

as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), China has also ensured a constant dialogue with African countries in order to implement Chinese promises in the continent. At the 2006 summit of FOCAC for example, various policies were established such as the creation of the China-Africa Development Fund and the creation of trade and economic cooperation zones³⁰.

Despite its obvious interest in African oil and natural resources, China refrained from over-emphasizing it as it prefers to project itself as a reliable and long-term economic partner for Africa, thus expanding its interests on a broad range of economic exchanges³¹. Aid, for example, has been one of the main channels used by China to improve its prestige and influence in Africa, including “[g]rant aid, interest-free loans and concessional loans are all deployed, as are non-monetary forms of aid, such as technical assistance and training, and other simulative tools such as debt relief and tariff exemptions”³². FOCAC and the China Export-Import Bank (China ExIm Bank) are also involved in several projects focusing on energy, infrastructure (with the construction of hospitals and rural schools) and transportation (especially related to oil facilities in oil-rich countries like Sudan). Thus, China is looking at a long-term relationship and is already thinking ahead, helping some African states to develop economically and to become stable partners in the future.

³⁰ Ibid. pp. 67

³¹ Large, D. “Beyond ‘Dragon in the Bush’: The Study of China–Africa Relations.” *African Affairs*, 107/426: 2008, Pp. 45–61. ; Sun, Y. “China’s Increasing Interest in Africa: Benign but Hardly Altruistic.” Brookings. URL: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2013/04/05/chinas-increasing-interest-in-africa-benign-but-hardly-altruistic/> (2013); Ayodele, T. “Misconceptions About China’s Interests in Africa.” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*. URL: <http://journal.georgetown.edu/misconceptions-about-chinas-interest-in-africa/>, 2015

³² Raine, S. *China’s African Challenges*. London: Routledge. 2009, pp. 65.

On the other hand, China has been implementing its usual ‘win-win’ strategy, ensuring that both trade partners have (real) mutual benefits. By developing the oil sector in Sudan, China secured important oil supplies and the Sudanese government secured one steady economic partner—it has only a few—along other compensations (i.e. arms). Since many African countries are particularly in need of infrastructure development, China also followed a coalition investment strategy; Naidu and Davies summarize: “Multiple Chinese state-owned companies across diverse industries are politically orchestrated to engage a recipient African economy in a way that can include tying energy acquisitions to funding for infrastructure development.”³³. Overall, China’s goal is obviously long-term but similar to the Middle Eastern case, it has focused on purchasing assets to avoid over-reliance on the global oil market and protect its access to oil at all times³⁴.

China is taking its commitment to Africa very seriously and has explored new venues for cooperation in addition to natural resources. Furthermore, China’s equity ownership strategy has proven to be very efficient in terms of control over foreign oil supplies but has raised immediate concerns in Washington who worried about China’s growing influence. Among others, Washington has been particularly interested in China’s economic strategy, known as the Beijing Consensus, in order to determine whether it could become a threat to American business strategy and United States’ energy security in the Middle East and North Africa. I will briefly explain the the Beijing Consensus and the Washington

³³ Naidu, S. and Davies, M. China Fuels its Future with Africa’s Riches. Johannesburg: *South African Journal of International Affairs* 13: 69-83. (2006), pp. 80.

³⁴ Taylor, I. “China’s Oil Diplomacy in Africa.” John Wiley & Sons. New York: *International Affairs* 82: 942. (2006)