

The Media and Chinese soft power in Uganda. The quest for investment and political influence



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Highlights



- Historical context
- China's investments in the media in UG
- China's engagement in other sectors in UG
- Opportunities & Challenges



Media in Uganda

- **Post**-independence (1962), government control of media
- Liberalization (1990s), media pluralism = private, community + government/public media,
- Opened up public sphere & more space for public engagement.
- Citizen journalism

Media in Uganda *cont'd*

- National media- state controlled, national coverage
- Westphalian state sovereign, power to control media content
- liberalization + ICT - media pluralism & transnational media
- New media - mobile phones, internet, blogs, Facebook, etc.

Media & Globalization

- Globalization: interconnectedness, compression of space + time; Free movement of labour & capital; global enterprises & global citizens; integration of national economies
- CHN closed economy, insulated from world market, now integrated into world trade

Media & Globalization cont'd

- Central to processes driving globalization
- service delivery platforms for business transactions
- physical products to symbolic products
- From industrial to information society

Media & Globalization cont'd

- carriers of information and images – affects global power balance
- centrality to the futures of all national economies
- Strategies for China's engagement with media in Africa/UG



China's investments in media

- Earlier investments - infrastructure & construction
- Shift to media & ICTs
- Aggressive advertising of digital products like StarTimes



StarTimes

- Migration (UN): analogue - digital broadcasting by June 2015.
- EA – Kn, Tz, Rd, BD & Ug
- Leader in the market, 80% in UG



China Daily

- 'To date, the story of China's growing presence in Africa has been mostly narrated by Western media, African newspapers, . . . blogs, websites and social media outlets. Often, it is framed in the context of land-grabbing, resource-snatching, neocolonialism and invasion', Zhu Ling, China Daily's editor-in-chief, (2012).



Other media

- CCTV Africa ('A new Voice for Africa', 2012 Nairobi)
- Xinhua News agency
- Weekly Press briefings /Centre for Chinese Studies, Stellenbosch University
- Journalists visits to China



New media



HUAWEI products
(internet, mobiles)
one of largest telecom
equipment providers in
UG (MTN, UTL,...)
Africa, Fixed line access
is <5% = big market
for mobiles
Usage 2008-63%;
2013-83%

Development approaches

Western

- Capitalist
- Individualistic
- State-centric
- Focus on democracy

Eastern

- Socialist
- Participatory
- Grassroots oriented
- Self-emancipation

China's model: An alternative?

- Individual freedoms, equality, harmony (Amartya 2000)
- respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity
- non-interference; aid with no strings
- peaceful co-existence from an economic interdependent perspective.

China's model: An alternative?



CRITICS:

- undermines democratic institutions & increases corruption
- State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) – ‘Go Global Strategy’ = state driven capitalism
- Has China outcompeted the West in Africa?- low interest loans, large infrastructure investment, bilateral trade, symbolic projects (eg. Govt. offices, national stadium, etc.)

BRICS

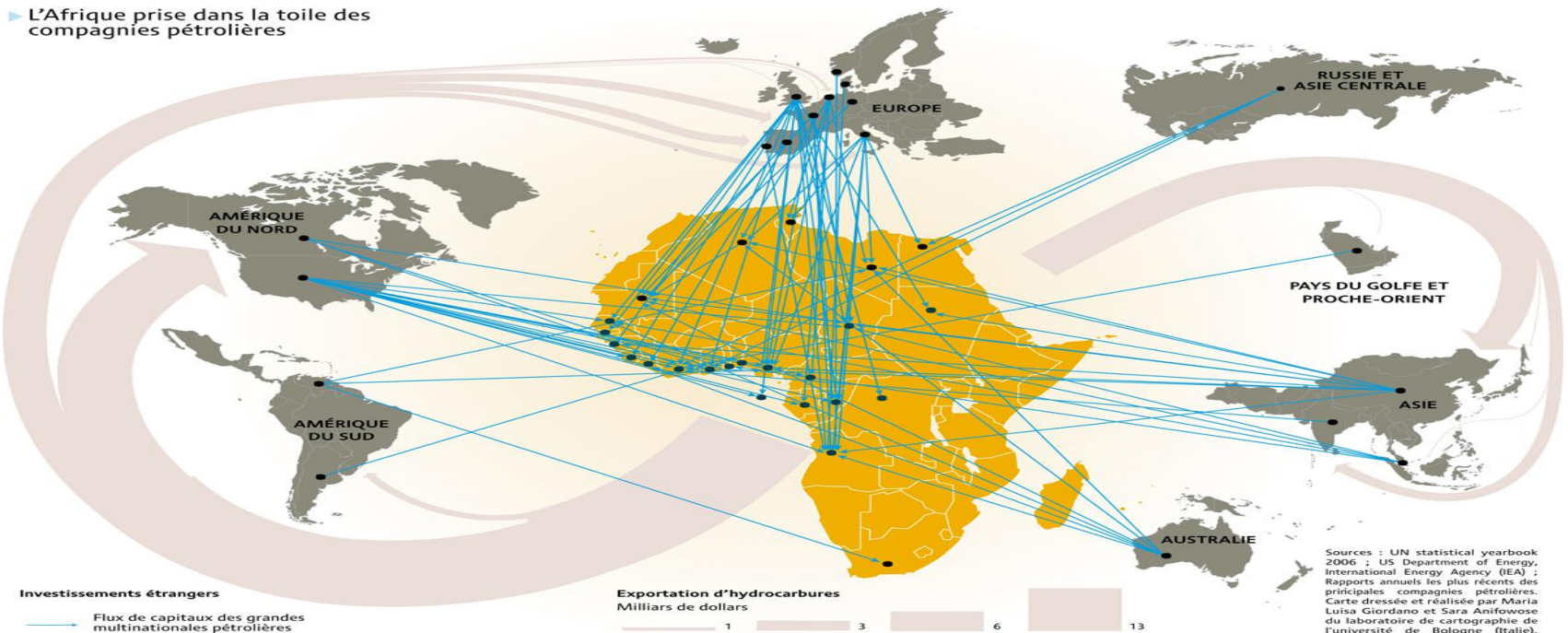


- BRICS influential actors - re-thinking dominant devt. Model + global power.
- CHN closed economy, insulated from world market, now integrated into world trade
- Almost 80% of Chinese imports from Africa are mineral + oil products.
- China, win-win formula (mutual benefits) in LDCs
- China, export of its domestic economic model



China - Africa's top business partner, with trade exceeding \$166 billion, overtaking America as the world's largest net importer of oil (The Economist 2013).

► L'Afrique prise dans la toile des compagnies pétrolières



Business: China and Uganda

- The economic cooperation between Uganda and China has developed smoothly. In 2014, the amount of China investment is projected to reach \$683 million. At the beginning of 2013 it was USD 596 million. 95% of Uganda's goods exported to China will enter the Chinese market with no customs duty and other tariff. Trade imbalance: Uganda exports USD 26 million, China exports to Uganda are USD 359 million.
- Chinese enterprises have registered in Uganda and planned investment amount was about \$683m, creating 33,000 job opportunities for the local people.

Business: China and Uganda Cont'd

- On oil, a Chinese company, China National Offshore Oil Company (CNOOC) signed a farm-down agreement with Tullow (a British oil company in Uganda) for exploration of oil in Uganda.
- Road construction of the Kampala-Entebbe Express way took place in November 2012. A Chinese bank- China Import and Export Bank provided US \$350m credit. The road is seen as part of economic and symbolic importance.

Business: China and Uganda Cont'd

- Under the framework of South-South Cooperation Programme 22 agricultural experts from China came to Uganda and brought advanced technologies and skills to promote agricultural development in Uganda.
- The Chinese Embassy issued 10,000 visas to Ugandans, while at the same time thousands of Chinese people came to Uganda. In addition, Ugandan youth, women and party member delegation visited China respectively.



Business: China and Uganda Cont'd

- October 2012, the first group of 15 Chinese youth volunteers came to Uganda and carried out one-year mission focused on sports, Chinese language teaching and aquaculture.
- China and Uganda continued to enjoy closer ties of solidarity and coordination in international affairs.
- Strong diplomatic ties; exchange visits
- China-Uganda Friendship hospital at Naguru
- China-Uganda Friendship Society



Opportunities

- **China Official Promises:** China will remain faithful in treating African friends, value real results in conducting cooperation with Africa, seek to cultivate kinship-like qualities in strengthening friendship with Africa and be sincere with a friendship that has been sealed in adversity.
- China will continue to expand investment and financing cooperation with Africa, follow suit on the commitment of offering US \$20b of credit to Africa.
- China will also make efforts in implementing the “African Talent Programme” in the next three years, which will train 30,000 personnel in various sectors and offer 18,000 scholarships to African students.

Opportunities cont'd

Opportunities:

- Africa's recent high growth rate has been attributed to increase in Chinese investment
- China in Africa stimulated other donors; Japan has promised USD32 billion, US President Obama on Africa tour 2013 promised USD 7 billion for electric power
- China demand for agricultural products like coffee, cocoa and cotton, as well as oil from Africa, increased global market prices
- Optimists see strong business ties between the two countries boosted by Museveni's close relations with Chinese political leadership. High level Uganda delegation by Prime Minister Amama Mbabazi to China- to attract investors.

Opportunities cont'd

- In the past “no one out there knew where Uganda was located on the map of the globe” China-Uganda Friendship Society says
- opening of ATM usage in China eased business for Ugandans
- Chinese promised a loan of 1.6 billion towards the 2.2 billion US dollars needed for Karuma hydropower dam
- Entebbe express highway at 350 million dollars

Challenges

- Concern about the trade deficit between Uganda standing at a ratio of 1:10 in favour of China
- Local business communities of the Chinese entering retail trade, and under- selling the latter
- International concerns have also been raised by the EU over Chinese companies being given local contracts, without competitive tendering.

Challenges Cont'd

- almost 80% of Chinese imports from Africa are mineral products, not creating jobs in Africa
- Africa “not catching up fast enough”

Conclusion

- No unanimous verdict on impact China has brought
- Important is the provision of an alternative to the 2 broad existing development models (West & East) . Can African countries(Uganda inclusive) win themselves off aid: Chinese or any other?
- No universal development path, so UG and developing countries can pick good practices from Chinese model
- Focus on aspects of equity and improved access to media and ICT.
- Concerns of AfriDevBank (ADB)and UNECA, Africa overdependence on China exploitation of natural resources- unsustainable in long term

CONCLUSION

- Concerns of “Chinese ‘colonialism’ in Africa”
- Decline of manufacturing in Africa, while fast growing in Asia
- Concerns of human rights and democracy, lack of transparency
- Chinese taking local jobs, retail trade
- Local media re-oriented towards Chinese development model
- The West could also learn from China

I thank you

For your

Time

