

# NAVIGATING THE DRAGON AND THE ELEPHANT: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CHINESE AND INDIAN POLICIES IN AFRICA

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## Abstract

*The engagement of China and India in Africa has become a critical focus in contemporary international relations, marked by substantial investments aimed at securing economic, political, and strategic interests. This study provides a comparative analysis of Chinese and Indian investments in Africa, exploring the distinct approaches, objectives, and impacts of these two Asian giants. The research delves into the motivations driving Chinese and Indian engagement, highlighting how historical ties, resource needs, and geopolitical ambitions shape their policies.*

*China's involvement in Africa is characterized by large-scale infrastructure projects, comprehensive financial aid, and a robust presence in sectors like mining, construction, and telecommunications. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) serves as a cornerstone of China's strategy, fostering extensive connectivity and economic integration across the continent. In contrast, India's approach is more diversified and grassroots-oriented, emphasizing capacity building, educational partnerships, and development cooperation through initiatives such as the India-Africa Forum Summit.*

*The study examines the economic, social, and environmental impacts of these investments on African countries. It investigates how Chinese and Indian projects influence local economies, job creation, and technology transfer, while also addressing concerns related to debt sustainability, environmental degradation, and labour practices. Through case studies of specific African nations, the research highlights the varying degrees of acceptance and resistance encountered by Chinese and Indian enterprises.*

*Furthermore, the analysis considers the geopolitical implications of Sino-Indian competition and cooperation in Africa. It assesses how their engagements intersect with broader global dynamics, including relations with Western powers and regional African organizations. The study underscores the potential for collaborative efforts that leverage the strengths of both countries to foster sustainable development in Africa.*

*Ultimately, this research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how China and India navigate their roles as emerging global powers in Africa, offering insights into the opportunities and challenges inherent in their investments. The findings contribute to the discourse on South-South cooperation and the evolving landscape of international development.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Belt and Road Initiative, India-Africa Forum Summit, South-South Cooperation, Technology Transfer, Debt Sustainability*

## **Introduction**

In the 21st century, the geopolitical landscape of Africa has been increasingly influenced by the strategic interests of two rising Asian giants: China and India. These nations, often metaphorically referred to as the Dragon and the Elephant, have embarked on significant engagements across the African continent, shaping its economic, political, and social spheres. This comparative analysis aims to explore and contrast the approaches, objectives, and impacts of Chinese and Indian policies in Africa, offering insights into how these two countries navigate their African endeavours.

China's engagement with Africa is characterized by its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), extensive infrastructure projects, and robust trade relations. The Chinese government has invested billions of dollars in constructing roads, railways, ports, and other critical infrastructure, aiming to enhance connectivity and stimulate economic growth.

China's approach is driven by a blend of state-led initiatives and partnerships with African governments, often accompanied by significant financial assistance and loans. This model has garnered both praise and criticism; on one hand, it has accelerated development and created jobs, while on the other, it has raised concerns about debt sustainability and local economic displacement.

In contrast, India's policy in Africa is shaped by historical ties, cultural connections, and a focus on capacity building and human resource development. Unlike China's infrastructure-heavy approach, India's involvement emphasizes education, healthcare, information technology, and agricultural development. Indian companies and government-backed initiatives have established numerous educational and vocational training centers across the continent, aiming to empower local populations with skills and knowledge. Additionally, India's engagement is marked by its democratic ethos and its efforts to build people-to-people connections, fostering goodwill and mutual understanding.

Both China and India are motivated by a mix of strategic interests and economic imperatives. Africa's vast natural resources, including oil, minerals, and agricultural products, are vital to the industrial and economic growth of both Asian giants. Furthermore, Africa represents a burgeoning market for goods and services, providing opportunities for Chinese and Indian businesses to expand their global reach. Strategically, both countries seek to enhance their global influence and secure geopolitical allies, recognizing Africa's growing importance on the world stage.

Despite these similarities, the execution and reception of their policies differ significantly. China's top-down approach, characterized by large-scale infrastructure projects and substantial financial outlays, has led to rapid transformations but also stirred controversy regarding neocolonialism and dependency. India's more decentralized and collaborative strategy, focusing on building local capacities and fostering sustainable development, has generally been perceived more favourably, though it lacks the same scale and visibility as China's initiatives.

This comparative analysis seeks to delve deeper into the nuances of Chinese and Indian policies in Africa, examining how each country's historical context, domestic priorities, and diplomatic strategies shape their interactions with the continent. By understanding these dynamics, we can gain a clearer picture of how the Dragon and the Elephant navigate their African engagements, and what this means for the future of Africa's development and its role in global geopolitics.

### **Areas of Competition and Potential Conflict**

The severity of the issue between India and China has been exacerbated by the increasing strategic ambitions and competitive character of their national interests in South Asia and Southeast Asia. During the era after the end of the Cold War, the pursuit of energy security has led to competition among these nations for control over maritime resources. China's foreign policy in the post-Cold War international system aims to construct a multi-polar world order, with China as a regional powerhouse. China's Asian strategy aims to thwart the emergence of a rival power that may potentially undermine China's dominant position.

According to Malik (2001), China is very concerned about India's growing progress in terms of material power, including economic capability, military might, and nuclear technology. Beijing regards India as a potential rival. China's South Asia strategy is primarily focused on India, exerting pressure on India through the provision of military and financial assistance to other nations in the region. Since the 1960s, Beijing has engaged in armed insurgency with India's neighbouring countries as a strategic response to offset India's expanding material influence. Currently, the majority of China's weaponry exports, namely 90 percent, are directed towards nations that share a border with India.

### **In the Name of Oil and Metals**

It is widely acknowledged that both countries' current strong interest in Africa is motivated by their desire to obtain access to raw materials and ensure national energy security. This is in order to sustain their current economic development and also to expand their markets for

inexpensive manufactured goods. Oil is the most important resource that both countries are seeking in Africa. From this standpoint, it is evident why both capitals have pursued assertive oil diplomacy in order to secure oil resources for their expanding local market in the near future, while simultaneously aiming to establish themselves as significant participants in the global oil market in the long term.

The Chinese and Indian economies are experiencing significant growth and have a high demand for oil. This has resulted in a significant impact on the international oil market and geopolitical landscape. The process of industrialization and the consequent improvement in living conditions have led to a significant and rapid increase in the demand for oil. Based on the International Energy Agency (IEA, 2007) report, China and India are projected to contribute 43% of the worldwide growth in oil demand from 2005 to 2030. Additionally, their total oil consumption is expected to rise from 9.3 to 23.1 million barrels per day (mb/d) during this timeframe. This signifies a yearly increase of 3.7%. Given the projected increase in the number of automobiles in both China and India, with China expected to have over 200 million vehicles by 2030 and India expected to have 115 million, it is estimated that two-thirds of the oil consumption would be driven by the transportation sector.

Additionally, due to the limited production capacity of Chinese and Indian oil fields, as well as their relatively small proved reserves, both nations will need to increase their oil imports in order to meet the rising demand. The estimated growth in oil imports for China and India is expected to rise from 5.4 million barrels per day (mb/d) in 2006 to 19.1 mb/d in 2030. This surpasses the combined present oil imports of the USA and Japan. The International Energy Agency (IEA) predicts that both India and China will increasingly depend on oil to fulfil its energy requirements. By 2030, oil is expected to account for 25% of India's primary fuel consumption, a significant increase of 24% compared to 2005. Similarly, in China, the proportion of oil in their energy mix is projected to rise from 19% to 21%. Furthermore, as earnings in China continue to increase, the per-capita demand for oil will stay greater in comparison to India. In summary, the IEA forecasts that oil will continue to be the primary concern for the Chinese and Indian

governments as they strive to address increasing concerns around energy security. This statement indicates that there is a strong possibility of a significant rise in their need for imported goods, particularly in the transportation industry. Additionally, it suggests that there are few alternatives to oil products, making it difficult for them to transition to other options.

Furthermore, it is anticipated that the hydrocarbon reserves of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) nations would undergo significant expansion. In 2007, the combined production of the top 10 oil producers in the Sub-Saharan Africa region amounted to 5.6 million barrels per day (mb/d), with 5.1 mb/d being sold to other countries. By 2030, the estimated export output is expected to increase from 6.4mb/d to 7.4mb/d. Currently, Nigeria and Angola are playing a significant role in driving the growth of the oil industry, and this trend is expected to continue. As other countries become oil producers, they will also contribute to this development, as noted by the International Energy Agency (IEA) in 2007.

China and India are competing to get a share of this oil supply. The trade arrangements between China-Africa and India-Africa indicate that the primary trading partners for Beijing and Delhi are nations that produce oil. Muller-Kreener (2008) argues that the pursuit of energy security has significantly altered the foreign policies of both nations, resulting in the emergence of a new foreign policy that impacts the current geopolitical landscape. China's pursuit of energy security through its Africa-ward oil diplomacy extends beyond just economic considerations. The text discusses China's comprehensive development plan, the trajectory of its modernization program, and the rising nature of China as a global power.

Ian Taylor, in the year 2006. India may be described in a similar manner. Consequently, China has effectively positioned itself as a prominent participant in the African oil industry, having established bases in significant oil-producing nations like Nigeria and Angola. Chinese investment has enabled Sudan to transition from being a country that imported more oil than it exported to becoming a country that exports more oil than it imports in a span of less than five years

(1993-1997). China is actively exploring for oil in both established medium-scale producing nations such as Congo, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea, as well as in emerging oil-producing countries like Ghana. According to IDE-JETRO (2009), Chinese oil companies are currently active in almost 20 African countries, involved in both the exploration and production as well as the refining and distribution of oil. This presents a notable strategic and economic competition to both well-established major companies and smaller independent ones, which have long held dominant positions in Africa's energy industry. Africa is an important contributor to India's energy security. In 2014, India obtained the majority of its oil from Nigeria and Angola, where Indian businesses had acquired some properties. Nigeria and Equatorial Guinea are two of India's primary gas suppliers.

Currently, ONGC Videsh, a public sector corporation from India, has made substantial investments in the oil and gas industry in Africa, specifically in Sudan, South Sudan, and Libya. Delhi is offering African countries its knowledge and skills in oil exploration, refining, consultation, training, and infrastructure development to ensure access to hydrocarbon deposits. Nevertheless, Delhi's endeavors are significantly overshadowed by China's massive \$25 billion investment in the African oil and gas industry (Business Standard, January 20, 2016).

### **In Search of New Markets**

In contrast to Afro-pessimists, India and China view the continent as a market with more potential for their produced goods. Africa's current population in 2020, as estimated by the United Nations, is around 1.3 billion, which accounts for 16.72% of the global population. The continent presents a vast market with diverse consumer demands that both Asian economies are eager to meet. China and India have been incentivizing their corporations to invest in Africa and gain market dominance, due to this rationale.

China's central government has shown clear signs of actively assisting state-owned companies (SOEs) in directing foreign direct investments

(FDIs) towards Africa. Sautman and Hairong (2009) state that an Indian official has characterized Africa as a region with exceptional commercial prospects, while another official has encouraged Indian businesspeople to embrace risks, since they are often accompanied by benefits. They delivered speeches at the India-Business collaboration Summit, which was co-organized by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Federation of Indian Chambers and Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in January 2009.

Chinese and Indian investors are displaying a high level of enthusiasm for the economic climate in the continent, in contrast to other investors who are more sceptical due to concerns about investment limitations, political stability, and physical security. McKinsey's analysis conducted in 2017 reveals that over the past two decades, China has transitioned from a minor player to Africa's foremost commercial partner. In 2018, China conducted trade with the continent amounting to \$185 billion, which was an increase from \$155 billion in 2017, representing a growth rate of almost 20% annually. Foreign direct investment has had a rapid growth rate of around 40% per year over the past decade. The growing connections between China and Africa are strengthened by the presence of several Chinese companies working throughout the continent. According to McKinsey, there are around 10,000 Chinese-owned companies operating in various sectors in Africa. Of these, one-third are involved in manufacturing, one-fourth in services, and one-fifth in both commerce and construction, as well as real estate.

To be more precise, Chinese enterprises are responsible for around 12% of the continent's industrial production, which amounts to a total value of \$500 billion every year. Chinese businesses dominate over 50% of Africa's building projects that are granted through international bidding processes in the field of infrastructure. Furthermore, Chinese enterprises appear to prioritize addressing the market demands of Africa rather than focusing on exports. The entire magnitude of investment undertaken by these corporations serves as evidence of their

enduring commitment to Africa, above mere trade and contracting prospects.

India, the second largest emerging economy in Asia, is now expanding its economic presence in Africa. In 2018, the commerce between Africa and India amounted to \$62 billion, representing a significant 22% growth compared to the previous year. Due to significant advancements in trade, India emerged as Africa's fourth most significant trading partner in 2016, despite China's trade levels being nearly three times greater than India's. Africa primarily exports commodities such as crude oil, gold, coal, and various minerals to India. In return, Africa mostly purchases refined petroleum and medicines, which make up around 40% of the overall exports to African markets. In 2018, Africa received a total investment of \$54 billion. India, with \$15 billion, was listed as the fourth largest investor in the continent. Samuel and Ihssane (2019) stresses that initially focusing mostly on Mauritius because to its evident social and cultural connections, India's investments have since extended to Nigeria, South Africa, Angola, Kenya, Egypt, Tanzania, and to a lesser extent, North African nations. While Indian investment is expected to maintain a consistent growth rate, it is projected to remain behind that of other partners, particularly China. As previously observed, Chinese companies are involved in a wide range of industries. In contrast, the composition of Indian imports from Africa indicates that New Delhi's current economic involvement is mostly centered around natural resources.

Beijing's involvement with Africa has both a significant political aspect, which is equally as crucial as the economic aspect. In the last 15-20 years, China has been actively implementing a proactive foreign policy. China has transitioned from a policy of isolationism and is now actively seeking to play a significant role in global affairs. As part of this ambition, China has been expanding its bilateral diplomatic network, increasing its participation in multilateral organizations, and joining regional organizations that focus on security and economic matters. Beijing views this aggressive participation as a means to enhance its power.

Tull (2008) attributes this reframing of foreign policy to three sources. China's increased economic prosperity has bolstered its confidence in engaging with the international community. Engaging in an assertive foreign policy in this particular situation serves to enhance the reputation of the nation.

Furthermore, China has acquired knowledge from the financial crisis that impacted Asia in 1997, recognizing the utmost importance of regional and international stability in sustaining the smooth growth of its economy. Only a proactive foreign policy can effectively safeguard and uphold national interests in foreign territories. Furthermore, China perceives the dominance of the United States as a significant danger to its peaceful ascent as a global force. In response, Beijing has devised the notion of a "multi-polar world," which involves forming adaptable alliances to counterbalance US hegemony and establish a just international system. By depending on these partners, particularly those located in the South, Beijing aims to increase its range of choices in exerting its domestic and foreign objectives. China's involvement in Africa should be understood in this context, not as a unique policy towards the continent, but rather as a component of a global strategy that is being implemented in other parts of the world, such as Latin America.

Practically, this leads to significant advantages for the Chinese government. African countries serve as a significant source of diplomatic support in international organizations that use a one country-one vote system, such as the UN Commission on Human Rights. African votes have consistently played a crucial role in preventing successive Western efforts to condemn China on human rights matters. Additionally, it is widely considered that African votes have played a significant role in securing China's successful bids to host esteemed global events, such the Olympic Games and the World Exposition. Ultimately, securing diplomatic backing from African nations also advances the One China Principle, notwithstanding the diminished significance of the Taiwan factor in China's current African foreign policy compared to previous years. However, as the intensity of

the China-Taiwan struggle diminishes, a new rivalry has emerged to take its place. The emerging competition between China and Japan is rooted in Tokyo's aspiration to transform its existing position as an economic powerhouse but political subordinate. Should Japan secure a permanent membership in a reconstituted United Nations Security Council, it would inevitably lead to a substantial reduction in Chinese power in the area. Recognizing the crucial importance of African votes in this matter, Tokyo is increasing its involvement with the continent. Being the second largest contributor to Africa gives it the ability to utilize Official Development Assistance (ODA) as a powerful political instrument to increase its presence and influence on the global stage. India is actively seeking worldwide recognition. This line outlines two primary goals of its foreign policy: the restructuring of global governance institutions and the maintenance of strategic autonomy. In other words, it aims to create a favourable environment for its own growth without being limited by any global or regional power. India believes that developed nations founded organizations such as the UN, IMF, and World Bank to maintain their dominance in global affairs. Consequently, their portrayal in these physical forms is inherently prejudiced against nations located in the Southern hemisphere. India actively supports the reform of these institutions in order to achieve better representation, given its large population, economic advancement, significant political influence, and nuclear power status. Regarding the second objective, India's foreign policy has consistently embraced the principle of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which asserts the nation's freedom to choose its own path of development, known as the "third world way." According to Dubey (2008), the promotion of South-South collaboration is crucial for implementing these two aims.

India aims to solidify its position as a developing economy by redirecting global attention from its domestic challenges of poverty and inequality to its capacity to offer assistance to those in need. In 2003, the Indian Minister of Finance at the time, Jaswant Singh, made the decision to utilize development cooperation as a means to transition the

country from being a recipient of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to being a giver of ODA. The objective of this shift was to increase India's international political influence. Mthembu, in the year 2018. Despite Indian financial assistance to African countries still being lower than that of China, it has significantly increased in recent years. New Delhi anticipates that African countries will take this into account when voting for the reform of the UN system and granting India a seat in an expanded UN Security Council.

India aims to achieve its foreign policy objectives by initiating the IBSA Initiative with Brazil and South Africa, therefore garnering support from nations in South Asia, Africa, and Latin America for its global agenda. The matter of commerce serves as an illustration. According to Chakraborty et al. (2012), globalization has made it necessary for developing nations and least developed countries (LDCs) to strengthen their ability to negotiate in international discussions in order to reduce the influence of Western countries in global decision-making. IBSA aims to establish itself as the primary platform for creating a long-lasting alliance that safeguards the interests of rising economies in Asia, Africa, and South America. Indeed, the collapse of the Doha Round, which entails the reinforcement of trade barriers, poses a greater risk to the interests of developing nations compared to Western nations. Examining the matter through the special lens of TRIPS and Public Health, the WTO stated in 2005 that it was feasible to modify the provision on compulsory licensing and parallel imports. However, this modification would only be achievable if more than two-thirds of member nations ratified it within a two-year timeframe. The legislation would result in increased exports of pharmaceutical items to India and Brazil. Developing nations have not yet achieved the desired number, and hence IBSA effectively facilitates the coordination of efforts among countries in the global South to establish a more equitable international public health system. Likewise, the EU-US joint proposal, presented at the WTO Cancun Ministerial Conference in 2003, highlighted the resistance of developing nations to the insufficient pledges made by these two groups of countries to reduce

their agricultural subsidies within a certain timeframe. India, along with China, has contributed to amplifying the perspectives of the Southern countries on issues of food and livelihood security, as well as rural development.

On October 2, 2020, India and South Africa jointly requested the Council of Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights of WTO to relax intellectual property (IP) regulations for Covid-19 in light of the ongoing epidemic. Without a revision of existing regulations, it is probable that poor nations may not receive rapid benefits from a vaccination once it becomes available in both countries. India, which has a substantial market share of generic drugs in Africa, supported a move that aligned with a communique from the African Union. The communique called for the elimination of all restrictions related to copyright, industrial designs, patents, and the protection of undisclosed information or trade secrets. The objective was to ensure fair access to any effective COVID-19 vaccine. India is urging for the enforcement of the "Doha Declaration on public health" by WTO members in 2001. This declaration allows governments to issue compulsory licenses, which permit the use of a patented invention without the permission of the patent-holder. Similar to the situation with HIV, where Delhi, along with South Africa, challenged the Western pharmaceutical industry on patents, India's activities aim to emphasize its role as a representative of the Global South while also ensuring market prospects for its thriving pharmaceutical sector.

### **The 'Deep Pocket' Policy**

Chinese financial involvements in Africa have more significance compared to Indian ones, as evidenced by trade statistics. In 2018, China's trade with the continent amounted to \$185 billion, which was more than the \$155 billion recorded in 2017. In comparison, India's trade in 2018 amounted to \$62 billion, showing a significant growth of 22%. China is much ahead in terms of investment. They addressed the inaugural session of the African Development Bank (AfDB) annual meetings in India in May 2017. Narendra Modi stated that the nation

has provided 152 lines of loans, totalling about \$8 billion, to 44 African countries. China has provided a minimum of \$5 billion to Angola, Sudan, and Nigeria, respectively. China's strategy in Africa involves leveraging its significant financial resources to outcompete other countries, including India, in securing contracts given by African governments. This is due to the fact that Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) receive substantial financial backing from the government, allowing them to outbid its competitors. India is now unable to effectively compete with China in several aspects, since Indian companies have consistently faced defeat while competing against their Chinese counterparts in Africa. In 2006, OVL encountered SSI once again when it made a bold offer of \$1 billion for Angola's deep-water blocks 15(06), 16(06), and 18(06). SSI surprised the international markets with an offer of \$750 million for block 15(06) alone and an astonishing \$2.2 billion for blocks 17(06) and 18(06). The overall offer amount of \$2.975 billion was almost three times higher than that of OVL's bid. According to Chand (2019), Indian enterprises were successful in outbidding other competitors in certain cases. However, the Indian government's reluctance to take risks and its unwillingness to provide loans as advantageous as those offered by the Chinese government have resulted in the failure of such agreements, as shown in the Ghana instance cited earlier.

As the battle with China for African resources intensifies, India has significant challenges in keeping pace with China. Indian businesspeople are among the first to acknowledge that narrowing the gap with China will be arduous, if not outright impossible. "We are approximately five to seven years behind schedule," confesses Prashant Ruia, the CEO of Essar Group. —To be frank, it is really difficult to compete with the Chinese. Infrastructure such as roads, airports, and projects are being constructed by a grant. They are undertaking a 20-year investment venture, a luxury that private enterprises like ours are unable to afford. We lack the same level of support and presence as the Chinese, who operate on a far greater scale. According to Forbes India,

as of May 24, 2010, they have been in that position for the previous 10 years, giving them an advantage over others.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that Chinese incursions in Africa do not only target Indians, as highlighted by Harry Broadman (2007), the author of a World Bank research on China and India's investments in Africa. "The Chinese possess significant financial resources." They possess the capability to outbid and secure any deal - and not only when competing with India. The United States and Europe are also included.

### **Strategic Competition for Oil and Gas Reserves: China and India's Energy Diplomacy in Africa**

Due to their significant reliance on foreign suppliers for energy needs, China and India have developed a peaceful policy towards various energy-producing areas globally, characterised by collaboration, investment, aid, and diplomatic engagement. These tactics are referred to as energy diplomacy, which involves use foreign policy to secure energy supply and enhance bilateral ties with primary energy resource producers. China has a dominant position not just as a voracious energy user but also as a proficient operator in energy diplomacy. China leverages all its resources, expertise, and influence to facilitate its endeavours in energy production throughout many regions.

Africa is a critical region in China's energy strategy and a primary focus of its energy diplomacy, due to its abundant energy resources and significant role as an energy exporter. In 2017, Africa accounted for 8.9% of world gas exports and 10.2% of global oil exports, with energy output increasing by 5.7%, oil production by 5%, gas production by 9%, and coal production by 3.6%. The "Chinese model" of investment and infrastructure financing, sometimes referred to as the "Beijing Consensus." It constitutes China's foundational approach to engaging with the international arena concerning politics, development, and the global balance of power, grounded in multilateralism, consensus, and peaceful coexistence, which is highly appealing to African nations. The Chinese strategy opposed the Western neo-liberal worldview,

sometimes referred to as the "Washington Consensus". The latter emphasises democracy, effective government, and poverty alleviation; yet, it is often not well-received in Africa.

China purchases about 25% of its oil from Africa and, due to its escalating energy demands, endeavours to safeguard oil and natural gas reserves in African nations, seeking access to the affluent oil-rich Gulf of Guinea. China has secured new regions of economic influence in Angola, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea. Besides Sudan, China purchases oil from Chad, Algeria, Angola, and Gabon, and it intends to finalise further oil contracts in North Africa, particularly with Algeria and Libya.

For over 20 years, Chinese enterprises have established their presence in Sudanese oil producing sectors. Since that time, China has spent about 15 billion dollars in the Sudanese oil sector. As per official Sudanese figures from August 2017, this collaboration is anticipated to expand, as both parties possess the requisite determination to enhance their bilateral oil relations. This is clearly articulated in the Sudanese authorities' request to the Chinese delegation to enhance investments in the oil and gas sectors during the visit of Jianhua Zhang, Deputy Chairman of the Chinese petroleum business, in August 2017.

China dominates 75% of the Sudanese oil industry, with a production rate of 133,000 barrels per day. Undoubtedly, the secession of South Sudan in 2011 adversely impacted Sudan's production capacity; nevertheless, Chinese enterprises are seeking to identify new oil reserves to offset the lost deposits and fulfil Sudan's objectives of enhancing oil output.

Extensive Chinese investments in Sudan and various other African nations have encountered significant criticism and allegations. Detractors of Chinese energy diplomacy characterise it as neo-colonialism, citing investments in corrupt and authoritarian regimes that violate fundamental human rights and perpetrate crimes against humanity, as seen in Sudan,

Angola, and other nations, while also highlighting the deplorable working conditions at numerous Chinese facilities.

A significant portion of this criticism originated from Western sources, particularly U.S. politicians, foreign observers, and experts, with minor contributions from environmental protection and human rights NGOs. Nonetheless, China is unperturbed by Western criticism, and it is improbable that it would alter the tenets of its energy diplomacy in Africa. This is clearly evident in the formation and operations of the "Forum on China-Africa Cooperation" (FOCAC), which demonstrates the country's commitment to advancing further.

### **Soft Power- A Potent Policy Tool**

In the intense struggle for influence, dominant nations employ a concept called "structural power" to manipulate the choices and possibilities of other states. This involves exerting control over the circumstances that govern the decision-making process of those states. This often involves exerting influence on the global agenda of topics to be deliberated. Alternatively, one might achieve the same outcome by persuading other states to align their actions with one's own objectives, using the attractive potential of their own values. Joseph Nye has coined the term "soft power" to refer to the ability to exert influence by attraction rather than compulsion, which he contrasts with "hard power". In relation to this matter, Nye (2002) asserts that there is a significant advantage in persuading others to desire the same objectives as oneself, particularly in terms of the appeal of one's views. Hu Jintao, the former leader of China, believed that enhancing the country's soft power is a crucial aspect of its strategy for a peaceful ascent. During his speech at the 17th session of the Chinese Communist Party in 2007, he stated that culture has increasingly become a crucial source of national unity and innovation, and a significant role in the overall fight for national power. Hence, it is imperative for China to bolster its cultural aspects as a means to strengthen the influence and attractiveness of our nation, in order to effectively safeguard the fundamental cultural rights and interests of the people (Xinhua News,

October 15, 2007). Regarding the Sino-Africa relationship, China actively promotes its cultural influence, namely in the fields of medicine and education.

The Chinese medical missions in Africa serve as effective ambassadors for China, successfully winning the favour and trust of the African population. They have been consistently traveling to Africa for an extended period and are highly valued by the local communities. People hold them in high regard on the continent because to their simplicity, ability to operate in challenging situations, and intimate proximity to their patients. Although the Pan African e-Network in Delhi, particularly its telemedicine aspect, has the potential to bring significant advantages to Africans by leveraging India's advancements in medical, India still has a long way to go to catch up with China in this social domain. However, over the course of 20 years, China has successfully ensured that a portion of the upcoming generation of African leaders and elites would have a favourable disposition towards China. The contingent of around 30,000 African soldiers who have received training in China effectively fulfills that objective. Estimating the impact of this academic instruction on future generations will be challenging to quantify accurately. However, their experiences in China undoubtedly make them more aware and receptive to Chinese perspectives and interests. Furthermore, students will acquire expertise in the Chinese language, along with a deep understanding of Chinese society, culture, history, and politics. Individuals who assume positions of authority may exhibit a greater willingness to accommodate the interests and demands of China. Additionally, they will establish personal relationships with old classmates and advance in professional hierarchies at the same time. David Shambaugh's commendation of China's efforts to provide equitable training opportunities for Asian students also applies to their African counterparts.

Despite India's claim of having a relative edge over China in capacity creation, Beijing is outperforming them in this area. China is providing training to a far larger number of Africans compared to the Indians

through their ITEC program. However, recognizing that the training possibilities offered by India are far inferior to those supplied by China, Delhi has increased its attempts to recruit young Africans by giving more cash to capacity building. India is assisting African countries in narrowing the digital gap through the implementation of the second phase of the Pan Africa e-Network project - e-Vidhya Bharati and e-Arogya Bharati Network Project (E-VBAB). This initiative aims to offer five years of complimentary tele-education to 4000 students, free medical education to 1000 doctors, nurses, and paramedics, as well as free medical consultation. In the past four years, six IT Centers have been created in South Africa, Egypt, Morocco, Lesotho, Ghana, Namibia, and Tanzania. Additionally, a CGARD Technology Centre has been constructed in Madagascar, and seven Vocational Training Centers have been established in Ethiopia, Rwanda, Burundi, Burkina Faso, The Gambia, Zimbabwe, and Egypt. Additionally, a Technology Centre was built in Zimbabwe. Entrepreneurship Centers are being established in some nations. However, while Beijing allocates substantial funds towards scholarships, some talented individuals from the African Continent choose to finance their own education and enrol in Indian universities and institutions. For these youthful individuals, it is demonstrating to the world that Africa have the capability to independently shape its own destiny (The Economic Times, May 29, 2019).

In addition, China is intensifying its efforts to gain a deeper understanding of the realities in Africa, both in terms of quality and substance. The Chinese authorities have specifically assigned some academic institutions and think tanks with the responsibility of strengthening their research capabilities on African matters. The universities involved include Nanjing University in Nanjing, Zhejiang Normal University in Jin Hua, and East China Normal University in Shanghai. Beijing and Pretoria have established the Center for Chinese Studies (CSC) on the continent. Situated in Stellenbosch University in the Western Cape Province, this is the

inaugural establishment exclusively dedicated to the examination of China in Africa. However, there is a lack of evidence on any official efforts by the Indian government to promote knowledge of Africa inside Indian intellectual circles.

Furthermore, the website of the Confucius Institutes headquarters states that there are already 54 Confucius institutes established in Africa, with 27 of them being categorized as "classrooms" within existing African colleges. Despite the ongoing challenge of understanding the exact role that the growth of Confucius Institutes plays in China's Africa policy, Beijing has taken a more official stance on this matter, in addition to its political and economic endeavors. Delhi, although asserts a significant cultural influence on the continent, has yet to organize its cultural projection in a systematic manner. Although the outcomes of China's soft power projection are yet to be observed, India is facing difficulties in emulating this approach.

China has allocated \$200 million to construct the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa. The building was formally presented as a gift in 2002, but it undoubtedly serves as a symbolic representation of China's expanding influence in Africa. Nevertheless, in 2018, the French newspaper *Le Monde* conducted an investigation that revealed a tarnish on this accomplishment. The study suggested that China, who financed and constructed the computer network at the AU, maybe implanted a hidden access point that enabled the transmission of data. The intrusion went unnoticed until January 2017, when technicians saw a surge in data consumption between the time frame of midnight to 2am every night, despite the absence of personnel in the premises. Upon investigation, it was discovered that the secret data of the continental organization was being replicated on servers located in Shanghai (Quartz Africa, 2018).

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