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Washington University in St. Louis

University College

International Affairs

From Democracy Deficit to Liberal Political Consolidation: Foreign Assistance and  
Democratization in Africa

By

Amber M. Whittington

A thesis presented to the  
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences  
of Washington University in  
partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the  
degree of Master of Arts

May 2012

Saint Louis, Missouri

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### **Abstract**

The correlation between foreign aid and democratization has a contentious history in the field of international affairs. The paradigm that foreign aid can be used to achieve democratization in foreign political systems underscores to the centrality of democracy in Western societies. This thesis explores the relationship between foreign aid and democratization in sub-Saharan Africa.

## Acknowledgements

I dedicate this monograph to my beloved father, Mr. William Clifford Whittington (1950 - 2011). I suffered the tragedy of his untimely passing during my graduate studies at Washington University in St. Louis. My Father epitomized generosity and service. Moreover, he prided himself on the accomplishments of his three children. The legacy of my father's work-ethic compelled me to continue my graduate studies, uninterrupted, in spite of his passing. I am eternally grateful for his love and enduring devotion to our family.

I would like to thank the International Affairs Program of University College, I feel privileged to have obtained the Master of Arts Degree from this Program. I would especially like to convey my sincere gratitude to my thesis advisor, Professor Andrew C. Sobel, as well as my gratefulness to the other members of my defense committee: Professor Marvin H. Marcus, and Mr. Repps Hudson.

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Finally, I would be remiss, if I failed to acknowledge the contribution of my faith to the successful completion of my graduate program. I am a devout Christian, and I am eternally grateful to my Lord, Jesus Christ, for His divine province in providing me with the opportunity to study at Washington University in St. Louis.

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## Introduction

The correlation between foreign aid and democratization has a contentious history in the field of international affairs. The paradigm that foreign aid can be used to achieve democratization in foreign political systems underscores to the centrality of democracy in Western societies. This thesis explores the relationship between foreign aid and democratization in sub-Saharan Africa. The research question is: What have been the consequences of foreign aid on democratization in Africa?

To begin our discussion, the terms *foreign aid* and *democracy* must to be defined. Foreign aid is defined as “An international transfer of resources that would not have taken place as a result of market forces...it includes grants, and loans made at subsidized interest rates, provided by governments or by international finance institutions” (Goldsmith 2001, 412). Democracy can be characterized as a “Pluralistic national political system where people are reasonably free to express their political demands and to hold rulers to account” (Goldsmith 2001, 412). Although multi-party elections are an indicator of democracy, they should not be taken as the only measure of democracy; ultimately, elections are necessary, yet insufficient in measuring democracy.

Exploring the consequences of foreign aid on African democratization can be perplexing given the foreign aid policies of Western governments towards Africa. Since the 1960s, specifically U.S. foreign aid policy has been rhetorically based upon the United States’ commitment to devote some of its wealth to combating human suffering around the world. Prompted by the tenets of modernization theory, in 1961 President John Kennedy called for the creation the U.S. Agency for International Development



(USAID). Subsequently, the U.S. Congress moved to ratify the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, which established foreign assistance as a central component of U.S. foreign policy. Yet despite grandiose narratives of America's commitment to promote economic development, and good governance worldwide, these ambitions became susceptible to the U.S. Cold War agenda. Hence, historically, American foreign aid became nothing more than an extension of realpolitik policy objectives.

Beginning with Ghana in 1957, as independence dawned across Africa, newly liberated African states found themselves the benefactors of American foreign aid. Moreover, aid was perceived by the Kennedy administration as essential in lifting newly independent territories out of poverty, making them less likely to undergo a communist revolution. However, as the Cold War preceded American aid became a tool of persuasion for the United States. African states that politically aligned with the West were rewarded with aid. It is from here that proxy contests between the United States and Soviet Union began to unfold across Africa.

Moreover, when analyzing the United States allocation of aid to Africa it is essential to compare two chapters in America aid policy. During the Cold War, the United States allocated aid based on the expressed ideological position of the recipient state. This approach was often sold as protecting African states from communism; however, it proved to be quite detrimental to democracy. In many circumstances, this approach worked to maintain the powerful grip of non-democratic regimes.

The second chapter of American foreign aid towards Africa was promoted by the end of the Cold War. The fall of the Soviet Union gave way to a global wave of democratization. During the 1990s the United States implemented foreign aid policies

that actively seek to promote democracy. The 1990s is a significant decade for two reasons. First, it is during this decade that democracy assistance was adopted as a new foreign aid approach by the United States. Secondly, the 1990s signify America's shift away from its Cold War approach to foreign aid, and United States foreign aid practices became consistent with America's rhetorical narrative on aid. During this chapter the United States strategically redirected aid from African dictators and tyrants, and reallocated it to civic initiatives mobilizing to remove these actors. For the last 20 years foreign aid in the form of economic development assistance, humanitarian aid, and democracy assistance has flowed into African political economies, yet it is unclear whether this purported capital has yielded its intended outcome.

This paper hypothesizes that post-Cold War foreign aid has advanced democratization in Africa. The monograph is organized in three sections. The first section presents qualitative findings on the impact of foreign aid on democratization in Africa. In this section democratization is designated as the dependent variable. To explain this variable, the study will put forth four explanatory variables: foreign aid, aid conditionality, international political trends, and democracy assistance. Moreover, this section will address each explanatory variable with the review of scholarly literature that presents both quantitative and qualitative evidence relevant to the variable.

From here the second section will broaden its attention to explore foreign direct investment (FDI) and its consequences on democratization. The vast natural resources of Africa have caught the attention of foreign investors from emerging markets. Most notably, the People's Republic of China has invested heavily in African oil exploration. Chinese FDI is accompanied by infrastructure development aid for the recipient

government. Proponents of Chinese involvement in Africa claim that FDI is more effective than foreign aid in helping African states realize their infrastructure development goal. This section will examine the validity of this claim, and whether Chinese FDI has advanced or hampered democratization in Africa.

The third section will explore three political indexes and will compare sub-Saharan ratings on these indexes against their official development assistance (ODA) as reported by the World Bank. Official development assistance can be defined as “a net transfer in cash or kind that is administered with economic development in mind and that has a grant element of at least 25 percent” (Goldsmith 2001, 426). Finally, the conclusion will address region specific challenges that impede democratization in Africa. This will take a panoramic view in analyzing the consequences of foreign assistance on democratization in Africa.

## **Explaining Democratization in Africa**

### **Foreign Aid**

Arthur A. Goldsmith in “Donor, Dictators, and Democrats in Africa” presents findings that demonstrate a corollary relationship between foreign aid and African democratization in the post-Cold War era. Goldsmith cites three indicators of heightened political engagement in African political systems. First, Goldsmith notes that African counties are beginning to tolerate liberal-democratic norms of political participation (Goldsmith 2001, 418).

Second, the author notes an increase in the number of political contests held across Africa. Specifically, Goldsmith notes that between 1990 and 2000, 78 political elections were collectively held by African States. This is in stark contrast to the 126 elections held between the years of 1960 to 1989. Additionally, during the 1990s there were 21 opposition election victories across Africa, as opposed to the merely one opposition victory occurring between 1960 and 1989 (Goldsmith 2001, 422). Goldsmith also notes increased retirement of African heads of states. He states, “The threat of losing an election also may account for the increasing rate of leader retirement-nine in the 1990s versus only eight in the previous three decades” (Goldsmith 2001, 422).

Third, the score of African states on international indexes measuring political freedom rose during the 1990s. Goldsmith cites the Freedom House index, and he notes that from 1989 to 1999 many African governments improved their mean index score from 2.4 to 3.6. Additionally, he notes the Ted Robert Gurr Polity98 Project at the University of Maryland, which measured political openness. Within the Gurr index 41

sub-Saharan states received the mean score of 3.0 in 1998 opposed to a score of 0.8 ten years earlier in 1989. The index scores range from 0 to 10, with 10 designating most open (Goldsmith 2001, 425).

Though Goldsmith presents convincing evidence that African states begin to implement democratic reforms in the 1990s, it is still unclear whether aid is consequential in the democratization of sub-Saharan states. To address this concern, Goldsmith provides regression data to test 12 explanatory variables of Africa democratization.

<b>Table 1</b>				
<b>Democracy in Africa, 1989 to 1999<sup>a</sup></b>				
	Freedom House Index (1= least freedom, 7= most)		Polity98 Index (0= least openness, 10=most)	
	1989	1999	1989	1998
Mean Score	2.4	3.6 <sup>a</sup>	0.8	3.0 <sup>a</sup>
Number of Countries	47	48	41	41

**Source:** Goldsmith, Arthur. 2001. "Dictators and Democrats in Africa." *Journal of Modern African Studies* Vol.39 No. 3 (September): 425.

<sup>a</sup>99 percent confidence

These explanatory variables include official development assistance, effective development assistance, gross domestic product per capita, urbanization, ethnic heterogeneity, religion, population, and land mass. The variables are tested against ODA, and effective development assistance (EDA)—“the sum of grants and grant equivalents of official loans”—for 10-year increments (Goldsmith 2001, 428). Goldsmith’s findings present a monotonically positive regression relationship between democracy index scores

and ODA and EDA. Moreover, there was a statistical increase in the regression relationship between ODA and EDA and democracy index scores in the 1990s (Goldsmith 2001, 432). The scholar also provided another measurement model to address concerns of endogeneity, and the positive relationship between aid and democratization remained.

Goldsmith concludes that there is a small, yet positive corollary relationship between foreign aid and African democratization. He notes that donors post-Cold War aid allocation policies “can help boost the budding democratic movements” of sub-Saharan countries, thus giving way for the initial phases of democratization (Goldsmith 2001, 432). Nevertheless, Goldsmith affirms that the work of democracy consolidation will only be achieved with local buy-in from citizens and African civil society.

A divergent assessment of the correlations between foreign aid and democratization in Africa is presented by Stephen Knack in “Does Foreign Aid Promote Democracy?” Knack’s quantitative analysis is composed of a large sample of 102 countries—33 of which are in sub-Saharan Africa—that have received foreign aid. His findings span 25-year period, with his data beginning in 1975 through 2000. Furthermore, the scholar notes the significance of 1975, as the year in which the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act was amended to incorporate Section 116, which conditioned the allocation of aid on the incorporation of civil liberties and the rule of law by recipient governments (Knack 2004, 252). This was done in an effort to promote democracy and human rights. Although conditions were placed on aid, Knack concludes “no evidence is found that aid promotes democracy” (Knack 2004, 251). He acknowledges that his

findings do not prove that democracy programs are completely ineffective, but that instances of these programs' success are limited and sporadic (Knack 2004, 251).

Knack's quantitative findings are derived from states' ratings on two democracy indexes: 1) the Freedom House Freedom in the World Index, a measure of level of political freedom and civil liberties, and 2) the Polity Index, a measure of how executive leadership is selected (Knack 2004, 254). To test the correlation between foreign aid and democratization, Knack creates a comparative regression between official development assistance, GDP and eight other indicators, among these being literacy, infant mortality, and population rates. He argues: "If aid promotes democracy, then countries with higher aid levels should exhibit improving ratings on democracy indexes over time, other things equal" (Knack 2004, 256). Knack eventually notes that both indexes show a clear trend towards democratization among the nations sampled; however, he does not attribute this to foreign aid but to a third wave of democratization triggered by fall of the Soviet Union.

Though Knack provides a quantitatively sound analysis of the effect of foreign aid on democracy, he neglects to address the international political circumstance of the time period in question, which arguably undercuts the soundness of his conclusion. He references the significance of 1975 as the year the U.S. Foreign Assistance Act is amended to include Section 116. However, Knack fails to address the circumstances of the international systems at this time, and more specifically that the United States and its Western allies are engaged in the Cold War. Ultimately, though the promotion of democracy and human rights is addressed in Section 116, it was apparent that American aid policy did not fully implement this mandate in its aid allocation procedure. Given that Knack's evaluation of state ratings spans a 25-year period, his results have the

potential to be skewed. Arguably this reality has led scholars like Goldberg to divide their findings in ten-year increments.

### **Politically Conditioned Aid**

In “Foreign Aid and Democracy Promotion: Lessons from Africa,” Stephen Brown qualitatively examines the impact of conditioned foreign aid on the achievement of consolidated forms of democratic governance in sub-Saharan recipient states. Brown limits his findings to the decade of the 1990s. He notes that the end of the Cold War initiated reforms in Western aid distribution policies. It is during this time that donors begin to condition bilateral aid upon recipient states’ implementation of democratic political reforms. The most notable of aid conditions is the introduction of multiparty political participation and popular elections (Brown 2005, 182). Prior to the 1990s several African political systems maintained constitutional statutes which outlawed the formation of opposition political parties, thereby creating a one-party political system. Known as *African Democracy*, political opponents to the state party were subjected to punitive repercussions under the law.

Moreover, Brown concludes that the implementation of politically conditioned bilateral aid, though instrumental in providing democratic openings in sub-Sahara political systems, undermines democracy consolidation in African recipient states (Brown 2005, 182). To support his argument, Brown provides three examples.

First, he notes that political parties in Western societies are formed around class or social interests, whereas in sub-Saharan societies political associations are primarily based upon ethnic identity. A rapid transition to multi-party democracy can often foment



ethnic rivalries for political control of state resources, thereby undermining the consolidation of democracy (Brown 2005, 183). This assertion harkens back to the original justification for one-party African democracy. In the years following independence, African autocrats evaded calls for multi-party politics, claiming that multiple political parties would give rise to tribalism. They argued that political parties would be nothing more than vehicles leading to the fracturing of the electorate, thus giving rise to ethnic conflict and civil discord.

Next, Brown claims that African states will find ways to evade political conditionality by making the minimum democratic reforms necessary to maintain their aid. Brown notes many African autocrats have learned to “[Allow] opposing parties to compete, but not win; [to permit] an independent press to operate, but not freely; [and to allow] civic groups to function, but not effectively” (Brown 2005, 184). Furthermore, by donors rewarding government actors for modest political reforms, they may undermine domestic actors mobilizing for more substantive democratic reform, thereby undermining democracy consolidation (Brown 2005, 188).

Finally, Brown argues that donors tend to be initially involved in applying pressure onto recipient governments to allow multiparty elections and other forms of procedural democracy, but gradually democratization become secondary to other foreign policy goals such as economic liberalization. Brown claims, “The U.S. has historically subordinated democracy promotion to its security interests, since democracy, contrary to current rhetoric, is not always perceived as serving U.S. interests” (Brown 2005, 189). Furthermore, based upon the argument, it can be logically inferred that politically conditioned bilateral aid, though promoting procedural democracy, can curtail the full

consolidation of democracy within the African recipient government. Brown concludes his article by advocating for the adoption of a gradual democratization process for African governments.

### **Democracy Assistance: A New Type of**

The fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 brought about a stark shift in American aid policies. In the decade following the Cold War, the United States took the lead as the largest donor to democratization in foreign political systems. In *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve*, Thomas Carothers discusses the evolution of democracy assistance aid. Carothers characterizes democracy assistance as: “Aid specifically designed to foster a democratic opening in a non-democratic country or to further a democratic transition in a country that has experienced a democratic opening” (Carothers 1999, 8). From here, Carothers surveys the impact, outcomes, and limitations of democracy assistance. As the Vice President of Global Policy at the Carnegie Endowment for Peace, Carothers provides a practitioner’s assessment of democracy assistance and its role as a relatively new approach in U.S. foreign assistance.

To begin his assessment, Carothers discusses what he terms the *core strategy* of democracy assistance, which includes three models of democratization: 1) democracy template; 2) political sequencing; and 3) institution modeling. The goal of democracy promoters is to assess the democratic trajectory of a political system and then allocate aid resources in way that will result in instances of consolidation. The core strategy provides democracy promoters with a guide for how to aid democratic transitions already underway in political systems. However, Carothers notes that the desire by democracy

promoters to place political systems neatly into one of these models can lead to inflexibility.

The *democracy template* is composed of three stages of democracy assistance: elections, state institutions, and civil society. When a democratic opening is achieved, democracy promoters initiate assistance by concentrating resources on the holding of “free and fair” popular elections. Once an election is achieved, democracy assistance is then directed at state institutions; this is typically done by providing assistance to draft a constitution. Carothers notes that along with establishing a government, a constitution should ideally provide for liberal governance in the form of separation of powers, rule of law, and the protection of civil and political rights (Carothers 1999, 87). The final chapter of the democracy template is civil society. During this stage democracy promoters work to activate a vibrant civil society sector that advocates for citizens interests, as well as holds political leaders to account.

Building upon the democracy template, *political sequencing* is the second model of the core strategy. Under this model, a political system has already achieved a political opening, and has elected a transitional government that is charged with instituting liberal political reforms forming a new democratic government. With the initial political transition achieved, democracy assistance is directed at consolidation. Democracy promoters work to augment the “supply of democracy” provided by government institutions, as well as the “demand for democracy” by citizens (Carothers 1999, 87).

*Institution modeling* is the final model applied by democracy promoters, and it is the process of transforming the institutions in a transitional country to resemble state institutions in Western democracies. To further expound on this point, Carothers notes:

The self- assigned role of democracy assistance is to stimulate and speed up such institution modeling. Each project in the typical U.S. portfolio aims to shape a particular sector or institution along the lines of its counterpart in Western democracies. This is why training is such a common method of democracy assistance (Carothers 1999, 90).

The rationale for institution modeling is the naïve notion that if a political system can reproduce the institutional frameworks of Western states then it will inevitably achieve democracy (Carothers 1999, 90).

From the core strategy, Carothers moves on to present four case studies of countries that have undergone democratic transitions in the 1990s. He notes that each country had different government structures, which are representative of the region. His cases represent the democratic transition witnessed during the third wave of democracy. Carothers also notes that the United States supported non-democratic regimes in all four countries, and eventually provided democracy assistance to each country. These countries are: 1) Guatemala, a right-wing military dictatorship; 2) Nepal, a *partyless* monarchy; 3) Zambia, a single-party *African democracy*; and 4) Romania, a communist totalitarian dictatorship (Carothers 1999, 65).

Despite their divergent political structures, Carothers asserts that each country shares three central characteristics. First, democratic openings were prompted, in part, by democratization in other countries. Second, illiberal regimes were undermined by prolonged economic distress. Third, each country witnessed popular mobilization for democratic reforms. Moreover, each of the four countries has encountered difficulty in consolidating their democracy. This reality leads Carothers to state: “All four countries

point up a critical difficulty of democratization: transforming state institutions into competent, effective entities. In all four, most of the core state institutions have remained citadels of corruption, incompetence, and inefficiency throughout the process” (Carothers 1999, 81).

It is from the case studies that Carothers presents four assessments of the prospects and limitations of democracy assistance. First, in political systems where democratization is advancing, democracy assistance can have a useful, though minor, role in advancing the transition. Second, in political systems where democratization has become stagnant, or even begun to backslide, democracy assistance initiatives are unlikely to put the system back on track. Carothers claims democracy programs at most can support pockets of reform to help maintain some political opening (Carothers 1999, 341). Third, in non-democratic political systems with no signs of a democratic opening, assistance is limited to promoting a democratic vanguard. Finally, in political systems that are trending towards authoritarian governance, democracy aid may support civic initiatives advocating against the trend; nevertheless, aid is not a sufficient substitute for these forces. Carothers concludes by stating: “No dramatic results should be expected from democracy promotion efforts.” He continues to say, “Democracy promotion must be approached as a long-term, uncertain venture” (Carothers 1999, 351).

**Table 2**  
**The Democracy Template**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Sector Goal</b>	<b>Type of Aid</b>
Electoral Process	Free and fair elections	Electoral aid
	Strong national political parties	Political party building
State Institutions	Democratic constitution	Constitution assistance
	Independent, effective judiciary and other law-oriented institutions	Rule-of-law aid
	Competent, representative legislature	Legislative strengthening
	Responsive local government	Local government development
	Pro-democracy military	Civil-military relations
Civil Society	Active advocacy NGOs	NGO building
	Politically educated citizenry	Civic education
	Strong independent media	Media strengthening
	Strong independent unions	Union building

**Source:** Carothers, Thomas. 1999. *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve*. Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace: 88.

## Supporting Civil Society

The significance of civil society in democracy assistance is addressed by Julie Hearn and Mark Robinson in “Civil Society and Democracy Assistance in Africa.” In their analysis, Hearn and Robinson present three schools of thought regarding civil society. The first two schools are associated with Northern notions on civic associational life, while the third school presents a contemporary concept of civil society as experienced in Southern political systems.

The *Tocqueville school* defines civil society as: “The sphere of associational life, in which citizens organize themselves into horizontal associations and networks that cut across and transcend traditional social relationships founded on patron-client ties” (Hearn and Robinson year, 242). Next, the *Locke school* conceptualizes civil society as a check on an authoritarian state, where citizens mobilize to enlarge the political sphere while advocating for the protection of their political and civil rights (Hearn and Robinson year, 242). Finally, the *Marxist school* serves as the foundation for contemporary thought on civil society in African political systems. Within this school, emphasis is placed on citizens’ associational behavior in the economic sphere, as opposed to the public sphere. In the context of Africa, this school identifies three competing civil societies: a “predatory state elite; an ‘aspiring bourgeoisie’; and a popular civil society” (Hearn and Robinson year, 243). Under this framework citizen organization in the public sphere is used as a means to obtain economic influence.

From here Hearn and Robinson explore three African states: Ghana, Uganda, and South Africa. Their findings from these case studies lead to them to identify three common trends in democracy assistance to civil society. First, they found that donors

avored civil society organization (CSOs) that supported economic and political liberalization. Next, Hearn and Robinson state that donor support is typically targeted at CSOs in urban areas that are led by middle-class elites. Finally they state that CSOs have grown rapidly in many countries, and are primarily supported by foreign aid, thus rendering them susceptible to the externally imposed donor agendas. Moreover, these findings lead Hearn and Robinson to conclude: “While donor funding to civil society organizations has helped to strengthen the legitimacy of democratic political institutions, the concentration of financial resources on a relatively narrow group of recipient organizations restrict democratic debate and political participation” (Hearn and Robinson year, 259).

In Africa, urban centers are disproportionately capital cities, and thus the centers of government. It is questionable whether CSOs working for democratic causes can effectively execute their activities outside of urban centers; also infrastructural impediments are rampant in rural settings outside of cities. Additionally, the depiction of middle-class elites is also wanting of further clarification. Historically, the middle class has been the primary advocate for democratic reform. The reality that African CSOs are led by middle-class elites is endemic in political systems globally. It points to the fact that these elites may be more effective in leading the charge for democratic reform than citizens living below the poverty line.

The authors’ assertion that Northern donors disproportionately support CSOs that align with economic liberalization is valid. But it would be a “slippery-slope” to attribute these funding tendencies to the Northern-donor community at large. Organizations like the Soros Open Society Foundation are resoundingly forthright about their mission to



promote liberal democratic reforms, specifically in African locations. Finally, African CSOs' susceptibility to foreign agendas is also a valid assertion. In addition, African CSOs' heavy reliance on Northern donors presents sustainability dilemmas for these organizations. Nevertheless, despite these systemic realities of African civil society, Hearn and Robinson duly note the overall positive impact of democracy assistance to the organization of civil society.

## **China in Africa**

The People's Republic of China's 21st century return to Africa has been met with a great deal of skepticism and foreboding by Western governments. Foreign policy institutes, based in the United States and Western Europe, have heightened their scrutiny of Chinese ambitions for an ever-increasing role in African states. Claims depicting China's growing economic role in Africa as counterproductive to democratization and development are made against China. It is against this metanarrative that China seeks to project itself as the antithesis to Western aid institutions, and thus an ideal partner to developing African states. Sino-African relations have primarily consisted of inflows of Chinese foreign direct investment into resource-rich countries.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) is defined as, "An investment made to acquire lasting interest in enterprises operating outside the economy of the investor...[T]he investor's purpose is the gain an effective voice in the management of the enterprise"(United Nations 2002). The World Trade Organization specifies three primary categories of FDI: 1) equity capital, 2) reinvest earnings, and 3) other capital, which is mainly in the form of intra-company loans (World Trade Organization 1996, 57). Whereas foreign aid is capital flows from external entities that cannot be explained by market forces, FDI is motivated by profitable returns on investment. To be specific, when British Petroleum invests in oil exploration in Gabon, it does so with the intention of receiving a return on its investment, and to obtain an equity stake in oil discoveries made from its financed explorations. Conversely, foreign aid institutions allocate revenue without the expectation of a financial return, with aid primarily provided to advance economic, political and human development.

## **Sino-Africa Relations**

Prior to the late 1990s, China's relations with Africa, to a great degree, resembled the inward-outward dichotomy that has characterized Chinese foreign relations throughout history. During the 1960s and 1970s China stood in solidarity with liberation movements throughout Africa. Given China's experience with British colonial occupation, the People's Republic of China rhetorically supported revolutionary elements in various African countries. China's claims of solidarity with African liberation movements were primarily symbolic.

It was not until the Sino-Soviet split in 1961 that China sought enhanced relations with newly liberated African states. Following the Sino-Soviet split, China became concerned about its isolation from the West and the East, and began to carry out aid-based *diplomacy partnerships* with friendly sub-Saharan states. In 1963, Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai led China's first high-level delegation tour to Africa (Segal 1992, 117). From there, the Chinese implemented a military aid program to assist national liberation movements. Chinese military aid took the form of combat training, arms, and revenue (Segal 1992, 118).

In 1970, China embarked on its first large-scale aid project in Africa, where it constructed the Tanzanian-Zambia railway. Initially, President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, and President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia had sought financing through the World Bank, and other Western financial institutions. The World Bank rejected the railroad project as uneconomical. In 1965 the project was brought to Chairman Mao Tse-tung, who approved the project allocating up to \$1 billion to the project's

completion. Within a year of financing the Tanzanian-Zambia Railway, China replaced Great Britain as Tanzania's primary trading partner (Segal 1992, 118).

Throughout the 1970s and into the early 1980s, China's policy remained a dual approach of rhetorical solidarity combined with financial support for African liberation campaigns. Moreover, the Western backlash from the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre reinforced China's alignment with its African partners. China continues to demonstrate benevolence in exchange for its African allies' loyalty in multilateral organizations like the United Nations. In "China's Engagement in Africa: Scope, Significance and Consequences," Denis Tull notes that in the aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, "Developing countries were effectively elevated to a 'cornerstone' of Chinese foreign policy in an effort to build coalitions to shield Beijing from western criticism" (Tull 2006, 461). It was through its *cornerstone strategy* that China addressed the Western backlash. Through the 1990s China steadily re-emerged as an ascending global leader.

In turning his attention to Chinese policies during in the 1990s, Tull points to three primary factors that shape China's foreign policy during this decade. He argues that these laid the foundation for China's aggressive economic policies in developing states. First, China's need to shield itself from international outcries prompted it to build greater solidarity among African states. Moreover, the Chinese portray U.N. sanctions as another hegemonic infringement by the North into the domestic affairs of a Southern state (Tull 2006, 461). Given the history of colonialism and that Africa is home to heinous authoritarian leaders, Chinese propaganda of being bullied by the West resonated with many African heads of state.

Second, China's increasingly active foreign policy approach was within a context of growing fear of an unchecked America. The end of the Cold War left the United States the dominant super power. The Chinese perceive America's unbridled hegemony as a threat to its ascent in global leadership (Tull 2006, 461). This reality prompted China to increase its advocacy for multi-polarity by seeking to construct "flexible alliances to contain every form of hegemony and build a new and just international order" (Tull 2006, 461).

Third, Chinese leadership saw the pursuit of a foreign policy agenda as becoming increasingly necessary for China's survival. The Asian financial crisis of 1997 demonstrated how international events could have implications for the Communist Party's domestic political interests. Tull asserts:

The financial crisis in Asia in 1997 alerted the Chinese leadership to the risks of economic interdependence as it exposed the vulnerability of the country's outward-oriented economy to external shocks. By implication, regional and international stability, mainly but not exclusively in economic terms, turned into strategic objectives (Tull 2006, 461).

These three factors, coupled with high population density, led China once again to Africa in pursuit of advantageous political relationships, sustainable energy sources, and access to raw materials.

### **Chinese Foreign Direct Investment in Africa**

The turn of the 21st century marks the beginning of a new chapter in Sino-African relations. China prompted by the realities of its own development and growth agenda revamped its foreign policy towards Africa, where it began to pursue pragmatic investment policies in sub-Saharan countries. In "Friends and Interests: China's Distinctive Links with Africa," Barry Sautman and Yan Hairong present two FDI

approaches of the Chinese that are distinct from the FDI policies of Western states and transnational corporations. These policy approaches are: the *Chinese Model*, and the *Beijing Consensus*. Sautman and Hairong claim that under these two approaches Chinese transnational corporations, and the People's Republic of China as a whole, are better positioned to reap the benefits of FDI partnerships with African states. They also assert that Africa stands to benefit greatly from Chinese FDI as well.

Under the *Chinese Model*, China's investment in sectors of strategic importance to China is combined with aid programs to African states. Often Chinese aid is allocated to infrastructure projects. The Sautman and Hairong claim:

Chinese bids for resources fare well because they are packaged with investment and infrastructure loans. China preeminently invests 'in longer-neglected infrastructure projects and hardly viable industries', and its loans, typically advance at zero or near-zero interest, are often repaid in natural resources, if they are not canceled entirely (Sautman and Hairong 2007, 80).

The Chinese model is in stark contrast to Western foreign aid initiatives such as structural adjustment loans, which require recipient states to implement systemic economic reforms in exchange for needed loan revenue. China, by contrast, provides "no-strings attached aid" to the African states that have valuable natural resources.

In analyzing the Chinese model, China's overwhelming investment in African oil and rare earths is quite apparent. Chinese energy firms have invested heavily in exploratory projects, most notably in Angola and Sudan, as well as other African states with high levels of political instability or with newly discovered oil reserves. Chinese oil companies are acknowledged as being less risk adverse than their Western counterparts, and more willing to go to politically volatile areas and invest heavily in oil discovery projects that have a low initial return (Tull 2006, 468). This can be

attributed to two factors. First, China's major oil companies are owned by the Chinese government (Tull 2006, 469). Unlike privately owned Western oil companies, Chinese oil companies are subsidized by the state. This works in the Chinese favor, and provides oil companies with the leverage to invest in oil exploration in political hot spots throughout Africa. Should political stability be restored, China is then left with privileged access to the oil supply of the country. Tull affirms this by stating:

Thanks to their willingness to take significant risks, Chinese firms are able to derive huge profits from rates of return on foreign direct investment, said to be much higher in politically volatile sub-Saharan Africa than in other parts of the developing world (Tull 2006, 468).

A second factor is that Chinese oil companies are commissioned to secure privileged access that will help support China's increasing demand for oil. Moreover, since these companies are government owned they are an extension of the state, and ultimately, can afford the risk in the area of oil discovery, because secured access to these oil resources is the anticipated return.

In turning to the *Beijing Consensus*, Sautman and Hairong, present it as a competing framework to the *Washington Consensus*. The central tenet of the Beijing consensus is China's unrelenting adherence to state sovereignty. Moreover, China has maintained a non-interference policy in its investment relations with its African partners. From the perspective of the Chinese, its economic relations with African states are strictly business relationships. It should be noted that the PRC maintains its non-interference policy regardless of the state political structure (i.e., liberal democratic or authoritarian).

China's non-interference policy is in direct contrast to the Washington Consensus, made up of the IMF, World Bank, and other Western funding organization,

which places conditions on loans. Through its non-interference policies, China appeases African states' calls for greater autonomy and has contributed to China being hailed as the ideal development partner by some African policymakers. It should be noted that China has suspended its non-intervention policy when its economic or security policies are at risk.

A good example of China's non-intervention policy is its policy towards Sudan. In 1996, China acquired a 40 percent ownership stake in Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company, Sudan's oil production and exploration company. It is estimated that China has invested nearly \$5 dollars in its oil enterprise in Sudan (Tull 2006, 470). As acts of genocide being carried out by Khartoum against Southern Sudanese in the Darfur region of the country were brought to international attention, China refused to acknowledge the situation as a humanitarian crisis, but rather called it an "internal issue." China did not adhere to international sanctions on Sudanese oil, and in 2004 used its position on the U.N. Security Council to block any Security Council actions against Khartoum.

The refusal of China to relent to international pressures on the Darfur genocide left China as the only importer of Sudanese oil. Tull argues that China's opposition to U.N. sanctions against Sudan "perpetuated a highly advantageous status quo" (Tull 2006, 470). He notes: "The peace agreements between Khartoum and the rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Army of January 2005 contain an explicit guarantee for all oil concessions which the Sudanese state has granted during the war" (Tull 2006, 470). Sudan is just one example of China's willingness to partner with *pariah states* to advance its energy security policies.



Another strategic component of the Beijing Consensus is the use of bilateral trade agreements with African states to advance Chinese export interests. China has strategically circumvented African multilateral and regional trade commissions and insists on entering into trade agreements with individual states (Adem 2010, 354-55). African markets present China with a lucrative opportunity to heavily export inexpensive consumer goods to developing African states. Often, trade agreements are included in Chinese FDI contracts, thereby opening the door to Chinese exports to African markets. Although, African states have the option to export their commodities to China, these products are at a disadvantage in competing with Chinese commodities in China's domestic markets.

Through its development partnerships with Africa, China has also taken advantage of programs meant to aid Africa. One such program is the United States' African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) of 2000, which granted African textiles preferred access to American markets. The Chinese textile industry was ultimately disadvantaged by AGOA. This caused Chinese textiles companies to relocate their factories to African locations. Once the AGOA ended in 2005, Chinese textiles companies relocated back to China, leaving tens of thousands of textile workers in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, and Kenya unemployed (Tull 2006, 472).

### **Evaluating the outcomes of Sino-African Relations**

The unfulfilled promise of Chinese foreign direct investment to bring increased employment opportunities for Africans is becoming a growing concern for African states. Although Chinese investment in African infrastructure projects has increase

construction jobs in many sub-Saharan cities, migrant labor from China is primarily used in infrastructure projects. In the case of Angola, one of China's primary oil suppliers, migrant workers have been brought to Angola to complete its infrastructure projects. Tull claims:

China's hard-nosed economic interests are also reflected in Angola, where some 2,500 Chinese workers have arrived to work for Chinese companies whose work will be financed by the oil-backed loans that Beijing granted to the Angolan government. According to one source, a total of 30,000 Chinese workers are expected eventually in Angola (Tull 2006, 473).

Given China's economic superiority it is difficult to ascertain whether African states as a whole will truly benefit from Chinese economic policies. Although the Chinese model to foreign investment, which combines investment with desperately needed infrastructure aid, provides a promising opportunity to African states, it is questionable whether the benefits of these programs are undermined by other aspects of China's economic policy. In the case of Angola, Chinese requirements that contracts for infrastructure projects be awarded to Chinese companies, which rely heavily upon Chinese migrant labor, undermines the development of a modern African labor force. Granted, China, like any other international actor, is protecting its economic interests as it should. However, this reality should be kept in mind when China claims that its agenda is best for Africa.

The political ramifications of Chinese economic policy are detrimental to Africa democratization. The Chinese protection of pariah states, under the guise of non-interference policies, is dangerous for African political development and may present unintended ramifications for China's economic interests in Africa. In addition, as China rises in global power, the Chinese may find it increasingly difficult to pursue a

policy of non-interference. Furthermore, like most international actors, China will begin to weigh the cost and benefits of involving itself in the political affairs of its African partners. China, like many Western states, may pursue non-interference as it advances its foreign policy interests. However, China will not hesitate to change its policy towards African sovereignty should its investments be threatened.

In “Towards a Critical Geopolitics of China’s Engagement With African Development,” Marcus Powers and Giles Mohan assert:

The Chinese are themselves well aware that their non-interference stance is untenable in Africa. Given that the economic relationship matters to China, its government has a vest interest in long-term stability...(Power and Mohan 2010, 482).

China’s desire for peace in Africa is apparent in its involvement in U.N. peacekeeping missions, particularly in Liberia. During the Liberian civil war, China continued to purchase Liberian timber despite mounting international pressure to end trade with the state. It was the revenue from timber sales that kept the warlord regime of Liberian president Charles Taylor in office. However, after Taylor left office, China participated in an UN peacekeeping mission to restore order to the war-torn state. China apparently sought to demonstrate its continued support for the Liberian government while attempting to circumvent any international backlash from its relations with Taylor’s regime. China’s peacekeeping mission to Liberia presents an example of how China is increasingly implementing a policy of selective non-interference (Power and Mohan 2010, 482). It should be noted that this is a policy practiced by many states in the international system.

China’s oil investment policies in war-torn, resource-rich countries embolden authoritarian regimes. Resource-rich countries in Africa are some of the societies

hardest hit by war and humanitarian crises because of constant conflict for control over natural resources. China's investment in these areas, in an attempt to advance its resource security agenda, has had devastating consequences for these countries and their neighbors. For example, in the instance of Sudan, proceeds from Chinese oil investment potentially were used to perpetrate acts of genocide against the South Sudanese.

The analysis of Chinese-African relations has explored the opportunities, as well as the shortcomings, of Chinese FDI in Africa. It must be noted that the policy approach implemented by China is not different from approaches utilized by Western governments during the high stakes Cold War era. Although China presents African states with opportunities for growth and infrastructure development, these opportunities are aimed at primarily profiting the Chinese, which legitimately falls within the Chinese national interests. Although Chinese FDI is presented as a promising alternative to foreign aid, it is apparent that Chinese investments hold adverse implications for democratization and may potentially perpetuate the political circumstances that lead to state failure in Africa. Though the People's Republic of China portrays itself as an ideal development partner for African countries, its policies make it poised to take up the role of neo-colonial actor in sub-Saharan political economies.

## Empirical Findings

### Origins of the Data

The Freedom House Foundation is an American-based public policy institute. Since 1972, Freedom House has published an annual index that measures the global level of political freedom and civil liberty. The *Freedom in the World Index* provides an in-depth survey of the level of political and civil freedom enjoyed by the individual in a country. The political rights rating is determined by three factors: the electoral process, political pluralism and participation, and the functioning of government. Additionally, the civil liberty rating is determined by freedom of expression and belief, associational and organization rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy and individual rights.

Countries are rated on a scale of 1 to 7 by the Freedom in the World Index. A rating of 1 signifies the highest level of freedom, while a 7 signifies the lowest level of freedom. The following overall freedom statuses: *Free (F)*, *Partially Free (PF)*, and *Not Free (NF)*, are determined by the country's political rights and civil liberty rating. The freedom status is attained by averaging the political rights and civil liberty scores. An average of 1.0 to 2.5 is *free*; 3.0 to 5.0 is *partially free*; and 5.5 to 7 is *not free*. The Freedom House Foundation contends that the status of *free* does not signify that a country is perfectly free or without serious political problems, but rather that a *free* state enjoys more liberal democratic freedoms compared to a *partially free* state. The following table provides the 10-year aggregate ratings of African countries states on the Freedom in the World Index.

<b>Table 3</b>			
<b>Ten-Year Aggregate score (2001 - 2011)</b>			
<b>Country</b>	<b>Political Rights</b>	<b>Civil Liberties</b>	<b>Status</b>
Angola	6	5.1	NF
Benin	2.2	2	F
Botswana	2.2	2	F
Burkina Faso	5.2	3.4	PF
Cameroon	6	6	NF
Cape Verde	1.1	1.2	F
Central African Republic	5.3	4.8	PF
Chad	6.4	5.5	NF
Congo (Brazzaville)	5.6	4.6	PF
Congo (Kinshasa)	5.8	6	NF
Cote d'Ivoire	6.2	5.4	NF
Djibouti	4.9	5	PF
Equatorial Guinea	6.9	6.3	NF
Eritrea	7	7.4	NF
Ethiopia	5.1	5.1	PF
Gabon	5.6	4.4	PF
Gambia, The	5.1	4.7	PF
Ghana	1.4	2.2	F
Guinea	6.1	5.1	NF
Guinea-Bissau	4.1	4.2	PF
Kenya	3.8	3.4	PF
Lesotho	2.4	3.1	F*
Liberia	4.2	4.6	PF
Madagascar	3.8	4.4	PF
Malawi	4.1	3.8	PF
Mali	2	2.6	F
Mauritania	5.5	5.1	PF
Mauritius	1	1.8	F
Mozambique	3.2	3.6	PF
Namibia	2	1.4	F
Niger	3.7	3.7	PF
Nigeria	4.2	4.2	PF
Rwanda	6.2	5.1	NF
Sao Tome & Principe	1.8	2	F
Senegal	2.4	3.1	F*
Seychelles	3.3	3	PF
Sierra Leone	3.6	3.3	PF

<b>Somalia</b>	6.5	7	NF
<b>South Africa</b>	1.5	1.8	F
<b>Sudan</b>	7	7	NF
<b>Swaziland</b>	6.8	5	NF
<b>Tanzania</b>	4	3.1	PF
<b>Togo</b>	5.5	4.8	PF
<b>Uganda</b>	5.2	4.1	PF
<b>Zambia</b>	3.6	3.9	PF
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	6.5	6	NF

**Source:** Freedom House Foundation. “Freedom in the World: Aggregate and Subcategory Scores.” <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-aggregate-and-subcategory-scores>.

An analysis of the status of African countries on the Freedom House Index suggests that sub-Saharan countries consistently are rated as *partially free*. Twenty-five countries are listed as *partially free*; 13 countries have the status of *not free*, while only eight African countries are acknowledged as *free*. An examination of the African countries ratings from 2001 to 2011 is significant because it marks the decade after the initial implementation of aid conditionality and the development of democracy assistance as a field in foreign aid. Moreover, the disproportionate amount of *partially free* states in Africa substantiates the conclusions of Goldsmith, Carothers and Brown that democracy consolidation is an arduous long-term endeavor. Furthermore, despite the best intentions of Western democracy promoters, the impetus for liberal democratic consolidation in African countries must come from local actors.

### **United States Aid Recipients in Africa**

In turning to country-specific aid allocation practices, the following table captures the leading African recipients of U.S. assistance. These figures are based on the U.S. Congressional budget request submitted by USAID. There is a noticeable heterogeneity

in the freedom levels of countries the United States aids. In fact, six of the countries are *free*, while 14 are *partially free*, and eight are *not free*. Additionally, it appears that aid by the United States is region-selective, such that five of the top 10 USAID recipients are located in East Africa. These countries are: Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Sudan.

**Table 4**  
**Leading U.S. Assistance Recipients in Africa**  
(**\$ in millions**)

<b>Country</b>	<b>FY 2012 Requested</b>	<b>FY 2011 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2010 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2009 Actual</b>
<b>Uganda</b> <sup>a</sup>	527.7	456.1	456.8	404.1
<b>Kenya</b> <sup>a</sup>	751.4	661.8	687.6	829.4
<b>South Africa</b> <sup>a</sup>	561.9	571.1	577.5	544.8
<b>Nigeria</b> <sup>a</sup>	660.4	632.3	614.1	594.2
<b>Zambia</b> <sup>a</sup>	400.7	385.0	392.9	308.1
<b>Ethiopia</b> <sup>a</sup>	608.3	519.0	533.2	864.8
<b>Tanzania</b> <sup>a</sup>	571.8	501.7	462.5	646.9
<b>Sudan</b>	518.2	400.2	427.7	924.1
<b>Mozambique</b> <sup>a</sup>	424.5	386.6	386.9	317.9
<b>Somalia</b>	82.3	98.4	133.8	403.8
<b>Liberia</b>	211.4	203.1	226.1	224.0
<b>Rwanda</b> <sup>a</sup>	241.3	220.7	208.1	195.8
<b>Namibia</b> <sup>a</sup>	99.6	103.2	102.8	112.0
<b>Botswana</b> <sup>a</sup>	71.8	75.4	77.3	81.4
<b>Mali</b>	171.7	137.7	117.8	102.6
<b>Dem. Rep. Congo</b>	261.8	215.9	183.0	296.5
<b>Ghana</b>	204.5	165.8	138.8	147.5
<b>Malawi</b>	201.6	169.7	145.7	115.6
<b>Senegal</b>	119.8	98.7	106.3	93.7
<b>Cote d'Ivoire</b> <sup>a</sup>	142.4	108.0	133.6	113.7
<b>Madagascar</b>	78.8	71.6	86.4	71.0
<b>Angola</b>	27.8	60.9	84.2	55.9
<b>Guinea</b>	13.6	25.0	22.0	13.3
<b>Benin</b>	29.1	31.0	36.4	30.9
<b>Guinea</b>	13.6	25.0	22.0	13.3
<b>Benin</b>	29.1	31.0	36.4	30.9
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	109.9	97.3	89.0	292.3
<b>Djibouti</b>	7.3	8.5	9.4	5.8



<b>Sierra Leone</b>	22.7	19.4	31.1	20.0
<b>Burundi</b>	37.6	35.6	40.4	39.4

**Source:** Ted Dagne, 2011. “Africa: U.S. Foreign Assistance Issues.” *Congressional Research Services*.

<sup>a</sup> Global AIDS Initiative “Focus” Country.

Two factors account for the concentration of USAID assistance in East Africa. First, this region in Africa is prone to terrorist activity. In 1998, al-Qaeda terrorist attacks were simultaneously carried out against two U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Additionally, state failure in Sudan and Somalia has made the Horn of Africa a hotbed of terrorist activity, which is evident in the heightened instances of piracy occurring along the coasts of the Indian Ocean. The United States provides security assistance to the region for counterterrorism operations and supports the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) in its training of African armies for peacekeeping missions (Dagne 2011, 4). Second, state failure in Somalia and Sudan has brought about a humanitarian crisis within the region. Countries like Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia have been overwhelmed with migrant refugee populations, and this humanitarian crisis has resulted in USAID assistance.

### **Chinese Foreign Direct Investment in Africa**

Accurately identifying African recipients of Chinese FDI is difficult given the lack of transparency by the Chinese. This reality is addressed by Thomas Lum, Specialist in Asian Affairs for the Congressional Research Service. In his analysis, Lum employs a study conducted by the Wagner Graduate School of New York University. The study examines eight African countries; it reports their primary export to China, along with the

type of aid pledged to the African recipient country, and finally the purpose of the pledged aid. All of the countries studied exported natural resources to China. These exported resources are either in the form of oil, minerals, or raw materials.

**Table 5**  
**Selected African Countries with Large Reported Aid and Investment Projects,**  
**2002 - 2007**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Main Export to China</b>	<b>Pledged Aid, Loans, Credit Lines, and Investment</b>	<b>Major Types of Financing (as Reported)</b>	<b>Major Types of Projects Financed (as Reported)</b>
<b>Angola</b> <sup>a b c</sup>	Oil	\$7.4 billion	Loans, interest-free loans, credit lines	Infrastructure (railways)
<b>Congo (DRC)</b> <sup>a b c</sup>	Oil, Minerals	\$5 billion	Loans	Infrastructure, mining
<b>Sudan</b>	Oil	\$4.2 billion	Investment, loan, grants	Oil refining, infrastructure, hydro power, humanitarian
<b>Gabon</b> <sup>d</sup>	Oil, minerals	\$3 billion	Investment, Grants	Iron ore mining, infrastructure, port facilities, hydro power
<b>Mozambique</b>	Wood, ores	\$2.4 billion	Debt cancellation, concessional loans, grants	Dam construction, infrastructure, national stadium
<b>Equatorial Guinea</b> <sup>b c</sup>	Oil	\$ 2 billion	Concessional loans, credit lines	Not specified
<b>Ethiopia</b>	Oil drilling rights	\$2 billion (includes 2008 aid of \$150 million)	Loans, grants, investment	Infrastructure, telecommunications, public buildings, hydropower, light industry

<b>Nigeria</b> <sup>a b</sup>	Oil	\$1.6 billion	Debt cancellation, investments, grants	Off shore oil development, infrastructure (railways), medical training
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**Source:** New York University, Wagner School. “Understanding Chinese Foreign Aid: A look at China’s Development Assistance to Africa, Southeast Asia, Latin America, April 25, 2008.”

- a. Major African Trading Partner of China
- b. Loan Payment in Oil
- c. Major Africa Oil Supplier of China
- d. Loan payment in minerals

### **Comparative study of Chinese FDI Recipients and USAID Recipients**

This paper’s fundamental hypothesis is that African states receiving Chinese FDI and aid will be disproportionately evaluated to be non-democratic, whereas states receiving USAID and World Bank assistance will be deemed more democratic. To test my hypothesis, I will analyze the consequence of USAID and Chinese assistance on democratization in Africa. Concretely, I will compare the freedom status of the recipients of Chinese FDI and infrastructure aid to that of the recipients of USAID and World Bank assistance. I will show that Sudan is an example of how Chinese assistance in the form of FDI and loans in exchange for access to oil has undermined humanitarian assistance by USAID and the World Bank.

**Table 6**  
**Chinese FDI & Aid vs. USAID & World Bank**

Chinese FDI & Aid	Democratic States	Non-Democratic States
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gabon (PF:5)</li> <li>• Ethiopia (PF:5.1)</li> <li>• Mozambique (PF:3.4)</li> <li>• Nigeria (PF:5.1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Angola (NF:5.55)</li> <li>• Democratic Republic of Congo (NF:5.9)</li> <li>• Sudan (NF:7)</li> <li>• Equatorial Guinea (NF:6.6)</li> </ul>
USAID & World Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uganda (PF:4.64)</li> <li>• Kenya (PF:3.6)</li> <li>• South Africa (F:1.65)</li> <li>• Tanzania (PF:3.55)</li> <li>• Zambia (PF:3.75)</li> <li>• Nigeria (PF:5.1)</li> <li>• Ethiopia (PF:5.1)</li> <li>• Mozambique (PF:3.4)</li> <li>• Liberia (PF:4.4)</li> <li>• Namibia (F:1.7)</li> <li>• Botswana (F:2.1)</li> <li>• Mali (F:2.3)</li> <li>• Ghana (F:1.8)</li> <li>• Malawi (PF:3.95)</li> <li>• Senegal (PF:2.75)</li> <li>• Madagascar (PF:4.1)</li> <li>• Benin (F:2.1)</li> <li>• Djibouti (PF:4.9)</li> <li>• Sierra Leone (PF:3.45)</li> <li>• Burundi (PF:4.3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudan (NF:7)</li> <li>• Somalia (NF:6.75)</li> <li>• Rwanda (NF:5.65)</li> <li>• Democratic Republic of Congo (NF:5.9)</li> <li>• Angola (NF:5.55)</li> <li>• Guinea (NF:5.6)</li> <li>• Cote d'Ivoire (NF:5.8)</li> <li>• Zimbabwe (NF:6.25)</li> </ul>

China's non-interference approach to aid allocation provides recipient countries with an alternative to Western donors as well as Western lending institutions. Unfortunately, the provision of unconditioned aid to an African government has been observed to have adverse ramifications to the level of freedom and democracy in the recipient country. For example, both Ethiopia and Gabon experienced a decline following the receipt of unconditioned aid from China; such that the freedom status of both countries rapidly declined from *partially free* in 2009 to *not free* in 2010 and 2011. No government receiving Chinese aid saw an increase in its freedom status. In contrast, USAID recipients like Burundi, Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone were elevated from the status of *not free* to *partially free* during 2001 to 2011. Additionally, only one USAID or World Bank recipient, Senegal, experienced a decline in status from *free* to *partially free*. A decline in freedom status from *partially free* to *not free* was only manifested in two recipients of USAID and World Bank conditioned aid. Both Djibouti and Ethiopia declined from *partially free* to *not free* in 2011 and in 2010, respectively. Nevertheless, none of the recipient countries of USAID and World Bank assistance saw their freedom status increase from *partially free* to *free*.

Regardless of the 10 years of conditional aid donated by USAID and the World Bank, surprisingly, not a single African state experienced a rise in their status from *partially free* to *free*. Aid conditionality and democracy assistance are thus insufficient to bringing about democracy consolidation to African states. The concluding section will address the structural barriers to democratization and democracy consolidation in African political systems, and the limited effectiveness of democracy assistance to overcome these obstacles.

## Conclusion

The democratic wave that swept across Africa in the early 1990s took the West by surprise. Africa was believed to lack the essential components that have historically contributed to democratic openings. In a continent made up of low-income economies, African countries typically lacked a viable middle-class. Additionally, low literacy plagued these societies, and years of autocratic governance blocked a civic culture of popular participation (Brown and Kaiser 2008, 249). However, the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, with reforms to the aid policies of donors, provided a critical juncture for democratic openings in African countries.

During the 1990s, the world witnessed a historic number of multi-party elections being held across the continent, and 29 African governments adopted new constitutions.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, despite these liberal political advancements, the full incorporation of democratic governance has been muted, giving way to a “deficit of democracy” throughout the continent. Therefore, although the 1990s brought unprecedented democratic openings across the continent, backsliding towards illiberal governance has thwarted full consolidation of democracy in Africa. In this section I will discuss the impediments to democracy in Africa, and furthermore, how these hindrances undermine the consolidation of liberal democratic governance.

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<sup>1</sup> Angola, 1992; Benin, 1990; Burkina Faso, 1991; Burundi, 1992; Cape Verde, 1992; Central Africa Republic, 1995; Chad, 1996; Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), 1992; Democratic Republic of Congo (Kinshasa), 1993; Djibouti, 1992; Equatorial Guinea, 1991; Eritrea, 1996; Gabon, 1991; The Gambia, 1997; Ghana, 1992; Lesotho, 1993; Malawi, 1994; Mali, 1992; Mauritania, 1991; Manibia, 1990; Niger, 1999; Nigera, 1999; Rwanda, 1991; Setchelles, 1993; Sierra Leone, 1991; South Africa, 1996; Togo, 1991; Uganda, 1995; Zambia, 1991 (U.S. Central Intelligence Agency World Fact Book).

## Challenges to Democracy

Post-colonial African political systems have been afflicted with the legacy of autocratic governance. In contrast to Western democracies, African democracies are generally structured to value the executive over other branches of government. Historically, following the independence of their respective states, popularly elected African presidents typically governed under what has become caricatured as the *Big Man Syndrome*, where patron-client relationships were combined with authoritarian oppression to buffer the executive branch from political opposition. Though many contemporary African states allow their citizens to freely exercise civil liberty, African political economies continue to be governed by elites that enjoy relatively unchecked authority and a great deal of discretion with regard to the allocation of public goods. Indeed, the concept of *Neopatrimonialism* pervades African political systems. This system allows elected officials to distribute state resources in a manner that advances the personal prerogatives of the ruling elite, thereby undermining transparency, and thus implicating government accountability (Brown and Kaiser 2008, 249). In conjunction with neopatrimonialism, the big man syndrome style of governance weakens systems of checks and balances, and thus the rule of law. Despite democracy promotion efforts by the West, big man syndrome and neopatrimonialism, persist in African political systems and are antithetical to democracy.

Next, the politicalization of ethnic identity impedes the development of robust democracy in sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, in African countries political affiliation is centered upon ethnicity as opposed to social class or interest. This renders elections a competition between ethnic groups for control of state resources, therefore exacerbating

neopatrimonialism. The grave consequences of ethnic-based politics were witnessed in Kenya following the 2007 presidential election. In retrospect that election can be characterized as a contest between the most prominent politicians of the country's largest ethnic groups. In 2007, President Mwai Kibaki of the Kikuyu community was challenged by Raila Odinga a Luo, the candidate of the Orange Democratic Party, a coalition made up of minority ethnic groups. Although voter turnout was high, the election was highly disputed and widely recognized as flawed. Nevertheless, Kibaki was declared the winner, and quickly sworn into his second term in office amid allegations of election tampering. Immediately following the 2007 election, Kenya erupted in violence, and episodes of ethnic cleansing were carried out in the rural cities throughout the country. The post-election conflict continued for nearly 100 days, and did not end until a power-sharing agreement was reached, which created the position of prime minister for Odinga. Since the Kenyan constitution establishes the president as both the head of government and head of state, it was unclear what official duties would be entrusted to the prime minister.

The violent aftermath of the 2007 election startled the international community. While Kenya, like most African countries, has a history of autocratic rule, it is widely recognized as being a stable country in East Africa, a region often plagued with conflict and state failure. Additionally, Kenya is a close ally of the United States and has enjoyed the benefits of partnering with America during the Cold War and the Global War on Terror.

Nevertheless, the politicization of ethnic rivalries is not new to Kenya President Daniel arap Moi strategically fomented ethnic conflict to insulate himself from domestic



and international appeals for democratic reforms. This occurred in 1992 when Kenya held its first multiparty general election since independence in 1963. Prior to the 1992 general election, episodes of ethnic conflict were incited by Moi supporters in the Rift Valley region. This was done strategically to display the turmoil the country would face if Moi were not returned to office. As a result, Moi was re-elected in 1992 and served two additional terms until he exceeded his term limits in 2002. The lack of a strong political party platform will continue to allow for the politicization of ethnicity, which will hamper the democratization of Africa states.

Finally, the economic reality of African political systems affects the level of civil liberty an individual citizen can attain. President Nelson Mandela of South Africa captured this reality when he stated, “Freedom is meaningless if people cannot put food in their stomachs” (Bratton and Mattes 2001, 447). With the continent being composed of low-income political economies, individual citizens are preoccupied with ensuring their survival. The average citizen is thus hindered from fully exercising the due diligence needed to hold their leaders accountable. In countries plagued with widespread poverty, pandemics, prolonged civil wars over natural resources, and ethnic conflict, democracy and the demand for greater accountability is a luxury that many Africans cannot readily afford (Collier 2007). Moreover, rampant corruption and a general lack of transparency by African leaders are intended to keep the citizenry ignorant of the operation of government.

These continent-specific realities, plus the absence of local government, leads to *Delegative Democracy* in African political systems (Bratton and Logan 2009). Under this governing model, citizens elect parliamentarians from their ethno-regional

community and entrust to them not only political representation, but sole governing authority. The drawback to *delegative democracy* is that elections can become a citizen's only avenue to hold elected officials accountable (Bratton and Logan 2009). With most African politicians enjoying 4- to 5-year terms, sporadic elections are weak instruments to hold leaders accountable. The notion that Africans have become mere voters in elections rather than actively engaged citizens is a recurring theme in literature on democratization in Africa. Arguably, these continent-specific realities help to explain why the role of citizen is not fully realized by Africans, and why liberal democracy, in its fullest form, remains beyond reach in states across the continent.

#### **Assessing the Consequences of Democracy Assistance in Africa: Findings from Kenya**

Several scholars argue that foreign aid has done nothing more than fund unsustainable democratic experiments in Africa. They claim that democracy assistance can ultimately undermine democratization because politicians become answerable to donors instead of their constituents. An additional common criticism of democracy assistance is that it causes quick transitions to electoral democracy before a foundation for liberal democratic governance can be established by domestic actors.

Although these may appear valid objections to democracy assistance, it should be recognized that the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 provided political movements within countries throughout the world the momentum, moral authority, as well as the critical juncture, to challenge authoritarian and autocratic regimes. In the context of Africa, democracy assistance of the early 1990s provided desperately needed resources to civic agitation that had been brewing below the surface. Although the initial wave of

multiparty elections held across Africa in the early 1990s did not instantly remove illiberal regimes, during this decade many African governments were put on paths to incorporate liberal political reforms.

Turning to Kenya, in 2006 I took part in a study abroad program at the University of Nairobi. During my studies, I obtained a research affiliation with the National Convention Executive Council (NCEC). Founded in 1997, the NCEC is the executive organ of the National Convention Assembly (NCA), a civic association composed of non-governmental organizations from various sectors of civil society. Since its inception, the NCA has championed the adoption of liberal democratic political reforms and has stood at the forefront of the civic movement for a new Kenyan constitution. During my tenure with the NCEC, I served as the Intern of Constitutional Reform Education and Advocacy. Additionally, through my research affiliation I collaborated with the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), Kenya's statutory human rights agency. During my time with these indigenous organizations, I participated in public forums and activities that were dedicated to ensuring a peaceful general election in 2007.

My field work in Kenya contributed to my undergraduate thesis: "Legalized Repression: A Case Study of the Kenyan Constitution and the Movement for Liberal Political Reform." This paper utilized critical juncture theory to examine the Kenyan constitution movement. My thesis argued that Kenya was presented with a constitutional moment following the 2002 election of President Kibaki, and that this opportunity was squandered due to illiberal, antithetical political interests. Furthermore, I concluded that it was unlikely that Kenya would ever ratify an entirely new liberal democratic

constitution. Rather, political leaders would continue to pragmatically amend the founding constitution in a piecemeal fashion to address reforms as they arose.

My prediction was proven wrong. The crisis which followed Kenya's 2007 presidential election demanded sweeping change as opposed to the gradual progressive amendments I had predicted almost a year earlier. The violent aftermath of the 2007 presidential election again provided Kenya another constitutional moment. In 2010, the Republic of Kenya held its second constitutional referendum, in which it ratified a new constitution founded upon the tenets of liberal democratic governance. The adoption of a new Kenyan constitution marks progress for the country. However, it is yet to be seen whether the principles of liberal governance will be fully embraced by Kenyan political leaders.

The Kenyan constitution movement, in essence, captures the challenges in assessing the consequences of democracy assistance in Africa. Democratization is a long and unsteady process that is being severely challenged by powerful domestic undercurrents seeking to maintain the status quo. Furthermore, foreign aid in the form of democracy assistance will often fail to fully achieve the intended outcome set forth by donors. In conclusion, given this reality, donors should conceptualize democracy assistance as a risky investment where returns are uncertain.

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