Thesis Approved by

______________________

Major Advisor

Dr. Terry L. Clark
BUSINESS OR PLEASURE? EXAMINING THE REASONS BEHIND CHINA’S AFRICAN VENTURE

BY
BRIAN C. KREITLOW

A THESIS

Submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School of the Creighton University in Partial Fulfillment for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of International Relations

Omaha, NE September 2007
ABSTRACT

The last decade has witnessed a marked increase in Chinese activity in Africa, characterized by an explosion in bilateral trade, investment, bilateral leadership visits and the commitment of Chinese peacekeeping troops to Africa. While China and Africa have had longstanding relations, the unprecedented expansion in China’s interest in Africa has generated much criticism and fear abroad. This paper examines the many explanations offered for this expanding relationship: the neo-mercantilist quest for energy and markets; the effort to undermine Taiwanese recognition; a realist grand strategy to challenge the United States; and an effort to extend its soft power and ensuring its peaceful rise. After a thorough review of these viewpoints, I contend that the sharp increase in Sino-African relations is the result of a new Chinese strategy to rise peacefully and gain support for its vision of a peaceful world order, one in which the predominant paradigm of international relations is idealism rather than realism. I explore neo-Gramscian theory to understand how the legitimation of a leading Chinese position in international affairs is vital to accomplishing these foreign policy goals. I then review the use of various foreign policy tools as part of China’s Africa policy to track the emergence and possible causes of China’s renewed relations with Africa. Finally, I examine China’s relations with Tanzania to see if these larger strategic goals are also evident at the level of bilateral relations. Coupled with China’s visible rise, a correct interpretation of China’s interest in Africa is vital to ensuring a consistent and appropriate foreign policy towards China.
For my lovely wife, Liz, and our new son, Lucas.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction ........................................................................................................ 1

II. Literature Review ............................................................................................ 9
   a. A Neo-Mercantilist China? ......................................................................... 9
   b. The Taiwan Question: The Role of Recognition in China’s Africa Policy ... 17
   c. The China Challenge: Africa as a Base of Hegemonic Competition ......... 24
   d. From Competition to Cooperation: Sino-African Relations as a Model .... 31

III. Hypothesis and Theory .................................................................................. 41
   a. From Realpolitik to Idealpolitik .................................................................. 41
   b. Thesis Statement .......................................................................................... 43
   c. A Neo-Gramscian Evaluation of Hegemony ............................................... 44

IV. Analytical Framework and Required Data ...................................................... 52

V. Analysis ............................................................................................................. 57
   a. Evaluating China’s Rise ............................................................................... 57
   b. China’s Relationship with Africa ................................................................. 77
   c. A Chronological Evaluation of Sino-African Relations ............................ 84
   d. Tanzania: A Case Study for Sino-African Relations .................................... 93

VI. Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 104

VII. Bibliography .................................................................................................... 109
Tables

Table 1: Top Ten African Trade Partners with China, 2005 (by imports) .......................... 11

Table 2: Bilateral agreements between China and Tanzania, 1964 - Present ............... 96

Table 3: Composition of China’s Exports to Tanzania, 1995-2005 ................................. 101

Figures

Figure 1. China’s Infrastructure Projects in Africa ............................................................. 12

Figure 2: Countries of the World, by Commencement of Relations with the PRC ........ 20

Figure 3: Chinese Defense Budgets and Estimates of Total Related Expenditures ....... 59

Figure 4: Travel of Chinese President, Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1993-2004 ................................................................. 71

Figure 5: Chinese FDI to Africa: 1993-2004 .................................................................. 79

Figure 6: Chinese Trade with African States, 1996-2007 ............................................. 80

Figure 7: China’s Support for African Insurrections, 1949-1987 ............................... 85

Figure 8: Aggregate Trends in Chinese Foreign Policy towards Africa, 1990-2006 ...... 88

Figure 9: Tanzania’s Exports to China, 1995-2005 ......................................................... 97

Figure 10: Composition of Tanzania’s Exports to China, 1995-2005 ............................ 98

Figure 11: China’s Exports to Tanzania, 1995-2005 ....................................................... 99

Figure 12: Composition of China’s Exports to Tanzania, 1995-2005 ........................... 100
China’s Dynamic Relationship with Africa

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations with Egypt in 1956, the People’s Republic of China (hereafter China or PRC)\(^1\) has pursued a multi-faceted but inconsistent foreign policy towards African states. In the early 1960s, China’s efforts in Africa were an outgrowth of the Chinese Civil War and focused on achieving international recognition as the one legitimate Chinese government. By the late 1960s, these efforts had expanded to include actively aiding African anti-colonial movements and contesting the influence of both the U.S. and U.S.S.R. While China was never able to match the two superpowers in the scale of its involvement, its support for African nationalist movements laid a strong foundation for economic relations and was crucial to Beijing’s assumption of the “China” seat at the United Nations in 1971. In the wake of the Sino-Soviet rapprochement in the early 1980s, however, China’s aid to African countries fell to only a trickle and remained low for the remainder of the decade (Taylor 1998, 443). But international criticism of China’s handling of the pro-democracy demonstration at Tiananmen Square ushered in a new era of Sino-African friendship and cooperation. While the West harshly criticized the crackdown and reacted with sanctions and diplomatic reprimands, China found African leaders sympathetic. The leaders of Namibia and Angola sent supportive letters to the Chinese government for their handling of the demonstrations, and President Blaise Compoare of Burkina Faso was the first international leader to visit Beijing after Tiananmen (Taylor 1998, 447). China reacted by strengthening its partnerships with developing countries, and Chinese foreign aid grew by over 600 percent between 1988 and 1990, by which time nearly half of the countries receiving foreign aid from China were African (Taylor 1998, 450). Throughout the 1990s,

\(^1\) In an effort to minimize confusion, I will use the abbreviation ‘PRC’ specifically when discussing the issue of recognition vis-à-vis Taiwan, since both governments claim to be the rightful government of China.
this pattern continued, with both China and Taiwan investing heavily in Africa—most notably in influential states, such as South Africa.

China’s relationship with Africa has grown even more dynamic in the last ten years. Since 1998, Chinese trade with and investment in African nations has skyrocketed. (In Ethiopia alone, bilateral trade with China nearly quadrupled between 2000 and 2006 (Ethio-China Relations, 2006). In 2006, representatives from 48 African countries attended the third triennial Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing, where China signed a US$1.9 billion deal with 19 African nations. Previous iterations of this conference had attracted relatively little attention; however, China’s emergence onto the world commodity market highlighted its economic interests in Africa, and the 2006 event garnered significant international attention.

China’s economic assistance now seems to reach almost every corner of the African continent: a stadium in Mozambique, two power plants in Nigeria, residential housing in Eritrea, and a $5 billion package of preferential loans and business credits to Zambia are only a few recent examples. Chinese bilateral trade with the continent has grown by 400 percent in the last 4 years (Furniss 2006, 55). A mere US$2 billion in 1999, China’s annual bilateral trade with Africa grew to just under US$40 billion in 2005. Chinese officials now predict this amount will increase to US$100 billion by 2010 (Kahn 2006a, 6).

China dubbed 2006 “The Year of Africa” and Chinese government officials visited 19 countries in the first six months of that year, signing over 100 bilateral agreements (Furniss 2006, 55). Since coming to office in 2003, Chinese President Hu Jintao alone has traveled to Africa three times, and visited fourteen different countries. This stands in stark contrast to the attention paid to Africa by Western powers; despite declaring Africa a top priority, President Bush and Tony Blair have each made only one visit to Africa since 2000.
Explanations for this sudden increase in interest vary greatly. Official Chinese statements claim that the heightened activity reflects increased cooperation aimed at mutually benefiting both China and Africa. The international media puts forth a variety of other reasons—ranging from China’s need for natural resources, to challenging the United States’ hegemony, or countering Taiwan’s dollar diplomacy in Africa. Frequently, press or scholarly reports identify several of these ‘motives’ in discussions of China’s Africa policy, leaving us wondering if there could be a greater strategy at work. How do we best explain the growing Chinese interest in Africa?

I will analyze this question on three levels: theoretical, chronological and practical. After using a literature review to explore the contending explanations for this phenomenon, I will turn to Neo-Gramscian theory in order to develop a theoretical model for hegemonic legitimation. I will then use this model to evaluate China’s Africa strategy as an effort to increase its international legitimacy as a world power. Neo-Gramscian thought stems from the 1930s writings of Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist. Gramsci’s study on the ‘hegemonic’ struggles of Italian political parties and social groups infers some efforts that an aspiring hegemon should undertake, and focuses on the importance of a strong base of support as a prerequisite for hegemony. While Gramsci himself directed only a few sentences at International Relations, his theories were adapted to that field by more recent IR scholars such as Jürgen Habermas and Robert Cox. Their work demonstrates that these social policies are also applicable in the quest for legitimate world leadership. Using this framework, I hope to be able to judge China’s African policy in line with the steps they would expect an aspiring hegemon to pursue.

---

2 Gramsci’s use of the term ‘hegemony’ was somewhat different than its use in modern International Relations studies. Gramsci used the term to define a cultural or spiritual superiority by a class or group within a national social order, while IR theorists are more likely to tie the term to national power dominance and dominant modes of production (Femia 2005, 342; Cox 1983, 170-171).
Second, I will use a chronological evaluation of Sino-African relations to review the growth of China’s involvement in Africa over the last 15 years. I will measure a number of indicators of this activity and seek to identify significant increases and decreases in activity. I will also try to draw correlations between these changes and shifts in Chinese Foreign Policy. This will allow me to determine if these shifts are more similar to the expectations of the neo-Gramscian model, or another competing thesis.

Third, I will use a case study of China’s relations with Tanzania as a practical example to see if the previously identified trends of overall Sino-African relations are also visible in Sino-Tanzanian relations. While Tanzania is not a major player in China’s economic relations with Africa, I think its use as a case study is well warranted. Tanzania has a long history of relations with China (since 1963) and has been the largest recipient of Chinese aid to date (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003b). Tanzania’s general stability and broader economic base provides us with a relatively controlled environment in which to view changes in Chinese interest—much more so than other African countries such as Angola, Sudan or South Africa.

I have chosen to use the term ‘interest’ to refer to the broad scope of Chinese activity in Africa, because Chinese efforts reach well beyond merely investment, trade or aid. While a vague and immeasurable variable on its own, many of the different forms that this ‘interest’ may take are measurable. Whether it is presidential visits to African countries, the construction of (or loans to build) infrastructure, schools, hospitals and public buildings; agreements intended to spur bilateral trade and investment; or simply the expansion of trade—all of these evince China’s ‘interest’ in Africa, and may be measurable by quantity or dollar value. Of course, there remain several manifestations of ‘interest’ that defy simple
quantification—such as the filming of Chinese-language commercials on Zambia and the granting of free scholarships allowing African students to attend Chinese universities.

Another relevant definition is the meaning of Africa, itself. While I will refer to the geographical continent of Africa (and its islands), it is important to bear in mind that Africa is not a single entity, but is rather a continent comprised of 53 sovereign countries. China maintains formal diplomatic relations with 48 of these—the other five continue to recognize Taiwan. Each of these countries makes their own independent decisions and manages their own foreign relations. Furthermore, there are multiple ethnic, linguistic, religious and historical backgrounds that offer other potential sub-divisions of Africa. But I believe that this individuality is what makes the scope of the recent Chinese interest so great. To limit my observations to only a single section of Africa (i.e. Sub-Saharan, Francophone or Islamic Africa) would fail to capture the full extent of Chinese interest in Africa.

Gaining insight into the motives behind China’s African adventure, especially as they relate to the larger goals of Chinese foreign policy, is of vital importance to major powers, such as the United States, which must seek either confrontation or cooperation with a growing China. In “Clash of the Titans”, veteran diplomat Zbigniew Brzezinski stated “China is clearly assimilating into the international system”—claiming that China has been socialized into the Western system and its organizations (Brzezinski and Mearshimer 2005). John Mearshimer, in the same article, argues that China is trying to consolidate its power in East Asia in order to drive out American influence. These diametrically-opposed viewpoints offer a glimpse into the heart of the problem. Each viewpoint would drive a radically different foreign policy towards China—one towards engagement and one towards confrontation—and have distinctly different results for the United States.
Naturally, this study also has ramifications for the African nations at the center of China’s Africa policy, which would benefit from an understanding of China’s motivations. Currently, many African governments are supportive of a greater Chinese involvement in Africa, though many others are skeptical of China’s role. Rioters in Zambia complained of Chinese interference in the Zambian election in 2006, and South African trade unions have pushed for quotas to limit the import of lower-priced Chinese goods. Africa lacks a strategy for dealing with the flurry of Chinese activity—understanding why that activity is occurring could assist in responding to it properly.

Historically, observers have characterized Chinese activity in Africa according to the salient features of the international system. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Chinese interest in Africa was quickly and coherently captured in terms of China’s unique role as a third front in the Cold War struggle (El-Khawas 1973, 25). By the late 1990s, the issue had turned to focus on Taiwan as the central issue in China’s African relations—against the backdrop of the Taiwan Strait crisis of 1996 (when China launched rockets into the Taiwan Strait) and Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui’s effort to scope out support for independence.

Today, most commentary on China’s increased involvement in Africa points to China’s quest for natural resources as the driving factor in Sino-African relations. In this neo-mercantilist arrangement, China seeks to exploit Africa’s cheap production and natural resources to meet Chinese demand, and then use Africa as a market for its manufactured goods. Proponents of this viewpoint highlight China’s numerous agreements for access to African oil and mineral rights and cite the role that dramatic increases in natural exports have played in expanding Sino-African trade. Media analysts are also quick to point out dangers posed by the rapid influx of Chinese goods into Africa, and the impacts to South African development (Never Too Late, 2006; Africa’s New Colonialists 2007). Even some African
leaders, most notably South Africa’s Thabo Mbeki, are beginning to warn of a new Chinese colonialism in Africa (Africa’s New Colonialists 2007).

Other observers of the growing Chinese presence in Africa note that Chinese aid is frequently tied to official non-recognition of Taiwan, and may be an effort to reduce support for Taiwanese independence (Payne and Veney 2001; Taylor 2002). Undoubtedly, the assimilation of Taiwan back into the PRC is the largest and most visible affectation of Chinese foreign policy over the last several decades, and has only become stronger since 1996’s pro-independence campaign. By using economic largesse to woo African countries away from recognizing Taiwan, China can undermine Taiwan’s claims to legitimacy.

A third group of scholars view China’s African policy in the context of a realist grand-strategy to facilitate its rise to power. In this viewpoint, China’s rush into Africa is intended to maximize its national power and secure valuable and strategic oil resources which it can use to challenge U.S. hegemony, first in the Pacific and then on a global scale. These analysts follow the theory that mighty China is rising, and as witnessed by the last several hundred years of great power conflict, its natural hegemonic desires will fuel confrontation with the United States. For support, they highlight China’s rush for Africa’s vast resources while the United States in preoccupied by terrorism and its involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq (Saunders 2006, 2; Traub 2006)

A final viewpoint, shared by Chinese scholars and officials, also views China’s Africa policy as part of a rise to great-power status, but focuses on China’s peaceful rise and its cooperative agenda (State Council Information Office 2005; Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006a; Shih 2005). Rather than seeking to challenge the United States, China seeks to expand its ‘soft power’ influence and encourage peaceful economic development in Africa. These goals are central to China’s ability to continue its own development and great-power
rise in a peaceful environment and to support its larger foreign policy goal of transforming the world order to a multi-polar system.

This paper agrees with this latter view and argues that the recent spike in Chinese interest in Africa is the result of a new grand strategy to facilitate China’s rise as a global power by peaceful, cooperative means and to establish a foundation for restructuring the current world order. China views itself as the guarantor of peace and development, and aims to establish a peaceful atmosphere for economic and social development. Additionally, China seeks to “transcend” the role of realism in international relations, paving the way for multilateralism and cooperation. China uses a variety of diplomatic and economic tools in Africa to expand its influence and ‘soft power’ in Africa (Bijian 2005). These efforts to expand its influence are intended to legitimize China’s vision of a new economic and social world order, predicated on cooperation and the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence. Achieving African support to legitimate China’s leadership is vital to accomplishing this paradigmatic transformation.

In the section that follows, I carefully review each of the four major hypotheses on why China has substantially increased the scope of its activities in Africa. I argue that the empirical evidence best substantiates a view of Chinese policy as essentially non-conflictual and focused on transforming the global order, in accordance with Chinese cultural norms and ideals. The body of the thesis makes the case for the thesis’ major contention that China’s interest in Africa is part of an effort to legitimate its global leadership toward this end. Employing a neo-Gramscian framework, I examine China’s activities in Africa against the general rules for establishing legitimacy in the world-system. The framework centers on the process for creating a normative change in secondary states and restructuring the world order without necessarily creating conflict. Next, I seek to identify the emergence of this
new *idealpolitik* approach by examining these same ideas in the context of Chinese political, diplomatic and economic activity in Africa. This will involve looking specifically at Chinese foreign investment, trade, leadership visits and humanitarian missions (peacekeeping, medicinal and academic) to Africa. Finally, I briefly explore a case study of China's involvement in Tanzania to see if China's increased involvement with individual African states is consistent with the emergence and features of this grand strategy.

**Four Contending Views**

*A Neo-mercantilist China?*

By far the most commonly cited reason used to explain China’s recent push into Africa, is a “neo-mercantilist” drive to satisfy its hunger for natural resources and find markets for its exports. Zweig and Janhai (2005, 25) state this thesis clearly, noting “an unprecedented need for resources is now driving China's foreign policy,” one fueled by China’s rapid industrialization, exploding production and nascent consumerism. China’s domestic economy has averaged an astonishing nine percent annually over the last two decades (Pan 2007). In 1971, despite having nearly one-quarter of the world’s population, China made up only five percent of the world’s aggregate energy demand (Ziegler 2006, 4). By 1993, China’s oil consumption had outstripped its domestic production; and in 2003, China surpassed Japan to become the world’s second largest consumer of oil (next to the U.S.) (Taylor 2006, 943). Analysts expect China will rely on imports for 45 percent of its oil use by 2010, causing imports to double from today’s 4 million bpd to 8 million bpd in 2025 (Taylor 2006, 943). Additionally, China's growing manufacturing sector has created enormous demand for aluminum, copper, nickel, and iron ore, with sizeable impacts on world commodity prices (Zweig and Janhai 2005, Ziegler 2006, Pan 2007).
The drive to secure natural resources has also been influenced by external factors, such as a greater instability in world commodity markets, following the terror attacks of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq; and the availability of new oil and mineral deposits (Zweig and Janhai 2005, Pan 2007). The American invasion of Iraq in 2003 not only cost China the possibility of realizing contracts it had negotiated with Saddam Hussein’s government, but led to a rapid increase in world oil prices and threatened the stability of existing routes of securing oil from the Persian Gulf (Ziegler 2006, 9). This turbulence coincided with the development of technology that allowed for the discovery and development of new off-shore deepwater oil reserves in the Gulf of Angola (stretching from Angola to Senegal) in 1997 and 1998 (Frynas, Wood and Soares de Oliveira 2003, 59). Significant in its own right, this development set the stage for multi-national interest in Africa’s off-shore oil reserves, much as Caspian Sea oil reserves had done ten years prior.

Adam Smith, in his groundbreaking classic, *The Wealth of Nations* (Smith 1991, 326) relayed that the first question asked by Spaniards upon reaching a new land was: is there any gold or silver to be had? Media sources and analysts who are quick to point out China’s focus on oil and mineral resources might adapt this question for modern use—is there any oil to be had? As of 2004, some 30% of China’s oil came from sub-Saharan Africa (Furniss 2006, 55). Part of the reason for this development may be the result of Africa’s extremely low standards of living, meaning Chinese businessmen are able to make more profit per barrel of oil in Africa than in other areas, where the medium income and standards of living are much higher. As Table 1 illustrates, nine of the top ten China’s top ten African trading partners in 2004 were oil producers (including Africa’s two largest oil producers) (Taylor 2006, 938). China has signed major deals for stakes in African oil fields, including the

While oil certainly composes the largest investment area for China, other raw materials, such as: copper, cobalt, manganese, iron ore, bauxite and uranium account for a large portion of its trade with Africa (Furniss 2006, 55; Taylor 2006, 938). Between 2000 and 2003, China’s share in the increase in global demand for some mineral resources such as aluminum, nickel and copper was as high as 76% to 100% (Kaplinsky 2006). China has invested US$170 million into Zambia’s mining sector and dominates the vast Zimbabwean platinum reserves (Furniss 2006, 55). Over ninety percent of Chinese imports from COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa) countries are oil and minerals (Center for Chinese Studies 2006, 91).³

---

³ COMESA members are: Angola, Burundi, Comoros, DRC, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
Chinese companies are not only signing deals for the exploration and drilling of precious oil reserves, they are conducting the operations, and even building the required infrastructure (such as roads and rail lines) to serve the task of moving those oil and mineral reserves from the country. Gabon signed a US$3 billion iron ore deal with China in 2006 which includes a railway and a container port, and China’s National Petroleum Corporation plans to invest $1 billion to upgrade Sudan’s refineries and pipelines (Romann 2006, 9; Ziegler 2006, 16). In Angola, Africa’s leader in oil exports to China, Chinese companies are

Figure 1:
China’s Infrastructure Projects in Africa (Saunders 2006, 41)
reconstructing the overgrown British-build railways to deliver the country’s resources to its port at Lobito (Traub 2006). China has also promised to rebuild Zimbabwe’s rail network and provide trains—in exchange for Zimbabwean chromium (China Develops Links 2006). Figure 1 illustrates the scope of Chinese infrastructure projects in Africa, many of which are clearly intended to facilitate the export of natural resources.

Many analysts decry such behavior as “neo-mercantilist,” maintaining that China’s goal is to secure the vast African resources at the lowest prices possible, and then use Africa as a market for its manufactured goods (Furniss 2006; Holslag 2006; Kahn 2006a, 2006b; No Questions 2006; Never Too Late 2006; Africa’s New Colonialists 2007). The neo-mercantilist label (also applied to Japan’s dumping policies in the 1990s) hearkens back to the limited imports/aggressive exports that characterized 15th to 18th century colonial economies. An unidentified scholar at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences admits that "since we are mainly there to make money and get hold of their resources," China’s behavior is difficult to differentiate from that of Africa’s erstwhile colonizers (No Questions 2006).

The other darker side of China’s “neo-mercantilism” is the flood of cheap Chinese goods into African markets. Because of its large pool of cheap labor, China is able to export low-price goods (such as textiles and clothing) to African nations (Furniss 2006, 55). Chinese traders undercut local African businessmen, and have replaced domestically produced clothing and furniture in Ghana and South Africa (Never Too Late 2006; Furniss 2006, 58). An estimated 350,000 jobs have been lost due to competition from low-cost Chinese imports in Nigeria alone, and China has become the second largest exporter of goods to Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) member nations (Tull 2006, 464). While imports from Africa to China have grown even faster, they generally comprise raw materials and not value-added manufactured goods.
Speaking before the House subcommittee on Africa, Global Human Rights and International Operations, University of Maryland Professor Ernest Wilson noted the devastating impact of the “Textiles Tsunami” that has washed across Africa in the wake of the liberalization of the textile trade and China’s increased involvement in Africa (United States Congress 2005, 53). Textile industries in eastern and southern Africa boomed after Chinese textile companies exploited the 2000 U.S.-sponsored African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), and set up factories in Africa in order to gain preferential access to the American market (the AGOA was intended for African products including clothing and textiles). When the Uruguay Round Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (which limited the flow of cheap Asian imports to Europe and the U.S.) expired in 2005, American demand turned to cheaper Chinese goods, and Africa-based Chinese companies began to relocate back to China—causing the value of textiles and clothing from five African countries to drop by 17 percent (Furniss 2006, 58). As a result, tens of thousands of workers lost their jobs in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Kenya (Tull 2006, 471).

Notably, South African President Thabo Mbeki has recently spoken out on the subject; warning of the possible “colonization” of Africa, noting the “unequal relationship” between African imports and exports is similar to the relationship between Africa and the colonial powers (Africa’s New Colonialists 2007; Oleson 2007). Mbeki warned “China can not only just come here and dig for raw materials and then go away and sell us manufactured goods," noting that critical manufacturing positions were not being established in Africa (Africa’s New Colonialists 2007). South African trade unions pressed for the establishment of quotas on Chinese clothing imports in 2005 in order to protect domestic textile manufacturers (Africa’s New Colonialists 2007). Chinese shops were looted in riots following Zambia’s presidential elections in 2006, after the candidate who accused Beijing of
“exploitation” lost (Furniss 2006, 58). Zambian copper miners have protested abusive working conditions in the Chinese owned Chambishi mine after the death of 51 of their colleagues at the mine in 2005—forcing the Chinese premier to cancel a planned appearance at the mine during his February 2007 visit (Freeman 2007).

Both Africa and China have extensive experience with this economic arrangement, a feature of the colonial exploitation that both suffered at the hands of European powers. The West’s forceful “Opening” of China not only facilitated the export of valuable goods (at that time tea and silk), it also flooded the Chinese market with inexpensive Western-produced goods. The export of tea grew by 500% in twelve years, rising from 7.5 million kilograms in 1843 to 42 million kilograms in 1855. Silk exports grew from a mere 2000 bales to 56,000 bales over the same timeframe (homestead.com). China’s traditional textile industry, based on hand-made garments, was devastated by its inability to compete with the import of inexpensive mass-produced Western textiles.

Some analysts draw parallels between these historical experiences and China’s current activities in Africa (No Questions 2006; Africa’s New Colonialists 2007)). They point out that Chinese diplomats, having framed their advances in terms of solidarity and South-South cooperation, then descended on destitute, “lesser” states (as the West viewed China and all other non-Westerners during the era of imperialism) and quickly set up shop on both the import and export end. Due to civil wars, questionable political alliances, links to terrorism and human rights violations, countries like Sudan, Zimbabwe, Chad and Angola have few friends in the developed world. Because these countries are particularly impoverished, and politically weak they are easy targets for Chinese attention—and a little attention goes a long way. The weak governments need to show progress to maintain their tenuous hold on leadership and Chinese investment can provide visible signs of success.
This desire is focused on China, because Chinese aid (unlike its Western counterpart) appears to come with no strings attached and doesn’t come at the hand of military expeditions or invasions. As a result, African governments find it easier to do business with their Chinese counterparts (Ali 2006, 95). Moeletsi Mbeki, a South African businessman and analyst echoes this sentiment, noting that China is “not the first big foreign power to come to Africa, but they may be the first not to act as though they are some kind of patron or teacher or conqueror” (Kahn 2006a, 1). Simply put, poor African nations have been willing to give China whatever it wants in order to gain the investment money, infrastructure projects and trade deals. A Kenyan report stated the problem well: “China has an Africa policy. Africa doesn’t have a China policy … The danger is that China will politely rip off Africa, just as the West did” (Taylor 2006, 952-953).

While compelling, the narrow focus of the mercantilist hypothesis on China’s drive for natural resources seems to reflect the inflated Western fears of growing Chinese economic impact on world markets more than it does reality. Further, it fails to account for a significant portion of China’s activity in Africa. Chinese government officials firmly defend their policies against such neo-mercantilist claims—highlighting that Chinese activities in Africa provide significant benefits to African states, such as improved transportation infrastructure, much-needed vocational education and a better standard of living (Chinese Premier 2006; Center to Provide 2005). China’s official Africa policy, published in 2006, outlines thirty different policy avenues including cultural and diplomatic exchanges, as well as cooperation in the fields of tourism, medicine, agriculture and education (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006a). In contrast to the ‘exploitative’ practices of the West, Chinese officials maintain that these policies have enabled African states to be more independent and in control of their own resources (Ali 2006, 95; Wenping 2006).
Moreover, some cite China’s unique confidence in African development and the use of its foreign reserves to actually create investment opportunities (Furniss 2006, 56). Chinese investment in Africa’s infrastructure has not only benefited Chinese companies, it has made Africa a more attractive investment and spurred new investments from other countries, such as India, Russia and Brazil (Prince 2007; Teslik 2007; Lokongo 2006). This has offered African nations a new model of development, one in which they are not tied to Western standards, and enhances the bargaining stance of developing countries when dealing with developed states (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003a). More importantly for Chinese officials, it highlights that Sino-African relations really are a winning proposition for both sides (Chinese Premier 2006).

**The Taiwan Question: The Role of Recognition in China’s Africa Policy**

A second hypothesis used to explain China’s expanded efforts is that it is part of a concerted effort to undermine Taiwanese legitimacy. Proponents of this hypothesis argue that by “wooing” away the few remaining nations that still recognize Taiwan, China hopes to nullify Taiwanese claims for independence and pave the way for the territory’s return to Beijing’s control. In this context, China’s significant aid and investment to African states serve as carrots, and the “One China” policy as a stick to encourage diplomatic abandonment of Taiwan—though some African states have benefited greatly from this competition.

Since the creation of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, the undisputed primary issue in Chinese Foreign Relations has been the reunification of China with its former territories. China’s leadership sees this goal as reversing the “illegal” treaties imposed on it by Western powers in the 19th Century, and as the first step in establishing itself as a
global power. This priority has been embodied in seeking the return of three entities to the
control of the People's Republic. Hong Kong was the first to return to Chinese control,
when the United Kingdom handed it over to China on July 1, 1997. Macao followed, as
Portugal, the island’s erstwhile colonizer, also returned it to Chinese control. The lone
holdout is Taiwan, where Chiang Kai-shek’s nationalist government fled after losing
mainland China to Mao Tse-Tung’s communist forces. While Taiwan’s geography and
alliances (especially with the U.S.) have been the primary reasons for its continued
independence, Taiwan needs international diplomatic recognition in order to retain its case
for sovereignty, and China’s goal of preventing Taiwanese independence has led to an

Beijing’s carefully constructed “One China” policy, which establishes that countries
who wish to have relations with China must cease relations with Taiwan, has been the most
important and visible facet of the effort to deny Taiwan recognition. This policy has made
recognition a zero-sum game, where a victory for the PRC undermines Taiwan’s claim to
legitimacy. To this extent, Beijing has been ruthless about denying the benefits of Chinese
friendship to those who continue to recognize Taiwan. In 2000, after Macedonia established
diplomatic relations with Taiwan in January 1999, China used its position on the United
Nations Security Council to veto the deployment of peacekeeping forces along Macedonia’s
border with Kosovo (Taylor 2002, 128). Macedonia subsequently ended its diplomatic
relations with Taiwan in July 2001. However, many countries that switched their
representation to the PRC, such as the United States, continue informal relations with
Taiwan, through unofficial offices such as the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representatives
Office in the United States or the Taipei Representative Office in Bangladesh. While this
allows for continued economic and cultural interaction, it does not provide Taiwan the diplomatic backing it needs to support its independence from the mainland.

In the global battle for Taiwanese legitimacy, Africa’s numerous weak governments have been a source of major contestation between both parties. The map at Figure 2 displays the different groups that recognized the Beijing-seated PRC as the legitimate government of China by decade. Though many Warsaw Pact member states recognized the PRC in 1949, Egypt became the first African state to switch its recognition to the PRC, during the 1956 Suez Crisis. After a slow start in the 1950s, decolonizing African nations began to recognize the PRC in droves in the 1960s—partly in response for the support they received from Beijing in their bids for independence. In 1963, George Yu (1963, 439) noted that “Africa has become a battleground in the Chinese civil war” and cited the role of development programs and loans from both the PRC and the ROC as designed to gain recognition from African nations. Yu (1988, 861) tracked Chinese foreign policy in Africa over several decades, and characterized China’s interest in Africa during the 1960s and 1970s as an effort to gain legitimacy. In 1971, the United Nations General Assembly switched official recognition from Taiwan to the PRC and, by the time the United States officially switched its diplomatic recognition in 1979, 46 other countries worldwide had also changed their recognition from Taiwan to China (Taylor 2002, 126). While Yu (1988, 861) noted that the focus on national recognition had taken a back-seat to other foreign policy priorities by the late-1980s, adherence to the “one-China” policy continues to underpin all of China’s relations with African nations, and during the 1980s and 1990s another 46 countries changed their recognition to the PRC.4 By June 1998, only eight African states continued to

---

4 Several; new countries were formed following the collapse of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. All of these countries individually established relations with China after gaining independence. Kiribati, Grenada, Lesotho, Nicaragua, Belize and the Marshall Islands would later reestablish relations with the ROC (Wikipedia 2007).
recognize the Republic of China, as the mainland wooed away Taiwan’s largest African supporter, and its last major-country supporter, South Africa, as well as the Central African Republic and Niger (Payne and Veney 1998, 873). Chad changed its recognition to Taiwan in January 1997, only to switch back to the PRC in 2006, leaving only five African countries—Burkina Faso, Malawi, Gambia, Swaziland and São Tomé and Príncipe—in support of Taiwan as of 2007. They join another 14 small or island nations worldwide that continue to recognize Taiwan.

Some analysts maintain that the provision of economic incentives to African nations by both the PRC and Taiwan, is an effort to gain recognition as the sole legitimate government of the Chinese people—a contest that has gained new momentum after the return of Hong Kong to the PRC (Payne and Veney 1998, 871). Ian Taylor (2002) examined Taiwan’s “dollar diplomacy” in Africa in the 1990s. Taylor highlights international recognition as the defining feature of Taiwan’s foreign policy—one which has been constrained by the counterpoint PRC policy that seeks to deliberately deny that recognition and undermine Taiwan’s international legitimacy. Taylor (2002, 134) maintains that while
China frequently decries Taiwan’s ‘bribery’ in Africa (and elsewhere), it is just as guilty. Taylor (2002, 134) cites China’s allocation of US$1 million to the Caribbean island nation of St. Lucia as an attempt to switch its recognition from Taiwan (Taylor 2002, 134). The competition has become so intense that in some cases, China is willing to even finish projects started by Taiwan (Snow 1994, 297). Moreover, China’s willingness to coerce nations to refuse Taiwanese recognition extends far beyond the merely economic realm. Between 1997 and 2003, Charles Taylor’s vicious regime in Liberia received significant aid and support from Taiwan (Taylor 2002, 130-131). But when that government was overthrown in 2003, the new government changed Liberia’s diplomatic recognition to China, who then dispatched hundreds of peacekeeping troops to the war-torn country in 2004 (Tull 2006, 463).

Taylor’s (2000) look at the establishment of relations between South African and the People’s Republic of China provides an interesting example of aggressive Chinese efforts to use its economic and political clout to encourage a change in diplomatic recognition. In 1948, Taiwan established ties with the South African government. United by staunch anti-communist beliefs, the two countries supported each other in international fora—with Taiwan supporting the pro-Apartheid South African government in exchange for South African recognition. At the same time, China supported the Pan-Africanist Congress, one of several South African nationalist parties. With the end of apartheid, China slowly groomed its relations with the African National Congress (ANC) and undertook efforts to woo South Africa away from Taiwan. Despite US$1.7 billion in Taiwan-South Africa trade, and Taiwan’s provision of over US$15 million to help South African farmers and another US$7 million to South African forestry and water conservation projects, (Payne and Veney 1998; Taylor 2002, 127), the first trade delegation from mainland China visited South Africa in

The “One-China policy” also presents an interesting opportunity for African nations that are willing and able to play the two countries against each other. Both countries have significant capital resources they can commit to the poor and infrastructure-weak African nations, and as all sovereign nations are considered equal under international law, diplomatic by recognition by even the most insignificant state is a significant victory for either side. A West-African diplomat in Beijing noted: "African countries know the future is with China. But if they need cash, the temptation [to recognize Taiwan] is very strong" (Tefft 1996).

Accordingly, many African nations have repeatedly switched recognition between the PRC and Taiwan. The Gambia received more than $30 million from Taiwan to switch its recognition to Taiwan in July 1995 (Tefft 1996). Since 1997, Taiwan has given some US$19 million annually to Saō Tomé and Príncipe for its continued recognition of Taiwan—a substantial sum for an otherwise financially insolvent country with an annual GDP of only around US$45 million (Frynas, Wood and Soares de Oliveira 2003, 58). Senegal has vacillated between the two—after switching its recognition in 1964, 1969 and 1971; it reestablished relations with Taiwan in 1996. This move followed offers from Taiwanese Foreign Minister John H. Chang offered to assist Senegal in developing its newfound oil
reserves and increasing its agricultural productivity (Payne and Veney 1998, 872). After years of wooing, Senegal finally resumed diplomatic relations with the PRC in October 2005 (Resumed 2005).

But while Chinese investment in Africa has frequently and historically been linked to the non-recognition of Taiwan, it fails to account for the sudden increase in interest and investment seen over the last several years. Despite, Taylor’s 1998 statement that competition over diplomatic recognition has become an increasingly important factor in China’s Africa policy (Taylor 1998, 456), significant changes have not materialized since then. Only Senegal and Liberia have switched their recognition to the PRC since 2000, and very little of China’s activity seems to focus on these states. Indeed, some members of the international media and analysts are quick to point out that Chinese aid and investment is always tied to non-recognition of Taiwan, and that diplomatic recognition is simply a benefit of China’s economic policies, and not a goal in and of itself (Tull 2006, 463; Eisenman and Kurlantzick 2006).

The South African case stands out as an anomaly—due to its large economy; it was aggressively pursued by Beijing. The few remaining African states which recognize Taiwan lack such distinctive positions and will not benefit from significant trade until they are willing to break with Taiwan. Even though China is looking to gain a foothold in Saô Tomé and Príncipe’s budding oil industry (Huang 2007), Chinese trade with the island nation had fallen by over 55% by April 2007 (China’s Trade 2007), and is nowhere near the level of aid provided by Taiwan. While the leaders of 48 African countries attended the 2006 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in Beijing, China notably extended the invite to all 53 African nations, including the five African countries who continue to recognize Taiwan (Kahn 2006a). Even though these countries did not attend, this could signal a Chinese
strategy to ‘show them what they are missing. In conclusion, China appears to be linking its activities in Africa to diplomatic recognition only in a passive sense—highlighting the benefits of cooperation with China, and enforcing the ‘One-China’ policy.

The China Challenge: Africa as a Base of Hegemonic Competition

The last two hypotheses concerning China’s growing interest in Africa shift our focus to broader geopolitical concerns as the driving force in China’s involvement in Africa. These viewpoints maintain that the previously cited reasons for the recent Chinese involvement in Africa are merely pieces of a global strategic effort to facilitate China’s rise to great-power status. They have in common the observation that China is a growing power, but their paradigmatic assumptions on the nature of state behavior cause them to perceive different motivations for the Chinese actions. The first of these two viewpoints is the Realist viewpoint, which maintains that China’s redoubled venture into Africa is an effort to strengthen China at the expense of other great powers (namely the United States, Japan, Russia and India) in preparation for future conflict. The second is the Idealist view that China seeks to avoid conflict by fostering a cooperative and legitimate rise to power, through benevolent relations and cooptation of smaller states.

From the Neorealist perspective, China’s eventual conflict with other powers seems pre-destined. Kenneth Waltz (1993, 66) has theorized, ‘For a country to choose not to become a great power is a structural anomaly. … Countries with great-power economies have become great powers, whether or not reluctantly.’ Mearshimer (Brzezinski and Mearshimer 2005) adds “The ultimate goal of every great power is to maximize its share of world power and eventually dominate the system.” Christopher Layne (1993, 9) completes the picture by advancing that any state that great-power contenders “naturally seek to
challenge the hegemon’s preponderance.” For many Realist scholars (Kristof 1993; Waldron 1995; Sutter 2004), one need only look as far back as Wilhelmine Germany and Imperial Japan to see how rising great-powers destabilize the international system and inspire conflict. The key to this picture is the notion that relative power is a defining attribute of interstate relations in an anarchical system. Because there is no single source of international order in an anarchical system, states seek to maximize their power to increase their own viability. Power is assumed to be zero-sum, meaning that one state’s rise inevitably means a decline of relative power by other states. At the level of great-powers, changes in relative power can affect the structure of the international system, and the complex balancing that is needed to prevent conflict. Thus, those who maintain the interstate system, whether multiple powers or a single hegemon, are resistant to the introduction of new powers that could threaten the existing arrangement (Levy 2003, Chase-Dunn 1990, 226).

Chinese government officials deny contentions that they seek hegemony, and that China’s rise must lead to conflict. Nonetheless, many observers (Bernstein and Munro 1997; Mearsheimer in Brzezinski and Mearsheimer 2005; A Rising China 2005; Roy 2003; Haass 2005) argue that both China’s history and its current policies fit into the realpolitik model. For instance, Joseph Khalili (1970, 311) points out that the establishment of relations with Egypt in the midst of the Suez Crisis was an effort to directly undermine both American and Soviet efforts to establish influence in the Middle East. After a discussion with Mao Zedong in 1973, Henry Kissinger (1982, 67) identified Mao’s policies as “a classic definition of modern Machiavellianism.”

---

5 For good comparisons of rising China to pre-war Germany and Japan, see Rex Li’s evaluation of the theoretical perspectives on China’s rise (Li 1999).
6 Kenneth Waltz’s Theory of International Politics (1979) offers the most thorough work on neorealist theory.
More recently, authors such as Thomas Christensen (1996) and Yong Deng (1998) point out that China’s foreign policy is the very model of Realist, balance-of-power politics and realpolitik—driven by a near obsession with the “national interest.” Christensen (1996) argues further that while Chinese foreign policy is growing more diverse and flexible, China’s leaders were likely well-schooled in realism during the Cold War, and its lessons have not been lost on them. Wang Jisi (1994, 492) also identifies the Chinese approach to world politics as generally state-centric and relation-oriented—ideas frequently identified with Western Realism. He points out that the major international relations texts that have been published in Mandarin Chinese comprise mostly realist texts, and many analysts note that the foundation of IR instruction in China rests on these classical Realist principles (Xinning 1997).

Acclaimed China scholar Iain Alastair Johnston (1995) also identifies a Realist base to Chinese foreign policy. He argues that despite the dominance of the liberal Confucian-Mencian paradigm in traditional China, the more realist-oriented Legalist paradigm governed relations between the Chinese states and the barbarian tribes. In his examination of strategic preferences and historical data from the seven military classics of traditional China, he found that relative power considerations were the driving factor that determined if the Chinese states would cohabitate with or confront their enemies. Johnston (1995) claims that this “parabellum” paradigm—a dichotomy of idealist words and realist actions—defines the Chinese approach to foreign policy.

Further arguments favoring the realist perspective are provided by the ‘rising China’ analysts of the 1990s. They argue that China is already posturing to challenge the hegemony of the United States (Bernstein and Munro 1994). Chinese nationalism has surged in the last several years, and as China’s massive economy continues to improve, and China is beginning
to view itself as a great power (Kahn 2006c, 1). Chinese official military expenditures have ramped up almost 16 percent every year since 2000, reaching $45 billion by 2007 and U.S. intelligence agencies estimate that actual spending could be three times as high (United States Department of Defense 2007, 27). This includes the purchase and indigenous production of sophisticated fighter aircraft, as well as steps towards the creation of a blue-water navy. China has also improved strategic relationships throughout Southeast Asia, which it could potentially leverage to challenge American power in strategic lines of communication, such as in the Strait of Malacca (Tkacik 2007; Zweig and Janhai 2005). This rapid military growth has sparked concern, as some analysts (Roy 1994, 2003) have viewed an increasingly aggressive Chinese stance towards Taiwan issue as a likely flash-point for the inevitable conflict of U.S.-China interests.

Additionally, some analysts fear China’s rapidly growing economic and political power, which are closing the gap with American power, especially in East Asia. In 2005, a Chinese source argued that China had surpassed Japan, Russia, Britain, France, Germany and India in its economic, military and political power, to become the second most powerful nation in the world behind the United States (Kahn 2006c, 1). Consistent with realist views of power as a zero-sum factor, Denny Roy (2003) observes that the growth of Chinese power and influence will result in a reduction of U.S. power and influence. John Mearshimer (Brzezinski and Mearsheimer 2005) expects that this reduction of power and influence will first occur in Asia, as China strives to first establish regional hegemony and “ensure that no state in Asia can threaten it.” To achieve this goal, China will need to push America out of Asia, and reinforce its status as the major power on the continent (Brzezinski and Mearsheimer 2005; Bernstein and Munro 1997).
The lens of relative gains and competitive national interest appears to offer important insights into China’s resource-focused relations with African states. Oil is the ultimate zero-sum resource—if one nation has secured oil resources it has made itself less vulnerable, for it can sustain its economy and military, while also denying those same capabilities to its competitors (Noreng 2002, 42). In 1998, the Chinese Ministry of Defense authored a white paper establishing energy security as an integral part of China’s overall security (Tull 2006, 468). As part of this strategy, China has been working to reduce its vulnerability by both expanding its oil imports and diversifying its oil suppliers. In addition, China’s 21st century oil strategy includes establishing a national oil reserve, increased efficiency in fuel use and reduced use of foreign tankers to deliver oil (Ziegler 2006, 5).

China initiated the creation of a strategic reserve in 2005, which is expected to be complete in 2010, and is expected to increase the Chinese reserves to 70-75 days (from little more than a week currently) (Ziegler 2006, 6-7). This has led China to push far abroad in search of oil, a search in which it frequently confronts the United States.

Some analysts have gone so far as to claim that a Cold War is evolving between China and the U.S. as the two compete for oil reserves (Engdahl 2007). In this view, China’s involvement in Africa is simply the newest front in this competition, and China’s expansive dealings in Africa have triggered new fears in the West (Brookes and Shin 2006; Eisenman and Kurlantzick 2006; Furniss 2006). U.S. Representative Christopher H. Smith summed up these fears well in 2005, stating: “there is concern that the Chinese intend to aid and abet African dictators, gain a stranglehold on precious African natural resources, and undo much of the progress that has been made on democracy and governance in the last 15 years in African nations” (United States Congress 2005, 1). The U.S. National Intelligence Council estimates that by 2015, 25 percent of U.S. imports will come from Africa, and 65-75 of U.S.
direct investment in that continent will be in the energy sector (Ellis 2003, 136)). In what may be seen as an effort to secure strategic interests in West African oil (Engdahl 2007), the United States military recently announced the establishment of a new Africa Command to further American interests and build partnerships in an area that has been mostly ignored for decades (Garamone 2007).

The scale of China’s involvement in Africa’s oil markets may reflect the significant failures that China has encountered in attempting to secure oil contracts around the world—primarily where other major powers maintain significant influence. Plans for a pipeline from Irkutsk, Russia to Eastern China were frustrated, first by Japan (who offered $7 million for the project if it terminated at a Russian port rather than a Chinese one), and then by the inquest against the Yukos oil oligarchy which was to build the pipeline (Ziegler 2006, 11). In 1997, China signed contracts to develop Iraqi oilfields that were to be activated when the sanctions were lifted—all of which were invalidated by the 2003 invasion of Iraq (Ziegler 2006, 9). In 2003, China was shut out of a share of the North Caspian Sea oil PSA in Kazakhstan by a multi-national consortium of gas companies. In 2005, China’s National Offshore Oil Company offered $18.5 billion for the American oil company Unocal. Security concerns (similar to that of Bahraini control of U.S. ports) quickly scuttled the deal—Unocal was eventually sold to Chevron for about $2 billion less (Ziegler 2006, 16-17). Even an internal pipeline stretching from China’s oil-west foundered after three foreign partners (with Russia’s Gazprom, Royal Dutch/Shell, and Exxon Mobil) backed out in 2004 (Ziegler 2006, 7).

As a result, China’s focus has shifted to Africa, an area that has traditionally been devoid of strategic interest from other powers. Some analysts (Traub 2006, 74; Saunders 2006, 2) note that Chinese relations with Africa blossomed at a time when the U.S. is
preoccupied with the War on Terror, and its influence in Africa is waning. David Hurd, head of Asian Oil & Gas Research at Deutsche Bank in Beijing, cites the current lack of U.S. influence in Africa as a driving factor for Chinese investment (Roberts 2006). Guy Martin (1995) points out that France, a colonial powerhouse in Africa has seen its influence decrease significantly since the early 1990s, French aid has declined, and the aid that has been provided has been increasingly channeled through Washington-based institutions such as the IMF and World Bank.

But American fears of Chinese growing power and expanding influence abroad do not make China’s policies any more Realist in nature. Chinese nationalism is not anti-Americanism, and its pronouncements in favor of a multi-lateral international system instead of the current unilateral system are not unlike statements made by other major world powers. China has abandoned earlier strategies to wear down U.S. power in the Asia and seems content to work within the confines of the current international system (Sutter 2004, 289; Brzezinski and Mearshimer 2005), an aspiration that was never shared by Wilhelmine Germany and Imperial Japan. A *realpolitik* model of Chinese behavior would suggest that China would actively oppose the structures created under U.S. hegemony, in order to invalidate the legitimacy of America’s leadership. Instead, China has abandoned its fear of Western institutions and globalization—playing up its role in the United Nations and acceding to the WTO and ASEAN (China to Join 2003; China’s Stance 2001). These efforts have been warmly received by the U.S., and both the Clinton and Bush administrations have sought to limit unnecessary confrontation and encourage China’s participation as a major stakeholder in the international system (Economy 2003, 243-244; Drexner 2007; Kahn 2006c). These events highlight a significant gap in neorealist theory, which would expect more aggressive behavior and rising tensions as China grows in power.
From Competition to Cooperation: Sino-African Relations as a Model

In contrast to the Realist view, many argue in favor of a fourth hypothesis, that China’s Africa policy is part of an Idealist global strategy which seeks to ensure China’s peaceful rise and build legitimacy for China’s role as a leading-power. This global strategy focuses on cooperation and mutually-beneficial relations as keys to maintaining a peaceful development environment for China’s growth. It also incorporates a variety of traditional and ‘soft power’ tools to expand China’s influence and legitimate support for China’s vision of a peaceful, Idealist model of international relations. Africa plays a central role in this grand-strategy, providing not only resources for China’s development, but also a clean pallet for China’s efforts to expand its influence.

This more Idealist view is commonly articulated by Chinese officials. They argue that China’s involvement in Africa is not intended to challenge the United States or compete over natural resources. Instead, China’s Africa policy is centered on enabling China’s peaceful rise to great-power status, and establishing its legitimacy as a leading-power. China’s rise is predicated on continued economic and social advancement until it can become a “prosperous, democratic and civilized socialist country” and overcome underdevelopment (Bijian 2005). Chinese officials recognize that these goals can only be achieved through its continued integration into the global economy and continued peaceful relations with other countries (State Council Information Office 2006). In order to avoid conflict, China seeks to validate itself as a leading power, not through might and force, but by showcasing the benefits of relations with a strong China and the prosperity to be gained through the

---

7 Chinese scholars and officials frequently use the word ‘great-power’ when referring to China’s rise. This is meant to place China on the same footing as the United States and the (erstwhile) Soviet Union, as a country that is strong enough to incur system-level changes and define the rules of the international system. In Western IR terminology, this idea is more akin to that of a hegemon, or leading power. Due to China’s extreme opposition to the word ‘hegemony’ and its stated commitment to a multi-polar world, I have chosen to use the term ‘leading power’ to represent China’s intention.
establishment of a peaceful world order. China seeks to then institutionalize this peaceful order, and eventually change the underlying paradigm of international relations to an Idealist paradigm derived from its unique cultural heritage and history.

Some liberal Chinese scholars also support the use of the Idealist paradigm over the Realist paradigm of international relations. These scholars generally attribute many of the causes of conflict in the current international system to the “traditional Western political thinking” that they associate with the Realist paradigm (Li 1999, 468). They believe that China’s current cooperative policies of economic globalization and mutual respect for other nations can challenge the underlying assumptions that Realism makes about the international system, avoiding the fear and uncertainty that drive confrontation in the Realist model (Li 1999, 468). Moreover, they believe that the shift towards a Chinese Idealist world order, based on Confucian thinking will “make international society more civilized” by placing the focus of international efforts on cooperation and morality over power politics (Xuetong 2001, 38).

The opinions of Chinese scholars lend credibility to this ideology lend credibility to Chinese official statements regarding this policy. While Chinese officials have many practical geopolitical reasons to support an international view of a peaceful China, Chinese scholars are not so restricted, and see this ideology as the foundation of a new world order based on China’s Confucian past. This ability has been encouraged by a growing openness in the Chinese academic community. In the last 20 years, Chinese scholarship has become less restrained by Chinese governmental restrictions and more influenced by Western theories, such as Realism, Liberalism and Constructivism (Shih 2005, 774; Davies 2001, 7; Zha 2000, 117-118). Additionally, unlike Western scholars, the primary purpose of theory (lilun) in Chinese political science is to make policy recommendations to decision-makers (Zha 2000,
126). These developments make these scholars a valuable resource in understanding the nature of this Idealist paradigm.

This Chinese Idealist strategy has its origins in Confucian philosophy—the Eastern forerunner of Kantian Idealism. Confucian ideals are centered on the concept of ‘benevolence’ (ren), and emphasize ‘virtue and morality (renyi diode) and ‘integration and peace’ (be-he) (Xinning 2001). Yu Xuetong (2001, 37) argues that this focus on ‘benevolence’ encourages rulers to follow ‘benevolent governance’ (wangdao) rather than ‘hegemonic governance’ (badao). This idea separates the concept of legitimate hegemony from coercive hegemony. These traditional cultural beliefs are also enhanced by China’s foreign relations experiences over the last several centuries, resulting in a unique view on international relations (Wang 2000, 144-145). Moreover, Chih-yu Shih (2005, 774) maintains that the influx of Western liberal and constructivist theories into China over the last several years is beginning to enhance the liberal arguments of Chinese academics.

Allen Carlson (2006, 235) argues that the resulting Chinese foreign policies actually have both Idealist and Realist origins. He explains that while China employs a cost-benefit analysis based on its national interest, its own conception of its national interest is formed by deeper-seated cultural beliefs of cooperation. Following from its Confucian principles, China has viewed itself as the “benevolent leader” of developing countries since the 1960s, guarding them from superpower influence and seeking out opportunities to provide assistance. Currently, China’s national interest focuses on its own continued development, a goal which requires a peaceful environment for business. China also seeks to establish a new political, and economic order based on cooperation and the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence (Bijian 2005), and liberal Chinese thinkers view the spread of Chinese culture, influence and norms vital to the achievement of this goal (Shih 2005, 769). Consequently, for
China to accomplish both its domestic development goals and its broader goals in the international system, China must maintain a peaceful environment while it rises.

At the same time, Chinese leaders have long understood that China’s eventual rise to great-power status would be overshadowed by conflict. The examples of Imperial Japan and Germany in the 20th century showcase the dangers of being a rising great-power in the Western system (Bijian 2005, Mahbubani 2005). For this reason, Deng Xiaoping established a foreign policy of "tao guang yang bu" (literally to hide its ambitions and disguise its claws) (Kahn 2006c). Understanding that provocative policies could undermine China’s economic success, China followed a conservative foreign policy, which encouraged industrialized countries to participate in its development (Ross 1997, 42). But with China’s rapid industrialization, it has become more difficult for China to hide its ambitions. Seeking to pacify foreign fears of China’s impending rise, influential Chinese academic Zheng Bijian introduced the term ‘peaceful rise’ to explain China’s unthreatening growth in November 2003, which has since been replaced with the even less threatening “peaceful development” (Suettinger 2004, 1; Kahn 2006c).

China’s rise has not only been constrained by international fears of a more powerful China, it has also been limited by internal resistance. For decades, Chinese leaders have disparaged the superpower struggle between the U.S. and Soviet Union, and the “hegemonic behaviors” that each used in their pursuit of power. China has taken an ardent public stance against both “hegemony” and “world leadership,” with Deng Xiaoping proclaiming to the United Nations in 1971 that China would never seek either. Thirty-six years later, Chinese official statements continue to deny the pursuit of hegemony (State Council Information Office 2006).
But there is now evidence that China is beginning to accept its emergence as a great-power and to divorce great-power status from “hegemonic behavior.” In the last several years, articles in Chinese journals and newspapers have advocated that China abandon its ‘victim mentality’ (shouhai zhe xintai) and influential Chinese analysts make the case that China should, instead, embrace a ‘great-power mentality’ (daguo xintai) (Medeiros and Fravel 2003). The 1997 Party Congress’ endorsed the term ‘great-power diplomacy’ (daguo guanxi) to characterize China’s relations with other major powers—representing a significant step forward for China’s self-perception as a great-power (Shih 2005, 758). In November 2006, China Central Television (China’s main national network) broadcast a 12-part series “Rise of the Great Powers.” The documentary, commissioned by the Politburo in 2003, chronicled the rise of nine nations to ‘great-power’ status and the attributes that made them ‘great-powers’ (Kahn 2006c). While the documentary supports the idea that China must study the lessons of the rise of previous leading-powers, Chinese officials played down the importance of the series—drawing a fine line between the exploitative colonialism practiced by these nations and China’s policies (Kahn 2006c).

China’s acceptance of its rise has dove-tailed with the decision to seek a careful path in order to avoid conflict with the United States. Zbigniew Brzezinski (2005) summarized this approach well, noting that “China's leadership appears rational, calculating, and conscious not only of China's rise but also of its continued weakness.” In Asia, China has sought to foster security cooperation to minimize potential areas of conflict. Since 1991, China has settled border conflicts with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Russia, Tajikistan and Vietnam, often on disadvantageous terms (Medeiros and Fravel 2003). China has also moderated its approach toward its offshore territorial disputes, such as those over the Paracel, Spratly and Senkaku Islands (Medeiros and Fravel 2003)—an area that Nicholas
Kristof (1993, 67) labeled “the most likely site for a war” only ten years previous. China created the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in June 2001, to improve security cooperation with the Central Asian nations of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, to strengthen mutual trust and cooperation in political, economic and technological fields (Shanghai Cooperation Organization 2001), while increasing cooperative security on China’s volatile western edge. Recognizing the role that other major powers play in the Asia, China has sought to strengthen strategic relationships with Russia, Europe and India since 2001, signing the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation with Russia that year (Saunders 2006, 16; Medeiros and Fravel 2003).

China’s conception of its role as a leading-power has also had dramatic effects on both its foreign policy and its conception of national interests. Much like the United States in first decades of the 20th century, China believes that its immense (and growing) power can be tamed and used to encourage a “democratic, just and multilateral world” (State Council Information Office 2006). While the United States did not fully embrace its role as a leading-power until WWII, the foreign policies of Wilson, Harding and Hoover were those of an idealistic great-power which intended to leverage its power for the benefit of world peace. Wilson’s Fourteen Points were laid out as steps in the “program of the world’s peace,” to make the world safe for peace-loving nations, such as the U.S. (Wilson 1918). Similarly, the White Paper on China’s Peaceful Development Road (State Council Information Office 2006) focuses on the need for a peaceful international order to sustain growth and benefit mankind.

While seeking to maintain a peaceful international environment for its development, China has also focused on international cooperation and mutually-beneficial relations in order to build its legitimacy as a leading-power. These efforts have built on China’s role as
the world’s largest developing country and have been directed towards the “third world” of
developing counties that Deng Xiaoping claimed as China’s sphere of influence in 1974. As
the continent with the most developing countries, and relatively free of other great-power
influence, Africa has become central to Chinese efforts to rise peacefully and build its
legitimacy. In fact, China’s current efforts to build legitimacy in Africa are reminiscent of
China’s expanded activity in Africa in the 1960s, when China sought support for its
recognition. That period ended with African nations applauding and celebrating Beijing’s
resumption of the “China” seat at the United Nations in 1971 (Ismael 1971, 529). This early
success provides China a model for legitimizing its rise as a leading power—one in which
Africa will again play a pivotal role.

Much as in the 1960s, China’s Africa policy is built upon expanded cooperation in a
variety of fields and a firm reliance on the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence as the
foundation for relations. In *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Thomas Friedman (2000, 204)
highlights that the key to geopolitical success is “being generous and not too overbearing, so
other countries see benefit” and become willing to adapt to “your standard and geopolitical
rules.” This statement echoes the Confucian concept of a ‘benevolent leader’ and captures
the twin facets of China’s quest for legitimacy—mutually-beneficial relations and the
principle of non-interference.

In recent years, China’s economic policies have taken center stage as the most
notable facets of China’s ‘generosity’ towards Africa. Since 2000, China has announced
complete or partial debt forgiveness for African countries amounting to US$10 billion, and
offered another US$10 billion in concessional loans (Perret 2006, 4). Sino-African trade has
risen over 400 percent since 2002, and Chinese aid to Africa jumped to nearly $430 million
in 2005 (Furniss 2006, 55; Saunders 2006, 42). In 2000, China established the Forum on
China-Africa Cooperation to create a framework for expanded Sino-African cooperation, and held subsequent FOCACs were held in 2003 and 2006. China invited all 53 African countries to the meeting in Beijing and ‘rewarded’ them with nearly US$2 billion in trade agreements in 2006. China has followed up the 2006 forum with billions of dollars in investment packages to African nations. Then-UN Secretary General Kofi Annan hailed the 2006 FOCAC as “an historic opportunity for China and Africa to build on these shared ideals, and to advance South-South cooperation” (Yanshuo 2006b).

China’s “generous” behavior towards Africa reaches well beyond just trade and investment, encompassing wide range of cooperative efforts. An official document put forth by the Chinese government in 2006 entitled “China’s Africa Policy” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006a) provides an exhaustive list of China’s foreign policy efforts towards Africa, including not only bilateral trade, investment and debt reduction, but also diplomatic exchanges, medical and educational missions and cooperation in scientific, technical and agricultural fields. For decades, China has sent medical missions to Africa to fight diseases and provide routine medical treatment to ordinary Africans. Since 1990, China has contributed thousands of peacekeepers on UN peacekeeping missions to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Eritrea. China has also provided scholarships for African students to attend Chinese universities; in 2003, the nearly 1,800 African students in China comprised nearly one-third of all foreign students in China (Eisenman and Kurlantzick 2006). China has begun to stand up “Confucius Institutes,” intended to teach students about China’s language and culture, including one in Lusaka, Zambia (Eisenman and Kurlantzick 2006; Chinese See Investment 2005). As a whole, these varied efforts provide China the ability to expand its influence, by showing its helpful face to ordinary Africans, by improving their daily lives, and in the case of the Confucius Institutes,
by directly educating them on Chinese culture. David Lampton (2007, 123) directly ties China’s use of “symbolic, intellectual, ideological, diplomatic and cultural resources” to achieving its goal of expanding its influence in developing countries.

At the same time, China’s reliance on the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence, and particularly the principle of non-interference, helps preclude it from becoming overbearing in its foreign relations. Contrary to Western models which focus on human rights and transparent governance as prerequisites for aid and investment, China claims its aid, trade and investment are free of such “selfish interests” and aimed instead at encouraging “autonomous development” in Africa (Chinese Premier 2006).

Though this approach has drawn fire from international sources, it has been very successful in gaining adherents in Africa, as weak governments seek to improve their economies without making the sacrifices required by Western powers. It has also allowed China to advance relations with nations that have fallen out of favor with the West because of their poor humanitarian record or lack of transparency. An international news editor highlighted the appeal of the Chinese approach to development, asking “if people don’t have food to eat and clothes to wear, how can you establish good governance and transparency?” (Furniss 2006, 57). Relations with Sudan have flourished despite international condemnation of the human rights abuses in the country’s Darfur region. Similarly, China has kept up relations with Robert Mugabe’s oppressive regime in Zimbabwe, and provided Angola an alternative to IMF pressure to increase governmental transparency. Some go so far as to suggest that this approach is turning developing states away from the “Washington Consensus” and towards a new “Beijing Consensus” (Furniss 2006, 61). Should this indeed be the case, it would mark a tremendous shift towards supporting the legitimacy of China as a leading-power.
China’s efforts to portray itself as a peaceful power are routinely criticized by many Western observers, who dismiss Chinese officials’ claims that its policies are ruled by idealistic notions, such as mutual benefit and peaceful cooperation. Some critics argue that Chinese claims of “mutual benefit” and “solidarity” are merely smoke-screens for exploitative agreements in which China spirits away valuable natural resources from unassuming developing countries (No Questions 2006; Africa’s New Colonialists 2007). He Wenping (2006) smartly counters this argument by contrasting China’s involvement in Sudan with Western involvement in Nigeria. While both sets of relations are characterized by significant trade in oil, China has provided the necessary infrastructure to assist Sudan in managing and exporting its own oil. Western companies, on the other hand, have not provided any such assistance to Nigeria in the last 50 years, leaving Nigeria at the mercy of Western oil developers. Other critics confront the notion of China’s “peaceful rise,” citing Realist theory and historical precedent to contend that a rising China must inevitably challenge America’s primacy and that China’s growing power will eventually lead to conflict (Haass 2005, 52; Roy 2003). But these criticisms fail to recognize that such Realist conception of international relations pushes towards China towards a peaceful and liberal foreign policy agenda. In rational-choice calculations the highest priority of any country, is to maintain its own existence (Stein 1990, 87). Viewed in the context of George Modelski’s (1987a, 98) call for “new networks of solidarity” to overcome the ritual of macroconflict that corresponds to the rise of great powers, China’s Idealist path has been rendered a necessity by the salient Realist interpretation of state-behavior. Given these realities, China can only rise in the current system if it can follow a peaceful development path, an endeavor which requires China follow a foreign policy based on peace and cooperation for China.
From Realpolitik to Idealpolitik

Of the four hypotheses in the literature on China’s foreign policy, the Idealist view is the most compelling. Motives popularly attributed to Chinese involvement in Africa, such as the need for natural resources and undermining Taiwanese legitimacy, are simply the most readily apparent aspects of a greater strategic foreign policy. Certainly, China’s economic relationship with African states is the most visible and noted feature of Sino-African dialogue. This emphasis on economics underscores the primacy of economic tools in Chinese foreign policy. Since 1990, China has found its increasing economic strength to be a useful tool for managing its relations with other countries—especially developing ones. Viewed in the context of China’s larger foreign policy goals, it is apparent that China’s expansive economic activities have greater utility to China than just acquiring natural resources. Instead, by changing the investment climate in Africa, they lay a foundation for the expansion of Chinese influence.

Similarly, arguments that view China’s activity in Africa as an effort to undermine Taiwanese legitimacy no longer support the breadth and scope of this activity, as they did in the early 1960s. Since the late-1990s, only a handful of African nations continue to recognize Taiwan, and none are of significant strategic, economic or political significance to China (though the development of oil fields off the coast of São Tomé and Príncipe may change its ‘value’). Furthermore, the advantages that African states are reaping from their relationship with China are increasingly altering the cost-benefit calculations for African states, making them less likely to switch their recognition back to Taiwan. This means that a undermining Taiwan does not need to be the central focus of China’s Africa policy—instead, this objective benefits from China’s efforts to increase its legitimacy as a world power.
China’s rapid industrialization, economic growth and sheer size have already secured it a place as a great power, but the Realist and Idealist schools differ in their interpretation of the nature of China’s broader geopolitical strategy. The Realist viewpoint argues that Chinese behavior has been and will continue to be based on realpolitik—policies to maximize self-interest and survival in an anarchical world-order. Realpolitik and Realist theory expect that China will seek to maximize its power in the international system at the expense of other powers, until it becomes a single dominating hegemon (Mearshimer and Brzezinski 2005; Li 1999, 446). Accordingly, this viewpoint dismisses official Chinese statements of a peaceful rise, and focuses instead on the potential military and economic threats a powerful China would present to other great-powers. There is certainly merit in this perspective, as the international system continues to perceive itself in Realist terms, with the national power a defining characteristic of status, and military power as the ultimate guarantor of national interest.

China’s track record provides a firm basis for these beliefs. In the 1960s and 1970s, China’s policies underscored Western concerns of a realpolitik foreign policy, as China sought to define a sphere of influence (the “third world” of developing countries) with which to counter the power of Western Europe, the U.S. and the Soviet Union (Yu 1977, 103, 105). In the 1990s, China’s foreign policy appeared the very model of realpolitik, as China responded to the resurgent Taiwanese independence movement with military intimidation, and remained uninvolved in regional and international cooperative efforts, such as ASEAN and the U.N. humanitarian missions (Christensen 1996). But Chinese positions on these issues have changed fundamentally in the last decade, with China taking a softer tone towards regional competitors, actively participating in ASEAN and contributing to eighteen

The new focus of China’s foreign policy is to limit conflict and to establish an international system that encourages cooperation and development (State Council Information Office 2006). Chinese policies are focused on transforming the international system by strengthening existing international institutions and promoting international cooperation. There remains a self-serving aspect of this policy—to allow Chinese development by avoiding international conflict—but China’s desire to rise peacefully seeks to change the Realist nature of great-power relations and the world system. China’s new policy proves itself more based on idealpolitik—an active foreign policy which promotes cooperation, common interest and peaceful relations, while seeking to preempt complications from realist-minded powers.8

The most important arena for the implementing this idealpolitik, is the developing world, where China seeks to legitimate its international leadership while avoiding conflict with other powers. The recent spike in Chinese interest in Africa is the direct result of a new and concerted strategy to facilitate China’s peaceful rise through cooperative means and establish a foundation for restructuring world order. Accordingly, any attempt to explain China’s increased involvement in Africa must begin with this idealist grand strategy, which frames the developments in Africa in a very different context than that provided by Realist theory.

I will examine China’s actions in Africa using a neo-Gramscian framework. The framework provides an important perspective for viewing China’s foreign policy. I argue

---

8 Stanley Kober’s discussion of this term does not directly define it—rather he lays out the role idealism could play in foreign policy, and specifically how the United States should embrace a non-naïve understanding of idealism in order to implement it (Kober 1990).
that the neo-Gramscian perspective portrays China as seeking to legitimate its position as a
great-power in order to lay the foundation for the eventual and peaceful transformation of
the current international order. By inducing a global normative change as a precursor to
transformation, China will be able to restructure the global order without resorting to
conflict.

A Neo-Gramscian Evaluation of Hegemony

When discussing systemic foreign policy goals, such as reforming the world system
and transcending the nature of international relations, the term hegemony inevitably arises.
In line with Western Realist thought, the Chinese foreign policy goal of restructuring the
world order can only be achieved if China has a predominance of power and influence—that
is, if China is a hegemonic power. Yet, in spite of its grandiose goals, China continues to
deny any desire to become a hegemon. This contradiction is complicated by the weak and
contested meaning of the term. In Chinese rhetoric, hegemony is often characterized as
world-dominance and associated with imperialism and unilateralism, such as the U.S.’s
current unchallenged position of power and Nazi Germany’s drive to physically conquer
broad regions of the world. Additionally, Chinese views of hegemony are framed by
negative normative views, based on China’s negative experiences with hegemonic powers
(Bijian 2005). The Chinese idealpolitik model highlights another priority—that China can
gain the legitimate ability to lead other states through cooperation and the exploitation of
common interest. While still comprising a form of ideological hegemony, this concept
focuses on a new method of rising to a position of international leadership that is not tied to
dominance. In order to discuss China’s efforts to establish a basis for legitimate leadership
as a great-power, it is important that we understand the similarities and differences between
the major theoretical perspectives on hegemony and international leadership, and how legitimate power formation relates to China’s efforts to restructure the system.

Consistent with neo-Marxist thought, Chinese officials have characterized hegemony as an unfavorable imperial structure in which a ruling state achieves and exerts domination over numerous less powerful states via coercion and exploitation (Rapkin 1990). In recent years, especially regarding U.S. foreign policy, the term ‘hegemony’ in China has become almost synonymous with ‘unipolarity,’ reducing the role of the hegemon to that of unilateral actor (Li 2003, 446). While a unilateral actor, by definition, is not exercising leadership, the association of this behavior with the term hegemony negatively reinforces Chinese perceptions of hegemony.

To date, the Realist school of thought has dominated the discussion of hegemony and international leadership in international relations. Realist conceptions of hegemony focus on the domination of many states by one, based on relative power concerns, and the factors that constitute that power. These theories emphasize the positive role of system maintenance performed by the hegemon, and focus less on the exploitation of smaller, less powerful nations by stronger ones. The establishment of hegemony in Realist circles focuses on national power, influenced by factors such as geographical position, economic power, cultural homogeneity and military force (Modelski 1987b, 220). A hegemon uses these sources of power to maintain stability in the international system and to maintain a system favorable to the extension of its power.

---

9 For representative examples of Realist thought on hegemony, see: Waltz (1979), Gilpin (1981) and Modelski (1987a, 1987b)
Neoliberal conceptions of hegemony focus less on dominance and relative power considerations and more on the regimes that characterize hegemonic systems. Arguing that pure power predominance does not necessarily equate to hegemony, these scholars identify that the hegemon must also exert leadership which must be recognized by others (Nye 2002). G. John Ikenberry (1996, 391-393) identifies that successful hegemons use international institutions to change the incentive structure, and stimulate other nations to follow its lead. Through this lens, hegemony is an opportunity for states to establish norms and regimes that bring peace and order to the international system.

For the most part, these various conceptions do agree that a hegemon is placed in a position of leadership vis-à-vis at least one other state, and that this relationship is usually the result of a preponderance of some form of power or circumstance. While this generalized definition admittedly loses explanatory power, it also allows for more focus on the unique nature of the hegemon as a leading state actor, and not on how the hegemon uses power or the effects it has on other states. Additionally, it defines the first prerequisite for a hegemon: that it evince significant power to place it in a position to lead other states.

While continuing to respect the role of power, the writings of Antonio Gramsci shift the discussion of hegemony from the realms of economic and military realms power to the role of ideas in establishing influence. Though he focused on the formation and behavior of Italian political parties in the early 20th century, his general concepts support an evaluation process by which leadership is consolidated, and whereby a hegemon is created. Gramsci draws a conceptual difference between ‘domination’ and ‘hegemony,’ separating political and social leadership (direzione) from a position of economic rule (dirigente) (Hoare and Smith 1971, xii-xiv). This differentiation draws on Max Weber’s earlier differentiation between

---

10 For representative examples of Neoliberal thought on hegemony see: Ikenberry and Kupchan (1990), Keohane (1984) and Doyle 1986.
‘power’ and ‘domination’, with the latter representing the right of a leader to lead, either through charismatic, traditional or legal bases (Morrison 1995, 284-290).\footnote{Weber’s \textit{Economy and Society} pre-dated Gramsci’s \textit{Prison Notebooks} by a good decade.}

Gramsci’s primary contribution to the discussion of hegemony was his contention that a foundation of intellectual leadership is a prerequisite for legitimate hegemony, wherein popular support is an enabler of hegemonic power (Hoare and Smith 1971, 57). This contradicts traditional realist perspectives on hegemony, which focus instead on the material sources of national power (i.e. sea power, monetary wealth) that allow a state to enforce its hegemony on other states (Modelski 1987b, 220). Gramsci identified that a social group expresses its supremacy in two ways: as “domination” and as “intellectual and moral leadership” (Hoare and Smith 1971, 57). He maintained that while the social group can dominate antagonistic groups using power (to include armed force); leadership is a prerequisite for winning and maintaining governmental power (Hoare and Smith 1971, 57). As such, he recognized that winning the ‘hearts and minds’ of the populace is a more significant step than raw domination. Because material force alone is not enough to establish effective leadership, there must be hegemonic behavior (or leadership) prior to achieving hegemony (Hoare and Smith 1971, 59). If at some point the leadership loses its consensus, it is no longer leading, and a ‘crisis of authority’ ensues, in which the leadership seeks to continue its dominance through the sole use of coercive force (Hoare and Smith 1971, 275-6).

The importance of legitimacy is captured in Gramsci’s differentiation between the “war of manoeuvre” which characterizes violent action (such as revolution and interstate war) and the “war of position” in which consent and legitimacy are established prior to a revolutionary moment (Hoare and Smith 1971, 238-9). He thus inferred that revolutionary
efforts could not be successful unless an appropriate ideological atmosphere existed beforehand. By outlining the possibility that the establishment and acceptance of new ideas can thus influence and change the shape of ideational structures, Gramsci’s work provides us with a new method for change in the political system and a framework by which social structures can be constructed, using a process of socialization. This framework begins with the identification of a preeminent actor or ‘pre-hegemon.’ This pre-hegemon can, through its leadership, incur a normative change on the part of secondary actors, resulting in the hegemon’s legitimate leadership of the new social order. In order for this normative change to occur, the pre-hegemon must identify and seek to influence a particular group of secondary actors. In Gramsci’s writings, these secondary actors were the subaltern classes, who, lacking direct influence in national politics, could realize benefits by attaching themselves to the ideology of a leading power (Hoare and Smith 1971, 52-5). Having identified the secondary actors, the pre-hegemon can then work to expand its influence and ideology within these groups to legitimize its views and ideology.

Gramsci’s ideas have been substantially developed in the secondary literature, and applied to the study of hegemony in international relations, most notably by Robert Cox and Jürgen Habermas. These “neoGramscians” have broadened Gramsci’s observations to delineate the role of legitimacy in international relations. Cox (1983) views a hegemonic world order as one that is “universal in conception” and one that the secondary states “could find compatible with their interests.” He contends that more than just a political order, hegemony “is an order within a world economy with a dominant mode of production” and a “complex of international social relationships” which link the economies and social classes of the secondary states (Cox 1983, 171). Reflecting a more neo-liberal view on the importance of international institutions, Cox and Habermas identify a final important step in
the legitimation process: the consolidation of legitimacy through the use of international
regimes and institutions. International institutions and rules are not only the tools that the
hegemon uses to legitimate its order and coopt the leaders of peripheral states, but are also
used to calcify its conception of universal norms and lay down rules for the international
system (Cox 1987, 171). Habermas (1975) also identifies the need for a world view which
legitimizes the hegemon’s authority, not only on the basis of laws, but more importantly in
the acceptance of a common normative order is a necessary prerequisite to establish
legitimate domination. Krasner (1981, 120) adds that the autonomy of post-WWII
international institutions is an important feature which allows for the ‘independent’
validation of the international order. Thus, by establishing or redirecting ‘autonomous’
international institutions, the hegemon can provide additional legitimacy for its world-view.

four models for the establishment of hegemony: endogenous learning, emulation, coercion/
inducement and legitimation. Only in the coercion/inducement model is there no change in
the normative values of the secondary states, while the difference between the other three
lies primarily in how that change occurs—spontaneously, through influence or through
socialization of a new normative order. The legitimation model, which reflects Gramscian
ideology, predicts that the hegemon will socialize its beliefs to positively induce a normative
change in the secondary states. Keohane (1984, 44-45) identifies this form of leadership as a
way to explain deference in the international system and as a system based in consensus and
cooperation, in which the hegemon may sacrifice short-term benefits to garner support for
long-term ventures. Adapted for use in modern international relations, Gramsci’s
formulation thus holds promise that hegemonic power transitions can be achieved without
long and painful hegemonic wars, in which powers compete for influence.
As useful as the Gramscian view of hegemonic status may be, there are a number of cautions and critiques that may be leveled against it. Keohane (1984, 45-46) argues that because the hegemon must be constantly seeking to legitimate its order, challenges to its ideological hegemony continue to exist. Additionally, he argues that the ideological hold of the hegemon may not be as strong internationally as it would be domestically. Both of these concerns are directed at the ability to encourage a normative shift in the secondary states. Much like policies in a democratic state, the hegemonic order must benefit the secondary states, so that they will continue to support it. If these benefits are lacking (or decrease) or the ideology is not sufficient to lock in secondary states, the hegemonic order will be susceptible to a new ideology or power.

Joseph Femia (2005, 341) cautions us that Gramsci’s “brief and disparate comments” on hegemony have been somewhat liberally applied to international politics, though his writings dealt minimally with that subject. Femia’s caution bears merit—it is difficult to tie Gramsci too closely with the international relations theories established some 50 years after his writings. For this very reason, I will refer to the approach here, as developed by Cox and Habermas as “neo-Gramscian.” While the basic theoretical framework is very similar to that laid out by Gramsci, the context and broader application is far from the realm of Gramsci’s work and consideration. Yet, this point should not lessen the value of these ideas—for their merit must rest on their explanatory power in the discipline. Similar critiques regarding the liberal application of lessons from Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War* as the basis for much Realist thought highlight that our focus should remain on the resultant theory and not on the intentions of the original authors who unwittingly contributed to its founding (Crawford 2000; Spegele 2005).
Another primary critique of neo-Gramscian thought regards the ability of humans to create and change international structures. To neo-Gramscians, structures are the result of human social interaction (are socially constructed); thus, new ideological allegiances can alter the nature of those structures. For structuralists, these same structures have their origins in human nature and are not consciously created—they exist independently of specific or short-term human social interactions (Waltz 1979, 117-123). Rather, these structures define the system and the patterns of human social interaction that can occur.

Some authors have attempted to bridge this gap, by developing frameworks for the evolution of norms and structures. George Modelski (1990, 23) argued that social systems can learn, and that this evolutionary learning defines the structure of global politics. As such, Modelski (1990, 22) identifies that world-powers have grown more democratic over the last several hundred years—with their institutions representing this evolutionary learning process. Piki Ish-Shalom (2006, 566) continues this discussion by describing a ‘hermeneutical’ framework for the diffusion of theoretical ideas to the general public that enables the social learning process, and thus, the creation of new structures. In essence, since interstate relations are social structures, changing the normative public conception of the nature of a social structure creates a mechanism for its transformation. This view allows for linkages between ideational and structural forces in shaping institutions, and specifically allows for the creation of new institutions by changing the understanding of the characteristics of the system.

Drawing on the work of Gramsci, Cox, and Ish-Shalom, I have defined a rough framework for analyzing China’s peaceful rise to hegemony. This framework relies on the legitimation of Chinese values, economic framework and leadership within the international system. Several prerequisites must be met in order for this legitimation to occur. First, in
order to become a hegemonic power, China must evince some form of power—whether this exists in the traditional realist sense, or in the more neoliberal “soft power.” This power is necessary in order to be able to shape the environment in which it operates, and to expand its influence to other states. Second, China must build a base of secondary states in which it may expand its influence and exert leadership. Without such a base of secondary states, the hegemon would be unable to socialize its views. Third, it must export its base ideology for the new international order to that base of states, and gain legitimacy for its world-view. As this legitimation takes hold, the secondary states will undergo a normative change to accept and support the ideals fostered by the hegemon. Finally, China must institutionalize its new world-view through international regimes, in order to cement its leadership and position.

The neo-Gramscian approach lends itself to the study of Chinese foreign policy for several reasons. China’s stated foreign policy goals emphasize cooperation and ‘transcending the traditional way great powers emerge’ (Bijian 2005)—ideas which are not part of the realist model of hegemony or hegemonic power transition. Liberal thought does allow for increased cooperation in an anarchic system, but generally fails to define a mechanism for hegemonic power transition or system transformation. Neo-Gramscian theory fills this void by providing an avenue for achieving these goals through cooperation and coordination. Additionally, neo-Gramscian theory’s focus on legitimacy opens up a central role for ‘soft power’ and influence—items that are normally marginalized in traditional realist formulations of international power.

**Analytical Framework and Required Data**

I will rely on three distinct methods to review and validate my contention that China’s interest in Africa is part of an effort to legitimate its leadership. First, I will
thoroughly examine China’s actions in Africa against the general rules for establishing legitimacy in the world-system, using the neo-Gramscian approach. This viewpoint will provide an important new perspective for viewing China’s global goals for legitimizing its position as a great-power and laying the foundation for a transformation of the current international order. Gramsci’s writings differ significantly from Realist writings on the subject by placing great weight on the importance of establishing legitimacy prior to achieving power. As developed by neo-Gramscian scholars, this approach provides a process for creating a normative change in secondary states, and allows for the restructuring of world order without necessarily creating conflict.

Second, I will seek to identify the emergence of this new idealpolitik approach by examining these same ideas in the context of Chinese political, diplomatic and economic activity in Africa. This will involve looking specifically at Chinese foreign investment, trade, leadership visits, bilateral treaties and agreements and other missions (peacekeeping, medicinal and academic) to Africa. Having gathered key data regarding these activities, I will be able to juxtapose China’s global activism with its efforts in Africa, at which point I expect to find temporal correlation between the global and regional efforts. This comparison will allow me to identify specific times at which the Chinese approach changed markedly, and seek to define key international and domestic events that could have prompted these changes. The key events I will look at in China are leadership changes, party congresses, economic policies and international incidents. Based on this comparison, I hope to discern whether the events that have increased China’s interest in Africa are driven primarily by domestic goals supportive of a strategy to gain legitimacy through cooperation and cooptation, or as a reaction to international events.
Third, I will briefly explore a case study of China’s involvement in Tanzania to see if the emergence and features of this grand strategy are consistent with China’s increased involvement with individual African states. More detailed than the broad-brush look at China’s Africa policy, this will determine if China’s geopolitical goals can be translated to the level of the individual nation-state, or if relations at the bilateral level are only influenced by near-term foreign policy goals. Specifically when addressing the Tanzanian case study, I will be confronted with a severely limited store of data—and will be forced to rely on single-source reporting or information that is incomplete, overtly biased and more journalistic than scholarly. I will attempt to reconcile this by using as much official data as possible, but the context will likely be determined by the limited work on Chinese relations with individual African states.

I employ a ‘levels of analysis’ approach, framed by neo-Gramscian prescriptions for hegemonic legitimacy. At the international level, the analysis will focus on China’s foreign policy efforts to achieve legitimacy worldwide in accordance with the prescriptions of neo-Gramscian theory. I will also seek to define common tools China employs in accomplishing its goals of legitimacy. Reducing the scope to the multi-lateral level, I will evaluate if these same policies and tools are employed in China’s relations with Africa. This level of analysis will allow for the identification of timeframes where Sino-African ties experienced significant development, providing focal points for an investigation into the domestic and international stimuli that may have effected the rapid rise. Finally, the bilateral level of analysis will observe China’s interaction with a single African nation to gain detailed insight into the context of Sino-African relations, and determine if a greater strategy is visible at this lowest level.
While I believe this methodology provides a logical continuum from theory to practice, I admit that this survey will not provide any fundamental proof that the Chinese involvement in Africa is a direct result of specific domestic or international events. Instead, I expect it will uncover generalizable and observable trends between certain types of events and the employment of certain policy tools. There is certainly danger here, for not all nations are equally affected by international events. For example, the 1999 U.S. bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade is only a minor footnote to American history—but is a major factor in Chinese views of its relations with the U.S. and its place in the world. Much the same, the 2001 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center became the defining event for U.S. foreign policy for the better part of a decade. While the attack was important to China, the resulting changes in U.S. foreign policy affected China more than the actual attack itself. Nonetheless, I expect to be able to discern if the changes in indicators of China’s Africa policy are driven by domestic policy changes or are reactions to international events.

Certainly, one could argue that there are many indicators that could be included in any analysis of Chinese relations. But the foreign relations of a major state, such as China, really make a full analysis of every diplomatic tool very problematic. As a result, I have chosen representative indicators to direct the study. Two indicators, the annual Chinese military budget and membership in international organizations provide a general look towards overall Chinese foreign policy, with the latter providing a useful metric for viewing changes in a traditional indicator of power. Other indicators, such as bilateral trade, FDI and leadership visits, reflect preferred approaches to Chinese diplomacy in Africa and illustrate both economic strength and political commitment to building legitimacy. I did not include indicators such as Chinese sales of military equipment to African nations; this information would not significantly add to the dialogue, as it is dwarfed by Chinese FDI, and
may be captured in bilateral agreements. Trade figures are available from both official Chinese statements and figures and international compilations, such as reporting from the International Monetary Fund. Diplomatic and political efforts in Africa will be more difficult to discern, and I will rely primarily on scholarly and government reviews of Chinese activities, both around the world and in Africa, as well as statements of Chinese officials and press releases. These sources will likely only provide a partial, and often anecdotal, accounting of Chinese activities, so it will be important to consider the source of the information and identify general foreign policy trends to the greatest extent possible.

An additional challenge is that much of the available data—especially when dealing with bilateral relations—is incomplete, spotty and inaccurate. For example, the accuracy of official data from the Chinese government, such as China’s military spending, is up for contention. U.S. intelligence agencies estimate Chinese defense spending to be two to three times higher than the official numbers reported by the Chinese government. For the purposes of this study, I have used only the official figures. While this greatly changes the scope of the Chinese military effort, the key factor I am looking at here is growth of the Chinese military budget. The growth rate for the Chinese military budget is fairly consistent—whether one uses the official Chinese figures or American intelligence estimates. In other areas, it may have been useful to compare Chinese activity different African states—but in many cases, this activity is as varied as the states themselves, leaving us with a large number of variables and very few consistent data sets. Other indicators, such as trade data, is subject to numerous inaccuracies, including fluctuations in African and American exchange rates, the yuan revaluation and the failure of this data to capture illicit trade and smuggling.
**Evaluating China’s Rise**

Zheng Bijian, executive vice-president of the Party school of the CPC Central Committee, claims that China is trying to establish a new international political and economic order.\(^{12}\) He notes that world peace is essential for this endeavor, and China must “transcend” the paradigm for how a hegemon arises (Bijian 2005). That paradigm, to this point, has been predominantly Realist, both in theory and in practice. As in Modelski’s long cycles, hegemonic-power transitions to date have been characterized as the product of great-power wars—conflicts resulting from relative power considerations between a rising superpower and a declining hegemon. The new paradigm seeks to lay emphasis on the legitimacy of world leadership rather than relative power considerations and conflict. By removing the necessity of conflict, China can pave the way for its peaceful rise. The premise of this paper is that China is attempting to accomplish this goal by building its international legitimacy as a leading major power and support for its eventual position as a world-leader. Neo-Gramscian theory tells us that for this to occur peacefully, China will need to export its values regarding the world-system to secondary states and other major-powers, causing a normative shift in the beliefs of those states.

In this first level of analysis, I will examine China’s behavior in relation to the five steps a hegemon must undertake in order to legitimate its leadership, as derived from neo-Gramscian theory. These steps are not necessarily conscious or consequential—in fact, some of the steps are timeless qualities possessed by the hegemon, while some are qualities that can be developed.

---

\(^{12}\) Mr. Bijian was also the former deputy-director for international affairs research center for the State Council in the 1970s.
Hypothesis 1: China must possess attributes of power—whether this exists in the traditional realist sense, or in the more neoliberal ‘soft power.’

Even neo-Gramscian scholars admit that there must be both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ power for a state to achieve a position of international leadership, and be able to act as a great power. To this point, there is little debate on China’s strength as measured by traditional indicators of power (military, economic and political)—as evidenced by neorealist fears of a dangerous rising China in the 1990s. China’s soft power is growing, characterized by its unique statecraft, economic model and Confucian philosophy. While it may seem unhelpful to discuss the more traditional attributes of power when discussing China’s peaceful rise, these elements define and underlie China’s current regional and global power, and strengthen non-military aspects of Chinese diplomacy. The first phase in establishing legitimate hegemony is establishing a basis of interstate power.

While military strength is the hallmark of most traditional and Western great-powers, China’s military power takes second to China’s economic machine. Military budgets are balanced against creating increasing economic development and the military’s primary purpose is for self-defense and to maintain a stable environment for economic activity (United States Department of Defense 2007, 7). China’s expanding economic interests may require new thinking about the importance and structure of the Chinese military force, though it is unclear if this will equate to new roles for the military as well.

Though massive in size, China’s military lacks any sort of power projection capabilities—constraining it to a regional force focused on self-defense, and limiting its utility in global foreign policy. Given China’s immense population, it is little surprise that China maintains the world’s largest military forces—even if they are far from the most modern (CNN.com). While these large numbers have been the key to past Chinese
defensive strategies, China lacks the military technology and reach associated with great power. The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Navy is a fairly small brown-water navy which mostly provides a coastal defense capability to China. China lacks a strategic bomber force for the delivery of nuclear strikes, and also lacks strategic airlift to move its forces. China’s only nuclear deterrent is its surprisingly small fleet of aging ICBMs, acquired in the 1970s (United States Department of Defense 2006, 26). Never directly threatened in the Cold War, the ICBM force was, and continues to be a defensive measure to deter aggression by either the U.S. or the U.S.S.R. Because of a lack of a power projection capability in either the Air Force or Navy, the Chinese military is unable to mass military force beyond its borders, including places as close as Taiwan, a mere 90 miles away.

Figure 3:
Chinese Defense Budgets and Estimates of Total Related Expenditures (DoD, 2007, 27)

In the last ten years, however, China has embarked on a major modernization campaign to improve the status of its armed forces, and strengthen its international
presence. As Figure 3 illustrates, China’s published military budget has risen fairly steadily since the 1990s, with the 2007 budget a 17% increase over the previous year (United States Department of Defense 2007, 19-20).13

While China’s GDP growth and military spending were fairly similar in the 1990s, this most recent increase begins to show significant divergence from China’s rate of GDP growth. Because of the five-year budget process, this likely reflects the uncertainty of the post-Sept 11th environment, whereas previous budgets (1996-2000 and 2001-2005) reflected modernization needs stemming from the Persian Gulf War and Taiwan Straits incidents (United States Department of Defense 2007, 25). China has begun to procure advanced fighters, air refueling, early-warning and transport aircraft, all of which will expand the range and utility of Chinese airpower beyond just national defense (United States Department of Defense 2006, 5-6). China has also begun the construction of an ocean-going blue-water Navy, mostly of Russian origin, though it is focused on providing a broader naval defense for China, and not an offensive power projection capability (Davis 2000; Ji 2005). In conjunction with a series of new ports and outposts throughout the Indian Ocean and South China Sea, these air and naval purchases will provide protection for Chinese oil shipments from Africa and the Middle East and increase China’s ability to respond to a variety of contingencies throughout the region (Zweig and Janhai 2005). China is also developing and testing new longer-range ICBMs, which not only provide both greater reach for Chinese nuclear power, but also increased survivability to the still small force.

After decades of relative economic backwardness, China’s rapid industrialization and burgeoning consumer market have resulted in unprecedented economic strength, and

---

13 Figure 3 also shows the great differences between China’s officially reported military budget and U.S. intelligence agency estimates of actual spending. While these estimates may be as much as three times higher than the announced budget, the important factor for this analysis is the rate of growth in military spending, which has remained relatively constant.
opened new avenues for economics-based diplomacy. For decades, China’s ability to realize its economic and political potential was constrained—first by colonial domination and Japanese invasion, then civil war and cultural revolution. As in the Soviet Union, socialism failed to bring China’s economy to greatness. But since the initiation of liberalizing reforms by Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s, China’s economy has grown far more dynamic and successful. China’s economy is now ten times larger than it was in 1978, and has become the second-largest in the world, next to the U.S. (Central Intelligence Agency 2007). China’s GDP for 2005 was US$2.5 trillion, and is growing at over ten percent annually. China also maintains the world’s largest current account surplus, nearly $180 billion in 2006, and foreign exchange reserves in excess of US$1 trillion (Central Intelligence Agency 2007).

The globalization of China’s massive economy provides China valuable political leverage, allowing it to achieve significant diplomatic goals. Denny Roy maintains that the rise of a new power would be far less unwelcome to the United States if it brought with it significant economic and investment opportunities (Roy 2003). With over a billion potential consumers, China’s massive domestic market has long been a tantalizing treat for Western investment, and over US$60 billion of foreign direct investment flowed into China in 2005 alone, of which the U.S. is the fifth largest contributor (United States-China Business Council 2006). Chinese infrastructure projects throughout the developing world, such as the construction of the Tanzania–Zambia railway in 1960s, likely contributed to the strong African support for Beijing’s assumption of the United Nations seat in 1971. Similarly, China’s growing economy and post-Tiananmen embrace of globalization changed the incentive structure for the United States, spurring the necessary support for its inclusion in the World Trade Organization (United States-China Business Council 1999).

---

14 Measured by Purchasing Power Parity (PPP).
The impact of Chinese economic performance on world economic markets has helped to guarantee favorable trade agreements and its relative freedom from sanctions (though the fall-out from Tiananmen stands out as a notable exception (Rennack 2005, 1-2)). China has become such a major player in the oil and commodity markets that increases in Chinese consumption, driven by rapid industrialization, sparked skyrocketing prices for mineral commodities such as copper, nickel and oil in 2003 (China Effect 2003). A similar impact has been felt in world currency markets—witness the reaction of world markets when China switched its currency base from the U.S. dollar to a basket of currencies in 2005, and when it revalued the yuan against the dollar (Embassy of the PRC in the United States 2005).

Diplomatically, China has long been accorded great-power status in the Western international system. China was included with other major powers in disarmament talks between WWI and WWII, seated alongside the U.S., Britain, France, Russia and Japan (Hyde 1988). It was designated a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council at its founding in 1945 (Beijing did not take over this seat from Taipei until 1971). In 2001, China acceded to the World Trade Organization, and accepted an invitation from the United States to discuss becoming a “responsible stakeholder” in the international system (Kahn 2006b, 1). Moreover, by highlighting its position as the largest developing state, and through organizations such as the G-77, China has taken on the role of representative for the developing world. This effort has sought to expand the recognition of China’s political power and provided a venue for China to showcase its leadership style.

Much of China’s diplomatic influence comes from what Joseph Nye calls ‘soft power.’ Nye originally used the term to describe the less tangible and more “indirect methods” of exercising power, focusing primarily on the international popularity of
American pop culture. (Nye 2003, 60). Nye identified the primary attributes of a state’s ‘soft power’ as cultural attraction, ideology and international institutions (Nye 1990, 188).

A key component of China’s soft power is the appeal of peaceful Confucian thought. China’s stoic Confucianism preceded by thousands of years the very similar modern liberalism that began in Enlightened Europe and is embodied in the writings of Immanuel Kant, leading Adolph Reichwein (1925, 77) to note that “Confucius became the patron saint of the European Enlightenment.” While the similarities between the ideas of the European Enlightenment and Confucian thought lay a foundation for common base of beliefs between the Western liberalists and China, they do not provide a bridge to many developing societies that lack those same experiences. However, Confucian thought does offer a simple unifying concept which emphasizes tradition, respect and the role of the individual in both creating and perpetuating peace. No doubt, students of Confucius in developing countries can identify with the lessons of a philosopher whose ideas were borne of centuries of instability and violence.

Confucian thought underlies the “Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence,” which form the primary basis for Chinese foreign relations with other developing countries. The “Five Principles,” as articulated in the 1954 Agreement on Trade and Communications between the Tibet region of China and India are (Ghali 2004): 1) Mutual respect for each other’s territorial integrity and sovereignty; 2) Mutual non-aggression; 3) Mutual non-interference in each other’s internal affairs; 4) Equality and mutual benefit; and 5) Peaceful co-existence.

China announced the “Five Principles” to the world at the 1955 Conference for Asian-African Relations (also known as the Bandung Conference), where they were warmly welcomed, though not formally adopted by that group. The “Five Principles” later served as
the theme of the Non-Aligned Movement, replacing Cold War competition with peaceful co-existence, and served as protection from superpower intervention. (Ghali 2004) These principles also underlie the governing principles of ASEAN, the FOCAC, and other regional organizations (Association of South-East Asian Nations; Forum on China-Africa Cooperation 2000). In doing so, they have extended China’s views on interstate relations throughout the developing world. To date, they comprise China’s greatest soft-power success.

China’s unique statecraft and millennia of self-government have long been a source of inspiration for other states, and now offer an alternative to the Western model of development. As early as the 9th century, Italian leaders were seeking to implement Chinese-style bureaucratic principles and examinations (Creel 1970, 2). More recently China stands out as a great-power that did not develop by the rules of the Western system, but one that forged a new path combining elements of Western theory with its own culture. China offers developing countries a new developmental model, one free from the colonial hang-ups that often frame Western ventures (Furniss 2006, 57, 61). This “authoritarian development model”, which limits political freedom while reforming the economy, has considerable appeal for authoritarian leaders in developing countries (Saunders 2006, 17).

While I discussed the Chinese economy as a source of real power, the products of Chinese investment and trade represent a source of Chinese ‘soft’ power in Africa. China’s significant foreign reserves offer it the ability to show off its wealth to poorer nations, by undertaking projects such as the construction of roads, government buildings and stadiums throughout Africa. Moreover, the strong economy offers inexpensive vehicles, textiles, and manufactured goods to developing nations, improving the standard of living and placing China into everyday life. Africa is becoming a prime destination for Chinese automobiles,
with thousands of vehicles arriving every month (Yanshuo 2006a, 30-31). In some cases, Chinese assistance and joint-ventures contributes to the development of vocational skills of local workers, filling a key educational gap and contributing to sustainable domestic economic growth (Center for Chinese Studies 2007, 52; Tikly, et al. 2003, viii).

**Hypothesis 2:** China must build a base of secondary states in which it may expand its influence and exert leadership.

China has long sought to establish the developing world as its sphere of influence. The 1955 Bandung Conference was the first forum at which the newly solidified Chinese socialist government laid out its case for leadership of the developing world. Speaking at the conference, Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai drew upon the common colonial heritage of developing countries and advanced the “Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence” as a basis for friendly relations between all states (The Bandung Conference 2005). In Deng Xiaoping’s 1974 “Three Worlds speech” to the United Nations, he described the world as having three politico-economic divisions: the two superpowers (the U.S. and U.S.S.R) formed the first tier; the developed countries formed the second; and the developing states the third (Yee 1983, 239). By citing a common heritage and emphasizing its role as a developing state, China included itself as a member of the developing world. Given Beijing’s massive sources of hard and soft power, and its seat on the UNSC, this placed China in a natural position to lead the community of developing nations.

In order to further solidify this hold, China has sought to minimize the involvement of other great powers in developing states. As discussed previously, Chinese support for decolonization movements in Africa and Asia in the 1960s and 1970s not only focused on
removing the influence of colonial powers, but also limiting Soviet and American influence in those states. In much the same way, China’s support for the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, and its antagonism towards Vietnam in the late 1970s, largely reflected its efforts to stop the expansion of Soviet influence in South Asia (Turley 1990, 368-9). In 2001, China expanded its security cooperation with the Central Asian republics through the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (Shanghai Cooperation Organization 2001). The 2005 vote for SCO members to set timetables for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from bases in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, reflected Chinese concerns over the presence of U.S. forces in Central Asia (Saunders 2006, 14-15).

China has also used its economic influence to establish multiple economic regimes under Chinese leadership. These efforts reach beyond attempts to limit the involvement of other powers, and actively try to establish cooperative economic regimes under Chinese leadership. China inaugurated the Central Asia Regional Economic Co-operation (CAREC) forum in 1998 to promote regional economic exchange with the former-Soviet Central Asian republics. Since its establishment, Chinese trade with the eight member nations has risen tenfold to almost US$10 billion annually (Go West 2007). China established the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in 2000 to promote economic cooperation and increase trade relations between China and African states. The FOCAC has served as a forum for China to outline economic investment and debt cancellation for Africa, while pushing for free-trade agreements between its participants. During the 2006 FOCAC, held in Beijing, China announced US$ 1.9 billion in sixteen trade agreements with African states, US$5 billion in new loans and credits billion and debt cancellation for African states (Kahn 2006a, 6). This forum is the most aggressive Chinese effort to extend its influence to African leaders, and has provided a consistent venue for increasing bilateral investment and trade agreements.
with African states. The Boao Forum for Asia was established in 2001 as a regional version of the World Economic Forum, but headed by China, rather than the United States or another regional power (the idea originated from Australian and Japanese leaders) (Boao Forum for Asia: History). Capitalizing on the economic boom experienced by Asian states in the last two decades, the forum not only encourages regional economic relations and development, but also provides an opportunity for China to showcase its leadership to other Asian nations in an economic forum (Boao Forum for Asia: Introduction).

China has also used its influence in global organizations, such as the United Nations, to support the interests of developing states. In its inaugural speech to the United Nations in 1971, the PRC pledged its support to “oppressed peoples and nations”, opposed the “imperialist and colonialist theory that big nations are superior to the small nations” and “the power politics and hegemony of big nations bullying small ones or strong nations bullying weak ones (Chai 1980, 23).” Since that time, China has indeed generally used its votes to support the cause of developing countries in the General Assembly (Chai 1980, 33). In 2004, China significantly watered down a UN resolution condemning Sudan for its humanitarian violations in Darfur, and threatened to veto any measure to impose an embargo (Blair, 2005). Similarly, in 2007, China voted against censuring Myanmar for human rights violations (Oleson, 2007). While these moves may not be beneficial to the citizens of Sudan or Myanmar, the Chinese moves cultivate stronger relations with their governments, in line with the principle of non-interference.

**Hypothesis 3: China must export its base ideology for the new international order to that base of states, and gain legitimacy for its world-view.**

China uses a variety of tools to export its ideology to other countries, and especially developing states. China uses foreign direct investment and bilateral trade agreements to
promote a new model of investment and encourage continued cooperation; it frames
diplomatic relations in terms of strategic partnerships to establish other countries as
stakeholders in development; its leadership spends significant time abroad to support these
partnerships; it offers educational outreach and scholarships to promote Chinese culture,
language and Confucian thought.

China is also rewriting the rules of international investment, creating new economic
formulas that diverge from the Western capitalist world order. China’s excessive foreign
reserves allow the state to accept increased risk in its sponsorship of international ventures.
This has changed the nature of investment risk in Africa—as China uses heavy investment to
create business opportunities (Furniss 2006, 56). The construction of government buildings
in Mozambique and infrastructure projects in Angola were funded by Chinese development
aid, and built by Chinese contracts—a condition tied to the investment funds (Furniss 2006,
56). Thus, while the aid packages and projects garner significant political advantages for
China in terms of influence, they also return the money to China’s businesses. James Traub
(2006, 74) labels this process “development by China,” with China essentially funding its
own companies to build infrastructure and develop African economies. While this process
benefits China far more than its African partners, it does support the idea of an economic
“win-win”—as China and developing nations both benefit from the relationship.

The widespread success of this mutually-beneficial aid process highlights a transition
to a new model of development and industrialization, one of the primary goals of China’s
international strategies. Zheng Bijian (2005) characterizes the “old” model of
industrialization as an exploitative rivalry for resources, high investment, high energy
consumption and high pollution; in contrast, the new Chinese model is characterized by
cooperation, gradual development and ecologically-sound development. Whereas Western
nations have avoided investing in many developing countries, and have certainly not focused on building domestic infrastructure, China has been willing to do so, realizing that the economic improvement of other developing countries not only fosters mutual growth and development today, it will create greater economic opportunities in the future (State Information Office 2006). By showing faith in developing nations, and by improving the domestic situation, China cultivates support for its beliefs, its system and its leadership.

At the same time, China’s “commercial diplomacy” uses investment and trade to support diplomatic objectives and is changing the underlying power structure of economic relations between sovereign states. The most visible embodiment of this diplomacy has been the “dollar diplomacy” supporting the “One China” policy, as China seeks to undermine Taiwan’s claim to international legitimacy. Increased Chinese investment and intense diplomatic posturing, especially in the developing world, were critical to gaining support for Beijing to replace Taipei as the Chinese representative to the United Nations, in 1971. On a much larger scale, the vitality of China’s economy and breadth of its investment is challenging the international economic regimes created by the United States, as well as the underlying power structure. China’s significant investment in states without regard for their internal fiscal or humanitarian policies has frustrated the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. This respect for sovereignty, based on the ‘Five Principles’ is a fundamental departure from the previous paradigm in which economic powers and organizations could dictate domestic policies to developing countries.

Angola provides a good example of this policy. As Angola emerged from its 30-year civil war in 2002, foreign donors were unwilling to provide aid to Angola, pressing for increased transparency, good governance and humanitarian improvements. But after receiving US$2 billion in export credits from China in 2004 (as well as numerous
infrastructure development programs), Angola delayed the implementation of any IMF reforms (Furniss 2006, 58). While some worry that this has undone several years of hard work to establish conditional debt relief, subsequent Chinese packages to Angola top US$7 billion and Angola has become China’s largest African trading partner (Kahn 2006a, 1; Taylor 2006, 944-947). By not tying investment and aid to government reform, China is slowly weaning developing states (and their frequently corrupt governments) away from the Washington Consensus, and toward a growing Beijing Consensus.

China’s primary diplomatic tool for increasing international support for its foreign policy goals has been the use ‘strategic partnerships’ with both developed and developing states. China has established strategic partnerships with Brazil (1993), Russia (1996), France (1997), Saudi Arabia (1999), Iran (2000), ASEAN (2003), the European Union (2003), India (2003), the United Kingdom (2004), and Germany (2004) (Saunders 2006, 13). These bilateral arrangements with major countries and regional organizations form a framework for cooperation and goodwill. Just as importantly, they provide an avenue to shift towards China’s preferred multi-polar system by recognizing other regional powers independently of the United States.

The concept of a strategic partnership is also used to frame important relations with developing countries, and recognizes the political power these nations have in multi-lateral organizations. At the 2006 FOCAC, Hu Jintao referred to Chinese relations with Africa in terms of a strategic partnership, intended to “promote development of each side, but also help cement unity and cooperation among developing countries and contribute to establishing a just and equitable new international political and economic order” (Jintao 2006). In this sense, the strategic partnership serves as a framework for coopting poorer countries, while empowering their sense of importance in order to garner support for
“common” objectives. It also establishes a framework for bilateral agreements and subsidiary agreements that stretches beyond short-term economic or political interests.

This cooperative framework established is supported by the frequent visits of Chinese leaders to other countries. As Figure 4 shows, the Chinese President, Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs travel frequently, especially to developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Signifying Africa’s special place in China’s power arrangement, the Chinese Foreign Minister’s first trip of every year is to Africa (Saunders 2006, 20). These trips are exceedingly important in cultivating positive relationships with poorer states, who are often flattered by the attention. In 2007, President Hu Jintao visited eight African nations including usually-overlooked nations such as Seychelles and Mozambique, which have few resources to offer China. Though some critics claim the visits are intended to divert attention from more resource-heavy stops on the agenda (such as Sudan), a South African researcher highlighted the effectiveness of this visit: “I can’t remember the last time [President] Bush visited (Oleson 2007).”

Figure 4:
Travel of Chinese President, Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1993-2004
(Saunders 2006)
Since the Confucian ideology is the philosophy that underlies the Chinese worldview, it should be no surprise that China devotes significant resources to promote Chinese culture and language abroad. The Chinese government provides scholarships and financial assistance to students from developing countries, and over 110,000 foreign students attended Chinese universities in 2004 (Saunders 2006, 17). The National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language used a $200 million annual budget to establish a global network of Confucius Institutes. These institutes are chartered to promote the study of the Chinese language and culture and to encourage cultural exchanges with China (Saunders 2006, 18; Eisenman and Kurlantzik 2006, 219-224). The first of 27 such institutes was established in Seoul in November 2004, and plans called for 100 institutes within 5 years. These have already proven successful in increasing interest in China and encouraging graduate students to study in China (Eisenman and Kurlantzik 2006). Additionally, they provide not only an avenue for increased knowledge and interest in China, but also provide an introduction to Confucian principles and philosophy. Similar programs in the West, such as Fulbright Program, sponsored by the U.S. State Department, have played an important role in expanding American soft power and cultural understanding between Western countries.

While these efforts focus on establishing a common ideological base with regard to relations between states and Confucian principles, China must also lay a foundation for its plans to transform the international system peacefully. Transcending the existing culture of Realist relations between states requires that China create faith and support, not only for its model of international relations, but for its model of hegemonic power transition—one in which a new power can be accommodated and international structure can be changed peacefully. Changing this mindset will require a complex and multi-faceted approach to
establish new a new normative framework for international relations. Following Piki Ish-Shalom’s hermeneutical process for the creation of new social norms, China’s approach must rely on the internalization of the theory of a peaceful rise by members of the world public. China’s efforts, especially in the developing world must focus on creating a positive, peaceful image of China and highlight a cooperative China’s rise as a preferable new model of international relations.

To begin creating popular support for the idea of its peaceful rise and to transcend the current paradigm of conflict, China is thus reliant on its efforts to broaden Confucianism and the culture of cooperation. These efforts are already major pillars of China’s soft power and public image. China’s increased participations in international organizations provides a building block for greater cooperation and shows that China is willing to seek out cooperation, even when it could achieve greater short-term benefits by acting alone. China has also shown modesty in some international disputes with its neighbors—such as the border dispute with Tajikistan and the recent cooling of relations in the South China Sea (Medeiros and Fravel 2003; Jiabao 2003). While these have traditionally been flashpoints for conflict, China is determined to allay the fears of its neighbors, by demonstrating a willingness to cooperate to achieve regional peace.

In Africa, China’s efforts to lay the basis for normative structural change are carried out under the banner of South-South cooperation (China Calls 2000; Wenping 2006). Using dependency theory to spur solidarity, China has bonded the third-world nations have bonded together in international fora to challenge existing international structures (Krasner 1981, 121; Mission of the PRC to European Union 2006). Chinese Vice Premier Li Lanqing, speaking at the 2000 South Summit of the G-77 called for solidarity to improve the situation of developing nations in the world economy: "To get united is the only way for developing
countries to enhance their status in the North-South dialogue, effectively participate in making decisions related to world economy and safeguard their own interests to the maximum in the course of the globalization” (China Calls 2000). By treating African nations as ‘equals’ and pushing for solidarity between developing countries, China is able to encourage greater participation of nations who are relatively new to the game of international politics. This shift establishes a basis for even greater change—as newcomers to the process are more receptive to paradigm shifts than those who are vested in the previous order (Kuhn 1996, 144).

**Hypothesis 4:** China must institutionalize its new world-view in order to cement its leadership and position.

International organizations play an important role in helping China to implement and institutionalize its vision of a new world-view. Clearly accepting the neoliberal arguments in favor of international regimes, China is actively seeking to strengthen the roles international institutions play in increasing cooperation and limiting conflict (Keohane 1982, 148-152). China currently seeks to leverage existing international institutions as a method for changing the current international order. China claims active devotion to increasing the role of the UN in “establishing a new international political and economic order featuring justice, rationality, equality and mutual benefit, promoting more democratic international relationships and rule of law in international affairs” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006a). But most importantly China will use international organizations to validate and solidify its new world order (Krasner 1981, 140).

Acting within organizations that are part of the Western order, China now plays an influential role in several bodies, such as the G-77, the World Trade Organization, and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. China’s role in these organizations, and especially in
sub-organizations such as the United Nations Council on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation has placed China in a position to encourage the common aspirations and goals of developing nations, whose large numbers are extremely effective in achieving goals in bodies characterized by an egalitarian voting system. Using the ‘spirit of South-South cooperation’ (stemming from the United Nations program), China has been able to advance its interests with third-world countries, without needing to dictate policy choices—demonstrating the strength of China’s growing legitimacy. As third-world nations have captured an increasing plurality in international organizations established by the U.S. (such as the U.N. and WTO), they have steered away from validating that current international order (Krasner 1981, 120-121.) These organizations are now better postured to support the evolution of a new international order.

China also supports the establishment of organizations that do not include the United States, especially in Asia (Saunders 2006, 1). Relying on its economic power and influence, China has focused on increasing regional integration and creating opportunities for expanding trade, in the context of the East Asia Economic Caucus, the Boao Forum for Asia and a proposed East Asian Free Trade Area. While these ideas may not have originated in China, they are focused on a Chinese model of international relations and exclude regional competitors such as Japan, Taiwan and Australia. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization and ASEAN (of which China is only an observer) institutionalize regional security cooperation under a Chinese framework—consistent with the “Five Principles”—and focused on regional security issues.

In addition to official organizations, China’s involvement in different conferences and dialogues has encouraged support for its peaceful rise, its development model and its role as the new economic power. In 2006, the 10th China Fair for Trade and Investment
included the United Nations Industrial Development Office (UNIDO) and UNCTAD as co-sponsors (UNIDO 2006). Other economic-oriented groups such as the FOCAC and the High-level Dialogue on Strengthening International Economic Cooperation for Development through Partnership serve as forums for China’s ability to export its world view and establish stronger bilateral and multilateral ties. Moreover, they quietly undermine the strength of American hegemony by creating an alternative source of structure in the current international system.

In the future, these transformed international organizations will combine with new structures, to legitimate and enforce the Chinese world-view. China’s current efforts to establish changes in normative understandings of the international environment and the relations between states will drive the creation of organizations that reflect those ideals. These organizations will legitimate the future world order, providing a systematic implementation of the value system and policies fostered by the Chinese world-view. More importantly, China’s success in transforming international organizations will directly reflect the growing legitimacy of China’s world-view in the secondary states. Thus, efforts to establish legitimacy for the guiding principles of that world-view, lay the stage for the accomplishment of that goal.

The neo-Gramscian paradigm would predict that China would use a variety of tools to cultivate its influence throughout the third world, as developing states form the secondary states in which China seeks to build its legitimacy. He Wenping (2006), director of the African Studies Section at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, glibly points out that China is the world’s largest developing country, and Africa is the continent with the most developing countries. Due to this relationship, any Chinese efforts to increase
legitimacy with developing countries must entail a focus on Africa, where it can maximize its positive influence and soft power.

**China’s Relationship with Africa**

While economic incentives are the tools of choice in modern Chinese foreign policy, China has used diplomatic visits to cultivate relations and lay a foundation for increased investment and trade. Additionally, China has undertaken a variety of missions, including peacekeeping, medicinal and academic missions in order to increase its appeal to the African public. Together, these tools establish Chinese economic primacy and frame relations in terms of a strategic partnership in which both sides benefit—a point that is announced clearly by Chinese and African media sources. As noted previously, these partnerships are of great importance to China’s overall strategy to build legitimacy for its global leadership, and are especially important in the “land of opportunity” that is Africa (Africa Alive 2006, 24).

China has used visits from its senior leadership to strengthen relations with Africa and lay a foundation for expanded trade and investment. The Chinese President, Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs travel significantly more than their Western counterparts, and just as importantly, they spend much of that time in areas that would not normally be deemed central to their strategic interests. In the 44 years between September 1960 and September 2004, some 92 Chinese officials have made 149 visits to Africa and 459 officials from 51 African countries have made 609 visits to China (Jianmin 2005). Premier Chou En Lai’s 1963-1965 visits to Africa were by far the most notable, as he spent over two months on the continent kick-starting both economic and diplomatic relations. Premier Zhao Ziyang conducted a similar trip, visiting eleven countries on a month-long tour from 1982-1983. In 1989, Former Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen started the tradition
of making Africa his first trip of every year, and he spent nearly six months there during his
ten years in office. President Jiang Zemin made trips to Africa in 1996 and 2000, cementing
relations with South Africa. President Hu Jintao has visited Africa every year since taking
office in 2004, including an eight-day tour in 2007. On his January 2007 trip, Hu received
criticism for his visit to Sudan, a Chinese partner worth US$2.9 billion in annual oil exports,
but known for its atrocious record on human rights (Oleson 2007). Less noticed, were Hu’s
visits to relatively resource-poor countries, such as the Seychelles and Mozambique. While
some maintain that rather than fostering goodwill, these stops were intended merely to
divert attention from China’s resource deals in Africa (Oleson 2007)—these countries have
been a major stops on Chinese African tours for decades, and recall China’s continued
interaction with African countries.

China has generally used diplomatic visits to establish a framework for increasing
foreign investment and trade, resulting in significant increases in Chinese foreign direct
investment (FDI) at times when Chinese officials are visiting Africa. Between 1961 and
1964, coincident with Chou En-Lai’s visits, Chinese FDI to Africa totaled a very respectable
US$195 million and by 1965, made up 60% of all of China’s FDI abroad. Though foreign
relations with Africa dropped off during the Cultural Revolution, Chinese investment was
anything but dead. In 1969, China signed an agreement with Tanzania and Zambia to
develop the TAZARA railway, linking Kapiri Moshi in Zambia with the coastal port of Dar
es Salaam, Tanzania—a project that would take six years and cost some US$600 million
Premier Zhao Ziyang’s visit (Taylor, 1998, 444). After Tiananmen, Chinese FDI to Africa
was slow to react, but rebounded to sizeable amounts by the mid-1990s (see Figure 5). FDI
dropped again in 2000, but rose steadily until shooting skyward in 2004 and 2005. The
diminished level of Chinese FDI to Africa in the early 2000s reflects mainly a worldwide dearth of outbound Chinese FDI, as well as the broadening of Chinese investment to other regions (Saunders 2006, 20, 35, 42, 50). FDI increased significantly following the 2000 and 2003 FOCAC summits, as China signed a flurry of bilateral investment treaties with African states. Notably, official FDI figures do not reflect much of China’s aid and corporate spending, meaning that the reported FDI figures may be significantly understated (Saunders 2006, 21).

Figure 5: Chinese FDI to Africa: 1993-2004 (Saunders 2006)

Bilateral diplomatic visits and investment agreements have also created a foundation for significant increases in trade between China and Africa. A mere US$1.5 billion in 1990, Chinese trade with Africa reached record levels in 2005, with US$39.7 billion in goods and services exchanging hands, and Chinese officials expect that Sino-African trade will reach US$100 billion by 2010 (Taylor 2006, 937). As Figure 6 illustrates, Sino-African trade grew
steadily throughout the 1990s with significant increases in 1999-2000 and 2004. The obvious trigger for these improvements is the growing framework for economic relations, in the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, which first met in 2000. The growth in trade also reflects several other significant developments, including China’s thirst for natural resources, an increase in government subsidies for Chinese companies operating in Africa and the sudden availability of new markets.

![Figure 6: Chinese Trade with African States, 1990-2007 (Furniss 2006)](image)

The most publicly-noted feature of this expanding trade is the rapidly growing export market for Africa’s natural resources. Sales of petroleum, metals, and agricultural raw materials account for 85 percent of Africa's exports to China and India (Broadman 2006), and the continued Chinese pursuit of energy resources is certain to continue to drive that amount upward. China’s ten largest African trading partners, each of which is an oil producing nation, comprise 88.4% of China's imports from Africa (Taylor 2006, 938). While
press coverage focuses on the export of natural resources to China, African nations import almost an equal value of Chinese commercial goods. A second feature of the booming trade reflects the export of Chinese goods to Africa. Some 80,000 Chinese expatriates are believed to be living in Africa, and selling a variety of inexpensive Chinese goods, ranging from shoes to television sets to automobiles (Kahn 2006a, 1).

Another aspect of China’s “go global” strategy ties FDI directly to increased business opportunities, as China has begun to subsidize Chinese companies who do business abroad, especially in risky markets. The Chinese government likely underwrites the risk for new companies, increasing the opportunities for new business and sustaining the economic boom (Saunders 2006, 12). Even the major natural resource developments have come primarily at the hands of national Chinese corporations, such as Sinopec, PetroChina and the Chinese National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC). Subsidized by the government, they are able to outbid their foreign competitors and lock in key markets for their future development (Traub 206, 74; Zweig and Janhai 2005). Additionally, Chinese development aid is frequently tied to contractual obligations that require that Chinese companies perform the development work. As a result, African governments hire Chinese companies to build new roads, bridges and government buildings—all funded by the Chinese government (Furniss 2006, 56). Most of the significant development projects that China is funding in Africa contribute to the efforts to increase trade, and especially to export natural resources. China constructed an airport in Tanzania, roads in Angola and Mozambique and recently spent US$700 million to rehabilitate a Sudanese oil pipeline to the coast (Ziegler 2006, 16; Saunders 41).

China has also proposed numerous initiatives to foster increased trade with Africa, including the development of free trade areas and tariff-excluded items. In 2004, China and
South Africa launched negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement (China, South Africa 2004). At the 2006 FOCAC, China announced a list of 490 items that can be imported from the least-developed African countries tariff-free (Shinn 2006, 5-6). China proposed the creation of smaller free-trade areas in Africa, focused on states such as Nigeria. While these initiatives are very small in scale when compared to Western ventures (the U.S. allows 6,000 items tariff free under the U.S.-Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) (Shinn 2006, 6), they represent a significant shift forward for the popular perception of China as a liberal, market economy.

It should be noted that the abnormal increase in Sino-African trade has also been dramatically affected and distorted by the availability of new markets. In the last ten years, each of the China’s top four trading partners underwent significant political changes which have allowed trade to flourish. In line with a 1993 agreement with the new ANC government in South Africa, China officially established formal relations in December 1998, and quickly solidified trade relations with South Africa. This change alone likely accounts for the rapid growth in Sino-African trade in 1999. In 2002, Angola’s 27-year civil war finally ended, opening greater opportunities for business development. In 2003, warring Congolese factions reached a tenuous truce, and in 2004, a North-South ceasefire in Sudan opened up the rich southern oil fields for exploitation. These countries combined to make up some 70% of all Sino-African trade in 2004 (Taylor 2006, 938), so their sudden arrival has likely had a significant impact on overall Sino-African trade statistics.

China is also involved in a variety of missions to show its presence and expand its influence in Africa. Breaking from its staunch line on national sovereignty, China joined the UN’s special committee on peacekeeping operations and in 1992, committed its first peacekeeping observers to Cambodia. By 2006, over 3,000 Chinese peacekeepers had served...
in Africa, and 850 were currently supporting 12 UN-sponsored missions on the continent (Wenping 2006). These peacekeeping missions portray a peaceful China integrated into the UN, and boosts Chinese influence in the countries where they serve. China’s 2003 deployment of peacekeeping troops to Liberia was followed by a surge of varied foreign aid packages comprising food aid, motorcycles for the Liberian police force, a new sports complex, and a US$2 million grant to help restructure the Liberian army (Thompson 2005). Additionally, China sponsors other unique cultural missions to African nations. Since the 1960s, China has sponsored medical missions to Africa, in which Chinese doctors travel to Africa for extended periods of time to provide treatments for malaria and HIV-afflicted patients. These include over twenty-seven medical missions to Mauritania since 1968, and lead to claims that two-fifths of all Mauritanians have been seen by Chinese doctors (Wan 2006). At the 2006 FOCAC, Hu Jintao promised increased medical assistance to Africa over the next three years, including the construction of 30 hospitals and 30 malaria prevention and treatment centers, as well as a US$30 million grant to provide the anti-malarial drug artemisinin (Jintao 2006). These missions truly highlight China’s commitment to cultivating a positive image at the lowest level, and have increased as China has grown more comfortable with their role in encouraging positive relations.

When we look at China’s complementary use of diplomatic and economic tools in Africa, it becomes obvious that there is more to Sino-African relations than just economics or political recognition. The use of strategic partnerships, and especially the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, has framed Sino-African relations in terms of cooperation. This has made African states far more open to Chinese trade as Africans see the multi-faceted benefits of relations with China, and feel as though China treats them as equals.


A Chronological Evaluation of Sino-African Relations

Chinese involvement in Africa has had different motivations over the last 50 years, but has used similar methods and tools to increase Chinese influence in Africa. More importantly, systemic changes have altered the purpose of expanding this influence. In this section of analysis, I will seek to identify the development of China’s new idealpolitik foreign policy, primarily with regards to Africa. As we noted earlier, since the creation of the PRC, its foreign policy has not been consistent in its focus and objectives. However, several significant events have shaped the foreign policy environment to create a paradigm shift within the Chinese leadership towards a paradigm that seeks to reconcile China’s rise with a more peaceful and cooperative agenda. This paper argues that the recent rise in Chinese interest in Africa is the result of actions taken as a part of this new paradigm. If this is indeed true, we should expect to find correlation between the evolution of Chinese foreign policy goals and the increasing Chinese activity in Africa.

As an extension of China’s overall foreign policy, China’s Africa policy can be broken down into three roughly defined phases: legitimacy, solidarity and globalization. More than just a chronological progression, each phase provides a stable foundation for the following stage. Legitimacy, originally thought of in terms of recognition, laid a basis for Chinese relations with Africa and for its claims to lead the third world. Solidarity with the third world, embodied in South-South cooperation, has established a mechanism for China’s accession into a global economy and for China’s industrialization. The economic and political ramifications of China’s acceptance of globalization created China’s ability to truly seek great-power status—still relying on its legitimacy and solidarity with developing states.

The ‘legitimacy phase’, from 1949 to 1971, is characterized by the driving foreign policy goal of gaining recognition of the PRC as the legitimate government of China. In this
early phase, China participated with the Non-Aligned Movement, and aggressively (and covertly) supported decolonization movements in Africa, in an effort to deny recognition to Taiwan and challenge the Western world order (Yu 1977, 105; Yu 1988, 851). Figure 7 shows the African countries where China supported armed insurrections from the 1949 through the late 1980s, though much of this activity occurred in the 1960s. This period ended with the U.N.’s recognition of the PRC as the official government of China. Since that time, recognition has continued to factor into China’s African relations, but at a much lower level than in the 1960 and 1970s—in part because the number of countries that recognize Taiwan has dwindled. China’s soft power successes have also minimized the need to focus on Taiwan—as recognition has become a side benefit of improved Chinese relations with African states.
The second phase can be described as the “solidarity” or “three worlds” phase. From 1971 to 1989, China turned its focus against the two world superpowers—first the U.S.S.R. and later the U.S. The 1960 Sino-Soviet split rapidly became a defining feature of Chinese foreign policy, with China seeking to block Soviet gains in Africa and refusing to join the communist world (Yu 1977, 97, 103). In this phase (1974) Deng Xiaoping first articulated the “Three Worlds” theory—subdividing the world economically into capitalist, communist and developing countries. After reaching some resolution with its Soviet counterpart, China’s focus turned to opposition of hegemonic behavior, and the North-South dichotomy (Jisi 1994, 486). Jisi (1994, 492) also notes that the Chinese position in the late-1980s was “not to take sides with either superpower … but to stand firmly with developing countries in North-South relations.” This timeframe is also characterized by increasing liberalism in the Chinese economic system, as reforms emplaced by Deng Xiaoping in 1978 began to take hold and China’s economy began to move steadily forward.

The 1989 crackdown at Tiananmen marks a significant change in Chinese domestic and foreign policy, and the beginning of the ‘globalization’ phase. After the crushing international response to the crackdown on student protesters at Tiananmen Square, China looked again to the third world for diplomatic validation. But this time, China’s efforts were supported by a skyrocketing industrializing economy, whose demand for raw materials and markets began to spiral out of control. By the late 1990s, China’s globalization effort was in full swing. Relative economic success during the Asian financial crisis, a positive new U.S. foreign policy and the return of Hong Kong and Macao spurred a confident China to set out in search of new markets and resources to support its burgeoning economy (Shih 2005, 759). China acceded to the World Trade Organization and it’s participation in international organizations increased dramatically, from 37 in 1988 to more than 50 in 2005 (Kim 1990,
The 1997 People’s Congress began to evaluate its “go global” economic strategy, and in 2000, the first FOCAC was held in Beijing. China was beginning to institutionalize its economic globalization.

This globalization has intensified greatly since 2003, and may indicate to another dramatic shift in Chinese foreign policy. Always critical of American ‘imperialism,’ following the U.S. unilateral invasion of Iraq under the preventative war doctrine, Chinese critiques of ‘hegemonism’ (though never directly the U.S.) resurged and Chinese statements began to call for the return to a more stable multi-power world order. Implied in this desire is the understanding that China is a great-power and should be treated on par with the United States and other great-powers, representing a break from China’s long-held ‘victim mentality.’ This policy resulted from the realization that not only was conflict damaging to business, but unilateral action by the world’s lone superpower could carry tremendous consequences for nascent powers. China has realized that it can only rise peacefully if it is able to transcend the current methods for great-power emergence (Bijian 2005).

If Chinese involvement in Africa is indeed the result of a broader international strategy, we should expect there to be a significant temporal correlation between the broadening of activity in Africa and a paradigm shift amongst the Chinese leadership. To identify this correlation, I will graph together data on factors of overall Chinese foreign policy (membership in international organizations and military spending) with Africa-specific data: Chinese leadership visits to Africa, Chinese FDI to Africa and Sino-African trade). Significant growth in any indicator can then be combined be with a qualitative analysis to identify the potential reasons for growth in Sino-African relations. If this growth is in response to a move to challenge the United States, we should see corresponding growth in both Chinese military spending and indicators in Africa. Such growth should be visible at
times of poor relations with the U.S. such as the 1999 bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Kosovo. On the other hand, if the growth in Sino-African relations can be tied to domestic events or the development of a new ideology in China, it would evince support for this growth as part of a greater plan.

In order to conduct a trend comparison on a single graph, I have established the lowest and highest values for each area of examination as 0 (zero) and 100, respectively. While this may provide the false indication that some Chinese efforts are at their maximum potential, it merely shows that they are at their highest level to date. It also provides a method of judging Chinese activity relative to itself across time, which is what a historical analysis should indicate. Figure 8 depicts not only the Africa-related FDI, trade and

![Figure 8: Aggregate Trends in Chinese Foreign Policy towards Africa, 1990-2006](image-url)
leadership visits, but also incorporates Chinese actions for global posturing, such as participation in international organizations and military spending.

While the first two phases of Chinese involvement in Africa (legitimacy and solidarity) were extremely important in establishing China as a legitimate state actor and defining a base of operations, I intend to focus primarily on the globalization phase of China’s African policy. The greatest growth in Sino-African relations has occurred since Tiananmen and this timeframe also allows us the fidelity to identify increases in relations that occurred in the mid-1990s and 2002-2003. Figure 8 represents the growth of general foreign policy indicators (military spending and IGO membership) and Africa policy (FDI, leadership visits and bilateral trade) since 1990.

Upon review, a few notable observations quickly stand out. Realist perceptions of China as a growing military threat would likely predict that Chinese military spending is the result of systemic factors which increase perceptions of a military threat to China. Yet, Chinese military spending has increased at a relatively standard rate, without significant jumps in response to significant world events (such as the 1999 bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Kosovo) that may have indicated a policy predicated on Realist beliefs. Moreover, the increasing technological costs of modernizing a military force can in many ways account for the consistent increase in budget. A second point is that the limited data on Chinese IGO membership leads to a constant, and misleading, rate of growth in this indicator, providing only the greater awareness of Chinese participation in international organizations.

The use of leadership visits to increase investment and trade also becomes readily apparent. President Yang Shangkun’s two-week visit in 1992, and FM Qian Qichen’s institution of annual visits to Africa begin a post-Tiananmen rise in visits to Africa that is
accompanied by an increase in FDI from minimal levels in 1990. A spike of leadership visits between 1996 and 1998 (including President Jiang Zemin’s 1996 visit) saw a corresponding increase in FDI in 1996-97 and again in 1999. While Chinese leadership visits trail off since 2003, this may be attributable to a corresponding increase in the visits of African heads of state to China. FDI spikes are also noted in 2001 and 2004, each year following FOCACs, when the various African heads of state signed bilateral investment agreements with China. Trade, which slowly increased throughout the 1990s shows spikes around 1998 and again in 2003, for reasons that can be attributed to both international and domestic events.

If we look in greater detail at the international events around 1997-8 and 2003, we see that the triggers for this activity are specifically linked to the maintenance of a peaceful business atmosphere and a grand Chinese strategic vision, rather than national security and economic exploitation. These policies reflect a learning process—not only from past Chinese policies—they reflect a greater understanding of world politics and foreign perceptions of Chinese behavior. China’s strong economic performance in the face of the ‘Asian Flu’ validated the Chinese experiment with globalization, especially as a guardian of continued Chinese economic growth. The Clinton Administration’s policy of ‘engagement’ towards China positively reinforced Chinese participation in the global economy and accepted China as a major player in the U.S. world order. Drawing the connection between a strong, globalized economy and the benefits of a peaceful development environment, China found its new national interest defined by maintaining a peaceful environment for doing business. This superseded the previous focus on sovereignty and national unity—a focus which had increasingly conflicted with the United States’ order. China recognized that these policies were feeding into fears of a ‘rising China’ and complicated not only the goal of national unity it was trying to achieve, but also endangered the growth of China’s economy.
At the same time, domestic changes were influencing the advancement of a paradigmatic change as to China’s rightful place in the international order. Certainly, events such as Deng Xiaoping’s “Open Door” policy and the concept of “socialism with Chinese Characteristics” were initial steps in preparing China for a major role in a global world economy; yet it was not until the late 1990s that this paradigmatic shift really began to bear fruit. Notably, the two major shifts in Sino-African trade and investment follow recent Party Congresses, in 1997 and 2002. The 15th Party Congress in 1997 announced steps to deepen privatization and undertook a path towards modernization and industrialization to ensure sustainable growth (Zemin 1997). The 16th Party Congress in 2002 embraced the “go global” trade model and placed greater emphasis on advocating world peace and promoting economic co-prosperity, highlighting the symbiosis of a peaceful environment and economic development (Satoshi 2006). Hu Jintao’s 2003 election solidified this shift, as the relatively young Chinese leader began to push for even greater internationalism.

But Hu’s election also coincided with the creation of a new security environment. With the Bush Doctrine ruling world relations, and the sight of unilateral, preemptive action imposed on a fellow developing country, China found itself in a position where it could not rise, unless it could rise peacefully. This realization has helped steer the general populace in favor of a “peaceful rise” and the necessary preconditions that must accompany that rise. In line with Gramscian theory, and the idea that war is bad for business, China has taken an adamant stand against conflict and in favor of cooperation (State Council Information Office, 2006). Since 2003, Premier Hu Jintao has focused on clarifying China’s role as a peaceful power, which seeks to avoid conflict and respects the rights of other countries. China began to invest in its image both at home and abroad, fostering the growth of domestic nationalism and seeking to extend its soft power abroad. China has also begun to
look ahead to its role as the next superpower. The 1997 Party Congress embraced the concept of “great-power diplomacy” (daguo guanxi) over “diplomacy towards great powers” (dui daguo waijiao), emphasizing a shift to perceiving itself as a great-power (Shih, 755). Chinese foreign policy has begun to shift to legitimating not only its role as a superpower, but gaining support for its more peaceful world view, based on cooperation and mutual respect (Bijian 2005).

In addition to the structural changes incurred by the U.S.’s neoconservative foreign policy, several other international events helped spur China’s Africa policy in 2003. First, after years of campaigning, China was admitted to the World Trade Organization in 2000, granting China a formal role in international economic relations. Not to be underestimated, this move increased China’s legitimacy in its economic and trade relations. Second, as previously discussed, in the early years of the millennium, several resource-rich African countries emerged from civil war ready to do business with China. The addition of Angola, Sudan and Congo to the list of China’s trading partners has certainly driven an increased Chinese presence in Africa.

While these structural factors do inflate the statistics and complicate analysis, the domestic and policy changes lay a strong foundation for Sino-African relations, one that allowed for a rapid increase in relations as new markets became available. For example, the FOCAC, which resulted from a Chinese commitment to development and predated these structural changes, has likely become the greatest single mechanism for increasing Sino-African relations. One method to overcome this limitation is to look at Chinese bilateral relations with an African state that would not have been affected by the arrival of new trading partners in Africa.
**Tanzania: A Case Study of Sino-African Relations**

A final consideration in establishing the reasons for Chinese involvement in Africa is to examine Chinese relations with individual states, in order to see if China’s larger strategic vision is apparent at this lowest of level, or if it is only visible in China’s overarching foreign relations with Africa. Based upon our previous analysis, we should expect to see an increase in trade in the 1996-97 timeframe, and again since 2003. Simply correlating the dates of investment will, however, provide only a tentative link to the greater strategy I have previously outlined. More important will be the nature and focus of Chinese relations. If no individual factor, such as natural resources, diplomatic recognition or hegemonic competition can explain these relations, then there must be a larger strategy at work.

Naturally, each of Africa’s 53 independent countries has its own unique people, culture and history, meaning that relations may vary greatly between countries. Yet African countries share many traits, many resulting from the European colonization that affected the entire continent until the decolonization movement in the 1960s and 1970s. The rejection of colonial governance left a combination of states that were economically and politically weak, with underdeveloped infrastructure, rampant poverty and immature political systems. To combat these weaknesses, many African states sold their political allegiance in the Cold War for aid from the U.S. or U.S.S.R. This aid often came in the form of military equipment and weaponry, and the superpowers sought to undo the other’s weak political regime by arming rebels and insurgent groups. This set the stage for civil war and militarization of entire generations, and only worsened the plight of the average African. While certainly far from the description of every African country, these ailments are common to a good portion of the states on that continent.
For the purposes of this case study, I have chosen to look at Chinese relations with Tanzania. While Tanzania is not China’s largest or most visible African trading partner, its consistent governance and low profile throughout our period of observation make it suitable for our study. Angola, the largest exporter of oil to China, did not break out of its civil war until 2002, so it becomes difficult to discern if the spike in Chinese investment is representative of a specific Chinese policy, or simply of peace in Angola. Sudan was also in an on-again/off-again civil war until 2004, and the current Darfur crisis is causing Beijing to publicly play down many of its endeavors. Both Egypt and South Africa’s high profiles cause a much greater scope of superpower involvement, and the latter’s apartheid policy alienated it from mainland China until the 1990s (Taylor 2000). Chad repeatedly switched from relations with the PRC and relations with Taiwan, causing large gaps in relations, making consistent analysis difficult. Zambia offers potential, but much like Angola’s reliance on oil, Zambia’s one-dimensional economy means that all indicators of Sino-Zambian relations hinge on the copper trade (Center for Chinese Studies 2007, 89). Senegal, Nigeria and Gabon have all held fairly consistent relations with China, but at low levels, leaving us with very little information to work with. In the end, our options for a solid case study are very limited, and the modest story of Tanzania becomes a useful model for Chinese involvement in Africa.

In many ways Tanzania is not your typical African nation, though its longstanding peace and consistent governance stand out among its peers. Tanzania’s colonial history is more varied than most. Portugal established colonies along coastal Tanzania (Zanzibar) in the 1600s, but were pushed out in the 1800s, replaced by the Omani Sultanate. Germany and Britain divided the area of present-day Tanzania between them, with Germany managing the inland territory (Tanganyika) and Britain the islands (Zanzibar and Pemba). After WWI,
Tanganyika became a League of Nations protectorate, and later became a U.N. trustee administered by Great Britain. Following the development of a national liberation movement, Tanganyika was granted independence in 1961. Zanzibar gained independence two years later and in 1964, the two bonded together to form the United Republic of Tanzania. Since then, Tanzania has been relatively stable, under the governance of a functional democracy (United States Department of State 2007).

Yet Tanzania is very much a developing country, and economically, it is very similar to other African states. Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a per capita income of only around $800/year (Central Intelligence Agency 2007). Its economy is primarily agricultural and its exports focus on timber, gold and copper. International assistance from the IMF, World Bank and other countries has buoyed its real GDP, allowing for a nearly 5% growth rate (Central Intelligence Agency 2007).

China’s involvement with Tanzania began immediately; China established diplomatic relations with both Tanganyika and Zanzibar as they gained their independence, and extended that recognition to the Tanzania when it was created in 1964 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003b). As indicated in Table 2, China and Tanzania signed the Agreement on Economical and Technical Assistance in 1964, the Treaty of Friendship with Tanzania in 1965, as has signed numerous other bilateral agreements on trade, health and culture (Center for Chinese Studies 2007, 45; china.org.cn). In 1976, China completed the six-year construction of the Tanzania-Zambia railway. The entire project was funded by Chinese aid, to the tune of $600 million, and carried out by the Chinese Civil Engineering Construction Company (Zambia Hopes, 2001; Center for Chinese Studies 2007, 44). It was China’s first major infrastructure project in Africa, and a major success for the Chinese model of
development. In the mid-1980s, and again in 1996, China and Tanzania signed bilateral agreements paving the way for improved trade relations and economic loans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Agreement Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 1964</td>
<td>The Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation between the People's Republic of China and the United Republic of Tanzania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1965</td>
<td>The Trade Agreement between the People's Republic of China and the United Republic of Tanzania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>The Agreement on Dispatching Chinese Medical Teams to Tanzania</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Bilateral agreements between China and Tanzania, 1964 – Present

To date, Tanzania is the largest recipient of Chinese aid, totaling US$2 billion since 1964 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003b). By the 1990s, this aid had shifted from purely bilateral investment aid to Chinese loans to Tanzania, allowing for a more diversified and consistent approach to development, rather than just funding individual “turnkey” projects such as the Tazara railway (Center for Chinese Studies 2007, 46). In 2001, China cancelled US$19.2 million in Tanzanian debt, totaling one-third of all Tanzanian external debt, as part of a $1.3 billion package of debt relief to 31 South African Development Council (SADC) members (Center for Chinese Studies 2007, 44; Kaplinsky, McCormack and Morris 2006, 22).

Notably, much of the debt written off was debt incurred from Chinese loans to support the building of the Tazara railway (Zambia: China Writes 2006). Since the beginning of joint-
venture cooperation in 1981, over 100 infrastructure projects have resulted from Sino-Tanzanian cooperation, focusing on construction, transport, mining, trade, health and education (Center for Chinese Studies 2007, 46). There are 41 Chinese-funded enterprises in Tanzania, with Chinese investment in another 85 Tanzanian enterprises and eight full Sino-Tanzanian joint ventures (Center for Chinese Studies 2007, 46). Chinese companies continue to be involved with the development of major infrastructure projects, such as building a new bridge linking Tanzania with Mozambique and a new airport in Zanzibar (Kaplinsky, McCormack and Morris 2006, 18; Saunders 2006, 41).

Compared with many other African nations, Tanzania’s trade with China is very low—in fact it doesn’t even rank in the top 10 for China’s African trade partners, mainly due to its lack of oil (Taylor 2006, 938). As Figure 9 shows, exports to China rose slightly in the 1996-97 period, doubling from US$9.6 million in 1995 to $19.2 million in 1996. This

Figure 9: Tanzania’s Exports to China, 1995-2005 (Centre for Chinese Studies 2007, 46)
was likely occasioned by the framework agreements on the provision of subsidized credit from China to Tanzania that occurred in those two years, as exports declined once again into late-1990s. Beginning in 2003, however, exports rose dramatically, and in 2005 exports were 36 times higher than in 2000.

Figure 10 illustrates that, unlike many petro-states such as Angola, Sudan and Chad, Tanzania's exports to China are more diverse, comprising mostly timber, cotton and copper. Looking at the nature of exports to China, it appears likely that the dramatic increases in exports reflect the increasing cost of copper, and the larger quantities of copper ore exported to China.

![Figure 10: Composition of Tanzania's Exports to China, 1995-2005 (Centre for Chinese Studies 2007, 88)](image)

Chinese exports to Tanzania have been consistently higher, though they also reflect a rise in 1997 and 2002-2005, as represented in Figure 11. A full nine percent of Tanzania’s
imports (as of 2004) came from China—one of the highest levels in sub-Saharan Africa (Kaplinsky, McCormack and Morris, 2006, 6).

Figure 11:
China’s Exports to Tanzania, 1995-2005 (Centre for Chinese Studies)

As Figure 12 illustrates, with the exception of the addition of oil derivative products (motor gasolines, heating oils, diesel fuels, etc.) in 2005, Chinese exports to Tanzania have been varied among basic consumer needs, including textiles, tires and batteries. With only minor variations in the nature of the exported goods, the 250% increase in exports to Tanzania occurring since 2000 can only be the result of a growing market in Tanzania. This market is the result of increasing investment and income in Tanzania stemming from new international loans, the expansion of Sino-Tanzanian business ventures and increased revenues from the growing export market. This development highlights the nature of the Chinese development model, and “mutual benefit”—that Chinese investment results in increased benefits for both China and the developing country. Indeed, increases in Chinese
Trade with and aid to Tanzania beget a more vibrant local economy and pave the way for higher standards of living and a stronger consumer market for Chinese goods.

As a one-party socialist democracy, Tanzania has been a good political fit for China. Tanzania's first President, Julius Nyerere was active in establishing relations with China, and visited China five times during his 21-year rule (china.org.cn). Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai visited Tanzania in 1965, cementing the relationship. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003b). Bilateral leadership visits have continued in earnest, with successive Tanzanian and Chinese leaders conducting frequent visits. Table 3 displays major visits between senior Chinese and Tanzanian leadership. Notably, China has only visited Tanzania once since 2006, while Tanzanian leaders have undertaken seven visits to China. This may suggest the level to which African states are now pursuing relations with China. More than just reaching agreements on trade, investment and culture, these visits provide an important view of Sino-
Tanzanian relations to the general public. During each visit, the media carries speeches from both the Tanzanian and Chinese sides focusing on the importance of cooperation, the south-south relationship and strategic partnerships (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2004; 2006b, 2006c; University of Alberta 2006). In his 2006 visit to Tanzania, Premier Wen Jiabao highlighted the long history of Sino-Tanzanian relations and emphasized their cooperation “in the struggle against colonialism and for national independence and the strive to maintain world peace and promote common development (Embassy of the PRC in Australia 2006).”

While intended more for public consumption and diplomatic propriety, these comments offer a contextual insight into Sino-Tanzanian relations. They also highlight positive characteristics of international cooperation and Chinese goodwill to the people of Tanzania—fostering a positive environment for future Sino-Tanzanian relations.

Far less data is available on the extent of China’s educational and medical assistance to Tanzania. China began to receive Tanzanian students at its universities in the 1960s and as of 2003, there were 80 Tanzanian students studying in China. By 2004, a total of 573 Tanzanian students had studied in China (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003b).

---

Table 3: Bilateral Leadership Visits Between China and Tanzania, 1995-2005 (Centre for Chinese Studies 2007, 88)
After signing the 1967 agreement on dispatching medical teams to Tanzania, China began a series of medical missions to that country, mostly focused on assisting with the fight against malaria. As of 2003, there were 46 Chinese medical personnel in Tanzania (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003b). In 2005, China donated mosquito nets and 2,500 doses of the effective anti-malarial drug, Artemisinin (China Donates 2005). While a strong gesture of goodwill, the gift pales in comparison to the 100,000 fatalities caused by malaria every year in Tanzania.

Using Tanzania as a case study, we are able to view Chinese relations at the very lowest level. This look at Tanzania reflects the key periods of Sino-African activity. Primarily in 1996-97 and again after 2001, there were significant increases in trade and aid, investment and leadership visits. In 1996-97, these developments may reflect increasing aid resulting from the coincident bilateral framework on Chinese investment signed in 1996. Interestingly, this also parallels the timeframe of the ‘Asian Flu’—a time when Chinese investment in Asia dropped by 14% (Saunders 2006, 39)—and could indicate Tanzania’s (and Africa’s) role in supporting China during that time. Looking at the post-2001 timeframe, we find increasing business relations and international ventures—likely reflecting China’s ‘go global’ campaign. This timeframe also coincides with changes in China’s demand for natural resources to fuel its growing economy, and witnessed an increase in copper ore exports to China. Finally, many of the bilateral aid agreements, leadership visits and investment projects were announced under the auspices of the FOCAC. Beginning in 2000, the exceptional increase in Sino-Tanzanian trade reflects the strong influence this forum has had in developing investment and trade between China and its African partners.

From this level, however, it is difficult to discern a greater strategy, which was more evident at the continental level. I believe there are several reasons for this limitation. First,
as I discussed previously, Tanzania represents a fairly small piece of China’s activity in Africa. As one of the poorest countries in the region (and the world) development in Tanzania has relatively little to offer China—or anyone else for that matter. For this reason, there is little international interest in Tanzania, and very little trade or investment occurs with distant trading partners. This means that few projects are needed to curry the same favor that takes significantly more effort elsewhere, such as Angola, where many nations are now seeking to gain advantages in the growing oil economy. Nonetheless, indicators in Tanzania are low across the board, and sensitive to the influence of even small developments. Second, the Chinese strategy counts on diplomatic support and the general extension of influence. As an individual country, Tanzania seems unimportant in China’s designs, but teamed with growing developments in Zambia, Mozambique and Angola, Tanzania becomes more relevant. Infrastructure projects, such as the Tazara railway or the new bridge from Mozambique, provide new outlets for raw material exports and facilitate both international and domestic commerce. The political allegiance of the large body of sub-Saharan states places China in a position to influence key African bodies such as the South African Development Council (SADC) and the African Union. Third, at the national level, trade and aid form the strongest indicator of activity. Goodwill visits, medical missions and exchange students are difficult to capture statistically, as is the public view of Chinese projects and companies. From the perspective of trade and aid, Chinese assistance looks very one-dimensional—focused on natural resources—and ignorant of the major changes this causes in the domestic economy.
Conclusion: Towards a Peaceful International System

This paper began by searching for the reasons why China’s involvement with Africa, on all fronts, has risen dramatically in the last ten years. Bilateral trade has risen by 400%, FDI has risen by 500% and more African states have relations with the PRC than ever before. Many analysts and many in the media point quickly to China’s expanded quest for natural resources—particularly oil and minerals. Others look to capitalism for an answer—that China’s businesses require sources of cheap resources and markets for its manufactured goods. Few analysts fail to mention that adherence to the One-China policy, meant to undermine Taiwanese legitimacy, is a core determinant of Chinese foreign relations with all states. Others view China’s growing military spending from a relative power paradigm and fear the expansion of Chinese influence throughout the developing world. Yet each of these viewpoints fails to account for the domestic mindset that drives China’s foreign policy and its Africa policy.

I have argued that China’s foreign policy is driven by a desire to cultivate its influence in developing countries, not for the purpose of conflict, but for the purpose of peace. The Chinese government, using Confucian thought as a guiding principle, seeks to legitimize the position it has achieved as a great power. The achievement of legitimacy is key to establishing a peaceful world order, rather than through domination. Supporting this goal, China does not seek its own ‘unipolar moment’, rather it seeks a return to a multi-polar world, where empowered international organizations can oversee the peace. China believes this arrangement can lead to a sustainable peace, one which will allow for its own continued development and that of other countries. Moreover, it ensures that China can rise peacefully into the international system, without being viewed as a threat.
In Africa, China’s policy is embodied in supporting the development and advancement of the lesser-developed countries that comprise the continent, as part of an effort to build its legitimacy there. China follows a simple strategy to encourage development in line with its new international economic order. It uses visits from its senior leadership, and more recently diplomatic fora such as the FOCAC, to establish relations and land agreements on trade, investment, culture and assistance. These diplomatic exchanges are accompanied by aid and investment packages and followed by rapidly increasing opportunities for bilateral trade. The earliest phases of this relationship are executed through what some label “development by China”, where Chinese investment pays for Chinese workers to improve domestic infrastructure in the target country. This construction, however, not only show the public China’s cooperative face, but also provides training and opportunities to local workers, stimulating the growth of the local economy and creating new business and investment opportunities. At the same time, this infrastructure benefits China’s near-term needs by providing improved mechanisms for facilitating the import natural resource from African states and improving the standard of living and creating markets for Chinese goods.

The current Chinese leadership paradigm stretches back thousands of years to Chinese antiquity. Even Confucian principles were based on the rituals and behaviors that had kept the peace in the preceding centuries. Confucian thought formed the basis for many of the policies of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping, including the “five principles of peaceful co-existence” the “three worlds” policies. Since Mao’s passing, the role of Confucianism in Chinese foreign policy has been carried forth under the banner of South-South cooperation and more recently the concept of strategic partnerships.
After identifying similarities between official Chinese statements and neo-Gramscian writings on the development of legitimacy, I used the latter as a guide to examine the development of Chinese efforts to foster its legitimacy on the international scene and then in Africa. Drawing on the writings of Gramsci, and neo-Gramscian theorists such as Robert Cox, I delineated some basic actions that China must carry out if it desires to establish legitimacy as a great-power. China has established strong bases of traditional military, economic and political power and has enjoyed significant soft power successes, such as the “Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence.” China has identified a solid base of secondary states, the developing world, to serve as the general public in its effort to popularize its philosophies and gain legitimacy. China currently spreads its principles to these states through a multi-faceted approach that focuses on the development of infrastructure, medical and educational awareness, economic assistance (to include trade) and a media campaign to properly frame its intentions. By convincing this ‘public’ of states, China hopes it can transcend the current paradigms of Western-style industrialization and realist hegemonic power transition. The next step, one which China has only begun to embark on, is to institutionalize its principles and leadership through the use of international organizations. If the early indicators are correct, China will try to perpetuate current international organizations in order to maintain its anti-hegemonistic reputation, and use the independence of these bodies to validate its leadership.

Looking at Chinese involvement in Africa from a chronological perspective, I was able to identify two particular timeframes in which factors of Chinese influence in Africa rose dramatically. This allowed me to look for particular events and structural characteristics that could have affected the change. In each case, both 1996-97 and 2003, I found that the primary determinants of this new policy were domestic rather than international. While
there were international factors that increased Chinese interest on the continent, these factors were the availability of new markets and success with globalization as a guardian of the Chinese economy. In fact, even the major security-related issue, the U.S.’s unilateral military action and pre-emptive strike doctrine pushed China to increase its cooperation with developing countries, rather than actively seeking to counter U.S. influence, in an effort to minimize chances of conflict.

In a final section, I used Chinese relations with Tanzania as an opportunity to seek out the applicability of this strategic vision at the level of the individual nation-state. Tanzania provided a decent case study because it had a long history of stable governance and relations with China—though these factors are also what make Tanzania somewhat atypical of China’s African partners. In general, I validated that relations in Tanzania followed the same general pattern as they did in the rest of Africa, though at a much less pronounced level. This is helpful in overcoming the concern that increases in indicators may result simply from the opening of new markets. China’s holistic approach to relations is more visible when focusing on just one country, as historical relationships, medical assistance and leadership visits seem more clearly inter-related. But the most obvious evidence of any greater Chinese strategy lies in the media—in leadership statements highlighting China’s cooperation and the unity of the Tanzanian and Chinese policies. These statements are vital to cultivating a positive public image of China in Tanzania, and indeed throughout Africa. True or not, the public diffusion of this image will lead to greater legitimacy for China’s leadership. Finally, the increased number of visits by Tanzanian leadership to China highlight Tanzania’s pursuit of relations with China—and demonstrates that China’s policy has gained legitimate support from Tanzania.
Tanzania is but one of 53 African countries, but it can be used as a microcosm for Chinese efforts to build its influence in Africa, and indeed throughout the developing world. Similar sections could be written on Angola, Liberia, Ethiopia or South Africa, or even non-African nations such as Kyrgyzstan, Argentina or Pakistan. Chinese interests are not limited to natural resources; Chinese infrastructure projects and assistance are not limited to facilitating the export of natural resources; Chinese assistance is not limited to strategic allies or great-power economies. Chinese relations with Africa are truly a part of a grand global strategy to maximize its influence and soft power in the developing world, and create support for the realization of its ideal world order.

Indeed, China’s foreign policy is very similar to that of the pre-hegemonic United States as it sought to establish its legitimacy following the two World Wars, a phenomenon that may warrant its own analysis. The similarities in these agendas—towards the establishment of a peaceful, liberal world order governed by supra-national institutions—should drive the U.S. to continue its policy of engagement with China, accepting China’s expanding influence not as a threat, but as an opportunity for international cooperation and peace. To accept China in this matter, the U.S. and Americans must break from the realist mindset that has dominated great-power relations, and embrace liberalism as the defining paradigm for U.S.-China relations. China is relying on this paradigm to facilitate its peaceful rise into the international system—and the establishment of an international order dominated by cooperation rather than confrontation.
Bibliography


Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). Overview: Association of Southeast Asian Nations. http://www.aseansec.org/64.htm


Femia, Joseph. 2005. Gramsci, Machiavelli and International Relations. Political Quarterly 76, no. 3 (July-September).


Freeman, Colin. 2007. President's visit made copper miners see red. The Sydney Morning Herald, February 5.


Go west, young man. 2007. Economist (January 4).


Kaplinsky, Raphael. 2006. Revisiting the revisited terms of trade: Will China make a difference? *World Development* 34, no. 6 (June): 981-995.


______. 2004.Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing Meets with His Tanzanian Counterpart. (June 1).


______. 2006b. President Hu Jintao Meets with His Tanzanian Counterpart (June 2).


Never Too Late to Scramble. 2006. *Economist*. (October 26).


University of Alberta, China Institute. 2006. Tanzania, China sign deals to boost ties. 2006. Article originally published by Reuters (June 23). [http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/chinainstitute/nav03.cfm?nav03=47447&nav02=43782&nav01=43092]


