



Dependence not debt-trap diplomacy

Pádraig Carmody

To cite this article: Pádraig Carmody (2020) Dependence not debt-trap diplomacy, Area Development and Policy, 5:1, 23-31, DOI: [10.1080/23792949.2019.1702471](https://doi.org/10.1080/23792949.2019.1702471)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23792949.2019.1702471>



Published online: 05 Jan 2020.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 521



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 2 View citing articles [↗](#)

COMMENTARY



Dependence not debt-trap diplomacy

Pádraig Carmody 

ABSTRACT

Every few years in the West – in the media and in political circles – there is a moral panic about the rise of China. Africa often plays a central role in this: as a supposedly predatory China is counterposed against representations of hapless and powerless African victims. As Deborah Bräutigam notes in her paper, this currently takes the form of the meme of ‘debt-trap diplomacy’, which is largely unjustified. However, intensified relations of dependence are being established between China and Africa, and increasing levels of debt are both a vector and an outcome of this, which in some instance may result in a debt trap. The construction of a debt trap implies intentionality, but while this may not be the case, development outcomes may include excessive overseas borrowing.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 1 November 2019; Accepted 4 December 2019

KEYWORDS

China, debt, dependence, Africa

JEL

F34, N17, N25

摘要

依赖不是债务陷阱外交。《Area Development and Policy》。每隔几年，西方媒体和政治界就会对中国的崛起产生道德恐慌，非洲在这些问题上往往起到核心作用。作为一个被认为是掠夺性的国家，中国反对那些不幸和无能为力的非洲受害者的表现。正如布劳蒂加姆教授在其论文中所指出的，目前这种做法采取了‘债务陷阱外交’的文化形式，这在很大程度上是不合理的。然而，中非之间日益加剧的相互依存的关系，以及不断上升债务水平既是这种依赖的载体，也是这种依赖的结果，在某些情况下可能会导致债务陷阱。债务陷阱的构建隐含着某种意图，但事实并非如此，这种情况的发展结果可能包括过度的海外借贷。


关键词

中国, 债务, 依赖, 非洲

RESUMEN

Dependencia en vez de diplomacia de la trampa del endeudamiento. *Area Development and Policy*. Cada pocos años se desata un pánico moral sobre el auge de China en los círculos mediáticos y políticos occidentales. África desempeña con frecuencia un papel fundamental en este contexto; China como

CONTACT

(Corresponding author)  carmodyp@tcd.ie

Department of Geography, Trinity College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland; and School of Tourism and Hospitality, University of Johannesburg, Johannesburg, South Africa.

supuesto depredador se contraponen a las representaciones de víctimas africanas desafortunadas e indefensas. Tal como la profesora Deborah Bräutigam destaca en su artículo, esto ahora adopta la forma del meme ‘diplomacia de la trampa del endeudamiento’, que en gran medida es injustificado. Sin embargo, se están estableciendo relaciones más intensas de dependencia entre China y África, y los mayores niveles de deuda constituyen tanto un vector como un resultado de esto, lo que en algunos casos puede acabar en una trampa de endeudamiento. La construcción de una trampa de endeudamiento implica una intencionalidad, pero aunque esto no sea el caso, el resultado del desarrollo puede incluir un excesivo préstamo del extranjero.

PALABRAS CLAVE

China, deuda, dependencia, África

АННОТАЦИЯ

Зависимость, а не дипломатия долговой ловушки. *Area Development and Policy*. Каждые несколько лет на Западе – в средствах массовой информации и в политических кругах – поднимается паника по поводу возрождения Китая. Африка часто играет центральную роль в соответствующих дискуссиях – образ хищнического (якобы) Китая противопоставляется образу несчастных и бессильных африканских жертв. Как отмечает профессор Брэтигам в своей статье, в настоящее время это принимает форму мема ‘диplomатия долговой ловушки’, что в значительной степени неоправданно. Однако между Китаем и Африкой устанавливаются более тесные отношения зависимости, и рост уровня задолженности является как вектором, так и результатом этого, что в некоторых случаях может привести к возникновению долговой ловушки. Создание долговой ловушки подразумевает преднамеренность, но хотя это может быть и не так, последствия развития могут включать чрезмерные зарубежные заимствования.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА

Китай, Долг, Зависимость, Африка

INTRODUCTION

Every few years in the West – in the media and in political circles – there is a moral panic about the rise of China. Africa often plays a central role in this: as a supposedly predatory China is counterposed against representations of hapless and powerless African victims. For example, at the launch of the new US strategy for Africa in 2018, then-National Security Advisor John Bolton argued that:

China uses bribes, opaque agreements, and the strategic use of debt to hold states in Africa captive to Beijing’s wishes and demands. Its investment ventures are riddled with corruption, and do not meet the same environmental or ethical standards as U.S. developmental programs. (White House, 2018)

US Vice-President Mike Pence has spoken of China’s so-called ‘debt-trap diplomacy’ (Haas, 2018), and a previous moral panic in the United States focused on China’s so-called ‘rogue aid’ (Naím, 2007). Peter Navarro, one of President Donald Trump’s main economic advisors and Director of the White House National Trade Council, devotes considerable attention to Africa in his books to show the purportedly malign influence of China on the continent (Navarro, 2007; Navarro & Autry, 2011). What is the reality? Is China engaged in programmes of rogue aid and debt-trap diplomacy to create ‘vassal states’, or are such discourses

more accurately seen as reflecting a racialized fear of the West being supplanted or surpassed as the world's dominant power centre, or are there elements of truth in both discourses?

The evidence for so-called debt-trap diplomacy is largely based on the case of Hambantota port in Sri Lanka, which was uneconomic as Deborah Bräutigam notes. Consequently, Sri Lanka gave the majority share of the port on a 99-year lease to the state-owned China Merchants Port Holdings Company in exchange for US\$1.12 billion. US Vice-President Pence subsequently claimed that Zambia might have to hand over its main international airport in Lusaka in a potential rerun of the Sri Lankan case, but this was subsequently denied and disputed by the Zambian government. However, previously when the government there wanted to switch from analogue to digital television, a Chinese company was controversially brought in in a joint venture in order to facilitate this process (DW, 2019). Furthermore, when negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a loan failed in 2018, Zambian President Lungu turned to China, and this loan is securitized against the national power company (Flint & Waddoups, 2019). It has also been reported that the port of Mombasa in Kenya would have to be given to China if Kenya defaulted on its debt for the newly built Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) (Niba, 2019).

The cases of Hambantota and the SGR raise an interesting set of questions. Within geography there is a debate about the extent to which scholars can generalize from critical or strategic case studies (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Does this mean we should or should not be concerned about China's lending practices globally? This suggests several important additional questions. The first is around the intentionality of China's international lending. Is China attempting to entrap countries in debt?

DEBT AND INTENTIONALITY

As Bräutigam suggests, this appears not to be the case, in general, although discerning intentionality is difficult. According to Rana Mitter of Oxford University (personal communication, 24 March 2019), deliberately trying to entrap countries in debt would run the danger of generating a backlash, both amongst populations and, over time, politicians, who are to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the context, dependent on public support. However, while this might be true globally, does the structural power and importance of China as a market now insulate it from backlash in particular cases? For example, Michael Sata, who ran on an explicitly anti-Chinese platform for the Presidency of Zambia, had the Chinese ambassador as his first official visitor to State House after his inauguration (Carmody, 2016). Debt entrapment would also discredit the policy of so-called non-interference espoused in the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, and furthermore China sometimes conditions its loans, as in the case of Angola, on having an IMF programme in place (Lwanda, 2019).

There is also, however, the question as to whether China's foreign economic policy is substantially and substantively geographically differentiated? In a paper written about 10 years ago, Ian Taylor and I argued that China seeks to achieve flexible hegemony by working with the grain through existing state-society formations to achieve resource, market and investment access and geopolitical support (Carmody & Taylor, 2010). Thus, it is possible that certain projects have been targeted for support for geostrategic reasons, even if they do not make short-term economic sense, either for China or for the countries in which they are located. For example, the port at Hambantota only had relatively few ships call on it in the years before it was effectively taken over (cf. Bräutigam, *in press*). However, it is close to one of the world's most important shipping routes in the Indian Ocean, and in 2016 China passed a law that forces all Chinese industries involved in international transportation to provide aid and supplies to its navy if needed (Maçães, 2018). Fears that China is developing 'debt colonies' in the Pacific in order to increase its military footprint have also been expressed (Lagan, 2018),

although the nomenclature may be inappropriate, as it suggests that debt is the primary motivation. Given China's increasing global economic footprint and its desire to assert autonomy, some securitization of its overseas interests is perhaps inevitable.

Many scholars have noted that there is no strict separation, when we are talking about China and its state-owned corporations, between territorial and non-territorial logics of power. Ching Kwan Lee (Lee, 2017) refers to the logic of 'expansive accumulation' in this respect, where the bigger and longer term economic picture plays a part in investment decisions by Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs). Thus, investment appraisals may be driven, partially, by geostrategic and longer term geoeconomic calculations, such as securing natural resource supplies. Indeed, as Dinny McMahon (McMahon, 2018) has extensively documented, many SOEs in China are unprofitable but are kept operational for strategic reasons, particularly social stability. A strategic logic would appear to be being extrapolated to the construction of megaprojects overseas through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and there is a strategic-relational coupling of the interests of Chinese and African political elites.

CHINESE-FINANCED PROJECTS AND AFRICAN DEBTS

As will be elaborated in more detail below, there are a variety of benefits to China's political class of such overseas projects, particularly the domestic maintenance of their rule. For African political elites there are also short-term benefits. While some projects, such as the SGR in Kenya, are loss-making, they generate short-term economic growth, improved infrastructure, which may enhance business conditions and also perhaps opportunities for contracts and corruption. There have been a variety of scandals in relation to the SGR, including some involving Chinese managers of the railway diverting ticket revenues, and another involving land purchases for the railway and the managing director of the Kenya Railways Corporation (Malalo, 2018).

In its first year of the SGR, it registered losses of US\$100 million (Standard, 2018, cited in Taylor, 2019) and trucking companies are estimated to have lost hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue, with several thousand workers being retrenched (Olingo, 2018, cited in Taylor, 2019). Politicians' time horizons in most cases are short term, and if projects fail after their tenures are completed, there may be a moral hazard attached to such investments.¹ The Zambian Minister of Transport and Communication in 2019 talked about China's 'friendly finance' (Xinhua, 2019). Thus, African political elites are not hapless or powerless in such financing arrangements, but active shapers, participants and beneficiaries from them. It was reported in March 2019 that Kenya was seeking another multi-billion-dollar loan from China to extend the SGR to Uganda, despite difficulties with previous phases and the country's rapidly deteriorating debt profile (Mwangi, 2019). This has not, however, been approved, after President Xi warned against the construction of 'vanity' projects in Africa. Consequently, Uganda is now refurbishing its century-old railway network (Biryabarema, 2019).

While there are countless and sometimes much-needed Chinese financed infrastructure projects being built, or already operational, across Africa, they oftentimes contribute to increased and potentially unsustainable debt levels, even if the majority of debt in most countries is not owed to China (Brautigam, 2019). Many observers and institutions have cautioned against rising levels of unsustainable debt across much of the continent after substantial relief had been achieved through the Highly Indebted Poor Country and Multilateral Debt Relief Initiatives. For example, Djibouti, where China has established its first ever overseas military base, increased its external public debt from 50% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2015 to 91% in 2017 (Maçães, 2018; Trading Economics, 2019, cited in Taylor, 2019). Furthermore, it is reported that Chinese finance accounts for 77% of the country's debt (Dahir, 2019) and that it was under pressure from China that the country evicted Dubai Ports (DP) World from the operation of the port next door to its military base

in 2018 (cf. Bräutigam, *in press*, for more details). DP World is suing the state-owned China Merchants Company for ‘bypassing its concession agreement with Djibouti and acquiring an indirect shareholding in the Doraleh terminal’ (Dahir, 2019, p. 3). Some have suggested this is part of a geopolitical and economic competition to dominate trade through the Red Sea. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is now building military bases in Eritrea and Somaliland.

Another country that has received substantial attention in the literature in relation to its increasing indebtedness is Zambia, but China ‘only’ owns a quarter of the country’s external debt (Laterza & Mususa, 2018), whereas a major source of concern is that interest rates on its Eurobonds have recently hit 17%. Some have argued that neoliberal policies forced on Zambia by the World Bank and IMF, which created a dependence on international finance, are also to blame for its looming debt trap, even as Chinese financing was one of the factors that reduced Western power in the country (Kragelund, 2019). Thus, China did not change the structural context and is implicated in rapid debt accumulation (Phillips, 2019). Bräutigam (*in press*) argues that China looks to find ways to do business in places that are not creditworthy, through securing loans against resources, for example. However, it has also given substantial loans to countries with a dubious ability to repay, securitizing them against other assets and, potentially, giving itself very substantial leverage if the loans go into default. ‘China doesn’t want to reduce bilateral credit to African countries because that is how it gets influence’ (interview with Christopher Wood, Johannesburg, 13 August 2014).

THE DRIVERS OF CHINESE FOREIGN ECONOMIC POLICY

China’s foreign economic and political policies are driven primarily by that country’s, or at least its ruling parties’, interests, which could be argued to partially but incompletely correspond. According to Andrew Polk (Polk, 2018, quoted in Maçães, 2018, p. 89):

‘The return on investment for a port in Sri Lanka or a rail line in Thailand matters less to Chinese officials than the ability to push participating countries to adopt Chinese standards on everything from construction to finance to data management’ and to the extent that Chinese standards supplant Western ones, it will represent a direct threat to the profitability of non-Chinese companies.

This is one aspect of the geoeconomic competition between China and primarily Western companies – a smokeless war for the Global North (Horner & Carmody, 2020), which nonetheless involves arrests and potentially executions (Buckley & Porter, 2019). Who will control the heartland technology of 5G, for example, which is 100 times faster than 4G technology and will be essential to the operation of so-called smart cities and self-drive vehicles? The Chinese telecoms company Huawei filed the most patents with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in 2018 – more than 5000 (CGTN, 2019), and this was the first year in history that companies from Asia filed more patents with the WIPO than those from the rest of the world combined.

Nonetheless, the Chinese economy is suffering from extensive over-capacity and over-accumulation. This poses a challenge to Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rule in that country which is partly dependent on maintaining an authoritarian social contract where widespread acquiescence to this form of governance is dependent on continuing rapid economic growth and a generalized improvement in living standards. The recent slowdown in economic growth in China has resulted in a resort to increased authoritarianism (Economy, 2019). The BRI infrastructural initiative announced by President Xi in 2013 must be seen in that light, although there are also related geopolitical motivations. It presents itself as a spatial fix to the problems of overaccumulation domestically through transnational infrastructure investment which creates new markets for Chinese products and

facilitates, and may speed their time to market and allow efficient offshoring of more labour-intensive elements of China-centred global production networks. Through extensive loans and the relations of dependence they establish, China is developing its geopolitical, economic, infrastructural and standards setting power, which are interrelated. Given its political dimensions and the important role which SOEs play in it, the BRI is perhaps best conceived of as a politico-spatial fix to problems of over-investment and accumulation and the imperative of maintaining legitimacy domestically for the CCP (cf. Carmody, *in press*).

CONCLUSIONS

China may not be intentionally engaging in debt-trap diplomacy, but whether intentionality is making a difference to outcomes is a matter of debate. As Flint and Zhu (2019, p. 6) argue:

There is no need to conjure up a conspiracy theory to explain the connection between the agency of business, institutions such as the AIIB [Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank], and China's national strategy. Once connectivity is identified as a need for firms to maximise profits then geopolitical outcomes will result. Specifically, China's relative increase in power in Asia through regional integration will lead to a relative reduction in US hegemony.

Flowing on from that, China is a highly and increasingly authoritarian state and is not afraid of punishing countries that defy it by using its economic and geopolitical power. For example, in 2016 it closed a key border crossing with Mongolia after a visit by the Dalai Lama to that country. It is also reportedly involved in intensive surveillance and disciplining of its own population through the 'Study the Great Nation' mobile phone application, 're-education' centres in Xinjiang, and even the hacking of the African Union's computer systems (Abegunrin & Manyeruke, 2020).

While the meme of debt-trap diplomacy is misplaced and is partly driven by racialized fears of Western displacement, it also has some grounding in reality given growing African dependence on China (Taylor, 2014) and its increasing 'commodity power' around the world (Carmody, 2017). In 2016, Africa exported only 19.7% of the value of it imports from China to that country, with the resultant trade deficit having to be financed (calculated from Dodd, 2019). However, this is a feature of uneven capitalist development, rather than something unique to China; although it does have distinctive features by virtue of its mixed economy model.

Perhaps periodic attachment to memes such as 'rogue aid' and 'debt-trap' diplomacy reflect, as the Chinese proverb would have it 'crossing the sea in full view' or the strategy of hiding in plain sight (Pillsbury, 2014). Attacking China or Chinese companies for engaging in commercial transactions, as do Western companies, would be self-evidently hypocritical for Western governments. However, deviance from Western norms around commerce or aid present a point of attachment for arguments against Chinese financing, which is in some instances problematic. As Lake (2017) notes, the CCP is Leninist in orientation, thereby empowering it 'or China as a whole to act on behalf of subordinate peoples without their consent or even acquiescence'. However, disentangling fact from fiction and fear from finance is a key task for further academic research, to which Bräutigam is making a major contribution.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to Ian Taylor, Peter Kragelund and Michael Dunford for comments made on an earlier version of this paper. Any errors of fact or interpretation are the author's alone.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

NOTE

1. Note, however, that some projects now designated as part of the BRI, such as the SGR in Kenya, were planned by African governments beforehand and only incorporated into the broader umbrella project subsequently (Anthony, 2020).

REFERENCES

- Abegunrin, O., & Manyeruke, C. (2020). *China's power in Africa: A new global order*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Anthony, R. (2020). Scale and agency in China's Belt and Road Initiative: The case of Kenya. In R. Anthony & U. Ruppert (Eds.), *Reconfiguring transregionalism in the global south: African–Asian encounters*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Biryabarema, E. (2019). Uganda revamps century old rail network after China delays funding. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-uganda-railways/uganda-revamps-century-old-rail-network-after-china-delays-funding-idUSKBN1XG1T3>
- Brautigam, D. (2019). Chinese loans and African structural transformation. In A. Oqubay & J. Lin (Eds.), *China–Africa and an economic transformation* (pp. 129–146). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brautigam, D. (in press). A critical look at Chinese 'debt-trap diplomacy': The rise of a meme. *Area Development and Policy*.
- Buckley, C., & Porter, C. (2019, January 1). Canadian sentenced to death in China for drug smuggling will appeal. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/16/world/asia/china-canada-schellenberg-death.html>
- Carmody, P. (2016). *The new scramble for Africa* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Polity.
- Carmody, P. (2017). The geopolitics and economics of BRICS' resource and market access in Southern Africa: Aiding development or creating dependency? *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 43(5), 863–877.
- Carmody, P., & Taylor, I. (2010). Flexigemony and force in China's resource diplomacy in Africa: Sudan and Zambia compared. *Geopolitics*, 15(3), 496–515.
- Carmody, P. (in press). Is China better than other outside powers in fostering African economic transformation? In W. Moseley & K. Otiso (Eds.), *Under the palaver tree: Debating enduring and contemporary African issues*. London: Routledge.
- CGTN (China Global Television Network). (2019). Huawei files the most patents as a company in 2018. Retrieved from <https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d3d514e3159444e33457a6333566d54/index.html>
- Dahir, A. L. (2019). A legal tussle over a strategic African port sets up a challenge for China's Belt and Road plan. *Quartz Africa*. Retrieved from <https://qz.com/africa/1560998/djibouti-dp-world-port-case-challenges-chinas-belt-and-road/>
- Dodd, N. (2019). BRICS' trade with Africa: Long live the new king, just like the old king. In J. van der Merwe, P. Bond, & N. Dodd (Eds.), *BRICS and resistance in Africa: Contention, assimilation and co-optation* (pp. 73–96). London: Zed Books.
- DW. (2019). China's contentious stake in Zambia's broadcast media. Retrieved from <https://www.dw.com/en/chinas-contentious-stake-in-zambias-broadcast-media/a-49492207>
- Economy, E. (2019). *The third revolution: Xi Jinping and the new Chinese state*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Flint, C., & Waddoups, M. (2019). South–South cooperation or core–periphery contention? Ghanaian and Zambian perceptions of economic relations with China. *Geopolitics*, 1–30. doi:10.1080/14650045.2019.1659781

- Flint, C., & Zhu, C. (2019). The geopolitics of connectivity, cooperation, and hegemonic competition: The Belt and Road Initiative. *Geoforum*, 99, 95–101.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12, 219–245.
- Haas, R. (2018). Who was Mike Pence really addressing in his speech on China? Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/10/04/who-was-mike-pence-really-addressing-in-his-speech-on-china/>
- Horner, R., & Carmody, P. (2020). Global North/South. In A. Kobayashi (Ed.), *The international encyclopedia of geography: People, the earth, environment, and technology*. London: Elsevier.
- Kragelund, P. (2019). *South–South development*. London: Routledge.
- Lagan, B. (2018, August 16). Fears over Pacific ‘debt colonies’ as Tonga struggles to repay China. *The Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/australia-fears-chinese-influence-in-pacific-as-tonga-admits-debt-distress-mxzc9j9fr>
- Lake, D. A. (2017). Domination, authority, and the forms of Chinese power. *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 10(4), 357–382.
- Laterza, V., & Mususa, P. (2018). Is China really to blame for Zambia’s debt problems? *Aljazeera*. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/china-blame-zambia-debt-problems-181009140625090.html>
- Lee, C. K. (2017). *The specter of global China: Politics, labor, and foreign investment in Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lwanda, G. (2019). China is not trying to catch Africa in a debt trap. Retrieved from <https://www.caixinglobal.com/2019-02-25/opinion-china-is-not-trying-to-catch-africa-in-a-debt-trap-101383289.html>
- Maçães, B. (2018). *Belt and road: A Chinese world order*. London: Hurst.
- Malalo, H. (2018). Kenya arrests two top officials for suspected corruption over new \$3 billion railway. Retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-kenya-corruption-railway/kenya-arrests-two-top-officials-for-suspected-corruption-over-new-3-billion-railway-idUSKBN1KW07L>
- McMahon, D. (2018). *China’s great wall of debt: Shadow banks, ghost cities, massive loans, and the end of the Chinese miracle*. London: Little, Brown.
- Mwangi, V. (2019). Kenya seeks sh368 billion loan from China to extend SGR, despite losses. Retrieved from <https://sokodirectory.com/2019/03/kenya-seeks-sh368-billion-loan-from-china-to-extend-sgr-despite-losses/>
- Naím, M. (2007). Help not wanted. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/15/opinion/15naim.html>
- Navarro, P. (2007). *The coming China wars: Where they will be fought and how they will be won*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: FT Press.
- Navarro, P., & Autry, G. (2011). *Death by China: Confronting the dragon—A global call to action*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall; London: Pearson Education [distributor].
- Niba, W. (2019). Will Kenya’s Mombasa port be taken over by the Chinese? Retrieved from <http://en.rfi.fr/africa/20190114-kenya-mombasa-port-china-debt-default>
- Olingo, A. (2018, October 30) The good, the bad and the ugly of Kenya’s SGR cargo, *East African* (Nairobi). Retrieved from <https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/business/Thegood-the-bad-and-the-ugly-of-Kenya-SGR-cargo-/2560-4827106-vdl4b4z/index.html>
- Phillips, J. (2019). Who’s in charge of Sino-African resource politics? Situating African state agency in Ghana. *African Affairs*, 118(470), 101–124.
- Pillsbury, M. (2014). *The hundred-year marathon: China’s secret strategy to replace America as the global superpower*. New York: Henry Holt.
- Polk, A. (2018, May 6). China is quietly setting global standards. *Bloomberg*. Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/opinion/articles/2018-05-06/china-is-quietly-setting-global-standards>
- Standard (Nairobi). (2018). Kenya’s Chinese-funded SGR makes losses’ July 19. Retrieved from <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001288644/sgr-makes-losses>
- Taylor, I. (2014). *Africa rising?: BRICS – diversifying dependency*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Taylor, I. (2019). Africa’s place in the Belt and Road Initiative: A new route to dependency? *mimeo*.

- Trading Economics. (2019). Country list government debt to GDP: Africa. Retrieved from <https://tradingeconomics.com/country-list/government-debt-to-gdp?continent=africa>
- White House. (2018, December 13). Remarks by National Security Advisor Ambassador John R. Bolton on the Trump administration's new Africa strategy, *The White House*. Retrieved from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-national-security-advisor-ambassador-john-r-bolton-trump-administrations-new-africa-strategy/>
- Xinhua. (2019). Zambian minister says BRI affords Africa access to friendly financing, technology. *Belt and Road Portal*. Retrieved from <https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/ghsl/wksl/83800.htm>