and South Africa's elites are paramount in this relationship - a central theme of dependency theory. Although casting this nascent relationship as wholly dependent is premature, early indicators show that South Africa and China hold unequal footing at the bargaining table – with China playing the dominant role. By not challenging unfair trade practices, such as the dumping of cheap imports, and refusing to make any hostile gestures toward China in defense of state sovereignty, such as the retraction of Franke's application and denial of admission into the country for the Dalai Lama, South Africa is acting as dependency theory would predict – paving the way for further exploitation.

## SUDAN

In 1989, a military coup led by Islamic officers and supported by the National Islamic Front

(NIF) successfully seized the Sudanese government. Driven by their desire to crush rebels fighting the central government in the South, the junta sought to Islamacise southern Sudan and form a unified Islamic state. In order to generate wealth, the junta began to exploit the state's oil reserves. However, willing Islamic investors generally lacked the necessary technical expertise. After being shunned by the international community, having their voting rights in the IMF revoked in 1993, the country was on a quick decline into bankruptcy. The new government of Sudan was in dire need of a trading partner who would invest heavily in oil extraction, while disregarding gross human rights abuses and not attempting to prescribe the conditionalities typical of Western aide. As Ali Askouri, director of the London-based Piankhi Research Group, describes, "the junta wanted its business partner to have the strength and ability to withstand political pressure from Western 'imperialist' countries; the stamina and determination not to be bothered by the protests of human rights groups; and, above all, to be a heavyweight international player that Western imperialist countries would find hard to force out of the country through political pressure."<sup>92</sup>

China was a perfect fit. Propelled by its growing internal demand for oil, China was more than willing to turn a blind eye to Sudan's human rights abuses and establish economic ties. The Chinese began investing heavily in infrastructure projects: dams, hydroelectric power stations, textile mills, agricultural schemes, and most important, oil refineries and pipelines. While the United States and European Union have refused to conduct business with Sudan, China now accounts for more than two-thirds of Sudan's oil exports, totaling 7% of China's oil imports. Estimates place China's investment in Sudan's oil fields at US\$15 billion plus, including a 900-mile long export pipeline to Port Sudan on the Red Sea and a US\$700 million oil refinery 70 kilometers north of Khartoum, with a capacity of 100,000 barrels of oil per day.<sup>93</sup>

Beyond oil, China is quick to point out its commitment to more than US\$1.3 billion in aiding Sudan's infrastructure. Chinese support has helped add more than 1,400 megawatts of new thermal generating capacity by developing coal and gas-fired thermal stations. Although not without controversy, the massive \$1.2 billion Merowe dam project is expected to bring an additional 1,250 megawatts.<sup>94</sup> In March 2009, Chinese ambassador to Sudan, Li Chengwen, said China was ready to expand cooperation in the media, education, vocational training in construction and development, medicine, and the spread of Chinese culture and language. Moreover, China agreed to write off Sudan's debt worth 470 million Chinese Yuan.<sup>95</sup>

As the largest foreign investor in Sudan, vested economic interests have ensured that China will work to see that the Sudanese government is protected from the scrutiny of Western nations, who continually condemn Sudan for the crisis in Darfur, which has killed more than 200,000 and displaced more than 2.5 million since 2003.<sup>96</sup> China has opposed sanctions against Sudan and has threatened to veto any resolution that would challenge its trading interests.<sup>97</sup> More recently, in March, while officials were visiting Sudan to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ties, China rejected the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant for President Omar Al-Bashir, against whom ten charges have been filed.<sup>98</sup> Invoking cries of Western imperialism, China defends its

right to Sudanese cooperation as a basic tenet of self-determination. According to the foreign Ministry website, “China had suffered imperialist aggression and oppression for over 100 years before the founding of the People's Republic in 1949. Therefore, China regards the hard-earned right of independence as the basic principle of foreign policy.”<sup>99</sup> However, China's “independence” in foreign affairs has blocked an international response to a conflagrating crisis, including the expulsion of 13 Aid Organizations in Sudan which account for 40% of aid workers in Darfur, leaving 1.5 million people without food, drinking water, and healthcare.<sup>100</sup>

China also unscrupulously remains Sudan's largest arms dealer. It shipped more than US\$57 million worth of small arms to Sudan during the 2001-2006 period, in which violence was escalating in Darfur.<sup>101</sup> A report by Amnesty International revealed that in 2005, the same year the UN resolution banning the transfer of weapons to all parties in Darfur passed, China supplied US\$24 million worth of arms and ammunition, US\$57 million worth of aircraft parts and equipment, and delivered six K-8 advanced fighter jets.<sup>102</sup> Although Beijing publicly denies breaking the UN arms embargo, which only bans the selling of weapons for use in Darfur, strong evidence incriminates China's role in sustaining the Sudanese Army in Darfur.<sup>103</sup> In January of 2007, the Chinese assistant foreign minister said unapologetically, “With Sudan, we have cooperation in many aspects, including military cooperation. In this, we have nothing to hide.”<sup>104</sup> The increasing international pressure China has faced, especially in building up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics, labeled the “Genocide Games” by actress Mia Farrow and boycotted by many popular figures like Steven Spielberg, Beijing has persuaded the Sudanese government to accept a stronger UN/African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur.<sup>105</sup> However, minimal effort by the Chinese has made finding a long-lasting solution difficult.

#### SUDAN AND DEPENDENCY THEORY

At the surface, considering Western states' refusal to do business with Sudan, China's investment might be seen as a “win-win” situation, in which oil-generated wealth is being redistributed to lift the Sudanese standard of living. However, as described within dependency theory, a close examination of the Sudanese government's allocation of Chinese revenue reveals a clear pattern of wealth going to enrich Sudan's elites and increase the power and influence of the central capital, Khartoum. “The pattern of development in the post-colonial Sudan has always been to concentrate in the center of the country,” argues political scientist and member of Sudan's national unity government, Safwat Fanus, “but not much effort has been done in the south, the west, the east, and the north.”<sup>106</sup> A lack of promoting economic diversity has reinforced and intensified inequality throughout Sudan, particularly in the South, where oil constitutes 97% of revenue.<sup>107</sup> This replicates a core tenet of dependency – an economy surrounding the export of a single commodity, making it highly vulnerable to the fluctuations of global capitalism.

In the Southern city of Paloich, “locals live in meager huts,” explains Danna Harman of the *Christian Science Monitor*, “eating peanuts with perch fished out of the contaminated Nile. There is no electricity [...] Most children do not go to school. There is no work to be found.

Petrodar, for one, has its own workers – almost all of whom are foreigners (mostly Chinese, Malaysians, and Qataris) or Sudanese northerners. The consortium hires Paloich residents only rarely, for menial jobs.” This description of underdevelopment is not unusual in the semi-autonomous south. Locals blame Sudan's northern government, but also the Chinese. “[The Chinese] moved us away so we would not see what was going on. They were stealing our oil and they knew it,” says rebel-turned-pastor Abraham Thonchol, “Oil is valuable and we are not idiots.”<sup>108</sup>

Although China presents major infrastructure projects as proof of a synergistic relationship, many argue that these projects are simply meant to “appease the ruling elite, with minimal analysis of the economic, social and environmental feasibility of the proposed projects.”<sup>109</sup> This pattern is exemplified by the developments in the oil producing Upper Nile area, where the Dinka and Nuer tribes have suffered under campaigns led by the Sudanese army and sects of the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement to depopulate the area and ensure the safety of oil installations.<sup>110</sup> According to the United Kingdom based charity organization, Christian Aid, “The inter-tribal warfare that has plagued the south for the last decade has been fomented by strategic arms deliveries from government garrisons [...] This is warlordism – as the government and the oil companies call it – but warlordism provoked and encouraged by the government with the express intent of depopulating oil-rich areas.”<sup>111</sup> The ferocity of the campaign has made it clear to inhabitants that the choice of not leaving will lead to annihilation. The report continues:

Since construction of the pipeline to the Red Sea began in 1998, hundreds of thousands of villagers have been terrorised into leaving their homes in the Upper Nile. Tens of thousands of homes across Western Upper Nile and Eastern Upper Nile have been burnt to the ground. In some areas, the charred remains of the humble mud huts that got in the way of oil are the only evidence there is that there was ever life in the region.<sup>112</sup>

Other major infrastructure projects involving the Chinese, like the Merowe dam on the fourth cataract of the River Nile in Northern Sudan, of which China holds a US\$460 million contract, have led to similar displacement. According to the dam authority, the project will displace more than 50,000 small farmers.<sup>113</sup> In September of 2003, a group of men, women, and children of Korgheli Village protested the dam. The police responded using bullets, tear gas, and plastic rods; three men were shot and several others injured. According to a report by the website Sudaneseonline, two leaders of the protest were arrested, jailed, and tortured. Later in December, the police attacked those who refused to leave the village and closed down the primary school and health center to force them out. Their houses were then demolished.<sup>114</sup> The atrocities continued. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April, 2006, “the dam militia, armed with machine guns and heavy artillery, attacked Amri people who were meeting in the local school courtyard to discuss how to organise themselves against the dam authority's plan to forcibly displace them to the desert.” Without warning, the militia opened fire, killing three and injuring more than 50.<sup>115</sup>

The violent repression that has accompanied Chinese infrastructure developments demonstrates

the importance of adopting a class perspective. While these practices are clearly to the benefit of Sudan's elite, and of course, China, many poor Sudanese throughout the nation's periphery have suffered. In fact, the manager of the Merowe dam project, Ding Zhengguo, confessed a horrible reality that Chinese officials have long denied. Despite assurances by Chinese ambassador Zhang Dong that China “[...] never interferes in Sudan's internal affairs,”<sup>116</sup> Ding admitted that Chinese investments in certain African states depend on the ability of the ruling elite to provide protection and security, presumably against antagonistic classes. In a letter to the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, Ding states:

Please be informed that the Government of Sudan has assigned local security force to be responsible for the security of the Merowe Dam Project since commencement of the Project, at both the upstream site and downstream site of the project construction area. Security personnel from professional security companies engaged by the contractors and approved by the client and the Engineer, are also 24 hrs available for the security of the site camp and construction site.<sup>117</sup>

Another key component of dependency theory is the willingness of the dominant state to take whatever steps are necessary to protect economic interests. Shrouding its unwillingness to join other states in punishing Sudan for the atrocities in Darfur with rhetoric of “mutual respect” and “non-interference,” China clearly demonstrates this exploitative tendency. While Sudan suffers from one of the highest rates of corruption in the world, ranking second in *Foreign Policy* magazine's 2008 Index of Failed States,<sup>118</sup> China, through both its UN veto power and direct assistance to the government in Sudan, has blocked movement toward democratic reform and national stability. Stated clearly by the Brussels-based International Crisis Group (ICG) in a 2002 report, Beijing has “a vested interest in the continuation of a low level of insecurity. It keeps the other major investors out.”<sup>119</sup>

Thus, dependency theory successfully explains China's role in Sudan. This “voluntary” relationship is the result of a shared interest among China and Sudanese elites. The stress on oil extraction has left most of Sudan's periphery, outside of Khartoum, in a desperate state of underdevelopment. Beyond economics, China's dealing of arms to the Sudanese government shows a complete disregard for peace within the country. Rather, the instability is of considerable benefit, as China receives revenue from weapons deals and other possible investors keep out. Although the Chinese government officially has denied such a relationship and portrays itself as a benevolent third-world ally, some officials have been less candid. As an adviser to the Chinese government explained: “No matter if it's rogue's oil or a friend's oil, we don't care. Human rights? We don't care. We care about oil [...] Anyone who helps China with energy is a friend.”<sup>120</sup> This reality has certainly not gone unnoticed by Sudan's poor. “The Chinese simply do not care about us,” says Martin Buywomo, Paloich's mayor, “...this is colonialism all over again.”<sup>121</sup>

**Conclusion:**

## THE LASTING RELEVANCE OF DEPENDENCY THEORY

The three case studies presented here demonstrate the viability of dependency theory's general narrative in explaining peripheral states' underdevelopment, and, in this case, China's role in perpetuating it. All three states are predominantly precapitalist with largely feudal economies, dominated by the production and exportation of raw materials. They are poor, and rank low in human development. They face a lack of capital, coupled with an abundance of cheap labor. Rather than having diversified and regionally-integrated economies, they remain dependent upon the exportation of raw materials to core capitalist states. In addition, all three states are dominated by a small parasitic elite who intentionally distort their respective states' economies to serve their interests. As shown, these patterns are not due to cumbersome "traditional" society; rather, they result from being coercively integrated into the capitalist world system.

Some may argue that certain aspects of development led by China as well as limited progress achieved through capitalist integration render dependency theory inadequate for explaining the complex political and economic relationships of African states with China. However, rather than attempting to provide a detailed, comprehensive model for which to judge the level of exploitation of a given relationship, dependency theory only intends to offer a blunt description of the world economic system. While a close examination China-Africa relations may reveal subtle complexities, a broader view affirms the basic contour lines of core-periphery interaction sketched by dependency theory.

Moreover, the current economic crisis has helped reveal China's true motives and dispel notions of benevolent partnership. Although China has officially argued the crisis to be an opportunity for further cooperation, the reality is, China's "mutually-beneficial" model, free of meddling in internal affairs, is facing grave challenges as downward pressure on raw material prices presses dependent countries in Africa closer to economic collapse. "The Chinese have changed their strategy," said Ibrahima Sory Diallo, a senior economist in Guinea's Ministry of Finance and Chinese investment advocate, "they are not going to inject \$5 billion into an unstable country in an uncertain market climate."<sup>122</sup> The image of China as an eager investor willing to go where Western nations would not, such as Angola, is eroding to reveal a more cautious and opportunistic nature.

Additionally, African governments have realized the shortfalls of loans backed by future revenue. Falling prices could very likely leave many states burdened with large amounts of debt.<sup>123</sup> The Congo appears to have already encountered this reality. As prices continue to fall, and production targets written in the Chinese deal become more difficult to meet, Congo faces a precarious future. According to Patricia Feeney, executive director of the British-based advocacy group, Rights and Accountability in Development, "The Congolese have raised expectations so much that they could rely on Chinese [sic] and turn their backs on Western donors, and in the process they have probably managed to alienate people who were willing to help."<sup>124</sup> The over-exuberance of African governments in rejecting Western aid and increasingly relying on China

has generated a dependency among many African states that will inevitably intensify as the global economy declines.

#### TOWARD DEVELOPMENT: THE SOLUTIONS DEBATE

While dependency theorists reach a foundational consensus on the characteristics of economic dependence, the challenge of prescribing policy solutions for subordinate economies to develop has caused vigorous debate. The largest disagreement comes from those of a greater Marxist orientation who argue that the only possible path to development is a complete rupture with capitalism and adoption of socialist planning, and those who argue that the development of the periphery is entirely capable by working within the capitalist system. Although a thorough discussion of the policy implications stemming from both schools of thought as relating to individual states' cases is beyond the scope of this study, a brief description is certainly warranted.

For radical dependency theorists, such as Andre Gunder Frank, James Cockcroft, and Dale Johnson, the only path to lasting development is breaking entirely with the world capitalist system: "The only remedy against the causes as well as the symptoms of underdevelopment lies in the revolutionary destruction of capitalism and the introduction of socialist development."<sup>125</sup> The American Marxian economist, Paul Baran, reinforced this argument. As described by John Bellamy Foster of the *Monthly Review*, Paul Baran contended that "the real radical goal was to break with production for production's sake (or surplus for surplus's sake) and to organize a society geared to optimum consumption and optimum output in accordance with genuine human needs: a society in which the surplus and its utilization were democratically planned."<sup>126</sup>

For those dependency theorists who argue development is possible within capitalism, the answer to Africa's underdevelopment lies not with socialist revolution, but with harnessing market forces and global integration. Although by no means an adherent to dependency theory, the capitalist magazine *The Economist* argues a similar solution for African development. Dismissing the notion of China providing a model for African development as incoherent and misguided, the magazine argues that "Africa's economies must find less-exposed niches in the world economy, such as tourism or cut flowers. And they should not look to China, but to Chile or Botswana for examples of how to turn natural bounty into shared prosperity." In order to boost its negotiating power, the magazine advocates African states to "talk to each other as well as their hosts in Beijing. If they negotiated as a block, they could drive a harder bargain [...] Africans should make sure they get China's know-how, not just its money."<sup>127</sup>

#### POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

While the general narrative of dependency theory holds true, the differences in the levels of exploitation in these studies are important to note when considering solutions. It appears that the opportunistic approach of China has driven it to be as exploitative as its African counterparts will

allow. In Sudan, China has been able to continue nefarious practices characteristic of earlier colonialism – unscrupulously propping up a kleptocratic regime while playing a direct role in the suppression of political stability and democratic reform. In South Africa, a state with greater bargaining power, China has been held more accountable by South Africans, and yet remains dominant in determining the nature of the states' economic exchanges. A lack of agency has condemned African states to perverting their economies to suit the interests of domestic and foreign elites. “There is no strategic continental approach that African countries have adopted,” explains Adama Gaye, a Senegalese author, “Overall, it's an unbalanced relationship in which China knows what it wants and has a clearly defined agenda.”<sup>128</sup>

Here, the adage “the strong do what they will; the weak suffer what they must” seems fitting. In considering this, the class perspective of dependency theory becomes especially relevant. While other international relations theories, such as realism, employ a state-level unit of analysis, dependency theory reveals the antagonism between the interests of the elites and the general population. “Strong” and “weak” do not only refer to the states in the relationship, but also to the classes within the dependent state. As seen in all three of the presented case studies, the persistence of corrupt and opportunistic regimes remains the largest obstacle to facilitate lasting development. The dominance of “strong” elite minorities has left the average African holding little if no power for influencing economic or political policy.

Because of these conditions, both schools of dependency theory agree that progress toward just alternatives, whether revolutionary or reformist, lies in oppressed classes seizing state power. As posited by Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Faletto Enzo in *Dependency and development in Latin America* (1979), “the style of development of the possibility of alternatives depends upon the resolution of this question of the state.”<sup>129</sup> Only in oppressed peoples and their allies taking the reigns of state will systemic underdevelopment be dismantled and new, more equitable alternatives be realized, whether that be adopting socialist planning or finding the state's “niche” within global capitalism.

However, as the experience of South Africa has shown, even regimes holding some allegiance to working people find it difficult to challenge Chinese hegemony by acting alone. Seizing state power is a necessary but not singular condition for escaping underdevelopment. History has shown that lone states who rose to challenge global capitalism with socialist or nationalist agendas, such as Chile under Salvador Allende or Iran under Mohammad Mosaddeq, were met with violent repression and forced back into the underdeveloped periphery.

This is not to dismiss any hope of peripheral liberation, but only to highlight the enormity of the challenge confronting global capitalism presents. Although an adherent of neoliberalism, *The Economist* magazine offers wise advice to peripheral states in saying that “if they negotiated as a block, they could drive a harder bargain...”<sup>130</sup> What is needed is regional integration and cooperation to “drive a harder bargain,” or, in a more revolutionary approach, to create a defended area with regional support to allow for the building of socialist alternatives. Without

such unity, there is little hope for African states to break free from exploitation.

Much to the ire of *The Economist*, some peripheral states have taken its advice to heart, and begun building alternative models to neoliberalism supported by regional alliances. The Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA), initiated by Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez in 2004, began the first attempt at regional integration not based on trade liberalization. Created in opposition to the Free Trade Area of the Americas, ALBA rejects the neoliberal paradigm and instead roots itself in principles of social and economic justice. Rather than focusing exclusively on economic growth, the Alliance prioritizes human development, including the elimination of poverty and vast expansion of vital social services. As an example of these principles, ALBA's "Operation Miracle" aims to provide free eye operations, transportation, and accommodations to 600,000 Latin Americans each year.<sup>131</sup> Alongside an impressive list of economic initiatives, ALBA has also spearheaded other projects to combat foreign hegemony. The creation of TeleSUR in 2005 created a new regional media under the control of Latin Americans, the only one in a market otherwise dominated exclusively by US-owned networks well known for their corruption.<sup>132</sup>

Above all, ALBA represents the power and importance of alliances in challenging neoliberal hegemony. Rather than implementing the austerity measures of the WTO and IMF, ALBA has realized local knowledge, culture, and values into a supranational organization aimed at promoting humane alternatives to the vagaries of peripheral capitalism. As described by David Harris and Diego Azzi of the University of São Paulo, "ALBA represents not just an attractive medley of innovative new programs and ideas for the region, but also a strongly compelling and solid set of principles through which neighboring states can take advantage of international partnerships and put them directly to use for their people."<sup>133</sup>

As the current economic crisis has both revealed the opportunistic and exploitative nature of foreign investment, and once again brought disproportionate suffering to peripheral states, the dire need for just alternatives is ever more obvious, yet absent from mainstream discourse. Ultimately, the answer to African development must, following ALBA's lead, come from local knowledge and values, rather than the imposition of neoliberal measures by foreign entities. Whether or not reform of both domestic and global capitalism will lift African states into prosperity, or lead to a dead end at which socialist planning must be adopted, the seizure of state power and the building of regional alliances to facilitate cooperation remain the first steps toward African empowerment and, ultimately, economic development.

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