

Mozambique and China: from politics to
business?

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Discussion Paper n° 05/2008

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of this article is to discuss the views and perceptions of the government of Mozambique and the Mozambican civil society about the country's relationship with China. It argues that there is a gap between the two sides, with the political elite very enthusiastic, considering China as a good partner, whereas some important strata of the society is doubtful, accusing China of doing the same thing that western countries did during colonial times.

The considerable economic development that China has achieved in recent years has led to numerous debates across the world. Africa is no exception, particularly because it has been seen by China as a strategic partner in what has been dubbed "South-South cooperation" and the struggle against an alleged "Westernization" of the world. In fact, relations between China and Africa have reached an unprecedented level of development¹. Between 1999 and 2006, the amount of trade between China and African states increased tenfold². After his accession to power in 2003, the Chinese President Hun Jintao and his Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited Africa three times (2004, 2006 and 2007), thus reaffirming the importance of this continent to China. In 2000, African ministers met in Beijing with the Chinese government to create the forum for China-Africa cooperation (FOCAC), and, in 2007, a China-Africa summit took place in the same city. It is considered one of the most important meetings bringing Heads of State together ever held in this country. How can this new partnership between China and Africa contribute to the economic and social development of this continent? Are critics right in pointing out that we are in the presence of a new form of colonialism or a "chinalization" of Africa?

In the West, China's growing interest in Africa is viewed with concern. China, in advancing its "policy of non-interference", is accused by many of curbing democracy in Africa, of being condescending or even an ally in relation to the violation of human rights, poor governance and environmental degradation by African leaders. In cooperating, for example, with regimes such as those in Khartoum, Sudan - whose leader was recently accused by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity in the Darfur region — and Luanda, Angola, regarded as one of the most corrupt on the continent —, or in vetoing the UN sanctions against the regime of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, China is seen as encouraging authoritarian regimes and bad governance in Africa. But not only do the detractors of China criticize the *means used by China*: they also claim that China's goals are not what it is usually claimed, that, in the end, the new Asian "tiger" is not worried about the development of Africa, but sees the continent solely as an inexhaustible source of

¹Relations between Africa and China have a long history, and according to some historians, based in archaeological discoveries, they could be around two thousands years. But with African post-colonial states they can be dated more and less from the period of liberation struggle in Africa. About China and Africa relationships see for example, Gao JINYUAN (April 1984), China and Africa: the development of relations over many centuries, *African Affairs*, Vol. 83, n°331, pp. 241-250; Alaba OGUNSANWO, *China's policy in Africa*, Londres, Cambridge University Press, 1974; Alan HUTCHISON (2007), *China's African Revolution*, Londres, Westview Press, 1976. To understand the debates and the interests at stake between China and Africa relationships, see for example, Chris ALDEN, *China in Africa: Partner, Competitor or Hegemon?*, Londres, Zed Books.

² Ministère du Commerce de la République Populaire de la Chine (24th October 2007), "La Chine est-elle un prédateur ou un partenaire de l'Afrique?". Retrieved 2 July 2008 from <http://french.mofcom.gov.cn/article/rapport/200710/20071005169584.html>.

raw materials to supply Chinese development. In reality, China is doing what colonial powers have always done to Africa.

Contrary to critics, part of the African political elite claims that China is reliable partner and one that is less disrespectful than the Western powers, respecting the authority of political leaders and not demanding anything in return other than business as usual; a partner that stick to its commitments and does not go beyond that. This statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Gabon illustrates the state of mind of the African political elite towards China: "*the advantage of China [in relation to the West] is the fact that this country does not interfere in our internal affairs*" (Radio France International, November 4, 2006). The partnership with China is seen by many African leaders as an important resource in the emancipation of African countries in relation to their former colonial powers. According to hem, the West is more concerned about losing their privileged status in Africa than with China's methods and ends.

In Mozambique, politicians have been receptive of China's interest in the country. The government of Mozambique, via the voice of its President, Armando Guebuza, sees China, "as a partner and not a colonizer", because, unlike Western countries, China is committed to developing Africa and has always kept its promises. But if optimism is high amongst most of the elite, this is not the case in some strata of Mozambican society, who see with some pessimism the way the new cooperation between the two countries is developing on the ground.

In this article, I intend to examine, from a socio-historical perspective, the relations between China and Mozambique. The analysis covers the period of formation of the anti-colonial movements through independence of Mozambique to date. This is to show that, if today the two countries enjoy good relations, things were not always so, the two having had a complex, difficult and ambiguous relationship in the past. Also, it is to show that China has always been present in Africa, although on a smaller scale than is the case today.

China and the Liberation movements during the colonial struggle

Like other African countries, the relationship between China and Mozambique is not a recent phenomenon.

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According to Medeiros (n.d), even if there are ancient traces of Chinese presence in Mozambique, we can say that, for the modern period, the first group of Chinese to arrive in the area that is today's Mozambique did so in February 1858, when the Portuguese authorities recruited a group of thirty Chinese to work in the colony. With the beginning of colonial capitalism in 1881, the recruitment of Chinese became more systematic. That kind of migration, which lasted until Mozambique's independence in 1975, produced a large Chinese community in Mozambique. The latter largely left Mozambique at independence however and their community buildings were nationalised. Although some elements stayed in Mozambique, we can advance that the growth of the Chinese presence was not built on this premise even if so.e connection may exist Hence the origin of independent Mozambique's relation with China may more usefully be linked to the period of liberation struggle when China got involved with the nationalist who took power in 1975.

In the 1960's China tried to establish its influence in the region and counter the US and the Soviet Union — its former ally, which had in the late 1950s and early 1960s turned into a major political rival — by supporting some liberation movements in this former Portuguese colony. However, competition with the Soviet Union would lead China to adopt an ambiguous position, supporting rival movements. This ambiguous policy was also pursued in Angola, where China has supported the National Front for Liberation of Angola (FNLA), the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA)³.

Also, China, while declaring itself favourable to the liberation of the oppressed and colonized people and supporting African anti-colonial movements, did not hesitate to support Portugal simultaneously — when the country was in conflict with India for possession of Goa and Damao, Indian territories occupied by this European country until 1961. This is explained mainly by the fact that China had an old border dispute with India, regarding possession of certain territories, and this dispute had led China to invade the second in 1962. In the case of Mozambique, China supported the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), the Mozambique Revolutionary Committee (COREMO), as well as the Popular Party of Mozambique (PAPOMO).

³ For this topic, see Indira CAMPOS, Alex VINES ((March 2007), Angola and China. A pragmatic partnership?, London, CSIS; Steven JACKSON, , "China's Third World Foreign Policy: The Case of Angola and Mozambique, 1961-93", *The China Quarterly*, No. 142, (July 1995), Cambridge University Press on behalf of the School of Oriental and African Studies, pp. 388-422.

China and FRELIMO during the colonial struggle

FRELIMO, officially created in 1962, had, since its beginning, important relations with China. These influenced how FRELIMO would not only be organized as a political-military movement, but also how it would lead the armed struggle.

China's support to FRELIMO included training, military equipment and money. The military training was conducted in Tanzania and in China itself. The year 1963 was the moment when the first group of Mozambicans went to China to receive military training. Amongst them were Filipe Samuel Magaia, the future head of the department of defence of FRELIMO and José Moiane. That same year Eduardo Mondlane, the first president of FRELIMO, visited the country. According to Thomas Henriksen, upon his return from China, Mondlane "*was convinced that the historical struggle of the Chinese people had relevance to the present struggle of the people of Africa*" (Henriksen, 1978:443).

It was therefore no surprise that FRELIMO adopted the tactics of Maoist guerrillas during the anti-colonial struggle, but without it being locked in to Beijing influence and interests (*Ibid*; Brito, 1987:18). Indeed, throughout the period of armed struggle, FRELIMO adopted a position of non-alignment.

Thus, in addition to China's support, FRELIMO received support from the Soviet Union, even though the two did not enjoy good relations, and each was trying to impose its influence in Africa. It seems that, in order to avoid conflicts between the two communist powers, FRELIMO chose to receive Chinese support via the African Liberation Committee (LAC) (P. Whitaker, 1970:14). At the same time, FRELIMO also received support from India, another major enemy of Beijing. However, while FRELIMO maintained a "neither x nor y" policy, China took advantage of divisions within this movement to try to impose itself by military and financially helping COREMO.

COREMO, formed in 1965 by former dissidents of FRELIMO, was the second most important anti-colonial movement after FRELIMO, being active in some military activities, particularly in the province of Tete. Like FRELIMO, it also found itself confronted with early internal conflicts amongst its leaders. One year after its formation, amongst the top three leaders, there remained only Paulo Gumane. The others had left or were expelled. However, unlike FRELIMO, COREMO never had significant support from the international community and was never recognized by the OAU, only receiving support from Zambia (Kenneth Kaunda was considered the "godfather" of the COREMO), as well as Ghana and China. According to S. Jackson, soon after its formation, one of the first countries visited by COREMO leaders was China in 1965, where

apparently this movement received some support (Jackson, 399:1995). The COREMO also succeeded in its propaganda that was publicized by the local press between 1965 and 1971 (*Ibid*).

Unlike the position of non-alignment followed by FRELIMO, and although its leader Paul Gumane was quoted in 1970 saying that the aid from China had not transformed COREMO into a communist movement (*Ibid*: 403), the COREMO had positioned itself against what he called "soviet revisionism". However, being an ally of COREMO did not prevent China from also assisting Adelino Gwambe, when he was expelled from this movement and created a new movement in November 1966, called PAPOMO. The SCCIM⁴ reported that, at the end of 1967, Gwambe, accompanied by several leaders of PAPOMO such as Calvino Malhayeye, visited Beijing at the invitation of the Chinese Institute of Foreign Affairs. In addition to receiving training for "revolutionary leaders", this visit was intended for "military enhancement" (SCCIM, December 1967). At the same time, news indicated that the COREMO had thirty militants receiving military training in China (*Ibid*). In 1968, it was believed that the confusion reigning within COREMO was the work of Gwambe who had received financial support from the Chinese to destabilize the movement of Paul Gumane (SCCIM, September 1968). However, despite these stories indicating the interference of China within COREMO, relations between the two parties continued at least until the beginning of the 1970s. PIDE⁵ reported a meeting between Paul Gumane and the ambassador of China in Lusaka, Zambia in 1972, in which the president of COREMO would have asked, amongst other things, for financial aid, military training in China and study grants for militants of his party. Despite the apparent Chinese support to PAPOMO, we can say that, unlike COREMO, this movement actually existed only on paper.

We must also note that at this period, rumours involving China's support to other liberation movements, which aimed to destabilize FRELIMO, were common. For example, in April 1970, the PIDE, citing an interview with a Russian diplomat, R. Ulyanovsky at the time the head of the International Department of the Russian Central Committee, said that China had helped create a movement called the Liberation Partazana of Mozambique (ULIPAMO). This movement, whose leaders said to be James Lunge and Joe Bande, former members of FRELIMO and COREMO, would aim to put an end to the existence of FRELIMO, accused of being a Soviet satellite. According to PIDE, a group of militants had already been sent to Beijing to receive military training (PIDE, 1970). Also, referring to the same source, PIDE reported

⁴ The Services of Centralization and Coordination of Information of Mozambique (SCCIM) had been created by decree 43 761 of 29 June 1961 and were intended to centralize, coordinate, interpret and disseminate information concerning the policy, administration and defence of the territory of Mozambique.

⁵ Portuguese police policy.

that China sponsored the establishment of the Communist Party of Mozambique, which would be a political wing of ULIPAMO (*Ibid*). However, ULIPAMO actually never existed; it was a rumour which PIDE took for reality.

In the same way, the death of FRELIMO's first president, Eduardo Mondlane, in 1969 and his replacement by a triumvirate was due, according to the PIDE and SCCIM, — which claim to base their interpretation of the events in the words of Uria Simango —, to a conflict between those two same factions. Mondlane, accused of neglecting Mao-Tse-Tung works, was considered independent of the two factions and a CIA agent, because he had studied in the U.S. and was married to an American woman, who in turn was seen as an official of the U.S. Department of Defence (*Ibid*).

Also, it must be stressed that the conflict which hit FRELIMO between 1967 and 1970 and led to the expulsion of the then vice-president Uria Simango (considered as a strong Maoist adept) and other important figures of the movement, was interpreted by PIDE and SCCIM as a struggle opposing two factions within FRELIMO, a pro-Beijing and a pro-Moscow (PIDE, August 1970; SCCIM, August, 1969).

Whatever the truth of these allegations, the fact is first that throughout the period of the anti-colonial struggle FRELIMO maintained its ambiguous position, not aligned on one side and continuing to receive support from both countries. Second, despite China's support of other anti-FRELIMO movements, the relationship between their leaders continued. In November/December 1968, Samora Machel, at the time head of the Department of Defence of FRELIMO, visited Beijing, where he received "more aid and arms" (SCCIM, February 27, 1969). In August 1971, Machel, now as FRELIMO leader, visited China again. This relationship continued until the independence of Mozambique, which resulted in the extinction of COREMO and other political-military movements and the introduction of a one-party system.

Marxist-Leninist FRELIMO and China

China was among the first countries to recognize the Independence of Mozambique and to establish diplomatic relations with the country in the day of its Independence, on 25th June 1975. Thus, cooperation between the two countries developed immediately and several agreements in various areas, particularly in health and agriculture, were signed. In 1976, China sent the first group of medical personnel and experts, particularly in agriculture to highlight its stake in state farms in Moamba, south of Mozambique (Eadie & Grizzell, 1979: 224).

Although they established their diplomatic relations on the day of independence, relations between the two countries slowed down in the early years of independence. While officially pursuing a position of non-alignment, FRELIMO was found to be increasingly close to Moscow. In 1977, during its 3rd Congress, FRELIMO proclaimed Marxism-Leninism as its official ideology. This Congress, which was honoured with the presence of a high-level delegation from the USSR, was also marked by the absence of Beijing. In the same year, Maputo received the then Soviet president, Nicolay Podgorny. The rapprochement with Moscow did not mean that there were unanimity within FRELIMO as to which model of socialism they should follow, whether reflected in development plans or in the organization of the party, and they were influenced by both China and the USSR (Henriksen, 1978: 447-448).

But the year 1979 can be seen as the year that exacerbated the crisis between Maputo and Beijing. In that year, three events of international order, more or less linked, negatively affected the relations between the two countries: the Sino-Vietnam war, the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

During the war between Vietnam and China in 1979, the FRELIMO positioned itself on the side of Hanoi — regime backed by Moscow — and condemned the invasion of Vietnam by China. At the same time, FRELIMO supported the invasion of Cambodia by Vietnam, positioning itself once more against China, which supported the Cambodian regime of Pol Pot in their fight against Soviet influence in the region, influence that, as latter acknowledged, had reached Phnom Penh. For FRELIMO, supporting Pol Pot was the same as supporting the dictatorial and bloodthirsty regime of Idi Amin in Uganda (Jackson, 1995:416). As a sign of rapprochement with Vietnam, Maputo received that year (1979), the Vietnamese Vice president, who participated in the celebration of 15th anniversary of the start of the colonial struggle against the Portuguese colonial regime.

Another event that negatively affected relations between the two countries was the fact that FRELIMO did not condemn the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union, as desired by China. According to S. Jackson, Mozambique, along with Angola and Ethiopia, is one of the three African countries that voted against the resolution of the UN General Assembly condemning the invasion by the Soviet Union of Afghanistan (Jackson, 416:1995). This provoked the departure of the Chinese ambassador Yang Shouzheng from Maputo accompanied by the team of Chinese doctors in 1980 -- they would only return to Mozambique in 1981, fifteen months later. While officially Yang Shouzheng left Maputo because his mandate had expired, it seems clear that this was a sign of protest by Beijing for the attitude of FRELIMO (*Ibid*).

We must also stress that China's support to UNITA in Angola dating back from the days of the anti-colonial struggle, was among the factors that poisoned relations between the two countries, because, as is well-established in the literature, FRELIMO and the MPLA were fairly close parties (*Ibid*).

Although the normalization of relations between the two countries can be dated back to the return of Yang Shouzeng to Maputo, relations between Maputo and Beijing resumed only with the subsequent visits to Beijing by Joaquim Chissano, who was Foreign Minister of Mozambique, in 1982, President Samora Machel in 1984, and then President Joaquim Chissano in 1988. These visits were returned by the Chinese Foreign Minister, Qian Qichen, who visited Mozambique in 1989, agreeing on a financial assistance package to Maputo of 12 million U.S. dollars (Taylor, 1998:451).

This shift in attitude on the part of the Government of Mozambique must be seen in the context of the political and economic crisis caused by the civil war and the collapse of its socialist project. Indeed, the crisis led Frelimo to adhere to the IMF and the WB in 1984 and to normalize its relations not only with China, but also with some other countries, like its powerful neighbour, South Africa. With the liberalisation of the economy both in China and in Mozambique, economic relations between the two countries started to grow significantly. Part of that process, Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng visited Mozambique in September 1997 on a tour of African countries⁶

After the end of the civil war, the Chinese began to take a more active role in the Mozambican economy. In the late 1990s, they were commissioned to build the headquarters of the Mozambican parliament (finished in 2000). During this period, in the construction sector, we can also point out the construction of the headquarters of the Foreign Ministry, and the Joaquim Chissano Conference Centre, all in Maputo. China supported a de-mining program that was underway in Mozambique and, in 2001 donated equipment worth more than 150'000 U.S. dollars and trained a group of Mozambican soldiers in de-mining. That same year, China financed the construction of houses for the members of the Mozambican army on the periphery of Maputo, estimated at some 7 million U.S. dollars (Notícias, 19th July 2001). China's support to the armed forces of Mozambique extended to technical assistance and logistics. Very recently (May 2008), China offered cars, computers, electronic equipment, as well as uniforms to the Army, Air Force and Navy. The police of Mozambique also receive logistical and material support from China.

⁶ The other countries visited were Cameroon, Seychelles, Gabon, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia.

Like in other African countries, Mozambique saw the 2000s a significant increase of the Chinese economic presence. A positive trend in cooperation between the two countries are also visible in the fact that Mozambique was approved as a privileged destination for Chinese tourists in 2006, the translation into Chinese of the new labour law in Mozambique, Mozambique's debt relief by China, estimated at around 20 million dollars, agreed upon during the visit of President Hun Jintao in February 2007, the rehabilitation and modernization of the main airport of Mozambique, the Mavalane International airport of Maputo, the building of a new football stadium in Maputo, considered the largest and most modern of the country and the fact that, between 2001 and 2007, China has become the 6th international investor in Mozambique, moving up from 26th. On this last point, it is important to note that, in 2007, bilateral trade between the two countries reached 284.11 million U.S. dollars, that is eight times more than in 2001 (China View, 11th July 2008).

Presently there are 41 Chinese enterprises in Mozambique concentrated mainly in agriculture, agro-industry, aquaculture, fishing, industry and construction, employing 11 214 Mozambicans (Departamento Económico e Comercial da Embaixada da RPC, 8th Mai 2008).

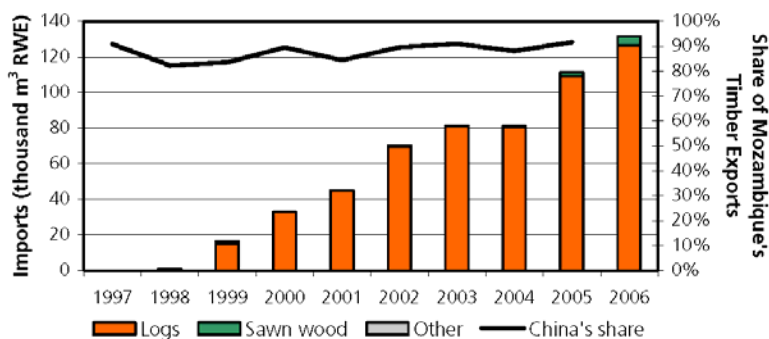
At the moment, Mozambican exports to China are largely centered on wood, fisheries, and agricultural products. Amongst these products, wood is the main export, with more than 90% of Mozambican exports in timber going to China. In 2006, Mozambique was in the top 10 African Forest Product Exporters to China by volume (Canby et al., 2008).

Table 1: Top 10 African Forest Product Exporters to China by Volume, 2006

Rank	Country	Share
1	Gabon	38.5%
2	Republic of the Congo	14.9%
3	Equatorial Guinea	14.9%
4	Cameroon	12.6%
5	Swaziland	7.6%
6	Mozambique	5.1%
7	South Africa	2.0%
8	Guinea	1.2%
9	Central African Rep.	1.0%
10	Côte d'Ivoire	0.5%
	Other	1.7%

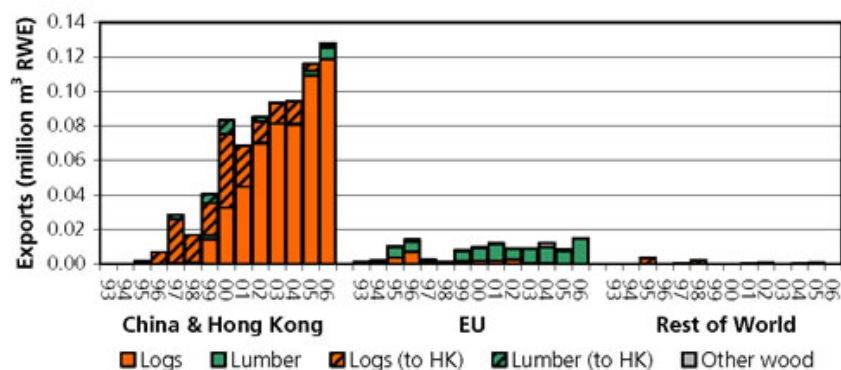
Source: Kerstin Canby et al. (February 2008), *Forest products trade between China & Africa. An analysis of imports and exports*, Forest Trends.

Figure 1: China's Imports of Mozambique's Timber by Volume & Type



Source: Ibid.

Figure 2: Mozambique's Timber Exports by Destination & Type



Source: Ibid

There seems to be, therefore, little doubt that relations between Mozambique and China are at their best level. The former president of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano, for instance, admitted that "Taiwan is part of China" during his visit to Beijing in 2004 (China Radio International, 4th July 2004), and President Armando Guebuza, declared that China-Mozambique cooperation is "win-win" business. However, does civil society feel the same way?

Scepticism of the civil society

In contrast to the views expressed by the government of Mozambique, some elements of civil society have proven wary of China-Mozambique cooperation. The Chinese are accused of not being concerned about the development of Mozambique, looking only after their own interests, and therefore only replacing the old "exploiters", i.e. the West. The Chinese are accused of being involved in smuggling of raw materials with the complicity of some officials in power, not respecting Mozambican labour law, of mistreating

Mozambican workers by paying wages of misery, and beating them physically. In March 2006, the minister of labour, Helena Taipo, closed two Chinese companies (Monte de Ouro and Irmãos Comércio Kodak) based in Quelimane, Zambezia, which were accused of physical and psychological abuse of Mozambican workers. These companies were reopened after a public apology to their employees and the people of Quelimane (Zambeze, 29th March 2006).

In June 2007, the Mozambican workers of the China Henan International Cooperation Group Co.Ltd (CHICO), responsible for building the bridge over the River Incomati, went on strike accusing the company of several violations of the labour law (unfair dismissal, physical assault, excessive workload, racial discrimination, no conclusion of contracts of employment, wages below the national minimum, etc.). (Savana, 14th June 2007). Similar situations involving the same company, this time in Inhambane, where CHICO is involved in the rehabilitation of the water system between the cities of Inhambane and Maxixe, were also witnessed (Savana, 2nd February 2007). This kind of social movement has happened all over the country and is reported almost daily by the local press⁷.

Many angry voices were raised with the scandal of unbridled exploitation of timber, particularly in Zambezia, where a report entitled "A Chinese take away" reported that the Chinese, in collusion with some elements of FRELIMO, such as the family of former President of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano and former governor of Zambezia, Bonifácio Gruveta, were guilty of deforestation of Zambezia (C. Mackenzie, 2006). Following this report, due to the risk of social unrest on the day of the arrival of Nji Hu Tao, his arrival was cancelled in extremis.

Apart from deforestation, which is reported almost daily, several cases of Chinese accused of illegal fishing have also been reported in the local press.

Another issue that concerns a part of Mozambican society is the Chinese financing of the Mpanda Nkuwa dam, which will be one of the most important of Africa and is to be built in the Zambezi Valley of the province of Tete. Mozambican environmentalists, convinced that this dam will have negative consequences on the environment, argue that before moving forward with its construction, a serious study on the possible

⁷ Also, it must be noted, that even if their reaction was weak in comparison to civil society's reaction, the main political opposition party, RENAMO, accused FRELIMO of complicity with the Chinese enterprises and of mistrusting Mozambican workers.

environmental impacts of this venture needs to be carried out. The activists even sent Mozambicans to China in May 2007 to persuade local banks not to finance this project (Notícias, 18th May 2007). However, the environmentalists concerns haven't impressed the Chinese authorities, and Chinese banks are pursuing advanced financing of the dam with construction to start in 2009.

All these situations have led to outrage and scepticism within Mozambican civil society, and there is a growing perception that China does not take into account Africa's interests. During the visit of the Chinese president to Mozambique, some Mozambicans who disagreed with what they call "new colonialism" took the opportunity to make their voice heard. This is the case of journalist Marcelo Mosse, who wrote an open letter to Hu Jintao in which he said, among other things, that China was only welcome in Mozambique, if its cooperation is transparent and fair:

We do not want to be a " *dumba-Nengue* "[the informal market] or Chinese "take away " as in the colonial past. China may build football stadiums, offer scholarships, erect bridges, combat malaria, but that generosity may not have as bargaining chip to promotion of easy and illicit enrichment of our elite, environmental vandalism, of piracy in public works, precariousness of employment, de-construction of the institutions that we have been rebuilding. Therefore, we would like to see him, rather than announcing the construction of a new presidential palace, making it clear that Chinese companies in Mozambique will adhere to the country's rules, laws and institutions (including environmental management) and that democracy must be respected (Mosse, February 2007).

Moreover, the presence of many Chinese companies in the construction sector of Mozambique has begun to annoy Mozambican constructors, who claim to be "prejudiced against and neglected by the Government of Mozambique, who gives preference to Chinese companies, although these companies do not provide quality services" (Zambézia Oline, 7th November 2007).

Other signs showing mistrust of Mozambicans in relation to the way this cooperation has been built did emerge in July of this year, when *Imensis*, an important media website in Mozambique, published news saying that the Government of Mozambique and China had signed an agreement to transform the Zambezi valley in China granary.

According to this source, the Chinese government had planned to send 20 million Chinese workers to the Zambezi valley, where they will cultivate rice with new technologies and undertake management activities, while the Mozambicans would be doing most manual work.

One can imagine what was the reaction of some Mozambican to this news.

Here are some examples:

Mozambican government in collaboration with China are fooling Mozambicans, say Manhiça:

The Chinese will manage, the Mozambican will work hard ... rice production is to feed the Chinese in China.

Conclusion: It must be a story, or the Chinese in collaboration with the Government of Mozambique are fooling us

(Manhiça, Imensis, 22nd July 2007).

To Macuacua, this agreement represents a new a form of colonialism:

It seems to me that Mozambique will be a territorial extension of China. This is not a modern form of colonialism?

Why have we fought for independence, while others come to take our land? (Macuacua, Imensis, 22nd Juillet 2008).

And for Ohawa, this agreement it's a dirty business for the Mozambicans and it benefits only Chinese people and the Mozambican elite:

This is a shame, a dirty business for the Mozambicans and very well done for the Chinese and our elite. One, rice is for the Chinese market; two, the hard work is for the Mozambican and three, thousands of Chinese will settle in the Zambezi Valley. My question is: what does the country win with this? Guebuza (President of Mozambique), stop being an idiot and opens your eyes, the Chinese will degrade the environment ... (Ohawa, Imensis, 22nd Juillet 2008).

Indeed, important FRELIMO figures such as Sérgio Vieira, Prakash Ratilal, in partnership with Chinese entrepreneurs, such as Stanley Ho, have formed a company called Sociedade Zambeze Corporation (ZAMCORP), whose official goal is to develop the Zambezi Valley (O Vale Online 26th April 2006).

Finally, we can say that, although the frustration with the way the Chinese cooperation with Mozambique is implemented has not yet reached the level of other African countries, such as Zambia⁸, Cape Verde⁹, the risk of similar situations taking place in the future is real.

This paper discussed the historical relations between Mozambique and China, a history whose beginning dates back to the period of Mozambique's struggle for independence.

⁸ In Zambia where trade unions and opposition parties accuse China of exploiting its resources and saw one of the most violent contestations of the way the cooperation with this Asian country has been held.

⁹ Several times the Cape Verdean workers took to the streets to protest the mistreatment and other abuses to which they are subjected to by their Chinese patrons.

Throughout the paper, we addressed the fact that, even if currently relations between China and Mozambique are in a good shape, one cannot say that this is a historical pattern: there were some troublesome moments in both countries relationship in the past. Besides, the current relationship between the two countries is not necessarily "horizontal" (or one of equal partnership); instead, it is rather similar to the type of relations that Mozambique have had with countries in the North. In addition, we stressed the gap that exists in expectations regarding Chinese influence in Mozambique: between the expectations of the country's political elite, which is enthusiastic, and those of its civil society organizations, which are pessimistic. This gap can only be closed if serious measures are taken against the obscures liaisons between some corrupt members of Mozambique's elite and Chinese enterprises and if, in the process, wealth and prosperity are created for all, and not only for elite groups.

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