

Can Western Media Overshadow the China-Africa Storytelling? Case Study of the BBC Documentary “The Chinese Are Coming”

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Abstract

The dynamics of the changing global geopolitics have driven China and African Countries more and more close. Guided by their common interests, Chinese and African people through their firm leadership seem to see eyes to eyes on major international initiatives such as *One Belt One Road*, *A.U Agenda 2063*, *U.N Sustainable Development Goals 2030*, etc. However, western media discourses on the China-Africa cooperation tend to reflect a different reality. In fact, Number of reports, articles and documentaries investigating the real motives of the Chinese in Africa have been made so far. Some of the world most influential western media such as BBC have taken the front line to display a western perspective of the China-Africa story. As result, some of the most critical episodes of western made Sino-African documentaries have come out. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) have made number of documentaries showing case of the Chinese operating in its former African colonies, covering Chinese made huge infrastructure projects, mining... In the 2011 documentary “*The Chinese are Coming*”, the BBC journalist JUSTIN ROWLATT met the fearless Chinese entrepreneurs who have traveled thousands of miles to set up businesses in Africa. From Angola to Zambia and D.R. Congo, the documentary goes beyond former British colonies and cover up the former Portuguese and France colonies as well, showing case of a full-scale Chinese involvement on the continent regardless of the language or cultural barriers, political systems, human right standards, etc. The present article reviews the BBC documentary “*The Chinese are Coming (UK, 2011)*”, and discusses from an African perspective the documentary’s standpoints vis-a-vis of the China-Africa cooperation.

Key words: Western Media; China-Africa Cooperation; BBC; Documentary;

1. Introduction

Long considered as third world countries, China and African countries have been at the margin of the world economic spotlights. But China economy has grown tremendously the past three decades to become the world second largest economy after the United States of America, and the biggest developing country in the world. Meanwhile, the African continent has become the hope of the world economic growth with the fastest and highest number of developing countries concentrated on the continent. For number of reasons, China has gradually come into a strategic partnership with Africa leading to an unprecedented Chinese migration into the continent with thousands State owned Chinese businesses and firms operating on the continent. This has arisen fierce criticism from several global players and mostly western established powers such as the United States of America as well as the former colonial powers France and the United Kingdom. Media have been the main canal for those players to voice their opinions, sometimes pointing the blaming fingers on those undermining their core interests in Africa. In this regard, numbers of documentary films have been made, most of them investigating on the Chinese influence in Africa. The list (Taling 2017) below represents some of the most interesting episodes that have come out so far:

Documentary's title	Main content	Details
1. When China Met Africa (UK, 2010)	Focus on Chinese in Zambia, Explore the many layers of Chinese involvement in the country.	produced by the British brothers Nick and Mark Francis
2. Empire of Dust (Belgium, 2011)	Features the cultural clash of a Chinese and a Congolese in Congo.	Directed by the Belgium Bram Van Paesschen
The Chinese are Coming (UK, 2011)	While many in the West view Africa as a land of poverty, to the Chinese it is seen as an almost limitless business opportunities. From Angola to Zambia and D.R. Congo, Justin met the fearless Chinese entrepreneurs who have traveled thousands of miles to set up businesses.	By BBC correspondent JUSTIN ROWLATT.
3. The Africa China Connection (Netherlands, 2012)	“The Africa China Connection” is a ‘Western’ reflection on why are Africans going to China – and not to Europe.	Directed by the Dutch Pieter Van Der Houwen
4. China Remix (USA, 2015)	Explores Guangzhou’s African entertainment industry through the lives of three African hip-hop artists who are trying to find success in the face of China’s challenging labor and immigration laws.	American directors Melissa Lefkowitz and Dorian Carli-Jones

Some local criticisms have arisen as well, pinpointing the negative impact of the Chinese involvement on the continent. The north African channel ALJAZEERA for example have powered up and broadcast several documentaries looking into the real motives of the Chinese in Africa. Some of the most exciting ones are:

5. King Cobra and the Dragon (2012)	An investigation in Zambia during the presidential elections of September 2011 on whether Africa has entered a new era of colonialism with Chinese firms maltreating workers and devouring the continent’s natural resources.	By Sino-French academic SOLANGE CHATELARD and filmmaker SCOTT CORBEN.
6. The Battle for Africa (2014)	China’s big arrival on the continent has challenged Western powers and sparked debate about a new Battle for Africa. But the real Battle for Africa is between Africans and its leaders – a battle for better governments.	Documentary hosted by veteran journalist SORIUS SAMURA.

Are these documentaries representing a balanced view on the ongoing Chinese presence in Africa? Why are western media so concerned in telling the China-Africa story and how far can they influence the outcomes of the China-Africa cooperation? What is the response of Chinese mainstream media? The following lines are an attempt to answer the above questions using the BBC documentary “*The Chinese are Coming (UK, 2011)*” as guide line. We will review and appreciate the documentary’s content by highlighting some facts and shortcomings displayed by the documentary as part of the Western media discourses in the framework of the China-Africa cooperation.

2- Main Content of the BBC Documentary

The journey starts with the arrival of the BBC reporter at Luanda the capital of Angola, more precisely at the port of Luanda where he cruised around the harbor, being struck by Chinese sailors. In the documentary, we can see the Chinese sailors waving at him from their barges. A couple of construction workers did, though, offer to share their lunch with him. "It tastes delicious" said Justin Rowlatt, chewing on what turned out to be steamed bread. The workers also pressed the head of the port to try some, but he was less impressed than Justin who, between mouthfuls, managed to tell the viewer that Angola exports a million barrels of oil to China every single day. Justin R asked if he could have a job with them. He seems to be welcome by the Chinese and no long after he appeared in uniform, a hard hat and an orange day-glow jacket. From a certain angle, he could have passed for one of the local People. The foreman explained what was required: punctuality, perseverance and completion of work etc. Justin got down to it, tightening a nut round a pole and hurting his finger in the process. During lunch the workers take out their laptops and ring home. The conversation with their families revolves around food. "Have you eaten?", "What did you eat?" etc. This seems to be a traditional way of greeting for the Chinese and may also reflects that food is an essential part of Chinese people's life. Those who were not involved in building and construction projects were busy repairing the BENGUELA Railway, which runs from the Angolan port of LOBITO to DR Congo, Zambia and beyond. Perhaps when they have finished that, they will get around to replace the trucks with proper carriages. Justin seemed to enjoy sliding from wall to wall as the train swayed up one country after another. For him, this was an adventure, while for the others it was daily routine. What made their journey worthwhile was the trade. At each stop they were besieged by villagers eager to buy fish, charcoal, tomatoes and sea salt. A Chinese businessman explained the success of his country's involvement in the continent. Western companies have to go through too many bureaucratic procedures whereas "we are more flexible". This particular entrepreneur sold motorbikes. Justin couldn't wait to get astride one but appeared disappointed by the lack of horsepower between his legs. The businessman was all smiling as he outlined the benefits of capitalism. The Chinese economy benefited from building the bikes and the Africans benefited because this cheap form of transport created job opportunities and somehow raised the standard of living. Justin nodded in total agreement. But he did mention that not all Africans were happy with the Chinese and even went so far as to investigate conditions at a smelting plant in the DR Congo, but he was refused entry and retired defeated when confronting the daughter of the Chinese owner of the plant that has received employee abuse allegations. Despite Rowlatt's insistence, the owner refused to speak, and the cameras were pushed out in a reminder that not everyone is quite so keen to openly discuss the work they are doing. The reporter concluded the first part of his exciting journey in Africa by raising the question of the growing Chinese influence on the continent and in the world as well. Is the Chinese migration in Africa a threat or a blessing for the continent? What will happen if China overtake the U.S.A as first economy and have to lead the world? Although too short to give a consistent answer, the one-hour documentary brushes up various facades of the Chinese involvement in the African continent but remains full of shortcomings and therefore worth criticizing.

3- Shortcomings of the BBC Documentary.

3.1- The Author Could Have Thought of a Better Title

The title ("*The Chinese Are Coming*") of this episode of Rowlatt's journey across the Sub-Saharan Africa is ambiguous. Without watching the full content of the documentary, one is tempted a priori to think about a possible "Chinese invasion". In fact, the following interrogations come in mind: Are the Chinese Coming (*to invade/colonize Africans?*) Are the Chinese coming (*to take over Africa's resources?*) etc. It's uncomfortably reminiscent of the term "*yellow peril*", current at the end of the 19th century, which expressed fears of a Chinese invasion of Europe and America. The phrase is thought to have been coined by Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1898 and was also the name of G.G. Rupert's book, subtitled "*The Orient vs. the Occident*" as Viewed by Modern Statesmen and Ancient Prophets (1911) (source: TV review: *The Chinese Are Coming*, 2011). SAX ROHMER's Dr. Fu Manchu, with "a brow like Shakespeare and a face like Satan", was the supreme embodiment of anxieties about the East, which came to a head in a mass demonstration in Hyde Park in 1904 against the importation of Chinese laborers into South African gold mines at a time when British workers were suffering poverty and unemployment. It is quite obvious that the documentary's title arises a series of questions in the

viewer's mind, and among others, the question of “ what purposes are driving the Chinese in Africa?” remains the core question and the viewer's focus. From another angle of view, the documentary's title could have been understood as “The Chinese are coming (*for assistance/help*)”. But are help and assistance to African people the real motives of the Chinese on the continent? What assistance could the Chinese really provide and How much of it is needed to lift the continent out of its current situation? ” What's the price to afford by African countries? etc. This seems absurd given that China itself is still a developing country struggling to lift its huge population out of poverty and underdevelopment. And this is not an easy task given the limited amount of natural resources in the Country. Moreover, just as African countries, China is still recovering from past aggression and instabilities that have inflicted the country with serious political, economic and cultural damages. Therefore, this title understood a priori as “The Chinese are coming (*to help Africans*)” is simply unrealistic. Another possibility of interpreting the documentary's title can be as “The Chinese are Coming (*for Win-Win Business/partnership*)”. This understanding seems much more reasonable and feasible given that China is one of the world fastest and largest growing economy in serious need of resources, markets and investment destinations. Therefore, looking for business opportunities all around the globe seems to be the right move for China. But what makes Africa special for the Chinese? Probably because the continent is blessed with its natural resources indispensable to power up the growing Chinese industries; not to mention the growing African population that will probably guarantee a considerable market for Chinese manufactured products. These reasons maybe the main drivers of the Chinese in Africa and are probably the reporter's main findings in this episode of investigative journalism. In brief, the title seemed ambiguous and do not enlighten the viewer on the content. This ambiguity could be easily understood by supposing that a Chinese reporter set out to shoot a similar documentary under the same title. It is quite easy to guess how different will be the content. In short, the Author of the documentary could have been more specific and precise in setting up the title so as to reveal his intentions in a more direct manner.

3.2- Why Angola, Zambia and D.R. Congo?

This first episode of the documentary brings us successively in Angola, Zambia and D.R. Congo (and somehow Zimbabwe). Justin Rowlett's journey aimed at clarifying the phenomenon of the Chinese migration in Africa taking these 3 African countries as case study. Then, the question of why these particular countries comes to mind. “Are they of any particular interest for the Chinese?”, “As a British reporter, are these countries of any particular interest for western powers and the United Kingdom in particular?” etc. It is obvious that Angola, Zambia and the DR Congo are of capital interest for both China and the West. China has overtaken Japan and became the world second largest oil consumer just after the United States. Angola is one of the largest oil producers in Africa and major oil supplier of China in Africa. So, it is obvious to understand why Angola is one of the principal Chinese direct investment destination on the continent, given that the investment is usually returned by crude oil. In fact, Angola has received 25% of all Chinese loans to Africa between 2000 and 2015, almost all of them backed by Angolan oil (Source: Join me in launching a NEW database of China's Africa loans, 2016). Having undergone decades of civil war, Angola has most of its institutions and infrastructures to be rebuilt and so offering wide scales constructions projects. This is a perfect match between both countries where the Chinese investments could be returned in crude oil, offering to the struggling Angolan economy the possibility to auto-finance huge constructions projects. This seems to be a general rule in the partnership between China and emerging African economies with the difference that non-oil producers could counterbalance the deal with other natural resources such as minerals as well as agricultural products (ZAMBIA and DR CONGO fall in this particular category) that have become one of the main sources of Chinese importations from African countries. The chart below for instance gives us a quick view on the structure of the Chinese imports from Africa in one decade.

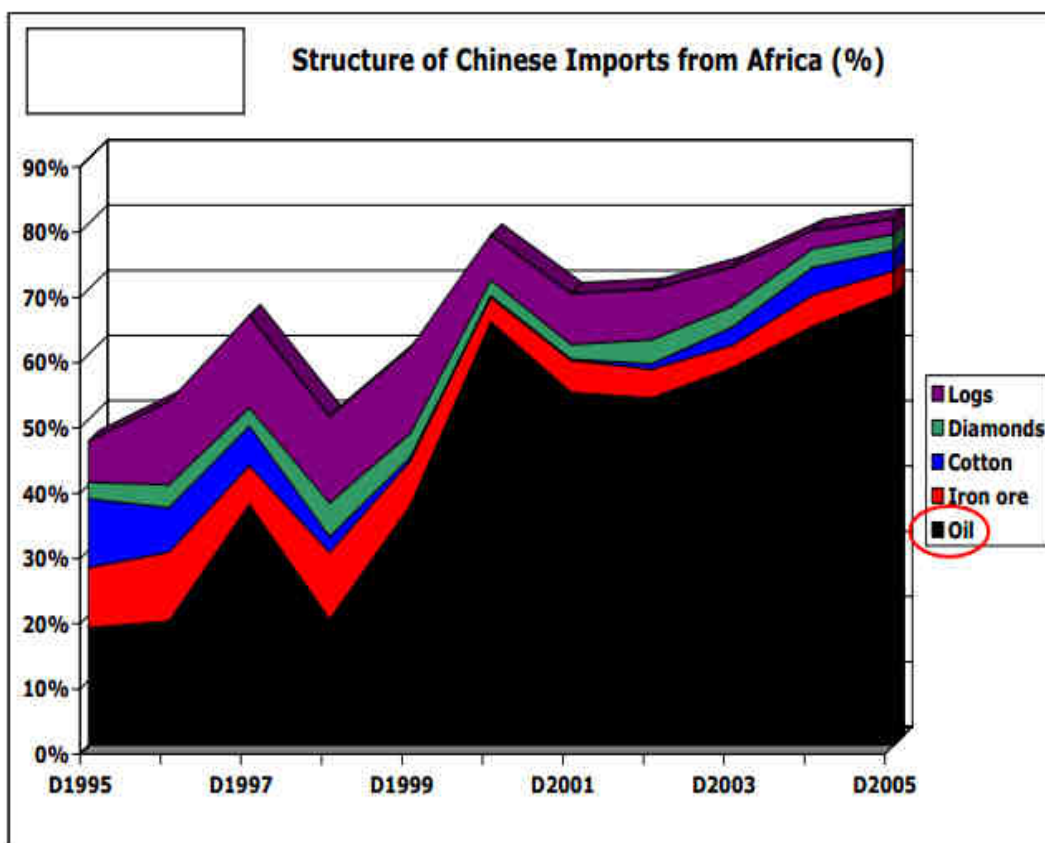


FIGURE 1. Structure of the Chinese Imports from Africa (Friedrich 2009)

The DR Congo for instance is the world's largest producer of cobalt ore (Source: United States Geological Survey Mineral Resources Program) and possesses 64%-80% of the world's Coltan (KORS 2010), while Zambian economy has historically been based on Cooper mining. These countries have drawn the appetite of China and the west as well and has become the battle field of global players (leading those countries sometimes in periods of instabilities). It is also noticeable that the BBC correspondent Justin. R set out to investigate in Zimbabwe. This is an illustrating case of China vs the West in Africa. China unlikely to Western powers has few political ambitions in Africa and seems to co-operate with democracies as much as with authoritarian regimes. The Mugabe's regime has been strongly criticized by the West as being anti-democratic, but this did not stop China of being a close ally of Zimbabwe. The BBC documentary could have been of great interest for westerners to overview the Chinese involvement in the country, but the Zimbabwean authorities did put an end to the reporter's curiosity. Still Justin. R. did manage to meet with some Zimbabweans anti-Mugabe and happened to question them under anonymity over the human rights issues and power abuse in the country. It is worth mentioning that Zimbabwe just as Zambia are both former British colonies and just as clearly shown in the documentary (where the reporter interviewed some British Firms' owners), the arrival of the Chinese have been a threat for the former colonial master's interests. In short, Angola, Zambia, DR Congo as well as Zimbabwe targeted in this documentary are of a significant political and economic interests for both China and Western Superpowers. This may justify the choice of the British reporter to investigate in these countries as case study.

3.3- Is China the Only Major Player on the Continent?

In term of the number of Chinese immigrants present on the African soil, the Chinese presence is beyond doubt the most significant (with more than 1 million Chinese nationals residing in Africa) among various global players; but in term of political and economic interest, China have fierce competitors on the continent. The BBC documentary failed to highlight the growing presence of rising

powers like India, Brazil which are competing fiercely on the continent and whose trade volume are growing as faster as the trade between China and Africa. In fact, The African boom, which China has helped to stoke in recent years, is attracting many other investors around the globe. The non-Western ones compete especially fiercely. African trade with India was projected to reach \$100 billion in 2015. It is growing at a faster rate than the trade with China, and is likely to overtake trade with America. Brazil and Turkey are superseding many European countries. In terms of investment in Africa, China was still lagging behind Britain, America and Italy in 2012 (see charts below).

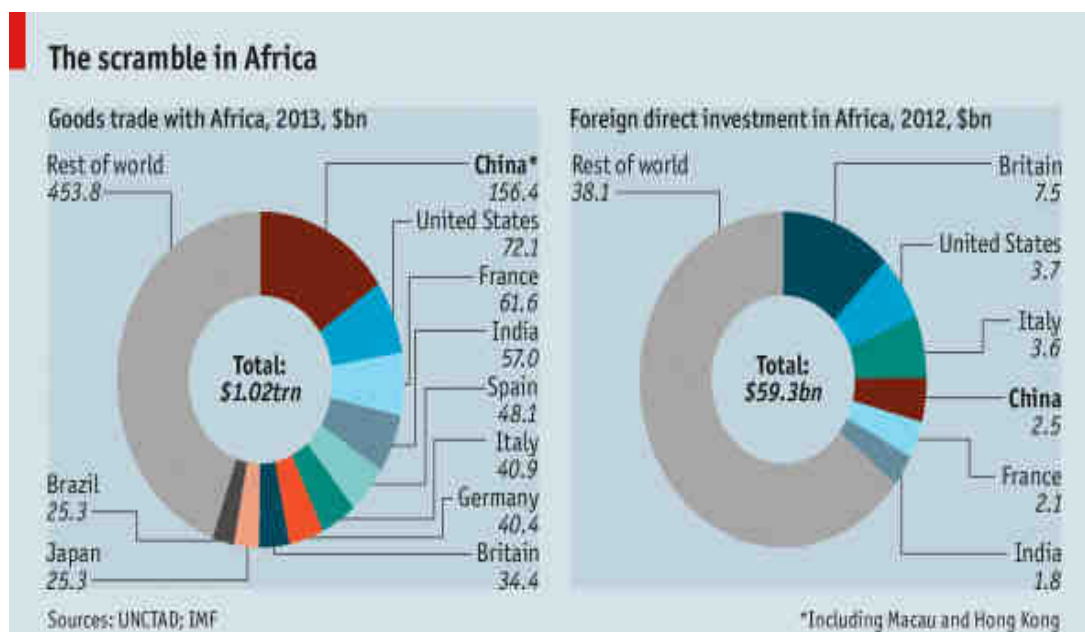


FIGURE 2. World's Trade with Africa 2012-2013 (The Economist 2015)

The charts show clearly that even though China is the leading partner of Africa in terms of trade, it has fierce competitors in term of Foreign Direct Investment. What we want to emphasize here is that, the finger pointed on the Chinese migration in Africa maybe related to the fact that China has grown to get the lion's share on the continent and has overtaken western powers in the cooperation with Africa. Can't the success of China in Africa be justified otherwise? In the BBC documentary, some Chinese businessmen justify the success of China in Africa as related to the flexibility of bureaucratic procedures, punctuality, speed and completion of various projects etc. Moreover, China's ambitions in Africa seems to be bigger than winning businesses, or seeking access to commodities. In fact, the growth in Chinese demand for commodities is slowing down as prices of many raw materials are falling (oil in particular). Meanwhile, China's hunger for agricultural products, and perhaps for farm land are growing as China's population expands and the middle class is becoming richer. Most importantly, China has purposely chosen a very unique path in dealing with Africa and this may fully justify the big difference between China and other major players on the continent like the U.S of America as shown in this interview of general Carter. F Ham, commander of the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) in 2012 by Alex Vines (Research Director, Area Studies and International Law; Head of Africa Program, Chatham House):

“Question : There are certain concerns about growing Chinese influence in Africa. How does AFRICOM (United States Africa Command) view the growing Chinese influence in Africa: collaborative or competitive?

General Carter Ham: Thanks. Again, as a newcomer to Africa, I will admit to some surprise in my initial trips around the continent – China is everywhere, really everywhere. And that's probably a good thing. I would not in any way characterize the US–China relationship in Africa, in any way, adversarial. There's certainly economic competition and we see that play out. That's probably healthy for both China and the United States and probably healthy for the African countries where we work as well. But I would say that in my view, China and the United States have taken different views with regard to

our interaction in Africa. China, as many of you know and have seen, and I have seen, is very good at infrastructure development – road, bridges, airports, government buildings and the like – constructed by the Chinese, which greatly benefits the African people. And I probably left off the most important thing they do – build football stadiums. The United States has taken a different approach. We don't focus much on building stuffs – we've chosen a different path which is primarily investment in human capital. So overwhelmingly the US assistance and support that is provided to Africa is in the area of healthcare, which is by far the most significant, and education – specifically women and girls' education – agriculture and the like. So perhaps not as visible as a football stadium but nonetheless very, very important. On the military front, again, not adversarial, but I think we need to look for ways where we can work more collaboratively with the Chinese in the military domain in Africa. Let me cite two examples: in Tanzania the Chinese built the facility for the National Defense College. A good facility – and I'm sure the Tanzanians are very appreciative of that. The Tanzanians asked us for a little bit of help in the curriculum development for the programming at the National Defense College. Maybe that's an example of the kind of collaboration we might be able to do in the future, where we focus on areas where each can apply their strengths to the benefit of a particular African military, or more broadly, across a region. So again I'm realistic in my approach, but I think we should explore opportunities to work more collaboratively across the continent.” (source: The United States Africa Command, 2012) .

This interview shows that China unlike the U.S, is taking a different path and this could explain China's success in Africa especially in countries such as Kenya and Ethiopia with tiny natural resources. The BBC documentary did not emphasize enough on this facade of the reality.

3.4.- Chinese Loans and Assistance to the Continent are Somehow Different from that of the West with Strings Attached.

China strongly supported African Independence Movements and gave aid to newly independent African nations in the 1960s and 1970s. Among the most notable early projects was the 1,860 km TAZARA Railway, linking Zambia and Tanzania, which China helped to finance and build from 1970 to 1975 (Brautigam 2010). By 1978, China was giving aid to more African countries than the United States (Brautigam 2010). During the December 2015 FOCAC meeting in Johannesburg and , South Africa, Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged \$60 billion over a three-year deal in loans and assistance to the African continent, the same amount was reiterated during the recent 2018 edition of the summit held in Beijing the September 4th. Moreover, China has gradually become one of the largest contributors of U.N peace keeping missions in Africa. Even though suspicions have been raising on the dependency generated by loans, the Chinese loans and assistance have made a difference from that of the so called “Western Donors” in the sense that it comes with very low interest rate and almost no “political string” attached in accordance with the principle of non-interference in African States' internal affairs pledged by China. Contrarily, Western aid has been qualified as “dead aid”(Moyo 2009) as it has brought more political turmoil and increased the external debts of African countries, and thus maintained the continent in an everlasting dependence and further exploitation of the “Western Donors” through their multinationals firms and international institutions. The BBC documentary again failed to highlight these facts.

3.5. Real Possibility of a Win-Win Partnership Between China and Africa

It is known that Africa has a huge potential in term of natural resources and human capital. Africa possess nearly 60% of the world arable land most of which remains unexploited. nearly 10% of the world oil reserve is located in Africa, not to mention various kind of minerals like diamonds, gold, copper etc. which Africa possesses the largest world's reserve. Meanwhile, Africa's population is the youngest of the planet with more than 60% of its people under 35 years old. Africa's population is estimated to reach 2 billion in 2050. Meanwhile, China actually possesses the largest labor force of the globe as well as the technology and skills necessary to fill Africa's needs of infrastructures and technology transfer. Most importantly, China can provide more Cash and FDI needed to finance Africa's huge development projects. So basically, the possibilities of a win-win partnership and cooperation between China and Africa are limitless. On this basis, trade between both parties has grown up and surpassed \$120 billion in 2010 and has grown to nearly \$200 billion today. Heritage Foundation, an American think-tank, estimates that between 2005 and 2010 about 14% of China's investment abroad found its way to sub-Saharan Africa. (see chart)

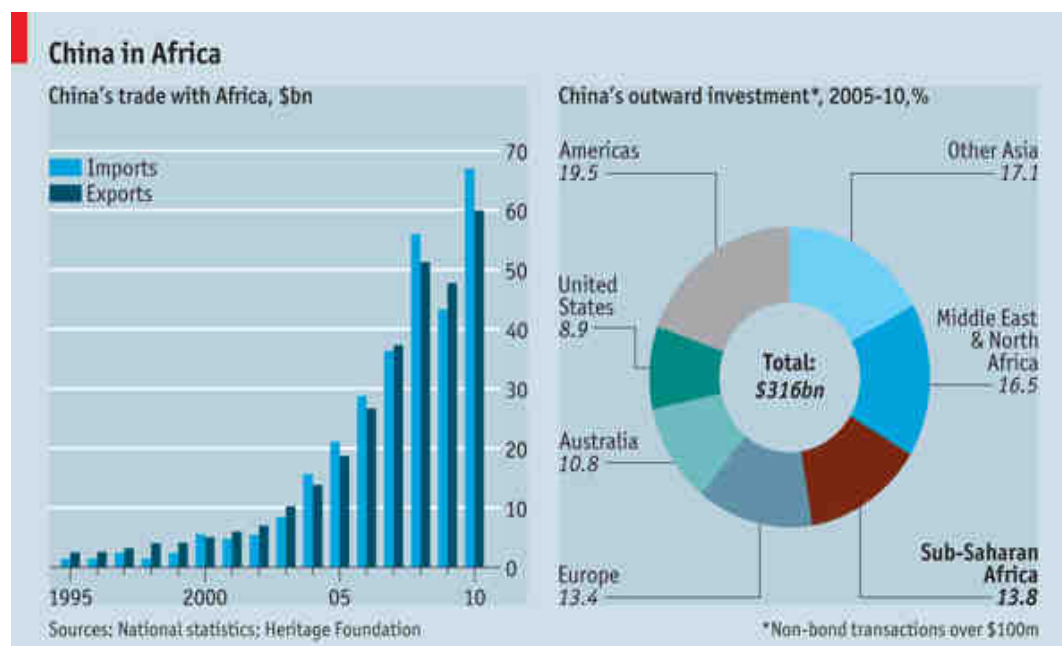


FIGURE 3. China's Trade with Africa (The Economist 2011)

China's investment roadmap in Africa (Shown in details During the 2015 and 2018 FOCAC summits) has included the areas of industrialization, agricultural modernization, infrastructure construction, finance, green development, trade and investment facilitation, poverty reduction, public health, humanities as well as peace and security. These areas appear to be the most urgent in need of investment to further Africa's development. China's hunger for natural resources, the needs of new markets as well as an effective global political support has made Africa an indispensable even closer partner of China. With more commitment of both parts, a real win-win partnership is susceptible to emerge from the China-Africa co-operation. But this will require more political will from the African leaderships.

4. Criticism Vis-a-Vis of the Chinese Migration into Africa Highlighted in the BBC Documentary.

The documentary has shared some light on a variety of critical perspectives scrutinizing the Chinese role in the relationship with African governments. In fact, Allegations of corruption, non-respect of Human rights, environmental damages as well as low quality goods and services provided by Chinese companies and firms are highlighted in the documentary. These criticisms include the claim that African markets are harmed by low-cost Chinese-made products (the scene of the Zambian chicken vs the Chinese chicken shown in the documentary where the reporter is invited by locals to taste both chickens is an illustrative example), which put great competitive pressure on local industries, businesses. Allegations of the damages on people's health and environment (pollution, illegal poaching, etc.) has been pinpointed. As pointed out earlier by some researchers, there are concerns arising regarding the lack of an institutional framework and government capacity to monitor and encourage Chinese direct investment into the continent. For those authors, this is mainly due to the state of corruption, poverty as well as the lack of an effective political will of African governments where the Chinese Construction Firms are investing. The overall countries' instability makes these governments less able or inclined to manage the opportunities presented by those firms. It has also been pointed out that local barriers such as poor quality of local inputs (labor, construction materials, etc.) have been overcome by Chinese investors in some manners that have raised questions (for instance in some cases, all the labor force and construction materials are provided by the Chinese firm and 100% imported from China). In addition, there is a lack of skilled local managers, African skilled employees as well as the lack of trust of Chinese employers towards local labor. The language and cultural barrier between the Chinese and local workers leading to misunderstanding and disputes had also been pointed out (Michel 2008). As a result, the Chinese Construction Firms have the tendency of bringing their own

workers and therefore limit their interaction between them and the local labor market. Moreover, unlike other expatriates the Chinese workers often live in segregated camps. In long term there is no transfer of knowledge from Chinese companies to the African community. The problem of unemployment and jobs creation crucial for the growing African population remain unsolved as well. From the African perspective, locals are increasingly suspicious of Chinese firms, worrying about unfair deals and environmental damages. In many African countries, the opposition to the Chinese migration is mainly fueled by Africa's thriving civil society, which demands more transparency and an accounting for human rights. This can be an unfamiliar challenge for China, whose foreign policy is heavily based on state-to-state relations, with little appreciation of the gap between African rulers and their people. Some African officials have also been voicing criticism Vis a Vis of the Chinese engagement with the continent. For instance, Lamido Sanusi, Nigeria's former central bank governor, said that Africa is opening itself up to a "new form of imperialism", in which China takes African primary goods and sells it manufactured ones, without transferring skills (**The Economist 2015**). This non-transfer of skills is said (*Brautigam 2010*) to have been observed in some earlier projects like the 1970's TAZARA Railway, where Some 50,000 Chinese engineers and workers were sent to the continent to complete the project, but without transferring skills at least for the railway's maintenance. As result, the railway was out of service as soon as the Chinese left. These facts have been added to Western accusations of China being a neo-colonist in Africa (*BLAIR 2007*). As a response to those criticism, China issued the Nine Principles to Encourage and Standardize Enterprises' Overseas Investment, a charter and guide of conduct to Chinese companies operating abroad (*Sautman 2007*). Many forums and round-tables have also been held between China and African authorities to improve the mechanisms and status quo of the China-Africa partnership. In a word, despite of being too brief, the documentary has highlighted some interesting point and major obstacles undermining the cooperation between China and Africa.

5. Response of Chinese Mainstream Media

As response to these criticisms, the China Central Television (CCTV), has come up with more programs broadcasting the China-Africa story, the China Global Television Network CGTN Nairobi branch has committed itself to re-telling the China-Africa story. The CCTV made documentary <*Chinese in Africa*> (CCTV 2016) and the China-Africa co-directed documentary <*Africans in Yiwu*> (2017) are among some of the vibrant responses from the Chinese side showing the positive change impacted by the China-Africa friendly cooperation and gradually increasing people to people exchanges.

Documentary name	Description	details
Chinese in Africa (China, 2016)	Documentary series released on CCTV-News (CGTN) showcasing Chinese presence throughout the African continent. Through 6 episodes, documentary highlight the positive outcomes of the Chinese presence in Africa. From infrastructure building, to assistance in the field of medical care, security and environment protection. Technological transfer with Chinese standards, talents training, people to people exchange is emphasized as part of Chinese effort to assist the African continent in its will and pursuit for development and prosperity.	CCTV (China Central Television)
Africans in Yiwu (China, 2017)	The 6 episodes Documentary series <i>Africans in Yiwu</i> , is a series that describes the lives and struggles of the African community in the city of Yiwu, China. It attempts to promote a better understanding of China for African audiences and a better understanding of Africa for Chinese audiences through first-hand reiterations by the film's characters. This film identifies as "Individuals from Africa telling their own stories", as it maintains a globalized outlook and the display of firsthand accounts by African individuals. The film looks at the challenges and opportunities that color the lives of the African community in Yiwu, and contemplate the interactions and integration between china and Africa through six lenses, namely: commercial activity, social activity, intermarriages, education, food culture and art.	Co-directed by a China-Africa transnational team, by the Chinese Director ZHANG YONG and the Somali Director HODAN OAMAN ABDI

Far from being enough, China is still investing a lot in mass media and communication to make more digital contents with Chinese characteristics available in the international stage. The China Global Television Network CGTN is already covering up Africa, America and Asia with more than 2 billion followers with special programs such as *Africa Live*, *Talk Africa*, etc. dedicated to African storytellers; more documentaries and films projects are on the way. The goal is to bring a Chinese perspective of the China-Africa story on the global stage. Forums and roundtables (FOCAC on Media cooperation, etc.) have been organized between Chinese and African media to deepen the dialogue and strengthen the media cooperation and come up with a unique voice on telling the China-Africa story.

6-conclusion

Through the documentary entitled “*The Chinese are Coming*”, the BBC reporter Justin Rowlett set out to investigate the phenomenon of Chinese migration. He therefore embarks on a journey across three African countries (Angola, DR Congo and Zambia) and come out with interesting findings: some positives and other negatives. As positive ones, Chinese firms are engaged in huge construction projects, Chinese-built railway lines and diverse infrastructure projects are effectively boosting trade and the local economy by creating jobs opportunities. That’s perhaps one of the reasons behind the GDP boom experienced by African countries the past couple of decades. However, negative outcomes have come out of this episode of investigative journalism, mainly the accusations of Chinese firms and companies of exploitation of African workers, serious environmental damages, low quality goods as well as non-respect of human rights in favor of some authoritarian regimes and political minorities that pay fewer attention to the masses. However, giving the longstanding and complexity of the China-Africa strategic partnership, the one-hour BBC documentary is too short to provide a comprehensive view of the China-Africa story. Moreover, the documentary is undermined by many shortcomings, among others the bias rhetoric of western media that tend to view and judge others through its own standards. China has chosen a different path in dealing with Africa, and African countries seems to have no problem with some of the main guiding principles of China foreign policies such as “*The One China Policy*, *The One Belt One Road*”, etc. On the other hand, some African regimes considered by western standards as “*Authoritarian or Anti-democratic*” may not align with the Chinese definition and therefore could not be properly displayed by western media. Finally, despite increasing criticisms among the Africa’s thriving civil society, which demands more transparency and an accounting for human rights as well as better treatments for local workers by Chinese companies, African governments seems not to worry about a increasing Chinese presence on their soil. The 2018 FOCAC summit in Beijing gathering 40 African head of States with the Chinese top leadership led by president Xi Jinping, was a vibrant proof for further commitment to the China-Africa cooperation from the African side. Nevertheless, the real motives driving the Chinese in Africa remains the focus of attention of many Africans and westerns elites and intellectuals still puzzled and wondering whether the Chinese migration in Africa is a threat or a blessing for the continent and its people. Nevertheless, The BBC documentary “*The Chinese are Coming*” does opens a window on the challenges facing the China-Africa Cooperation, and may serves as an outlook to foresee the potential obstacles and dangers that may undermine the relationship between China and African countries in a far or near future.

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