CHAPTER 4
Africa and China

Introduction
We can deduce from the discussions in the previous chapters that the manifestation of globalization is not always intended to benefit all global players, but rather to meet the desired needs of the actors, as each seeks to advance its own agenda to perpetrate and perpetuate its advantage over the other global players. Hence, the ensuing scramble for competitive advantage over the global distribution of opportunity and resources, even by those who claim to be in favour of globalization, “had accepted the [African] continent’s marginalization rather unscrupulously,”¹ simply because the end justifies the means, given that the aims of gaining the global(ized) advantage overrides or supersedes any concerns over Africa’s marginalization. Hence the African continent has experienced exploitation from the globalized and competitive scramble for resources.

While a negative precedent of globalization, such as the marginalization of the African continent, was being acknowledged as a matter of concern at the 2007 World Economic Forum (WEF), new and emerging competitors² were taking advantage of the emerging opportunities to compete in the same global space, and advance their own advantage at the expense of the African continent, thereby intensifying the contested territory status of the marginalized African “backyard.”³ China is in the fray with a number of guises: as (1) a superpower; (2) a comrade to developing countries; and (3) a candidate that carries the strategic imprint to disregard corruption, bad governance, and human rights violations by African partners—the very opposite of the mantra for the Western franchise. China does not have a brilliant human rights record, and furthermore has been rated 78th out of 178 on the 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index.⁴
The Policy and Diplomatic Route

Consequently, China’s inroads into the African trade and political arena, reinforced by the establishment in 2000 of the China-Africa Cooperation Forum (CACF), compete with equivalent Western structures such as EPAs with EU member states, and the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) with the United States, even if the United States and the EU do not always share the same policy interests when it comes to dealing with Africa. For example, the thrust of U.S. agreements is on full American control of the deal, whereas the EU emphasizes a relational arrangement, even if it is tacit within both agendas that the African partner should be the loser.

China’s structural rivalry is also not without intense diplomatic underpinnings. In what can be described as the modern watershed of Sino-African relations, China hosted the First Heads of State Summit of the Forum on China-African Co-operation (FOCAC), which attracted delegations from 48 African states, including 42 heads of states and some 1,500 business leaders, to Beijing in November 2006; a whopping US$1.9 billion worth of business and investment deals were signed at this event. The FOCAC series, founded in 2000, has become a regular occurrence. The extraordinary FOCAC 2006 was preceded by two ministerial level meetings; hence, it was dubbed as the “Third Ministerial Meeting,” as the African heads of states were accompanied by their respective foreign and trade ministers, even if not all 48 states present in November 2006 were represented in the two preceding ministerial encounters. Although FOCAC 2006 took place as late in that year as November, the indicators had already shown that trade between Africa and China was on a sharp rise, a 25 percent increase over the previous year—from US$40 billion in 2005 to US$50 billion in 2006.\(^5\) The volume of China-African bilateral trade had, by 2008, escalated to US$106.8 billion.\(^6\)

On another diplomatic front, we note that whereas the United States complained and portrayed China as uncooperative with UN resolutions to address the global humanitarian concern in Darfur, and indeed China (together with Russia, and Qatar on the sidelines) did not support Resolution 1706 passed on August 31, 2006 that called for 20,600 UN troops and police officers to support the 7,000-member AMIS, China however sought to give the impression that it had been playing a serious positive role. Ambassador Liu Guijin, the Chinese Government Special Representative on Darfur, said in a speech\(^7\) on February 22, 2008 at Chatham House:

Thanks to China’s vigorous mediation, and the efforts of other parties, the Sudanese government agreed to engage in dialogue and consultation with the United Nations and the African Union, leading to the agreement on the