

How does the rise of China and India as international donors change our understanding of development?

The emergence of China and India as international donors produces a counter-narrative to the dominant, western discourse of ‘catch up’ development by transgressing the latter’s implicit moral orderings, cultural categories and ‘symbolic domination’ (Bourdieu, 1976). Indeed, as Six (2009) propositions, ‘South–South development cooperation is one arena within which the North–South binary and its uneven political and economic architectures is being prised open and materially and discursively challenged.’ Drawing upon Mauss’s postcolonial “gift theory” and Mawdsley’s (2008) subsequent semiology of Chinese aid as reciprocative and non-hegemonic, this essay explores how the “Southern challenge” is mounted, instrumentalised and historicised through the ‘rhetorics and rituals’ of Chinese and Indian development actors. I suggest that their practices fundamentally change our understanding of development: in how aid is effectively conditioned and distributed and positive dialogue produced and sustained. I further trace the emergence of a critical, self-reflexivity within the dominant aid paradigm that slots within a broader ‘re-orientation to the realities of a multipolar world’ (Six, 2009).

Throughout, I frame the rhetorics and rituals of South-South development cooperation as ‘not mere cultural epiphenomena, masking or supporting the “real” geopolitical and commercial strategies that motivate them, but as essential to understanding the social relations they seek to create and those they seek to observe in the social constructions of them and their partners’ (Mawdsley, 2008). In this respect, I suggest that China and India’s development agendas place greater stress on the systemic, external causes of underdevelopment, that directly link their own colonial experiences with Africa’s, rather than on locating them within the bounds of the nation state as have historically the Washington and post-Washington Consensuses. Furthermore, I explore how these constructions of cause are politically framed through a language of solidarity and bi-lateral “cooperation” that obscure or reduce the social hierarchies between giver and receiver. Indeed, during the 2006 Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (FOCAC) meeting in Beijing, Premier Jiang Zemin announced a strategy for longterm Sino-African co-operation based upon: (i) fostering “sincere friendship”; (ii) interaction based on equality; (iii) respect for sovereignty and non-interference; (iv) common development on the basis of mutual benefit; (v) enhanced consultation and co-operation in global affairs and (vi) the pursuit of a just and fair international economic and political order.

The crux of this essay traces how the Chinese and Indian, non-western interpretations of the teleology of (under)development feed directly into their donor modalities which, in contrast to the ‘individual rights-based, neoliberal credo’ of the West, hold social and economic group-based rights as the major unit of analysis. In key, I suggest that South-South development cooperation recognises and imparts significance to the African state and its instruments and thus prises itself away from the ‘anti-statist’ legacy of the Washington Consensus. Corollary to this, I argue that the post-Washington Consensus - unable to prise itself away from its predecessor - still courts suspicion within African state bodies even though it has changed skins to re-focus on a statist agenda, ‘[supporting] strong ‘neoliberal state forms and modes of governance’ (IMF, 2009). At this point, I stress that Chinese and Indian “development co-operation” to Africa differs in several key aspects because of their divergent, political economies and global mobilities of financial resources; China, for instance, focuses more on monetary modes of development cooperation (commercial loans/ large joint-venture investments in resources and infrastructure) with India on more non-monetary modes (ITEC programme, skills training/ transfer of Triple A technologies (affordable, available,

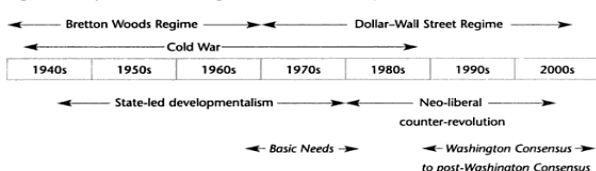
adaptable). The latter part of this essay draws together empirical research, predominantly from Sub-Saharan Africa, into the efficacy of the “Beijing Consensus” and thus attempts to trace the lessons that China and India’s engagement offer to our understanding of development processes.

Observing South-South development practices requires a particularly geographical perspective that distinguishes between “big D’ development as a project of intervention in the ‘third world’ that emerged in the context of decolonisation and the Cold War, and ‘little d’ development or the development of capitalism as a geographically uneven, profoundly contradictory set of historical processes. Drawing from Hart’s (2001) idea that both developments (D/d) are interconnected and mutually constituting, Mohan et. al (2008) suggest that ‘China’s huge flows of aid, trade, infrastructural investment and people (brain gain) are [the link] tying the two developments (D/d) together in space.’ Mawdsley (2011) however propositions that Chinese engagement is ‘unabashedly modernist - economic growth equates to development’ - such that, much in common to western interventions (if not more so due to the policy of non-interference) sub-national inequalities of race and class that are deeply embedded in state-capital dynamics, remain critically unexamined. Bryant (1993) for example observes the ‘rentier state in Africa as complicit in syphoning off revenue from Chinese investment, production and trade, thus repeating a model of extraversion laid down under European colonialism’ and further suggesting that the efficacy of D/development is by in large conditioned by the ‘institutional and structural conditions of the recipients’ and not of the actual aid itself (McCormick, 2008). Mawdsley’s analysis of state formation provides a postcolonial reasoning for the rentier state’s ongoing existence, she writes:

‘The African state was formed in a peculiar crucible of colonial expropriation and anti-colonial nationalism, which fused multiple ethnicities into single nations and used development as the ideology of unity. Given the extraverted economy control of the state became a primary source of empowerment and wealth creation’ (Mawdsley, 2008).

Fundamental to the engagement of the “Asian drivers” within Africa are the political memories and symbols of (mis)treatment and labelling by the west during the struggles of post-colonial independence, Cold War interference and neoliberal reform. China falls more problematically into the latter two categories of “shared struggle” having been (i) deeply implicated in the Cold War in Africa through Mao’s political jostling and (ii) only loosely implicated in the neoliberal reform and Structural Adjustment Packages of the World Bank in the 1980s. Nevertheless a discourse of solidarity is produced, Strauss critically observes the way in which a particular suite of historical events and relations (or rather, sanitised and heroicised versions of them) are elevated into a stable narrative that is repeatedly invoked in the opening rituals and ceremonies of official meetings; by China in rewriting positively its Maoist African past and by India through trumpeting the ‘ancient trade ties of the Indian Ocean, its move to shared colonial oppression, Gandhi’s initiation into political and social activism in South Africa, and Nehru’s commitment to African independence and

Figure 2.1 A periodisation of ‘big D’ and ‘little d’ development, 1940s–2000s



Four Key Claims of South-South Engagement: the assertion of a shared experience of colonial exploitation, postcolonial inequality and present vulnerability to uneven neoliberal globalisation, and thus a shared identity as ‘developing’ nations; based on this shared experience, developing status, and some geographical commonalities (such as tropical/monsoonal climates), a specific expertise in appropriate development approaches and technologies; an explicit rejection of hierarchical relations, and a strong articulation of the principles of respect, sovereignty and non-interference and an insistence on win-win outcomes of South– South development cooperation and mutual opportunity.

autonomy' whilst excising any problematic histories such as Idi Amin's expulsion of Asians in 1973 and Gandhi's own ambiguous views of black Africans.

There are substantive elements to this discourse of solidarity, such as in the conduct of Chinese migrant construction personnel and agricultural advisors who, unlike Western advisors, live more like their African counterparts.¹ The Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme, initiated in 1964, furthermore enacts a cultural exchange based on solidarity by providing training programmes, academic scholarships and pragmatic rural (commercial) credit programmes to support women's entrepreneurship. Kapur et. al (2005) observe how migration and the 'brain gain' of Chinese and Indian development cooperation is actively endorsed by a Nigerian middle-class with a collective memory of the collapse of Nigerian tertiary education and faculty outmigration during the "Structural Adjustment" of the 1980's. In this respect the rise of China and India as donors-cum-cooperators concretises the idea that human capital improvements increase FDI inflows and private enterprise growth, providing a lesson for the dominant aid paradigm into the cogency of migration and cultural exchange as a tool of Development.

Mawdsley (2008) opens up a productive line of analysis by foregrounding these relations in gift theory and the idea of reciprocity. She suggests that, rather than replicating the hierarchical, neo-imperialist logics of western aid in which (apparent) charity - i.e unreciprocated giving from the generous rich to the needy poor (an adult West disciplining and leading the childlike Africa in a tutelary relationship legitimated by superior Western 'development' and civilisational virtues') - constitutes the dominant symbolic and performative regime, South-South development cooperation constructs partner countries as 'sites of promise, offering counter-gifts of diplomatic solidarity and economic opportunity'. Claims to expertise are further based not on inherently culturally superior knowledge and institutions, but on their own domestic challenges and subaltern experiences, invoking a discourse of 'mutual learning'. For instance, writes Mawdsley (2008):

much of China's development cooperation involves a commercial transaction element, which produces goods and benefits for the investor/buyer (such as land, resources, market access and investment opportunities), as well as those that fall more properly into the category of gift...loans [thus] may be made on especially soft terms (low interest rates and/or long repayment horizons) but they are understood by all parties to be commercial loans. Resources may be used as equity in securing finances, which is again a form of commercial exchange.

The creation of positive reciprocity within Chinese and Indian development cooperation changes our understanding of the ways in which aid is performed effectively, accruing economic and political benefits to both countries in more or less equal public, social relations. Mohan et. al (2008) go further and historicise this South-South discourse of reciprocity, locating its popularity within African polities to a more general wave of disaffection against neoliberalism and its instrumentation in the (post) Washington Consensus. In this respect, they postulate that China's 'peaceful rise' (PRC, 1996) towards a global, economic powerhouse coincided opportunely with an African disillusionment to

¹ Naidu (2008) notes the complicated dynamics between a Chinese, migrant merchant class and the native, African polity in South Africa wherein 'recently, the older Chinese migrants have been lobbying for benefits under the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) legislation arguing that they were treated 'as black' under apartheid. Further research in Zambia by Sachikonye (2008) revealed the tensions 'bubbling [within] a nascent African civil and political society' as the opposition party played the anti-China card to win votes in Lusaka and the Copperbelt. As Mohan et. al (2008) suggest, [these] receptions afforded to Chinese migrants are conditioned by legacies of politics and state formation, and the current conditions and vitality of the economy and polity.

what had come before in adjustment and austerity. The dominant development paradigm that had framed this “before” - the Washington Consensus - rests fundamentally upon a commitment to neoliberal growth strategies (privatisation, deregulation, devaluation, fiscal restraint, market liberalisation and export-led growth) under the coordination of the multilateral International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and World Trade Organisation (WTO). Peck (2002) reveals the explicitly political nature of the loan and grant conditionalities tied to such aid, particularly under the auspices of a post-Washington Consensus which - backtracking from its anti-statist predecessor - calls for ‘purposeful construction and consolidation of neoliberal state forms, modes of governance and regulatory relations’ (IMF, 2001), Peck writes: ‘democracy, good governance, decentralisation, anti-corruption and transparency [are] all being leveraged through debt; political and representational hegemony within the forums of global governance; military might; and the willing cooperation of political and financial elites.’

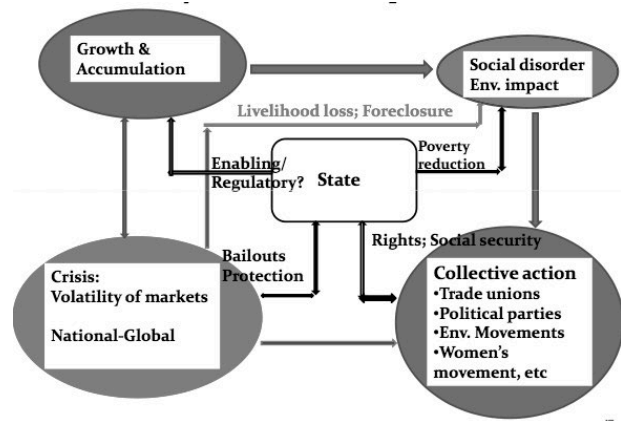
Critically, the (post) Washington Consensus attaches the causes of underdevelopment to the nation state, lambasting corrupt elites, poor policies, low capacity, social conflict, geographical isolation and resource-endowment (Dutch disease), whilst obfuscating more systemic factors in which the West is deeply implicated, such as colonialism; the role of the multi-national banks and the US Treasury in debt crises; the instability of casino capitalism; the distorted world trade system; the impacts of externally imposed ‘shock therapy’ and structural adjustment; and disproportionate power and representation at the UN, WTO, IMF and other ‘global’ forums’ (Stiglitz 2002). In contrast, South-South development actors actively recognise these systemic causes, drawing political capital for its own agendas from ‘western failings’ (PRC, 2009) such as the recent global financial crisis. The lack of political conditionalities attached to Chinese and Indian aid - distinct from commercial conditionalities, those expressed in the vast joint-venture, joint-labour Chinese oil investment in Angola for instance - has led several western development actors to argue they are at an “ethical disadvantage.”

The Darfur crisis and Chinese arms-for-resources investment with a ‘despotic, Sudanese regime’ at the time is often provoked as evidence for the moral bankruptcy of Chinese development cooperation. Hypocritically however, writes Muekalia (2004), ‘these arguments often obfuscate past [and continuing], western involvement in African state politics’, such as the CIA propping up Mobutu’s Zaire during the Cold War or the post-colonial trade policies that were tied to the performance of certain political reforms. China, in this sense, holds a particularly distinctive stance from the liberal discourse of the West, the Beijing Declaration reads: ‘Countries that vary from one another in social system, development level, historical and cultural background and values, have the right to choose their own approaches and models in promoting and protecting human rights in their own countries. Moreover, the politicisation of human rights and the human rights conditionalities on economic assistance should be vigorously opposed as violation of human rights’ (PRC, 2009).

Six (2008) locates these political dissonances within broader tensions over donor modalities, in which the West has to adhere predominantly to multilateral bureaucracy and open democratic dispute whereas China, a one-party socialist state, and India with a vibrant but relatively introverted civil society are free to bilaterally execute and perform development cooperation. Alden and Davies (2006) suggest that the competitive advantage of Chinese resource bids is not political or ethical at base but economic with ‘speed and a strong package of investment and infrastructure loans guaranteed for their African partners.’ In Nigeria for instance, a promised \$7b in investments and rehabilitation of

Table 1: Variables for Analysing the Varieties of Development Aid	
Key Variable	Secondary Variables
Motives for aid	Altruism Mutual benefit Strategic or political interests
Forms of aid	History Monetary or non-monetary Monetary: grants or loans Bilateral, multilateral, or other
Areas of support	Projects or programmes Recurrent or investment expenditures Strategic priorities
Terms and conditions	Financial and technical accountability Support for donor's strategic and/or political interests Macro-economic reform Progress towards 'good governance' and/or 'good management' Purchases of goods and services from donor country (tied aid) Other
Recipient country characteristics	Institutional environment Structure of the economy Other funding options

Source: Own compilation



The role of the State in development - a political economy perspective (Mawdsley, 2008). *Note its purpose in mitigating the real and potential risks of social disorder and crisis.*

power stations secured for PRC development actors, several oil areas that were highly sought by Western multinationals. Furthermore, in Angola, China offered \$2b in aid for infrastructure projects and secured a former Shell oil block that a large state Indian company had sought (Hurst, 2006). This latter case illuminates that China and India, though grouped together within a broader discourse of South-South engagement, are still highly differentiated development actors and competitors, politically (Indian democracy contra. Chinese socialism) and commercially (private enterprise contra. state enterprise). Nonetheless, what the success of Chinese and Indian investment and cooperation in Africa reveals is that within discourse and practice of d/Development, an economic logic often supersedes a moral one and a respectful rhetoric, a patronising one.

The emergence of China and India as international donors produces a counter-narrative to the dominant, western discourse of 'catch up' development, destabilising its implicit moral orderings and 'symbolic domination' (Bourdieu, 1976). If anything, what the rise of Chinese and Indian development actors change within development studies is the importance of a postcolonial political economy perspective that recognises the efficacy of aid, and development assistance or cooperation as a whole, will be conditioned by (i) the nature of the donor-cum-cooperator's interests (ii) the (re)presentation of these interests to African state actors and polities and (iii) the recognition and respect of existing African institutional and political structures. This latter point is contentious, particularly when these political structures are suspected of wrongdoing or human rights abuses, as in Darfur in 2008. Nonetheless, a constant motif throughout China and India's development cooperation is the significance placed upon the 'rituals and rhetorics', as a platform of engagement from which 'positive reciprocity' and stable relations of 'mutual benefit' are constructed.

At the same time Mawdsley (2008) and Six (2009) are mindful to stress that such engagement in the future is just as unstable as it is stable, for instance it remains to be known whether China will be forced, under the bindings of a strengthened global diplomatic presence, to become more involved in multilateral governance and regulatory structures of 'transparency, accountability and sustainability'. Equally, for India as more private, profit-oriented, development actors emerge, it becomes apparent that the rhetoric of 'mutual benefit' and solidarity might strain. Perhaps most problematic in any South-South engagement, and one Six (2009) postulates, is that Chinese and Indian involvement will not fundamentally alter Africa's place in the global division of labour, but simply add a new and significant market without challenging the continent's extraversion.'

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