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**The intersection of great power politics and international development:  
How are rising powers influencing development in emerging states?**

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*How are rising powers influencing development in emerging states?*

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## **Introduction**

The hegemony of the Western liberal order for the better part of the last century has led to a very particular approach within developmental assistance to the Global South. Attitudes towards aid and other forms of partnerships have, for a long time, been pervaded with a predominant focus on economic growth as the yardstick for measuring and quantifying development. This has been shown through the persisting dependence of international institutions such as the World Bank on measures such as GNP and GDP to essentialise countries' developmental status. Similarly, efforts to present a universal agenda for the development of an immensely wide range of states with diverse cultural and historical backgrounds have been at the forefront of development discourse. This includes the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and later Sustainable Development Goals, both of which have faced substantial challenges meeting their own goals due to their overreach and imprecision (Jamali, 2018).

Within the context of the onset of globalisation and increased interdependence in the fabric of the international system, there appears to be unprecedented attention on the ever-increasing disparity of global wealth. According to the UN's 2020 World Social Report, over 70% of the globe's population is currently living in countries where the wealth gap is increasing (Phan, 2020). The salience of this problem of inequality is more apparent now than ever, where we see the observable effects in education and literacy, the rise of populism, economic crises and even a global pandemic.

Coinciding with the phenomenon of increasing inequality, the Western liberal order appears to be undergoing a deep crisis of both authority and identity as it loses its hegemonic status in an increasingly multipolar system. With the rise of new great powers, old frameworks of aid and assistance seem to no longer be able to answer questions of how the Global South can strive toward genuine development beyond an economic scope. The BRICS nations particularly have been a source of competition for established Western institutions such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's

developmental paradigms. Increasingly, we have seen African countries turn to these ‘emerging’ donors as an alternative to the models that have been promoted by the West - China and India in particular.

The principal aim of this paper is to provide an assessment of the impact that these rising donors are having on the development of African countries. The activities of said donors are in many substantial ways a departure from the traditionally established modes of developmental activities and initiatives, posing a challenge to the Western development framework. Concepts such as untied aid, conditionalities and South-South solidarity are essential in this discussion, as they elucidate the reasons for which African states find non-Western aid more and more appealing. On the other hand, this paper will also delve into the ways in which the same emerging donors are perpetuating many of the same practices as their European counterparts, resulting in some degree of continuity with the Western development framework.

In order to carry out its objective, this qualitative study will be drawing from secondary materials to present a critical assessment of how India and China are affecting the development of emerging states. The first section will begin with a review of the existing literature surrounding relevant topics, such as the historical relationship between colonialism and development, the Western development paradigm, and South-South cooperation. Following this, an overview will be provided of two classical theories of development and a third critical approach derived from postcolonial theory. Finally, I will be exploring the different avenues in which China and India are showing both change and continuity from previous frameworks.

## **Literature review**

### *Historical relationship between colonialism and development*

There is no shortage of literature covering the historical relationship between colonialism and development. Postcolonial scholars provide a historical analysis of this linkage, showing that much of the

Eurocentrism observed in contemporary development strategies can be traced back to the hegemonic conceptions of modernity that were moulded by a ‘colonial imaginary’ (Pieterse & Parekh, 1995; Kothari, 2006). Crush (1995) identifies the same relationship examining development discourse, stating that ‘the production of Western knowledge is inseparable from the exercise of Western power’ (p. 3). More radically, Goldsmith (2002) argues that the terms ‘colonialism’ and ‘development’ are largely interchangeable (in the context of economic development) in that they share the same processes that exploit developing countries, especially pertaining to the exponential growth of TNCs’ activities. Despite the predominant understanding of this pathway, development still tends to be conceived of as a generally well-intentioned effort to help disadvantaged areas due to its framing as being humanitarian and virtuous in contrast to the association of imperialism with explicit exploitation (Kothari, 2006). Other scholars have studied continuities of imperialism that are apparent in the present, questioning the perceived demarcation between colonialism and postcolonialism (Miege, 1980; Bell, 2002).

### *The Western framework of development*

With the trajectory of colonialism to development established, contemporary authors have reexamined the Western framework of development and development studies using a postcolonial lens. This framework has itself undergone numerous phases; most notable of which is an adherence to the idea of modernisation as a ‘singular path of progressive change’ (Alden et al., 2020, p. 22). Following the success of ‘growth-orientation’ models in Asia and the West’s triumph in the Cold War, neoliberal policies became the norm during the 80s thanks to the dominant belief that market democracy would successfully bring about development (Yeung, 2010; Alden et al., 2020). In terms of present manifestations of this framework, organisations such as the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (hereinafter the DAC) have institutionalised certain practices and standards of development. Mahon (2017) suggests that the Washington Consensus, with its emphasis on neoliberal structural adjustment programmes through IFIs such as the World Bank and the IMF, has proliferated a tendency to focus exclusively on economic growth rather than on a more holistic conception of development. These policies of structural adjustment,

which were mandated to African states by international institutions, failed to fulfil their intended task of resuscitating unproductive economies. Even more disappointingly, they wholly neglected any efforts to reform the state's capacity to improve human development; instead, 'accentuat[ing] the scale of human deprivation' (Cheru & Obi, 2010, p. 2).

### *The Aid Industry and Official Development Assistance*

More than \$160 billion dollars in aid are spent each year on international development by governments, international institutions, private organisations and NGOs (Haan, 2009). The DAC defines 'Official Development Assistance' (ODA) as 'government aid designed to promote the development and welfare of developing countries' (OECD, 2020).

A frequent criticism of the DAC stems from the fact that 34.5% of all ODA is what is called 'tied aid', though the Committee officially encourages its members to provide aid for humanitarian intentions (Kim & Kim, 2016). According to Jepma (1991), tied aid serves the donor in an economic sense, by raising its exports, but equally importantly in a political sense, by establishing strong ties based on geopolitical and trade interests among other factors. However these interests come at the expense of aid effectiveness in states such as Ghana, where aid dependency has caused debt servicing to surpass spending on education (Quartey, 2005).

### *South-South Cooperation: from recipient to donor, or somewhere in between*

The term 'emerging donors' refers to states such as the BRICS nations - which are increasingly becoming key players in their provision of aid and other support to developing countries - but are not OECD DAC members, who may be labelled 'established donors' (Woods, 2008, p. 1205). Assistance of this nature is often not termed 'aid', because of the associations of this term with problematic relations between the Global North and the Global South as well as tied or conditional aid (Gray & Murphy, 2013, p. 190). The

rise of emerging donors is in part attributed to the decline of the Washington Consensus as well as the discontent of its critics; who ‘resent Western high-handedness with regard to good governance, human rights, and democratic institutions’ (Dreher et al., 2011, p. 1951). Other authors cite the growing importance of regional economic powers for the emergence of new players in aid and assistance (Chandy, 2012). Eckl and Weber (2007) draw attention to China and India as being of particular interest in that they occupy a ‘dual position’ (p. 11); being ‘developing countries on one hand and development partners on the other (Six, 2009). In his assessment of rising powers’ capacity to affect change on development programmes, Quadir (2013) suggests that it is precisely this duality which will hinder those states’ ability to become key players in global development. As long as they struggle to tackle domestic concerns of ‘poverty, underdevelopment, environmental degradation, deprivation, inequalities and socio-political injustices’ (p. 335), their aspirations to occupy a greater role in development cooperation will go unmet.

### *Departure from established frameworks*

However, in his analysis of South-South aid flows, Quadir (2013) argues that the ad-hoc activities of so-called emerging donors are not as different from traditional DAC assistance as the discourse implies. The author examines current trends in aid provided by Brazil, China, India and South Africa before addressing the main challenges faced by these countries in attempting to establish a systematic and coordinated program of assistance. Quadir (2013) finds that the lack of administrative infrastructure which organises and monitors development policies within rising powers’ bureaucracies hinders those governments from reviewing and responding to new challenges. Moreover, it results in the absence of a collaborative effort among donor countries to seek meaningful solutions through coordination and shared information. In terms of rhetoric, non-DAC countries make a point of rejecting the hierarchical connotations associated with the traditional lexicon of development assistance; ‘partnership’ instead of ‘aid’, ‘cooperation’ instead of ‘support’. Quadir (2013), however, exposes the underlying political and economic interests of donor countries in supporting aid programmes, such as trade and commercial



returns, that ultimately undermine the notion of ‘non-tied aid’ in that the policies are equally self-serving and/or extractivist as that of DAC countries.

In discussing the origins of the so-called Western development paradigm, Six (2009, p. 1103) argues that the historicist approach Western countries tend to adopt are fundamentally tethered to evolutionary notions of development and Orientalism. Contrary to some accounts, the author argues that it is precisely the self-interested, realist manner in which China and India conduct their activities in the developing world which makes them better equipped to make genuine partnerships with developing countries than are Western actors. This is because postcolonial rising powers do not have a vested interest in using a or a ‘pseudo-emancipatory’ rhetoric (p. 1109).

These two accounts of rising powers’ impact on development assistance initiatives provide relevant insights which are important for informing the assessment of the efficacy of emerging donors’ activities, but they are primarily normative in nature. I aim to fill the gap in the literature which asks if and how emerging donors are challenging the established framework and discourse of development assistance.

## **Theoretical framework**

Approaches in development studies can be crudely divided along their epistemological differences - namely positivist/classical approaches versus critical approaches. The emergence of new development frameworks with rising powers is a relatively recent phenomenon, prior to which the Western development paradigm prevailed. New approaches to development are seen by some scholars as a reaction to, and correction of, problems that accompanied said paradigm (Chakrabarty, 2000; Kapoor, 2008). Because of this, it is crucial to first explore the classical theories which predominated development discourse, underpinning norms of Eurocentrism and Orientalism that still arguably persist in the present day.

### *Modernisation theories*

The origins of modernisation theory can be found in the writings of Max Weber and Talcott Parsons, both of which emphasised tradition as a fundamental hurdle to be overcome as a society evolves into modernity (Hout, 2016). Societies which adopted ‘evolutionary universals’ such as differentiation of social strata, complex bureaucracies, markets, division of labour and specialisation would be able to attain better ‘general adaptive capacity’, making them more advanced and well-suited to a changing world (Parsons, 1964).

In his work *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Comunist Manifesto* (1991), Rostow established one of the key tenets of modernisation theory that saw economic growth as a linear process, ultimately leading to a developed society. This process is said to be five stages: 1) traditional society, 2) pre-conditions for takeoff, 3) takeoff, 4) drive to maturity, and finally 5) high mass-consumption (p. 4). Western societies served as a prototype, being early industrialisers, and other regions were seen as emulators which could be aided with Western injections of capital between stages 1) and 2) (Simmons, 1988). Accordingly, scholars of modernisation theory have drawn criticism for the European ethnocentrism of insinuations that non-Western societies were to ‘catch up’ to the standards of the West. Gusfield (1973) additionally points out that modernisation theories present a false dichotomy between tradition and modernity; one which does not actually exist in mutual exclusivity.

Tenets of modernisation theory are evident within examples of actual development policies, such as the postwar development project which coincided with the decolonisation period. This initiative was defined by its state-centered approach and was deeply influenced by Keynesian economics as well as a faith in technology and the injection of Western capital to bring about a ‘take-off’ phase in stagnant/declining economies.

### *Dependency Theory and World-systems theory*

The dependency school found its origins in Latin America during the 1960s, and built upon the foundational ideas of Marxism and neo-Marxism regarding the relations of production and the accumulation of capital (Hout, 2016). A key point of attention was the Prebisch-Singer hypothesis which found that, contrary to the prevalent assumptions at the time about comparative advantage, Latin American countries were unable to benefit from international trade due to unfavourable terms of trade that were established by colonial powers. Therefore the overarching logic of dependency theory saw 'underdevelopment' as a condition that resulted from the integration of former colonies into world markets by 'advanced' nations; the colonial powers.

In *Dependent Accumulation and Underdevelopment* (1979), Frank argued that underdevelopment was not a pathology of the absence of capitalism (as was insinuated by modernisation theorists), rather it was the direct result of its presence. Frank coined the term 'metropole', referring to the 'advanced' nations, and in opposition to 'satellites', which were victim to extractivist policies by the former. He concluded that autonomous development for those satellite states would remain out of reach until their relations with metropolises were severed. Criticisms arise from the fact that this conclusion leaves no room for the effect of individual leaders and their policy choices in development strategies.

Building from this, Wallerstein (1984) developed a historical-sociological approach: World Systems Theory (WST). Using the world system as a unit of analysis, WST would diverge from dependency theory by accounting for the role of individual states within said system, and instead focus on the 'global division of labour' (Hout, 2016, p. 29). Similarly to the conception of metropolis-satellite relations in Frank (1979), Wallerstein identified a relationship between the 'core' and the 'periphery' as well as the 'semi-periphery', 'both exploited and exploiter' (p. 23).

Alongside WST, the emergence of postcolonial scholars has led to a broad reconceptualisation of the mechanisms and structures within which development should be pursued. Dependency and postcolonial theories converge on their concern of the unequal world system, but where the former works within structuralist assumptions, the latter favours a post-structuralist perspective with greater emphasis on the politics of culture and representation.

### *Postcolonial theories*

Kapoor (2008) argues that the proclivity of classical development theories - such as modernisation and dependency - to neglect the 'politics of (and within) culture' as well as the politics of representation is detrimental to those theories' ability to address non-economic subjects of gender and race (p. 11). This blind spot has led to the construct of the Orient (or the 'Other'), as coined by Edward Said, as an oppositional caricature to the West which is characterised as being 'rational, virtuous, mature, normal', while the former is perceived as 'irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, different' (Said, 2003, p. 40). As such, the Orient is a construct which exists for and in relation to the West (Sered, 1996). This phenomenon has immense discursive implications on the way development itself is conceived and discussed. The arguments put forth by Said in *Orientalism* have reached a canonical status, forming the basis of all postcolonial theories, by seeking to reverse the conflation of non-Western identities, histories, and experiences.

Postcolonial theory can generally be understood as a group of interdisciplinary critiques of hegemonic Western interpretations of the global system (Noxolo, 2016, p. 43). They seek to decenter narratives which perpetuate Eurocentrism and unequal relations that persist as a result of imperialism, and so have an explicitly anti-colonial agenda. This tends to be more pronounced than in dependency theories, which have traditionally prioritised the eradication of poverty at the forefront of their agenda. Postcolonial approaches seek to address inequality and its manifestations at both regional and global levels through

structures of power and discourse, while ‘interrogating the terms and conditions of global wealth and wealth-making’.

While much of the literature since its emergence in the latter half of the 20th century focuses specifically on European and Western actions, in recent years the changing global landscape has resulted in a shift in attention towards the concept of inequality and subalternity itself, as opposed to fixed geographical centres of hegemony (Noxolo, 2016, p. 42). This has compelled a renewed interest toward the activities of rising donors such as China and India. In the words of Raghuram et al. (2014), new donors are challenging the ‘spatial matrices underpinning current thinking in postcolonial geography, particularly the global South/North distinction and the histories of colonialism’ (p. 119). Postcolonial theory, therefore, is itself adapting and evolving as its assumptions are challenged by the expansion and maturation of emerging countries. To present a more cynical interpretation, if rising powers are similarly benefiting from inequitable relationships with developing countries that were born out of Western imperialism, these actions must too be scrutinised under an altered postcolonial lens. In this vein, Kapoor (2008) writes: ‘colonialism may have brought about the global unevenness that continues to privilege the First World, but the rise of new global economic forces [...] gives new shape to unevenness, while also helping to intensify comparative inequality.’ (p. xvi).

As with all ‘post-theories’, postcolonial approaches remain sceptical of grand/meta-narratives which depend upon a universal framework that can be applied to all social structures. Consequently, teleological explanations which suggest a singular pathway of history and progress tend to be scrutinized, in favour of theories which ‘arise from multiple localities, rather than being applied to multiple localities’ (Noxolo, 2016, p. 47). As Edward Said succinctly argues, grand theories depend to a large extent on a ‘homogenising scheme’ which assimilates ‘non-synchronous developments, histories, cultures, and peoples to it.’ (Said, 1985, p. 102). This distrust of universalities is relevant in the study of developmental narratives, because the predominant discourse in the West (and the Washington Consensus) very much

emphasises universal values and norms which have been used to disguise neoliberal agendas as a benevolent force of moral superiority (Moises, 2000).

Postcolonial approaches are sometimes associated with methodological problems, due to the fact that they emerged from the humanities - more specifically, literary studies - and therefore do not adhere to established methods of a positivist nature or 'field research' (Kapoor, 2008, p. 6). As a result, postcolonial scholars often focus more on cultural analyses rather than political economy, which can present challenges to the theorising of concrete solutions within policy. Noxolo (2016) differentiates classical development frameworks from postcolonial analysis by showing that the former is usually 'action-oriented, focussed on initiating and advancing processes of change', whilst the latter are often 'more stubbornly reflective, focussed on identifying what is omitted [...], in development processes and relationships' (p. 44-45). That being said, postcolonial theories do possess a politicised purpose: to ensure that the Global South does not simply serve Western theorists as a series of case studies - rather, it must be understood as an arena out of which its own unique theories arise, drawing from deep postcolonial histories that were imposed upon them by Western hegemony (Chakrabarty, 2000).

## **Analysis**

### *An overview of Chinese and Indian foreign aid in Africa*

#### China

According to Brautigam (2011, p. 204), China's developmental assistance to Africa can largely be separated into three main channels - grants, zero-interest loans, and concessional loans (with fixed rates and low interest), all of which would meet the requirements for ODA. Between 2005 and 2007, Chinese-led projects in Africa had risen in cumulative value from \$800 million to around \$1.5 billion. Within the following three years, concessional loans valued at \$2 billion and 'preferential export credits'

worth \$3 billion had been pledged to African countries, showing the steady and exponential growth of Chinese aid. However, these numbers do not reflect the large supply of assistance through forms which are not reportable as ODA, such as strategic lines of credit toward Chinese companies like Huawei and ZTE (Brautigam, 2011, p. 206). In general, official information relating to Chinese foreign aid is rather elusive, but the first white paper released in 2011 claims that around \$37.7 billion in total had been given in aid to developing countries, roughly half of which was allocated to the African continent (p. 207). This assistance is used across a wide scope of sectors, from infrastructure, to education, to telecommunications and technology as well as healthcare.

Chinese foreign aid is unique in the sense that it is known to be given on the basis of non-intervention in the political and ideological state of the recipient country. This sets Chinese aid apart from traditional ODA practices, which are often allocated on the condition that certain policies are adopted, or standards of 'good governance' are met (Quadir, 2016, p. 325). This non-interventionism finds its roots within what is referred to as the 'Beijing Consensus' (Ramo, 2005), which enshrines principles of 'equitable growth, positive social change, self-determination and heavy state-control' (Quadir, 2016, p. 326) in order to promote an alternative model of economic development to that of the Washington Consensus. The nature of this type of aid is said to be given with the intent of facilitating recipient countries' autonomy within its domestic development strategy, as well as increasing a sense of agency and responsibility in the bilateral negotiation process (Kragelund, 2008).

### India

Similarly to Chinese foreign aid, India's development assistance policy has been tied to principles of self-determination that were outlined in the 1955 Bandung Conference for the promotion of Afro-Asian economic and cultural partnerships. The outcome of this conference was the agreement of 29 newly independent nations to abide by principles such as abstention from involvement with the domestic affairs

of others, and respect for the sovereignty of all nations (CVCE, 2017). This has played an influential part in the discursive framing of Indian foreign aid, which will later be discussed in further detail.

Due to its own dependence on developmental aid from DAC members until relatively recently, India's aid programme still operates on a modest budget compared to that of China's. However, the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) program, with a budget of approximately \$10 billion according to Quadir (2016, p. 326), has expanded its operations exponentially especially in the years following the 1990s when India's economic growth initially took off. This aid began with a focus on neighbouring countries in close geographical proximity to India, such as Nepal and Bangladesh, as well as countries in the Middle East such as Afghanistan. More recently, India appears to be seeking a strengthening of its relationship with sub-Saharan Africa as it deepens its economic and trading interests there. Chanana (2009) estimates that Indian foreign aid in Africa alone has grown at a 'compound annual growth rate' of as much as 22% across 10 years since 1998 (p. 12). Kurzydowski (2020) argues that one key factor of India's success relates to its 'well-integrated diaspora community' within Africa (particularly South Africa), which suggests that the potency developmental assistance may have more to do with cultural and historical identities than can be explained by classical theories of development.

Converging with Chinese aid strategies, India has assumed the role of providing credit and loans to its recipient countries besides financial grants. These concessions are offered to states in return for strengthened political relationships, as well as the bolstering of trade ties by giving 'lines of credit' (LOCs) to Indian companies who export products and services directly to recipient countries (Quadir, 2016, p. 327). These LOCs have amounted to a value of roughly \$5.2 billion in Africa, reflecting India's ability to utilise aid to the advantage of its of foreign policy (Chanana, 2009, p. 11).



## *Continuities - how are rising powers perpetuating the Western 'Development Paradigm'?*

### Ulterior motives and strategic interests: the myth of 'non-tied' aid

Western initiatives toward development programs have frequently faced criticism for the fact that they are inherently tied to the self-interested agenda of donor countries, effectively allowing a form of protectionism. For example, in 2006, it was estimated that around 58% of ODA was tied (or otherwise unspecified aid), meaning assistance which was given to recipients on the condition that it would be spent on goods and services from the donor country (OECD, 2006). In response to these issues, members of the OECD itself pledged to make comprehensive efforts to 'untie' aid in 2005 in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, though this has had mixed results (OECD, 2005). South-South cooperation prides itself upon the rejection of political and strategic conditionality, which is emphasised by the accompanying discourse, stressing its flexibility and the recipients' rights to self-determination. There is a strong normative undercurrent within this narrative, for which the term 'alternative development' has been coined (Brand, 2014).

Yet, although South-South aid adopts a no-strings-attached rhetoric, the notion of 'untied' aid can be contested when examined upon closer inspection. For instance, Chinese infrastructure projects in Africa heavily involve the use of Chinese labour and materials, rather than developing and making use of local industry (Banham, 2009). India faces similar accusations, substantiated by the former foreign minister Yashwant Sinha's admission that aid was 'tied to the extent that procurement could be made through Indian investors' (Quadir, 2016, p. 333).

Furthermore, there are important geopolitical and strategic motivations that challenge the supposed benevolence that is implied by the South-South cooperation narrative. China's use of development aid and investment diplomacy to leverage support for its 'Taiwan policy' has attracted criticism for the fact that

assistance is seemingly given only to countries that agree to recognise China as the only legal government, and in effect, to diplomatically isolate Taiwan (Copper, 2016). Chanana (2009) cites India's security competition with China as a key factor in its desire to further trade and diplomatic relationships with Africa, as well as a broader agenda to gain a deeper footing as a world power - though it should be noted that India's domestic economic conditions somewhat constrain its ability to gain strategic benefits at the same level as China. All things considered, it should be fair to conclude that China and India are not bringing anything new to the table in terms of unconditionality and altruism simply by default of their status as 'emerging' donors and their oppositional position to the Western liberal order.

#### Locating accusations of Chinese neocolonialism

Within the context of growing tensions during China's ascent toward emerging-superpower status, it comes as no surprise that their activities in postcolonial states have captured the attention of the world, tempting scrutiny and suspicion of potentially exploitative practices. It would seem a fair assessment to make that Indian activities are less likely to be accused of neocolonialism than China, and to some extent this may be attributed to the fact that the former's involvement in Africa is driven more by private sector operations, in contrast to the latter's state-driven approach.

Kolstad and Wiig (2011) demonstrate that Chinese investment in Africa has a correlation with areas that are especially rich in natural resources and have weak institutions, suggesting that these areas have been pursued in order to finance the state's own rapid economic growth. Other scholars more broadly question the integrity of both Chinese state-owned enterprises' and private companies' interests. For example, Drogendijk and Blomkvist (2013) find qualitative evidence that Chinese activities are motivated by natural resources, new markets, and assets - supporting classical theories of FDI. This all implies that 'motives for Chinese FDI in Africa seem to match those of Western firms' investments in global markets' (p. 82).

Equally troublingly, Lumumba-Kasongo (2011) forecast that the current trajectory of Sino-African relations points to a dependence on trade with China, of which the effects are already beginning to manifest in African markets (p. 261). The deepened (and unequal) relationship between the two countries has also resulted in a displacement of African labour as evidenced by the influx of anywhere between 500,000 and 750,000 new Chinese workers in the continent (Michel & Beuret, 2009, p. 4). Perhaps most alarming would be the increased military presence of China, especially along the Somali coast and in Sudan. Today, China supplies the largest share of troops for peacekeeping missions in Africa among the five permanent Security Council members, and this figure is expected only to increase as the 'One Belt One Road' initiative matures (Olander, 2018).

Although these prospects are concerning, many scholars urge readers to heed caution with accusations of neocolonialism where it is conflated with sino-phobia (Addis & Zuping, 2018; Breslin, 2013; Lumumba-Kasongo, 2011). With that in mind, much of the analysis would suggest that Chinese activities may be slipping into a harmful relationship with its recipients in Africa - the prevention of which will depend on Africa's ability to diversify its portfolio of investors (Lumumba-Kasongo, 2011, p. 260).

### Efficacy of aid

A common criticism of non-DAC aid arises from the relative lack of administrative infrastructure within donors' programs. Though India and China both possess national organisatory bodies through which aid is channeled, such as the ITEC in the former and the Ministry of Commerce in the latter, there still persists a reluctance to substantially invest in the coordination of aid programs both within their respective countries as well as with the initiatives of other donors (Quadir, 2016, p. 328). This presents a challenge to the efficacy of the assistance that is provided, due to the fact that information is not shared regarding problems that are encountered when delivering aid, leading to stagnant returns when collaborative solutions are not reached. These problems are somewhat addressed by DAC initiatives to

share data and analytical insights, as well as peer reviews - but such mechanisms are still largely absent when it comes to South-South aid.

Furthermore, the increase in interventions by new donors complicates existing aid structures for recipient countries, who have to accommodate more conditionalities and bureaucratic evaluations. Some scholars have argued that non-DAC aid is more streamlined in that it is detached from political conditionalities and commitments. However, research shows that recipient countries are burdened with increased transaction costs when donors' aid institutions are incompetent or insufficiently integrated with others' (Kragelund, 2008; Munro, 2005). These transaction costs, which result from processes such as appraisals, evaluations and monitoring, are shown to be inversely proportional to the utility of aid (Kragelund, 2008).

At best, this suggests that non-DAC aid may not be as productive as its DAC alternatives - at worst, emerging donors are continuing to perpetuate standards of tied aid under a new guise of South-South solidarity.

*Changes - how are rising powers challenging the Western 'Development Paradigm'?*

#### Widened options for recipient countries

The emergence of China and India as financiers and credit providers has left interesting implications for states seeking larger 'policy spaces' in development; redefining new and (perhaps) better options that have in the past been unavailable to recipients due to donor-mandated conditions (Cheru & Obi, 2010). Multilateral development banks (MDBs) have diverted 80% of their loans to middle-income countries, simultaneously increasing the risk premium for lower-income countries and making the prospect of bureaucratic processes and loan evaluations less and less enticing for borrowers (Manning, 2006). In contrast to this, China's relatively hands-free approach to financing and bilateral aid is more forgiving for the less creditworthy states. Likewise, India's LOCs afford those states more maneuverability despite the

attached conditions that compel them to spend and import from India. Whether or not these initiatives are born from self-interested concerns, the freedom and flexibility alone that they offer to African states is certainly not to be underestimated.

Junbo and Frasher (2014) emphasise this perspective by highlighting the mechanisms through which rising donors are facilitating African emancipation from the Western liberal order. Where traditional forms of aid have failed in attempts to enforce Western-style democratisation and economic systems, donors such as China and India not only provide alternatives to underdeveloped regions, but perhaps more symbolically allow them the choice to *refuse* projects (p. 200).

#### Funding illiberal and authoritarian regimes

A key area of concern for the Western liberal order lies in China's arms exports to countries such as Iran, Pakistan, Sudan and Zimbabwe (Breslin, 2013, p. 1285). During the three years between 2004 and 2007, China was reported to be the largest seller of weapons to African states, indicating its reemergence as a major arms dealer that has not been witnessed since its involvement in the Iran-Iraq war during the 80s (Bitzinger, 2009).

The profitability of civil conflicts in Africa breeds opportunities for Chinese state-owned arms exporters to establish deep political connections with areas that are resource-rich through arms deals. Concerningly, the pursuit of natural resources is shown to simultaneously exacerbate the degree of violence in conflict, aggravating the situation even further (Yang, 2020, p. 165). Perhaps most frustrating is the incongruence between China's rhetoric and its actions. In 2008, the PRC publicly denounced the ICC's indictment of the Sudanese president Omar Al Bashir's crimes against humanities, shortly before it was revealed that they had themselves violated a UN embargo against Sudan in pursuit of oil returns (Andersson, 2008). Even more damningly, Chinese military vehicles were found in Darfur, as well as Chinese military equipment that had been used to destroy civilian areas (Halper, 2010, p. 85). This blatant contradiction is disturbing in the context of development and welfare, and serves as an example of the 'rogue aid' that

irresponsibly pursues financial gain for Chinese interests at the cost of human life and regional peace in Africa (Woods, 2008, p. 1207).

This relationship presents reasons for concern where it seems that 'China is providing an economic and political alternative for authoritarian states which means that they can ignore Western pressure to liberalize' (Breslin, 2013, p. 1286). On one hand, Chinese foreign aid's inclusiveness allows states that have historically been ostracised by the political objectives of the West to seek development on their own terms. On the other, its engagement with authoritarian regimes and despots presents a direct threat to the Western liberal order and the development infrastructures it has already established (Halper, 2010).

#### Effective investments and emphasis on infrastructure

In contrast to that of Western development assistance, Chinese foreign aid is characterised by its generosity toward infrastructural projects which other donors are often reluctant to finance (Lancaster, 2007). Figures show that Ghana and Ethiopia received more than a combined \$11 million across three years between 2009 and 2012 specifically for infrastructure projects, while Kenya's largest post-independence railway project (the Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Railway) was estimated to have cost China close to \$4 billion (Tubei, 2018). India, too invests heavily in the infrastructure sector through the Exim Bank - for example, a contribution of \$450 million was directed toward the construction of power plants in Sudan, as well as initiatives to establish railway networks in Tanzania, Mozambique, Senegal and Mali. Telecommunications are yet another sector in which Indian aid has helped the efficiency and expediency of African development projects, as well as initiatives to use IT for the establishment of improved stock exchanges (Singh, 2006).

The unconditional nature of rising donors' aid programmes have drawn criticism from Western counterparts, who argue financial support that is 'untied' from political conditions fosters illiberal regimes, thus ultimately hampering development across all sectors (Brookes & Shin, 2006). However,

prior to the intervention of states like China and India, Africa had faced long periods of developmental impasse due to high transaction costs that inhibited fruitful investments. Additionally, problems with capital flight and poor macroeconomic management have impeded various sectors from performing successfully.

The investment of China and India are ‘filling [a] critical infrastructure gap, and they are doing it cheaply, less bureaucratically and in a shorter time frame’ (Cheru & Obi, 2016, p. 2-3). Infrastructure (or lack thereof) is arguably one of the main factors which inhibit economic and welfare development due to interregional disparities in trade and income, and proof of this is evident in research conducted on India’s own infrastructural development (Donaldson, 2018). The improvement of this sector results in a spillover effect, as is explained by Wang: Chinese and Indian aid prevents ‘the scenario of an aid-dependent economy by focusing instead on trade and investment and by providing the infrastructure that will enable Africa to move up the development curve’ (Wang, 2014, p. 55).

#### Historical, political and cultural proximities

In terms of historical and cultural contexts, Southern donors tend to have closer ties with their recipient counterparts than do Northern donors. This has been externalised through narratives of solidarity and cooperation, as will be discussed further in the following section. Scholars have suggested that the contributions of non-DAC donors are potentially more valuable than that of established donors ‘because of their experience and awareness of development issues’ (Balasubramanyam, 2015, p. 17).

For instance, the fact of India’s own subjugation to colonial rule seems to level the playing field for the recipients of its development assistance in Africa and somewhat shield it from ‘accusations of taking a paternalistic approach’ (Chanana, 2009, p. 13). Western aid programmes have been unsuccessful in this regard, considering their historical relationship of imperialism with African nations and their low-key perpetuation of the White Man’s Burden through narratives of liberalisation and assistance (Easterly,

2016). Manifestations of modernisation theories have also been prevalent (albeit less so in recent years), where it is implied that African states will remain underdeveloped until they adapt to Western standards of democracy and market competition. In a more practical sense, the unprecedented economic growth of both India and China could serve as a helpful example to their aid recipients, as they provide evidence of the success of non-Western, alternative economic models (Kragelund, 2008).

Quadir (2013) suggests that South-South cooperation is more effective due to the fact that ‘donors take interest, at least theoretically, in the unique, historical, political and cultural experiences’ of the receiving countries in a way that North-South cooperation tends not to (p. 334). However, from the standpoint of postcolonial theory, it could be argued that this only serves to perpetuate the Western vs non-Western divide as well as the generalisation of non-Western identities. The notion that historical or cultural proximity will make China and India better donors than DAC members assumes that aid is always given benevolently, which we have observed is not always the case. Moreover, the new ‘shift’ in postcolonial theory would suggest that subalternity and hegemony are not geographically (or historically) bound - in this case, what stops non-Western actors from exploiting their relationships with less developed areas?

#### Rhetoric and discourse: changes in how development has been framed

Across all areas of politics and history, the impact of rhetoric and discourse cannot be overstated. The manner in which issues are framed, especially those pertaining to identity and subalternity, must always be taken into consideration. Edward Said’s work on Orientalism shows that ‘representations are not neutral’ (Kapoor, 2008, p. 6) and have effectively established a persistent discipline of knowledge and constructs that influence the way scholars look at non-Western actors. In this sense, it can be assumed that the emergence of new, non-Western donors will usher in a new system of language in discussing development initiatives, regardless of how realistically their activities differ from Western donors’.



Rising donors like China and India consistently use a distinct rhetoric which connotes collaboration, mutual interest and solidarity with the Global South: this is evident in terms such as ‘horizontal cooperation’, ‘partnerships’ and ‘alternative development’. India in particular leverages this kind of language - Harris and Vittorini (2018) quote the notion of its ‘special affinity with Africa’ and a higher ‘comfort level’ between the two regions in comparison to its European and Chinese competitors. Additionally, officials make frequent references to the large Indian diaspora across Africa, such as the minister of commerce’s reference to the Afro-Indian relationship as ‘old friends and family’, distinguishing itself from China’s comparatively new association with the continent (Kuo, 2015).

This language represents a departure from the Western framework of development that it self-consciously seeks to remove itself from the context of Western paternalism and exploitation. To what extent this rhetoric accurately represents the reality of Chinese and Indian activity in the African continent is debatable, but it is certainly an interesting trend nonetheless.

## **Conclusion**

The emergence of non-Western donors at the forefront of development assistance is a hopeful and positive phenomenon for diversification of approaches, culture and practices; and it should come as no surprise within the context of globalisation and increasing multipolarity. For states in the Global South that have struggled to benefit from frameworks such as ODA and other Western initiatives, the increased interest of countries like China and India in those states is a source of optimism at the potential for them to realise their full potential, without being tethered to the West. In many ways, Southern donors have proven that the conventional approaches are outdated and ill-suited to the domestic conditions of the continent, such as in infrastructure for example.

However, the analysis of this paper also indicates that we should be cautious of celebrating the perceived success in new narratives of South-South cooperation too hastily. Much of the literature points to the conclusion that changes in developmental frameworks are largely discursive, as well as relating to culture and historical contexts. In this sense, the practices of non-Western donors are not so different from that of Western donors in reality, but there appears to be a dramatic shift in attitude due to the fact that the new donors were once (or still are) developing countries themselves. As Quadir (2013) aptly summarises, ‘non-tied aid becomes a sort of rhetoric, not a serious political commitment’ (p. 335). On the other hand, new donors are also presenting a very real challenge to the previously unquestioned standard of Western market-capitalism, by demonstrating the feasibility of alternatives for African states. All things considered, it will be fascinating to see how the Western development paradigm adapts or responds to the success of rising donors, through trilateral cooperation or by transforming its own attitudes and approaches towards African development.

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