

Development Assistance for Africa as Part of the Chinese–American Rivalry

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Abstract

The system of development assistance for Africa in recent years has become one of the most important tools in the rivalry between world powers on the continent. Due to the increasingly important position in the global system of China which is now competing with traditional donors, the problems with development assistance are gaining in importance as a potential area for competition among global powers. The aim of the article is to analyze the development assistance of China and the United States for Africa as part of the these two superpowers' global rivalry.

Keywords: development assistance, global development, Africa, China–US relations

Introduction

The system of development assistance has become one of the most important tools supporting developing countries in overcoming certain problems and helping them on to a sustainable path of economic growth and social development.

Traditionally, the role of donor countries has been represented by the so-called *Rich North* made up of countries from Western Europe as well as the USA and Canada. These countries played a major role in shaping and implementing certain policies in African countries, indirectly affecting the political and economic relations of Africa with the rest of the world.

However, recent years have been dominated by the growing role and position of China, which has become a world power with the ambition to shape and influence the world. Chinese policy and assistance have gained importance in Africa, especially as the country is able to spend significant amounts of money in order to fulfill political and economic objectives.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the development assistance as part of the Chinese–American rivalry in Africa. The analysis contains a brief presentation of the role of development assistance and the importance of China and the United States on the African continent. The last part of the work focuses on a critical analysis of the role of development assistance as a tool in the rivalry of two superpowers – China and the United States on the African continent.

The International Development Assistance System

One of the most important problems of the modern world is the problem of global imbalances in the level of socio-economic development of individual regions, which potentially represents an significant prerequisite for the emergence of new conflicts. For this reason, development assistance plays an important role in the world and has been a subject of in-depth research in the social sciences.

The reason for development assistance was justified in the development models created after World War II. According to theory, each monetary unit of an exogenous character increases the level of savings and reduces the amount of capital output needed to be spent on investment. The best known model, was proposed by R.F. Harrod and E.D. Domar, who relied on the these assumptions. H.B. Chenery and A.B. Strout adopted the Harrod-Domar model to create a two-gap model, which justifies the role of development assistance as a stimulus for economic development. This model, despite criticism, is still treated as justification for the development assistance and the global assistance system (Easterly, *Can Foreign Aid Buy Growth?*, 32–33).

Development assistance can also be seen as a political instrument in the post-colonial system, allowing or sustaining strategic control on developing countries, which was particularly evident during the Cold War (Véron 7). This problem is still important,

as many studies consistently show that the non-formal determinants, such as former colonial ties, the method of voting in the U.N. or historical and geostrategic considerations, are often the main determinant of assistance (Easterly, *Are Aid Agencies Improving*, 646–651; Noorbakhsh, Paloni, 928; Mawdsley, 502–503; Hansen, Tarp, 375–398).

Researchers distinguish two groups of factors determining aid: non-political and political (Round, Odedokun, 302–303). The first group includes:

- the level of income per capita;
- the business cycle phase;
- the level of budgetary expenditure and budget deficit;
- peer pressure (*the herd effect*) – the amount of development assistance depends on the amount of assistance granted by other donors;
- level of social protection in domestic politics – the lower it is, the less altruism is expected;
- size of the state, geopolitics and geo-economics associated with the country;
- other temporary factors.

Political determinants include the ideological orientation of the donor, the constitutional independence of decision-makers, and the balance of power in the government, which can dictate the situation in the country.

Since 2005, the total assistance per year for Africa was more than \$ 100 billion. What's more the “traditional” donor countries (the so-called *Rich North*) have been followed by Arab donors (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates) and countries referred to as the “new” donors: China, Brazil, India, South Africa and Russia. Each group of donors has its own rules, but the most formal form of assistance has been developed by OECD countries within the Official Development Assistance framework.

Official Development Assistance (ODA) is understood as donations and loans, provided to developing countries by official government institutions of the donor countries or international organizations, which support economic development and prosperity in the recipient countries. Loans are counted as Official Development Assistance on condition that they include a donation of at least 25% of the value of the assistance. A list of assistant recipient countries is periodically revised in accordance with the classification of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD (*DAC Statistical...*, 11; Deszczyński, 79, 84–87; Bagiński, Kowalska, 89–92). In order to classify resources such as ODA, the following conditions must be fulfilled:

- they are provided by the official sector of the state (government or local authorities);
- the aim of transferred funds is socio-economic development;
- they have a preferential character, which is manifested among others in the donation component;
- the transfer recipient (beneficiary country) is listed on the DAC List of ODA Recipients.

Overall development assistance to developing countries increased over time, and became an important component of international politics of the Global North (Table 1).

Table 1. Value of Official Development Assistance of certain countries in millions of USD and as a share of national income in 1998–2014

Country	Value in USD										Value as a share of national income				
	1998-1999 (average)	2003-2004 (average)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	1998-1999 (average)	2003-2004 (average)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	
Australia	1 707	2 637	14 531	18 522	21 906	23 170	31 975	0.46	0.48	1.23	1.28	1.46	1.58	2.29	
Austria	1 497	1 398	6 372	8 075	4 797	1 044	3 284	0.72	0.52	1.70	1.94	1.22	0.24	0.76	
Belgium	6 626	1 018	7 896	1 185	2 703	10 218	8 726	2.65	0.31	1.68	0.23	0.55	2.01	1.65	
Canada	8 109	5 467	22 642	13 548	18 515	11 109	18 175	1.36	0.60	1.46	0.79	1.04	0.62	1.03	
The Czech Republic	15	99	228	250	220	211	106	0.03	0.11	0.13	0.12	0.12	0.11	0.06	
Denmark	1 899	2 265	4 794	2 818	2 400	4 371	4 194	1.11	1.01	1.52	0.82	0.74	1.27	1.20	
Finland	1 245	647	4 312	1 016	1 527	996	3 027	0.99	0.37	1.78	0.38	0.62	0.37	1.12	
France	8 781	9 767	35 198	34 216	29 578	10 523	19 222	0.59	0.51	1.35	1.21	1.11	0.38	0.67	
Germany	21 221	10 237	41 637	56 202	34 717	53 096	54 375	1.00	0.40	1.24	1.54	1.00	1.42	1.37	
Greece	192	365	761	485	907	869	- 438	0.16	0.19	0.26	0.17	0.36	0.36	-0.19	
Iceland	7	19	29	26	26	35	37	0.00	0.17	0.29	0.21	0.22	0.25	0.22	
Ireland	292	3 093	2 695	2 444	956	1 933	1 203	0.40	2.18	1.57	1.37	0.56	1.06	0.55	
Italy	12 254	3 728	9 608	11 912	11 186	16 703	8 706	1.05	0.24	0.47	0.55	0.56	0.81	0.41	

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Japan	17 768	8 851	48 249	62 082	48 977	58 459	40 501	0.42	0.19	0.86	1.02	0.80	1.15	0.84
Korea	837	2 667	11 834	11 509	12 415	15 038	10 542	0.21	0.41	1.17	1.03	1.09	1.14	0.74
Luxembourg	121	221	411	417	399	429	423	0.69	0.84	1.07	0.99	1.00	1.00	1.06
Netherlands	10 368	14 651	13 013	22 046	19 943	19 428	68 874	2.67	2.73	1.67	2.62	2.56	2.39	7.85
New Zealand	158	239	426	536	629	581	667	0.32	0.29	0.32	0.35	0.39	0.33	0.36
Norway	2 021	3 046	5 876	4 755	4 752	5 580	5 040	1.33	1.29	1.41	0.96	0.93	1.07	0.99
Poland	20	72	378	417	421	487	452	0.01	0.03	0.08	0.08	0.09	0.10	0.09
Portugal	2 236	910	162	-1 299	475	2 325	- 331	2.08	0.59	0.07	-0.57	0.23	1.08	-0.15
Slovakia	7	22	74	86	80	86	83	0.04	0.06	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09
Slovenia	-	-	59	63	58	62	62	-	-	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.12
Spain	20 435	9 714	10 340	20 145	1 977	7 987	13 669	3.53	1.05	0.74	1.38	0.15	0.59	0.98
Sweden	2 869	2 105	5 127	6 598	14 156	10 447	9 325	1.27	0.65	1.10	1.20	2.63	1.82	1.64
Switzerland	4 020	2 316	23 444	12 878	14 342	13 293	4 673	1.38	0.61	4.01	1.94	2.20	1.90	0.67
United Kingdom	13 717	25 121	25 632	46 851	63 461	30 738	31 809	0.96	1.25	1.12	1.91	2.57	1.21	1.16
USA	49 279	35 072	216 950	166 777	167 506	151 860	238 648	0.55	0.31	1.48	1.10	1.01	0.88	1.34
Total	187 704	145 750	512 678	504 561	479 031	451 078	577 029	0.78	0.48	1.25	1.15	1.08	1.00	1.24

Source: The author's own work based on *International Development Statistics* (IDS) online databases (21.03.2016), <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/data.htm>.

Objectives of the assistance has changed over time in accordance to the doctrine of economic development and the political situation in the world. Depending on the recommendations, the countries spend assistance on poverty reduction, sustainable development and increasing the commerce of the potential recipient. Later, the list of objectives was extended to the promotion of gender equality, the empowerment of women, conflict prevention, and more recently, improving the quality of governance. In addition, the DAC recommends non-repayable assistance as the basis for the functioning of development aid (Nowak, 460).

The Development Perspectives of Africa

The development perspectives in Africa seem to be an important determinant for the rivalry of world powers on this continent, especially because of the numerous growth factors: natural resources, potential demographic structure, growing domestic markets, and the particular destination for foreign investment. Of course, analyzing the entire continent is problematic due to the huge diversity of certain countries and may raise methodological concerns related to excessive generalizations. Despite this, it is worth looking at the continent as a whole, which in the future may become an important center for growth in the global economy and an important crossroads for world geopolitics.

According to the forecasts and estimation, the gross domestic product (GDP) growth for the whole continent in 2015 was 4.5% (we are in 2018!!). (see my previous comment). Analyzing the economic situation of the continent, strong regional differences are clearly visible. West Africa achieved a relatively high GDP growth hitting 6% in 2014, despite its fight against Ebola. Southern Africa’s GDP increase dropped below 3%, and the region’s most important economy, South Africa, grew by only 1.5%. Sources of growth were associated primarily with the development of the agricultural sector, mining, construction and services. In recent years an increasing role has begun to be played by the growth in consumption and investment in infrastructure (*African Economic Outlook*).

Table 2. Basic indicators of certain African countries in 2014

Country	Population (in thousands)	GDP (PPP, USD m)	GDP per capita	Average rate of economic growth 2006–2014
Algeria	39 929	551 720	13 818	2.8
Angola	22 137	175 540	7 930	7.0
Benin	10 600	19 847	1 872	4.3
Botswana	2 039	33 622	16 493	4.8

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Burkina Faso	17 420	30 081	1 727	6.1
Burundi	10 483	8 396	801	4.4
Cabo Verde	504	3 286	6 525	3.7
Cameroon	22 819	67 225	2 946	3.8
Central African Republic	4 709	2 861	607	-1.3
Chad	13 211	29 851	2 260	4.7
Comoros	752	1 211	1 609	2.2
Congo	4 559	28 090	6 162	4.8
Congo, Dem. Rep.	69 360	55 731	804	6.6
Côte d'Ivoire	20 805	71 952	3 458	3.7
Djibouti	886	2 858	3 225	4.9
Egypt	83 387	945 388	11 337	4.3
Equatorial Guinea	778	25 331	32 557	2.1
Eritrea	6 536	7 855	1 202	1.8
Ethiopia	96 506	139 434	1 445	10.6
Gabon	1 711	34 280	20 032	4.3
Gambia	1 909	3 362	1 761	3.3
Ghana	26 442	109 392	4 137	7.0
Guinea	12 044	15 312	1 271	2.4
Guinea-Bissau	1 746	2 502	1 433	3.0
Kenya	45 546	134 711	2 958	6.5
Lesotho	2 098	5 589	2 665	4.9
Liberia	4 397	3 771	858	7.4
Libya	6 253	103 267	16 514	3.2
Madagascar	23 572	33 642	1 427	2.8
Malawi	16 829	13 755	817	6.3
Mali	15 768	27 101	1 719	3.9
Mauritania	3 984	12 856	3 226	4.7
Mauritius	1 249	23 422	18 751	4.0
Morocco	33 493	254 362	7 595	4.4
Mozambique	26 473	29 757	1 124	7.3
Namibia	2 348	23 592	10 048	4.7
Niger	18 535	17 666	953	5.6
Nigeria	178 517	1 057 831	5 926	6.3
Rwanda	12 100	18 704	1 546	7.6
São Tomé and Príncipe	198	612	3 093	5.6
Senegal	14 548	33 678	2 315	3.4
Seychelles	93	2 304	24 694	5.2
Sierra Leone	6 205	12 893	2 078	8.1
Somalia	10 806
South Africa	53 140	683 147	12 856	2.8

Table 2. (cd.)

South Sudan	11 739	23 306	1 985	...
Sudan	38 764	159 510	4 115	4.1
Swaziland	1 268	8 672	6 841	2.1
Tanzania	50 757	92 532	1 823	6.9
Togo	6 993	10 182	1 456	4.2
Tunisia	11 117	125 149	11 258	3.2
Uganda	38 845	66 650	1 716	6.3
Zambia	15 021	61 786	4 113	7.8
Zimbabwe	14 599	26 877	1 841	2.4

Source: The author's own work based on *African Economic Outlook: Basic Statistics*, <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/statistics/>.

Despite the progress achieved, the level of social development in Africa remains low and the aggregate growth rates mask significant variations between and within certain countries. Distribution of income and consumption in Africa is distorted, with greatly diversified as well as considerable socio-economic and geographical differences which exacerbate the problems in the region (see Fig. 1).

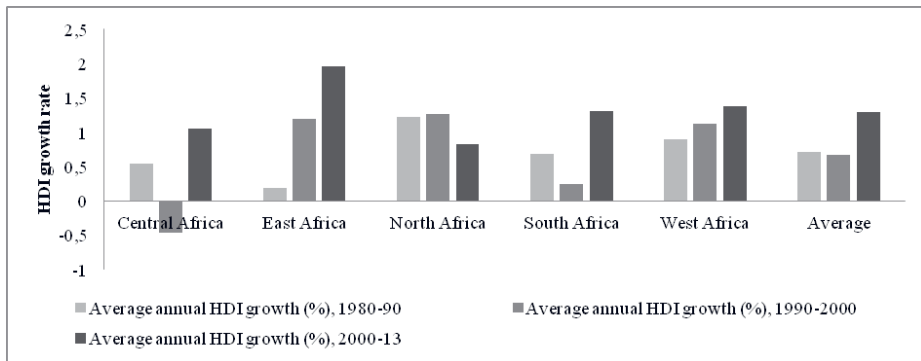


Fig. 1. Average annual HDI growth in African regions

Source: The author's own work based on *African Economic Outlook: Basic Statistics*, <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/>.

As it seems, all development programs and plans should focus on integration and social inclusion, leading to the achievement and maintenance of social and political stability, a reduction in excessive social inequalities and an improvement in resource allocations. The dismantling of defective structures and social institutions is necessary to prevent significant inequality that leads to extreme poverty, and has an impact on overall social well-being.

For obvious reasons, socio-political and economical development will still to be based on raw materials. In other countries, it will probably be based on the agricultural

sector. What is worth noting is that even today, exports of raw materials and agricultural products plays a major role in the economies of African countries.

The overall conclusion is as follows: the raw material base and growing domestic markets are a potential destination for the realization of global powers to conduct investment and trade. It should however be noted that the sluggish development in Africa and the huge problems of a socio-political and economic nature are a barrier to further growth and development.

The potential barriers can be grouped in various ways but the best method is to separate them into five major groups (Szukalski, 260–264):

1. Political factors – the recent history of Africa clearly indicates that one of the biggest challenges for this continent is to achieve political stability, which is a prerequisite for further development. Factors that stop this stability include separatist tendencies, armed conflicts that significantly destabilize the continent, and a slowdown in the process of development and modernization. The sources of conflict include primarily ethnic conflicts, which are often the legacy of colonialism, competition for natural resources, religious extremism (both Christian and Muslim), social inequality, the stratification of income, and dictatorial regimes on the continent. All these factors undoubtedly destabilize the region and contribute to the stagnation that has been observed in Africa for years;
2. Historical and cultural factors – the problems faced by Africa are often the aftermath of colonialism and imperialism, caused by the irresponsibility and greed of the colonial powers. Though perhaps these explanations are to a certain extent true, there are voices that say that the real causes of stagnation and underdevelopment on the continent should be sought primarily in the value systems which do not always go hand-in-hand with pluralistic, Western political systems (economic or social);
3. Institutional factors – in many African countries the institutional system is ineffective or does not exist at all. This causes general uncertainty that makes agents reluctant to engage in long-term projects, and can consequently lead to stagnation. The African system of values, attitudes and institutions is characterized by what should be known as progress-resistant features, which include the culture of facing the past and the present but not the future, an excessive concentration on individual leadership, boundless subordination of the individual community, a high degree of fatalism, irrationality, a belief in magic, and a profound disregard and ignorance for economic reality;
4. Poor infrastructure (roads, telecommunications, etc.) hinders investment and development of the continent;
5. Risks associated with globalization and global trends – like climate change, environmental degradation, deforestation, greenhouse effect, gas emissions, disturbance of the balance in the global system of raw materials and energy as a result of the dynamic development of Asian countries, terrorism, global crises leading to a disequilibrium in the world system, migrations, epidemics and famine.

The Economic Interdependence Between the U.S. and China – Selected Issues

China is one of the fastest growing economies in the world, achieving a high level of economic growth and a growing importance in the international division of labor, trade and world politics. The country in recent decades has made a significant step forward, becoming an important Actor in international relations.

The origins of the economic transformation in China are related to the plan of ambitious economic reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1978. The Chinese authorities adopted the reform and innovative program known as the “four modernizations” – agriculture, industry, national defense and science and technology (Kowalik, 222). Economic reforms have focused primarily on (Gawlikowskis, 118):

- a gradual move to a market-based economy;
- an actual departure from Maoism in economics, politics, society and culture;
- the opening up of the national economy to the global system;
- construction of a new legal order in the country;
- restoration of respect for ancient culture and traditions, preservation of ancient rituals.

Due to the lack of previous experience in the transformation of the socio-economic system, reforms were introduced gradually, initially in selected sectors and institutions that enabled the correction of solutions before their implementation throughout the country (Szymański, 184–185).

Agriculture was the first area that underwent reforms. In the villages there was a process of devolution of property rights and abolition of the agricultural commune system. The overall objective of this reform was to increase agricultural production and provide self-sufficiency for the population. At the same time authorities began to form what were experimental, special economic zones which allowed free movement of capital, including the beneficial transfer of modern technology and management methods which were later used in the entire country. The first special economic zone was Hong Kong.

In 1984, authorities began to modernize industry, focusing on increasing productivity and efficiency, reducing bureaucracy and modernizing management methods. Companies were given a relatively high degree of autonomy and opportunity to decide on the allocation of resources through the market system.

So rapid changes in the global economic system were significant for the United States both in a positive and negative way. On the one hand, China has become an attractive market for ‘get rich quick’ USA citizens as well as a source of cheap imports and a centre of production for US corporations, which allows for continued low inflation, limited wage growth, and an increase in domestic demand. On the other hand, it is impossible not to notice the negative effects for the USA as a world power: China’s role as the biggest buyer of American debt securities,

financing of the American deficit; the growing trade deficit between the two countries; indirectly, increases in the prices of raw materials in the USA and fuelling the rapid growth of production and industrialization in China.

However comparing the two giants is still quite problematic – on the one hand, the huge population of China determines the high level of production and in turn GDP. In addition, the USA as a highly developed country whose economic expansion cannot and is not based on the simple factors of growth, such as cheap labor. So exceeding the size of the American GDP and exceeding its share of global GDP means *de facto* only achieving nominal leadership. The standard of living, innovation, human capital and institutions will be several times higher in the USA than in China. This process illustrates, therefore, an increase in economic power, but the levelling of economies is still a long way off (see Fig. 2).

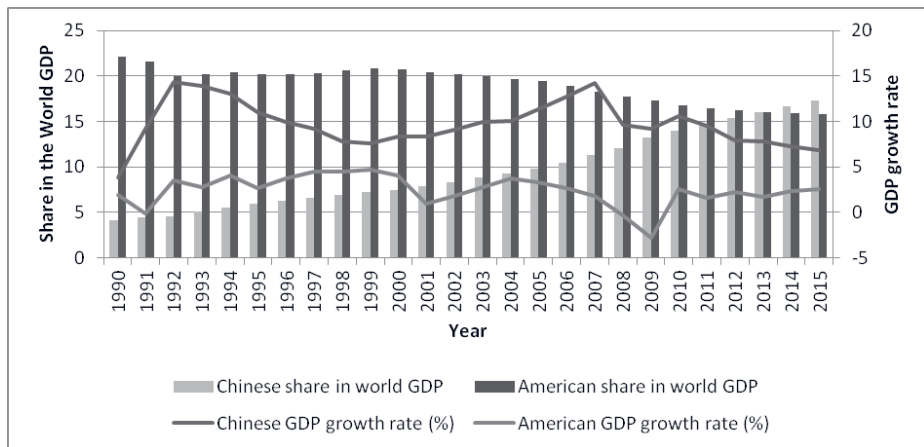


Fig. 2. Comparison of GDP growth in China and the USA and their share in World GDP

Source: The author's own work based on *World Bank Economic Outlook*, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2016/01/weodata/index.aspx>

It is obvious, however, that the growing interdependence of the USA and the growth of China's position carries more risks than benefits. American foreign debt in Chinese hands may serve as a potential source of pressure and instability, increasing dependence on Chinese goods and the increasing dollar reserves in China can easily trigger a crisis and an economic collapse throughout the Western world. Production of high-tech goods in China, the purchasing of Western brands and increasing cooperation with high-tech manufacturers by Chinese corporations might be considered a threat as well.

What is problematic is the fact of strengthening China's position in Europe, both by increasing and making bold investments on this continent, as well as the acquisition of the debt of European countries, including the PIGS (Spain, Portugal, Italy,

Greece), which may consequently make them politically dependent on the government in Beijing. Another interesting aspect is the construction of the New Silk Road.

To sum up, American–Chinese relations are intense, multi-level and multi-faceted. The growing interdependence, primarily economic, force both countries – despite the distance and certain prejudices – to work together, as it is mostly determined by the degree of dependence of the USA economy on China and the Chinese market. The agreement between Washington and Beijing is therefore one of the conditions for the smooth functioning of the global system. At the same time, however, fundamental differences between the two countries exclude a true partnership – first of all the differences in legal, institutional, social and cultural systems. An important factor is the growing military power of reviving the Chinese empire.

USA and China's Realization of Development Assistance in Africa

Along with the changes in world geopolitics and the global collapse of the colonial system, the growing interest in Africa began to be shown by non-European countries, including in particular the USA and China. Interest in African countries is traditionally based on their resources and potentially increasing domestic markets. Therefore both countries are interested in Africa as a potential source of natural resources as well as markets for their exports.

American policy towards Africa was based on the concept of the 3Ds: development, diplomacy, and defense. In 2014, the first USA–Africa summit was held where – apart from traditional political issues, such as security – members raised the issue of development assistance and trade.

From the point of view of the development of one of the key documents proving the USA's involvement in Africa is the Partnership for Economic Growth and Opportunity in Africa, adopted during Clinton presidency, which because it saw the creation of free trade zones, a widening access to US markets, the establishment of an American-African economic forum allocated 650 million USD for investments in sub-Saharan Africa (Tilton).

The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in 2003 should be considered as a real breakthrough, promoting the fight against AIDS, HIV, malaria and tuberculosis with an initial budget of approximately 15 billion USD (PEPFAR). In 2004, the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) was launched, offering help for countries ready to accept the principles of good governance and economic freedom. Washington's current commitments in assistance issues tend to focus on continuing existing programs related to the improvement of social infrastructure, institutions,

and security rather than on creating and implementing new programs. The USA is focused on promoting political and economic reforms, which would lead to increased security and prosperity. Unfortunately, as in the case of European countries, Americans are often viewed as colonizers.

In turn, the presence, role and nature of the help of the Chinese in Africa is complex. China is investing gigantic sums in Africa, especially in large infrastructure projects, construction of roads and rail links. Frequent sources of tension are economic in nature, which can weaken the local economy. A source of tension is also the working conditions in Chinese factories and mines. An example would be Zambia, where there has been mass protests after the Chinese opened fire on protesting miners in a coal mine in the south of the country. Foreign assistance itself is difficult to estimate, because the Chinese government does not publish full statistics. In addition, part of the funds is foreign investment rather than development assistance. The largest part of the assistance are concessional loans, other forms of support include sponsored investments, grants and debt relief (*China's foreign aid...*).

Chinese assistance and investments are increasingly gaining recognition in Africa as they are implemented relatively quickly and without political, economic, social or environmental conditions contrary to the requirements of donors from the USA, EU or international financial institutions such as the World Bank. In this way, the West is being gradually displaced and losing influence in its former colonies. It should be noted, however, that Chinese assistance should rather be described as a barter arrangement because in exchange for helping, China attains the right to extract raw materials. In fact Chinese assistance to Africa should be defined as straightforward bartering: in exchange for raw materials, production licenses etc., China develops infrastructure projects. China offers help, but only when Chinese companies somehow participates in future government contracts. It recalls in some ways the “neo-colonial” practices of Western countries (*Building Bridges...*).

Here in full view is China's pragmatism – assistance depends on the participation of Chinese entities in the procurement process and, as such, serves to create the foundations for trade and investment (Saidi, Wolf, 32–33). In contrast to traditional donors, who try different means to influence the situation in these countries, the political and financial support given by China is not directly related to the introduction of certain reforms of a social, political or economic nature.

At the core of the Chinese policy towards Africa is the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. Clearly the position of the Chinese in this case was presented by Deputy Foreign Minister Zhou Wenzhong: “business is business. We try to separate politics from business. You [the West] are trying to impose the market economy and multiparty democracy. Countries [in Africa] are not ready to do so”.

Such activities are of enormous concern for Western politicians, who emphasize that Chinese development aid is uncoordinated with the efforts of other actors and projects funded by the Chinese brands not taking into account the environmental and social consequences. The rejection of the principle of conditionality of aid is not conducive for the introduction of effective mechanisms of governance in African countries that would permanently improve their situation. There are even fears that in the longer term, the impact of the assistance of the Chinese economy on the quality of institutions in African countries will be detrimental. Moreover, future USA influence and control over oil in the African region might be either weakened or counterbalanced by the China.

In fact China has a unique opportunity to gain a significant foothold in Africa as a new main actor on the global stage. Through its activities and image as a donor, China can change the situation in Africa and this might be potential cause for conflicts with the USA. Both countries are becoming increasingly dependent on imported resources that are located in Africa. They both have strong reasons to compete and build their own alliances in order to maintain their respective positions in world politics and the global economy.

Conclusion

Development assistance is one of the most important forms of assistance for developing countries. Traditionally, the role of the donor was taken on by the rich countries of the West, including in particular the former colonizers and the USA, as the leading state in the contemporary political and economic relations.

The growing role of China in the global economy has sparked great interest in Africa as a region rich in natural resources and potentially absorbent internal markets. The rise of China in Africa has focused the attention of the entire West, including the USA, which is one of the main donors of development assistance to Africa. Strengthening Chinese–African trade and political relations appear to be permanent, although the final results of such assistance in the long term may not be beneficial for the continent.

Chinese expansion is of great interest to African countries and the reaction of other powers, including, first and foremost, the United States of America. Currently, there is no doubt that any initiative towards Africa must take into account the position of Beijing, as development assistance has become one of the tools of their expansion on the continent. However, despite its increasing importance and attractiveness for African countries, Chinese development assistance is uncoordinated and projects funded by Chinese companies do not take into account environmental and social consequences, the effectiveness and legitimacy of the actions taken, which eventually may have a negative impact on African countries.

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