

Cheru, F., & Obi, C. (Eds.). (2010). *The rise of China and India in Africa: challenges, opportunities and critical interventions*, London, Zed Books, 276 p, ISBN: 9781848134379 (pb)

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This book effectively outlines the economic rise of China and India in Africa, highlighting the significant transition from a US-led unipolar world following the Cold War to a multipolar global landscape, where emerging powers from the Global South are set to play crucial roles amidst the decline of Western nations and their unsatisfactory history in Africa. The book is structured into six parts and also explores the challenges and opportunities that the involvement of China and India in Africa presents.

The first part sets out to introduce the book by emphatically stating how China and India are emerging giants in Africa. The countries view Africa as an equal partner rather than a recipient and do not have Western donor conditionalities. Africa international relations are in flux as a result of the impact of the emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC). Five images of China were put in place to set up the relationship with Africa. First, its image as the new face of globalization, second, its role in African development success, third as a mirror for the West, fourth as a pariah partner and finally as a responsible stakeholder (Alden 2007:128). Africa is still entrenched in the traditional role of supplying raw materials. China faces similar problems to those facing Africa and thus the continuing developing country character of China suggests that Africa could also adopt the models and instructive experiences of China. India is also growing in Africa, trailing behind China. India is more aligned with the continental regional trade processes through regional trade blocs like COMESA.

The second part provides a succinct historical perspective of China and India's relations with Africa. In 1935, Zhou Enlai pointed out that African and Asian countries needed to develop economic and cultural cooperation with each other in order to overcome the historical legacies of imperialism and colonialism. The five guiding principles of the Chinese aid set included mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefits and peaceful co-existence. These have stood the test of time except however, for equality and mutual benefits, as it is not always a win-win situation. A general historical review shows how China's cultural diplomacy has developed and how it has opened different channels of cooperation in order to strengthen its economic and political ties with the African continent. India-Africa relations have moved beyond those based merely on Gandhi's 'ideas and services' to a more pragmatic relationship that involves India's political, economic and security interests in convergence with and responding to Africa's developmental needs.

Trade between India and Africa is said to go back to the fourteenth Century. India's engagement with Africa took a new turn following decolonization. There was an ideological affiliation between India and Africa, which was evident in the anti-racism and anti-colonialism agenda of NAM. It helped in ending racism and apartheid in South Africa. There has been a major shift in India's engagement with African countries from the 1948–91 period to the 2000–08 period. India now provides a vibrant market for African exports, resources for investment, finance for development and technologies for enhancing productivity.

Part three explores China and India's growth surge in Africa. Trade between Africa and China surged from US\$3 billion in 1995 to about US\$55 billion in 2007. China is becoming a very important trading partner and source of FDI for Africa. Historically, China's FDI flows into Africa have mainly been in the form of equity joint ventures with local enterprises. This form of entry and ownership allowed Chinese firms to exercise some degree of control over local operations while avoiding outright ownership and exposure to political and commercial risk. Two case studies of DRC and Kenya were used and market-seeking motivations have been the driving force for China. Economic relations between India and Africa are buoyant, and this is largely the result of the active role being played by the Indian private sector, with strong support from a more pro-business Export-Import Bank of India. The historical context of Ghana and Togo led to women adopting new trade of Chinese prints.

Part four discusses the conflict-development nexus. China's Africa engagement reflects the emergence of new power dynamics in the global economy. China's foreign policy makes a conscious effort to respect Africans as partners. China's robust engagement with the African Union is spurring the AU's traditional partners, especially the EU, to engage more with the organization. The conflicts in Darfur have put China's long-held foreign policy of 'non-interference' on a collision course with the new international principle of the 'responsibility to protect'. China believes that upholding non-interference and offering unconditional aid are important to its efforts to develop lasting relations with Africa. It has been accused of worsening the humanitarian crisis in Darfur by ignoring it and pursuing economic interests. However, China has been in constant communication with the relevant people, playing mediator, promoting dialogue between top leaders, dispatching envoys, discussing the problem in the UN General Assembly and joining peacekeeping missions of the UN in Africa. China has helped a lot of developmental projects in Zambia, but however, it has been accused of poor and exploitative working conditions. The issue of Chinese investments in Zambia is said to have become divisive and polarized Zambian society.

Part five explores the scramble for African oil and resources. China has moved from being an oil exporter to the world's second-largest importer of oil (overtaking Japan), while India has also moved to the position of the world's fifth-largest importer of oil. While China imports about 46.05 percent of the oil consumed domestically (Xinhua News Agency 2008), India imports about 70 percent. China and India are the latest to join this scramble to secure access to stable supplies of oil and gas to fuel their economies. Naidu (2007: 295) rightly cautions, 'if Africa has to ensure that there are mutual gains in this "new strategic partnership", then surely it must set the rules of engagement with China and not vice versa.

Part six provides a way forward and limitations for Africa emphatically discussing the issue of promoting regional integration. This part recommends that policies and programmes to deal effectively with the economic imbalances between China, India and Africa have to be comprehensive, collectively created and implemented, and thus located within a very different paradigm. It is not too late to transform NEPAD into a strong continental platform to negotiate effectively with Africa's external partners on an equal basis. However, the challenge of harnessing China's and India's investment in Africa to support Africa's development agenda in a meaningful way rests at the national level.

This book is a must-read for African leaders and the general populace as it seeks to pave a solid way forward to develop Africa. It provides a profound insight into the opportunities and challenges posed by trade investments and economic partnerships, and the geopolitical implications associated with China's and India's presence in Africa.