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# **Discourse analysis of multiple media perspectives on China's involvement in Africa**

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**“Discourse analysis of multiple media  
perspectives on China’s involvement in  
Africa”**

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# 1. Introduction

## *1.1 Hypothesis and questions*

In the last few years, China's involvement in Africa has captured the Western media's attention. However, there is a scarcity of literature documenting Chinese encounters with Africans, not only in terms of the political and economic involvement, but also with regard to its impact on the African people. China has been critiqued for its controversial role in Sudan with respect to its oil investment and previous military support showed to the Sudanese government and in disregard to the critical situation in Darfur. This issue has made headlines in view of the upcoming Olympic Games and of the torch relay, China being urged to use its influence on the Sudanese government to help solve the situation in Darfur.

I will pursue a critical discourse analysis of such articles not only in the Western media, but also in the African media. I will also present the Chinese official stance, which is perfectly echoed in most of the Chinese media reports. This type of news falls into a larger debate on China's foreign policy towards Africa and its methods of doing business in Africa. My hypothesis is that the western media reports on this subject present a distorted and often biased image of China's involvement in Africa. I will mostly analyze the Anglophone media news reports or editorials, because, as Chris Alden states, China's interests in Africa are mostly in the former English Colonies, with a few exceptions such as Gabon and Cameroon (Alden 2007, 109). Given the prominent position of the United States on world politics and its involvement in Africa, the discourses of China's involvement in Africa in the American newspapers are also essential.

I will closely follow if the western discourses are shared in the African media as well, or if an opposition to the western media presentation of China in Africa is also present. Interesting are also the Chinese defensive reactions to this kind of assessment of China in the western media, and the different focus the Chinese press places on issues concerning China's role in Africa. I intend to demonstrate that language can be a powerful force in the media, effectively creating a different reality by interpretation. Metaphors, analogies and expressions in general can be used in presenting a story from a particular point of view, and are

consequently actively employed by politicians and the media. It is enough to randomly pick a couple of western articles that deal with this issue to get a very negative imagine of China's influence in Africa. One almost has the feeling the talk is more about a Chinese invasion than about the pursuit of economic interests. My goal is to assess to what degree such presentation is biased. Furthermore, I will attempt, on the basis of my results, to assess China's foreign policy in Africa with respect to issues such as trade and investment strategies, resources policy, and human rights.

## ***1.2 Method***

The method employed in this study was spread mostly by Norman Fairclough and Teun van Dijk. As defined by Fairclough, critical discourse analysis tends to explore "the connections between language use and unequal relations of power." The texts will be analyzed in view of the broader social context. Therefore, this study will not be based on an abstracted theory, but rather on sociological theories anchored in the present social, economic and political dynamics. Fairclough also assumes that the usage of language is related to certain social goals (Bloome and Talwalkar, 105). Thus, media texts can also function ideologically and can replicate the social relations of domination in society (Fairclough, 45). Another issue worth taking into consideration is the fact that most of the news articles and editorials rely on official sources. As a result, the media conveys, for the most part, an establishment view of the world. Truth is becoming a notion difficult to define; in the media reports we encounter merely representations of the truth (Fairclough, 47-48). I have selected this method because it can be very efficient for an assessment of media language, particularly of the political and economic discourse. Since this method tends to stress manipulation, exploitation, and issues of power asymmetry, it makes a good choice for the present study.

Critical discourse analysis represents a three dimensional framework: the first stage contains a descriptive text analysis of the discourse as text, noting patterns in vocabulary, grammar, or cohesion (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 448). Essential is also the identification of the participants (the voices), which can range from politicians, reporters, and experts to common people. Moreover, one has to take into consideration the relationship between the participants (Fairclough, 203). The second stage offers an interpretation, more exactly an analysis, of the relationship between the discourse processes (the process of production and interpretation) and the text (Bloome and Talwalkar, 106). The question arises how these texts are produced and in what way they are being used. The focus on discourse as discourse practice stresses the fact that texts are being circulated and consumed. Thus intertextuality

plays an essential role, in its two forms: “manifest intertextuality,” which draws on other texts, and “interdiscursivity,” where discourse type and style are important. For manifest intertextuality, the way in which quotes are changed and put in a different context is germane (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 448). The intertextual analysis entails looking at the text from the perspective of the discourse practice.

Two types of relations are being differentiated: external and internal relations. The external relations refer to “the relations between the order of discourse of the media and socially adjacent public and private orders of discourse.” The internal relations refer to alternative practices within the order of discourses. Essential is also the fact that the public discourse is mostly intended for consumption (Fairclough, 63). This is also one of the reasons why most reports have a negative connotation or seek to depict disasters or issues that would impress the readers. The media is on a constant look for the sensational, and the commercial order of discourse is becoming ever so obvious in today’s consumerist society. It is therefore important to identify certain tendencies of change in the discourse, such as commodification or conversationalization of media discourse. Sometimes the discourse can be translated into a more accessible language or even into slang.

Furthermore, there are two types of discourses: “congruent” and “metaphorical.” The metaphorical discourse, which represents an extension of a discourse to signify something new, can be socially motivated or ideologically loaded, while the congruent discourse is used to express experiences it normally does (Fairclough, 94). Most important is the configuration of discourses, more specifically “how the discourses are articulated together within discourse types”. We have two types of discourse configuration: oppositional and dominant. For example, a dialogue presenting two conflicting positions can be called oppositional. The dominant discourses are in the foreground, while the oppositional are mostly in the background (Fairclough, 98). It is also interesting to see how variable or how stable a discourse is: the more established and conservative the society is, the more stable is the discourse (Fairclough, 65). This is also true in the case of the discourse about China in Africa in the Western media. In the case of the African media, since the African society is more unsettled, we deal with a changeable discourse. Another important aspect is the official discourse, or the discourse of the lifeworld.

The orders of discourse are being employed in presenting a social practice from a particular point of view (Fairclough, 61). The last stage intends to offer an explanation by means of social analysis, since discourse is regarded as a social practice, embedded in large scale hegemonic processes such as democratization. The social theory is employed to provide



a linguistic metadiscourse, such as human rights in one of our cases, in which the target is a technique of text analysis. The social structure affects discourse patterns, and the social dimensions of the texts are being evaluated morally and politically. Such analysis also aims at certain social effects such as revealing social abuse or giving power to the powerless (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 449). In order to get a better overview of the situation, the socio-cultural context also has to be dealt with, since it shapes the discourse practice, and the social realities are, in turn, shaped by the discourse practices. The context is understood according to different levels of abstraction: the immediate situational context and the wider context of institutional practices, within the wider frame of society and culture (Fairclough, 62). It can therefore be argued that discourse as a form of social language is in a dialectical relationship with the social. The critical discourse analysis combines cultural and social analysis with close textual analysis. The connection is essential since language use is constitutive of social identities, social relations, and systems of knowledge and belief (Fairclough, 55).

The embedding of China's engagement in Africa in the debates over resources, human rights, strategic economic investments, development aid, environmental protection, and civil society is something that I intend to follow closely while assessing the different perspectives in the media reports. I will evaluate a certain number of articles that I consider representative for the type of media discourse concerning China's engagement in Africa. The articles will range around four central topics corresponding to the four chapters: trade patterns, the debate over resources, human rights, and the view on the Sino-African relations. I will analyze the corpus of texts corresponding to each central topic according to the three stages of critical discourse analysis.

Critical discourse analysis makes the connection between the micro level of the texts, where I will analyze the vocabulary patterns and the grammatical and syntactical structures that reveal biases in the description, and the macro level social, political, and economic processes (Bloome and Talwalkar, 111). I will also try an interpretation based on patterns of intertextuality, as it is apparent that many articles draw on other articles in which expressions such as "pariah governments," "on safari" or "the scramble for resources," are pervasive. Such an occurrence shows the way that media discourse circulates. The lexical style, rhetorical devices, connotations, and associations will be examined. In some cases, expressions may be taken out of context to create a certain effect, or one sentence by an authority in the field may be cited without giving the entire context in which it was used. Consequently, many Chinese and Africans complain that the western newspapers present a one sided account of the Chinese involvement in Africa, focusing on the debate over

resources. Similarly, we can observe in the Chinese media reporting an overwhelming influence of the official discourse. Hence, Fairclough's emphasis on power by means of coercion and control seems quite adequate to assess the state of newspaper reporting on the same topic.

One has to take into consideration the fact that most newspaper articles go through what is called text processing and are not based on the personal experience of the journalists, but rather on textual transformations of discourses such as reports, teletexts, and documents (van Dijk, 6). Moreover, the media has an extraordinary impact on people's perceptions of certain facts. That is the reason why I chose this topic, since I experienced myself during a debate the way in which the western discourse on China's involvement in Africa has convinced some sinology students in my class. Some of them repeated overused rhetoric that circulates in the media without taking into consideration where the commentaries were coming from. While western sinology students tend to be more skeptical about the Chinese press, given the wide known media control of the Chinese government, they don't seem to remark the bias in the western media reporting, which sometimes portrays China as a threat. This observation can also refer to the larger audience, who most times take their information from the media reporting. As T.A. van Dijk affirms, people employ the media information for the formation of opinions and attitudes (van Dijk, 7).

There is an intricate relationship between policy makers and the decisions they take, the public opinion, which may influence the decision makers, and the media, which shapes the public opinion. Another approach would be that of Rosenau, who sees public opinion" in pyramidal terms, with the top level being occupied by the elite, the government and the press, the second level being the attentive public intellectuals and business people; and the third being the rest of the public (who are indifferent) (Alden 2006, 2-3). Official discourse clearly plays an essential role in the newspaper articles analyzed, since officials are often being quoted. I would therefore agree that the top level exerts great influence on the population. Also, China's interests in Africa may not be an issue of interest for the greater public, but more for intellectuals and business people. Nevertheless, these may or may not reflect the official discourse; thus a pyramidal relation subordinating the intellectuals and business people doesn't seem appropriate. We will see in the articles analyzed that an important number of academics and business people are actually being quoted and interviewed, so they may also be influential.

In addition to the economic and political focus, I would also like to add a human dimension to the discussion on how the Chinese encounters with the African people have

manifested in Africa and on the impact on the lives of the African people. I consider that often such articles do not focus on the human aspects enough, even though such politics and economic strategies deeply affect people's lives. I would therefore like to tackle that subject as well, noting how the Chinese way of doing business affects issues within the African civil society, such as corruption, unemployment, and human rights. Such a focus is important, especially since China claims to want to aid the people of Africa by doubling its aid to Africa.

Such discussion is also necessary in outlining the discrepancies between the official Chinese policy to Africa, which always stresses that they promote a policy of non-interference and respect to the sovereignty of the African states and focus on mutual economic benefits, and the realities of the effects of such a policy. There are inconsistencies between the apparently positive aspects pertaining to China's pragmatic economic pursuits and the disregard for the human factor that China has proven by often dealing with the so called "pariah governments" in order to secure the natural reserves that are necessary to ensure the continuation of China's formidable ascending economic trend. Nevertheless, one has to take an objective look at the overwhelming critique coming from the west, take into consideration the conflict of interests and note that the west has its own history of exploitation in Africa. Chinese reports will also be analyzed, although they tend to be mostly positive or defensive, and equal importance will be given to the African view, which is not always stressed enough in the western media reports.

### ***1.3 Structure and themes***

In the last decade, the Sino-African relations have undergone a new direction, one that encourages the economic engagement of China in Africa, noting a shift from the ideological anti-colonial stance starting with the 50s and Mao's Africa policy. The focus of this paper is to discuss China's involvement in Africa in the last couple of years. It is not the purpose of this paper to analyze the entire history of the Sino-African relations, but rather to focus on issues of great actuality, such as resources, human rights and economic tactics and pursuits. The increasing aid to Africa appears from the western media perspective to rely on other considerations, such as the strategic securing of contracts for state owned oil companies through a mix of business with the courting of the African elites. Such efforts undermine the interests of common African people and only serve the mutual benefit of China and of the African elites. Essential in this respect are China's pragmatic policy towards Africa which attaches no conditionality to its loans and aid, using this to gain advantages and contracts for

its state owned enterprises. I will, however, also treat the positive aspects of the Chinese aid, such as building infrastructure in a very efficient way.

The first chapter deals with the trade and investment patterns between China and Africa, namely with the increasing presence of the Chinese companies, multinationals and small shop owners in Africa, and with the possible consequences on the African labor force, with lots of African jobs lost and businesses undermined, and on the civil society with regards to problems such as corruption, work conditions, pollution and human rights. China's dam projects in African countries such as Sudan, Ethiopia, Zambia, Ghana, Mozambique, Nigeria and the Republic of Congo are raising critique regarding China's poor environmental and social standards. Most distressing is the displacing of people as in the case of the Merowe Dam in Sudan built by two Chinese companies. Nearly 50,000 people have been displaced from their fertile lands in the Nile Valley without their consent and have been sent into unfertile desert terrain, some of them ending up in refugee camps. I intend to assess not only such negative effects, but also the positive impact it might have on revitalizing the African economies, by building the much needed infrastructure such as roads, railways, dams, hospitals, schools, by offering technical assistance and by facilitating consumption goods for all people at lower prices. Crucial are the African articles which have an insight into the economic realities in Africa. The discrepancy between Western and Chinese perspectives is also relevant.

Given that the increased Chinese economic activities are strongly promoted by the Chinese government at national level, as well as by local authorities, I will analyze how China's increasing engagement in Africa is viewed in the western and African media, while also noting China's official position, which is mirrored in the Chinese newspapers. The question arises: is it a "win-win" situation, as claimed by the Chinese, or can it be described as "neo-colonialism disguised as South-South development"?

In regards to China's Africa policy, two debates stand out, namely China's so called "scramble for resources" and China's "non-interference policy" and the "human rights" issue. The second chapter focuses on the debate concerning China's securing of the African resources and raw materials. In the discussion regarding China's pursuit for resources, the following key states stand out: oil exporters Angola, Sudan and Nigeria, iron and manganese exporting Gabon, copper rich Zambia, coal and platinum extracting Zimbabwe and cobalt rich Congo. The question of resources tends to get a disproportional special attention in the western media; oil in particular seems to monopolize most of the articles, while aspects

dealing with the way African jobs are affected do not pose the same importance in the western media.

The last chapter deals with how the human rights issue is presented in the western media and the underlying perceptions of the human rights in the Western, Chinese and African world. From a western point of view, China's non-interference policy allows China to have controversial dealings with "pariah governments" such as the one in Sudan or Zimbabwe, to ensure its swift access to the much needed resources, especially oil. Most disturbing are the arms sales, the disregard for human rights and environmental considerations on the part of the Chinese, and the connections with the African elites which control the resources in some countries. Recently, a Chinese ship full of weapons heading for Zimbabwe has caused a stir, given the controversial election situation in Zimbabwe. However, China's understanding of human rights is also germane, since it tends to focus on the economic aspects and prefers the benefit of the community as a whole rather than the individual freedom of its people.

China's aid policy will also be tackled with. China presents an alternative to the western economic models; therefore, a number of African governments have adopted a "look east" policy, attracted by the lack of conditions in granting loans and by China's direct style of doing business and building infrastructures at a much faster pace than the western counterparts. This is owed to the fact that the Chinese assess projects only from an economic point of view, not concerning themselves with environmental and human factors. China's engagement in Africa is viewed in terms of neo-colonialism or opportunism, but at the same time there are also positive assessments, especially from the African side, in regards to the Chinese contribution to the construction of infrastructure, technical assistance, aid and Africa's economic growth.

#### ***1.4 Sources***

During the course of my analysis, especially in the final stages when the social context plays a vital role, I will rely on secondary literature such as "China in Africa" written by Chris Alden, as well as on the collections of essays "Africa in China's Global Strategy," edited by Marcel Kitissou, and "African perspectives on China in Africa," edited by Firoze Manji and Stephen Marks. I will also make use of the expertise of Yan Taylor with his various papers on the subject. The primary sources will consist of online articles retrieved mainly from databases such as Proquest, Lexis Nexis, and Cross Asia or directly from the online editions of Chinese, Western and African newspapers. When I talk of Western papers, I mainly refer

to American, British, French and German online newspapers articles. The total pool of articles consists of 241 articles.

## 2. Trade and investment patterns between China and Africa

China's trade interests in Africa have sparked an outpour of media articles tackling with the issue of Chinese investment in Africa and the possible impact on Africa, as well as on its western counterparts. Many of the articles dealing with the Chinese investment in Africa also engage in talks of resources and human rights as a result of some of the investment made by China in several African countries with rogue regimes. Nevertheless, these aspects will be dealt with in the subsequent chapters more thoroughly. For this chapter articles have been picked from a pool of 74 articles.

### *2.1 Western view of the Chinese economic interests in Africa*

#### **2.1.1 "Staking a Claim: China Flexes Economic Muscle throughout Burgeoning Africa"**

The first article to be analyzed is taken from The Wall Street Journal 2005. The title clearly shows a skeptical view of the Chinese economic interests: "Staking a Claim: China Flexes Economic Muscle Throughout Burgeoning Africa; Beijing Forges Deep Alliances With War-Torn Nations, Countering U.S. Influence; A Dam Gets Built on the Nile" ( Leggett, A1). The first stage of our analysis contains a textual analysis. The headline begins with a metaphor, "**China Flexes Economic Muscle,**" which stands for China's increasing economic power in Africa.

The article goes on to depict China's reaction in comparison with the US withdrawal after the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea in the late 1990s, where Beijing saw it "as an opportunity to expand its influence" by dispatching engineers, businessmen, teachers, or granting credits. "It's all part of Beijing's broad **push** into Africa. Aiming to secure access to the continent's vast natural resources, China is forging deep economic, political and military ties with most of Africa's 54 countries. There's more at stake than just fuel for an economic juggernaut... It's also thinking long-term, cultivating desperately poor nations to serve as markets for its products decades down the road" (Leggett, A1). The article further names

other building projects such as the railroad network in oil-rich Nigeria. Leggett then speaks about “Beijing's policy of actively encouraging its companies and citizens **to set up shop in Africa** at a record pace.” A comparison is again made with the US, which doesn't allow doing business with outlaw regimes. Unlike the US, “Beijing **expresses no qualms** about dealing with the continent's most brutal and corrupt leaders. Instead, Chinese leaders prefer to view their relationship through a North-South prism, emphasizing the need for developing nations to band together against the industrialized West. “China is ready to coordinate its positions with African countries... with a view to safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of developing countries. Indeed, by reaching out to African leaders who are shunned by Western nations, and **throwing money at projects Western companies avoid**, Chinese officials and businessmen say they are able to secure more business deals and build political influence at a far more rapid pace” ( Leggett, A1). Moreover, the article describes the benefits of providing aid and investment to the sanctioned Zimbabwe and to Mr. Mugabe's regime, such as for China National Aero-Technology Import and Export Corp., or Catic., which “signed a series of contracts valued at \$300 million to rebuild Zimbabwe's electricity grid” ( Leggett, A1). “We see Zimbabwe as a great opportunity, a great place to make money,” says Wang Dawei, the company's vice president. “One of the first people dispatched to Ethiopia by Catic, Wu Ping, acknowledges “paying the occasional bribe,” a fact denied by a Catic official. The article describes ironically how Mr. Wu now “**cruises around Addis Ababa in a Toyota Land Cruiser and presides over a growing business empire.**” The key to his success lies in “deliberately underbidding the contract. Though he will lose money on the deal, he says it's all part of Catic's strategy. Deng Guoping, general manager of China Road and Bridge Corp. in Ethiopia, is skeptical about making money here, since “he is instructed to slice projected profit margins so thin -- about 3% -- that losses are inevitable, given perennial cost overruns in Africa. “We're a government company and the Chinese government wants us here building things,” he says (Leggett A1). The article further criticizes the fact that Chinese aid worth of \$4 million intended to build homes for flood victims ended up in the hands of Ethiopia's Ministry of Defense, which used the houses for its own personnel, motivating the flood victims didn't like the apartments. This article is a perfect example of a one-sided presentation of Chinese investment in Africa. It was selected from the Wall Street Journal, which up until 2003 had the highest circulation rate in the United States. Negative aspects of the Chinese business methods are foregrounded, such as taking advantage of war torn countries, dealing with rogue regimes, paying bribes, while the only positive commentary which comes in relation to the building of a road network in Ethiopia which reaches Sudan

and Kenia is backgrounded among criticism of the government's apparent strategy of encouraging state owned enterprises to underbid contracts. More noticeable is that the Chinese investment is given no recognition for any kind of development in Ethiopia.

The voices in this article belong to the Chinese investors themselves, such as Wu Ping and Deng Guoping, but their claims are framed in a way to use them against their own interests. Two American voices also appear, that of Walter Kansteiner, a former U.S. assistant secretary of state for African affairs, stating "China has simply exploded into Africa, as in 'Katie-bar-the-door stuff,'" and that of Ed Royce, a California Republican and vice chairman of a House subcommittee that deals with Africa, who stresses the fact that the U.S. needs to deal with the Chinese competition: "China's increasing engagement in Africa is a concern and we need to focus on it before Beijing becomes fully established." Chinese official sources are also mentioned, with premier Wen Jiabao and Li Xiaobing, a senior Africa official at China's Ministry of Commerce, expressing their view of China's economic policy in Africa.

The second stage of the analysis looks at the article from the point of view of the discourse practice. Instances of interdiscursivity between this article and other western articles are obvious from the title. Similar titles read: "China woos African trade" (Ford, 2006) and "Finance And Economics: On safari; African financial markets" (The Economist 2007, 86). The expression "on safari" appears in countless articles and it's an example of manifest intertextuality. "The scramble for *Africa* just became institutionalized" (Wright, 464), a passage from an article in *Euromoney*, is a further example of interdiscursivity. Similar to "on safari," this expression is also pervasive in countless articles. Both are normally used for the quest for resources, but here it has been adapted to the quest for financial markets. It has a direct negative connotation, suggesting that China is on a hunt, trying to take advantage of Africa's financial markets. The same expression, "a second *"scramble for Africa"* is under way," appears in an article of the *Telegraph*, the UK based broadsheet newspaper which converted to tabloid style short format. The article is even more inventive in its critique of China and poses the question from the title: "Why China is trying to colonize Africa?" The article starts with a metaphorical discourse which attributes China the characteristics of an octopus, which is holding Africa economically in its "tentacles." The article states: "**China's economic tentacles extend deeper into Africa**"... "If its economic boom is to be sustained, Beijing must find more raw materials and new markets for manufactured goods" (Blair, 2007).

Another example of interdiscursivity is the one related to the western interests which have been hampered by China's involvement in Africa. China-Africa economic involvement sometimes appears as a sort of conspiracy, such as in the metaphorical title "China And



Africa's Mutual Back Scratching - A 10-fold Increase In Bilateral Trade Means China Is Set To Eclipse Europe And The US As The Main Foreign Actor In Africa” (The Banker, 2007). This type of interdiscursivity stresses the western worries, as in the following headline: “China-Africa bond worries U.S., EU” (Washington Times, 2008).

The discourse on bribery is present here when Wu Ping’s recognition of “paying the occasional bribe” also appears in other articles. One article in the *Mail&Guardian online* edition states: “Critics say China has ignored corruption and rights abuses and undermined international efforts to isolate rogue regimes” (Becks, 2006). Another article where a similar discourse appears, this time constituting the dominant discourse, is called “Bribery helps China buy new friends overseas.” The article starts with the expression: “Corruption is the name of the game.” The Chinese are behaving, according to the report, even more corruptly abroad. In the survey carried out by Transparency International, China ranked second after India in paying bribes overseas. “Not only does China invest in highly corrupt markets where it has an advantage over Western investors, it invests in places that many other investors won't touch” (Backman, 8). This last statement is also another example of interdiscursivity, which reminds us of a statement from our article: “by reaching out to African leaders who are shunned by Western nations, and **throwing money at projects Western companies avoid**, Chinese officials and businessmen say they are able to secure more business deals” (Leggett, A1)

The article ends with a critique that the houses intended for flood victims have ended up in the hands of the Ministry of Defense for its own personnel. In a similar case, “Chinese-built mansions for Angolan ministers loom grotesquely on Luanda's hillsides, just above shantytowns, where millions of refugees took up residence during the worst years of war” (Johnson, 2008). According to an article in *The Telegraph*, China helped design a new mansion for Mugabe, Zimbabwe’s controversial leader, in the style of a Chinese pagoda. Moreover, the Harare national headquarters of Zanu-PF, Mugabe’s party, was also built by China (Blair, 2007).

Even from the headline, “China Flexes Economic Muscle,” we recognize a metaphorical discourse that of physical power applied plastically to express the power of China. This is also a testament of an external relation between the economic discourse and the discourse on physical power. The article presents a tendency of conversalization of the discourse, made clear in the following expressions: “to set up shop in Africa,” “expresses no qualms,” “throwing money at projects Western companies avoid,” “cruises around Addis Ababa in a Toyota Land Cruiser and presides over a growing business empire.” Such

expressions are proof for the commodification of the media discourse, which aims at reaching a wider number of readers by means of an accessible language, even in a newspaper like the *Wall Street Journal*. It is also indicative of a certain entertainment content which has to be satisfied to boost the sales. This is an example of a stable discourse with negative connotations in a well established American society.

The configuration of discourses presents an interesting case of blending of the dominant negative discourses such as the discourse on corruption, on competition against American interests, of shrewd Chinese investment strategies, with the backgrounded oppositional positive discourses on China's economic policy expressed mostly by short statements of the Chinese officials themselves and not by the author. The implicit suggestion is that such positions are conspicuous. This article also presents a blending of the broader political and economical discourse.

While researching for this study, I have discovered two short studies on the problem of discourse in the western media concerning China in Africa. One study was conducted by the Hong Kong based academics Barry Sautman and Yan Hairong, the other by the Cambridge lecturer Dr. Emma Mawdsley, who focuses on the British newspapers. During the course of my analysis, I will compare the results of my study with some of their conclusions regarding the western media discourse on this issue, as a reinforcement of the one sidedness of this kind of discourse.

Sautman and Yan suggest a comparative approach be used when criticizing China's policy towards Africa. I find the proposal appropriate, since a more objective analysis would result if western analysts viewed China's involvement in comparison with the Western involvement in Africa. What is constantly omitted in the western articles is any reference to the western actions. Thus, by missing the comparative approach, readers see "only trees but not the forest." The scholars identify the main problem with the western critical discourse to be the de-contextualization for ideological reasons. They further point out to the superficial analyses which portray the western actions in Africa in mostly positive terms. Moreover, such analyses reflect the "Western elites' perception of their national interests or moral superiority, especially as these impinge on putative strategic competition with China" (Sautman and Yan, May 2007, 16). This last observation is also supported by Fairclough's approach to media discourse analysis, which also points out to the influence of the official discourse on the media reports. It further supports my own conclusions regarding the competition discourse, where western interests, in our case American interests, are always an issue.

In such a comparative analysis, Sautman and Yan assess that "China is thus not likely

to fare worse than the West in any thoroughgoing evaluation of how foreign investments impinge on development and human rights in Africa” (May 2007, 16). Besides, regarding the issue of exports and imports that China is being criticized about, the former for the low quality products and the latter for the resources imports, Sautman and Yan suggest that trade in money and people should also be taken into consideration, a conclusion reached by my analysis as well. “Western banks have traded secrecy and interest to the exporters of about 40% of Africa's private wealth. The accomplices of such capital flight and tax evasion by corrupt African officials are in London and Zurich, not Beijing” (Africa All Party Parliamentary Group, 20). As we have seen in our analysis, there are numerous reports about Chinese takeovers and investments in the banking sector, which is viewed as competition. None of those articles make reference to the type of western involvement in the African banking sector which is presented here.

As to the issue of people, “the main Western states have traded citizenship for the skills of professionals, especially doctors and nurses, trained in, but now largely lost to Africa” (Sautman and Yan, May 2007, 16). The western media sometimes presents cases such as that of a Malawian hospital whose doctors and nurses all fled to England, leaving only one doctor behind to take care of hundreds of patients. Nevertheless, such reports do not appear in the western discourse on China-Africa, to compare such realities to the Chinese medical assistance and China trained African specialists who have returned to Africa, in comparison with western trained African specialists, who haven't. This is, in my opinion, another serious factor which impedes African development. As Fairclough puts it, in our critical discourse analysis it is also important to emphasize the missing parts, as they could be essential.

The question is on what grounds are western media assessments based when judging the Chinese investment in such negative terms, given that they offer no term of comparison with the western investment. The rhetoric of positive western aid and investment is not enough, because Africa's financial difficulties suggest that western aid and investment, which had many years of influence prior to the emerging Chinese influence in the region, did not solve the underlying problems, but was merely self serving.

The third stage of the analysis intends to give the wider socio-economical context of the issues dealt with in the article. My analysis does not intend to discredit the facts presented in the *Wall Street Journal* article. I only aim to show that it presents China's economical involvement in Africa from a particular point of view, in view of the American interests, and does not give enough credit to the positive aspects of the Chinese investment. In my opinion, Chinese investment in Africa can not be objectively presented in absolute terms. It neither has

an entirely positive impact on the continent, nor a totally negative one. In the assessment of it, I believe one must take into consideration both its beneficial and harmful effects. Clearly from the point of view of western interests, it cannot be assessed in an optimistic way. In my assessment of the wider socio-economic and political context, I will rely on academic secondary literature based on the opinions of analysts and academics, and will try to balance the negative and positive positions, by bringing forth what I consider to be the most compelling arguments.

Chris Alden's study of China in Africa clearly corroborates the fact that the Chinese multinational corporations have employed diplomacy strategies and their development aid to Africa to boost their bid for new markets. Moreover, they have cleverly made use of infrastructure projects, such as road construction projects, to ensure the access to resources. But at the same time, it is essential to note that China's state owned enterprises and their way of doing business is very similar to other SOEs active in Africa such as the French Elf Aquitaine in Gabon or Angola (Alden 2007, 37-38).

James Reilly and Wu Na also agree that, together, the Chinese leaders and diplomats have succeeded in creating a favorable environment for Chinese investment in Africa. Furthermore, the economic bureaucratic agencies actively encourage investments of the Chinese SOEs in Africa through the going out strategy 走出去 *zouchuqu* (Reilly and Wu, 132). The perspective of this article is different from our analyzed article, since the innovative Chinese diplomacy techniques are the subject of admiration.

Indeed, China's economic strategy relies on competitive political activity and the willingness to deal with any government, on economical advantage and development assistance. As a result of its government influence, Chinese SOEs are indeed able to benefit from it on such a closed market like the African one (Alden 2007, 41-42). The Chinese and the African governments they deal with sign all around package deals that provide the Africa governments with cash, investment, cheap credit, technical expertise and training, and benefits such as new presidential palaces and stadiums, or cheap infrastructure such as roads, dams, and railways. Such was the case of Angola which has received a \$6 billion line of credit since 2004 to finance projects such as hospitals, schools, roads, bridges, housing, office buildings, training programs, and the laying of fiber-optic cable.

According to some critics, some African leaders, such as the ruling party in Angola or the Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles, have been drawn by the Chinese model of development, involving autocratic and some unaccountable political economy. Nevertheless, one has to say that China owes its amazing development to its opening and to the reduction of its autocracy

(Akwe, 2007). The Chinese model of growth is based on trade and investment, and any investment in infrastructure is beneficial for Africa and is welcomed by the African leaders, but is also coupled with a certain suspicion from the West. Additionally, Chinese winning bids are also due to the low labor costs and to the thin profits which amount to less than 10 % (Sautman and Yan, Dec. 2007, 80-81), in comparison with western firms which favor profits higher than 15 %.

From a Chinese perspective, China Africa cooperation is based on pragmatic cooperation and on equality and mutual benefit (Liu, 78). Still, western skepticism on this issue is high, and some analysts are asking themselves whether it really is a win-win situation or just fresh neo-colonialism disguised as South-South development (Servant, 105). Interestingly enough, this exact phrase appears as a form of manifest intertextuality in countless articles in this exact form. Even the title of Servant's article "China's Trade Safari in Africa" can be found in numerous articles which probably draw from academic papers that previously used the expression. Most of the times, China's depiction of itself as Africa's friend in need is dismissed in western media as propaganda intended to gain the favor of the African elites (Sautman and Yan Dec. 2007, 83).

In response to claims of deepening the corruption in Africa, Sautman and Yan find the accusation that China is undermining the so called Western efforts to put an end to corruption doubtful, since packaged Chinese loans going mostly in infrastructure projects are less likely than Western aid to being drained by corruption (May 2007, 5). Furthermore, western companies in Africa are not obliged to display transparency, despite the western rhetoric of transparency. The Chinese business strategies are the main focus in the western articles, rather than the bids of western oil companies accompanied by bonuses which go up to millions of dollars granted to the governments. According to investigations, the Western Multinationals paid millions of dollars to Angolan officials' private accounts (Sautman and Yan, May 2007, 6).

### **2.1.2. "Lessons Learned from China in Africa"**

The article is taken from an African-American magazine *Ebony* and it therefore provides a different focus on the issue of China's economic involvement in Africa, adding the more human side to the story, dealing with cases of Chinese businessmen and assessing the possible negative effects on the African work force. The article starts with the following head note written in capital letters: "WHILE AMERICA - AND THE WORLD - SIT IDLY BY, **THE ASIAN SUPERPOWER** IS SLOWLY AND QUIETLY CEMENTING ITS PLACE

ON THE CONTINENT ... AND IN HISTORY” (Brea, 68). The article begins with the successful business story of Mr. Zhang, who is having a profitable business on a chicken farm in Zambia, registering an average profit of \$480,000 a year, a big difference from \$400, the average winnings of a peasant from Jiangxi, his native place. The article starts to tackle the issue from a concrete case of a Chinese peasant, thus also giving it a voice. Nevertheless, the example stands to point out not only his success, but the threat it poses to American and African interests. This is a kind of statement taken out of its context and placed in a totally different one in order to prove a point which is actually against the position of the statement. It is a common strategy among western articles on China in Africa.

The article then gets into issues of politics and economics, presenting the rising Chinese presence in Africa: **“While the West continues to look at Africa as a charity case, hundreds of thousands of mainland Chinese are flocking to Africa** to capitalize on the continent's vast stores of untapped opportunity” (Brea, 68). This article also emphasizes the high profile of the Chinese government, whose **“wooing of Africa has inspired both hope and fear, hope that China's arrival heralds the end of decades of economic stagnation and Western paternalism, fear that beneath the rhetoric of friendship lurks a new colonial intent”** (Brea, 68). Interestingly enough, here African perspectives on the failures of the West are also being rendered in a combination with the reaction to the so-called “Chinese colonial intent.” The article points out to the fact that **“China has been quick to meddle** where they shouldn't - it threatened to withdraw all investment from Zambia if Michael Sata, the pro-Taiwan opposition candidate won the last presidential election.” Thus, the Chinese stance that **“its money comes without internal meddling”** is being refuted. Again, a suggestion is being made that the money doesn't come free either, but it facilitates the access of Chinese SOEs to oil, mining and timber.

Nevertheless, stance is being taken against those who label China's involvement in Africa as just a **“resource grab”**. Emphasis is being placed on the new private businesses and entrepreneurs that are drawn by the potential of Africa's growing market. The financial investment of the state-owned Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, the world's richest bank, which bought a 20 percent stake in South Africa's Standard Bank, is being mentioned in making the prediction that China will soon surpass the World Bank as the biggest money lender.

The Chinese are assessed through their business sense and pragmatism: “Most importantly, the Chinese are a deeply practical people, too practical to bother with civilizing missions when there's money to be made. An American sees images of a poor black child

running barefoot on a dirt road and he might call the number at the bottom of the TV screen to give a dollar. A Chinese hears stories from his cousin in Kinshasa about a continent of poor black children running barefoot on dirt roads and imagines a billion potential shoe consumers or hundreds of thousands of cities and villages who might be searching for new construction contractors, at the right price. Where the West sees poverty and need, the Chinese see opportunity” (Brea, 70).

The article gives voice to another Chinese entrepreneur from Fujian, Liu Feng, who has lived in Congo, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa, trading everything from T-shirts to copper ore, who is basically saying that Africa offers much more opportunities because it’s poor and there isn’t as much competition as in China. This time his statement is used to confirm the fact that “Africa’s economies are high-risk, but offer the highest rate of return on investment of any region in the world” (Brea, 70). Unlike the previous editorial, Jennifer Brea’s article suggests that Africans also have a potential to profit from the Chinese investment, because of the advantageous offers for building “hydroelectric power dams, railways, roads and fiber-optic cables, and at better prices than Western contractors could ever offer”, which accompany oil bids. Despite the corrupt governments, the article sees infrastructure projects as being “a public good, with the potential to benefit ordinary people.” More positive aspects are being enumerated: “Private-sector investment can mean more local jobs, the transfer of valuable management and technical skills, and more equity available for indigenous business ventures” (Brea, 71).

The author is not surprised that African leaders are looking to China for lessons, since China managed to lift the poverty burden on millions of people. At the same time, the author cautions about the risks and the costs: “But I’m also afraid because I see the costs of that success, paid daily by millions of workers who toil under the most inhumane conditions, in the species that have already gone extinct, in the rivers polluted and ancient monuments destroyed by these deeply practical people. For progress. So when dozens of miners, most barely old enough to be called men, are blown to bits in a preventable accident because the Zambian government couldn’t bother to force a Chinese explosives company to comply with local safety regulations; or when thousands of acres of Gabon’s rainforest - a paradise on earth I am told - are felled by a Chinese logging company without the government’s permission, it’s not racism or colonialism, it’s equal treatment. The Chinese are exporting, for better and for worse, what they know” (Brea, 72). The article ends with attributing the responsibility to protect their interests and to take advantage of the Chinese investment to the Africans themselves.

We now move into the second stage of the analysis, which examines the different discourses within the article. The writing style of this article is clearly different from the one in the Wall Street Journal, instances of conversationalization of the media discourse being more pronounced, given that this is an article in a magazine intended for African-Americans from all backgrounds, not necessarily intellectuals. Clear examples are the following: “**Chinese are flocking to Africa**”, “**resource grab**” which has been preferred to the overused “**scramble for resources**”, “**China has been quick to meddle**” instead of possibly saying to interfere. On a more positive note, all commercial reasons aside, the article also provides access to a larger audience by its accessible style. In that way, the theme can be made known to a wider number of readers. One example of this accessible style is the metaphorical discourse on the case of the poor bare footed children. In my opinion, it stands for the larger American and Chinese aid strategies, the Americans offering money and the Chinese seeing the situation in Africa as a business opportunity.

The idea of lesson learning, and that the US needs to come up with a strategic partnership of its own for Africa because it also needs Africa, is also present in a documented article of the New York Times, which presents the impressions of James Traub after visiting Angola. Nevertheless, he focuses more on whether Chinese development model can help Angola reduce poverty for its population and explores the intimate relation with the authoritarian Angolan regime: “a model of development that strengthens the hand of authoritarian leaders and does little, if anything, to empower the poor is a bad long-term strategy” (Traub, 75).

The article states “Development by China looks like a catastrophic mistake to the Western experts and institutions that have scrutinized, invested in and at times despaired of Angola,” (Traub, 75) and yet the author appreciates that Chinese money is welcomed especially for infrastructure projects. After the years of war and the “mutual disgust” between IMF and Angola, China seemed like a benefactor. Another instance of intertextuality regarding American interests also appears in this article: “And China has already begun, in myriad ways, to serve the interests of these emerging clients, while the United States, preoccupied with terrorism, has seen its dominant status slip” (Traub, 75). The article criticizes the way the Chinese are trying to please African dictators: “Africa is dotted with gigantic sports complexes and People's Halls built by Chinese engineers at the behest of dictators” (Traub, 75). The author also tackles the issue of an alternative development model offered by China to Africa, one “driven from above and powered by high-tech investment, vastly more gratifying and reassuring to third-world elites than the Western gospel of



unleashing growth through democratic and marketplace reform” (Traub, 75).

The article describes the still shattered poverty of Angolans, but states it cannot be blamed on China, but rather on the consequences of colonialism. The author also recounts instances of contact with the Chinese workers. According to the report, the Chinese in Angola are present but don't have so much contact with the local people. The article also cites a Chinese engineer building a railway who explains that they cannot force Angolans to work as hard as the Chinese, and that they have been teaching the Angolans technical skills. “We taught them how to mix concrete’, he told me. When I expressed amazement that he had had to impart this skill, concrete being pretty much the only building material used in Angola, Tu said, ‘They didn't even know bricklaying.’” (Traub, 75) Apparently, there had been so little building activity until the last few years that even the most basic skills had been lost. Or, alternatively, the Chinese paid so poorly that they couldn't attract qualified workers.

Returning to our intertextual analysis, we can still trace it in relation to other discourse practices as well. For instance, the idea that in Africa the opinions are split appears in more articles, and probably reflects the ambiguity of the situation. The articles suggest that the “wooing of Africa has inspired both hope and fear.” Another article from the *New York Times* also says: “Africans view the influx of Chinese with a mix of anticipation and dread.” This is a further case of intertextuality (French, 1). China's Africa aid policy is being criticized in the article because it offers an advantage to the Chinese SOEs. Similarly, the *Economist* ironically states: “Chinese government officials regularly waltz across Africa in an effort to encourage and support Chinese companies that want to do business in the region” (Economist.com, 1).

In an article by the *Sunday Telegraph*, the poor conditions of the Zambian workers are being presented extensively. Here we are provided with an example of intertextuality, as suggested by the article's title: “Africa discovers dark side of Chinese master” (Freeman, 2007). The article first mocks Hu Jintao's annulment of the visit to the Chinese plant in Zambia for fear of demonstrations. Then it goes on to say: “However, the enthusiasm of Africa's ruling elites for a non-Western benefactor is not shared by the miners of Chambishi township, whose Chinese masters arrived after the mine had lain shut for more than a decade” (Freeman, 2007). The voice of a Zambian miner appears saying that he is glad the Chinese “have created employment but they should improve the social conditions.” “If they are taking our copper they should give something back to the community” (Freeman, 2007). Nevertheless, also regarding the mining unrest in Zambia, a Guardian article cites Chris Alden in saying that “Zambia was a big wake-up” and that “the Chinese have demonstrated that they've been pretty responsive” (Beck, 2006). This is an example where experts such as Chris

Alden are given voice in the media articles to give credibility to the article. The responsiveness of the Chinese in this case suggests that they may learn from past mistakes.

While the article from the *Wall Street Journal* clearly fell into the “China threat” type of discourse, largely promoted in the western media and academic circles, the second article analyzed presents a mixture of warning and admiration to China’s failures and achievements in Africa. It is also intended as a lesson for both the American as well as the African sides. Most of the statements attributed to Chinese businessmen, peasants and Chinese officials are being framed in a way to present a contrary point of view, to depict their involvement in Africa in negative terms. Nevertheless, we don’t notice the same prominent backgrounding of the oppositional discourse of positive Chinese investment as in the *Wall Street Journal* article. Instead, the Chinese are being allowed to speak, their statements only to be later refuted with some convincing arguments. The assessment here differs from the one in the other article, since it views the Chinese involvement as being strictly a business one, a view which I agree with. The dominant discourse here is that the Chinese presence in Africa is simply business motivated, which can have both a positive and a negative impact on the African society, as stated in the article itself.

The configuration of discourses here presents an interesting case, since the article blends in oppositional and dominant discourses, which appear on this theme in the western media. The dominant discourses are related to the Chinese business strategies, which also involve “internal meddling,” or to the negative effects of the Chinese approach to business without considering the impact upon the African population. Oppositional instances of discourses are a critique to Western, and especially American, failed policies in regards to Africa and the positive results of the Chinese investment in Africa.

Emma Mawdsley suggests in her study on the British media narratives that media accounts tend to concentrate disproportionately on Chinese state firms and agencies. “Allied to this is a tendency to isolate Chinese firms as nationally discrete entities. In fact, joint enterprises with both African and western firms are becoming more common” (Mawdsley, 1). Such an assessment is congruent with the findings of my analysis as well, as we have seen in the above analyzed articles. Moreover, Mawdsley draws attention to the fact that most press reports tend to refer to the “the Chinese” as an entity, not considering the fact that Chinese communities and actors in Africa are of various origins and have different roles and interests (Mawdsley, 1). Clearly, this tendency to refer to “the Chinese” or “China”, as if the Chinese in Africa shared the same interests and were all part of a big plot is misleading.

Proceeding to the last stage of the analysis, we investigate the social context of what

was affirmed in the article. The issue of terrible work conditions for the African workers employed by the Chinese firms and on its poor environmental standards is also being raised by a number of African NGOs, which makes it difficult for the Chinese to deny them (Alden 2007, 91). The Chinese weak and environmental requirements, as well as the disregard for human rights protection and the lack of transparency, has allowed some countries to evade the international pressure to reduce corruption. A concrete example is the logging in the Zambezia province in Mozambique, where the Chinese are practicing illegal deforestation, as well as manipulating the statistics (Lemos, 64). The same thing is happening in Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, and Cameroon, where the Chinese are encouraging the disregard of the law by not paying taxes and by committing logging violations (Chan-Fishel, 146). Another African pundit warns that trade should not come at the expense of environmental sustainability and resource depletion (Chidaushe, 115). Nevertheless Sautman and Yan point out that in regards to illegal timber, it is true that China does it, but so does the EU (76).

Furthermore, the Mphanda Nkuwa dam, a Chinese project, has caused environmental problems due to its weak environmental and social assessment. The Chinese have disregarded the fact that it is built in a seismic zone, because they mostly assess projects in economical terms (Lemos, 67-69). Unfortunately, China has gotten a serious warning as a result of the latest Sichuan earthquake as to the importance of seismic activities in building dams. So my prediction is that it might change its strategies on the long run.

Nevertheless, the *New York Times* article painted a different picture of the working ethics of the Chinese in Angola. The Chinese engineer was aware of the differences in working standards between the Angolans and the Chinese. Such a report might suggest that we have to be cautious not to generalize about the “Chinese master” as the *Sunday Telegraph* article puts it.

We have seen in the article published in the *New York Times*, a newspaper which trails in circulation only to *USA Today* and the *Wall Street Journal*, the American view on the Chinese development model in Angola. It is, however, important to mention that China’s growing influence in Angola has sparked much speculation about China’s intentions in the Western media and has often been misunderstood, but from both Chinese and Angolan perspectives, it is based on a pragmatic and strategic partnership. The construction sector offers Chinese construction firms good opportunities for profitable investments due to the low level of competition there. More importantly, China benefits by gaining access to energy resources, since Angola is a major producer of oil in Africa. Correspondingly, the Angolans are attracted by the strategic post conflict infrastructure projects which were not available

from the West, as well as by better conditions for commercial loans, such as low interest rates in comparison with those from the international financial institutions, with which Angola has poor relations. Above all, Chinese investment coming after 27 years of conflict when Angola urgently needed FDI helped support Angola's economic growth and the poverty reduction through the construction and rehabilitation of the electrical and hydro-electrical infrastructure, which provided access to electricity for as much as 60,000 Angolans in Luanda (Campos, 18-19). The water supply systems across Angola have also been improved with the help of the Chinese. There are, therefore, many positive aspects which can also benefit the Angolan population as a result of Chinese direct investment.

Nevertheless one should keep in mind that Chinese FDI in Africa pales in comparison with investment from Singapore, India and Malaysia. Furthermore, considering that the overall Asian FDI in 2002-2004 amounts only to \$ 1,2 billion a year when contrasted to the 2003 British FDI of \$ 30 billion, American 2003 FDI of \$ 19 billion, French FDI of \$11,5 billion, the Chinese reports on the Chinese FDI are evidently embellished (Guerrero and Manji, 1-2).

## ***2.2 The African view of the Chinese economic interests in Africa***

As stated above, similar discourses are common in the western newspaper articles. One question that arises though is whether the African articles present the same type of discourses or whether instances of oppositional discourses are more pregnant. I will closely follow both patterns of western discourse of politics and economics, as well as contrasting discourse patterns, in the articles written by African analysts.

### **2.2.1. "China's time is right"**

The first article analyzed represents an exclusive interview with Adama Gaye, the author of "China-Africa: The Dragon and the Ostrich" featured in Stephen Williams' magazine *New African*. "Contrary to the West, which tends to look at Africa as a basket case, China's view is that Africa is a market full of potentialities and on the verge of take-off. This, I propose, demonstrated a dragon's attitude, whilst Africa acted as the ostrich, burying its head in the sand and refusing to face its own challenges" (Gaye, 2007, 144). The ostrich attitude Adama Gaye is speaking about pertains to the failure to implement the democratic processes and good governance. Asked about the effects of colonialism, Adama Gaye responds: "The colonial powers did not do anything to create the conditions and the basis for

economic development of Africa. They left governments that were neo-colonial in outlook in the thrall of the technocrats at the IMF and the World Bank with no home-grown ideas, nor initiatives to transform the economy” (Gaye 2007, 144). Unlike in the western articles, the African reporter examines the differences between Chinese and western business strategies in Africa.

Gaye mentions the capitalistic methods that the Chinese rapidly learned, the pursuit of their national interest, and the Chinese model. He emphasizes that the Chinese “come in with soft-loans, with infrastructure project proposals, with a complete package. They tend to provide responses, solutions, including financial and technologically-adapted ones to their African partners, whereas these days, the West, mainly driven by the US, is security conscious: and rapidly losing ground against China in Africa” (Gaye, 2007, 145). “Another difference would be the funds which the Chinese are bringing to Africa, while Western corporations come to Africa without financial support and reluctant to bring in the infrastructural support that Africa needs” (Gaye, 2007, 145).

Asked about the good cooperation between African and Chinese leaders, Adama Gaye responds metaphorically: **“Birds of a feather flock together!”** Gaye explains that the “soft power strategy” pleases its African partners, as it proposes to engage a real partnership, to establish a mutually beneficial relationship. The Western powers, on the contrary, come with a heavy-handed approach, like in the case of the U.S. linking its commercial proposals with various preconditions, such as demanding military cooperation to counter or contain global terrorism. “They are not prepared to commit investment without African countries surrendering elements of their sovereignty” (Gaye, 2007, 145). Gaye states that China doesn’t impose such preconditions and that it has respected all its commitments in Africa, such as the number of hospitals built, the number of roads constructed, the level of debts cancelled. “China does not promise the moon, but ensures it can deliver its promises” (Gaye, 2007, 145).

As a prediction to the future of China-Africa relationship, Gaye appreciates that it is a long term one. The partnership is different from others Africa has had, due to “a creative state-centric policy of non-interference and respect for African sovereignty” (Gaye, 2007, 145) which eases the relationship. Gaye strongly considers that China won’t just please “rogue leaders”, but he is sure the Chinese came to Africa because they appreciated the sort of market it offered for their manufactured goods as well as the fact that Africa is a key supplier of natural resources. Moreover, he opines that the Chinese long-term direct foreign investment is the type of investment that Africa was missing. He considers it is Africa’s responsibility to set the right conditions in order to benefit from its deals with China. In this respect he names the

African Union “the biggest ostrich of all”, since it was not able to deal with the threats and opportunities brought by China to Africa (Gaye, 2007, 145).

He believes that the Western neo-liberal model has failed in Africa, and that “the West has lost its credibility owing to its inconsistencies and the poor results returned by the policies of its sponsored institutions, such as the World Bank and the IMF”(Gaye 2007, 145). Moreover, the West is accused of practicing double standards, since it has not respected many of its promises on trade, development aid and debt relief. “They continue to lecture, when they knew well that it was utter hypocrisy to be chastising a continent when they did so much to hinder its development, by assisting corporate predators to exploit “(Gaye 2007, 145).

We can identify metaphorical discourse displayed in the analogies of China depicted as a “dragon” and Africa and the AU as an “ostrich” bearing its head in the sand. Here, characteristics of animals are being used to denote qualities of states: power and failure. China’s labeling as Dragon is not new, “Dragon in the Bush” being a well known expression in the foreign policy papers on China in Africa by George Yu (Yu, 1018). Another article of Adama Gaye, “China in Africa,” takes an oppositional discourse to the “Dragon in the Bush” western discourse: “the Dragon is not on safari” (Gaye 2008, 13).

There are several instances of interdiscursivity between this article and a piece that appeared in *Africa Monitor*. First of all, the discourse on colonialism plays an essential role in the African analysts’ assessment of China. Whereas the previous interview assesses the negative impact of Western colonialism on Africa, this article states that China, on the contrary, does not pose a colonial threat and that, from an African perspective, “There are several reasons why China is attractive to Africa. Firstly, the political aspect of the relationship cannot be underestimated. China has no colonial baggage and, more importantly, never totally abandoned its ‘third world’ policy. This South-South solidarity is echoed in African states, which would like to see an end to unipolarity” (Africa Monitor, 6). Moreover, the discourse pertaining to the beneficial Chinese investment that was appreciated in the first article for its long term perspectives appears here as well: “investment flows are immensely important for many poor African states” (Africa Monitor, 6).

While in the western media discourse talk of the Chinese investment appears from the point of view of affected western economic interests, in most African articles it is praised for its potentially positive effects. The discourse on the Chinese economic model as preferred to the western model appears in both articles. The first one says it attracts Africans because it lifted millions of people out of poverty, while the western neo-liberal model failed in Africa, and the second article explains the attraction because “it offers an alternative to the broader

Washington Consensus” (Africa Monitor, 6). Furthermore, what Gaye named as the heavy-handed approach of the West, which links its deals to “preconditions” represents an important discourse in the African analysts’ assessments. We can, for instance, recognize an example of manifest intertextuality in the *African Monitor* article: “Chinese investment does not come with the same intrusion as that from the West, which tends to be accompanied by largely unpopular economic policy prescriptions. This can be seen in China’s investment in Zimbabwe. Indeed, the only conditionality concerns Taiwan – the ‘One China’ policy is the political foundation for the establishment and development of China’s relations with African countries and regional organizations” (Africa Monitor, 6). Ironically, in the western articles it is mostly China’s no conditionalities which are subjected to a critical treatment, while in the African articles the western preconditions are the object of critique.

This is the dominant discourse type in many African articles. To begin with, what was missing in the western articles was a comparative perspective of the role of the West in Africa. That gap was certainly filled in the African articles, where most of them have at least one reference to the western impact on Africa. Ndubisi Obiorah, an African scholar and visiting fellow at Harvard University, writes that the information provided by the NGOs in the western and African media seems outdated, recycled and has a monodimensional feature, which falls little short of China bashing (Obiorah, 39).

Nevertheless, a backgrounded oppositional discourse appears here as well, because the author states that “recent events in the textile sector in South Africa illustrate how different actors in the economy – the government, trade unions, retailers and consumers – differ in their perceptions of Chinese involvement” (Africa Monitor, 6). Thus, it is also important to recognize the voices of both those who appreciate and those who oppose the Chinese involvement in Africa. Most African analysts tend to positively assess the Chinese investment in Africa. At the same time, various African leaders and governments also welcome the Chinese investment with the package deals it brings. This may not be the case, however, for trade unions who complain about bad working conditions, local retailers who see their businesses undermined, or common people who may lose their jobs.

I will verify my findings with the results of Chris Alden’s paper, “Through African Eyes: Representations of China on the African continent,” which is intended to assess whether China is more predominantly seen as a partner or as a competitor, and whether “the Western ‘discourse of fear’ on China and its alleged hegemonic intentions is being absorbed into the African discourse on China” (Alden 2006, 2).

Alden identifies three images of China from the way it is represented in the African press: “China as Africa’s development partner,” “China as Africa’s competitor” and “China as hegemon.” Predominant is the first image, China being considered a positive force in Africa. China’s willingness to invest in Africa, at a time when western sources were redrawing from the continent, is a central consideration. The crumbling infrastructure and inefficient telephone systems are being rebuilt with China’s grants and loans. The low cost Chinese consumer goods are reaching a population who did not have access to such products before. Key policy issues are China’s lack of conditionalities, its solidarity and its development model. Alden’s findings clearly corroborate our analyzed article, which also emphasized the lack of conditionalities, the long term type of investment, China’s infrastructure projects and the Chinese development model, which has sparked interest in some African leaders, governments and analysts.

Oppositional discourses on China’s positive role in Africa also appear in the African press. “The great Chinese takeout” is the title of an article in the South African renowned business magazine *Finweek*. The article starts with a quote from a South-African commentator: “Africa is undergoing a fifth wave of colonialization. First, it was the European superpowers; then the multinationals, followed by the World Bank and IMF. SA has been very active in recent years - now it's the Chinese.” We identify here the same type of discourse as in some western media articles which label China’s involvement in Africa as neo-colonialism. “The Scramble for Africa”, a notion first used by the historian Thomas Pakenham to describe the colonial carve-up of Africa after the 1885 Berlin conference, is used as applied to a new Chinese wave. This is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century scramble for Africa, mostly on economic grounds due to Africa’s rich minerals and resources, and its attractive market (Finweek, 11). This assessment is similar to what Chris Alden called “China as hegemon.” Alden identifies this as a minority perspective, China being seen as a hegemonic power with continental aspirations for Africa. Curiously, the Hegemon image is not always negative, so Alden calls it the benevolent and the malignant Hegemon. Among African governments and officials, and in the African business milieu, the positive assessment of China seems to dominate, while unions and NGO’s adopt a more critical approach to China (Alden 2006, 10).

Interestingly enough, the dominant discourse in the *Finweek* article is not China as Neo-colonialism. The article cites Martyn Davies, director at the Centre for Chinese Studies at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, who traces the interest of the Chinese investment in Africa to the time when the US congress blocked a bid by China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) for the US oil company Unicol. Davis ironically observes how things



have changed on the world politics scene: “The most pragmatic government today sits in Beijing, the most ideological in Washington” (Finweek, 11). Nevertheless, Davis rejects the accusations of neo-colonialism against China: China doesn't have colonial ambitions. “The Chinese know what they don't know - they know they don't understand how to run African banks and are happy to leave it up to the locals to do so and reap the rewards of their investment” (Finweek, 12). Another specialist is being cited, namely strategist Clem Sunter, who sustains that Africa is more and more seen as a commercial opportunity. He observes that the reason why the Chinese are helping with the infrastructure development is to be able to move the commodities and resources to the coast, from where they can be shipped to China. Sunter also rejects labeling the Chinese strategies as neo-colonialism, since “the Chinese don't want to impose their culture on anyone - they're only interested in doing deals.” Other official sources that are being cited also appreciate the swift and efficient Chinese way of doing business, when compared to the western business approach.

The other image identified by Alden, namely China's image as a competitor, appears in many articles on the impact of the cheap Chinese textiles on the African textile business, which resulted in immense job losses. “Loss of textile market costs African jobs. Diversification, efficiency hold key for economic recovery” is the title of an article that depicts the China effect in Lesotho, who went from gains to losses. China's impact as a competitor is identified in 2001 when it entered WTO, and the MFA restrictions fell. (Mutume, 18). “Chinese textile imports cost the jobs of 250,000 workers” cites an article in *African Business*. The article recounts the personal experiences of some Lesotho textile workers who lost their jobs. It also offers some specific numbers: “South Africa itself has lost more than 30,000 textiles jobs. In Swaziland and Namibia, an estimated three in every four jobs will be lost by the end of June. In Lesotho, where unemployment has reached 40 per cent, the textile job losses are simply unaffordable in a country where textiles account for 90 per cent of all export earnings” (Peta, 2005).

Sautman and Yan criticize the significant attention drawn in the western media to the impact of Chinese textiles in the African textile sector. As noted above, the same discourse also appears in the African media articles. Responding to the criticism on the cheap low quality goods, Sautman and Yan point out that consumer goods do not predominate among PRC exports, but rather machinery, electronic equipment, and high tech products. They also maintain that Chinese exports to Africa do not displace local producers or crush African exports as illustrated in the western discourse. They state that the much discussed textile industries in Lesotho, Madagascar and South Africa were already in extremis when the

Chinese arrived. Moreover, the eventual outcomes were at odds with the critics, since for example the new Chinese bosses in Lesotho's textiles industry employ most of the country's formal sector workers (Sautman and Yan, May 2007, 8-10). As for the South African case, the context should also be assessed. They cite a Johannesburg economist, who states that "the effect of the Chinese textile imports is positive as far as total employment and output growth in South Africa are concerned, since the growth rate in South Africa has been based on the retail sector's expenditures" (Sautman and Yan, May 2007, 11).

Let us analyze the wider social, economical and political context in which some of the issues raised in the African articles are embedded. The overall positive assessment of the impact of the Chinese investment is also corroborated by the views of other African experts and academics. John Rocha appreciates the Chinese investments in infrastructure and considers they might have positive spin-offs in lowering transaction costs and in helping African governments deal with social calamities, such as poor health services, energy crisis and skills training (Rocha, 24). Overall, the investment in infrastructure might help the reduction of poverty in Africa. Despite criticism against Africa for letting China use the African market as test markets for its cheap low quality products under western standards, John Kuada emphasizes the fact that African companies also gain access to the Chinese high growth market. Besides, Chinese companies not only trade with Africa, but are also involved in production. A relevant factor is also the skills that the African workers gain from the Chinese through various training opportunities (Kuada, 87-88).

In the African articles, one can notice an underlying comparison with the Western role in Africa. On a background of African dissatisfaction with the West (Kitissou, 17) and a disappointment of globalization in general, the Chinese offers appeal to African politicians, since the Chinese don't attach conditions, are practical, and act fast. Moreover, the African intellectuals believe that China offers a possible return to multipolarity and an alternative model to the western economic model (Obiorah, 40-44).

Reference to the Washington and the Beijing consensus appears in several articles. China's rising activity in Africa has ignited talks of a Beijing Consensus, which stresses the non-interference in the domestic affairs as well as the respect of African sovereignty. Both policies enjoy a great appeal with the African elites (Alden 2007, 105). The Washington Consensus (WC) imposed conditions on the Western aid such as transparency, improved governance and growth of the private sector as part of its requirements for sustainable development in Africa (Copson, 62). The conditionalities imposed by the IMF and the World Bank also include restrictions on the macroeconomic policy and reductions in public spending

(Alden 2007, 105). The Washington Consensus advocated privatization and liberalization. Additionally, a Post Washington Consensus adds to WC' neoliberalism a discourse of democracy, good governance and poverty reduction. The Beijing Consensus is a term first used by Joshua Ramo and Goldman Sachs in reference to the Chinese model in Africa. It stands for the Chinese investment, aid and trade carried on without oversight by either western states or international institutions (Sautman and Yan, Dec 2007, 76-82).

China gains an immense political capital when compared to the Western conditionalities, by its separation of business and politics in the non-intervention approach. Moreover, the development discourse is non-prescriptive, stressing the importance of political stability and the collective right to develop. Nevertheless, the idea that China can possibly separate business from politics is disingenuous, concludes Daniel Large (Large 2007, 180). A question is also raised pertaining to the claim that China doesn't attach any conditionalities. Moreblessings Chidaushe considers such a claim is a misrepresentation, since the terms of most agreements are not known to the public. Conversely, the western critique to the no conditionalities is not seen as being owed to true concern for Africa (Chidaushe, 117). Some other African analysts raise concerns over whether, for example, the takeover of strategic national firms in Zimbabwe by Chinese companies, can suggest a loss in sovereignty (Karumbidza, 99). We notice that the same feature criticized in the western discourse: no conditionalities and the respect for sovereignty are put into doubt in a different context by the African analysts.

However, in response to the accusation of practicing neo-colonialism voiced by the Western media and by a minority of African media, most African analysts assess that China has no tradition of colonialism, never taking part in the slave trade. However Horace Campbell asserts that the European Union's present-day relations with Africa could be described in terms of neo-colonialism (Campbell, 99-100). Even China's prime minister Wen Jiabao reminded the Africans during his last African tour about China's own experience with colonialism in order to explain that China is not a colonial power (Pant, 39). Thus, one also has to take into consideration China's own traumatic experiences with colonialism at the turn of the last century, which stands at the core of the Chinese nationalism, in dismissing such an assumption. China is more seen as an ally against colonialism, also due to its ideological involvement in aiding some African countries fight for their independence. Charges of neo-colonialism appear on the background of the Chinese challenge of the West in Africa. Traditional western actors are finding their influence undermined by Chinese multinational corporations (Alden 2007, 102).

Another important issue raised in the articles above was the significance of the Chinese development model for Africa. Since the problems faced by China are familiar to the African policy makers, China's own approach to development may be important for them. Such problems include uneven development between centre and periphery. Moreover, they also share the need for policy and technology changing (Little, 184). The role of the overseas Chinese communities in making China the manufacturer of the world could set an example for the sizable African Diaspora. Nevertheless, Africa faces challenges regarding the cross border regional cooperation, for problems which for China can be solved internally (Little, 185). China's reform and opening model could be best applied by Africa in the exact area where China is becoming very influential, namely in engaging foreign investors. Nevertheless, when asked about the validity of the Chinese model for Africa, Deng once advised the other African countries not to simply copy their model, but to weigh one's own national conditions, since that is one of China's most important lessons (Alden 2007, 130-131). The validity of his argument is quite clear from the present tumultuous situation of countries who have been inspired by the Chinese model, such as Zimbabwe or Sudan.

China is simultaneously a partner and a competitor; a reality underlined by the problems emerged in the African textile industry where the Chinese competition stifled the local producers, resulting in huge job losses. While the media attention concentrates on the big multinationals, the Chinese small and medium employ networks and supply chains that drive out traditional suppliers by offering low cost products (Alden 2007, 47). Chris Alden confirms the reports according to which textiles from China have threatened to put companies in South Africa, Lesotho, Mauritius and Nigeria out of business and have led to lay-offs of hundreds of thousands of people. Some of the numbers are staggering: in South Africa 800 firms have been shut down and 60,000 people have been fired. The situation in Nigeria was even more worrisome since 80% of the textile factories were forced to close, laying off as much as 250,000 people. Moreover, the flood of cheap products and of small scale Chinese retailers has become a competition for local small retailers. Alden cites former Zambian trade minister, wondering if Africa needs Chinese investors who sell shoes, clothes, chickens and other products which the local people could also sell (Alden 2007, 49). Conversely, Chinese retailers have enabled the African population to have access to inexpensive products, which had been previously unaffordable, so there is some kind of benefit in that as well.

### ***2.3 The Chinese view of the Chinese economic interests in Africa***

After reviewing the western and the African media perspectives on the Chinese investment strategies and trade with Africa, it is time to take a closer look at what is the Chinese assessment of the same issue. Given the conflict of interests, we cannot expect the same type of discourse, but rather a defensive one.

### **2.3.1 “Analyses of the investments trends of Chinese enterprises in Africa”**

The article to be analyzed is entitled “Analyses of the investments trends of Chinese enterprises in Africa” “中国企业在非洲投资的动态分析” *Zhongguo qiye zai feizhou touzi de dongtai fenxi*. The Chinese investment in Africa in the last few years has become a hot topic; the going out strategy “走出去” has become an option for enterprises looking for new opportunities to expand markets. By implementing the guiding principle of two resources, two markets “两个资源、两个市场” “liang ge ziyuan, lian ge shichang,” Africa has become the new investment spot for Chinese enterprises. Huang and Li state that the Chinese investment brought on the economical development of the African countries, improved local employment opportunities, brought technical assistance and enhanced the self construction capabilities of the African countries and enjoyed a general welcome (Huang and Li, 50).

Moreover, according to Huang and Li Chinese enterprises implement or carry out long term aid projects of the Chinese government and of the international organizations. Africa also gives Chinese enterprises preferential policies to encourage investment; for example, they erased the entrance restrictions on trade, on telecommunications companies, and on engineering companies. Besides fields that include natural resources such as oil and mining, other fields don't stipulate a ratio of shareholders anymore and can be managed individually. The major domains of investment in Africa are summarized as follows: investment in resource exploitation, electronics, agriculture, and infrastructure construction, such as building railways, airports, ports, roads, dams and hydroelectric power plants (Huang and Li, 50).

This article is significant for the type of propagandistic discourse which appears in the Chinese media about China's role in Africa. Let us analyze the order of discourses, taking in consideration the previous types of discourses. The article appreciates that Chinese have created new job opportunities for the Africans, without mentioning the situation in Lesotho's and Nigeria's textile industry. Similarly, the article states that Chinese companies have been enjoying a general welcome. Although Chinese investment is welcomed by the African governments for the most part, in some countries, such as Zambia, there has been an overt

anti-Chinese sentiment in the grass-roots, expressed especially among unions. Thus, the article fails to give an objective overview of the situation of Chinese enterprises and merchandise in Africa, by not mentioning some of the negative aspects which affect them, and by foregrounding the positive assessments.

Another article stressing the economic cooperation is “Simple analysis of China-Africa economical cooperation” (Wang, Tong and Zhang, 108). The article starts by mentioning the South-South cooperation, which enhanced the economical cooperation between China and Africa. The positive assessment is similar to the one in the first article. Curiously enough, the Chinese articles seem to consider cooperation in agriculture essential, while in the western article there is no mention of it. It is even placed before the cooperation in the minerals and resources extraction, which is said to be in its initial stages. The last field mentioned is the commercial cooperation (Wang, Tong and Zhang, 108). The article then discusses different difficulties encountered in the three fields: Objectively speaking, China appears to be in the middle of a whirlpool in terms of competition for resources. Because it doesn’t yet have a stronghold on the world resources, it had to buy minerals in the international market, causing the price to go up. Another issue that has caused problems in the Sino-African relations is China’s surplus in its trade relations with Africa. The surpluses are due to China’s exports of commodities that are “excellent in quality and reasonable in price” 物美价廉 *wumei jialian* (Wang, Tong and Zhang, 109). Also, Chinese products are becoming more and more diversified to fit the African people’s tastes (Wang, Tong and Zhang, 109).

The configuration of discourses in this article presents further differences compared to the western media discourse. The stance taken is clearly from the point of view of the Chinese interests, as it is made obvious from the estimation of China’s difficulties in the resource sector. A further difference comes into light about the appreciation of the Chinese commodities: while in the western media articles they are usually described as “low quality and cheap,” the Chinese article describes them as “excellent in quality and reasonable in price,” Nevertheless, Chinese products are appreciated in Africa and are described in an African editorial as cheap, but durable, affordable, appropriate and available, reaching even remote villages formerly left out of the distribution circuit (Versi, 11). The reference to the South-South development is a recurring theme in the African and the Chinese media reports. The western reports merely use it to depict the Sino-African relations as neo-colonialism disguised as South-South development. Clear instances of interdiscursivity refer to the beneficial Chinese investment in Africa. There is evidence in these Chinese articles that the Chinese indeed consider Africa as an excellent business opportunity.

Further evidence of such a view comes in an excerpt from another article entitled “Investment in Africa, which skills do Chinese enterprises need to perfect? ( Shi and Zhai, 93)The article gives practical advice to companies wanting to invest in Africa. According to it, the first step for investment in Africa is to know Africa. Africa offers big opportunities due to its rich resources, but it also presents risks and legal difficulties, such as any company employing more than 10 people having to create a union and the minimum salary being stipulated. Some tactics on how to invest in Africa are also being described. African countries are being categorized in: First Class African Countries, those with a good investment environment and economic development and Second class African Countries, those with a weak economical basis but in the process of improving it. Among the tactics suggested, interesting is the advice to take advantage of the preferential treatment offered by the developed countries to Africa and use Africa as a spring board to enter the American and European market: “充分利用发达国家对非洲的优惠政策, 以非洲为跳板打入欧美市场” “chongfen liyong fada guojia dui Feizhou de youhui zhengce, yi Feizhou wie tiaoban daru Oumei shichang”( Shi and Zhai, 93). This last statement is an indicative that China does indeed represent competition for western interests, and not only in Africa. After the amount of Chinese textiles has been restricted on the European market, China can seize the Western markets by using preferential treatment given to African products.

The last stage of the analysis intends to offer the political and economical context of the Chinese investment in Africa. Firstly, to some western specialists, such as Valerie Niquet, the South-South discourse advocated by China is reminiscent of the third world discourse in the 60’s. Considering the longevity of the African elites, it might still play a role. Moreover, despite having different economic interests as obvious in the WTO, China retains its status as speaker of the developing countries due to its South-South policy ( Niquet, 2).

As to Chinese investment, it must be said that it differs from country to country. Chris Alden speaks about pariah regimes, such as Sudan and Zimbabwe, for which China is a source of stability due to its development assistance and direct investment. The second type of regimes, which has to be considered are the illiberal regimes and weak democracies, such as Angola, Nigeria, Zambia and Tanzania. For the elites in those states, Chinese investment is welcomed, though the local trade unions and civil society might be concerned about the impact on their interests. The last type of African states is that of democracies with diversified economies such as South Africa; and even though Ghana, Namibia and, Botswana do not have the same economic capacity as South Africa, they can also enter this category (Alden 2007, 70).

Specific investments in the areas mentioned in the Chinese articles include the deal reached by Alcatel Shanghai Bell in cooperation with Ghana Telecom to supply equipment in value of \$75 million. In agriculture, there have been massive Chinese investments in agricultural enterprises, operated through China Food and Food Industries Corporation in areas which have been vacated by the departure of former farmers, such as in Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Rwanda and South Africa. Their agricultural products are intended for the Chinese, Africans and for the world market as well (Niquet, 6).

China's economic policy towards Africa is based on ties leveraged by the economic policy makers in order to build a network of large transnational corporations. Bates Gill and James Reilley assess that most analysts exaggerate China's corporate engagement in Africa and reveal some of the weaknesses of the Chinese strategies, warning that the Chinese government will most likely have to confront the "principal-agent" dilemma. This refers to tensions between the government's interests and the aims of the Chinese companies and businesspeople in Africa. China's much publicized reliance on state owned corporations, which are intended to carry out China's strategic interests, is becoming problematic (Gill and Reilley, 38). Despite the win-win rhetoric, which promises economic benefits on both sides, Chinese companies ambitions may undermine China's diplomatic objectives. Therefore, "the 'China Inc.' model may be far less monolithic than outside observers often assume" (Gill and Reilley, 38).

Some of the problems Chinese firms face has been identified in the Chinese article as well: the lack of familiarity with local laws, customs and institution. As a result, they are trying to reduce costs to stay competitive with one another. This has lead to recurrent strikes of the Chinese workers. An office was established to provide assistance and protect the rights of the overseas Chinese (Gill and Reilley, 45). Most importantly, Chinese corporations are backed by influential bureaucratic forces within the provincial or a city government, which renders any local enforcement in Africa ineffective. Efficient government control is thus undermined by the tangling of corporate agents and of different bureaucratic levels (Gill and Reilley, 48). Despite the diplomatic, economic and strategic successes, China's oversight agencies do not have full authority over Chinese corporations overseas. The Chinese government is working on improving its control, but faces a real bureaucratic muddle. This may affect China's reputation and has already sparked worries concerning worker safety, illegal goods, unfair trading, and low environmental standards (Gill and Reilley, 49).

The competition with the west can be seen at different levels. First of all, the level of purchasing power of the African market favors the inexpensive Chinese products and excludes western products. Furthermore, Africa is considered a springboard for the



government approved strategy to go global with the biggest Chinese enterprises. In many areas such as Congo and Cameroon, Chinese companies like the Hong Kong based Vichwood have been taking control over western companies (Niquet, 4-6). Added to that is the loss of the previous monopolies in pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, constructions, public works and banks of the former colonial powers. There has been a steady withdrawal of French corporations from Africa since the 80's, corroborated with the fall of the Soviet Union (Paone, 10). Indeed, French corporations have massively invested in Eastern European countries, such as Romania.

### **3. The debate concerning China's securing of the African resources and raw materials.**

By examining a sample of around 52 articles focusing on what has been called China's "scramble for resources" or "resource grab," I have noticed certain patterns which will be identified in the subsequent analysis. Most of the articles lack a comparative perspective with the western interests and actions pertaining to Africa's resources. Those who do mention western companies, present them as disadvantaged in comparison with the Chinese companies. "Sautman and Yan consider that the main problem with the China-in-Africa discourse is not the deceptive criticism of Chinese activities in Africa, but rather the decontextualization of such criticism for ideological purposes. Thus, some analyses appear superficial and inaccurate, presenting the western involvement in positive terms compared with the Chinese activities (Sautman and Yan, 16). There is also a tendency to excessively focus on China's interests in oil over other commodities (Mawdsley, 2008). This is indeed true, since approximately half of the articles contain the word oil in their headlines, and an overwhelming majority makes reference to China's oil deals. For the sake of content, I will not choose one of the typical short and one-sided articles, but a more complex editorial, more the exception than the rule, which I will compare with the other articles.

#### ***3.1 The western view: "With its resource-hungry push into the sub-Saharan, Beijing puts the Planet to the Test"***

In a lengthy and extremely critical report on China in Africa that appeared in the monthly business magazine *Fast Company*, which has been hailed by Lew Dobbs from CNN as the most influential article on the matter, Richard Behar summarizes all the problematical areas of the Chinese involvement after traveling to some of the African countries. The article starts with a suggestive title, representative also of other articles in its choice of words: “With its **resource-hungry push** into the sub-Sahara, Beijing puts the Planet to the Test”.

The author considers China to be “the most aggressive investor-nation in Africa” (Behar, 2008). Even though the author states that he will resist the temptation to describe China’s exploits as “an update of The Yellow peril, although no shortage of U.S. officials see China’s safari as precisely that,” the choice of language is in line with some of the other articles which focus on resources. In the author’s view, it is “a story about an economic model of exploitation that is at once formidably efficient and tragically flawed, about a planet that’s being consumed by those who live on its surface” (Behar, Part 1, 2-3).

What differentiates this article from the other articles that it will be compared to is that it does not paint an “image of a benign, postcolonial West being outfoxed by a ruthless and unscrupulous neo-communist power” ( Behar, Part1, 2). It assesses the American track record in Africa as equally deplorable: “a half-century of backing strongmen, turning a blind eye, and taking what we can get with little or no regard for the health or welfare of the locals”( Behar, 2). In its choice of naming, Behar does not shy away from using a wide range of dysphemisms, such as in the following phrase: ”Anyone who thinks that kind of **ravenous acquisition of resources** is a thing of the past should take a close look at the **suction** China is applying in the sub-Sahara. The region is now the scene of one of the most **sweeping, bare-knuckled, and ingenious resource grabs** the world has ever seen.” The nominalization in this sentence of certain verbs: “**acquisition**,” “**suction**,” “**grab**” is a linguistic way in which the representation of events can be manipulated, in such a way that it becomes an event (Johnstone, 54). The article goes on to say that while America is engrossed in the war in Iraq, China “has become the most aggressive investor-nation in Africa” (Behar, Part1, 2).The former U.S assistant secretary of state is being cited having made an analogy between China’s “**commercial invasion**” and “**tsunami**.” Other voices even talk about the region as “ChinAfrica.” Even the use of the present tense in the sentence “**It’s scramble time**”, which is normally used to express general truths, is used here in a manipulative way.

What follows is an assessment of the Chinese business deals regarding resources: “While flat-footed Western governments largely watch from the sidelines, cash-flush Chinese firms -- many with state-directed financing -- are cutting deals at a dizzying pace, securing

supplies of oil, copper, timber, natural gas, zinc, cobalt, iron, you name it. At the most macro level, China's offensive is at once enthralling and unnerving, like watching a well-oiled war machine. Closer to the ground, China's presence in Africa can seem a chaotic and reckless. China's quest is generating business that the West is too timid to undertake. But the secrecy and elitism that already define the government of China, and many of those in Africa, are poised to usher in a **toxic** intercontinental **corruption** we can hardly yet imagine” (Behar, 2). Notice here as well the strong epithet used to describe corruption: “toxic”. After the first official voice, the voices of two academics follow to give a sense of authority on the situation of the resources: South-African Clem Sunter is quoted saying: “Whether or not the world's key resources are running out, China is *behaving* as if they are.” Lucy Corkin, projects director for the Centre for Chinese Studies at South Africa's Stellenbosch University, the only African think tank devoted entirely to China-Africa research adds: “People are not worried about saving the environment; they are worried about getting some before it all runs out. That's the mentality: ‘China is just going to consume everything -- let's get it *now!*’” (Behar, Part 1, 3).

Ironically, the article even uses a Napoleon quote to describe the Yellow peril, despite its intention not to be another such article: “Let China sleep,” Napoleon famously remarked, “for when she awakes, she will shake the world”. “Today, China is not only roused, she is **devouring the world for breakfast**. In just a few years, it has become the world's top consumer of timber, as well as zinc (with 30% of global demand), iron and steel (27%), lead (25%), aluminum (23%), and copper (22%), along with nickel, tin, coal, cotton, and rubber” (Behar, Part 2, 1). Here again we notice the dysphemism **devour** used to describe China's need for resources preferred to “appetite” or “hunger,” terms which often appear in other articles. The article also uses other metaphors and analogies as follows: “So the **dragon** must be fed. As bureaucrats in Beijing like to say, ‘China is **like an elephant riding a bicycle**. If it slows down, it could fall off, and the earth might quake.’” (Behar, Part2, 3). The principle of analogy is that conventions can be flouted and expectations upset for stylistic purposes. It also makes use of the relevant previous experience (Johnstone, 64).

The issue most stressed in all articles which do mention western activities is this: “Influence of that magnitude threatens to wipe out a decade's worth of efforts by global institutions to push African governments to improve human rights and government transparency” (Behar, Part2, 6). The article further mentions “Beijing's checkbook diplomacy,” and underlines the Chinese pragmatism: “The Chinese aren't interested in owning the land itself, only what lies within or on top of it.” I also understand this sentence as an

inference against usual charges of neo-colonialism. The author makes yet another bold statement along the lines of the Yellow Peril, regarding the impact of the Chinese products on the local industry: “Chinese-made counterfeit products proliferate, cannibalizing embryonic local industry -- or aborting it altogether” (Behar, Part 2, 6). The word choice here is extremely plastic; the author avoids euphemisms by all means.

The first subtitle is called: “Mozambique: A Chain Saw for Every Tree.” In this part the author recounts the disastrous implications of the Chinese involvement on the environment. “Chinese operators push deeper into the forests of Mozambique and other sub-Saharan countries, it's likely that most of that product -- **maybe the chair you're sitting in, or the flooring beneath your feet -- is tainted as well.** ‘Most logs imported into China are effectively stolen,’ says the Smithsonian Institution's William Laurance, one of the world's foremost tropical biologists” (Behar, Part 2, 7). Again, we have an authority describing the situation. Notice the underlined sentence is an instance of conversalization of the discourse so that it becomes more efficient. Two other official sources name log exporting from Mozambique as an exploitative “**gold rush**” (2006 report funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development) and talk about “**a timber mafia**” (Catherine Ann Mackenzie, a highly regarded forestry expert researching in Mozambique). A reporter from Mozambique also relates the involvement of the Chinese companies with the ministers and the politically connected people (Behar, Part 2, 7).

Nevertheless, the article makes its first comment which shows that although it is highly critical of China, it is not completely one-sided. Behar says that, taking advantage of the upcoming Olympic Games, China is being bashed by everyone from George Bush to Mia Farrow for doing business in Sudan, but there are no complaints in Washington or Hollywood about China's growing role in Equatorial Guinea. This is because Equatorial Guinea has become a strategic vital place for both the US and China, due to its oil reserves. “As such, it provides a perfect platform for watching how the scramble for finite resources is unfolding. And even a short stay in E.G. reveals that things aren't exactly going our way. China is systematically challenging the American oil giants here -- locking in exploration or supply contracts, winning rights to new oil fields, doing massive infrastructure development, even stepping up military supplies. (Not to be outdone, a private U.S. security firm won a contract last year -- approved by the Pentagon -- to train E.G.'s army and Presidential Guard. With so much U.S. investment on the ground, keeping Obiang well protected is apparently essential.) America remains E.G.'s dominant foreign investor by far, with \$7 billion in cumulative direct investments over the past decade, and with ExxonMobil, Amerada Hess, and Marathon Oil

leading the way. But if recent statistics are reliable, China has surpassed the United States as E.G.'s biggest trading partner, purchasing more than \$2.5 billion of its oil a year” (Behar, Part 5, 2-5).

Behar even obtained an interview with Gabriel Nguema Lima, Obiang's 36-year-old son, who studied in the US. He explains why the Chinese are gaining more influence “The Chinese listen better, and they understand that sometimes you need to make sacrifices for a future gain. They'll do a hydroelectric plant at half the price, and, in return, they get future projects. With U.S. companies, we feel more squeezed and squeezed. They just take the oil and do nothing else. Of course they are losing ground to the Chinese. The World Bank and the IMF also come. ‘No, we don't need you,’ the president says all the time” (Behar, Part 5, 5-6). Behar attributes Obiang’s choice of looking east due to a sense of abandonment by the West in correlation with the coup attempt by the British and the Riggs’s affair, which exposed the scale of corruption in the American oil dealings with Obiang in a senate report. Thus, Obiang started “to look East, where Senate probes don't happen and where mercenaries don't pile onto planes from Beijing” (Behar, Part 5, 5-6). Behar also suggests that Beijing has outwitted and outmaneuvered the United States, because if Obiang is called a “good friend” of the U.S., it is described by China’s foreign minister as China’s “best friend” (Behar, Part 5, 6).

The article also relates the similar situation in Congo and Zambia. The last subtitle is called emphatically: **“Endgame: Hypocrisy, Blindness, and the Doomsday Scenario”** It states that the west is losing the Sub-Sahara, though this is attributed to the right reasons, such as pressure from shareholders and regulators on western companies to improve their ethical and environmental performance. However, such changes are rather tardy since “the charge of American hypocrisy is everywhere in the air. And still the United States and Western institutions manage to talk out of both sides of their mouths when it comes to transparent governance, human-rights protection, and fair trade in developing countries” (Behar, Part 6, 1). This is a pretty visual and one of the rare outspoken instances of critique against western comments on human rights and transparent government. Moreover, Behar says that “African and Chinese leaders use the Western hypocrisy as leverage against us”. In one of the few western articles which refer to western Africa policy in comparison with the Chinese one, the following assessment is being made: “Capital flight out of Africa shows Western hypocrisy from a different angle. For every dollar the West lent Africa between 1970 and 1996, studies show that 80 cents flowed back out in the same year, often into foreign bank accounts in New York, London, and Zurich.” A 2005 report by the (Tony) Blair Commission for Africa estimates that “stolen African assets equivalent to more than half of the continent's external

debt are held in foreign bank accounts” (Behar, Part 6, 1-2). By comparison, Behar acknowledges that it is also due to China that the sub-Saharan economy has grown at an average of 6% a year since 2004, but criticizes that much of this wealth ends up in the pockets of what another pundit, George Ayittey, a Ghanaian economist and professor at American University in Washington, calls a “vampire parasitic elite” (Behar, Part 6, 1-2).

The author reaches the following doomsday conclusions, the first about China’s involvement in Africa and the second one about America’s own role in it: “China’s win-win blitz in Africa conjures the prospect of a hellish lose-lose, a zero-sum competition for finite resources in which one country’s gain is another’s loss” (Behar, Part 6, 5). He ends with the following ironical remark about the failed American China policy in the African context: “We buy China’s junk, they buy our bonds, our real estate, even our corporations; they expand into Africa with our money, enabling them to grow and sell us more junk. It’s a **spiderweb**, a matrix -- and how it spins out is as scary as it is unclear. But one thing is certain: We’re all part of the same ugly scramble. Eh?” (Behar, Part 6, 5) Here you notice the metaphor “spiderweb” which stands for the tangled situation between the US, China and Africa and is a good example of metaphorical discourse.

Funnily, the author compares America’s tangled relationship with China with that of the host and parasites, coming to the conclusion that sometimes the host drops dead. Clearly, this article goes to the extremes in presenting the China effect, though all exaggerated stylistic effects aside, some points concerning the environmental impact, as well as the result of some Chinese and American policies, have been rightfully made. Sometimes the word choice is so provocative and rudimentary, that the intention of capturing a much broader audience is clear cut.

Coming to the second stage of our analysis, I will shed some light on the “appropriation process” of excerpts from prior texts by means of which interdiscursivity is realized (Johnstone, 66). In our article, two instances of metaphorical discourse can be observed, which attach “the hunger” dimension to the discourse of the need for resources for stylistic effects: “**resource-hungry push**,” “**China is devouring the world for breakfast**.” Thus, words usually associated with hunger are used metaphorically to emphasize China’s need for resources. Instances of manifest intertextuality are often in this case: “**Oil-hungry China takes Sudan under its wing**” (Blair, 2005), “Asian Giant’s **Appetite for Raw Materials**” (Timberg, A.14), “**ravenous appetite for raw materials**” (Dexter, 2008), “**China’s hunger for oil**” (Financial Times 2007, 18), “**Feeding an insatiable appetite**” (*Financial Times* 2008, 4). The same discourse has been associated metaphorically with

“thirst”, sometimes in the same article such as in: **“China's thirst for resources has it cozying up to some pretty unsavory regimes”** (Timberg, A14) or **“Africa has helped quench China's growing thirst for oil”**(Kahn,1). Some authors don't spare any stylistic means and come up with pretty inventive phrases to underline China's spiraling need for raw materials. By the way the situation has been depicted in countless articles, one would think China is starving and the last dish is Africa's resources. Beyond all these plastic phrases lies a clear conflict of interests, respectively western undermined interests. Furthermore, China's deals in Africa are being described as **“scramble”**, **“grab”** or even worse as **“mad dash”** or **“a rape”** (Mohan and Power, 23). Dan Large, a specialist from SOAS, sustains that these images are symptomatic for the western defensiveness about “its backyard,” and are the result of a wider reaction to an emerging power (Mawdsley, 3). It can be observed that the media discourses here fall back on the well known Orientalist discourses that depict China as a monolithic beast with an insatiable appetite for resources. Politically speaking, China is presented as a totalitarian state, which has unleashed on the African continent. Simultaneously, China is unreceptive to western logics, humanitarianism or to the international development models. Furthermore, we must keep in mind that these represent constructed imaginaries of China and Africa, which are prevalent in the western popular culture (Mohan and Marcus, 26).

It can be inferred from the text that western economic interests are being systematically undermined by the unbeatable Chinese bids and that the Chinese are willing to go at any lengths and in places where the west is reluctant to go. Interdiscursivity can be observed between that idea and the following quote about China's boldness: “But China National Offshore Oil Corp. (CNOOC) raised the bar for boldness in July when it struck a deal to explore for oil in Somalia” (Asiamoney, 1). This idea is also similar to the following headline “Willing to go where western companies fear to tread” (Clark, 6). The article further states: “State-backed groups such as China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) have established strong interests in oil-rich territories such as Nigeria, as well as frontier exploration zones, often muscling traditional western rivals aside” (Clark, 6). Such a discourse has depicted the Chinese as ruthless competitors (Soares, 2). This is another case of interdiscursivity. A similar idea appears in different articles as obvious from the following statement: “The unmatched firing power of Chinese state companies and their willingness to secure supplies at all cost are, at the same time, driving western competitors away” (Financial Times 2008, 4).

The configuration of discourses here presents an interesting case, since the dominant discourses on China's scramble for resources, negative environmental impact, negative

economic impact for American interests, Chinese corruption and shrewd strategy, which are all foregrounded, mix with the discourse on the western disastrous impact in Africa and the discourse on Western hypocrisy. These last two discourses are quite common in the African editorials and are usually foregrounded there. Surprisingly enough, they are also foregrounded here as well and not just shoved in the background. This is one of the rare instances where African discourses also appear in the Western media, without being written by an African-American or an African immigrant.

Overall, the discourse on China's imports is concentrated on oil, China being accused of making Africa dependent on earnings from raw materials. Conversely, compared to Europe's 36% and America's 33% of oil exports from Africa, China's 8,7% in 2006 showed that China is still a relatively small player in Africa (Sautman and Yan May 2007, 3-4). The attention paid to oil, within the discourse on the competition for oil, reveals the overall focus on the geopolitics of oil, as a result of the Iraq war and of the rises in oil prices. Nonetheless, oil merely plays a role in China's dealings with only a few countries, such as Angola, Sudan, Nigeria, Gabon and Guinea, whereas for most African countries, exports of fish, timber and grain are equally crucial. The overall discourse appears quite uneven, because it tends to focus on the negative aspects (Mawdsley, 1). Sautman and Yan point out the fact that American analysts emphasize the strategic competition with China in Africa. Nonetheless, not only China backs authoritarian regimes, the US does the same thing in almost all African oil producing states with the exception of Sudan. That is why the media discourse is focused on China's involvement in Sudan (Sautman and Yan May 2007, 7). The fact that our article also explores the US relation with these authoritarian regimes is more the exception than the rule among the pool of articles that I have read.

Let us go to the last stage of our analysis and examine the political and economical context of China's resource foreign policy toward Africa. The article raises some environmental and legal concerns regarding China's handling its affairs in Mozambique. Indeed, African analysts have also warned that "the Chinese takeaway" of slow growing hard wood in Zambezia province of Mozambique could lead to deforestation in 5 to 10 years. The Chinese grant credit to local timber buyers to apply for simple licenses. Because of the rare controls and frequent bribes, the exact quantity of wood exported is unknown. Besides the statistical manipulations, certain regulations have also been bent to allow the Chinese a way to carry the commercial timber as logs (Lemos and Riberio, 63).

Unfortunately, this is not a singular case. It has been estimated that half of all wood imported from Cameroon into China is collected unlawfully, whilst merely 10% of wood



exported from Congo-Brazzaville to Beijing is legal. In Gabon, 70% of wood exports to China are illicit and, unbelievably 100% of the wood that China gets from Liberia is illegal, since timber exports are prohibited. Moreover, China's illicit imports of Liberian timber have contributed to the bloody civil war there. Furthermore, in Gabon, Sinopec has caused public outrage by dynamiting areas of a Gabon national park and building roads through the forest without prior approval. Serious concerns have thus emerged as to further environmental damages as a result of illegal activities facilitated by corrupt government agencies (Taylor, February 2007). China will have to find a way to reduce its negative impact on the environment, not only at home, a lesson they have learned the hard way, but also abroad.

The study of China's pursuit of resources and especially oil in Africa should be more objective and take into consideration a range of factors. To begin with, a comparative approach with the US and Europe's own pursuits might help position China on the world oil market. It should also prove that a lot of the claims in the media are exaggerated. Not only the media, but academic studies as well, should avoid the one-sided view of China's oil policy, since objectivity is without a doubt in everyone's favor. The resource scramble seems to be more a narrative than a fact, and closer attention to the details and context should be paid.

Despite China's pursuit of other resources such as copper, bauxite, uranium, aluminium, manganese and iron ore, much of the world attention has been focused on China's oil quest. China's oil diplomacy's aim is to fulfill two key roles: in the short term, to secure the much needed oil resources to satisfy the domestic demand, and in the long term, to ascend as a global player in the international oil market. Much of its strategy has relied on the African's leader suspicion of western intentions (Taylor May 2006, 938).

Hong Zhao also identifies two goals of the going out strategy: one is to develop equity oil similar to international oil companies and to look for income and rent from the upstream sector - exploration and production. The second one aims at shaping internationally competitive firms, especially those that can compete with the world's leading corporations (Hong, 401). China's equity oil strategy is said to possess a hedging element as a kind of insurance policy. Gaining privileged access to oil and maintaining good political relations with oil producers will increase China's security (Soares, 4).

The question then arises whether China's oil companies are part of a well coordinated government strategy. Erica Downs sustains that the so-called "China, Inc." model is not as coherent as assumed by most observers. Despite the diplomatic and financial support provided by Beijing, when it comes to choosing the investment destination, the companies are the ones that decide. Sudan was recently omitted from the Chinese government's list of countries that

Chinese companies are advised to invest into, but that did not deter CNPC from investing there. Moreover, there is a low level of synchronization between the Chinese government and China's national oil companies. Thus, the Chinese government has limited control over their activities, as a result of the liberalization and decentralization of China's energy sector. Similarly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has no control over the Chinese oil companies (Downs, 49).

A further question emerges: how will China's strategy affect Africa in the short and in the long run? For now, China's strategy of aiding its oil bids by rebuilding Africa's crumbling infrastructure has been highly beneficial. Furthermore, as a result of the higher demand for energy resources caused by China, oil prices have spiraled, bringing high revenues to the oil producing countries in Africa. The downside is whether these revenues will actually be employed for the benefit the common people, or only for the African elites. China should, therefore, pay more attention in the future to where the money goes. Another long term cause of apprehension is that over-reliance on oil tends to make African nations more vulnerable to price shocks and might impede the diversification of their economies (Taylor May 2006, 951).

On the downside, much critique has been addressed that "China's loans for example to Angola weaken the IMF's efforts to improve oil revenue transparency." Nonetheless, the reasons why Angola rejected the IMF loan proposal were more complex. It might also be related to the new oil revenues obtained from the increase in oil prices. The choice is with Angola's leaders whether the oil money will prove to be a resource curse or whether it will be used for the bettering of the people (Downs, 56).

One example of a country impoverished by its dependence on oil is Nigeria, Africa's largest oil producer, where oil exports amount up to 80% of the country's trade. Most oil trade is done through joint ventures with Nigeria's National Petroleum Corporation and companies like Total. In addition to the American and French foreign companies such as Exxonmobil, Agip and Total, China has also signed an \$800million deal for oil, by which China was given a license to operate four oil blocs (Weimar, 11-12). Investing in the Niger Delta has proven to be very dangerous for the Chinese, since they have been attacked and threatened by the rebels on several occasions. Clearly the most disputable situation is that of the Chinese involvement in Sudan. However, I will approach that discussion in the following chapter, as it is related to human rights and China's policy of non-interference. What poses more concerns in the western media is that even autocrats in countries where Western oil companies are prevailing,

such as President Obiang in Equatorial Guinea, have called China their most important “development partner” (Carmody and Owusu, 515).

The western media articles present the Chinese strategy as detrimental to western companies. Mostly stressed in the press is the fact that “state financial support for China’s oil companies is unfair to Western oil companies competing for acreage in Africa.” Downs argues that despite it being an advantage, its impact has been widely exaggerated. Beijing’s support of its national oil companies has been justified by two main reasons. Firstly, the Chinese government believes that Chinese national oil companies have lost ground being only latecomers in the international oil business. Secondly, the oil producing countries have gained the upper hand as a result of the rising oil prices and they choose to give advantage to countries who also invest in other economic domains. China capitalized on that issue by compensating for the lack of cutting-edge technologies, capacity-building and large project management skills (Downs, 51-52).

The narrative of competition between Chinese oil companies and western companies is a bit exaggerated, mostly due to the assumption that Chinese companies are driving western oil companies out. One needs to keep in mind that, according to the numbers, China is still a small player in Africa (Manji, 2008). Besides, western oil companies identify the Chinese companies more as a chance than a menace. This is due to the fact that major western oil companies are strategic investors in the international subsidiaries of the three main Chinese companies (Soares, 10). The main three Chinese oil companies are: Petrochina, Sinopec and CNOOC. Much has been written about a possible clash between the US and China over oil. After the 9.11 terrorist attacks, China has felt that the Middle East is quite an insecure region for securing resources and has turned much of its attention towards Africa. The US, however, has banned its companies from investing in some African countries, such as Lybia and Sudan. In order to ameliorate the Sino-American relations with respect to Africa, it is imperative that China becomes more responsive to the American critique on its noninterference policy and that the US acknowledges that they both share the same view regarding more controversial issues (Hong, 403).

### ***3.2 The African view -“Economic war for Africa's loyalties begins”***

The article which will shed some light on the African view is entitled: “Economic war for Africa's loyalties begins” and was published in *African Business*. The article explored the possible economic clash between China and the US over Africa’s resources. The article begins as follows: “By targeting Africa's oil sector, China has now entered territory that has

traditionally been the **hunting ground** of the Western oil majors.” China’s impact on the global oil supplies is being explored, beginning with its transformation from a net oil exporter into an oil importer (3m barrels a day), which has led to an increase in the oil prices. At the insistence of the sub-Saharan countries, state owned African countries have held equity on many concessions; still, most investment has been offered by the Western majors. Foreign independent oil firms have also opened up new areas of exploration. However, the present situation may well change as a result of the growing strength of the Asian economies, “**of their thirst for energy resources** and security considerations” (Ford, July 2006, 20-21). Here we notice the same metaphorical discourse on China’s need for resources. Also notice the other metaphor “hunting ground,” which stands for the quest for resources.

China’s state owned enterprises also come into the discussion: “Beijing is keen for Chinese state-owned companies to take control, or at least large stakes, in gas as well as oil fields overseas in order to improve energy security; particularly as domestic oil production is increasing by just 2% a year” (Ford July 2006, 21). As one of the fastest growing producers of oil and gas, Sub-Saharan Africa is said to be the ideal target for China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) and the other Chinese oil companies. Africans welcome the new interest in its oil fields: “**More oil companies are now chasing an ever smaller pot of available exploration acreage.** This should boost signing-on fees and enable African governments to push for more favorable terms of investment” (Ford July 2006, 21). China’s firms could encourage development of more marginal oilfields. “Before the South Atlantic Petroleum deal, Chinese overseas investments were concentrated in countries that had difficult relations with the US, notably Iran and Sudan. However, the move into Nigeria could not only increase competition between oil companies but also between rival economic powers” (Ford July 2006, 21).

Both the US and China are shifting from the Middle East to locate new oil sources in Africa. “The control of oilfields by Chinese companies that are either fully or partly state-owned would provide even more strategic insurance. Competition between China and the US for influence in Africa and for African oil supplies could intensify over the next few years.” Despite the American technical expertise and greater financial clout, “African states are desperate for infrastructural investment and Beijing is prepared to offer such a commitment in conjunction with oil deals.” Additionally, China also offers soft loans to accompany its bids. The author is confident that the continent could be the winner this time around. “If the Chinese government and companies are prepared to invest in projects that others are loath to touch, then Africa will at least benefit from additional infrastructure” (Ford July 2006, 21).

It is interesting to see which western discourses have found an echo with the African pundits. Many African analysts do explore the competition between China and the West, be it Europe or the US. Nevertheless, the perspectives are different, whereas the western authors see the situation negatively, the African specialists are actually pleased with the situation and hope that African states can capitalize on that. An example of intertextuality regarding the discourse on China-Europe competition appears in the article: “Europe squeezed by China's scramble for Africa” (Mendez, 2007). An article in *The East African* also describes the western fears of competition: “In nearly every international newspaper, there's a long article or anguished column every week talking about how China is set to gobble up resource-rich Africa, locking the West out” (The East African, 2006). The author finds that the West has reason to be concerned. Responding to the question whether Africa will really benefit in a global economy dominated by China, the author is inclined to have a positive answer. He takes as example Ethiopia, which has relied heavily on China to build its infrastructure. China's interest in resources is even seen as beneficial, offering another alternative to African countries: “The Chinese are much cheaper than Western companies and the fact that they accept natural resource swaps in lieu of payment has helped some countries go around the Byzantine international financial system” (The East African, 2006). The trust in China is evident from the title: “We Have Read Africa's Future, And It is written in Chinese” (The East African, 2006).

The positive assessment of China as evident from the last phrase in the article from *African Business*, as well as this last case, is strengthened in a further article which poses the question “Is China Africa's best friend?” (Versi, May 2006). Aver Versi cites Robert Mugabe's famous remark about China being Africa's oldest friend: “We look again to the East, where the sun rises, not to the West, where it sets” (Versi, May 2006). Metaphorically, it is to be understood that China will bring positive development to Africa and won't resemble the negative impact of the West. “China has indeed been a friend of Africa during the struggle for independence and was there to help any who asked in terms of building economies. They constructed railway lines, roads, bridges and stadiums at a fraction of the cost that was demanded by Western contractors and they have trained tens of thousands of African doctors and scientists. Their attitude has also been largely straight and honest. They want to do business and are prepared to bargain and compete. They have not tried to push ideologies down African throats nor lectured them on how to run their affairs” (Versi, May 2006).

Three recurring African discourses are present in this assessment of China, namely the impression that the West is patronizing Africa, the idea that the main goal of the Chinese in

Africa is just doing business, and the appreciation of the Chinese investments in infrastructure. The business only approach is also favored by the Chinese officials. A further example of interdiscursivity regarding the positive assessment of China is evident in the following excerpt: “African governments of all political stripes have strongly welcomed China’s growing presence on the continent. They have expressed appreciation not only for the economic boost triggered by Chinese investment, but also for the pragmatic and speedy way in which China has delivered aid projects, often irrespective of concerns over corruption and environmental impacts” (Bosshard, 2008).

Damaging environmental effects resulting from the activities of the Chinese have constituted the object of a discourse mostly among the African analysts, but also in some of the western accounts. Peter Bosshard explores the evolving Chinese environmental policies from the traditional response that China does not interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries, to a statement of a Foreign Ministry spokesperson: “Government concerns over the impacts of overseas investments have triggered a series of guidelines regarding workers’ rights, product safety, community relations, and environmental impacts in such projects” (Bosshard, 2008). An example would be China Exim Bank and its environmental policy not to fund projects that are harmful to the environment. However, since compliance is not obligatory, the Chinese government’s guidelines aren’t being implemented. China is exporting what it knows in terms of a development model, which, despite its success, has brought high environmental and health care problems (Bosshard, 2008).

A concrete example tackling such problems is the case of the Chinese iron ore project in Belinga, Gabon, which will “likely damage the country's national parks” (Africa Research Bulletin, 10). “The contract apparently frees China from any taxes (even on profits) or fees to the Gabonese government for the next 25 years, gives priority access to the People's Republic for other minerals discovered in the vicinity of Comibel's concession and exempts it from environmental claims or accidents. There are no provisions for production sharing and, should the Belinga project be unprofitable, the Gabonese government is obliged to look for alternative ways to pay back its debt to the China Export-Import Bank” (Africa Research Bulletin, 10). These terms have caused outrage at this project and its possible consequences (Africa Research Bulletin, 10). Other articles also deal with the Belinga project: “The Belinga deal in Gabon is only the latest of a string of multi-billion-dollar energy and commodities contracts secured by the Asian economic giant to feed its **ravenous economy**. China is the world's top steel producer and biggest importer of iron ore” (Africa Research Bulletin, 2). Here we recognize the same type of metaphorical discourse as in the western articles. The

discourse on the scramble for resources can also be found in the African assessments, as evident from the headline “The draining of Africa’s wealth” (Bond, 10) or from the title “Asian companies target Africa's oil and gas,” (Ford, Dec 2006, 4). On the whole, my impression is that the use of euphemisms replaces the dysphemisms in the African discourse of China’s pursuing of resources. Still, no dysphemisms are spared to discuss the western exploitation of Africa.

The third stage of the analysis intends to present the economical and political dimension of the resource discourse embedded in China’s foreign policy. Through this political economical perspective, the western accounts are no longer the main voices, making place for African and Chinese voices that are not usually heard in international politics as often as their counterparts. However, the Chinese claims are not given more preponderance and legitimacy over other claims, but are contrasted with western views (Mohan and Power, 25).

A Chinese specialist, He Wenping, affirms that China’s connection to Africa goes well beyond the quest for resources and also extends to countries not endowed with resources, which benefit from debt reduction, low or zero tariff trade agreements and aid (He, 24). However, Michelle Chan-Fishel argues that China’s quest for energy and minerals reminds us of the “scramble for resources that characterized Western colonialism” (Chan-Fishel, 143). This image of China is also present in the African specialist and some official circles. Most prominent is the warning given by the South African president Thabo Mbeki, that Africa should be cautious not to trade traditional western modes of domination for Chinese ones (Alden 2007, 124). African economic historian John Blessing Karumbidza has a similar remark: “As far as Africa is concerned, the giant panda will carry on from where the colonialists and imperialists left.” Aside from the charge of neo-colonialism, despite the win-win rhetoric, China’s increasing needs make it a potential target for resource nationalism. There are predictions according to which China’s position pertaining to the oil trade will become more significant than its ideological affiliation (Halff, 36). Nevertheless, such positions should take into consideration that the 30 millions tons of oil imported annually by China in the recent years still fall short of other countries which imported even 100 million tons (Alden, 2007, 104).

As to challenges standing in the way of the possible benefits of the Chinese investment in the energy sector in Africa, most of them are concerned with the weak African administrative systems, weak laws, and dependence on natural resources. Added to that is the lack of technical know-how and skilled personnel. Last but not least, the competition for

access to resources will increase consequent to the augmenting world consumption and development (Rocha, 28-30). A multilateral approach would probably best benefit Africa, making it able to balance the great influences coming from the U.S., E.U., China, and India.

Negative perceptions of China do not accurately describe the mood of most African officials. The business approach and the appreciation of China's investment in the resource sector, combined with all the additional infrastructure deals that accompany it, characterize the opinions of most African officials. Mozambican President Armando Emilio Guebuza stated: "When we see China coming, we Africans say 'Welcome', because these investments and projects, especially in infrastructure, will help reduce our poverty problems." Moreover, the Africans have acknowledged that traditional relations and partnerships attempts with the West have not aided Africa "overcome the structural obstacles to eradicating poverty and reversing its economic marginalization." China's upward influence could break with the patterns of western leverage over African affairs (Rocha, 16), a tendency viewed with apprehension by the West. In the U.S., due to the rising oil prices, apprehensions are growing from consumers to policy officials as to China's role as a competitor in assuring oil supplies. Some government officials in the U.S. have taken notice of China's increasing monopolistic influence over some parts of Africa. For instance, as mentioned in the African articles, unlawful timber exports to China, which are not declared in the national statistics, pose a threat to the environment and come at the expense of the locals. China's need for wood is fuelled by the rapid pace of constructions. On the other hand, it still trails American consumption. What is disturbing is the bureaucratic ambiguity and secrecy pertaining to China's log imports and wood products exports. For instance, China does not declare weight or other measures for its furniture exports (Butler, 160-161).

### ***3.3 The Chinese View "Misinterpretation by the West on China's African Policy and Practice"***

The main Chinese article analyzed is defensively called: "Misinterpretation by the West on China's African Policy and Practice"( Zhang, 52). It starts to approach the issue of the western representation of China-Africa policy. "As a result of the increasing leverage of China in Africa, researching Sino-African relations turned into the favorite topic of western analysts. Every point of view argued outlandishly and denounced the success of China. Among these views there is no lack of misrepresentation of China's Africa policy. The main errors can be observed: saying that China is playing the card of the energy resources "打能源牌" "da nengyuan pai," and that every friendly move is made in order to gain access to



Africa's resources and market, by means of neo-colonialism “新殖民主义” “xin zhiminzhuyi.” Some western specialists criticize the fact that China started to penetrate Africa due to a need for resources. Some western academics believe that because China's resource projects in Asia are not so successful, and because it couldn't compete in the Middle East, China's attention turned to Africa. Others assert that China's extraordinary enthusiasm for Africa came after the Asia crisis in 1997. The second misrepresentation is saying that China doesn't pay attention to the human rights record of some African governments in Africa “人权记录” “renquan jilu,” neglecting the democratization construction in Africa. Others are saying that unlike the West, when the Chinese are doing business they don't consider the partner's human rights record or the revenues transparency, issues which are of concern in the West, but only cares that these countries don't establish relations with Taiwan. The third misrepresentation concerns the China threat. “中国威胁论” “zhongguo weixie lun,” applied to China's relations to Africa. In assessing this relation, western pundits habitually employ the international relations theory of realism “现实主义国际政治理论” “xianshizhuyi guoji zhengzhi lilun” (Zhang, 52-53).

First of all, the Sino-African relations are based on mutual respect of sovereignty, argues Zhang: “中非关系是建立在对双方主权尊重的基础之上的” “Zhongfei guanxi shi jianli zai shuangfang zhuquan de jichu zhi shang de.” Zhang's assessment can be summarized as follows: This kind of respect represents a genuine esteem. Even though Western countries also talk of respect, they often use a patriarchal frame “家长的架子” “jiazhang de jiazi,” and display the attitude of a godfather “教父” “jiaofu” from the colonial times to lecture the wrongdoings of the African states. Besides, the Sino-African trade relations abide by the principle of one's own free will of the two parties “双方自愿的原则” “shuangfang ziyuan de yuanze.” This is, of course, based on the rules of the international market and of competition, as well as on each side's principles. China has never imperiled any African country or lured by the promise of gain “没有威胁利诱” “meinyou weixie liyou” in order to grab benefits “攫取利益” “juequli yi.” Most importantly, the Sino-African relations are based on mutual benefit “互利双赢” “huli shuangying” (Zhang, 53).

The author is posing the question: “How can we solve these misinterpretations? First by intensifying the dynamics and frequency of the diplomatic relations, since they hold a special position, having direct results, swift and attracting attention of the whole world... Secondly we can genuinely establish a sense of equality to persist in attaining mutual benefits.

We should teach this concept not only in diplomacy, trade department but also in the population” (Zhang, 54).

The presence of a metaphorical discourse “playing the card of the energy resources” “打能源牌” implies manipulation of the energy resources. We can identify here an inference, which conveys the denouncing in the Western press of the Chinese deals pertaining to the resource domain. Some important notions pertaining to China’s Africa policy have been introduced here, but they will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

The configuration of discourses in this article is representative for the kind of foregrounded defensive oppositional discourse which can be encountered in the Chinese media, as a reply to the overwhelmingly negative assessments of China’s Africa policy, which denounce neo-colonialism and resource appropriation. The discourse present here stresses the misunderstanding of China’s Africa policy with regards to resources as well, and the possible way in which Chinese academics can help clear this false impression. A recurring African discourse of the patriarchal approach of some Western states towards Africa can also be encountered in the Chinese article.

Intertextuality can be established with an article in the *New African* “Time for the West to practice what it preaches,” where the post-colonial mindset that some donor organizations display in their criticism of Chinese investment is rejected, “as though Africa was naive enough to just offload its precious natural resources at bargain prices” (Wade, 20). In an echo of its past colonial rivalries, European leaders and donor organizations have expressed concerns that African nations are throwing their doors too wide open to Chinese investors and to exploitation by their Asian partners. “It is emphasized that the Chinese companies are also transferring technology, training, and know-how to Senegal” (Wade, 20). The appeal of the Chinese alternative is clear: “But when bureaucracy and senseless red tape impede our ability to act and when poverty persists while international functionaries drag their feet, African leaders have an obligation to opt for swifter solution” (Wade, 20). Both articles criticize the remains of colonial mindsets displayed by some Western countries.

Criticism against the Western view of China’s Africa oil policy is often present in the Chinese media articles. One such example of interdiscursivity on this topic is obvious from this excerpt: “For a few years, the progress of the Chinese oil companies in Africa touched on the interests of European, American and Japanese oil companies and provoked calumnies which spurred from jealousy and evil intentions. They made uproar and instigated in Africa coming again with the China threat theory, attacking China and its method employed in Angola in exchange for oil. They said that the Angola method helps the

governmental corruption. This criticism created a negative impression of the Sino-African oil cooperation in the international environment” (Ye, 21).

In order to better comprehend the defensive stance adopted in this Chinese article, we need to outline a few background debates in the American policy circles, as well as the way the Chinese academics are writing about the strategic importance of oil in Africa. The Chinese articles will also help us assess China’s oil policy in Africa. These explications fall under the third stage of analysis.

In some US policy circles, there is also talk of a neo-imperialistic dynamic in the hemisphere that China is generating. Such an approach signifies a shift towards “realist,” and away from normative neoclassical economics (Carmody and Owusu, 510).

It is clear that China’s relation with Africa can not be viewed in a vacuum, but has to be embedded in the geopolitical dynamics. In this respect, contrasting the Chinese Africa strategy to the American one in the context of resources, we can keep a panoramic view on the world political forces. Carmody and Owusu assert that China views Africa as a strategic economic space, whereas the US government approach evolves around relief, energy procurement or defense, according to the US image of Africa largely as a site of humanitarian intervention, resource extraction, and security threat (Carmody and Owusu, 506). The neo-liberal model advocated by the US seeks to constrain, legitimate, and empower African state in a certain prescribed way, whereas the Chinese’s intention is merely to enable and empower. Such an approach clearly enjoys the approval of the African elites, especially of those sanctioned by the Western countries. Beneficiaries are the Chinese companies which invested in areas banned for Western companies (Carmody and Owusu, 512). It is questionable whether neo-liberalism can function in Africa. Because it seeks to apply the law of supply and demand to society, it presents a functional problem, since people are not commodities. Thus, one has to also take notice of social considerations, such as a minimum income guarantee (Carmody and Owusu, 518). Paradoxically, there are many critics of this model even in the U.S. itself, surfacing in the election campaign and coming mostly from ordinary people or the losers of such a model. The failure of the model in Africa is obvious.

The second background issue concerns the Chinese assessments of Africa’s oil and of the Chinese investment in this domain. With the spiraling demand of resources in China, the gap between supply and demand widened, the dependency on foreign oil increased, and the resource problems turned into an “empty bottle neck” “瓶颈” “pingjing” assert Zhang Juan and Gao Xinwei. Thus, China has implemented the going out strategy “走出去战略” “zou chuqu zhanlüe” and has started to actively participate in the competition and cooperation over

the world's oil reserves. With its rich oil reserves and great potential, Africa has become the centre of attention of the whole world and also one of the most strategic regions in China's cooperation within the world oil market. Nonetheless, the environment of the Sino-African cooperation related to oil issues is extremely complicated, being filled with both threats and opportunities (Zhang and Gao, 33). It is surprising that both the Chinese and the African pundits describe each other considering the threats and opportunities related to the other.

Shu Xianlin and Chen Songlin assess Africa's potential for oil resources as follows: In the global gamble for gas and oil, Africa is becoming the focal point of the world attention. Due to its commercial value and unique strategic position, it has brought about the Western oil companies to debark in Africa under each government foreign policy wing, in order to open up a fight for oil for one's own country's oil security “石油安全” “shiyou anquan,” and for one's own country's profit. The Chinese oil cooperation in Africa already has a 10-year history, and Africa has become one of China's main areas of implementing the oil security multilateral strategy. In taking part in the competition and cooperation for oil in Africa, we have to realistically acknowledge the advantageous conditions and the restricting factors. Furthermore, we have to bring into play our strengths, to reply actively and to implement our Africa strategy in order to secure resources for China. China's oil security problems cannot be separated from the global oil market (Shu and Chen, 5). “未雨绸缪” “weiyü choumou” “Repair one's house before it rains,” that is the philosophy of China's Africa strategy for the resource security. China and other developing nations have to cooperate to maximize their advantages over the western counterparts, and to implement the target to achieve equal and mutual benefits between us and the African nations (Shu and Chen, 8).

Shu and Chen go on to discuss problems concerning the Sino-African oil cooperation. First of all, the import channels aren't stable. Despite the growing momentum in the Sino-African oil commerce, there is still a high risk involved. Except for the relatively secure oil rights and interests from Sudan, the other imports from African countries are bought from a third party or from the international oil market. Secondly, the political situation of African oil producing countries is unstable; their self ruling power is weak. Even though Africa is endowed with rich resources, because of religious and tribal disputes, political corruption and widespread poverty, the region is politically uneven. In some countries, the self governing capacity concerning oil exploration is extremely low, since the oil exploration and export has been monopolized by the Western Multinationals. Our friendly relations with most African countries notwithstanding, China entered the African oil market relatively late. Thirdly, there is a large gap between our companies and the Western Multinationals in terms of scale,

capital, technology, experience and other fields (Ye, 21). Moreover, the unstable situation in the South of Sudan has brought many risks and difficulties to the Chinese oil company ( Shu and Chen, 8).

## **4. China’s “non-interference policy”, aid policy and the “human rights” issue**

There is a real concern about the human rights situation in countries like Sudan and Zimbabwe. China’s non-intervention policy has sparked outcry in the Western media, since it is believed that China could exercise a positive influence on the Sudanese government. Moreover, China’s opposition to the sanctions on Zimbabwe and its arms sales has also come under the scrutiny of the media. Irrespective of the way the media is portraying the situations in Darfur and Zimbabwe, there is a clear crisis situation for the affected populations there. The carnage in Darfur has been declared genocide, given to the immense loss of life. Latest reports depict the cruelty of rape Darfur women must endure. The latest news regarding the election in Zimbabwe are also disconcerting, given that people are intimidated, displaced and driven away from their homes, in order to prevent their voting for the opposition.

Furthermore, the leader of the Movement for the Democratic Change, Morgan Tsvangirai, has been repeatedly arrested while campaigning, and another member of the party has been formally accused with treason. Even worse, there have been reports of deaths of the party members related to the election. In this context, China’s military support for the Mugabe regime and his party ZANU- PF is problematic. Moreover, the fact that China provided non-conditional loans and aid has also turned into a favorite theme in the western press. The articles were chosen from a pool of 115 articles.

### ***4.1. The western view: “How China's Support Of Sudan Shields a Regime Called 'Genocidal' ”***

The first article comes from *The Christian Science Monitor*, a newspaper which, despite its name, relates current events and doesn’t attempt to evangelize. The title is quite suggestive “How China's Support of Sudan Shields a Regime Called ‘Genocidal.’ ” The dysphemism “genocidal” is indicative of the grave situation in Darfur. The Darfur situation has been labeled genocide in a White House Press release by George W. Bush, as a result of investigations sent by the then Secretary of State Colin Powell (Bush, 2004). Since then, the

press has repeatedly used the term in its reports. This is a clear indication of the influence the official statements have on the media reporting.

The article starts blaming the Chinese not only because of their economical policies, but also because of their political policies to Darfur. “Beijing has ‘a vested interest in the continuation of a low level of insecurity. It keeps the other major investors out,’ charged the Brussels-based International Crisis Group (ICG) in a 2002 report” (Harman, 1). An apparently contradictory remark from a spokesman of the same group ICG, named Kimberly Abbott, follows: “Beijing's foreign policy has significantly evolved. China now well understands that its investments in Sudan are threatened by growing instability in Darfur and the potential re-emergence of conflict in the south of the country, and has started to lean on Khartoum” (Harman, 1). Here we notice the voice of a representative of a new social movement. The prominence of this type of voice in the modern mediatized politics is a proof of their growing influence (Fairclough, 185). “More worrisome for many critics, however, is that China sells Khartoum weapons and military aircraft and backs Sudan in the UN Security Council when other nations seek to condemn it for its bad behavior toward its own citizens.” According to a report last year by Amnesty International, Sudan is carrying out “massive violations of international human rights ... in southern Sudan and Darfur,” all with the help of Chinese ammunition, tanks, helicopters, and fighter aircraft. China has also recently delivered six K-8 advanced trainer fighter jets, which can be used for air-to-ground attacks, according to the report. All this happened after an UN-approved embargo was imposed on Darfur (Harman, 2). Again we notice the voice of Amnesty international, which attests to the impact some of these NGO's have today on politics.

The article criticizes China's use of its role as a permanent member of the UN Security Council to continuously block effective action against Sudan by arguing for the respect of Sudan's sovereignty. “China has repeatedly used veto threats to block the deployment of a joint UN-African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur, significantly weakening international pressure on Sudan's government to solve the crisis” (Harman, 3). Nonetheless, the author gives China some credit for its quiet pressure on Sudan, on account of which “President Bashir conceded to a deployment of 3,500 UN peacekeepers into Darfur.” Even the critical U.S. “admits that Beijing's cautious behind-the-scenes diplomacy might be working in concert with the U.S.'s more aggressive style.” The article further condemns “China's willingness to befriend, do business with, and diplomatically protect questionable regimes” such as Mugabe's in Zimbabwe. “This relationship has been a major support to the otherwise internationally ostracized President Robert Mugabe: With both human rights conditions and

the economy in a free fall under Mr. Mugabe, China has in recent years sold more than \$200 million of military hardware to Zimbabwe” (Harman, 3). “Furthermore, because of its attitude that sovereignty of nations must be respected above all else, China does not tie its aid or investment to conditions such as good governance, fighting corruption, or adopting reforms – the sort of conditions that have long been mainstays for the West and international institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. This ends up being convenient for regimes that do not care to make reforms in their countries and undercuts efforts by other donors and investors to press for positive reform, say critics” (Harman, 3).

The configuration of discourses here corresponds to other western articles as well. First of all we recognize the foregrounded dominantly negative discourses on China: Beijing coddles the authoritarian regimes, sells arms, has interest in instability, and gives non conditional aid which benefits the African elites. Secondly, we also identify backgrounded positive oppositional discourses, like the discourse on Beijing’s positive role of subtle diplomacy. The overall intention of this article is to condemn Beijing’s actions, so any positive assessment can only be backgrounded. “China’s subtler, more respectful approach” is contrasted in this article with “the West’s strong-arm tactics and father-knows-best conditionality for aid and trade.” This is one of those seldom instances where the African discourse creeps into the western articles.

There are many examples of interdiscursivity. The first one deals with the nature of the untied Chinese aid to human rights: “European governments are increasingly concerned at China’s involvement, because it undermines their own efforts to tie trade and aid to human rights, and to help Africa overcome corruption” (The Economist, Jan 21 2006, 57). The Chinese arms sales to Sudan represent a recurring theme in many articles such as in an article entitles: “U.S. report links China arms sales to Darfur carnage,” which quotes Human Rights First, a U.S.-based nonprofit group. A “detailed study of Sudanese and U.N. trade data showed that China was virtually the sole supplier of small arms to Sudan, which pays for the weapons with its growing oil revenues” (Reuters Group, 2008).

There are also examples of manifest intertextuality encountered in another article called “The Genocide Games,” which poses the following questions: “Why does China airbrush away Darfur’s genocidal realities? Why has Beijing been Khartoum’s largest weapons supplier over the past decade? Why has China repeatedly wielded a veto threat at the UN Security Council as the world body vainly struggles to bring pressure to bear on Khartoum?” (Reeves, 2008) Even the answer has appeared in the previously analyzed articles as a type of metaphorical discourse: it “lies in China’s thirst for Sudanese crude oil” (Reeves, 2008). The

blocking of sanctions against Sudan is a recurring theme in the western media: “China will not allow even targeted sanctions against regime officials most responsible for flagrant violations of international humanitarian law” (Reeves, 2008). The same configuration of discourses between the metaphorical “thirst discourse” on oil, arms sales, disengaging the Olympic Games from the Darfur situation, and the obstruction to the UN sanctions appears also in the article entitled “Investing in Tragedy: China’s Money, Arms and Politics in Sudan,” which states: “China's thirst for oil not only explains why Beijing arms a gun-hungry Sudanese government while the world protests; it also accounts for the political cover that China gives Sudan, especially at the United Nations. China has been the chief obstruction to efforts by the Security Council to censure Sudan, weakening nine out of fourteen Council resolutions between 2004 and 2007” (Apple and Sears, 2008).

The dominant discourse of condemning China for not taking the responsibility of using its leverage over Sudan and linking it to the Olympics is also present in the article “China and Darfur, The Genocide Olympics?,” stating: “But the bigger question is why China, along with Sudan's other Arab and Asian partners, feels free to trample on basic standards of decency ... China seeks acceptance at the world's diplomatic top table -- and this cause is unlikely to be advanced if China is perceived to be complicit in genocide. Imagine the newspaper ads leading up to the Beijing Games in 2008: Human rights campaigners will call on the world to boycott the Genocide Olympics.” Recognizing China’s influence over Sudan, evident from the fact that African Union forces were allowed in Darfur, as a result of Chinese diplomacy, the author urges China “to join with the United States and others to broker a cease-fire in Darfur, without which even a beefed-up peace monitoring force cannot save civilians” (*Washington Post*, 14 Dec. 2006).

There are also oppositional discourses regarding the “Genocide Olympics.” In an article called “Why China won’t save Darfur,” the authors opine that “threatening a ‘Genocide Olympics’ alone will not bring peace (or peacekeepers) to that troubled region” (Abramowitz and Kolieb, 1). The article identifies China by means of a metaphorical discourse with a whipping boy: “With its oil ties to the Sudanese regime and its resistance to U.N. Security Council resolutions condemning Khartoum, China is a convenient **whipping boy**, and a cast of celebrities has signed on eagerly to lead the whipping” (Abramowitz and Kolieb, 1). While the article acknowledges some of the results of this pressure applied to Beijing, it states that “No amount of criticism will convince Beijing to pursue a coercive strategy and a nonconsensual deployment of U.N. peacekeepers that Khartoum rejects. Yes, China has the economic leverage to gain the ear of President Bashir, but that hardly means it



has the ability—or, more to the point, the will—to bully him into accepting a large U.N. peacekeeping contingent in Darfur” (Abramowitz and Kolieb, 1).

Nonetheless, other articles laud the linking of Beijing Olympics with the situation in Darfur: “Credit goes to Hollywood — Mia Farrow and Steven Spielberg in particular ... non-governmental organizations and other groups appear to have scored a surprising success in an effort to link the Olympics, which the Chinese government holds very dear, to the killings in Darfur, which, until recently, Beijing had not seemed too concerned about.” In short, Mia Farrow urged Mr. Spielberg to pressure China through his involvement with the Olympic Games. After handing in his resignation “Mr. Spielberg sent a letter to President Hu Jintao of China, condemning the killings in Darfur and asking the Chinese government to use its influence in the region ‘to bring an end to the human suffering there.’ ” China soon sent Mr. Zhai to Darfur. “During a news conference on Wednesday, Mr. Zhai called activists who want to boycott the Games ‘either ignorant or ill natured.’ But he added, ‘We suggest the Sudan side show flexibility and accept’ the United Nations peacekeepers” (The New York Times, 13 April 2007).

In another article called “Envoy Lauds China’s Role in Diplomacy with Sudan,” the voice of another Chinese representative’s to Darfur, Liu Guijin, appears. Nonetheless, his assertions are presented in a very ironic way, which basically sends us another message. The article cites: Liu “fervently rejected any tie between the atrocities in Darfur and the 2008 Beijing Olympics, saying that linking the Games and what is happening in Darfur is ‘ridiculous’ and like comparing ‘**cattle to horses.**’ ” (Boustany, A16). The plastic analogy the Chinese envoy makes it easier for the writer to sound sarcastic.

The metaphorical discourse doesn’t stop there though: “If with 8.7 percent China is charged with looting resources, I don’t know the words that describe the exports to these other countries (23% US and 36% Europe),” he said. China’s oil exploration concessions are “transparent, inclusive and mutually beneficial,” he said. “**You have eaten all the meat and only left us with some soup. We just start to sip the soup and you are accusing us of wrongdoing,**” Liu said. ““Do you think this is fair? Is it fair?” he said, his voice rising to a high pitch” (Boustany, A16). Naturally, the Chinese envoy is also being ironic and speaks in metaphors like Chinese officials often do when confronted with such situations. Still, his quotes are being manipulated to convey another meaning, the irony of the author being evident in the quote: “Liu trumpeted his country’s success in persuading the Sudanese government in Khartoum to approve a hybrid African Union-United Nations peacekeeping force for the troubled Darfur region” (Boustany, A16). Normally, this kind of discourse

appears in the Chinese articles.

The discourse of China's arming the Mugabe regime is a recurring one in both western and African articles. One headline cites: "China slammed for arming Zimbabwe's Mugabe." In addition to the normal accusations against China in this issue, this article informs that China might react to the media pressure: "Hammered by criticism over its own human rights record and perhaps worried about its reputation ahead of the upcoming Summer Olympics, China signaled Tuesday that it might turn around a ship full of arms bound for its long-time ally, Zimbabwe...The apparent withdrawal of the arms shipment by China comes at a time of growing criticism from African leaders for Mr. Mugabe's iron-fisted handling of his domestic opposition in the March 29 elections" (Baldauf and Ford, 2008). Indeed, the time of this arms shipment was scandalous, given the highly controversial Zimbabwe elections which have now been proved to be a fraud.

The discourse on Chinese arms sales is ubiquitous. It also appears in relation to Darfur as in a recent article: "Made in China: The planes and guns slaughtering Darfur's innocents" (Mcgee, 12th July 2008). The article further states that "military equipment and weapons made in China are being used against civilians in Darfur in violation of a United Nations arms embargo in the troubled region of Sudan...UN experts say two military trucks taken from the Janjaweed by rebels in a remote area of Darfur hold the key to China's involvement. Serial numbers on the trucks, made by Chinese vehicle manufacturer Dong Feng, matched those of a shipment that UN officials tracked to Sudan after the embargo came into force but were later lost" (Mcgee, 12th July 2008). An instance of manifest intertextuality can be observed in this article, which draws on a BBC report aired on Panorama TV programme, as mentioned in the article itself: "The Panorama TV programme tracked down Chinese army lorries in the Sudanese province that came from a batch exported from China to Sudan in 2005. The BBC was also told that China was training fighter pilots who fly Chinese A5 Fantan fighter jets in Darfur" (Andersson, 13 July 2008).

In order to understand the diatribe directed against China with regards to its Sudan and Zimbabwe politics, a discussion on China's understanding of human rights, its stance on non interference and China's aid policies, as well as the perception in the West and in Africa is imperative. The Chinese discourse on human rights revolves around the right to economic development, as evident from the right to food and shelter. Thus, the liberal approach to human rights undermines the stability desired by Chinese policymakers to bring about development. Such a stance is evident in China's Africa policies (Taylor, 9 March 2007).

Despite criticism in the West, it is not correct to assume that the Chinese have

removed human rights from their diplomacy. The Chinese approach draws on Confucian principles, which underline collective interests as having a priority when compared to the individual freedoms. China is targeting a need free society. Thus, an alternative Chinese conception of human rights emerges (Shinn, 21 December 2006). While acknowledging China's human rights theory, Jan Taylor makes a cogent argument, namely that Beijing's diplomatic efforts in Africa might strengthen governments that actively deter development, since it is a threat to the African elites. Taylor thus recognizes the deep contradiction within the Chinese human rights discourse, more precisely regarding the fact that sovereignty, considered by China as guarantor of human rights, is being employed to undermine development in some African countries. The deleterious consequences of the disregard for human rights in Zimbabwe, upheld by China, are translated not only in the trampling of civil and political rights, but also in a precarious economical crisis (Taylor, 9 March 2007). While China is advocating the elementary human right to development, one has to ask whether the Chinese approach might actually impede the long term growth prospective (Pant, 37).

China condones the quashing of human rights and especially political rights (a western understanding of human rights). Moreover, it also undermines the economic and social rights of the people, which is incongruous with China's own discourse on human rights. If abiding to the principle of non-interference, Beijing subverts the economic well being of some African people and deepens the penury, then its socio-economic argumentation is far from being a coherent one (Taylor 4 October 2007, 63). It is in the emphasis on non-interference that China's vulnerability to western diatribe lies. This is because such a stance can easily be exploited by African autocrats, and China appears in this context as shielding them (Taylor 4 October 2007, 67). In China's view, sovereignty is imperative, that being to the detriment of democracy. It is considered to be a sort of collective human right and a guarantor of human rights. The non-interference with one country's autonomy is essential for the Five Principles (Taylor 4 October 2007, 67). The propensity for respecting other countries' sovereignty is rooted in China's history of humiliation.

China's initial approach was one of denial of the relevance that human rights might pose for socialist China. That is due to the fact that human rights were perceived by China as the bourgeois liberal rights of the West. After the 1980's, the Chinese started to argue their stance, rather than simply reject the western view. Relying on culturalist relativist positions, they perceived the human rights concept in the west as resulting from the capitalist society, while in China, the Confucian tradition of harmony didn't necessitate individual protection of human rights. The material aspect was emphasized in this Chinese view on human rights,

namely ensuring basic standards of living (Breslin and Taylor, 59).

China's non interference is welcomed by the African countries with some of the worst human rights records, such as Sudan and Zimbabwe. The support between these countries and China in the UN Security Council and the UN Human Rights Council is reciprocal. Thus, African countries do not voice any criticism on China's human right record (Shinn, 21 December 2006). On its part, China has repeatedly vetoed sanctions against the Mugabe regime and has been a supporter of the regime in Sudan. The official Chinese stance is that any sanctions against Zimbabwe would complicate the situation in Zimbabwe. China considers that passing a sanctions resolution would not be conducive to political dialogue and negotiations between the two political parties (China defends veto of Zimbabwe resolution, Sat Jul 12, 2008). Politically, China is thus seeking international support from the African countries in the UN, and is trying a soft balance to contain the US in a tangle of international rules and procedures (Pant, 35). Some pundits suggested that China's cooperation with the Mugabe regime has become a liability for China's prestige in the international community in view of the approaching Olympic Games, since the Mugabe regime has been ostracized by most western countries. The fact that president Hu did not visit Zimbabwe on its last African tour was read as a suggestion that China might not back Zimbabwe internationally after all (Matahwa, 1). Such predictions proved to be false, since China did not hesitate to veto proposed UN sanctions against the Mugabe regime just a few weeks prior to the Olympic Games.

Conversely, China has not hesitated to sell the Mugabe regime radio jamming equipment, which was used in assuring his success in the presidential campaign in 2005. This comes in addition to helping Zimbabwe build its military strength with Chinese weapons, fighter jets and trucks (Matahwa, 1). This veiled involvement proves that non-interference is actually selective, as long as it suits China's interests. Thus China has provided Mugabe with considerable political, military and material support, even building him a palace.

During Mr. Hu's visit to Sudan, he granted them a \$13 million interest free loan to build a new presidential palace for Omar Al-Bashir, which now faces an indictment from International Criminal Court (ICC). Nonetheless, under international pressure, Hu said it was imperative to put an end to the deaths in Darfur. China's stance on Darfur could be indicative that China might not find it always suitable to remain a non interfering partner (Matahwa, 1).

The views on China's role in Darfur are diverse. Lately, China has expressed concerns regarding the indictment of the Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir by the ICC, on several charges from genocide to ethnic cleansing. Nevertheless, China is also vulnerable with

the impending Olympic Games and risks to damage its image by an eventual opposition to the accusation against Omar al Bashir.

He Wenping suggests that China's Darfur policy is adapting. Despite harsh denunciations from the Western media, of allegedly aggravating the Darfur situation, China has been working to prevent the deterioration of the hostilities in Darfur. China's actions are concretized in diplomatic mediation between the parties involved, sending special envoys, \$11 million worth of aid in the form of humanitarian goods, and \$1.8 million for the peacekeeping mission of the African Union and dispatching engineers (He Summer 2007, 35). However, the downside of China's non-interference policy became clear to the Sudan based NGOs, which were more frequently ignored by the Chinese officials, who did not hold meetings regarding the human rights in Darfur (Alden 2007, 111).

Other pundits stress the ubiquity of China's involvement in Darfur despite its rhetoric that China does not meddle in internal affairs. They hope that China's prominent role in Sudan could help pressure the Sudanese government, since it is considered that China has a real influence on the Sudanese government. Nevertheless, China maintains its status quo, avoiding harsh critique or actions against Khartoum (Thompson J-P.,1). One element of its involvement is the weaponry and military equipment (helicopters, jetfighters, tanks, missiles, ammunitions, anti-tank and anti-personal mines, guns and rifles) sold to the Sudanese governments and rebels. This proves that China continues to sustain a despicable regime by a combination of political and military actions (Thompson J-P., 1).

Let us also analyze the nature of Chinese aid to Africa in comparison with Western aid. Most of the Western aid is tied, which means that the recipient is obligated to buy certain goods or services from the donor country. We can differentiate between input conditionalities, which refer to how the recipient spends the resources and output conditionalities, which are connected to institutional changes. China's sole output condition is observance to its "One China" policy. China provides both monetary and non-monetary aid. It offers a complete package which contains money, technical expertise, as well as political influence. Furthermore, China offers grants and loans for infrastructure, plant and equipment. In addition, China grants a significant number of scholarships to African students (15,600 to 52 African countries in 2005). A particular type of aid employed only by China is tariff exemption. 2005 Beijing lifted tariffs on 190 import items such as food, textiles minerals and machinery. In an effort to protect the South African textile industry, China introduced the voluntary export restraint. These forms of aid suggest that there is an intricate connection between trade and aid. However, China's concessional loans to African governments for infrastructure projects,

which are carried out by Chinese firms, are also a form of tied aid and an example of input conditionalities (McCormick, 80-84).

Moreover, China's aid for oil strategy can be considered as another way of tying aid, since it offers financial assistance for construction projects in exchange for oil (Zafar, 2007). Chinese aid, while not totally untied, manages to diminish negative effects on the donor, by means of securing projects through the so-called indirect conditionalities (Sauntman and Yan Dec. 2007, 86).

The Western aid, on the other hand, comes with direct conditionalities. 80 % of U.S. grants and contracts for developing countries must be employed to buy goods and services from the United States. High percentages can also be encountered in European countries such as Italy: 90% of Italy's aid money must benefit Italian companies. Regardless of the Western rhetoric of generosity to Africa, it is estimated that from 1970 to 2002, Africa received \$530bn aid and loans, and repaid even more: \$540bn. Despite some debt cancellation, Africa's debt still amounts to \$300bn. More than half of the G8 promised aid was double counted or involved sums already pledged (Sauntman and Yan, Dec. 2007, 85). By contrast, China has always fulfilled its promises.

China is altering some of the prevailing practices and parameters in development assistance (Zafar, 2007). Chinese aid to Africa has focused on infrastructure and human development. Chinese aid provides funding for highly visible and important infrastructure projects which Western donors have long since stopped financing (Idun-Arkhusst and Laing 2007, 6). A significant part of China's aid is directed towards complex physical infrastructure projects in areas with difficult terrains. They include remote rural roads, bridges over deep rivers and deep-sea ports (Guttal, 25). Infrastructure aid can be beneficial for the local manufacturing sector, as long as local materials are used. Countries such as Kenya with strong cement industry have more benefits. Furthermore, the improved roads, electricity and water supply, ports, and communications means will benefit the African people in the various countries in general (McCormick, 85).

Davies remarks upon the new terms of engagement of Africa by China, which came up with a "coalition engagement, a collaborative state business approach to foreign policy," that China's aid policy is also integrated in this scheme (Davies, 2). Similar to the issue of human rights, the government of the People's Republic of China has its own fuzzy definition of foreign aid (Davies, 2). Because of the vagueness, a complete overview of China's aid commitments and their implementation is not easy, since figures on China's aid disbursements to Africa remain hazy. The lack of transparency in Chinese loans further

complicates this process. A vital role in China's aid policy is played by China EXIM Bank, which is the unique provider of concessional financing. The approximately 300 projects in Africa by mid-2007 amount to almost 40 percent of its loan book. Most of its concessional loans are directed to infrastructure development. In May 2007, the China EXIM Bank started to manage the \$5 billion China-Africa Development Fund publicized at the FOCAC 2006 Summit. Davies opines that despite its title as "development" fund, it was intended mainly to finance the market entry of Chinese firms into the African economy (Davies, 3). China Exim Bank has been highly criticised by countless civil society organizations for financing large hydropower or mining projects without conducting talks with the affected populations or doing impact assessments (Guttal, 25). A concrete example of such a project, which infringes upon the human rights of the Sudanese people, is the Merowe dam implemented by a Chinese joint venture between China National Water Resources and Hydropower Engineering and China Water Engineering (CCMDJV) funded by China Exim Bank. It has resulted in grave displacement of the people of Korgheli village, which have been attacked by the police and forced to move into an infertile desert area. Thus, the Chinese companies also rely on armed forces to gain access to the natural resources (Askouri, 78).

An African NGO, Pambazuka, reports that two well-known leaders of the Manasir, one of the three groups being displaced by the Merowe Dam in Sudan, have barely escaped an assassination attempt by security personnel employed by the Merowe Dam Implementation Unit on 10th February 2007. Incredible human rights violations have occurred since its start in 2003, such as arrest of community leaders, shooting of the peaceful protest of the Hamdam people in September 2003, and firing without warning on a peaceful gathering of Amri affected communities in school courtyard, killing three and injuring 47 others in April 2006 ("Sudan: Merowe Dam: Attempted assassination of community leaders", 16 February 2007).

Nonetheless, a major critique point is that China's lending banks do not adhere to the "Equator Principles," which monitor the social and environmental impact of such loans. Furthermore, former World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz has castigated Chinese aid policies towards Africa, noting that China should not fall in the footsteps of Western donors, which have financed for decades unsavoury regimes such as the one of Mobutu Sese-seko of Zaire (Pannt, 37). Other specialists refer to the lack of conditionalities on the Chinese aid. By offering aid without preconditions, China has presented an "attractive alternative to conditional western aid" (Tull 2006, 459). China's aid to Africa differs from western practices, since it is not used as a political tool. A further difference to U.S. aid, for example, concerns

whether the recipient or the donor decides the projects financed by aid money (Sauntman and Yan Dec. 2007, 85).

#### ***4.2 The African view: “The Darfur Dilemma: Justice or Peace?”***

The challenge connected to the latest indictment from ICC ( International Criminal Court) against President Omar al-Bashir for crimes against humanity has been very well put in the headline of an African article from Cokorioko newspaper in Sierra Leone “The Darfur Dilemma: Justice or Peace?” The headline is emblematic for the possible choices and consequences related to this course of action taken by the ICC. The indictment was considered, according to the article “as a gesture of political grandstanding” or “the West's relentless appetite to punish another Muslim state” (Mansaray, 22 July 2008). We notice here the metaphorical discourse of “appetite” which appeared so often in regards to China’s quest for resources, applied this time to the western propensity of castigating Muslim states. The author finds the timing ironic, since “Sudan finally accepted the presence of ‘peace keepers’; after years of political gymnastics” (Mansaray, 22 July 2008). The metaphorical ironical expression “political gymnastics” refers to the slow process in the UN where the U.S. and China have had disagreements over how to proceed in solving the situation in Darfur. The article further explores “fears of a backlash for the recent developments” (Mansaray, 22 July 2008).

The author takes the following stance clearly in favour of justice: “Those who subscribe to the idea that this will unleash hell's fury on earth, should listen to Peter Tosh, that ‘there can be no peace without justice’ ” (Mansaray, 22 July 2008). The metaphor to “unleash hell's fury on earth” stands for the possible negative outcomes of the indictment against Omar al-Bashir. The presence of the adverb “without” in connection with the negation “no” in the formula “no peace without justice” is epistemological evidential (Johnson, 54). It underlines the author’s position on the subject. The author also employs the voices of the Chinese pundits and governmental officials, who reacted to Steven Spielberg’s accusations: “In response, China embarked on a journey of political paranoia, accusing its critics of ‘ulterior motives’ and being part of a ‘conspiracy.’ In an edition of the Guangming Daily, the Chinese Government line was that ‘Mr Spielberg knows nothing about China's endeavour to solve the Darfur issue... He is unqualified to blame the Chinese Government.’ ” Nonetheless, the Chinese statements are interpreted by the author as “political paranoia,” and are used ironically, as is evident from the next statement. “Oh yes, the world knows the endeavours taken by China to solve the Darfur crisis. It comes gift-wrapped in toys called AK47, rocket



launchers, grenades and bullet candies, in return for oil. China is known as one of the primary stakeholders in the Darfur region” (Mansaray, 22 July 2008). The sarcasm in this sentence is apparent, China being accused of selling weapons to the rebels in Darfur. The article continues in the same manner: “It is ironical that on the eve of the Beijing Olympics, China has suddenly suffered from a bout of its conscience and moral ‘fibrosis’ to contribute to the hybrid coalition forces in Darfur, in pursuance of peace.” The metaphor “moral fibrosis” is analogue to the other idiom “bout of conscience,” where fibrosis is used in its less known meaning as “normal healing process” and associated to morality.

The author ponders upon “the worrying trend that China and Russia's rights to veto at the UN appear to be specifically reserved to insulate leaders with poor human rights record against sanctions. When Britain and the U.S. trumpeted the need for further sanctions against Robert Mugabe recently, China, Russia and South Africa flexed their muscles against it.” Another frequent expression appears here, namely the fact that “China flexed its muscle,” which is associated with China’s political power and appears also in connection to its economical favourable position, as evident from a previous article analyzed.

The author makes two interesting ironic parallels, the first one about the Chinese association with the Mugabe regime, and the second one about the connection to the Al-Bashir regime and present China’s deleterious actions: “At the height of the Zimbabwe crisis, while the world was wringing its conscience about how to tackle the problem, China was not only busy negotiating nautical miles to deliver a ship load of ammunition to Mugabe's Government, but by so doing massaging his ego as well.” ”In February this year, while eight Nobel laureates were appending their signatures to a letter addressed to President Hu Jintao, calling for urgent action by China over the situation in Darfur, it doubled its trade with Sudan by providing resources that make it easier for that Government to continue to carry out its atrocities” (Mansaray, 22 July 2008). The article ends with a warning: “China should remember to bring the stick when serving the carrot on a plate of moral considerations. To support politically psychotic regimes carte blanche will undermine what, if any, well meaning intentions. ‘We don't interfere into the internal politics of a country’ no longer washes with the human conscience, when you consider the amount of lives it takes to protect your investments” (Mansaray, 22 July 2008).

The well known idiom “Carrot and stick” designates a policy of rewarding for making progress towards one’s objectives. The original metaphor is that of a stick dangling a carrot in front of an animal as an incentive to perform a task. Nevertheless, the term is presently distorted to refer to the act of rewarding good behaviour and punishing bad behaviour. The

carrot represents the edible reward, while the stick refers to a punishing switch. This is in fact a combination of 2 theories of diplomacy, Carrot and Stick and Big Stick Diplomacy (“Carrot and stick”).

From the perspective of the discourse analysis, it can be observed that the dominant discourse is one of condemning Chinese actions in Sudan and Zimbabwe. The configuration of discourses in this article is representative of a trend in the media articles on the subject of human rights in Darfur and Zimbabwe, often both countries being mentioned in the same article. The article deals with the possible backlashes to the indictment of Al-Bashir, advocates that there is “no peace without justice”, criticizes China’s arming of the Mugabe regime and China’s veto at the UN Security Council and questions the timing of sending Chinese troops to strengthen the UN forces in Darfur.

There are instances of interdiscursivity between this article and other African articles. One headline states “China, Russia quash ICC efforts to press Sudan over Darfur crimes” and goes on with the same theme as in the previous article: “January 11, 2008 (THE HAGUE) — A United Nations Security Council, UNSC, statement calling for the Sudanese government to comply with the International Criminal Court, ICC, by handing over two men suspected of war crimes in Darfur has been scrapped due to opposition from China and Russia” (Glassborow, 12 January 2008).

**There are also clear examples of manifest intertextuality:** “Other observers in Sudan fear it will provoke a backlash from the government, further worsening the situation in Darfur” (Mushtaq, 23 July 2008). In an oppositional discourse to the scepticism expressed regarding China’s contribution to the UN troops, Africa News takes a more positive note on China’s late diplomatic efforts to send UN troops in Darfur “China Takes Credit for Sending Int’l Troops to Darfur” (Africa News, April 21, 2007). Nonetheless, in the same article, China’s reluctance to sanctions is being addressed by giving voice to Chinese official Zhai “We are not in favour of increasing sanctions or expanding sanctions, because there is much hope for resolving this (Darfur) issue” (Africa News, April 21, 2007). The statement is treated circumspcctly, since the author argues that “Beijing’s stance continues despite new evidence that the Sudanese government is directly involved in the civil war ravaging the Darfur region” (Africa News, April 21, 2007). This line of argumentation is typical for the western media discourse on China’s stance towards sanctions against Sudan and most recently against the Mugabe regime. The much disparaged non-interference stance of China in the western media,

is also being addressed in many African articles pertaining to human rights affairs: “Their insistence on non-intervention while pursuing economic interests has disturbing elements of insensitivity to the plight of Africans in crisis situations” (The Nation, 27 April 2008).

The infamous Chinese ship carrying arms to the Mugabe regime during a very tumultuous election that had made headlines in the western media, was not only mentioned in our article, but has also made suggestive headlines in Africa “Zimbabwe; Country Does Not Need Chinese Arms” (The Nation, April 27, 2008), “Zimbabwe; 'Ship of Shame' Cargo Delivered to Country” (The Namibian, May 20, 2008). The article further criticizes Mugabe’s campaign of “intimidation and coercive tactics” (The Namibian, May 20, 2008). The military support offered by the Chinese to the Mugabe regime appears analyzed in more detail in an article entitled “Mugabe: China's Military is a Welcome Ally on The Streets of Zimbabwe” (Mikelti, April 19, 2008). The article alleges that “the Mugabe regime calling in Chinese military aid to help suppress the will of people in Zimbabwe.” The will of the people refers to the controversial situation of the Zimbabwe elections. The article goes on to say “The PRC troops were observed patrolling with Zimbabwean National Army soldiers before and during Tuesday's ill-fated general strike called by the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)” (Mikelti, April 19, 2008).

However, there are also discourses oppositional to the ones that criticize the incident with the Chinese arms ship. One article is entitled: “Zimbabwe; SADC - When a Ship Exposes the Sheep in U.S.” (Africa News, 26 April 2008). The article adopts quite a trenchant attitude towards the Western interference and media coverage, and is quite defensive of the Chinese military support: “This ship about which there has been so much brouhaha is just but one of the many arms shipments Zimbabwe has received, indeed shipments Zimbabwe will get well into the future. Zimbabwe is well stocked for its defense needs” (Africa News, 26 April 2008). The article makes an incisive and pathetic plea for Zimbabwe’s sovereignty, which China professes to respect: “For us, sovereignty is not just a big word, a fleeting feeling which visits us at the UN and other conferences of nations. For us, sovereignty is the blood shed; the lives lost, the tears wet and still un-wiped; bitter memories that cannot fade” (Africa News, 26 April 2008). The resentments against western nations are quite clear in the author’s scathing assessment of the way the West is viewing the Sino-Zimbabwean involvement: “Is the assault on Sino-Zimbabwe trade prompted by democratic commitment to human rights on the part of these foremost oppressor nations of the West? Who benefits?” (Africa News, 26 April 2008).

In the third stage of analysis, I will give voice to some African perspectives on human rights. In addition, I will offer a timeline of the way the UN Security Council tried to deal with the conflict in Darfur and will expand on China's shifting position to Darfur.

Nobusi Obiorah gives a very compelling image of China and of the significance of human rights in a western understanding of it for Africa, in context of China's involvement in Africa: "For many among Africa's ruled who are physically and intellectually exhausted by two decades of economic 'reform' supposedly adopted by African governments but driven by Western governments, donors and the IFIs, China represents hope that another world is possible in which bread comes before the freedom to vote" (Obiorah, 38). Evidently, China's emphasis on the material aspect of the human rights is welcomed in an economically struggling Africa and has priority to the detriment of democracy. In this context, Chinese aid and loans also appear as a welcomed alternative to the western donors and the IFIs.

However, African civil society is also apprehensive because of the impending implications of China's relationship with the African governments for the promoting of human rights and democracy in Africa. Of particular concern is the Sino-African security cooperation, more precisely the cheap Chinese weapons sold without imposing humanitarian conditions. The Nigerian government, for instance, bought 12 Chinese versions of Mig 21 jet fighters and ordered patrol boats to secure the swamps in the Niger Delta, where China also has oil interests. Moreover, China also supplied 12 jet fighters and 100 trucks to the Zimbabwean army. There is also a difference to the effect of African NGO's when African governments turn to China. In the past, African NGOs could rely on Western NGO's to exert pressure on their governments, but such influence seems to erode since the Chinese NGO's cannot influence the Chinese government in the same way (Obiorah, 47-49).

Ali Askouri alleges that China has a top down economic development approach and enumerates some of the negative consequences of Chinese economical assistance. Chinese economical assistance to countries such as Sudan, Ethiopia, Angola, Chad, Mozambique and Zimbabwe has encouraged elitism and corruption, and has widened the social and class divisions. Furthermore, Chinese economical assistance encourages tyranny and dictatorship, undermining the efforts of the African societies to advance respect for human rights and democracy (Askouri, 73). Not all analysts agree that China's official policy of non-interference applies. Askouri believes that China interferes in the domestic affairs of its partners, but mostly to the benefit of the ruling party (Askouri, 76).

The pandemonium in Darfur coerced China to shift from a passive stance to active persuasion and mediation. The strategy adopted was not one of imposing measures, but one

based on trust and alternatives in search of a viable consensus. From a Chinese perspective, this new policy approach enhances China's morality on the world scene, reassures both Africans and Western partners, defends its oil interests in Sudan, while still not infringing on Sudan's sovereignty. China tried to reconcile its traditional stress on sovereignty and non-interference with the critical situation in Darfur. When a nation is unable to protect its people, sovereignty can be put aside (Holslag, 72).

Before expanding upon China's position on Darfur in the UN Security Council (UNSC), a timeline of how the question of Darfur was handled by the international community is imperative, also to elucidate how the matter reached the ICC. In September 2004, the US State Department labelled the mayhem in Darfur genocide and passed the issue in the UNSC. Afterwards, the International Commission of Inquiry ICID was set up in Darfur for investigation. February 2005, ICID reported and UNSC referred the case to the ICC. August 2006, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1706, which invited Sudan to consent to a UN force, which was rejected by Omar al-Bashir a week later. 31 July 2007, a compromise proposal of US and China amounting to a AU-UN hybrid force was finally accepted by Sudan (De Waal, 1042).

China's position on the UN peacekeeping operations changed from opposition and non-participation in the 70's to support and non-participation in the 80's. In the 90's, China registered its biggest policy shift to participation and support. Despite its opposition to intervention, Beijing modified its stance through a series of multilateral actions. It is essential to note that China chiefly opposed a peace enforcement operation, not the deployment of UN troops (Holslag, 74). China is also interested in the stability of the region; due to its apprehension that the conflict might extend in the Southern Sudan, where China has vested oil interests. Nonetheless, especially because of that, China is interested in maintaining good relations with the Sudanese government. Insisting on political consent, Beijing managed to buy time in persuading Sudan to accept the UN mission (Holslag, 74).

### ***4.3 The Chinese view: "The Darfur Issue and China's Role"***

The last article to be analyzed is entitled "The Darfur Issue and China's Role" "苏丹达尔富尔问题与中国的作用." It starts by explaining the origins and notoriety of the Darfur conflict: "The Darfur issue originated from the interest clashes between the local tribes caused by the ecological crisis. The reason for which the Darfur issue has escalated to become a highly international political and diplomatic war, from a regional ecological war in Sudan, is

mainly due to the fact that the situation in Darfur has worsened, the decade memorial activities for the Rwanda genocide give the inspiration and the U.S. government got involved” (He, November 2007, 11).

In order to explain the connection between China and Darfur, as well as China’s stance on Darfur, the author quotes the Chinese envoy to Darfur Liu Guijin: “Darfur is not China’s Darfur, it is primarily Sudan’s Darfur and secondly Africa’s Darfur” (He, November 2007, 8). The author thus appeals to a Chinese political authority on the issue of Darfur to express China’s non-interference policy. The author stresses China’s good relations with Sudan and its 10 years old oil cooperation, by stressing the fact that “China does not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries ‘不干涉别国内政’ ‘bu ganshe bie guo neizheng.’ ” He also deals with accusations that China doesn’t add any conditionalities to its economical aid, ignores the western understanding of the human rights “权” “renquan” of the people in Darfur, and does not preoccupy itself with good governance “良政” “liang zheng.” These are reasons why some organisations link China to the Darfur problem and consider unwarrantedly “莫须有” “moxuyou” that China’s investment in Sudan and China’s economic, military and political cooperation with the Sudanese government add fuel to the flame “推波助澜” “tuibo zhulan” (He, November 2007, 8). The metaphor “推波助澜” “tuibo zhulan,” which could also be translated as “make a stormy sea stormier,” stands for worsening the situation in Darfur. Moreover, “foreign governments also try to isolate the right to govern of the autocratic regime which does not respect human rights ‘不尊重人权的专制政权’ ‘bu zunzhong renquan de zhuanzhi zhengquan’ and pressures China to withdraw its support for Sudan” (He, November 2007, 8).

He Wenping also tackles the issue of linking the Darfur to the Beijing Olympics: “In light of the forthcoming Olympic Games and of the substantial work of the Chinese Government and of its people for the Olympics, some organizations which harbour prejudices ‘抱有成见的组织’ ‘baoyou chengjian de zuzhi,’ like the Association for Saving Darfur and some other people who do not accurately know China’s Darfur policy, have echoed the view of others ‘人云亦云’ ‘renyunyiyun’ and made the connection between the Darfur problem and the Olympics” (He, November 2007, 8). Another idiom is employed here “人云亦云” “renyunyiyun,” which can also be translated as “acting like a parrot,” to criticize the fact that people and organizations sometimes advocate what is fashionable and are mainly saying the same things as others.

The defensive reaction and the justification continue: “In reality the so-called connection between China and Darfur ignores and disregards the fact that since China started its oil and commercial cooperation with Sudan, Sudan has changed actively and has preserved the peace between North and South, the political situation in the country stabilizing as opposed to the past” (He, November 2007, 8). He Wenping enumerates two main western critiques towards China in regards to Darfur: “the opposition to sanctions ‘制裁’ ‘zhicai’ in the UN Security Council ‘联合国安理会’ ‘Lianheguo Anlihui’ and the fact that the pressure exerted upon the Sudanese government is not enough.” He answers as follows: “people who have the slightest idea about international affairs should know that China has always favoured negotiations, talks, diplomatic and political means in solving international and regional conflicts. The same means are adopted for Darfur as well, since historical experience has shown that employing sanctions would only exacerbate poverty, and penury would only bring on more conflicts. The ones who have to endure the hardship of the sanctions would only be the people. To destroy is easier than to build, to sanction is easier than to promote harmony. Sanctions can only be applied to short term problems and can not solve the Darfur situation” (He November 2007, 10). The author alleges that China’s emphasis on economical development and cooperation is the best solution to solve the situation in Darfur, since the causes of the conflict were related to poverty caused by deteriorating ecological problems.

The author further describes China’s support for the Annan Plan: “In November 2006 the permanent member states of the UN Security Council and The African Union adopted a humanitarian plan in three stages. The first stage of the Annan Plan pledges \$21 million from UN for the AU equipment and goods, dispatching 200 officers and civil officials, within the African Union forces to provide counselling. In the second stage of the plan there will be a certain amount of UN humanitarian and AU equipment and forces. The third stage of the plan intends the formation of a hybrid UN and AU Force, comprising 17 thousand Troops and 300 Police officers under UN command. China has supported this plan, considering it is feasible and hoped to reach an agreement with Sudan” (He, November 2007, 10). “In June 2007 as a result of China’s efforts, the Sudanese government accepted to allow the forces under UN ‘联合国’ ‘Lianheguo’ and African Union’ 非盟’ ‘Feimeng’ command to mix with the Peacekeeping Forces without preconditions in the Darfur region. This is a further step towards a political solution to the Darfur problem. One ought to mention the constructive and efficient role that China has played in the Sudanese government sudden change of mind. For the successful implementation of the second stage of the Annan Plan China complied with the UN request and decided to dispatch a group of 300 skilled soldiers and engineers. Even the

western media appreciated the positive role played by China in solving the Darfur problem. China's strategy is to offer humanitarian and development aid '人道主义和发展援助' 'rendaozhuyi he fazhan huanzhu' and to exert influence in this way but without interfering '干涉' 'ganshe.' China's Darfur policy has a long term objective" (He, November 2007, 10). In comparison with the overwhelmingly negative assessment on China's role in the UN Security council, the author uses only positive epithets stating that China played a constructive role which is both vital and efficient: "建设性作用是至关重要和有效的" "jianshexing zuoyong shi zhiguan zhongyao he youxiao de." China's role is also described as positive "积极作用" "jiji zuoyong." Mostly recognizable are the frequent clichés which appear in other Chinese articles as well.

The article entails the following configuration of discourses: the causes for the Darfur conflict, the good relations and cooperation with Sudan, China's non-interference policy, response to western critiques on human rights and the lack of interest for good governance, and a positive assessment of China's role in the UN Security council. The dominant discourse is one of defence against different western media critiques, of emphasis on the positive aspects and results of China in the UN Security Council without acknowledging the negative actions of the Chinese government. Thus, the article clearly presents a one-sided view antipodal to most of the western discourses on the issue.

Manifest intertextuality can be established with passages from another Chinese article concerning China's lack of guilt and its active or positive role in solving the conflict: "Even though China had nothing whatsoever to do with the occurring of the Darfur conflict, the Chinese Government made every effort to aid resolve the Darfur crisis. China has been very active "积极" "jiji" and was the first non African country to send troops under the guidance of UN and the African Union" (Tao and Song, 64).

Manifest intertextuality also appears with regards to the link between Darfur and the Olympics: "2007 Western human rights organizations and the media used the opportunity of the 2008 Olympic Games to pressure and castigate China for its weapon sales to Sudan, its oil acquisitions and its support for the Sudanese government... The president of the International Olympic Committee IOC states that the Olympic Games are a sports organization and not a political one" (Tao and Song, 64). The de-linking of Darfur from the Olympics is made with the help of a statement by an authority, just as in another article: the president of the IOC Rogge said that the Olympics should not be expected to solve the world problems. Another Chinese official stated that the Games should not be politicized "政治化" "zhengzhihua" (Du and Liu, 4). Another article entitled "Linking Darfur with Beijing Olympics 'totally



unreasonable' ” is quoting another official, Liu Guijin, special Chinese envoy to Darfur who says that in the long run it is “dangerous” to politicize the Olympics. He also rejects any notion of a resignation of Spielberg, since his recruitment letter had not been signed by the deadline (Wang Na, 34). Another critical article questions the motivation of linking sports with politics of the “Darfur Team” comprised from U.S. Olympic skating champion Joey Cheek and polo champion Brad Greiner, with the goal to pressure China over the Darfur crisis by calling for a boycott of the Beijing Olympic Games (Su and Luo, 28). In order to avoid any more protests, the Chinese authorities have revoked the visa for the Olympics for Joey Cheek.

The western negative “负面” “fujian” media discourse is also a theme which appears not only in our article, but in others as well: “The Western media is doing its utmost to seize the political news related to the Olympics, making the negative news as prominent content...There have been mistakes caused by ideology, political interests and civilisation consciousness... some western countries advocate the China threat theory ‘中国威胁论’ ‘Zhongguo weixielun’ ” (Du and Liu, 4). “In a study conducted by the Chinese state department for news analyzing The New York Times, The Washington Post, Associated Press, CNN and other media outlets, the data for one year showed that half of the news are negative, mixed 25% and positive 25%” ( Du and Liu, 5).

There are also a few defensive responses to accusations that appeared in the previously analyzed western articles. One such example is the headline: “**China’s Loans to Africa Won’t Cause Debt Crisis.**” The article uses the debt to the West as a comparison: “Chinese aid and loans to Africa are much smaller in sum than those from Western countries, so have less impact on the debt issue. This does not include a host of other factors such as the origin of the debt issue, China's efforts at resolving the debt problem, and the effects of Chinese aid and credits on African countries” (China Daily, 2007). The author further expands on the positive effects of the Chinese aid in order to justify that it won’t deepen Africa’s debt: “The Chinese government does not attach any conditions to its aid nor demand any privileges; China provides aid to the recipients in the form of interest-free or low-interest loans and will reschedule repayment if necessary; that Chinese aid is aimed at helping the recipients embark on the road to economic independence and self-reliance rather than increasing their dependence on China; China promises to help the recipient countries master the technology in its technical aid” (China Daily, 2007). Intertextuality can be established with a further China Daily article which stresses the fact that aid does not come with political strings: “Aid to Africa without political agenda” (China Daily, 2006).

Another article presents the Chinese official stance to the charges against China

brought by BBC regarding the arms sales to Sudan: “China says BBC's accusation on arms sales to Sudan ‘ungrounded’ ” (Xinhua, 2007). The same Chinese special representative to Darfur, quoted so many times, said that this accusation is “ungrounded and biased” and “has ulterior motives” (Xinhua, 2007). Liu justified his response that “according to China's related rules, the export of those items for civilian use does not need to receive permission from the Chinese government.” He blamed the bad security in Darfur and alleged that the rebel groups often attack transports (Xinhua, 2007).

The last stage of the analysis intends to provide the socio-political context. First let us more closely examine the origins of the Darfur conflict. This racial and tribal conflict commenced because of competition for resources among different Sudan tribes. Yu and Wang state that China should not be blamed for the crisis “达尔富尔危机不能归罪于中国” “Daerfuer weiji bu neng guizui yu Zhongguo” (Yu and Wang, 12). In reality, the conflict can be attributed to the longstanding tribal conflict of interests, whose origin lie in economic and development problems, more precisely in Sudan’s uneven economic development. That is why it is not accurate to charge China (Yu and Wang, 13).

Jiang and Luo also consider that this is an internal development crisis and administrative crisis of Sudan. They add that China has been subjected to international diatribe, doubts and slander. China’s adjustment in its foreign policy choice reflects the policy certainty and diplomatic solutions of any great country with achievements and responsibilities (Jiang and Luo, 5).

Let us see how Chinese specialists appreciate China’s diplomatic response to the Darfur crisis. Yu and Wang consider that China’s endeavour for a solution of the Darfur crisis materialises in the following forms: First, through bilateral and multilateral talks, China managed to reduce divergences and to reach a consensus. Second, China was active in establishing a link with the Sudanese government. China has repeatedly sent a special envoy to visit Sudan and make an on-the-spot investigation. Third, China has made constructive and positive proposals, to ensure the interests of all those involved. Furthermore, China is paying close attention to the living conditions of the Darfur refugees and to the humanitarian crisis, and is aiding to better their living conditions. Finally, China’s constructive role has also been praised in the international community (Yu and Wang, 14). We recognize here the same biased evaluation of China’s involvement in Sudan, not even acknowledging that the critique also has some valid points. Instead, the author sinks in accolades of China’s diplomatic merits. Most Chinese analysts use platitudes to praise China’s role.

A similar optimistic appraisal can be seen in the next assessment of China's role in the UN. Jiang and Luo state that, in solving the Darfur crisis, China's position is consistent with the UN and The African Union's stance, namely of respecting sovereignty and not interfering in internal problems. The 1590 resolution in the UN Security Council reiterates unequivocal Sudan's sovereignty. While promoting the 1769 resolution of the Annan Plan in the Security Council of the UN, China has urged Sudan to maintain talks and cooperation with the international community, supported the general direction of the resolution, displayed flexibility and concern. Simultaneously, China pressed all sides involved to recognize Sudan as a great part in solving the conflict and carried out equal talks and cooperation with Sudan (Jiang and Luo, 7). There was no mention of the fact that, as a member of the UN Security Council, China has veto power and has used it several times in the past, which also explains the UN initial position to Darfur.

The issue of China's technical aid and of its unconditional loans has also been raised. Despite the positive nature of aid, if there are strategic economical and political interests involved, it might not be so positive. This is obvious in the failure of the western aid, which did not manage to ease the poverty in Africa. Traditionally western donors have conditioned their development aid by connecting it with technical expertise, such as human resources, equipment or machinery. Given that 60% of the aid is technical aid and expertise, it appears that in its current form it is more self-serving for the donor countries than serving the recipients. The Chinese have proven to be even worse than the West on technical aid, since they even bring their own causal laborers instead of transferring knowledge to the locals, disregarding the abundant unskilled African workers (Chidaushe, 113-114).

Regarding Chinese lending in Africa, it is mostly welcomed, especially since it finances the infrastructure. Nevertheless, it raises the concern that countries benefiting from Chinese loans are already heavily in debt. China's potential risk to debt sustainability does not refer to the loan itself, since these countries are endowed with natural resources, but is related to its lack of transparency while granting these loans. Since such loans are mostly decided at high level meetings, the details are not accessible to public and media scrutiny. China's presence as an alternative donor in Africa gives the African states more leverage to choose their lenders, and it appears that traditional lenders such as the IMF and the World Bank are losing influence due to competition and because they have less resources to count on as a result of the debt relief. Non-interference and non-conditionality have mixed results: positive results come from opening up policy space for the African countries and negative outcomes from the human rights and environmental problems issues (Huse and Muyakwa, 1).

# 5. Conclusions

## *5.1 Conclusions on discourse patterns*

### **5.1.1. Western media presentation**

Even if one randomly picks a newspaper which contains a western article on China's involvement in Africa, the immediate conclusion is that Africa is quickly becoming a modern Chinese colony, with countless Chinese setting shop all over Africa, Chinese construction workers repairing and building Africa's crumbling infrastructure, not to mention the Chinese being involved in oil business. At a first glance, China's presence in Africa appears as deleterious to the African people, at least according to the western press. The dominant foregrounded negative discourses on China are ubiquitous. Western journalists do not shy away from using trenchant words, quite often employing dysphemisms and negative metaphors. Such a presentation is, in my view, not only one-sided, but also not accurate. Nonetheless, some of the concerns raised are grounded, especially those dealing with environmental and human rights issues.

There is a tendency to exaggerate when presenting China's investments and China's deals in Africa. The numbers prove that China's trade patterns are no greater than that of the U.S. and France. In direct investment, China is even behind Singapore and India, so one has to wonder why the press isn't talking about these countries with the same fervor. The question is what grounds do western media assessments rely on when judging the Chinese investment in such negative terms, given that they offer no term of comparison with the western investment.

A propensity to focus excessively on Chinese state firms can be observed, the impact of the so called China Inc. Model being overstressed. Most times, the weight of the provincial governments and the weakening government control resulting from liberalizing are not

regarded as important factors. Western journalists seem to have a penchant to refer to the Chinese in general, irrespective of their distinct interests, in a kind of China threat discourse. Most western articles present China's economical involvement in Africa from a particular point of view, that of the American or European interests, and do not give enough credit to the positive aspects of the Chinese investment. The discourse on China's neo-colonialist intentions and actions appears frequently.

The attention paid to China's interests in oil over other commodities is incommensurate. The arguments brought in support are rather tenuous, more efficient being the embellished language. The study of China's pursuit of resources and especially oil in Africa should be more objective and reflect upon a range of factors. First, a comparative approach with the U.S. and Europe's own pursuits might help position China on the world oil market. It should also prove that most of the claims in the media are overstated. Not only the media, but academic studies as well, should avoid the one-sided view of China's oil policy, since objectivity is without a doubt the most favorable way to present facts in a convincing manner. The narrative of rivalry between Chinese oil companies and western companies is equally embellished, especially the assumption that Chinese companies are driving western oil companies out. One needs to bear in mind that China is still a small player in Africa and that many western companies have invested in the Chinese state oil companies.

### **5.1.2 African media presentation**

The African media presentation is not homogenous, so there are different discourse patterns to be recognized: most are positive, but there are also some who see China as a hegemon with neocolonialist tendencies and others who fear the emergent Chinese influence and competition.

It is interesting to see which western discourses have found an echo with the African pundits. Many African analysts do explore the competition between China and the West, be it Europe or the United States. Nonetheless, the perspectives are different: whereas the western authors perceive the situation negatively, the African specialists are actually pleased with the situation and hope that African states can benefit from it.

Unlike in the western articles, African analysts adopt a comparative perspective: "The heavy-handed approach of the West," which links its deals to "preconditions" constitutes a central discourse in the African analysts' appraisals of China in Africa. The emphasis on business on the part of the Chinese and the appreciation of the Chinese investments in infrastructure are also important discourses. Frequently, the harangue is directed against the

African governments or elites and not just against China for the profits China might gain from its deals with some African countries.

Pernicious environmental effects resulting from the Chinese projects have comprised the object of a discourse mostly among the African and some western analysts. Most African analysts are critical towards China's stance on the precarious situation in Darfur. Related to that, China's vituperative attitude to human rights issues is not well regarded in a continent which has suffered previous colonization.

### **5.1.3 Chinese media reaction**

Some articles are reactionary in nature and accuse the west of misinterpreting the Chinese policies with regards to the resources and the human rights issue. Most often than not, they are also one-sided and defensive. There is a plethora of clichés employed in most articles and sometimes the idioms employed are a bit flamboyant, which only gives ammunition to the western analysts who actively mock the Chinese official statements. Positive assessments are omnipresent. They fail to give an objective overview of the situation of Chinese enterprises and merchandize in Africa, by not mentioning some of the negative aspects which affect them, and by foregrounding the positive assessments. Similar to the African articles, there are frequent references to the western involvement. Disparagement against the Western view of China's Africa oil policy is regularly present in the Chinese media articles.

Other articles are very business oriented and calculate Africa's potential in terms of resources, investment, and trade, while also stressing the complications and the western competition. The stance adopted is clear from the point of view of the Chinese interests, as it is apparent from the evaluation of China's difficulties in the resources sector. A further difference comes into light about the appreciation of the Chinese commodities: while in the western media articles they are usually described as being cheap and of low quality, one Chinese article portrays them as "excellent in quality and reasonable in price." South-South development, mutual benefit and cooperation are persistent themes in the Chinese media reports. The pervasive African discourse of the patriarchal approach of some Western states towards Africa also occurs in the Chinese articles. Chinese articles on Darfur portray China's role as constructive and positive, even its actions in the UNSC, so highly contested in the West, are made to appear justifiable. The western critiques are downplayed as western attempts to vilify China. China's achievements and diplomatic endeavors are foregrounded, to the detriment of any negative action of which China might be accused.

## ***5.2 A qualitative assessment of China's impact in Africa***

China neither has an entirely positive impact on the continent, nor a totally negative one. In assessing it, I believe one must take into consideration both its beneficial and harmful effects. Clearly, from the point of view of western interests it cannot be assessed in an optimistic way. However, the low cost Chinese consumer goods are reaching a population who did not have access to such products before. Seen in that way, China's involvement also has very positive aspects. The Chinese model of growth based on trade and investment seems to be an inspiration for many African governments. Any investment in infrastructure from the Chinese side is useful for Africa and is greeted by the African leaders. Overall, the building of infrastructure might help Africa reduce poverty. Moreover, the Chinese investment revitalized an economical area in decline and almost forgotten, and made it more attractive for investments, bringing on economical development of the African countries.

There is much skepticism in the west because Chinese multinational corporations have actively used diplomacy strategies and Chinese development aid to Africa to increase their chances of winning proposals for new projects. Even though it appears as inequitable competition, China is not the first country to mix oil business and politics in Africa, the case of France being quite publicized.

After years of promises, conditionalities and little results, Africans have grown tired with the West. Therefore, African intellectuals regard China with a potential return to multipolarity in mind and consider the Chinese model as a substitute to the western economic model. Chinese offers are also tempting for African politicians, since the Chinese forfeited any conditions, their implementation of projects comes within a definite timeline, and the Chinese approach is quite practical. Unfortunately, the Chinese do not show any misgivings from building palaces for some African elites, so then these elites are the first to benefit from any deal. They retain a disproportionate amount of the revenues coming from raw materials and oil, a situation towards which China does not demonstrate much concern.

By professing separation of business and politics in the non-intervention approach, China manages to gain the upper hand in the context of the weariness caused by long standing western conditionalities. This approach is giving China leverage in both business and political milieus. Nevertheless, it appears simply as rhetoric, as there are clear examples of amalgamation between business and politics. Moreover, the "no conditionalities formula" is not quite accurate, since the "One China policy" regarding Taiwan is maybe the only

perceptible output condition. Any other conditions are not directly stated, though the actual terms of most high level contracts or loan deals are opaque.

In response to the accusation of practicing neo-colonialism voiced by the Western media and by a minority of African media, I would say that China has no tradition of colonialism and that the term does not apply. Nonetheless, there are certainly underlying interests involved. Still one should keep in mind that China's link to Africa surpasses the quest for resources and also extends to countries not rich in natural resources, which benefit from debt reduction, low or zero tariff trade agreements and aid.

China is in the same time both a partner and a competitor. The job and business losses which occurred in the African textile industry, as a result of Chinese competition clearly embody China's competitive role in Africa. The Chinese weak environmental requirements, the indifference for human rights protection, and the lack of transparency permitted some countries to escape the international pressure to reduce corruption.

For now, China's strategy of helping its oil bids by rebuilding Africa's deficient infrastructure proved to be positive. Moreover, oil producing countries have enjoyed substantial revenues, due to China's increasing demand for energy resources, which has driven the price of oil up. The only drawback is whether or not these revenues will benefit the common people, or only the elites. China's interest in the acquisition of African resources is justifiable and the idea of a scramble is exaggerated. Still, China's willingness to deal with any government is problematic when considering the grave human rights abuses that are overlooked. China is becoming more aware of its image problem in view of the impending Olympic Games and has made some progress regarding its Darfur policy. However, it is still offering support for regimes such as Mugabe's, as evident from its last veto against UN sanctions.

There is a difference in the understanding of human rights by the West and by the Chinese and African authorities. The Chinese favor the overall benefit of a community, over that of the individual, and tend to focus on the material aspects such as the supply of food, instead of emphasizing democracy and freedom of speech. Such a perspective is unknown, misunderstood or totally overseen in the western media critique on the human rights. Yet, by upholding rogue regimes such as that of Mugabe or of Omar al-Bashir, based on its non-interference policy and on its respect for sovereignty, China is subverting the very essence of its human rights theory, namely the economic livelihood of the common African people. The sufferings of the Darfur and Zimbabwe people have been well documented. The well being of the Darfur people is foremost an issue of survival against rebel attacks and maybe



governmental attacks, but the camps suffer from deep economical problems. The Zimbabwe population is suffering the consequences of a deep economical crisis, where a few million Zimbabwe dollars can only reach for a loaf of bread. Therefore, China's stance on this issue cannot be justified by the favoring of the overall being of the people. Conversely, China is not the only country partnering with autocrat regimes. For instance, President Obiang from Equatorial Guinea is courted by both China and the United States.

The main western critique pertaining to the fact that Chinese unconditional aid is undermining western efforts in promoting good governance may be warranted. Nevertheless, from a comparative perspective, the rhetoric of positive western aid and investment is not enough, because Africa's financial difficulties suggest that western aid and investment, which had many years of influence prior to the emerging Chinese influence in the region, did not solve the underlying problems, but was merely self serving due to its conditionalities. More important than transparency is the fact that western aid helped to open the African markets for the western goods. Ironically, it provided an opening for the Chinese trade and investment as well. Nonetheless, Chinese aid is also tied, as it is obvious in the loans given to Angola for infrastructure projects, which are carried out by Chinese companies. Furthermore, Chinese technical aid takes on new forms to the detriment of the African unskilled workers, since Chinese firms even bring on casual workers in addition to engineers and equipment.

There are also positive aspects of the Chinese aid in Africa, such as technical and medical assistance, and an emphasis on infrastructure building. Moreover, the Chinese aid has always been prompt in comparison with the many still unfulfilled western promises.

China's role in the Darfur crisis is not easy to assess in terms of negative or positive. On the one hand, it did contribute significantly to the stabilization of the conflict by persuading of the Al-Bahir regime to receive the hybrid UN-AU peacekeeping force relying on diplomacy, and even sent its own engineers and troops. On the other hand, the frequent vetoes in the UN Security Council and its insistence upon respecting Sudan's sovereignty even at high costs cannot be justified. Similarly, arms sales in troubled countries such as Sudan and Zimbabwe also negatively impact the well being of the local populations.

## 6. Abbreviations

AU African Union

BC Beijing Consensus

Catic China National Aero-Technology Import and Export Corp

CCMDJV China National Water Resources and Hydropower Engineering and China Water Engineering

CNOOC China National Offshore Oil Corporation

CNPC China National Petroleum Corporation

EG Equatorial Guinea

FDI Foreign Direct Investment

FOCAC Forum on China-Africa Cooperation

ICC International Criminal Court

ICID International Commission of Inquiry

ICG International Crisis Group

IFIs International Financial Institutions

IMF International Monetary Fund

IOC International Olympic Committee

MDC Movement for the Democratic Change

MFA Ministry of Foreign Affairs

NGO Non-governmental Organization

SADC South African Development Community

SOEs State Owned Enterprises

UN United Nations

UNSC United Nations Security Council

WC Washington Consensus

WTO World Trade Organization

ZANU- PF Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front

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Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit  
selbständig verfasst habe und keine anderen als die  
angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel verwendet habe.  
Tübingen den 15 August 2008