

## China's Foreign Aid to Africa: Socio-Economic Impact of the Tazara Aid Project on Tanzania

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**Abstract:** The study researches Chinese aid relationship with Africa mirrored in the Tanzania-Zambia Railway (Tazara) aid project with a view to analyzing its socio-economic impact on the lives of the people of Tanzania. The idea of a rail link between Tanzania and Zambia dates back to the colonial era. But, the impetus for the actual construction developed in 1965. Appeals for assistance were made to the West but were rejected. China came in when the hope on the West was disappointed. Following President Nyerere's visits and appeals to China in 1967 China agreed to finance the project. The Tazara linked Kapiri Mposhi in Zambia with Dares-Salaam in Tanzania. It was the biggest aid commitment at the time costing about 400 million dollars. The study adopts the inter-dependence theory as its theoretical and analytical framework for the discussion of aid in Chinese relationship with Africa. The findings are that the railway aid project was significant in a number of positive ways and therefore developing to the economy and the state of Tanzania. Among other things, the Chinese involvement in the project demonstrated that despite the ravages of the cultural revolution and the effect that this had on Chinese foreign policy, China remained committed to Africa. By signing the deal on the project at the height of the revolution, China signaled to the continent of Africa of its commitment to her development and liberation from the shackles of imperialism and colonial hang-over. On its completion, the project by its process had transferred technology to Tanzania and left rural lives significantly transformed.

**Key words:** Socio-economic, foreign policy, project, technology, Tanzania

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### INTRODUCTION

The idea of a rail link between Tanzania and Zambia dates back to the colonial era. But, the impetus for the actual construction developed in 1965. Appeals for assistance were made to the West but were rejected. China came in when the hope on the West was disappointed. Following President Nyerere's visits and appeals to China in 1967, China agreed to finance the project. The Tazara linked Kapiri Mposhi in Zambia with Dares-Salaam in Tanzania. It was the biggest aid commitment at the time costing about 400 million dollars. As Tazaras construction was completed, the railway stations on the Tanzanian side were incorporated into Julius Nyerere's vision of ujamaa villagization a state-led rural resettlement project and the agricultural resettlement schemes. Tazara was built during the Cold War when development visions were shaped by global rivalries these rivalries played a pivotal role in the Tazara project. They were part of the reason that Tazara was dismissed by its critics as an ideological project (which it was in part) driven more by third world solidarities and

pan-African aspirations than by economic common sense. In this global context, the Chinese had articulated their own vision of development assistance in Africa through the 8 principles of development assistance introduced during Zhou Enlai's tour of Africa in 1963-64 (Alden, 2007). These principles reflected China's efforts to distinguish its approach to African development from those of the United States and the Soviet Union. Several of these principles had direct application to the Tazara project in particular the provision of an interest free loan with a generous repayment schedule the effort to promote self-reliance rather than dependency the transfer of technical skills and the expectation that Chinese technicians would have the same living standards as the African workers without special amenities. These Chinese principles together with Tanzanian and Zambian development ideals became part of the state vision of railway development that shaped the Tazara project.

Stemming from this research and its findings are that through aid, China has made remarkable positive impacts on the growth and development of Africa and that the Tazara aid project, especially was immensely gainful and

contributive to Tanzania. Though, the rise of China's influence in Africa has been assailed with apprehension and suspicion by the West, China's aid has undeniable pluses that arguably offer Africa opportunity for growth and progress.

### **THEORETICAL ISSUES**

Attempts to present foreign aid in a discrete and intelligible manner have provoked a number of theoretical analyses. To the realists, aid is a policy tool that originated in the Cold War to influence the political judgments of recipient countries in a bi-polar struggle (Liska, 1960; Morgenthau, 1962; Mckinlay and Little, 1977; Hook, 1995). According to liberal institutionalism, it is a set of programmatic measures designed to enhance the socio-economic and political development of recipient countries (Balladwin, 1985). The world system theory views aid as a means of constraining the development path of recipient countries promoting the unequal accumulation of capital in the world (Wood, 1986). All of these theories assume that foreign aid consists of material goods or services that are owned or controlled by donors, the allocation of which may vary according their purposes and interests. This study adopts the inter-dependence thesis as its theoretical and analytical framework for the discussion of aid issue in the Sino-African relation. As an analytical concept in political science and international relations, inter-dependence refers to situations characterized by reciprocal effects among countries or among actors in different countries (Keohane and Nye, 2004). These effects often result from international transactions; flow of money, goods and people across international boundaries. Such transactions have increased dramatically between China and Africa since the eve of the 21st century.

The arch proponents of this theory, Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye argue that the current international system is characterized by growing inter-dependence; the mutual responsibility and dependency on others. They point to growing globalization particularly with international economic interaction as reinforcing the idea that relations in the world today are characterized by inter-dependence. Operationalization of inter-dependence should not be entirely in terms of situations of evenly balanced mutual dependence. Apparently, the common judgment about inter-dependence is about whether the relationship is mutually beneficial. The continued aid relationship that defines China-Africa relations is best explained and appreciated within the logic of this

theoretical frame. The two relating actors suffer a desideratum that differed from that of the other creating, thereby a situation of inter-dependence. Africa is not developed, thereby needing almost on every side external assistance. China is comparatively better off and has a global challenge that requires Africa's support. China's Africa aid in the period before opening-up was based on strategic considerations and was salutary to the realization of China's diplomatic strategy. Given the reality of the Cold War bi-polar politics which placed China in enmity with the United States and the subsequent rift between China and the former USSR, China became really steeped into a fix. This powered the imperative for Africa's hand in friendship. Aid policy to Africa was circumscribed by this international reality (Rotberg, 2008). Employing the foreign policy tool of aid, China sought for friends in Africa who supported its application for a permanent seat in the security council and its entrance into the world trade organization. China wants friends who will now and in the future back it in international fora everywhere and always. As a tool of foreign policy, aid is critical in the "One-China" policy. Brautigam observed that as countries switched recognition away from Taipei they were rewarded with aid programs.

With the continuous economic growth at astounding annual rate of 10% in the past quarter century China has transformed its landscape and become one of the largest economic powerhouses on earth generating in the process huge demands for new sources of energy and other resources. China's relentless pursuit of economic development and quest for energy and other natural resources had brought her to Africa where these resources are abundantly available. To demonstrate that China's foreign assistance to Africa has been driven primarily by Beijing's desire to secure and transport natural resources and secondarily for diplomatic reasons, Lum *et al.* (2009) observe that 70% of China's infrastructure financing on the continent is concentrated in Angola, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Sudan, all of which have oil fields. The increased need for access into Africa's rich and vast natural resources to feed the Chinese burgeoning industrial economy the twin capitalist thirst of finding extra-Chinese market for the industrially produced goods and a virgin land for further investment necessitated China's aid diplomacy without which penetration into Africa where the West had earlier footing would not have been possible. Given these realities, it makes sense that inter-dependence relationship has developed between China and Africa where the former gives aid for the latter's support and resources.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The subject of China-African relation and China's foreign aid to Africa has received attention from a multitude of analysts and has provoked a lot of academic publications and scholarly writings from which this research derives information. Larkin (1971) was the first to seriously examine China's aid activities in Africa. In his study "China and Africa", he claims that China's approach to Africa between 1949 and 1971 was determined by two strategic considerations; Africa was regarded as fertile ground for the export of the Chinese Revolutionary Model and by the acknowledged need to avoid alienation of friendly or neutral governments. In the years that followed, several scholars sought to elaborate upon this thesis. Hutchison too considered the Chinese Revolutionary Model and the desire of the People's Republic of China (PRC) to export this to China as a determinative factor behind China's policy in Africa. In fact, he alleged that the PRC moved in to fill a vacuum left by the retreat of the colonial powers. It has been argued however that more so than filling a vacuum, China was seeking to prevent the development of an alternative hegemonic threat the United States (Taylor, 2006). Most importantly, they agreed on the centrality of ideological considerations in influencing China's behaviour in Africa. So did Yu, China's relations with Africa in general and Tanzania specifically is analyzed as a strategic alliance that again allowed China to manifest its presence on the African continent and to support revolutionary struggles while it provided Tanzania with an alternate source of aid different from that of the Western countries. Aid, he claims, greatly impacted on the cooperative relationship between the two countries. In fact, Yu finds that China's strategic approach to Tanzania relied almost exclusively upon what he refers to as attractive power which includes informal foreign policy instruments such as the appeal of the Chinese International and Development Model, economic aid and technical assistance. Indeed, increasingly scholars have come to undertake an instrumentalist approach to China's aid strategy analyzing it as but one tool in China's array of soft power instruments. Kurlantzick (2009) claims that China has developed its tools of culture and business to strategically pursue more of economic interests not so much of ideological concerns on the African continent. As such, Kurlantzick's analysis incorporates two central theses that have come to characterize scholars' (predominantly Western) approach towards the evolving Sino-African relationship: First, while obviously driven by a multitude of factors increasingly Chinese policy in Africa is economically motivated, more specifically to fuel

it's growing economy's thirst for natural resources and energy supplies. Second, China's Africa approach appears, more so than ever as multidimensional and sophisticated the Chinese tools of influence are wide ranging covering inter alia trade, aid, investments, culture, public diplomacy, leadership and migration.

The study of the Sino-African relationship has been and still is an exercise in rationalization, scholars are seeking to make sense of China's policy in Africa; the driving motives, the central objectives and the means to achieve them. There seems to exist some sort of a consensual agreement that ideology and ideological considerations has been central feature of China's African policy. Yet, studies that relegate China's activities in Africa to mere responsiveness to what is referred to as, superpower activity, will fail to explain the continuation of China's presence in the continent after the collapse of communism. Taylor (2006) claims and finds it essential to fathom China's dynamism of its own that China's relations with Africa are rooted in China's specific policy aspirations and agenda. Indeed, several scholars opine that China's policy in Africa is so multifarious and complex that it defies the application of any one theory from which the interference is that China's approach toward Africa must be contextualized with reference to the broader global contemporary situation, the influence of the international system on the PRC's policy behaviour and the domestic concerns of the PRC. Observing this, Ansha (2007) remarks that to accurately analyze China's strategic considerations in the Sino-African relationship, it is important to understand both aspects of continuity and more recent changes in China's African approach, the most recent change being China's booming economy and hunger for African raw materials. For instance, Wenping asserts that Africa's rich produced natural resources and potential market advantages have great strategic meaning to China's economic development in the 21st century. With China's rapid pace of modernization and reform, China must expand into new overseas markets and secure the supply of raw materials. Following this, several scholars find that China is careful to cultivate relations with its largest trade partners in Africa, including; Nigeria, Sudan, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Angola. Yet, effectively reducing a complex set of considerations to a mere quest for resources and economic influence is problematic Wenping argues. Chinese engagement with Africa is also driven by political considerations: Africa accounts for almost one-half of the non-aligned nations and a full third of United Nations member countries all of which have demonstrated themselves as reliable supporters of China's position in opposing hegemonism and power politics. For instance, prior to 2004, the United

States brought 11 proposals against China for its human rights record at the United Nations conference on human rights. African nations, holding 15 of the 53 seats at the commission, helped to block the proposals. China could not have defeated such proposals without the stalwart support of Africa.

Indeed, several scholars emphasize that China's African policy is not just the by-product of China's recently booming economy and soaring demand for African raw materials (Thomson, 2005). Rather, China's influence is the result of many years of investment in building relations through trade aid and cultural and technical exchange that is through distinct tools of influence

### **THE TANZAM AID PROJECT IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The idea of a rail link between Zambia and Tanzania (and East Africa) dates back to the British colonial era. However, the possible implementation of the project was not seriously considered until the 1960s following Tanzanias and Zambias independence (Monson, 2009). The impetus for the actual construction of the railroad developed in 1965 following Rhodesias independence which was perceived as a threat to Zambias political and economic existence. Following Rhodesias Unilateral Declaration of Independence in November, 1965; Zambia immediately began to search for alternatives so that the systems of railways air services electric power and oil supply which she shared with Rhodesia could be dissolved. The first survey of the Tazara link during this period was that taken by the World Bank, the report of which is dated May 27, 1964. It was almost entirely negative about the project maintaining that given the existing network of railways and roads and the nature of commodities traded in the area, the Tazara link was neither economically feasible nor justifiable. Upgrading the existing Great North road from Kapiri Mposhi to Iringa would have been 40 million US dollars cheaper than building a railway. The reports' focus was on growing intra-African trade in agricultural products as the source of traffic for the new railway. The report maintained that with the cheap and efficient railways to Beira/Lourenco Marques and Lobito which had capacity adequate for an estimated 10-20 years and potential for expansion with small additional investment the need for a new bulk carrier was minimal. Further, the prospect of hooking the Tazara line into East African Railway's central line at Kidatu as was then planned involved the additional expenses of transshipment because of the different rail gauges.

The World Bank survey also included the total costs in compensation which Zambia would be required to pay Rhodesia Railway under their loss of revenue clause. The report states that in any emergency, three adequate though long and inconvenient, alternative routes existed as well as highways. The conclusion of this survey was that Zambia and Tanzania would be ill-advised to build this railway and that given a choice of a railway or a road their goals would be better served by the improvement and expansion of the great North road highway link (Monson, 2009). The World Bank report gives little consideration to the political situation in Southern Africa and does not mention the possibility of substantial diversion of copper shipments to the new line. No attempt was made to ascertain Zambian or Tanzanian political motivations nor to understand the symbolic and real impact of the Tazara line in the political and racial confrontation evolving in southern Africa in the mid 1960s. A UN survey late in 1964 agreed with the conclusions of the world bank survey, i.e., that the project was too expensive for its returns and that it might set back Zambian development by tying up all her available funds.

Shortly after Chou Enlais, 1965 offer, a Chinese team of experts arrived in Dares-Salaam to undertake a preliminary survey of the route to be followed by the Tanzanian section of the line. In September, an inter-ministerial committee representing the Zambian and Tanzanian governments formally approached the governments of Britain, West Germany, the United States, France and China with requests to help finance the Tazara line. One week earlier Britain and Canada had offered to pay the cost of another survey of the route the Maxwell Stamp survey.

During the time the stamp survey was under way, Rhodesia declared her independence Tanzania broke diplomatic relations with Britain and Kaunda, more determined since UDI to end Zambian links with Rhodesia searched for a country other than China to finance the rail link (Gleave, 1992). He feared becoming dependent upon China and therefore favored a Western sponsored consortium. He received little response. Nyerere, too favored an international consortium through the African development bank. He was, however, determined to have the Tazara regardless of who financed it: I do not care whether I get communist or Western money, he declared in July, 1965; I want this railway line and I am not going to be stopped (Kanza, 1975).

The break-up of the Rhodesia Railway occurred in June, 1967. Through this action Rhodesia could maintain a stranglehold on Zambia by threatening to cut off vital imports in transit through Rhodesia. What was once

merely a threat became a reality and caused Kaunda to change his attitude toward China. Whereas his relations with China up to this point had been cool and he had refused to allow the Chinese survey team into Zambia earlier in the year, he now welcomed Chinese aid. On September 5, an agreement on the construction of the Tazara Railway was signed in Peking by Mr. A.J. Soko, Zambian Minister of State and Mr. Jamal on behalf of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda (as joint owners of East African Railways) (Yu, 1971). The Chinese survey began in May, 1968. Further agreements on the route were signed on November 14, 1968 and final agreement on cost was signed on July 12, 1969. Construction began in the Summer of 1970 while the formal inauguration was held on October 26. The ceremonies that marked the inauguration of the formal construction of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway on October 26, 1970 marked another page in the annals of Chinese-African interaction and Chinese foreign policy and international behavior. Tanzania and Zambia perceived the railway as the realization of a long and frustrating dream come true which would contribute both to the economic development of the two countries and Eastern Africa and to the support of the liberation struggle in Southern Africa. It was not unexpected, therefore, that the railway took on the aura of a crusade real and symbolic and was referred to as the great Uhuru Railway.

Western reactions to these events were colored by reticence a sense of belatedness and a combination of skepticism and cynicism. The West underestimated both Nyerere's determination to build the line and China's willingness to do so. It miscalculated in not taking advantage of Kaunda's initial coolness toward China; moreover, the Western attitude has been one of skepticism as to China's ability to undertake such a project and cynical satisfaction that such a large percentage of the PRC's foreign aid capital is committed to one project. Zambia and Tanzania's interpretation of the Western actions has been generally negative. Kaunda at the inauguration of the line in 1970, maintained that the refusal of Western states to participate in the project was based on political and ideological objectives—namely keeping Zambia dependent upon Southern Africa so that her shipment of copper to the West is assured.

#### **THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TAZARA ON TANZANIA AND THE LIVES OF ITS PEOPLE**

In many and multiplied ways, the building of the Tazara Railway by the People's Republic of China did benefit Tanzania and its people. This study seeks to bring to the fore, some of the ways in which the

construction of the railway from its process to its completion impacted positively on the socio-economic lives of Tanzanians.

**Technology transfer:** With reference to the Tazara aid project, it is obvious that owing to the labour intensive nature of the technology involving the dispatch of about 30,000 Chinese railway engineers and construction experts to Dares-Salaam, there was significant technology transfer measured in terms of contribution to workers training in Tanzania. Technology knowledge was conveyed through teaching and learning via the Chinese established workshops and foundries at places like Mangula where the railway's concrete sleepers and steel parts were produced. The specific form of worker training during the Tazara project raised a generation of significant and experienced African railway specialists who continued to research in Tanzania after Chinese departure.

What is to be appreciated about the aid project is the attitude of the Chinese in training and impacting knowledge on the Tanzanians. The Chinese taught by example. Once the construction recruits had signed on, they were transported to the work camps railway, workshops and warehouses where they would begin their new jobs. They were given intensive training. The workers learned in the process, as they go about their jobs in the field. This form of practical training or teaching by example was the primary method used by the Chinese in development assistance. Even when theory was taught, it was directly related to practice. The Chinese preferred to teach without words. A Chinese engineer or technician would simply assemble and dismantle a piece of machinery and encourage his African apprentices to follow suit until they got the procedure right. More formal job training for workers who had proven their ability was offered at the four railway training schools that opened at Magula, Mgulani and Mbeya (Harman, 2007). The curriculum at Mangula included construction and maintenance of the permanent way and bridges, telecommunications, signaling and locomotive driving. A good number of Tanzanians reaching about 2000 were trained in technology and railway management at these workshops during the construction and handing over periods. A smaller number of workers were sent to China for further studies at the Northern Jiaotong University in Beijing (Monson, 2009).

For the young men who were recruited for and stayed on through Tazaras construction, the experience of participating in a transnational project of modernization was transforming. Most of them were from rural areas and had limited experience with technology beyond what they may have learned in primary school. For many of these

young men, it was their first time to be employed for a wage and to follow a structured and regimented study schedule. Workers themselves described their experiences during construction as a process of maturation, as a coming of age.

**Lessons of Chinese ideal of hard work:** The Chinese stated frequently during Tazara construction that they were committed to following development principles in Africa that were based on solidarity and friendship. In practice, Chinese railway technicians were expected to study shoulder to shoulder with their African counterparts, demonstrating in a brotherly manner new skills and new ideals of self-reliance through hard work. The construction work experience was meant to be an uplifting one, both for the individual worker and for the nation, thus representing an alternative to colonial and neocolonial African work experience.

For many of the workers on Tazara, these ideals were realized. The Chinese approach to study, especially the way they joined in on every task did, inspire the Tanzanian workers. In response to a survey conducted in the mid 1980s, former Tazara construction workers remembered that their Chinese supervisors had helped them the most by actually working alongside them, not just standing aside, hand in pocket, directing workers by finger pointing (Ngila, 1983). Workers also appreciated the material gains they made on the job. They report being paid promptly with a good wage and receiving substantial benefits. These included overtime, leave allowances subsistence and night allowances and workers compensation. Wages were paid by Chinese accountants or Tanzanian foremen on site in cash. The Chinese were fair recalled one worker for they believed “ufanye kazi upate hela” if you do the work you will be paid (Monson, 2009). Those who were not doing their study were asked to leave.

At the sites of large-scale tasks such as tunnel blasting and bridge construction, the Chinese used electricity generators to allow work shifts to continue both day and night. John Gilbert remembers working at Kisaki building bridges as part of a 24 h crew. Here and in the tunnels section, workers put in successive 8 h shifts around the clock: You worked for 8 h, you then rested 8 h, then you started again recalled Beatus Lihawa (Monson, 2009). During resting shifts the workers retreated to their temporary shelters in the worker camps. Electricity generated at the base camps also allowed for around the clock activity. At Mangula base camp, engineers who worked in the factories and workshops often put in similar 8 h rotating shifts over 24 h periods.

African workers remember Chinese railway technicians in ways that reveal the ideals that accompanied them. The Chinese are remembered as strict supervisors who doled out harsh discipline to workers who were lazy or errant. They were very harsh, remembers Raphael Chawala. If you were lazy or a liar or a thief, they would chase you away. They would send a report to other stations so that you could not work there (Gleave, 1992). Workers recall that the Chinese were tough but fair; if you did your job properly, you would be paid on time without questions. Those who failed to do their work, on the other hand, would be asked to leave.

The construction of the Tazara railway created the opportunity for an unprecedented cultural exchange. Over a 5 year period, tens of thousands of Chinese and Africans lived together and worked side by side along the railway line. As they camped in rudimentary shelters, dug ditches, constructed bridges and occasionally shared a meal together they had many occasions to interact. Friendship and solidarity were especially important themes in the isolated workplaces and temporary camps where the workers spent most of their time

When they were not working the Chinese enjoyed leisure activities such as reading, smoking cigarettes and playing board games and table tennis.

**Developmental impact:** By the time, the railway was completed and trains began plying, Tanzanians could speak about their experience of the railway and its relationship to development. The Ordinary Train linked the rice farmers of the Kilombero valley floodplain with the maize and horticulture specialists of the Njombe and Mbeya highlands (Yu, 1971). In this way, markets in the lowland settlements of Ifakara and Mlimba could play a significant role in the economic lives of Njombe farmers and traders while traders based in Ifakara came to depend, in turn, upon regular supplies of beans, potatoes or groundnuts from Makambako. The busy traffic in parcels that moved up and down the passenger belt therefore had broad significance for rural economic development within the Southern region of Tanzania and even further afield when traders extended their economic networks or traveled themselves to access more distant goods and markets.

The Ordinary Train provided a transportation infrastructure that enhanced physical mobility for goods and people across varied ecosystems, economic opportunities and concentrations of settlement. Yet, the train was much more than this. It was a resource around which people structured not only their material survival but also other important aspects of their lives whether

they were recovering from a sudden downturn or stroke of bad luck were young traders just starting out in business or were retirees settling down on a plot of farmland after a career in civil service: I came here (to the railway corridor) looking for life, was one of the most common phrases used to explain the attraction of the Ordinary Train to its users.

The Tazara railway facilitated the creation of multi-spatial rural livelihoods for its users in the context of economic uncertainty that accompanied Tanzania's liberalization and structural adjustment policies. It provided access to fertile farmland and to markets for agricultural products. Extractive products, such as; charcoal, timber and dried fish were carried as parcels on the train. The planners of the Tazara railway had a development vision of how the railway would impact rural economy and bring about development as it affects agriculture and the movements of goods from place to place. Thus to those who lived in the rural communities, the completion of the railway, fetched remarkable transformations and changes in their livelihoods. Among other things, the railway was used to ferry sugar cane and by that provided a vital link between the out growers and the sugar factory at Mkamba (Ngila, 1983). About 20 years later, the train was not carrying sugar through Sonjo and the other villages along the railway, where the out growers lived. Rather, the Ordinary Train was carrying people and rice ferrying passengers from the out grower areas, where fields were taken up with sugar cane planting and where land was already in short supply and taking them out to their outlying farms, where there were also opportunities for casual labor and small-scale trading. The Ordinary Train could, therefore, be seen as serving the people and their economic needs. Yet, the train by serving this community of rural people was also serving the sugar company and its labor casualization policies. For it was the availability of fertile farmland made accessible by the Ordinary Train that facilitated conversion to sugar cane on out grower farms. The presence of the train cushioned the social and economic impact when the sugar company laid off workers who subsequently took up farming and trading or were hired back as casual labor for the company. Thus, the Ordinary Train served the company not by carrying sugar but by supporting alternative livelihood options as Illovo reduced its commitment to long-term and short-term security for its workers.

China was in the early stages of the cultural revolution when Tanzanian and Zambian delegations arrived in Beijing to sign the first railway construction agreement in September 1967 (Monson, 2009). During the 1960s and 70s, China's Model of Rural Development in particular, its experience with transforming rural agrarian

production was perceived positively by African visiting delegations. China intended to overcome its own blank slate of underdevelopment and visitors to rural communes in China were impressed not only by the material technologies they witnessed there but also by the pace of change made possible, in their view, by the ideologies of hard work, solidarity and self-reliance.

Thus for newly independent African countries, one of the relevant aspects of China's experience with rural transformation was the Chinese emphasis on accelerated development. This could be seen in the effort made to complete the Tazara project ahead of schedule speed in construction would show the world what poor countries could do when they helped one another as speechmakers announced; it was also a part of the discourse and practice of rural modernization (Tull, 2006). The combination of ideology and acceleration could be seen as having positive outcomes when ideology stressed hard work, solidarity and the setting aside of negative attitudes. When it came to the development principles of training and skill development on the other hand and the creation of African self-reliance through, the reduction of dependency upon outside experts there were contradictions. Despite these contradictions, the experience of railway construction and living along Tazara was a transformative one for many African workers and for the rural communities of the railway corridor.

## CONCLUSION

The Tazara railway construction is a representation that aid is a factor in the age-long expanding relationship and interaction between China and Africa. The Tazara railway was constructed between 1970 and 1975 to link the landlocked Zambian copper belt with the Indian Ocean port city of Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania. It was China's largest international development project. Tazara represented the great steel arm of China thrusting its way into the African interior. The 1,060 mile long project was built with financing and technical support from China amounting to over 400 million dollars in form of a long term interest-free loan. In October 1964, Tanzania and Zambia issued a joint statement of intent to build a joint railway. Consequently, appeals for financial backing were made to the world bank United States, Britain and the Soviet Union. Western nations had rejected the project as being costly unfeasible and unnecessary. Following this rejection, China agreed to finance and support the railway project. The railway gave Tanzania and Zambia the ability to avoid the hurdles of using the rail links through Portuguese, Mozambique and Rhodesia. The construction also spelt China's commitment to the liberation of Africa

from imperial and colonial stranglehold. The railway aid project was significant in a number of positive ways. Among other things, the Chinese involvement in the project demonstrated that despite the ravages of the cultural revolution and the effect that this had on Chinese foreign policy China remained committed to Africa. By signing the deal on the project at the height of the revolution, China signaled to the continent of Africa of its commitment to her development and liberation from the shackles of imperialism and colonial hang-over. It must be mentioned that China's commitment to build the Tanzanian railway should be contextualized around Beijing's desire to combat hegemonism in the region, prevent Soviet infiltration in Tanzania and Zambia and boost China's prestige in Africa and the third world. This Beijing succeeded in doing and was regarded in Africa as a power to reckon with. Naturally, China's African aid had its own strategic aim yet one of its starting points was to help African countries eliminate poverty and consolidate their independence. This is co-development, a principle which Chinese-African cooperation carefully follows. The thesis of this research is that contrary to the accusations against China's aid-giving to Africa, China is not imperialistic and does not harbour colonial ambitions in her dealing with Africa. Both Tanzania and Zambia that benefitted from the Tazara railway project are not among the oil-rich states of Africa. This douses the fire of ill conceived apprehension of its aid presence in Africa judging from the Tazara project.

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