

# African Students in China: Research, Reality, and Reflection

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**Abstract:** With the fast development of China-Africa relations, the African community in China becomes an impressive phenomenon and an attraction for international academia. Various African diasporic groups exist in China such as traders, students, artists, professionals, etc., with students forming the second largest group. Although there have been debates about whether international students can be considered as immigrants, the opinion that they are largely prevails in the scholarly literature. Studying African students in the context of China-Africa relations, the article is divided into five parts. The first provides a survey on the research on the topic, followed by an overview of the history of African students in China. The third part is an analysis of China's policy towards African students. Why do the African students want to come to China? What attracts them? What are their purposes? The fourth part will discuss the favorable conditions for their coming to China and their motivations. The last part will describe their contribution to both the African and Chinese societies. I will argue that by their initiative the African students' existence in China and their interaction with the Chinese people has brought various new things to China and made a great contribution to Africa as a whole.

## Research, Debates, and Views

The international community currently shows great interest in China-Africa relations. Different issues, contradictory views and various debates have been presented for some time.<sup>1</sup> Related to this issue, the African diaspora has also become a fashionable topic among academia. It is presumed that the African community appeared in China in recent years, yet there is a long history of diaspora and contact between China and Africa.<sup>2</sup> Owing to the fast growth of the bilateral trade volume, increasing from \$10.8 billion in 2000 to more than \$220 billion in 2014, it is undeniable that the African community has boomed in China during this period.

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Since China-Africa trade occupies a very important component in the bilateral relations, traders thus by far constitute the largest group within the African community in China. So far the studies have generally focused on African trading communities in China or their economic activities in Guangzhou, the commodity hub of China, and Yiwu, China's biggest commodity center.<sup>3</sup> Some have studied their business transactions and deals in Hong Kong and Macau.<sup>4</sup> Other researches include the living conditions, social practices, or religious activities of the African diaspora, and barriers between Africans and Chinese, management of the African diaspora by Chinese authorities, or the reaction of Chinese citizens.<sup>5</sup> African entrepreneurs are also described for how they have transmitted their conceptions of China into their own countries, thus explaining the impact of Chinese development in a global context.<sup>6</sup> More recently the research focus has gradually moved beyond Guangdong Province and its commercial hub Guangzhou.<sup>7</sup>

African students form the second largest group of African diaspora in China. Yet far fewer scholars have been involved in the study of this topic. The earliest work was done by a Ghanaian student, who had personal experiences in studying in China in the early 1960s. After their independence, fourteen African countries sent their students to China until the end of 1966 when China closed all universities because of the Cultural Revolution. Immanuel Hevi was among the group. He wrote the first book about African students in China, complaining about racism and other unpleasant phenomena. He listed six causes of African student dissatisfactions: undesirable political indoctrination, language difficulty, poor educational standards, inadequate social life, outright hostility, and racial discrimination.<sup>8</sup> Although he indicated that many African students returned back home in 1961-1962, there was disagreement about his statements.<sup>9</sup> While the book raised attention from the West, the study of the subject then almost stopped since all the African students returned back to their countries due to the Cultural Revolution. Until recently, scholars studying African students in China reviewed the historical context or explained the social background of China at the time.<sup>10</sup>

China resumed educational cooperation with Africa in 1973, and railway technology trainees arrived in China from Tanzania and Zambia in connection with Chinese funding of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway (TAZARA). There are several works on, TAZARA including documents, records, and the African trainees.<sup>11</sup> As for the first systematic survey of African students in China, Gillespie's work is one of the few books that put African student experiences in the context of South-South relations, emphasizing the knowledge transfer of China's educational exchange programs for Africa.<sup>12</sup> There were several studies on the conflicts between African students and Chinese students in the 1980s with a criticism of Chinese racism.<sup>13</sup>

With the establishment of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), beginning with the first summit in 2000, the number of African students greatly increased (see Table 2 below). In terms of the study of African students currently in China, there is a greater interest among Chinese scholars (or African scholars in China) than those outside China. The first study on the issue in China was by the Center for African Studies at Peking University. It was a general survey with a series

data based on the archives of the Ministry of Education, focusing on African students in China.<sup>14</sup> Current research about African students are generally focused on four subjects, namely cultural adaptation, China-Africa cooperation, educational management, and professional teaching such as language, mathematics, engineering, and so forth. Using key words “African overseas students” as an entry, forty-seven articles are found in the Chinese Journals Network (2003-2014) containing journal articles and MA dissertations. Among them, five are on cultural adaptation, six on educational management, and fourteen on teaching the Chinese language, with the rest on China-Africa relations. Reports and memoirs have also provided information about the experiences of African students in China.<sup>15</sup> There is an important study regarding the evolution and effect of China’s policy towards African students, in which the author argues that the scholarship policy has contributed a great deal towards the success of China’s international educational cooperation, especially with African students.<sup>16</sup>

Psychology is often applied in cross-culture studies, and two works are worth mentioning. One is an article based on an SASS (Study Abroad Stress Survey) of Africans and western students in China that was carried out in 2003 with two hundred forms sent out to foreign students at colleges in three cities in China. The thirty questionnaires were divided into four categories, e.g., interpersonal, individual, academic, and environment. One hundred and fifty-six valid forms were returned from eight-two Africans (forty-six males, thirty-six females) and seventy-four westerners (thirty-two males, forty-two females). Its purpose was to evaluate gender differences (male/female) and cultural differences (Africa/West) in the perception of stress. No group differences existed in the subtotal perception of the four stressors. Group variations existed only in their sub-divisional areas of stress. Cross-cultural orientation was suggested for foreign students. The study indicates that academic and interpersonal sources of stress were the most common and daily hassles defined as high pressure and challenges among both males and females.<sup>17</sup> Another psychological study was an MA thesis based on an investigation of 181 feedbacks out of 210 forms, a rather high ratio for an investigation. The author was an African student, and the aim of the study was to examine cultural shock and adaptation among African students in China. It found that cultural shock is common for African students in China, and the best remedy is to increase social contact with local people. It also found that although all African students experienced cultural shock, the extent is different according to the grade and gender, e.g., more serious for undergrads than graduates, female than male.<sup>18</sup> Other studies are either on cultural adaptation, cultural differences and their impact, or different concepts of time and family.<sup>19</sup>

As for the role in China-Africa educational cooperation, Ketema et al. suggested that Chinese universities played an important role in bilateral cooperation, King used African students in China as an indicator of China’s soft power, and Haugen analyzed China’s policy for the enrolment of African students and its effect and outcome.<sup>20</sup> Others argued that China’s educational assistance formed an essential

part of China-Africa cooperation and offered substantial support to Africa.<sup>21</sup> Studies also discussed the management of African students or graduates in China, either in universities or society.<sup>22</sup> The fourth subject always involves teachers who are doing language teaching and probing better ways to teach the Chinese language to Africans.<sup>23</sup> African students themselves wrote about their experiences in China and emphasized African agency in their behavior in Chinese society.<sup>24</sup>

There are criticisms regarding the teaching methods and suggestions for improvement and different views on the effect of China's educational policy towards African students. One view holds that African scholarship holders are generally satisfied with their experiences in China, which thus promotes a positive view of the potential for strengthening China-Africa friendship with African countries through educational programs.<sup>25</sup> Although there are shortcomings and room for improvement, China's policy is rather successful in promoting China-Africa relations, building African capacity and bettering China's image.<sup>26</sup> Haugen, on the other hand, asserts that China fails to reach its policy objectives because of African students' disappointment with the quality of the education they receive, "Disappointment with the educational experience obstructs the promotion of Chinese values, thus obliterating the soft power potential of Sino-African educational exchanges."<sup>27</sup>

Similar features characterize the above-mentioned studies, e.g., cross-cultural theory with questionnaires as methodology and concrete suggestions as the outcome. They involve the collection of direct data drawn from life experiences. Researchers sometime are African students themselves. The shortcoming of such studies is that they are usually based on a case study of African students in a place (or a university) or from a country, and thus limitations are inevitable. How to apply theories in case studies is another issue. Bilateral migration provides both an opportunity and a challenge. There are similarities between Chinese culture and African culture, and mutual learning is always beneficial to both, especially through people-to-people contact.<sup>28</sup> Yet, we still lack a solid study on the topic.

### **History, Reality, and Trends**

The history of African students in China began in 1956, when four Egyptian students arrived. If we compare the figure with 61,594 African students in China in 2016, the trend is dramatic. The history of African students in China can be divided into four periods. The first started from 1956 to 1966 when the Cultural Revolution closed all the universities. The second is mainly about the trainees for Tanzania-Zambia Railway. The third runs from the 1970s to 1995. The fourth started from 1996 and got a promotion in 2000, the year of China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), and it lasts till the present.<sup>29</sup>

The period 1956-1966 forms the first contact of African students with China. In 1953, the Chinese youth delegation had broad contact with delegates from Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Madagascar, and French West Africa during the International Conference of Defense of Youth Rights, held in Geneva, and students of both sides established links at the early stage. Even before the establishment of

China-Egypt diplomatic relations on May 30, 1956, the two countries signed the agreement of cultural cooperation on April 15, 1956.<sup>30</sup> The program of Egypt-China educational cooperation started the exchange of scholars and students from both countries. Four Egyptian students came to China in 1956, three were under the academic supervision of the famous artist Prof. Li Keran to learn the skill of Chinese painting. They became well-known artists in Egypt after their studies in the China Central Academy of Fine Arts.<sup>31</sup>

In 1957, eleven African students from Cameroon, Kenya, Uganda, and Malawi (all not yet independent countries) came to study in China. During the 1950s, twenty-four African students came under the scholarship of Chinese government. Many African countries won their independence in the 1960s and China started educational cooperation with them. African students or technicians arrived under various agreements or programs at Chinese universities for advanced study. In the 1960s, China sent various cultural delegations to Africa, learning different types of African dance while African countries sent young people to China for further study. In 1960, the number of African students in China increased to ninety-five. When the Cultural Revolution occurred in 1966, there were 164 students from fourteen African countries. The African students had to go back home since all the universities were closed during that time.<sup>32</sup>

Among the young African students was a Ghanaian, Immanuel Hevi, who wrote a book complaining about racism and other unpleasant experiences in China.<sup>33</sup> His negative statements about the country immediately brought about applause from the West. What is more, he was from Ghana where President Nkrumah was strongly pro-socialist. Most importantly, the West was looking for something negative about China, and Hevi's book came out at just the right time. Hevi's complaint was somewhat understandable for several reasons. The first is the economic disaster in the early 1960s. Although African students, like all foreign students in China, enjoyed some privileges and a higher living standard than the ordinary Chinese citizen, yet China could not further improve the conditions as the early 1960s witnessed the worst economic period in China after the founding of the People's Republic of China. The second were the social conditions in the period. China's dogmatism, social taboos, and regulations set up a kind of "segregation" between African students and ordinary Chinese, especially African males and Chinese females. Thirdly, to make things worse, the pervasive politics created a vacuum for social interaction that made life less interesting for foreign students, including Africans.<sup>34</sup> However, this was also a period in which young African students saw China with their own eyes and had their first personal contact with Chinese people.

The 1970s was characterized by the notion of brotherly friendship because many of the African students were connected with TAZARA. During the 1960s and 1970s, two important events greatly improved contact between China and Africa: the dispatch of Chinese medical teams and the building of the Tanzania Zambia Railway (TAZARA). After China sent its first medical team to Algeria in 1963, Chinese



medical teams were dispatched to forty-seven African countries.<sup>35</sup> Supported by the Chinese government, TAZARA was built specifically to break the transportation blockage by the white racial regimes of southern Africa. TAZARA not only made a great contribution to the transportation of minerals from Zambia to the port of Dar es Saalam, thus helping the landlocked countries at the time, but it also improved the livelihood of the local people. Moreover, the process of building TAZARA provided an opportunity for mutual contact, since more than sixty thousand Chinese engineers, technicians, and workers joined the workforce in Africa, which enabled Africans to better understand China and the Chinese people.<sup>36</sup> In order to help Tanzania and Zambia run TAZARA, China agreed to train engineers for the two countries starting in June 1972. Thus the railway technology trainees came to China, followed by other African students who enrolled in Chinese universities in 1973.

This large group was trained for the future TAZARA project in various specialties. They started training courses at institutions such as Beifang Jiaotong University and the North University of Transportation. The two hundred would-be engineers from Tanzania and Zambia took different basic courses of public transportation, then trained in different special fields, such as transportation, Locomotive specialty, vehicle major, communication major, signal specialty, railway engineering specialty, and financial professional. Among this group, 179 finally graduated in September 1975. In 1973, China resumed the enrolment of international students. There were thirty-seven formal African students, followed by sixty-one in 1974. However, there was a great increase of African students in 1975, reaching 113, probably because Chairman Mao Zedong met with Zambian President Kaunda in 1974 when Mao put forward the "Theory of Three Worlds." In 1976, African students increased to 144. By the end of 1976, China had 355 students from twenty-one African countries, and the number with Chinese scholarships increased as well.<sup>37</sup> After their return home, they played an important role in the transportation and other fields in their own countries.<sup>38</sup>

The years 1978 to 1995 form the third period, and it indicates increasing contacts. Since the opening-up, China resumed normal educational cooperation with African countries. However, the economic situation in China was not good enough and the international students were rather limited. In 1978, China enrolled 1236 new international students with 95 percent enjoying Chinese Government Scholarships (CGS). Among them, 121 were African students, about 10 percent of the total.<sup>39</sup> Together with nearly three hundred African students enrolled during 1976-1977, there were more than four hundred African students in China, accounting for one quarter of foreign students then. However, only thirty Africans received CGS in 1979, forty-three in 1980, and eighty in 1981.<sup>40</sup>

The statistics indicate that African student numbers went on increasing in the 1980s except 1989 when the number dropped to 249 from 325 of the previous year. The number kept fluctuated between two and three hundred in the following years, never surpassing three hundred. The situation might be explained by the clashes

between African and Chinese students around the 1980s, especially with the clash at Hehai University in Nanjing in 1988.

**Table 1: African Students in China (1976-1995)**

Year	Scholarship	Self-financed	Total
1976	144	0	144
1977	142	0	142
1978	121	0	121
1979	30	0	30
1980	43	0	43
1981	80	0	80
1982	154	0	154
1983	230	0	230
1984	247	0	247
1985	314	0	314
1986	297	0	297
1987	306	0	306
1988	325	0	325
1989	249	2	251
1990	252	6	258
1991	272	15	287
1992	267	20	287
1993	225	58	283
1994	220	246	466
1995	256	721	977
Total	4174	1068	5242

With more African students, problems occurred, and racial tensions broke out during the 1980s. For many Chinese, it was the first time they saw foreigners and they could not help pointing to foreign students, especially African students. This became a very complicated issue, which was due to various factors such as African student complaints about economic or living conditions, political divergence between the US and Middle East, different social values, Chinese prejudice towards Africans, etc.<sup>41</sup>

Complaints and grievances resulted in conflict and even demonstrations. Clashes between African and Chinese students occurred in Tianjin, Nanjing, Beijing, Shanghai, and other cities during the 1980s. African students voiced their grievances by taking different forms, such as demonstrations inside or outside of campus, boycott of classes, hunger strikes, petitions. Occasionally, Chinese students took part in the demonstrations, which resulted in clashes. The incidents were described as “national racism” by some scholars.<sup>42</sup> Analyzing from today’s perspective, differences of social systems, values, and culture might be the major cause. For a

people with a rather traditional character, the Chinese were not used to the close relations between males and females in public, while African students took a more open attitude about the issue. Therefore, the trigger of conflicts was usually the close contact between African male students and Chinese girls, which was disliked by ordinary Chinese. Of course, China was undergoing a dramatic social transformation at the time. With six students in a room, the Chinese students were not happy with the better treatment of foreign students who lived in a room with only two. In addition, foreign students enjoyed stipends and better conditions in other aspects on campus. Therefore, it was natural for the Chinese students and ordinary citizens to complain about the special treatment of foreign students. Combined with other inequalities or social dissatisfaction, this complaint gave vent to grievances, which led to the conflicts.

**Table 2: African Students in China (1996-2011)**

Year	Scholarship	Self-funded	Total
1996	922	118	1040
1997	991	224	1215
1998	1128	267	1395
1999	1136	248	1384
2000	1154	234	1388
2001	1224	302	1526
2002	1256	390	1646
2003	1244	549	1793
2004	1317	869	2186
2005	1367	1390	2757
2006	1861	1876	3737
2007	2733	3182	5915
2008	3735	5064	8799
2009	4824	7609	12433
2010	5710	10693	16403
2011	6316	14428	20744
2012	6717	20335	27052
2013	7305	26054	33359
2014	7821	33856	41,677
2015	8470	41322	49,792
<b>Total</b>	67231	169010	236241

**Source:** *China Education Yearbook, 2003-2015; Brief Statistics of Foreign Students Studying in China, 2012-2015*, Department of International Cooperation and Exchanges, Ministry of Education of China.

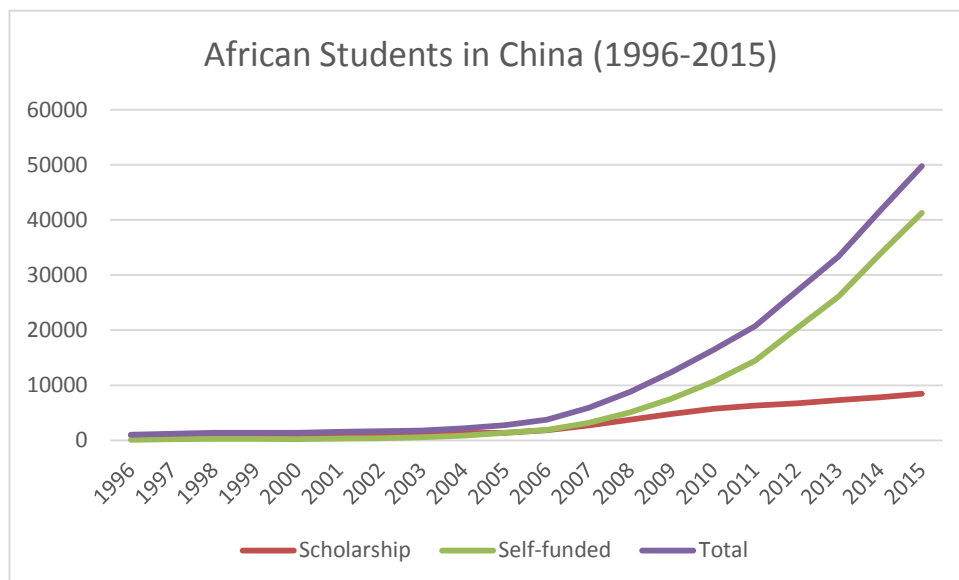
One phenomenon was impressive, i.e., self-financed students from Africa who were increasing during the first half of the 1990s. In 1990, there were six, then fifteen in 1991. The number increased to thirty and then to fifty-eight in 1993. The figure jumped to 246 in 1994 and 721 in 1995. More and more African youth wanted to go to



China for further study, and the low fees and easy access to visas might explain the situation. After 1996, the history of African students in China entered a period of rapid development.

The significance of 1996 was because in May that year President Jiang Zemin visited six African countries—Kenya, Ethiopia, Egypt, Mali, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. This was the first time a Chinese Head of State visited the sub-Saharan Africa. During the visit, Jiang put forward five proposals for China and Africa to build a long-time stable and all-round cooperation for the 21<sup>st</sup> century based on the principles of sincere friendship, equality, solidarity and cooperation, common development, and the future. The visit and policy brought about a great increase of CGS for African students, which leaped from 256 in 1995 to 922 in 1996. With 118 self-financed students that year, African students for the first time surpassed one thousand in China.<sup>43</sup>

**Figure 1**



After the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000, promoting China-Africa educational cooperation became an important issue. By the end of 2002, there were 1,600 Africans among the 85,800 foreign students.<sup>44</sup> In 2009, foreign students in China surpassed 230,000, and African students numbered 12,436.<sup>45</sup> The figures indicate that the increase of African students was closely linked to that of international students. During 1996-2011, there were 84,361 African students in China, with 36,918 holding CGS while 47,443 were self-funded.

The year 2005 was a turning point when self-funded students (1,390) from Africa outnumbered scholarship students (1,367) from Africa. This change may have been due to the success of the scholarship programs and the Chinese Education Exhibitions in Egypt and South Africa since 2003. However, this trend was also in sync with the situation of international students as a whole. In 2005, there were

13,3869 self-funded students from 175 countries studying in China, about 94.88 percent of the total international students, a growth rate of 28.56 percent from 2004. In 2009, of the 238,184 foreign students at 610 Chinese universities and scientific research institutions, 219,939 were self-funded.<sup>46</sup> The dramatic increase may be explained by Beijing Olympic Games. In 2011, the self-funded African students reached 14,428, doubling the number of African CGS holders (6,316). In 2015, there were 8,470 African CGS holders while self-financed students numbered 41,322. Most African students in China, no matter whether CGS holders or self-financed, are pursuing degrees and the degree-seeking students increased rapidly. In 2014, 84 percent African students in China set earning a degree as their goal, while only 16 percent chose non-degree courses.

The impressive trend of African students has three characteristics. First, the increase is rapid, along with the general increase of international students. Second, the number of self-financed African students increased faster than the CGS holders. Third, the overwhelming majority of African Students are pursuing degrees.

### **Policy Implementation and Effect**

While China received foreign students as early as the 1950s, yet in the 1950s-1970s, its policy for international education cooperation was mainly ideologically oriented, i.e., to unite African countries in the struggle against the capitalist camp headed by U.S. in the first stage, then the against the two hegemonies, the US and the USSR in the second stage.

After the opening-up, China started to emerge into the international arena of educational cooperation. As a newcomer, the Chinese government has learned from its international partners, made its policy towards international students and carried it out step by step. There is no specific law regarding any group of international students such as U.S. students or African students, yet the policy is the product of international relations. No doubt, China's policy of international educational cooperation is closely linked with or even decided by its strategy. Since China's international education policy has gradually formulated after the opening-up, the article's focus is on the policy since the 1980s.

As early as 1978, the State Council endorsed a document to request that Chinese be more friendly to foreign students, that foreign students be allowed to go shopping publicly and be allowed to marry Chinese.<sup>47</sup> The 1980s witnessed the establishment of primary rules, regulations, and policy in the management of foreign students. In 1985, the State Council approved the "Measures of Administration of Foreign Students" issued by State Education Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Public Security and Ministry of Finance. The government realized that "the enrolment and training of foreign students is a strategic work in our diplomacy" and required ministries and different levels to carry out the instruction. The document has eight chapters with forty-three clauses, covering general principles, enrolment and status management, teaching, professional practice/field work, various types of management, such as ideological

work and political activities, livelihood and social, and organization leadership.<sup>48</sup>

It seems that the Chinese government regarded foreign students as an element of the Chinese society and the management was dogmatic and strict. Its policy covered a broad range of topics including courses, Chinese language teaching, teaching materials, physical training, etc. As an important document, it governed the management of international students for many years. On July 21, 1999 the Ministry of Education issued a document for the administration of the enrolment of foreign students by primary and secondary schools.<sup>49</sup> In 2000, "Provisions on the Administration of Foreign Students in Universities" was issued by the government, which had eight chapters with fifty clauses. The provisions contain two added chapters on "Scholarship" and "Entry-Exit and Residence Procedures," which made implementation more applicable. These regulations were more systematic than the previous one.<sup>50</sup>

In March 2017 three ministries issued a new document regarding the enrolment and training of international students, which went into practice on July 1, 2017. Its purpose is to standardize the enrolment, advising, and management of international students, provide them better services, and promote foreign exchange and cooperation in China's education, thus raising the level of internationalization. It covers four levels: pre-school, primary school, middle school, and university. Although the specific work is the responsibility of the local government, the educational administration under the State Council takes charge of the management of international students, including making the general policy for their enrolment and development and guiding and coordinating the concrete work of the local government, while ministries of foreign affairs and public security are in charge of the management accordingly. Since this document covers all education institutions, the previous ones of the same type issued in 1999 and 2000 were annulled.<sup>51</sup>

Although the related legal regulations and rules cover all foreign students, there are specific measures regarding African students, especially when some special events or unusual things occurred. For example, during the troublesome days in the early 1980s, racial discriminations occurred in Shanghai. Some Chinese called the African students names, and there were clashes here and there. In one case, the Minister of Education had to call a meeting with the leader of African diplomatic corps and fifteen African ambassadors in February 1983 to explain the problems between Shanghai residents and African students. The African ambassadors warned that the Chinese government should teach policemen as well as residents since African students were often harassed by the policemen, either being stopped by them without reason or getting a scolding, which was a nuisance for African students. If the situation persisted, Africa-China friendly relations would be damaged. Therefore, different local governmental departments also promulgated various documents regarding specific issues related to African students.<sup>52</sup>

During the mid-1990s, after their graduation in China, some African students did not go back to their home countries. Instead, they took jobs in a third country

other than China and their homeland. This phenomenon did not fit with the original intention of the Chinese government to help capacity building for African countries. In 1996, the Ministry of Education of China issued a document that requested the institution of management to hand African graduates a return-ticket directly to the embassy of the student's country in Beijing at the end of the academic year in order to facilitate the students returning directly home. This has become routine now. A recent report commented on this: "Due to Chinese visa rules, most international students cannot stay in China after their education is complete. This prevents brain-drain and means that China is educating a generation of African students who—unlike their counterparts in France, the US or UK—are more likely to return home and bring their new education and skills with them."<sup>53</sup>

In 2005, when Chinese President Hu Jintao participated in the High-Level Meeting on Financing for Development at the Sixtieth Session of the United Nations, he promised that over the next three years, China would increase its assistance to developing countries, African countries in particular: "China will train 30,000 personnel of various professions from the developing countries within the next three years so as to help them speed up their human resources development."<sup>54</sup> Since the CGS is closely related to China's international strategy, it is also a reflection of the focus of China's policy.

As we see from the statistics, before 2005 the number of African students who received CGS was always smaller than that of European students. Yet the situation started to change since 2006, a year after Hu Jintao's declaration. Although in 2006 African students and European students accounted for equal proportions, the actual number of African CGS holders (1,861) surpassed that of Europeans (1,858) for the first time. From 2007 onward, the number of African students with CGS began to increase substantially.

There were continuous policy promotions. During the China-African Summit (as well the Third FOCAC) in 2006 in Beijing, the CGS specifically for African students was increased from two thousand to four thousand annually. In the Fourth FOCAC in 2009, the CGS again increased to 5,500 every year. The number reached 5710 in 2010.<sup>55</sup> In 2012, the Fifth FOCAC announced the scholarships would reach twenty thousand for next three years. That is why the CGS for African students increased rapidly. In 2011, the number was 6316. By 2015, African CGS holders reached 8,470.<sup>56</sup>

In order to implement the policy, different strategies were planned by the agents, universities, municipalities, various departments, and even individuals.<sup>57</sup> Regarding CGS, there was no evaluation system until 1997, when the State Education Commission issued the "Provisional Measures of Annual Review of Scholarship of Foreign Students." The measures made it clear for the first time that students had to undergo review according to certain standards with either "pass" or "no-pass" results.<sup>58</sup> Within three years, 7,118 CGS holders took the review exam; 7008 passed and 110 did not (1.55 percent). In 2000, two documents were issued by the Ministry of Education regarding the CGS annual review system and method.<sup>59</sup> With more accurate standards and more autonomy for the institutions entitled to enroll foreign

students, the receiving universities now had the real authority to carry out their own review of foreign students. In the same year, 2342 CGS holders at eighty-one universities underwent the review; 2314 (98.8 percent) passed, 28 did not. Among the unqualified students, seventeen were Asian, seven European, two African, and two American.<sup>60</sup> As for the universities that have the authority to offer CGS, there are strict qualifications. Usually only those universities that have high-level education, qualified professors who can offer courses in foreign languages, and adequate educational facilities can enroll international students. In 2015, only the 279 designated Chinese universities under the CGS-Chinese University Program were entitled to accept individual scholarship applications.<sup>61</sup>

The Chinese government wanted to get actively engaged in international educational cooperation. Therefore, different ministries, provinces, municipalities, and companies started to offer various types of scholarship. Owing to the complicated scholarship system and space, we describe one example, that of Shanghai Government Scholarship.

**Table 3: Shanghai Government Scholarship – Class A**

(Unit/time: RMB ¥/Annual)

Supporting Categories	Field of Study	Tuition	Accommodation	Stipend	Medical Insurance	Total
Undergraduate students	I	20000	8400	30000	800	59200
	II	23000	8400	30000	800	62200
	III	27000	8400	30000	800	66200
Master's students	I	25000	8400	36000	800	70200
	II	29000	8400	36000	800	74200
	III	34000	8400	36000	800	79200
Doctoral students	I	33000	12000	42000	800	87800
	II	38000	12000	42000	800	92800
	III	45000	12000	42000	800	99800

**Source:** "Shanghai Government Scholarship – Class A," China Scholarship Council Date: 2016-03-28 <http://www.csc.edu.cn/Laihua/scholarshipdetailen.aspx?cid=105andid=1293>

**Note:** (1) Full scholarship covers tuition waiver, accommodation, stipend, and comprehensive medical insurance; (2) Field of Study I includes Philosophy, Economics, Legal Studies, Education, Literature, History, and Management; Field of Study II includes Science, Engineering, and Agriculture; Field of Study III includes Fine Arts and Medicine.

At the end of the 1990s, a general framework for international student education was in place in China, which was compatible with Chinese culture and China's own educational system. Since then, China has kept improving its international educational cooperation in an effort to make itself one of the most popular destinations for foreign students. In the meantime, as economic globalization

accelerates, international demand increases greatly for those young talents who can speak Chinese or have a solid knowledge about China. As a result, the number of China's international students continues to grow rapidly. In 2016, they increased to 442,773, 45,138 more than 2015 (a growth rate is 11.35 percent). African students increased 11,802 to reach 61,594, which was a growth rate is 23.7 percent.<sup>62</sup> International education in China gets more popular every year.

Western countries have long dominated African development theory and practice. Since gaining independence, few African countries have developed successfully under western guidance, and many have gotten into difficult situations.<sup>63</sup> In recent years, the world economy has been volatile, and major changes have taken place in the international balance of power. On the one hand, the U.S. financial crisis and the debt crisis in Europe landed the western economies in trouble; on the other hand, emerging economies have become the driving force of the world economy. Thus "Look East" becomes a tendency of some African countries.<sup>64</sup> Asia's experience with poverty alleviation and development becomes a model for Africans who want to find a way for their own countries out of poverty, and China offers an alternative development model for African governments. Nigerian historian Femi Akomolafe explained it this way: "Now to the lessons Africa can learn from the world's new economic giant: The first and most profound is that: It is possible! Whichever way we throw it around, China's economic performance is nothing short of a miracle. It shows what a people with confidence, determination and vision can achieve."<sup>65</sup>

The Chinese experience is that to pursue the development of its own economy, a country can only rely on the concerted efforts and determination of its own people. Never in the history of mankind did a nation depend entirely for its own economy on foreigners.<sup>66</sup> One of the ways for the African governments to learn from China is to send their young people to China for further study. In 2005, the Rwanda government signed an agreement with the Ministry of Education to train their undergraduates, with Rwanda government scholarships. That same year, the Tanzania government also signed an agreement with the China Scholarship Council and agreed to train Tanzanian students in China's universities with Tanzanian scholarships.<sup>67</sup>

### **Reasons, Motivations, and Purpose**

Why do more and more Africans come to China for further study? There are various reasons, such as the favorable conditions provided by China, various motivations of young people and pragmatic purposes for personal development.<sup>68</sup> To know more about China and to learn more advanced technology from China are the main reasons that young Africans go to China for further studies.

The West has dominated the African media, and there are various untrue stories or even rumors about China. A typical one is the 1991 *New York Times* article "China Used Prisoner Labor in Africa" by Roberta Cohen, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights in the Carter Administration.<sup>69</sup> There was no source or



explanation for what she wrote, but since she was a former top U.S. official, the rumor of “China’s prison labor” spread around the world.<sup>70</sup> BBC’s irresponsible report “Angola’s Chinese-Built Ghost Town” is another example.<sup>71</sup> The residential area soon sold out after it opened to the public for sale.<sup>72</sup> Africans used to know very little about China, and most of the young Africans come to China in order to see China with their own eyes. China’s economic development and strong economy are the true attractions to young Africans. The Beijing Olympic Games in 2008 showcased China as never before to Africans and they were surprised to find an impressive China as shown on TV.<sup>73</sup> The event served as a stimulus to attract African youth who want to know more about China’s growth and its experience of development with modern technologies. They want to understand why China can be Africa’s largest trading partner for consecutive years and is now the second largest economy in the world. It is China’s growing presence in Africa, the commodities, television shows, Confucius Institutes, and Chinese people working in Africa that have aroused growing interest among African students. Maxwell Zeken is a 16-year-old Liberian who lives in rural Nimba County. Asked where he dreams of studying, he says: “I want to study engineering in China and come back to Liberia to build our roads and our cities. They say you must visit the Great Wall of China. I regret that my country didn’t build something like that.”<sup>74</sup>

China’s readiness for educational cooperation has surely promoted the boom of African students coming to China. In recent years, the Chinese government has worked hard to strengthen its relations with African countries and has adopted several measures to encourage African students to become familiar with China, such as the Confucius Institutes, learning Chinese, and scholarships to provide favorable conditions to attract African students.<sup>75</sup> By 2017, there were forty-eight Confucius Institutes and twenty-seven Confucius Classrooms located in thirty-three African countries, which provide various levels of Chinese language learning (see Appendix for a listing of the Institutes and Classrooms).

Many African students learned Chinese before applying for a Chinese scholarship or for enrolment at a Chinese university.<sup>76</sup> For example, Dr. Bellhadj Imen first won the top prize in a Chinese Bridge Competition in Tunisia, and the Chinese government then offered her a scholarship to study in the Department of Chinese Language and Literature at Peking University. Since Peking University is the top university in China, many international students have to learn Chinese before applying there for enrolment or a scholarship. It is the same case with other Chinese universities entitled to enroll international students. At the Shanghai Institute of Technology, about 130 African students are majoring in civil engineering and architecture. In their first year, they master Chinese and take a language proficiency test. This is a normal way for international students including Africans pursuing their degrees in China. Christian King, a student in philosophy and international trade at Renmin University, told Panview: “I started studying Chinese back home in Zimbabwe and it was very difficult at first. The tones and characters were

challenging, but after several years in China I am almost fluent. I love and enjoy Chinese now."<sup>77</sup>

Scholarships also promote African students going to China. With Africa's importance in China's international strategy, the scholarships become more and more inclined toward African students. As for CGS holders, Asian students are always at the top. It is natural both for the geopolitical reasons and the many overseas Chinese in Asian countries neighboring China. Europe, although with fewer CGS recipient countries than Africa, had been long time at the second place. Yet the situation has changed since 2006 when Africa moved into second place in terms of CGS awardees.

**Table 4. Comparison of CGS Holders between Africa and Europe (2003-2010)**

Year	Total Scholarship	Africa	Percent (%)	Europe	Percent (%)
2003	6153	1244	20.2	1442	23.4
2004	6715	1317	19.6	1880	23.5
2005	7218	1367	18.8	1761	24.4
2006	8484	1861	21.9	1858	21.9
2007	10151	2733	26.9	2107	20.8
2008	13516	3735	27.6	2628	19.4
2009	18245	4824	26.44	3022	16.56
2010	22,390	5710	25.5	3283	14.66

As the Table 4 shows, the percentage of CGS for Africa and Europe was about the same in 2006, but by 2007 the number of Africans had risen to 2,733, 2007, outnumbering Europeans by 626. The CGS holders of Africa increased every year. Today, students from fifty-one African countries are eligible for Chinese government scholarships (for Europe, the number is thirty-nine). In 2010, there were 22,390 beneficiaries, with 11,197 were offered to Asia (50.01 percent), 5710 to Africa (25.5 percent), 3283 to Europe (14.66 percent), 1761 to America (7.87 percent), and 439 to Oceania (1.96 percent).<sup>78</sup> Clearly Africans have become the second most important in terms of CGS holders.

Besides the CGS, there are other types of scholarships offered to international students, such as provincial scholarships, ministerial scholarships, university scholarships, and various scholarships with specific purposes provided by companies, charity organizations, etc. CGS covers the waiver of various expenses, including tuition, teaching material fees, research and survey fees, dissertation guidance fees, one-off resettlement fees, on-campus accommodation, medical insurance, a round-trip international airfare each year for home visits, and one-time round-trip international airfare for all students. In addition, international students receive their stipends monthly. With the country's continued economic development, the value of the scholarship has raised many times over the past years.<sup>79</sup> More and more African students enjoy CGS or other scholarships.

Self-funded African students, however, have greatly surpassed the Chinese scholarship holders since 2005. In 2015, among 49,792 African students in China, only 8,470 were CGS holders while 41,322 were self-funded. I once met a Zambian student in the Shangdi region in north Beijing where I live. He told me that he came to learn Chinese in a small language school in Wudaocao, an area well known among foreign students. That surprised me because he looked very young and had come to China alone. He was living in a residential area far away from the city center, and he showed his determination to study Chinese language.

There are different motivations underlying Africans deciding to study in China. For instance, some like the reputation of Chinese universities and others want to pursue specific fields.<sup>80</sup> China's experience of development with advanced technologies has inspired young Africans. Chinese companies are building roads, bridges, hospitals, schools, dams, oil refineries, and modern railways in Africa. What is more, Huawei, a networking and telecommunications equipment and services multinational company, has been successful in African IT industry and China is cooperating with Nigeria in the field of satellites. The localization of Chinese companies has attracted talented youngsters in different countries. I have met various African students who were in master's programs, such as Serge Mundele at Beijing University of Science and Technology and Oodo Stephen Ogidi, a Nigerian student who worked as a post-doctoral fellow in electrical engineering at Dalian University of Technology. African students are also engaged in the social sciences, such as Erfiki Hicham, a Moroccan student who received his PhD. from the School of International Studies at Peking University. The aforementioned Tunisian scholar Imen Belhadj earned her M.A. in Chinese language and literature and Ph.D. in international politics and then undertook post-doctoral studies in Arab studies, all at Peking University.

All these phenomena make China an ideal country for young students to pursue further studies. In recent years, more African students are engaged in professional studies.<sup>81</sup> According to a survey of two thousand samples in 2014, 84 percent of African students had as their goal earning a degree: 41.61 percent applied for medical science as their major, 21.56 percent chose engineering related subjects, while 13.94 percent chose business and management. In all, 98.33 percent applied for admission to the Top Five majors.<sup>82</sup> A student from the Republic of Congo came to China in 2007. He once told me that after he saw several telecommunications products in the market that were "made in China" he decided to go to China. With a dream of becoming the minister of telecommunications in his country, he is now a graduate student in telecommunications at the Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications.

Obviously there are other practical reasons, among them the fact that tuition and fees are lower and it is easier to get student visas than for western countries. Moreover, if one has learned Chinese and has an understanding of Chinese culture, it is easier to find a good job at a leading Chinese companies such as Huawei and ZTE

(also a telecommunications multinational) back in their own country. To be sure, the Chinese know very little about Africa, and there is surely widespread ignorance regarding the African skin color. However, the friendliness and warm feelings of the Chinese people may also encourage young Africans to study in China.<sup>83</sup>

### **Role, Contributions, and Agency**

Since African students are becoming a big group in China, what role do they play? What contributions do they make to both China and Africa, or to bilateral relations? Human history is a history of (im)migration. Although international students are not always considered immigrants or members of a diaspora, their linkage with a diaspora is obvious. The first reason for considering them as such is their role as a bridge. As the second largest group within African community in China, they constantly function as a bridge between African culture and Chinese culture. As soon as they enter China and begin their social life on campus, they engage in cultural exchange and play a role as a bridge between different cultures through conversation with their fellow students, contact with the authorities and ordinary Chinese, courses and debates, social interaction, etc.

In a new situation, young Africans in common with other humans always face new challenges and have to experience cultural shock—more serious for undergraduates than graduates, females than males.<sup>84</sup> Cultural exchange or adaptation thus becomes important, since it can occur in daily life, the learning process, and social contact, and it brings about better relations with the host community.<sup>85</sup> Cultural adaptation becomes an active response to new conditions, a process of mutual learning. I personally have supervised many African graduates, including three Ph.D. recipients from Tunisia, Morocco, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. They told me various stories about their experiences involving ignorance and biased views on the one hand and on the other friendliness with warm feelings.

African students become the bridge between Africa and China. Moses is a Nigerian student majoring in Chinese language teaching. He came to China in 2013 and has a typical Chinese name “Wu Wengzhong.” Having learned Chinese in Nigeria from his childhood, he became addicted to Chinese culture during his stay in China. He has learned various kinds of Chinese arts and performances, including some superior arts such as *Xiangsheng* (Chinese cross-talk or comic dialogue) and lion dance, and has attended various performances and art shows. With his profound interest in Chinese language and culture, Moses participated in the “Hebei Provincial Foreign Scholars’ Chinese Talents’ Show” in November 2014. He showed his *Kung Fu* skills, recited Chinese classic poems, and performed self-composed Chinese cross-talk with his foreign partner. Thanks to his excellent performance and skill, he won “Best Creative Award,” “Best Eloquence Award,” and the “Silver Award of Recitation of Classic Poem.” He also received the “Best All-Around King” for his talent show presentation of Chinese culture. Owing to his capability in Mandarin and understanding of Chinese culture, his Chinese friends called him “China-hand.”<sup>86</sup>

Tuition from African students has no doubt contributed to China's economy. Besides, their cultural knowledge about their home countries has contributed to multi-culturalism in China. Significant cultural exchanges are ongoing between African and Chinese students. Africans are learning the Chinese language, culture, and work ethic.<sup>87</sup> At the same time they are transmitting African culture, values, and skills.<sup>88</sup> Chinese students also learn about African culture on different occasions. There are various African culture clubs in Chinese cities, such as African dance, African music, and African drumming, which are the result of African students' contribution.<sup>89</sup> For example, Francis Tchiégué, a Cameroonian student, came to China for further study many years ago, having already received his Ph.D. in Cameroon. In China, he was attracted by the similarity between Cameroonian culture and Chinese culture and thus started to learn Chinese art, cultural skills, and cross-talk. He introduced African culture to the Chinese through various activities, and he even made a Chinese traditional costume from Cameroonian cloth. Francis was named "Envoy of Art Exchange between China and Africa." He is now trying his best to introduce African films to China.<sup>90</sup>

There is an annual International Cultural Festival in Peking University, and African students set up booths to proudly introduce their own culture to the Chinese audience.<sup>91</sup> My student Antoine Lokongo played the drum in the festival, and many Chinese students tried to learn this skill. In order to introduce African culture to ordinary Chinese, the Center for African Studies at Peking University and the *Half-Monthly Talks* co-run a special column entitled "Entry into African Culture." So far fifteen articles on different topics about African culture have been published, covering African world heritage, languages, films, the role of chiefs, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka, Ibn Battuta, Ibn Khaldun, the civilization of Ethiopia, etc.; some of them were written by African students.<sup>92</sup>

Chinese students in London serve as a bridge between Chinese culture and British culture and between Chinese diaspora in Britain and British society.<sup>93</sup> African students play the same role. They not only serve as a bridge between African culture and Chinese culture but also a bridge between the African community in China and Chinese who are interested in China-Africa bilateral relations.<sup>94</sup> Thanks to the effort of African students, Chinese have begun to get familiar with African values, ideas, dance, drumming, pictures, sculpture, etc. A good example is my former student Wang Hanjie who wrote her B.A. thesis on "The History and Spread of Djembe Drum in China." When asked why she chose this topic, she told me with a smile that she was a member of the Djembe Club at Peking University.<sup>95</sup> In Wuhan, an important metropolitan city in middle China where advertisements projecting western brands and tastes are very popular, in an interview with some local women about their tastes for African cultural products in China they found it *hen ku* (very cool). "Their choice showed that they were avant-garde, cosmopolitan and even modern in their fashion tastes and preferences. This African cultural influence in Wuhan has been facilitated in no small measure by the annual Wuhan University



Autumn International Cultural Festival.”<sup>96</sup> In other universities in Beijing, such as Minzu University of China, there is even a specific African Culture Day.

Although some African students choose to move to a third country after they finish their university studies in China, many decide to return home after graduation and make important contribution to their own countries.<sup>97</sup> In addition to their participation in different fields of work, some of them were put in important positions and assumed high posts in their government. As of 2005, for example, eight former recipients of Chinese government scholarships were holding ministerial positions or above in their respective home countries, eight were serving as ambassadors or consuls to China, six were working as secretaries to their countries’ presidents or prime ministers, three were secretary-generals of Associations for Friendship with China, not to mention many experts and elites in other fields.<sup>98</sup> Taking Peking University as example, its former student Mulatu Teshome Wirtu became Speaker of the Parliament in Ethiopia and now is the President. After her education, Lucy Njeri Manegene worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kenya. Rakotoarivony R.J.Manitra went back to Madagascar after her M.A. studies and now serves in the Madagascar Embassy in China. Mapulumo Lisebo Mosisili returned to Lesotho after being awarded an M.A. and is now Principal Secretary of the Labor Department in Lesotho.<sup>99</sup>

Another important aspect of African student experiences in China is that they develop Pan-African connections on their campuses. When answering the BBC’s question of why he came to China, Mikka Kabugo, a Ugandan in the African Students Association of Peking University, said he started to learn about China through a traditional Chinese medical doctor in Uganda. When he came to China, he found that Beijing was a global village where he could exchange ideas about African affairs with fellow African students from other countries. Such exchanges among African students helped broaden their global perspective. With fellow students in the same association, they examine African issues from a Pan-African perspective and think about how they can help their home continent.<sup>100</sup> What is more, through classes, debates, and various seminars held jointly by the African Students Association and the Center for African Studies at Peking University, they have learned a great deal about world affairs and the African situation, problems, and solutions.

Following their fellow students at Peking University, the Tsinghua University African students also formed an African Students Association on African Day, May 25, 2017, with members from twenty-seven African countries. During the opening ceremony, African students discussed various issues such as the thoughts of Presidents Julius Kambarage Nyerere and Nkrumah, heard a presentation by Dr. Chabalala, a student from the School of Public Health at Tsinghua University, about the continent’s contribution to knowledge development shared, and listened to Professor Tang Xiaoyang from the School of International Relations and Carnegie–Tsinghua Center talk about the structural change of China-Africa relations. Professor John Akokpari, Center for African Studies at Peking University, led a discussion



about opportunities for African students in the diaspora to become change makers in the development of their own countries. There are other African student associations as well, such as the General Union of African Students in China (GUASC) and the General Union of African Students in Tianjin (GUAST).<sup>101</sup>

Although most international students are not normally classified as immigrants, Bodomu correctly pointed out that the process of trading between Africa and China began with Africans who studied in China and remained there engage in business, and some ended up in trade with China.<sup>102</sup> African students are often the first to carry out business between their home country and China. Although they have little capital to begin with, yet a solid social and linguistic background is to their advantage. Gradually they became major trade intermediaries between Africa and China, thus contributing to the economic activities between both sides. Dr. Abdul, a veterinary official for the Niger Government, is a good example. He received a Niger-China Friendship Scholarship from the Chinese government. After finishing his degree, he decided to change his profession by opening a new occupation that was unfamiliar for him but more profitable. Since 2000, Dr. Abdul has established himself in Guangzhou to export medicine and related veterinary products to Africa and Europe, obtaining these products directly from factories in north China with which he is familiar due to his training in China. After this success, he resumed his connections with the Niger government. Now fluent in Mandarin, Dr. Abdul serves as honorary consul for Niger and is responsible for conveying the demands of Nigerian students with scholarships at Chinese universities to any Nigerian minister who visits Guangzhou. He describes his role as turning “brain drain” to “brain gain.” According to Bredeloup, this type of situation has resulted from two facts: the opportunities created by China’s rapid economic development and the change of or even devaluation of the position of civil servants in Africa. There are quite a few examples like Abdul, including Patrick from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Aziz from Mali, etc.<sup>103</sup> As indicated in other studies, some of the self-funded African students and even CGS holders in Guangdong and Zhejiang entered trading activities for the first time in their life and became settled businessmen while studying in China.<sup>104</sup> Now, many African students like Dr. Abdul now serve as a business and cultural bridge between Africa and China.

It is generally assumed that China has made every move in developing China-Africa relations while the African agency in shaping and influencing deepening relations with China is either paralyzed or non-existent. It is interesting that an African student researched African agency in the making of Africa-China relations. Adu Amoah, a former Ghanaian government official, later became a student in China and married a Chinese woman. As president of the Wuhan University African Students’ Representative Committee, he used his own observations and experiences to indicate how African students can be the master of their own lives in China. He described a lively African migrant community emerging in Wuhan, “which may potentially add to the makings of an African diaspora in

contemporary China” and that “this migrant African population is constituted fundamentally by students,” “comprising a dynamic fashion of those pursuing their course of study and those who stay on after graduation.” Taking Wuhan as an example, Amoah describes how the African presence in China influenced the reality of Chinese society in the form of fashion, inter-marriage, the exchange of language learning (Africans can explain their own worldview and experience in Mandarin while teach English to Chinese students), and through the management of African enterprises such as nightclubs run by Africans. “This is necessary to dispel the interpretation of Africa ‘under the sign of crisis’. . .in popular and academic discourses in general and specifically, the patronising idea of Africa as a clueless, pliant and suppliant partner in Africa-China relations.”<sup>105</sup>

African students have not only immensely improved cooperation between Africa and China and contributed a great deal to cultural exchange, but they also have promoted the internationalization of China’s universities.<sup>106</sup> For African students, there are definitely cultural shocks, homesickness, issues of social adaptation, psychological stress and frustrations, and difficulties and problem in daily life. Moreover, there are misunderstandings and prejudice from Chinese students and other international students as well as language barriers in the educational process. The English proficiency of Chinese teachers is not always good enough, which makes the learning process for African students more difficult.<sup>107</sup> In the future, there is thus much room for improvement.

## Conclusion

In terms of the subject of this article, international educational cooperation involves three parties: China, African countries, and African students. At this juncture we can ask certain questions to the Chinese government, African countries, and African students.

Regarding the Chinese dimension, it is important that Africa is not a totality but a continent of fifty-four countries, which have different conditions and needs.<sup>108</sup> African students are not a totality but different individuals. Besides scholarships, does the Chinese government provide adequate living conditions for African students with their different religions, lifestyles, and cuisine in a society that is unfamiliar to them? Are Chinese teachers sufficiently qualified in their skills for transmitting their knowledge to African students? Are there good measures for African students to introduce their own culture to the Chinese society? Is there sufficient opportunity for African students to exchange ideas and experiences with their Chinese counterparts? China certainly needs to better address these and other issues.

As for the African countries, they must remember that the African students returning home are those who love their own countries and want to contribute the knowledge learned in China to their homelands. Do African governments offer a good opportunity for African students to work at home after their graduation in China? Do they show enough concern and care for their academic studies and life in

China and create better conditions to facilitate their studies and daily living requirements? Do the embassies provide suitable channels of communication with their students in China, look after their interests, and respond effectively to their reasonable demands?<sup>109</sup> Better conditions should be prepared for those who would like to return home for service on behalf of their own countries.

For African students in China, we should remind them that they are studying with great dreams for themselves, great expectations from their countries, and great hopes from their families. Do they make good use of their scholarships or give their best efforts by studying hard to meet the challenges ahead and thus be fully prepared for their futures? Do they take every opportunity to introduce African culture or the culture of their own countries to ordinary Chinese or to fellow students from other countries? Do they learn from having had good experiences or from the lessons of development of other countries and thus make good provision for the opportunity to use them when they want to realize their dream upon their return home?

The June 28, 2017 report “China tops US and UK as destination for Anglophone African students” that appeared in *The Conversation* underscores the need for China, African countries, and African students to address vigorously questions such as those posed above. “According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics,” the report stated, “the US and UK host around 40,000 African students a year. China surpassed this number in 2014, making it the second most popular destination for African students studying abroad, after France which hosts just over 95,000 students.”<sup>110</sup> More and more African youth have come to study in China in recent decades, and their number is constantly increasing. They serve as carriers of African culture, mediators of bilateral trade and business, transmitters of social organizations and ways of life, and as a bridge between Africa and China. “It’s still too early to tell how these new dynamics might be shaping geopolitics on the continent.”<sup>111</sup> African students are definitely creating a new world. To integrate into a host society does not mean giving up one’s own culture. To build a linkage between two cultures and transform from an “enclave” to a “bridge” remains a difficult task but one that is worth trying and is workable.

### Postscript

On November 11, 2017 the first “Amanbo Cup” of Employment/Innovation Competition for African Students was held in Shenzhen. Jointly organized by the Center for African Studies of Peking University, the China-Africa International Business School of Zhejiang Normal University, and the Center for China-Africa Sustainable Development, the competition was sponsored by Shenzhen Right Net Tech Co. Ltd. and was aimed at training and development young African talent for innovation and entrepreneurship.<sup>112</sup> The six finalists were selected from more than two hundred submitted African student projects. Those of contestants from five universities involved health care (1<sup>st</sup> Award), biological pharmacy and ecological

farms (2<sup>nd</sup> Award), and water resources protection, recycling economy, and preschool education (3<sup>rd</sup> Award). The competition is significant in three aspects. It was the first time for an African student entrepreneurship competition in China, and it will definitely play an important role in the future of China-Africa cooperation. Secondly, it was initiated by and under the sponsorship of a private enterprise and presided over from the beginning to the end by civil organizations. Thirdly, it was the first joint efforts university-institution effort to promote China-Africa cooperation with a focus on the development of young African talent.

Coincidentally, on November 15th, the African Students' Job Fair was held in Beijing with the theme of "The Belt and Road Initiative and Prospects of African Youth Employment" and organized by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) and the University of International Business and Economics. This was a recruitment effort of Chinese companies specifically for African students. A total of sixty-six state-owned, local, and private Chinese enterprises provided nearly five hundred job opportunities on the African continent. African youth both in China and Africa showed a great interest in the fair, with nearly four hundred attending the job fair in person and about one thousand young Africans from fifty-two African countries submitted their resumes online in advance.<sup>113</sup> With the opportunity for Chinese enterprises to enter Africa under the special opportunity of capacity cooperation, the road for China-African cooperation will become broader and broader.

## Appendix

### Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms in African Countries (-Feb.2017)

Country	Confucius Institutes	Confucius Classrooms
<b>Angola</b>	Agostinho Neto University	
<b>Benin</b>	University of Abomey-Calavi	1
<b>Botswana</b>	University of Botswana	
<b>Burundi</b>	University of Burundi	
<b>Cameroon</b>	University of Yaounde II	1
<b>Cape Verde</b>	University of Cape Verde	
<b>Comoros</b>		University of Comoros
<b>The Republic of Congo</b>	Marien Ngouabi University	
<b>Côte d'Ivoire</b>	University of Felix Houphouette Boigny	
<b>Egypt</b>	Cairo University, Suez Canal University	3 at the Nile Television of Egypt
<b>Equatorial Guinea</b>	National University of Equatorial Guinea	
<b>Eritrea</b>	National Board for Higher	

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<b>Ethiopia</b>	Education of Eritrea Confucius Institute at TVET Institute of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa University	Mekelle University, Hawassa University (in total 5)
<b>Ghana</b>	University of Ghana, University of Cape Coast	
<b>Kenya</b>	University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Moi University	2 at CRI in Nairobi
<b>Lesotho</b>		Machabeng College International School
<b>Liberia</b>	University of Liberia	
<b>Madagascar</b>	Antananarivo University, University of Toamasina	1
<b>Malawi</b>	University of Malawi	
<b>Mali</b>		Lycee Askia Mohamed
<b>Mauritius</b>	University of Mauritius	
<b>Morocco</b>	University of Mohammed of V-Agdal, University Hassan II	
<b>Mozambique</b>	Eduardo Mondlane University	
<b>Namibia</b>	University of Namibia	
<b>Nigeria</b>	University of Lagos, Nnamdi Azikiwe University	1
<b>Rwanda</b>	College of Education, University of Rwanda	1
<b>Senegal</b>	Cheikh Anta Diop University, Dakar	
<b>Seychelles</b>	University of Seychelles	
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	University of Sierra Leone	
<b>South Africa</b>	University of Stellenbosch, University of Cape Town, Rhodes University, Durban University of Technology, University of Johannesburg	The Cape Academy of Mathematics, Science and Technology, Westerford High School, Chinese Culture and International Exchange Center (in total 5)
<b>Sudan</b>	University of Khartoum	
<b>Tanzania</b>	University of Dodoma, University of Dar es Salaam	Zanzibar Journalism and Mass Media College of Tanzania

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<b>Togo</b>	University of Lome	
<b>Tunisia</b>		CRI in Sfax
<b>Uganda</b>	Makerere University	
<b>Zambia</b>	University of Zambia	2
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	University of Zimbabwe	
<b>Total</b>	48 Confucius Institutes	27 Confucius Classrooms

## Notes

\* I would like to thank Prof. Lin Fengmin, Dr. Xu Liang, Liu Qinglong, and Li Zhen for their help.

1 Li 2014.

2 Li Anshan 2015a, 2015b.

3 For African trading communities see Bertonecello and Bredeloup 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2009; Bredeloup and Pliez 2009; Bodomo 2007, 2012; Ditgen 2010; Cissé 2013. For their economic activities in Guangzhou see Bodomo 2007, 2010; Lyons, et al. 2008, 2012, 2013; Li et al. 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2012; Li and Du 2012a, 2012b; Bodomo and Ma 2010; Diederich 2010; Müller 2011; Haugen 2012; Bredeloup 2012. For Yiwu see Le Bail 2009; Bertonecello, Bredeloup and Pliez 2009; Osnos 2009; Pliez 2010; Bodomo and Ma 2010 2012; Ma 2012.

4 For Hong Kong, see Bodomo 2007, 2009, 2012; Ho 2012; Mathews 2011; Mathews and Yang 2012. For Macau, see Morais 2009; Bodomo 2012; Bodomo and Silva 2012.

5 Regarding living conditions, social practices, and religious activities see Li et al. 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2011; Li and Du 2012a, 2012b; Bertonecello and Bredeloup 2009; Li et al. 2008; Bodomo 2009, 2010; Xu 2009; Yang 2011; Müller 2011; Haugen, 2013b. For barriers, etc., see Bredeloup 2007; Li and Du, 2009; Xu 2009; Osnos 2009; Morais 2009; Bodomo, 2010; Haugen, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Marfaing and Thiel 2014; Cissé 2013.

7 Bodomo 2016.

8 Hevi 1963.

9 Larkin 1971.

10 Liu 2013; Cheng 2014.

11 Zhang 1999; Monson 2009; Liu and Monson 2011.

12 Gillespie 2001.

13 Seidelman 1989; Sautman 1994; Sullivan 1994; Li and Liu 2013.

14 China Africa Education Cooperation Group, 2005, hereafter CAECG.

15 Li and Li 2006; Li 2013; China Africa Project 2013.

16 Liu 2017.

17 Hashim, et al. 2003; Hashim and Yang 2003.

18 Disima 2004.

19 See Yi and Xiong 2013 and Gong 2014 for cultural adaptation, Long and Xiong 2014 regarding cultural differences and their impact, and Ye Shuai 2011 on different concepts of time and family.

20 Ketema et al. 2009; King 2012; Haugen 2013a.



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- 22 Cheng 2012; Zheng 2012, 2013a, 2013b; An et al. 2014.
- 23 Song 2011; Lin and Ren 2010.
- 24 Amoah 2012; Lokongo 2012.
- 25 Dong and Chapman 2008.
- 26 Li and Liu 2013; Niu 2016; Liu 2017.
- 27 Haugen 2013a, p. 331.
- 28 Li 2014.
- 29 Li 2006; He 2007; Liu 2017.
- 30 Jiang and Guo 2001, p. 524.
- 31 Li 2006; Jiang and Guo 2001, p. 530.
- 32 China Africa Education Cooperation Group 2005, pp. 14-17.
- 33 Hevi 1963.
- 34 Cheng 2014.
- 35 Li 2011.
- 36 Monson 2009.
- 37 CAECG 2005.
- 38 Liu and Monson 2011.
- 39 Chen and Xie 2010.
- 40 China Africa Education Cooperation Group 2005.
- 41 Li and Liu 2013.
- 42 Sautman 1994; Sullivan 1994.
- 43 China Africa Education Cooperation Group 2005, p. 16.
- 44 China Education Yearbook 2003, p. 343.
- 45 China Education Yearbook 2010, p. 440.
- 46 China Education Yearbook 2009, p. 440.
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- 52 Li and Liu 2013. For specific cases, see Liu 2017, pp. 167-71.
- 53 *The Conversation* 2017.
- 54 Hu 2005.
- 55 Li Anshan et al. 2012, pp. 58-60.
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- 63 According to Johns Hopkins University Professor of Development Studies Deborah Brautigam (Brautigam 2009, p. 308), “Where the West regularly changes its development advice, programs, and approach in Africa...China does not claim it knows what Africa must do to develop. China has argued that it was wrong to impose political and economic conditionality in exchange for aid, and that countries should be free to find their own pathway out of poverty. Mainstream economists in the West today are also questioning the value of many of the conditions imposed on aid over the past few decades.”
- 64 ACET 2009.
- 65 Akomolafe 2006, p. 49.
- 66 Li 2013a.
- 67 China Education Yearbook 2006.
- 68 Liu 2017.
69. Cohen (1991) wrote that “I learned of the case of a Chinese construction company building a road in Benin using prison labour. 70 to 75 percent of the construction workers were known to be prisoners ..... The company was the Jiangsu

- Construction Company.....The company was able to underbid all its competitors by a wide margin because its labor costs were so cheap." There was no source and no explanation. Since she is a former U.S. top official, the rumor of "China's prison labor" spread all over the world (Yan and Sautman, 2012, 2017).
- 70 Yan and Sautman 2012, 2017.
- 71 Redvers 2012.
- 72 Situated in a spot about 30km outside Angola's capital, Luanda, Nova Cidade de Kilamba is a newly-built mixed residential project of 750 eight-storey apartment buildings for half-million people with a dozen schools and more than 100 retail units, all sold out soon after its finish. To report an unfinished residential project as "no residents" and the area as "ghost town" before it opens for sale is really a biased view, if not a malicious slander. I visited the area in February 2016 and it was prosperous. At a China-Africa Media Cooperation seminar held at Remin University on April 26, 2017, I exchanged ideas with Venancio Rodrigue, a reporter of Angola, who verified that BBC's report is a twisted story.
- 73 Several African students told me about their deep impression when they saw a different China in TV during the Olympic Games in 2008.
- 74 Pilling 2017.
- 75 Liu 2008.
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- 77 "Africans learning Chinese can boost cooperation channels," March 23, 2015, CCTV.com.  
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- 79 "China's government scholarship for international students raised," January 22, 2015.  
<http://old.moe.gov.cn//publicfiles/business/htmlfiles/moe/s5147/201501/183255.html>
- 80 King 2013; Tsui 2016.
- 81 Bodomo 2011, p. 29.
- 82 "EOL and CUCAS jointly published 2014 Report of International Students in China." <http://www.eol.cn/html/lhlx/content.html>. Accessed June 25 2017.
- 83 Regarding whether there is racism in China, views are different. A Ghanaian student talked about her experience in China, saying, "Others often ask me if I found Chinese to be racist, and whether their treatment of me as a spectacle—taking pictures, touching my hair, rubbing my skin, staring at me—does not indicate a racist attitude. I respond that I find them curious. Many of the experiences I had were borne of ignorance, not racism. Despite always being identified as 'black' and 'African', I never felt discriminated against or antagonized, but rather treated with warmth and friendliness. Because I spoke Mandarin, I could often understand what people said about me, and they were rarely disparaging or maligning." (Baitie 2013).
- 84 Disma 2004.

- 85 Hashim, et al. 2003.
- 86 Yang, et al. 2016.
- 87 King 2013.
- 88 Amoah 2013.
- 89 Shikwati 2012.
- 90 “Cameroonian Tchiégué’s life in China”,  
<http://tv.cntv.cn/video/C10616/3ce5c25b1bfc476095406544b5971b8a>. Accessed  
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- 91 “African student’s speech at International Festival in Peking University”, October  
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- 92 Shikwati 2012; Li 2015.
- 93 Wu Bing 2015, 2016.
- 94 Bredeloup 2014.
- 95 Wang 2013.
- 96 Amoah 2012, p. 108.
- 97 Bodomo 2011; Li and Liu 2013.
- 98 China Africa Education Cooperation Group 2005, pp. 20-21.
- 99 Lisebo Kikine to Li Anshan, Tue, 12 Feb 2013 00:18:24 +0800 (CST) (Li, 2013b).
- 100 BBC World Service Newday, “Why are African students flocking to Chinese  
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- 101 King 2013.
- 102 Bodomo 2013; Haugen 2013.
- 103 Bredeloup 2014.
- 104 Bodomo 2012; Amoah 2013; Haugen 2013.
- 105 Amoah 2012, p. 110.
- 106 Liu 2017.
- 107 Hashim et al. 2003.
- 108 Apithy 2013.
- 109 I supervised several Ph.D. students from Africa. Some of them came across  
 difficulties in finding a decent job after return. An absurd case is that one of them  
 was even asked to translate his dissertation, which was written in Chinese, into  
 French in order to prove his academic capability.
- 110 *The Conversation* 2017.
- 111 Ibid.
- 112 [http://www.chinafrica.cn/chinese/focus/201711/t20171114\\_800109951.html](http://www.chinafrica.cn/chinese/focus/201711/t20171114_800109951.html).
- 113 <http://ge.cri.cn/20171116/c5c7ee5f-147e-a879-c315-8114acae8e4c.html>.

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