

# **CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN KENYA-CHINA RELATIONS 1963-2008**

**BY**

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**DECLARATION**

This project is my original work and has not been submitted for award of a degree in any other University.


  
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Date

This project has been submitted for examination with the approval of my University supervisors.

  
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Date

## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to my mother who has sacrificed a lot to get me where I am today. I would also like to thank my brother and sister for their steadfast support.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An academic research project is in the final analysis the outcome of a collaborative process involving many people.

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Stephen Mogaka

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>CCP</b>	<b>Chinese communist party</b>
<b>CNOOC</b>	<b>China National Offshore oil cooperation</b>
<b>FOCAC</b>	<b>Forum of China Africa cooperation</b>
<b>GOK</b>	<b>Government of Kenya</b>
<b>KANU</b>	<b>Kenya African National Union</b>
<b>KBC</b>	<b>Kenya Broadcasting Corporation</b>
<b>PRC</b>	<b>People's Republic of China</b>

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## Abstract

In the last few years there has been a significant amount of comment and debate on the topic of Kenya's growing relationship with China. To a certain extent, the debate is part of a broader discussion on the question of China's growing presence in Africa. A number of commentators have argued that the state of Kenya-China relations during the Kibaki administration differs fundamentally with the state of relations during the Kenyatta and Moi administrations. In other words, it has been argued that Kenya-China relations during the Kibaki administration have been characterized more by change than continuity. The main objective of the study was the examination of the history of the bilateral relationship across the three administrations of Kenyatta, Moi and Kibaki with the aim of evaluating the degree of change and continuity in the relationship. The study addressed several research questions. The key questions were; was the state of Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta and Moi administrations uniformly strained as has been suggested? How does the state of Kenya-China relations during the Kibaki administration compare to that of the Moi administration? How much continuity and change is seen in the relationship? What factors domestic or external have contributed to continuity and change in the relationship? The study tested two hypotheses. The first postulated that Kenya-China relations had improved due to changes in the global distribution of power. The second postulated that Kenya-China relations had been enhanced by changes in leadership in the two countries. The main finding of the study was that while changes in leadership had influenced the relationship, the most significant influence on the relationship was the changes in the global distribution of power. In particular, the study concluded that the significant amount of continuity in Kenya-China relations from the Moi to the Kibaki administration was the result of the end of the Cold War and the resulting change in the global distribution of power. Kenya like many other developing states had to diversify her sources of aid and assistance as well as markets for her goods. China on the other hand, has had to seek out new markets as well as seek new allies to further her global ambitions.



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## CHAPTER ONE- INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction to the study

In the last few years the state of Kenya-China relations and the related subject of the basic direction of Kenya's foreign policy has been a topic of immense discussion in various fora. To a certain extent, the debate on the increased ties between Kenya and China is part of a broader debate on China's growing influence in Africa. An issue of great interest has been the much publicized lucrative government contracts granted to Chinese companies by the Kenyan government especially in the infrastructure and energy sectors. In the infrastructure sector alone, Chinese companies are reported to have been granted contracts amounting to 80 billion Kenyan shillings (*The Standard*, 12 October 2008).

The debate on Kenya's growing relationship with China has been particularly fuelled by statements such as those of former Vice President Moody Awori and a former Foreign Affairs minister Raphael Tuju who on a number of occasions declared that Kenya would pursue a 'look east policy'. Several commentators in the media have seized on the fact that President Kibaki despite being in power for over six years has not yet paid an official state visit to Kenya's traditional main development partner the United Kingdom. The fact that the president during the same period has carried out two state visits to China is held up as proof of a shift in Kenya's foreign policy away from its traditional pro-western stance.

The result of these discussions has been that new questions have been raised about the state of Kenya-China relations and specifically the relationship between the state of the bilateral relationship under President Kibaki's leadership and that during the time in office of his two predecessors. In an article in a local daily that purported to examine the history of the Kenya-China relations, an assertion was made that the state of the bilateral relationship during the Kibaki administration amounted to a radical break with the past. The commentator sought to contrast the current cordial nature of the relationship with the 'frosty' nature of relations under former Presidents Kenyatta and Moi (*The Standard*, 12 October 2008, p. 30).

The study proceeded from the assumption that such descriptions of the history of the relationship are inaccurate and amounts to mischaracterization. The aim of this study is the examination of the nature and evolution of Kenya-China relations across the three presidential administrations of Kenyatta, Moi and Kibaki with a view to determining patterns of continuity as well as change in the relationship. The value of such an exercise arises from the fact that it provides the basis for understanding the history of the bilateral relationship to date along with the factors that have driven the relationship over time.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

At present the governments of Kenya and China are cooperating in fields as diverse as education, tourism, defence, mining, health, and infrastructure.

The extent of cooperation between the two states has provided the basis for the assertion that the current state of the relationship is something radically new compared to earlier periods in the relationship. Consequently, it has been claimed that Kenya-China relations today represent significant change compared to earlier periods in the relationship.

The study's basic premise is that an analysis of Kenya-China relations covering the period of 1963 to 2008 would reveal that in keeping with the general tenor of other bilateral relationships, the relationship had been characterized both by change and continuity at various junctures. The focus of the study was therefore two-fold: firstly, an examination of the patterns of change and continuity in Kenya-China relations covering 1963 to 2008. Secondly, by utilizing insights gained from the field of Foreign Policy Analysis an attempt is made to provide explanations for the patterns of change as well as continuity in the relationship at specific junctures.

The major research questions that were addressed in the study are

- (a) How much of a radical break with the past is the current state of Kenya-China relations?
- (b) Was the state of Kenya-China relations during the times in office of Presidents Kenyatta and Moi uniformly strained as has been suggested?
- (c) How does the state of Kenya-China relations under President Kibaki compare to the state of relations under President Moi? In particular, how much continuity as well as change is seen in the relationship from Moi to Kibaki and why?

(d) What factors domestic or external have contributed to change or continuity in the relationship?

The approach used in the study for measuring continuity and change in Kenya-China relations is the analysis and comparison of the various aspects of Kenya-China relations across different administrations. This involved analyzing Kenya-China relations in each administration under several sub-topics such as economic and trade ties, military relations, educational and cultural ties and diplomatic and political relations. The data from such sub-topics from one administration was then compared to that of Kenya-China relations in during a different administration. For example, the level of diplomatic and political relations in a presidential administration was measured in terms of the number of diplomatic and state visits as well as bilateral agreements signed. The use of such an approach revealed that significantly more diplomatic visits and interactions took place between Kenya and China during the Moi administration as opposed to the Kenyatta administration suggesting that change in the form of an improvement in the relationship had taken place. This conclusion was further corroborated by the comparison of economic, trade, and aid data over the same period.

### **1.3 The Goal and Objectives of the Study**

The broad goal of this study was to examine the nature and evolution of the bilateral relationship between Kenya and China from 1963-2008.

The specific objectives of this study were the following:

- I. To examine the extent to which Kenya-China relations covering the period 1963-2008 have been characterized by change and continuity.
- II. To determine through the utilization of levels of analysis framework the most important variables that explains change and continuity at various junctures in Kenya-China relations from 1963 to 2008.

#### **1.4 Justification of the study**

The subject of Kenya-China relations is a very timely one. This is because it is a subject that has been situated within the wider debate on whether there is a shift in Kenya's foreign policy away from emphasis on the historically close ties with the West to more emphasis on forging relationships with newly emerging economies such as China and other Asian giants.

Despite the importance of this subject, background research revealed that very little research had been done on the topic of Kenya-China relations. At the same time, the literature review revealed that while there is no shortage of books and material which have dealt with the broader question of China-Africa ties there is a serious shortage of books or works that deal specifically with Kenya-China relations. The books on China-Africa relations that were reviewed did provide some insights on China's relations with various African states including Kenya during the Cold War but their major limitation was that they were for the most part descriptive and non-

analytical. This study therefore has the potential to address a number of serious gaps in the available literature. This provides the academic justification for the study.

The study also has adequate policy justification. There is unanimity among scholars that China is destined to achieve superpower status in a few decades. In this regard, Kenya's relationship with this budding superpower will be an important cornerstone of Kenya's future foreign policy. The insights generated from the study will serve to equip policy makers as well as other stakeholders in the relationship with knowledge about the history of the bilateral relationship as well as the means through which the relationship can be strengthened and safeguarded for the interests of the two states.

### **1.5 Literature review**

The topic of China's growing presence in the African continent is one that has increasingly captured the imagination of academics, policy makers and the international media. The prevailing consensus is that China's current policies towards African states differs markedly with the policies China adopted during its earlier foray into the continent during the 1960's and 1970's (Muekalia, 2004; Gill et al., 2007). During its earlier venture into the continent, China mostly pursued an ideologically driven policy that took the form of support for armed struggle, opposition to western colonialism and a diplomatic campaign against Taiwan (Ogunsanwo, 1974). The contrast between China's past policies in Africa and its present involvement is



therefore significant. China's ideologically driven policy towards African states in the 1960's and early 1970's has given way to its current policy which is based more on economic considerations, in particular, the search for resources as well as new markets for Chinese goods (Gill et al., 2007).

In an analysis of the China's policies in Africa during the Cold War, Phillip Snow (1994) argued that there had been certain dominant impulses in China's policies in the continent. Snow in particular argued that the foundation of China's policies in Africa was attempts by China to convince African states that China was different from the former colonial powers and the West in general. China sought to unite African states under its leadership in the campaign against western colonialism and neo-colonialism.

The decision by China to embark on the Tanzania-Zambia railway which was 'politically and psychologically important to African governments but which more profit-minded aid donors had rejected on economic grounds' (Snow 1994: 288) was therefore in keeping with an important basis in Chinese foreign policy. Snow further gave examples of several cases in which China practiced 'benevolent trade'. In such cases China bought surplus products such as coffee and chocolate from African countries despite there being no significant demand for such products in China (Ibid).

A shift in China's foreign policy took place after the death of China's leader Mao Tse-tung in 1976. According to Snow, there was not only a precipitous decline in China's aid commitments towards Africa but more significantly a fundamental change in the way China's projects were funded.

China began encouraging African states to contribute to the welfare of Chinese staff involved in projects as well as providing funds for the spare parts for Chinese projects. In other words, the nature of China's relationships with African states became less ideological and political and more commercially based.

One of the most influential scholars on the topic of China's recent foray into Africa is Ian Taylor (1998, 2006, 2007, and 2010). In an influential article Taylor (1998) argued that China's renewed interest in Africa since 1990 was primarily the result of a domestic event in China the 1989 Tiananmen Square uprising. In the violent aftermath of the uprising, the Chinese government was heavily criticized by major western powers. The strong criticism of the Chinese government's handling of the protests had the effect of ending China's 'honeymoon relationship' with the West (Taylor 1998: 447). According to Taylor, China's subsequent diplomatic isolation led a major reassessment of China-Africa policy. China's leaders decided to revamp ties with the only continent where their actions in putting down the protests had not been condemned as a means of strengthening its diplomatic position. The importance of Taylor's argument is that it reveals that China's interest in Africa is not merely driven by economic considerations but also by diplomatic and political considerations.

A second highly influential scholar on the topic of China increasing presence in Africa is Chris Alden (2007). Alden has written extensively on the topic of China's increased activities in Africa. One of the main arguments

advanced by Alden (2007) which has also been advanced by Jakobson (2009) and Taylor (2010) is the argument that China today unlike in the past does not operate in Africa as a monolithic actor. Alden noted that while China's earlier dealings with Africa were state-centric and fairly straightforward the relationship has increasingly become more complex and multidimensional due to the proliferation of Chinese actors. According to Alden (2009), the diversity of Chinese actors in the continent posed a significant challenge in terms of managing and coordinating the relationship.

The challenge arose because many of these actors including Chinese companies and migrants often pursued policies that were sometimes at odds with those of the Chinese government. According to Taylor (2010), the enormous diversity of Chinese actors in Africa whether in the form of central and municipal governments, companies, and individuals only serves to render meaningless the bulk of western criticism about Chinese activities in Africa because such criticism is often based on the notion of a monolithic China pursuing a single policy in the continent.

On the specific topic of Kenya-China relations, John Cooley (1965) drew attention to the fact that China's interactions with Kenya preceded Kenya's independence. During Kenya's independence struggle, the Chinese Propaganda authorities had strongly taken up the cause of the Mau Mau who they lauded as a 'patriotic and anti-imperialist organization' (Cooley 1965:62). According to Cooley, bilateral relations between the two countries

were established soon after independence on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1963 with China becoming the first state in the communist bloc to recognize Kenya.

Cooley argued that the subsequent tension in the bilateral relationship was chiefly the result of allegations that China was offering military training to supporters of Vice President Oginga Odinga in a bid to bring about the overthrow of President Kenyatta. Cooley further argued that by early 1965 senior Kenyan government officials had already concluded that China's aid to Kenya was one of the lowest among the donors to the extent that new donors to Kenya such as Japan and West Germany were already giving more aid and assistance. The implication is that China's alleged subversive activities and its miniscule aid contribution to Kenya made a break in relations possible.

Bruce Larkin (1971) argued that the crisis in Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta administration was a product of a number of factors. One factor that severely damaged relations was the allegation that China had joined other Soviet bloc countries in funding President Kenyatta's opponents at the 1966 KANU party conference in Limuru. In the run up to the conference and its immediate aftermath, two Chinese diplomats were expelled. According to Larkin, bilateral relations were further damaged by the sporadic publication in the Kenyan media of incendiary pamphlets said to be issued by the government of China some of which besides calling for revolution in Kenya, severely castigated President Kenyatta while at the same time praising his political opponents especially Oginga Odinga.

Alaba Ogunsanwo (1974) also briefly shed light on the state of Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta administration. Ogunsanwo agreed with most other authors of the period that Kenya-China relations broke down chiefly due to China's alleged support for Kenyatta's main political rival Oginga Odinga. Ogunsanwo further pointed out that the statement by China's premier Chou Enlai in Dar es Salaam in 1965 to the effect that Africa was ready for revolution had strongly offended senior Kenyan leaders. According to Ogunsanwo, the Kenyan government decided not to accept Chinese technicians who had been sent to initiate Chinese projects after evidence surfaced that China had sent money to support Oginga Odinga's efforts at the Limuru KANU conference.

Alan Hutchison (1975) argued that the deterioration in Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta administration was to a great extent the result of China's own poorly conceived policies. Hutchinson agreed with other authors of the period that accusations about Chinese funding for Odinga during the 1966 KANU conference in Limuru marked a significant juncture in the deterioration of bilateral relations. Hutchinson further pointed out that the deterioration in relations led to several attempts by Kenyan parliamentarians to sever Kenya-China relations. Hutchinson was of the opinion that the fear of an increase in China's subversion aimed against the government was the reason why President Kenyatta, despite pressure from several quarters decided against a total break in bilateral relations.

The works by Cooley (1965), Larkin (1971), Ogunsanwo (1974), and Hutchinson (1975) although illuminating on various aspects of Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta administration are not without serious limitations. One of the main weaknesses of these works is that they submerged the whole question of Kenya-China relations under a regional analysis of China's interactions with the African continent as a whole during the Cold War. In as far as Kenya-China relations were briefly examined, there was little in the way of serious and exhaustive analysis on why relations broke down during the mid 1960's other than an elucidation of the proximate causes that led to the crisis in the relationship.

The aforementioned authors while stressing that domestic factors in Kenya contributed to tensions in the relationship failed to examine the role domestic factors in China along with systemic factors had played in the tensions that came to characterize the relationship. Another major weakness of these works was that important questions such as why Kenya did not follow the lead of other African states in severing relations with China or even in switching recognition to Taiwan were not addressed.

In a Masters thesis George Ochieng (1994) introduced a different dimension to the question of tensions in Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta administration. According to Ochieng, Britain and British commercial interests were acutely concerned about Chinese growing influence in Kenya during the 1960's. These interests actively sought to undercut China's influence through various means. Therefore the crisis in

bilateral relations was partly attributable to the concerted efforts of British interests in Kenya. The analysis by Ochieng has the merit of drawing attention to the fact that Kenya's foreign policy during the period was strongly influenced by western powers and western multinational interests. The weakness of Ochieng's analysis is that it suggested that Kenya's policy makers were mere pawns of British capital and that they lacked a conception of what was in Kenya's national interest.

Katete Orwa (1994) argued that President Moi's decision to reach out to China in the form of a state visit in 1980 was linked to the fact that China had by then opened up to the West diplomatically as well as economically. In a sense therefore, President Moi's decision to engage with China did not amount to a radical break with Kenya's traditional pro-western stance since China had already opened up to the same western states. A weakness of Orwa's argument lay in the fact that it suggested that there had been no thaw in bilateral relations in the years preceding President Moi's ascendancy to power in 1978. The evidence from several sources however leads to the conclusion that a *rapprochement* had taken place between Kenya and China prior to President Moi coming to power in 1978. Indeed, it is important to note that China made an offer to help Kenya construct the sports stadium in Kasarani in 1977 while President Kenyatta was still in power (Interview with senior retired Kenyan diplomat September 24<sup>th</sup> 2009). The assumption underpinning this study is that a gradual improvement in Kenya-China

relations which began in 1970 was the main force behind President Moi's state visit to China in 1980.

In a Masters thesis Edward Mogire (1993) described Kenya-China relations during the early years as having been largely characterized by conflict. However, in later years the relationship came to be characterized more by cooperation. According to Mogire, the relationship had changed to one of cooperation chiefly as a result of a learning process by the two states. Mogire asserted that when '...the two states realized that they stood to gain more through cooperation than conflict cordial relations developed' (Mogire 1993:3).

Mogire's thesis is of great benefit in terms of its analysis of the various aspects of Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta administration and a portion of the Moi administration. The thesis however has a number of limitations. In the first place Mogire does not address the central focus of this study which is an evaluation of continuity and change in Kenya-China relations across three presidential administrations. Mogire's study addresses aspects of change in the relationship in other words the change from a conflictual to a cooperative interaction. However, there is little in the form of an analysis of continuity in the relationship. An analysis of the continuity in the bilateral relationship is important as it provides the basis for a keener understanding of what factors drive a bilateral relationship. The existence of continuity is usually taken to mean that a foreign policy tradition is in place



and that there is consensus among different political groups on a country's foreign policy. The existence of significant change on the other hand is usually seen to mean that a country lacks a foreign policy tradition and perhaps there is strong disagreement among the political class on the issue of foreign policy. This study because of its examination of continuity and change therefore differs significantly from that of Mogire (1993).

Furthermore, Mogire's thesis is also time bound since it only dealt with the bilateral relationship until the early 1990's. The study examines the full breadth of the bilateral relationship from the time it was established in 1963 to 2008 when the strength of the bilateral relationship was regarded as being very strong.

In an evaluation of the history of the bilateral relationship, Michael Chege (2007) argued that tensions in Kenya-China relations during Kenyatta's administration were the result of personal differences between President Kenyatta and China's leader Mao Tse Tung. According to Chege, two factors were responsible for President Moi's decision to visit China in 1980. The first was the desire to diversify Kenya's sources of external aid and assistance. The second reason was to solidify President Moi's base in Rift Valley province by convincing the Chinese government to undertake a number of major projects in the province. Chege's analysis while of immense benefit suffers from a number of weaknesses. One major weakness of Chege's paper is that he does not sufficiently address the *rapprochement* in relations that preceded President Moi's accession to power in 1978. A second limitation of Chege's

analysis arose because of the paper's focus on the economic dimension of the relationship. As a result, the paper did not shed light on questions such as whether changes in the global distribution of power or changes in leadership may have played in the way the relationship has evolved over time.

### 1.6 Theoretical framework

The purpose of theory is to enable one to better understand or grasp a social relationship, structure or phenomena. A theory plays an important role in science because to put it simply it is the framework upon which facts are organized. Kenneth Waltz one of the leading scholars in the study of International Relations cites one definition of theory as 'collections or sets of laws pertaining to a particular behaviour' (Waltz 1979:2). Theories enable one to better grasp social reality as well as offer explanations. A good theory is one that enables one to not only grasp reality but also to make predictions.

A number of theoretical frameworks could potentially be used in this study. One potentially relevant framework is the dependency theory. One of the first scholars to use the dependency theoretical framework to analyze Kenya's foreign policy was Samuel Makinda (1983). According to Makinda, the nature of Kenya's post-independence economy, in particular, the dominance of foreign capital was the main reason behind the content, style and character of Kenya's cautious and pragmatic post-independence foreign policy. Makinda further argued that Kenya's policy of good neighbourliness in the East Africa region was itself a policy which was driven by the desire on

the part of foreign multinational corporations operating in Kenya which were keen to use Kenya as a springboard for entering other East African markets.

Another example of an academic study that utilized the dependency theoretical framework to explain foreign policy and bilateral relations was the M.A. study by George Ochieng (1994) of Kenya-Britain relations. Ochieng used the dependency framework to explain why Kenya's foreign policy especially in the years after independence was largely in agreement with that of Great Britain. The study by Ochieng has some relevance for this study because he argued that Kenya's strained ties with China during the 1960's was partly the result of pressure by British capital on Kenya.

The dependency theoretical framework is a framework that can be helpful in a number of ways. One of the great strengths of the framework is that it addresses the important aspect of political economy and how that factor can significantly shape foreign policy. The utilization of such a theoretical framework could therefore potentially enrich a study especially the study of a relationship between a state and its former colonial power.

The dependency framework however has a number of weaknesses. One of the main weaknesses of the framework is its assumption that a dependent state and its leadership is unable to unshackle themselves from the powerful state that is dominating them. World politics is replete with examples of weak states such as Cuba which have broken the control exercised on them by more powerful states.

Furthermore the dependency framework wrongly portrays the leaders of developing nations as mere tools of International finance. In this regard Katete Orwa (1987) criticized the framework for its caricature of Kenya's post-independence leadership as one that was 'naive', and totally devoid of a 'perception of national interests except those of multinational corporations and of a national elite' (Orwa 1987: 5).

The available historical record disproves the notion that Kenya's post-independence leadership was naive and ignorant of Kenya's national interest. Katete Orwa (1994) pointed to the fact that even before Kenya gained independence, its future leaders had already begun articulating their preferred program for the foreign policy that Kenya should adopt after independence. In this regard Orwa (1994) cited the Kenya African National Union (KANU) manifestoes of 1961 and 1963 which contained several pledges by the party in the area of foreign policy. An analysis of Kenya's post-independence foreign policy reveals that for the most part Kenya's foreign policy was in line with the pledges of 1961 and 1963 (Orwa, 1994).

It is as a result of these weaknesses in the dependency framework that this study has chosen a different framework the realist theoretical framework. The first reason for the adoption of the realist framework is because unlike other theories of the study of International relations it is a theory that retains relevance to date. One of the reasons for realism's resilience is because it is a theory that has always found 'endless affirmation in current events' (Buzan 1996: 61). It is particularly instructive that despite

the numerous criticisms leveled on the framework it has continued to grow as evidenced by the continued proliferation of branches and sub-branches of realism (Feng and Ruizhuang, 2006).

The second reason for the adoption of realism as a theoretical framework flows from the evidence in terms of both official documents and public statements that policy makers and political leaders in both Kenya and China have generally operated under a realist framework (Howell, 1968; Orwa, 1994; Levine, 1994). In this regard it appears certain that insights gained from realism will provide the basis both for a better explanation of Kenya-China relations at various junctures but also a basis for making more accurate predictions about the future direction of the relationship.

There are several variants of realism of which the main ones are classical realism, structural realism, and neo-classical realism. Classical realists such as Hans Morgenthau and John Hertz maintained that power was the most important factor in international politics. Classical realists further argued that states are driven to maximize power because the desire for power is itself based on human nature (Lynn-Jones, 1998).

Structural realism also referred to as Neo-realism is a variant of realism that emerged in the late 1970's. It is a variant of realism that is most commonly associated with the works of Kenneth Waltz who in 1979 published his influential work *Theory of International Politics*. Waltz reasserted the logic of power politics between states but in keeping with the need to be

scientific he based the desire of states to seek power not on human nature but on the anarchic structure of the international system (Buzan, 1996).

In the aftermath of the end of the Cold War, a new variant of realism known as neo-classical realism emerged. Neo-classical realists such as Stephen Walt and Fareed Zakaria sought to marry the insights of classical realism and the assumptions of structural realism. They argued that domestic politics was an important intervening variable between the structure of the International system and foreign policy behaviour. (Dunne and Schmidt, 2005).

According to Barry Buzan (1996), realism despite its many forms emphasizes continuity in International affairs. Realists argue that the lessons from the ancient and medieval past hold relevance in understanding world politics today since world politics and state behaviour are still governed by the same factors as before. A prominent realist scholar Gilpin questioned whether students of International relations in the twentieth century knew anything new that Thucydides an ancient Greek historian did not know about international politics (Dunne and Schmidt, 2005).

Dunne and Schmidt (2005) argue that there are three core assumptions of realism that transcend the various schools. These are statism, survival and self help. In the first place realists maintain that the state is the primary actor in International relations. At the same time, realists assert that the international system is characterized by anarchy. This means that states exist

in a world in which there is no common government or authority to make rules.

The fact that international relations is characterized by anarchy means that states can not rely on any other entity to protect them they must protect themselves by amassing power. States as a result will be concerned with their own survival and this leads them to engage in self help which is putting into place their own measures for their own security. At the same time, the main objective of a state's foreign policy is the achievement of what its policy makers regard as its national interest.

In this study the aim is to utilize the assumptions of realism to explain continuity and change in Kenya-China relations. In particular there is an attempt to argue that the greater continuity in the relationship since 1990 is a result of the gradual convergence of the national interests of the two countries. The realist framework does however have a number of limitations. One major limitation of the structural realism variant is its emphasis on the role of structure of the international system as the sole determining factor of a country's foreign policy. The assumption that structure alone determines the foreign policy of a country has led critics to dismiss the possibility of neo-realism adequately explaining foreign policy making (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1993; Feng and Ruizhuang, 2006; Kai He, 2007).

In recognition of these weaknesses this study has utilized the neo-classical variant of realism. This is because this variant of realism is more attuned to the realities of foreign policy analysis. Neo-classical realism is a

variant of realism that gained prominence with the end of the Cold War. Proponents of this school include Vasquez, Zakaria, Christensen, and Schweller among others (Dunne and Schmidt, 2005; Feng and Ruizhuang, 2006; Kai He, 2007).

Neo-classical realists argued that structural realism with its focus on the global system of analysis had not been particularly helpful in foreign policy analysis since it neglected the unit level of analysis. Neo-classical realists therefore sought to move beyond structural realism's focus on the global system level of analysis and sought instead to marry structural realism with elements of classical realism. The result is a more balanced variant of realism that while recognizing the main assumptions of structural realism also takes into consideration '... [factors at the state and individual levels of analysis] such as domestic politics..., state power and intentions, and statesmen's perceptions of the relative distribution of capabilities ...to better explain historical puzzles and foreign policy decision making' (Kegley and Wittkopf 1993: 42).

It is important however to note that although neo-classical realists agree on a multi-level approach there is no consensus on which factors from the unit level should be considered as intervening variables. Fareed Zakaria for example, argued that the diffused and decentralized nature of the US political system was responsible for why the United States despite the structure of the international system, failed to expand like other European powers before it. According to Christensen on the other hand, the domestic



concerns of US and Chinese leaders rather than the structure of the US political system was the key factor contributing to tensions in US-China relations (Kai He, 2008).

Nevertheless, neo-classical realists have made the persuasive case that the distribution of power in the international system is not an objective reality and that because leaders may perceive differently they may adopt different policies as a result. Neo-classical realists therefore stress that domestic politics and in particular the quality of leadership needs to be considered in explaining state behaviour. (Dunne and Schmidt, 2005).

### **1.7 Hypotheses**

The study shall be seeking to respond to two hypotheses

- I. Kenya-China relations have improved as a result of changes in the global distribution of power or polarity.
- II. Kenya-China relations have been enhanced as a result of changes in leadership in Kenya and China.

### **1.8 Scope and limitations**

The focus of this study is primarily on Kenya-China relations covering the period 1963-2008. There are a number of limitations in the scope of the study. The first limit is a geographical one. The study was conducted exclusively in Nairobi. There is also a limitation in the data collected. Although the study was originally designed to benefit from the contribution of

the officials from the Chinese embassy in Nairobi, none of them availed themselves for interviews despite repeated attempts on the part of the researcher. This limitation however was addressed in part by the extensive use of official government of China documents and material that was accessed via the internet.

## **1.9 Definition of terms**

### **I. Foreign policy**

Foreign policy simply means the guidelines or strategies that a nation state adopts to facilitate its interaction with other states and international institutions. Beyond that foreign policy also refers to actual course of action that a state undertakes in its interactions with other states. Richard L. Merrit defines foreign policy making as the 'task of devising strategies that utilizes a nation state's capabilities to achieve the goals the leaders set' (Merrit 1975: 1).

### **II. Bilateral relations**

Bilateral relations refers to relations or interactions between two states. As a term it refers to the sum total of all aspects of the relationship between two states. The aspects may range in topics such as trade, fisheries, security etc.

### **III. Continuity**

For the purpose of this study continuity in relations means sameness, constancy or similarity in a bilateral relationship over a period of time and

notwithstanding changes such as those to do with a change in government. Continuity in a bilateral relationship over a long time despite changes in government may suggest that one or both of the countries has a foreign policy tradition and that the political elite despite differences in ideology are broadly supportive of the foreign policy tradition.

#### IV. Change

For the purpose of this study change means the transformation in a bilateral relationship over a period of time possibly but not necessarily as a result of a change in government. The transformation may be in the form of a downgrading of ties but also in the form of a significant improvement in relations which may translate into cooperation across more issue areas.

#### V. Polarity

Polarity refers to the global distribution of power among states in the international system. Depending on the global distribution of power, the international system may either be classified as unipolar, bipolar, and multipolar. In a unipolar system there is one state that holds most of the power in the system. In a bipolar system power is roughly divided between two powerful states. Finally in a multipolar world power is diffused between several powerful states.

#### IV. *Rapprochement*

For the purpose of this study *rapprochement* simply means the lessening of tensions in a bilateral relationship over a period of time. It denotes the

gradual improvement in a bilateral relationship from a condition of tension to one of improved bilateral ties that translates into cooperation.

## **1.10 Methodology**

### **Research Methodology**

In this section the focus is on a description of the study site, the study design, sampling procedures and the methods of data collection.

### Study Area

In the conduct of the study, several locations were visited in the city of Nairobi. The major sites visited in the conduct of the study were the: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Roads, Ministry of Trade, Kenya Investment Authority, the Export Promotion Council, the Embassy of China in Kenya, the Macmillan library and the Kenya National Library.

### Sampling technique

In this study the non-probability sampling technique was utilized in the selection of the individuals that would be interviewed as part of the study. This is a sampling method in which a researcher uses his/her own expert judgment to decide who to include in the sampling frame. The individuals chosen were those with knowledge and understanding on the history of the bilateral relationship between Kenya and China. The study focused on officials serving as well as retired in the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Roads

and Trade as well as officials in the Kenya Investment Authority and Export Promotion Council of Kenya.

The selection of the ministries was purposive. The reasoning behind the selection of the three ministries arose from the fact that all the three ministries played important roles in several key aspects of the bilateral relationship between Kenya and China. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is charged with the formulation and coordination of Kenya's foreign policy. The Ministry of Trade is tasked with fostering trade between Kenya and other countries such as China. The Ministry of Roads is in charge of the development of roads and related infrastructure in the country. The Chinese government and Chinese companies have played a significant role in Kenya's infrastructural development over the years. Therefore, officials in the said ministries whether serving or retired, would be in a position to shed light on important questions about the bilateral relationship in particular the evolution of the relationship across different administrations.

### Data Collection Techniques

This study utilized both primary and secondary data. The bulk of the information was obtained through secondary sources in the form of academic books, academic journals, newspaper articles, and statistical information from relevant organizations as well as academic material retrieved from the internet. The secondary sources were supplemented by primary data that mainly took the form of official foreign policy documents, official speeches

and informal face to face interviews with senior officials (serving as well as retired) in the ministries of Foreign affairs, Trade, and Roads along with officials from relevant organizations. The interviews were conducted at venues chosen by the interviewees which in most cases were their areas of work or a public meeting place. In view of the nature of information sought, not to mention the diversity of respondents, the interviews took the form of an unstructured interview format. Nevertheless, two interview schedules were developed to offer general guidance in the interviews of officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and officials in the Embassy of China (See Appendix 1 and 2). The interviews were for the most part non-directive. Interviewees were encouraged to freely discuss their knowledge and experiences. Anonymity was sought and granted for a number of interviewees as part of the requirement for the interview.

### Data Analysis

The study was primarily qualitative in nature. The data collected from interviews was in the form of the words of the interviewees about their knowledge on the question of continuity and change in Kenya-China relations. Tables were used where appropriate in showing the changes in the bilateral relationship during different presidential administrations. Data obtained was presented in a descriptive manner.

## 1. 11 Chapter outline

In chapter one a general introduction of the study is made. The chapter also includes the background to the problem, the problem statement, hypothesis, research questions, objectives, scope and limitations, literature review and research methodology.

Chapter two examines the state of Kenya-China relations during the term in office of President Kenyatta. The main aim of this chapter is the determination of the main themes in Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta administration with the objective of providing a basis upon which the future state of the relationship could be compared and contrasted. The chapter also seeks to provide explanations for the tension in the bilateral relationship during the Kenyatta administration.

Chapter three explores the state of Kenya-China relations during the Moi administration. A major aim of the chapter is the comparison of the state of bilateral relations during the Moi administration and the state of relations during the Kenyatta administration with a view to discovering and accounting for patterns of continuity and change in the relationship.

Chapter four examines the state of Kenya-China relations during a period that covers President Kibaki's first term in office as well as one year into his second term in office. In this chapter, there is an assessment of the state of bilateral relations in the light of the history of the relationship under

previous administrations with a view to accounting for patterns of change as well as continuity.

Chapter five summarizes the conclusions that are drawn in the main body of the study. The chapter also contains the recommendations that arose from the study.



## CHAPTER TWO

### Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta Administration (1963-1978)

#### 2.0 Introduction

The main objective of this chapter is an examination of the state of Kenya-China relations during the term in office of Kenya's founding father and first President, Jomo Kenyatta who led Kenya from 1963 to 1978. An evaluation of the state of relations during this period is of great importance to this study's main objective which is an examination of the patterns of change and continuity in Kenya-China relations from 1963 to 2008. Most commentators have characterized the state of Kenya-China relations during the time in office of President Kenyatta as having been tense and uniformly strained. The main argument advanced in this chapter is that the available evidence shows that the state of Kenya-China relations between 1963 and 1978 was not uniform but rather unfolded in three phases. Furthermore it is argued that the different phases in the bilateral relationship far from being unique to Kenya were in fact replicated in China's relationship with most other African states over the same period.

This study proceeds from the assumption that the history of Kenya-China relations has largely been mischaracterized. There has been a tendency to regard Kenya-China relations during the administrations of Kenya's first two presidents as having been uniformly strained and low key as opposed to the

cordial state of relations during the Kibaki administration. An example of such an analysis is one that appeared in 2008 in a local daily the article began;

‘During Kanu’s reign Kenya-China relations were frosty. Under former President Moi’s rule even a superficial association with China was sufficient to make one a political outcast ... However, after Kanu lost power in 2002 elections and President Kibaki assumed office, Kenya has done a clear 360 degree turn, embracing China tight, like a long lost brother’ (The Standard, 12 October, 2008 p. 30).

The implication of such an account is that Kenya-China relations during the Kibaki administration represent change as opposed to continuity when compared to the state of relations during the Kenyatta and Moi administrations. This study proceeds from the assumption that such a description of the history of the relationship amounts to a gross mischaracterization.

The evidence gathered in the course of the study points instead to the fact that Kenya-China relations from 1963 to 2008 has been at various junctures characterized by continuity as well as change. It has been argued that the most effective way of gauging the degree of continuity and change in a bilateral relationship over time, is to examine certain aspects of a bilateral relationship as well as events across time. The aspects to be examined may include the amount of bilateral trade, amount of aid and assistance offered, the number of friendship, cultural or military agreements that are signed, the number of diplomatic visits and the level at which they have been made, and

establishment of diplomatic relations or the rupture of such relations (Hutchison, 1975).

The available evidence points to the fact that Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta administration (1963-1978) unfolded in three phases. The first phase lasting from December 1963 to the end of 1964 was largely characterized by fairly warm ties between the two countries. This phase was characterized by some high level visits, free interaction between Kenyans and the Chinese including Kenyan students studying in China, and agreements on aid and technical assistance. During this phase there were no major diplomatic incidents between the two countries (Ogunsanwo, 1974).

The second phase of the relationship began in 1965 and came to an end after 1970. This phase was marked by a very serious deterioration in relations between Kenya and China. This phase was also characterized by mutual diplomatic expulsions, absence of any state visits at any level, and the absence of any sustained interactions between the people of the two countries. The height of the deterioration in relations during this phase culminated in the decision by Kenya to close down its embassy in Beijing (Snow, 1994; Chege, 2007).

The third and final phase of the relationship began in 1970 and saw a gradual but significant reduction in the tensions that had earlier characterized the relationship. During this period the Chinese government dispatched some humanitarian aid to Kenya. At the same time, trade ties picked up and a Chinese cultural troupe was allowed to visit Kenya (Mogire,

1993; Ogunsanwo, 1974). It was during this period that China first offered its funding and expertise for the construction of a sports stadium in Kasarani, Nairobi (Interview with senior retired Kenyan diplomat, September 24<sup>th</sup> 2009).

## **2.1 Phase One of Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta administration (1963- 1964)**

The first phase of Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta administration lasted a year from December 1963 to the end of 1964. The general tenor of bilateral relations during this period was warm and cordial. At this point in time, China is said to have had a significant amount of goodwill with Kenya's nationalist leaders. Peking's propaganda had several years before independence, taken up the cause of Kenya's independence struggle in particular the cause of Mau Mau (Cooley, 1965). During Kenya's Independence Day celebrations on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1963, the Chinese government dispatched a high level delegation led by Marshall Chen Yi, China's vice premier and foreign minister (Ibid).

The Chinese vice premier met both Jomo Kenyatta and his deputy Oginga Odinga. Odinga thanked the Chinese government for playing 'a key role in the Kenyan people's struggle for independence' (Ogunsanwo 1974:116). Diplomatic relations between the two countries were established on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1963 two days after independence (Larkin, 1971).

In May 1964, Kenya's Vice President Oginga Odinga led a high powered government delegation to a visit in China. The significance of this visit in light

of subsequent events lay in the fact that it was the highest ranked government delegation to visit China throughout President Kenyatta's term in office. The Kenyan delegation met senior Chinese leaders Liu Shao Chi and China's supreme leader Mao Tse-tung (Chege, 2007). The Chinese government offered Kenya a 200 bed hospital, a technical school for 1,000 students, credit financing along with equipment for a radio station (Ibid). China also extended humanitarian assistance to Kenya during this period. Following floods in Nyanza in 1964, the Chinese ambassador presented a cheque of 1,000 sterling pounds to the Kenyan authorities (Mogire, 1993).

In July 1964 China's Ambassador to Kenya met James Gichuru the minister of finance and an agreement was reached for the dispatch of 15 Chinese experts to Kenya so as to identify areas in which China could be of assistance to Kenya. At the same time, relevant government departments and ministries were asked to come up with proposals for assistance. The Chinese government announced that it would assist Kenya complete two main projects a sugar refinery and a textile factory (Chege, 2007).

In August 1964 Achieng Oneko, Kenya's information minister visited China and met Foreign Minister Marshall Chen Yi (Chege, 2007). The state of bilateral relations during this period was fairly cordial. Diplomatic relations were established, high level diplomatic visits took place and bilateral trade agreements were signed. During this period Kenyan students, journalists, trade unionists and political party officials freely visited China (Ogunsanwo, 1974).

## 2.2 Phase Two of Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta administration (1965-1970)

The year 1965 marked the beginning of a serious deterioration of bilateral relations that continued for several years. Indeed, so severe were relations during this period that one commentator marveled at the fact that Kenya did not follow the lead of several other African states in completely severing diplomatic relations with China (Hutchinson, 1975). This was a phase characterized by mutual diplomatic expulsions, strongly worded denunciations of each others policies as well as physical attacks on embassies and related institutions (Larkin, 1971; Ogunsanwo, 1974 Hutchinson, 1975; Chege; 2007).

The trigger for the new phase in relations appears to have been a speech by China's Premier Chou Enlai in neighbouring Tanzania in June 1965. In the speech in question, Chou repeated a statement that he had made a year earlier in Mogadishu in which he asserted that the conditions in Africa were favourable for a revolution. The Kenyan government issued a strongly worded statement which read;

'It is not clear to the Kenyan government what type and what form of revolution he has in mind but the Kenyan government wishes it to be known that Kenya intends to avert all revolutions irrespective of their origin' (Hutchinson 1975: 96).

In the aftermath of Premier Chou Enlai speech, some Kenyan parliamentarians introduced a motion in which they denounced Chou Enlai's 'destructive statement' and also called for the severing of diplomatic

relations with China due to its activities in several other African countries. The motion was passed with amendments including one in which the word China was replaced with 'any foreign government found participating in such activities in Africa' (Ibid). That the government of Kenya saw it fit to use its majority in parliament to remove the word China from the motion points to the fact that the government was reluctant to completely sever relations with China.

If Premier Chou's statement in June 1965 can be considered as the triggering point for the crisis in relations between the two countries then a statement by President Kenyatta while the Chinese Premier was still in Tanzania marked the beginning of more serious deterioration in relations between Kenya and China. President Kenyatta observed:

'It is naive to think that there is no danger of imperialism from the East. In world power politics the East has as much design on us as the West and would like us to serve their own interests. This is why we reject Communism. It is in fact the reason why we have chosen for ourselves the path of non alignment and African socialism. To us Communism is as bad as imperialism. What we want is Kenya nationalism which helped us to win the struggle against imperialism' (Larkin 1971: 138).

President Kenyatta's statement was highly significant because of the substance of what he said as well as his position as a respected African statesman. The president's denunciation of China's activities in particular his assertion that China like the West also had designs on the continent amounted to a repudiation of China's long stated position that it was in the continent to assist in the fight against imperialism. The President's statement also appears to have been aimed at his political opponents led by Vice-

President Odinga who had called for closer ties between Kenya and China as a means of making Kenya more self-reliant (Goldsworthy, 1982).

One month after the president's speech, Kenya expelled the first Chinese national Wang Te-Ming, a New China News Agency correspondent. Mr. Te-ming was ordered to leave Kenya on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1965 (Larkin, 1971). He was accused of playing a part in the attempted taking over of the ruling party's headquarters (Ibid). The state of Kenya-China relations continued to deteriorate in 1966. In March 1966, the defence minister announced that the Kenyan government had lodged complaints with several communist bloc states including China because they were allegedly offering military training to Kenyans without the government's permission (Larkin, 1971). In the same month, Kenya-China relations were severely damaged as a result of allegations that the Chinese through their embassy in Dar es Salaam had channeled a total of 100,000 pounds sterling to President Kenyatta's opponents who were aiming to capture the ruling party KANU during its 1966 Limuru KANU conference (Ibid).

The government reacted swiftly and on 10<sup>th</sup> March 1966 expelled a clerk in the Chinese embassy. A few days later, the third secretary in the Chinese embassy was also ordered to leave the country (Larkin, 1971). The deterioration of Kenya-China relations continued with the sporadic unearthing of Chinese pamphlets and books in which President Kenyatta and other conservative African leaders were strongly criticized while President Kenyatta's opponents in particular Jaramogi Odinga were lionized (Ibid).



The lowest point in Kenya-China relations during the period came in 1967. During a parliamentary debate Tom Mboya, the minister for economic development and planning, cautioned that Africa was constantly exposed to danger and that Africans had a duty to watch out against imperialism not only from the West in the form of the US, UK, and France but also the communist bloc in the form of China and Russia (Africa Diary, 1967). The Chinese embassy in Nairobi reacted strongly to Mboya's statement. In a departure from diplomatic norms, a letter strongly castigating Mboya was sent by the embassy to a local daily the East African Standard (Larkin, 1971).

The Kenyan government responded by expelling China's *charge d'affaires* on June 29<sup>th</sup> 1967, while at the same time recalling its Ambassador from Beijing for consultations (Ibid). On July 1<sup>st</sup> 1967, China expelled Kenya's *charge d'affaires* from Kenya's embassy in Beijing. Kenya's Ambassador T.A. Koskei who was in Kuala Lumpur at the time attending a seminar announced that he was not going to return to Peking but would await further orders (Africa Diary, 1967).

In August 1967 Vice President Daniel Moi accused the Chinese government of interfering in Kenya's domestic politics through its embassy in Nairobi. This came after the Chinese embassy had offered to provide Mao Tse-tung books and badges to a Kenyan school. The Vice President took the opportunity to remind the people that books on Chairman Mao Tse-tung were banned in Kenya (Ibid).

Later in the same month, the government of Kenya sought to issue a protest note to China's *charge d'affaires* to protest the attack on Kenya's embassy in Beijing by the Red Guards. The Chinese official refused the note and instead sought to hand in a note from his government which criticized Vice President Moi's assertion that China was interfering in Kenya's domestic politics (Ibid). Following the attack on Kenya's embassy in Beijing, members of the ruling party KANU organized their own protest outside China's embassy in Nairobi (Ibid). The continued deterioration in relations led to the decision by Kenya to close down its embassy in Beijing. The Kenyan authorities did not however follow the example of other African countries in ordering the closing of the Chinese embassy in Nairobi (Hutchinson, 1975).

The general tenor of relations during this period was strained with both sides frequently using very strong language to attack one another's policies. In a very strong statement that was reflective of the tension during the period, China referred to Kenya's political leadership as 'freaks and monsters' (Snow, 1994: 304). Some Kenya parliamentarians also used very strong language while criticizing China. The Minister of Health and Housing, Mr. Joseph Otiende, warned Kenyans that 'the yellow fellow' was interested in taking over Kenya by first 'infringing on the minds the people' (African Diary 1965: p. 2380). A regular occurrence during this period was the frequent unearthing of incendiary pamphlets allegedly produced by the Chinese government. The pamphlets often strongly denounced Kenya's

leadership while at the same time calling on the Kenyan people to overthrow the government (Ibid, p. 2549).

The tension in the relationship was captured in statistics. Since independence in 1963, various Chinese delegations had periodically visited Kenya. However between 1965 and 1969 not a single Chinese delegation visited Kenya (Ogunsanwo, 1974). At the same time, in the years since independence it had been customary for Kenyans from various sectors of society to visit China every year as part of what the Chinese government referred to as People's diplomacy. However, not a single Kenyan delegation visited China between 1966 and 1970 (Ibid). During the same period no new substantial aid or technical assistance was offered by the Chinese government to Kenya. A number of development projects that the government of China had earlier promised to undertake either did not take off or were abandoned half-way (Ogunsanwo, 1974; Chege, 2007).

### **2.3 Phase Three of Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta administration (1970-1978)**

The period after 1970 saw a gradual improvement in Kenya-China relations that was also replicated in China's relationship with many other African states. The acrimony that had come to characterize diplomatic relations between the two countries gradually ceased. The frequent denunciations of each other's government policies also came to an end. The gradual *rapprochement* in Kenya-China relations that begun during this period

was first seen in the area of interactions between the two countries. While records show that not a single Chinese delegation visited Kenya after 1965, the Kenyan government gave the go ahead for a Chinese acrobatic troupe to visit Kenya in 1970. (Ogunsanwo, 1974).

In 1974 in a testament to the growing improvement in relations, the Chinese Red Cross made a substantial donation of 420, 000 US dollars to assist Kenya in its fight against drought. The donation in 1974 amounted to the largest aid donation given by a communist state to Kenya in that year (Mogire, 1993). After the donation was made President Kenyatta gave audience to a Chinese diplomat the first such audience in a number of years (Ibid).

The main reason for the improvement in bilateral relations during this period was due to the fact that a fundamental transformation had taken place in China's foreign policy. China's leaders abandoned their earlier policy of promoting violent revolution in Africa and instead declared that they would support the status quo in the continent (El Khawas, 1973; Ogunsanwo, 1974). The first practical manifestation of the new policy had been seen earlier in 1968 when Modibo Keita, the President of Mali, a prominent China ally was overthrown. In a departure from past policy, China quickly congratulated the new military junta and swiftly recognized it (El Khawas, 1973). At the same time, China began reaching out to conservative African leaders such as Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia and Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire (Ibid).

The gradual improvement in Kenya-China relations culminated in China's decision in 1977 to offer Kenya its help in the construction of a modern sports complex (Chege, 2007). This was a very significant gesture in light of the history of Chinese aid and assistance to Kenya. Since the establishment of the bilateral relationship, Chinese aid and technical assistance to Kenya had been very small and low-key. The proposed modern sports complex therefore dwarfed all other prior Chinese projects in Kenya. The size of the proposed project suggests that China's leadership had become convinced that a secure foundation for the bilateral relationship was poised to be established. In this regard the proposal for the construction of a modern sports complex was an important step in further safeguarding the relationship.

The improvement in bilateral relations led to the clamour for Kenya to reopen its embassy in Beijing. The decision was finally taken to reopen the embassy in 1978 (Chege, 2007). What is important about this *rapprochement* was that it took place while President Kenyatta was in power. That a gradual *rapprochement* between Kenya and China took place while President Kenyatta was in power is important for two reasons. Firstly, such a *rapprochement* belies the image of Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta administration as one that was characterized throughout by tension and mistrust. Secondly, and more importantly, the *rapprochement* provided the basis upon which Kenyatta's successor Daniel Arap Moi could normalize relations.

#### **2.4 Kenya-China relations 1963-1978: Explanations for the three phases in the relationship**

An examination of the state of Kenya-China relations between 1963 and 1978 does lead to a number of questions. In the first place, what explains the fairly cordial nature of bilateral relations between the two countries in the first year of their relationship? Secondly, what factors account for the serious deterioration in bilateral relations after 1965? Thirdly, what factors best explain the gradual improvement in relations between the two countries after 1970? In order to provide explanations for why Kenya-China relations unfolded in the way they did during this period it is necessary to examine the foreign policies of both countries during the said period with a view to examining the factors responsible for the state of the relationship

In keeping with this study's hypotheses it is necessary to pose the question of whether the global distribution of power and the change in the political leadership played a role in the way the relationship unfolded.

#### **2.5 Kenya's foreign policy during the Kenyatta administration (1963-1978) and its impact on Kenya-China relations**

Kenya's post-independence foreign policy was mainly driven by two foreign policy objectives. The first objective was economic in nature. Kenya's political leadership sought to preserve the economic model which they believed would best serve the country's interests. At the same time, Kenya also sought to preserve her leading economic position in the region. Finally,

Kenya's foreign policy was aimed at maintaining the flow of foreign direct investment, technology and capital into the country (Orwa 1994: 315). The second core objective of Kenya's foreign policy was the protection and preservation of Kenya's territorial integrity and national security (Okumu 1973; Orwa, 1994).

There is unanimity among commentators on the main cause for the deterioration in Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta administration as having been the result of China's alleged support for President Kenyatta's political opponents in particular Vice President Oginga Odinga (Cooley, 1965; Larkin, 1971; Ogunsanwo, 1974; Hutchinson, 1975). While such an assessment is not incorrect the available evidence suggests that Kenya-China relations broke down in large part because President Kenyatta and other senior leaders firmly believed that China's actions and policies in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa posed a fundamental threat to Kenya's national interests. In particular, there was incompatibility between Kenya's foreign policy and certain aspects of China's foreign policy.

President Kenyatta and other influential leaders in government such as Tom Mboya strongly believed that the goal of Kenya's economic development would best be achieved if Kenya forged closer relations with the West in particular former colonial power Great Britain (Okumu, 1973; Goldsworthy, 1982). China unlike Britain did not have the ability to offer the kind of capital, aid and technology that Kenya's leaders deemed necessary for Kenya's development. The prospect of economic relations with China was

further undermined by the fact China in its dealings with other African states such as Tanzania actively sought to promote a different economic model to the one that Kenya had adopted. The Chinese government recommended a model that emphasized more on self reliance and a reduction of western aid and assistance (Larkin, 1971).

The state of Kenya-China relations was also damaged because a number of China's policies posed a threat to Kenya's core foreign policy objectives. The stated objective of furthering Kenya's economic growth necessitated among other things peace and political stability in Kenya. The declarations by China's premier Chou En-lai in 1964 and 1965, incidentally on both occasions in neighbouring countries, that Africa was ripe for revolution was greeted with anger by the leadership in Kenya because such a statement coupled with reports of Chinese activities elsewhere in the continent was understandably regarded as providing the green light for violence in the region which would have had serious consequences for Kenya's development.

The second important objective of Kenya's foreign policy namely the safeguarding of Kenya's domestic security and territorial integrity was also affected by a number of China's activities. Frequent western media reports that China and other communist bloc states were offering military training to Kenyans in a bid to bring about an overthrow of the government created fear and uncertainty in the country (Larkin, 1971; Ndegwa, 2006). Bilateral relations were further undermined by reports that China was selling arms to Kenya's neighbour Somalia and that some of these arms had found their way



to the Somali backed insurgency in Kenya's North Eastern province (Hutchinson, 1975).

In conclusion, the fundamental incompatibility of Kenya's core foreign policy objectives and Chinese policies created the crisis in Kenya-China relations during the 1960's. The gradual improvement in bilateral relations after 1970 was the result of a significant change in China's foreign policy which resulted in the adoption of policies that were more compatible with Kenya's foreign policy. China's decision to accept the status quo in Africa and its decision to abandon the call for revolution meant that China's policies ceased to be a threat to Kenya's national interests. This in turn created conditions favourable for normalization of relations.

## **2.6 China's foreign policy (1963-1978) and the impact on Kenya-China relations**

In the period between 1960 and 1978 China's foreign policy towards most African states underwent a significant transformation (El Khawas, 1973; Ogunsanwo, 1974). In the space of about fifteen years, China went from encouraging violent uprising in Africa to the acceptance of the status quo in Africa (Ogunsanwo, 1974). This transformation had a direct bearing on Kenya-China relations and explains the three phases the relationship underwent between 1963 and 1978.

The significant shift in China's foreign policy towards the African states between 1960 and 1978 was the result of a change in the hierarchy of China's

foreign policy objectives over the same period. The decision by China to adopt a moderate policy that was in favour of the status quo in its dealings with African states between 1960 and 1964 was the result of China pursuing two main foreign policy objectives over all others. The first objective was to gain influence in Africa and win over allies which would serve to undermine attempts by the United States to isolate China (Ogunsanwo, 1974). The second major objective of China's foreign policy during the period was to reduce Taiwan's diplomatic inroads into the continent by winning over as many African states as possible to the notion of One China (Ibid).

The decision by China's leaders in the early 1960's to adopt a moderate policy that was in favour of the status quo created congenial conditions for the establishment of diplomatic relations between Kenya and China on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1963. During the same period China's moderate foreign policy resulted in the establishment of diplomatic relations with many of Kenya's neighbours including Uganda, Tanzania, Somalia, Rwanda and Burundi (Larkin, 1971).

The deterioration in the Sino-Soviet relationship led to a shift in China's policies towards Africa states. The main objective of China's foreign policy became ideological in particular the opposing of both superpowers through the promotion of 'armed struggle' in Africa (Ismael 1971: 509). The new policy was officially declared by a senior Chinese leader Lin Piao in 1965. Lin Piao declared that world wide revolution would follow a similar pattern to the communist revolution in China. In other words, just as the revolution in

China had begun in the country side, the world revolution would begin in the underdeveloped parts of the world namely Africa, Asia and Latin America (Ibid).

The decision of the Chinese government to adopt a policy of encouraging armed struggle and revolutions in Africa served to precipitate a crisis in China's relations with many African states including Kenya (Hutchinson, 1975; Snow, 1994). China was widely accused of being behind various acts of subversion as well as violence including the assassination of leaders in countries as diverse as Niger, Burundi, and Congo (El-Khawas, 1973). The President of Ivory Coast Houphouet-Boigny spoke for many African leaders during the period when he observed '...the peril that menaces Africa today is the yellow-tinted communism of Peking' (Ibid, p. 25).

Kenya-China relations were further damaged by domestic events in China which had a direct bearing on China's foreign policy. China's relationships with many countries including Kenya deteriorated significantly as a result of the events surrounding the Cultural Revolution. China's foreign ministry the nerve centre of Chinese diplomacy was taken over by the radicals of the Chinese Red Guard. With the sole exception of the Chinese Ambassador to Egypt, all other Chinese Ambassadors in Africa were recalled during this period (Ogunsanwo, 1974). The result was that junior untrained militant officials took over the running of Chinese embassies and this contributed to a deterioration of relations with many states (Ogunsanwo, 1974; Hutchinson, 1975). Between 1965 and 1968 six African states Kenya,

Burundi, Central African Republic, Dahomey and Ghana broke or suspended relations with China. During the same period seven African states including Kenya expelled Chinese journalists (Snow, 1994: 307). Furthermore, the Cultural Revolution spawned domestic disorder in China which in turn led to attacks on embassies and consulates including the Kenyan embassy (Chege, 2007).

The Cultural Revolution came to end in 1969. A gradual transformation took place in China's foreign policy with less emphasis being placed on ideological considerations. During this period the first three objectives or 'status quo objectives' of Chinese foreign policy took precedence over the revolutionary aspects of Chinese foreign policy. The leadership of China during this period sought to '... extend its influence in Africa through normal diplomatic and aid channels' (El Khawas 1973: 28). China's moderation in its foreign policy was seen in the fact that its leadership took the decision to reach out to several conservative and anti-communist African leaders most notably Emperor Haille Selassie and Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire (El Kwawas, 1973; Ogunsanwo, 1974).

The period after 1969 saw China seek to repair damaged ties with a host of African states while simultaneously reaching out to states that had not yet established diplomatic ties with China. China sought to win over new friends not only by adopting a moderate foreign policy but also by substantially increasing its aid and assistance to African states. In 1970 for the first time China's aid to the continent surpassed the combined aid of the USSR and the

Eastern European states. Africans began to see China as a major aid donor in the aftermath of its financial support for the railway linking Tanzania and Zambia (Hutchinson, 1975; Snow, 1994). The result was that by December 1972, China had established diplomatic relations with twenty eight African states up from fifteen states that had relations with China in 1967 (Hutchinson, 1975). The establishment of diplomatic relations between communist China and Zaire led by the staunchly Pro-US Mobutu Sese Seko in January 1973 is largely seen by scholars as having been a defining moment in China's moderate foreign policy towards African states (El Kwawas, 1973).

The changes in China's foreign policy during this period serve to explain the gradual thaw in Kenya-China relations that begun during the same period. China's leaders had chosen to moderate China's foreign policy and had clearly come out to say that they would respect the status quo in the continent. The Chinese leadership indicated that they would no longer support opposition movements or insurgencies but rather that it would deal directly with African governments regardless of their ideological hue (El Khawas, 1973). At the same time, China was now increasingly seen as a reliable source of aid and assistance for African states.

In the final analysis of the two hypotheses in this study only one can fully explain the change in China's foreign policy which in turn led to changes in Kenya-China relations over the same period. The second hypothesis which states that changes in the bilateral relationship were the outcome of a change in leadership can not be proved. The fact is that the three phases in

the relationship took place without any change in leadership in either Kenya or China. In fact changes in the leadership of the two countries only took place in 1976 with the death of Mao and in 1978 with the death of Kenyatta.

The first hypothesis which states that the bilateral relationship improved as a result of a shift in the global distribution of power has some validity. The significant overhaul of China's foreign policy after 1970 came about chiefly as a result of the perception by China's leaders that a shift in the global distribution of power had taken place and that the new balance of power posed a threat to China's interests (Shambaugh, 1994). The Chinese leadership concluded that events such as the 1968 Soviet Union invasion of Czechoslovakia meant that the balance of power globally had swung in favour of the USSR (Ibid).

The Chinese political leadership took the decision to fundamentally reorient China's foreign policy away from radicalism and confrontation towards moderation and compromise with the West as well as the developing world. In particular, China's leaders decided to improve ties with the United States so as to prevent a two front war with both superpowers (Ibid). China also sought to gain more influence in Africa in a bid to finally regain its seat at the United Nations Security Council (El-Khawas, 1973). Therefore the first hypothesis offers a reasonable explanation about how polarity impacted on China's foreign policy and in turn on Kenya-China relations.

## 2.7 Conclusion

The state of Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta administration has frequently been portrayed as having been characterized throughout by tension and mistrust owing to China's subversive activities against the Kenyatta government. In this chapter it has been argued that the reality of Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta administration was far more complex. In the first place, the relationship was not as uniformly characterized by tension and mistrust as has been suggested. Secondly, although Kenyan domestic politics shaped the relationship there is also evidence that China's policies elsewhere in Africa also shaped the relationship. Kenya-China relations during this period substantially mirrored those of China and other African states. The period after 1965 when tension came to characterize Kenya-China relations was replicated in several African countries. At the same time, China's decision after 1970 to disavow revolution in Africa created conditions that led to a gradual *rapprochement* in Kenya-China relations. The improvement in relations created the basis upon which Kenya's second President Daniel Arap Moi could build upon the relationship when he came to power in 1978.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Kenya-China relations during the Moi Administration (1978-2002)

#### 3.0 Introduction

The main objective of this chapter is an examination of Kenya-China relations during the time in office of Kenya's second President Daniel Arap Moi. President Moi served as Kenya's head of state from 1978 to 2002 a period encompassing twenty-four years. The chapter in particular aims to examine the extent to which Kenya-China relations during the Moi administration displayed patterns of change and continuity with relations during the Kenyatta presidency.

The first President of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, died in office in August 1978. He was succeeded by his vice-president of twelve years Daniel Arap Moi. The new president declared that he would carefully follow the policies of his predecessor especially in the matter of national development (Orwa, 1994). During the state funeral of President Kenyatta, the new president lavished praise on his predecessor's foreign policy (Ibid). On the specific matter of the future of Kenya-China relations, the new president's past policies coupled with his strong ideological convictions suggested that relations faced a bleak future.

During his over a decade stint as Vice-President, Moi had on several occasions strongly criticized China's policies. This appears to have been the



result of not only official government policy, but also Moi's own firm anti-communist and pro-Western views. In August 1967 during the height of tensions in the bilateral relationship, Vice President Moi had accused the Chinese authorities of interfering in Kenya's domestic politics after the Chinese embassy had expressed interest to supply books and badges by China's leader Mao Tse-tung to a Kenyan school (Mogire, 1993; Chege, 2007). The vice president took the opportunity to warn Kenyans that books by Chairman Mao were banned in the country (Ibid). The vice president's allegations drew a furious response from China's government which accused Moi of 'brazenly vilifying China' (Chege 2007: 21).

In the aftermath of the assassination of Tom Mboya in 1969, Moi had issued a statement in which he suggested that communist China was behind the assassination (Goldsworthy, 1982). In view of Moi's ideological background and in view of the fact that he was historically one of the foremost critics of China in the Kenyatta administration, there was little expectation that Kenya-China relations would thrive under his presidency. Nevertheless, in actual fact Kenya and China went on to establish close diplomatic relations during the Moi administration. This apparent paradox is addressed later in this chapter. The state of bilateral relations during President Moi's term in office can be analysed under several headings; diplomatic and political relations, economic and trade relations, Aid and technical assistance, educational and cultural relations, and military relations.

### 3.1 Diplomatic and political relations

During the Moi administration Kenya and China established very warm and cordial diplomatic and political relations. The level of diplomatic and political relations between the two countries was vividly captured in the numerous high level visits carried out by senior leaders from the two countries. With the end of the Cold War, the level of relations went a notch higher due in part to the decline in Kenya's relationship with several western countries on account of pressure for democratization and reforms (Interview with former Kenya Ambassador to China, 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2009).

In August 1980 Vice Premier Ji Pengfei visited Kenya. This was the second high profile visit by a senior Chinese official after a visit by China's vice minister of foreign affairs in November 1979 (Mogire, 1993). The frequency of these visits is significant when it is considered that there had been no high level visit by a senior Chinese official after the visit by Marshall Chen Yi visit during Kenya's Independence Day celebrations in December 1963. The subsequent deterioration in bilateral relations had at one point led to the decision by the Kenyan government to cancel a proposed visit to Kenya by one of China's senior-most leaders Premier Chou Enlai in 1965 (Ndegwa, 2006).

One month after the new administration officially came into office in Kenya, the Chinese government began extending invitations for a state visit. In late November 1978, an invitation to visit China was conveyed directly to President Moi by the new Chinese Ambassador Wang Yeu-Yi. President Moi

reacted to the invitation by stating that he would visit China at an appropriate time (*Daily Nation*, 30/11/1978). One month later, the Chinese Ambassador again extended an invitation for a state visit to China during a meeting with the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Peter Muigai Kenyatta. Mr. Peter Kenyatta while acknowledging that relations between the two countries had improved also conceded that a state visit by President Moi was important if the relationship was to be further consolidated (*Daily Nation*, 22/12/1978). During this period Kenya appointed a new ambassador to China while simultaneously reopening its embassy in the country (*Daily Nation*, 12/12/1978).

In September 1980 President Moi made a groundbreaking five-day visit to China. The visit marked the first time a Kenyan head of state had visited China. It was therefore a significant milestone in the relationship. The only other previous high profile visit to China by a senior Kenyan leader had taken place back in May 1964 when the then Vice President Jaramogi Odinga visited the country. However, the 1964 visit was distinctly less high profile than the 1980 visit and many of the agreements signed during that trip were either not initiated or were abandoned as a result of the subsequent tensions in the bilateral relationship (Ogunsanwo, 1974; Ndegwa, 2006; Chege, 2007).

The importance of the 1980 state visit was captured in the size and composition of the president's delegation, the itinerary and the coverage of the visit both by the local and international media. The president's large delegation was composed of senior members of the cabinet representing

ministries such as those of Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs, and Industry among others. The delegation also included senior bureaucrats as well managers and senior officials of parastatals such as the Lake Basin Authority, Kerio Valley Development Authority, Kenya Pyrethrum Board, and the National Irrigation Board (*Daily Nation*, 16/09/1980). The significant number of people in the president's delegation coupled with the variety in their backgrounds suggests that the country's leadership was keen on fully exploiting the opportunity presented by the visit to forge cooperation in numerous sectors.

The importance of the 1980 state visit was also well captured in the president's itinerary while in China. The president visited several projects in the cities of Beijing, Shanghai and Nanking. The president also met senior Chinese officials including Party Chairman Hua Guofeng as well as the influential Vice Chairman of the ruling party Deng Xiaoping (*Ibid*). The significance of the visit was also captured in the way the local and international media reported on the state visit. A respected local daily the *Daily Nation* gave significant and detailed attention of the state visit. All the newspaper's headlines from 15 - 17<sup>th</sup> September 1980, touched on the president's visit to China. The newspaper's editorial on 20<sup>th</sup> September also focused on the state visit. *The Standard* newspaper also gave significant attention and focus to the state visit. The newspaper's editor in chief, Henry Gathigira, was in the advance party of Kenyans who arrived in China before the arrival of the president (*The Standard*, 23/09/1980).

The significance of the 1980 state visit was also seen in the manner in which major western media outlets reported on the visit. A number of western commentators expressed concern about the visit and its likely impact on Kenya's traditional pro-western foreign policy. As a result of such concerns, western media outlets in Beijing scrambled to interview President Moi in a bid to get more insights into the state visit (*The Standard* 17/09/1980; *Daily Nation*, 20/09/1980).

The 1980 state visit to China by President Moi not only carried the weight that the 1964 visit had lacked, it also yielded a much more significant amount of aid and technical assistance for Kenya. The visit by President Moi also laid an important and new foundation for closer relations between the two countries. As a result of the growing bilateral relations President Moi went on to undertake two further state visits to China in October 1988 and May 1994 (Chege, 2007).

The most important change that took place as a result of the 1980 state visit involved a change in perception. Kenya's political and social elite had long regarded China as a totalitarian and relatively backward socialist state that was incapable of contributing to Kenya's economic development. The negative impression about China in Kenya and elsewhere in the continent was the result of low exposure to China by African leaders as well as distorted impressions left behind by former colonial powers (Cooley, 1965; Larkin, 1971; Hutchinson, 1975). The state visit however transformed the opinions and views of Kenya's political and economic elite.

The president and his delegation were highly impressed by China's strides in such sectors as irrigation, rice growing and the health sector. After the president returned from China, the local media interviewed several members of the Kenyan delegation on their impressions about the country. Many of those interviewed admitted that they had been very impressed by China's progress in several fields as well as the absence of ideological conformity (*Daily Nation*, 20/09/1980).

A senior Kenyan journalist who visited China with the president's delegation expressed surprise at the fact that the once influential book on the thoughts of Chairman Mao was out of circulation (*The Standard*, 23/9/1980). Almost overnight, the old impressions about China had been replaced by new positive impressions. The chairman of the pyrethrum board who was part of the delegation to China openly confessed, 'This is not the same China, we were told off, and this is quite a different picture from what I believed' (*Daily Nation*, 20/09/1980). The change in perception created the means through which the bilateral relationship was cemented.

President Moi made two further subsequent visits to China in October 1988 and May 1994. During the 1988 visit, Moi urged the Chinese to assist Kenya build a water project in Timboroa as well as provide more student exchanges. President Moi also carried out a third state visit to China in May 1994. During the 1994 visit President Moi extended an invitation to the President Jiang Zemin of China to visit Kenya. An important outcome of this

visit was China's decision to extend to Kenya a loan of 350 million shillings as well as a grant of 10 agricultural tractors (*Daily Nation*, 7/5/1994).

During the Moi administration there was a significant increase in mutual high level diplomatic visits. Senior officials from the two countries visited each other on a frequent basis. Kenya's foreign minister Ndolo Ayah visited China in August 1991. A second Kenyan foreign minister Bonaya Godana visited China twice in 1999 and 2000. Over the same period, numerous Chinese delegations visited Kenya. The most high profile delegations were those of Premier Zhao Ziyang in January 1983, President Jiang Ze Min in May 1996 and Premier Zhu Rongji in April 2002 (History of Kenya-China relations, Embassy of China in Kenya website).

The level of diplomatic relations was underscored by the manner in which some of the Chinese high level visits were carried out. A case in point was the hugely symbolic decision by China's leadership to make Kenya the first stop of President Jiang Zemin's 1996 tour of several African countries. At the same time, Kenya was the only Sub-Saharan country on Premier Zhu Rongji three nation tour in 2002 that also took him to Turkey and Egypt (*China Daily*, 24/4/2002).

The growing level of diplomatic relations between Kenya and China culminated in a bilateral agreement that was signed in January 1999 committing the two states to the establishment of a political consultation mechanism. The agreement stipulated *inter alia* that during international conferences the representatives of the two states would 'conduct

consultations, coordination and cooperation on issues of common interest' (Bilateral agreement between Ministry of Foreign affairs of the Republic of Kenya and Ministry of Foreign affairs of China, January 6<sup>th</sup> 1999). The improvement in the bilateral relationship also led to the establishment of close political relations between the ruling party in Kenya, KANU and the Chinese communist party. Senior party officials from both parties also carried out mutual visits (Orwa, 1994; Munene, 2000).

### 3.1.2 Economic and trade relations

During the Kenyatta administration the level of trade and economic relations between Kenya and China was small and low key (Hutchinson, 1975: 194-195). The low levels of trade and economic relations was a product of both strained political ties as well as the incompatibility of the two economies. Kenya prioritized trade and economic relations with major western powers because of the conviction of its leadership that trade with such countries would yield obvious benefits for Kenya unlike trade with communist bloc nations (Goldsworthy, 1982).

During the Moi administration Kenya and China gradually established strong economic and trade relations. The change in policy was mainly because China had in 1979 embraced economic reforms which made it an attractive country in terms of economic opportunities (Orwa, 1994; Chege, 2007). In 1981, in an indication of the significant shift in thinking over economics that had taken place in China, the institute of West Asian and



African studies in Beijing released a volume in which the economies of Kenya and Ivory Coast were praised while those of socialist regimes such as Tanzania were criticized (Snow, 1994).

The prospects for economic and trade ties between the two states were also furthered by domestic and international events in the late 1970's. The Moi administration was facing the challenges of the oil crisis, decline in British assistance as well as the collapse of the East African community (Throup, 1992; Chege, 2007). In view of these challenges, the decision was taken to seek out new markets for Kenyan goods.

Bilateral trade grew slowly between 1980 and 1993 partly as a result of China's focus on western markets. However, after 1994 the volume of bilateral trade increased significantly. The increase in trade after 1994 was the product of two factors economic reforms and liberalization in Kenya, and China's industrial growth which enabled it to produce affordable goods for the Kenyan market. The result was that bilateral trade not only grew significantly but also became more diversified than before with Kenya increasingly importing more finished goods from China (Chege, 2007).

In subsequent years the level of bilateral trade continued to grow at a faster rate. While bilateral trade in 1991 was valued at only 26 million US dollars, by the year 2000 the volume of trade had reached 136 million dollars. Kenya became China's largest trade partner among Southern and East African states (*People's Daily*, 17/7/2001). An issue that arose frequently during this period was the unbalanced nature of bilateral trade which was heavily in

China's favour. President Moi during his state visit of China in May 1994 urged China to increase its purchases of Kenyan products as a way of addressing the trade imbalance (*Daily Nation*, 5/5/1994).

The improved nature of trade and economic relations between Kenya and China resulted in a significant number of Chinese firms entering the Kenyan market thus creating jobs and opportunities. In the year 2001 there were 44 Chinese companies operating in Kenya, out of these 12 were joint ventures with Kenyans. The companies were mainly involved in the infrastructure, telecommunications and the agricultural sectors (*People's Daily*, 17/7/2001).

The increased bilateral trade coupled with the growing presence of Chinese companies in Kenya also served to improve the flow of Chinese foreign direct investment into Kenya. Between 2000 and 2005 China's share of the total foreign direct investment entering Kenya peaked at 7.2% (Chege, 2007).

### **3.1.2 Aid and Technical assistance**

During the Moi administration, China for the first time became a significant contributor of aid and technical assistance to Kenya in various sectors. This was a result of not only an improvement in diplomatic relations but also by President Moi's own admission, the result of his admiration of China's swift modernization and development which led him to seek out Chinese aid and investment (speech by President Moi at the Banquet of China's premier, Zhu Rongji in April, 2002). In November 1978, President Moi

while receiving the Chinese Ambassador to Kenya requested for China's help in the establishment of a rice project in western Kenya (*Daily Nation*, 30/11/1978).

President Moi's September 1980 visit to China led to the establishment of the basis for China's becoming a significant contributor of aid and technical assistance to Kenya. The president and his delegation were very impressed by China's achievements in sectors such hydroelectric dams, engineering and agriculture in particular irrigation (*Daily Nation*, 20/09/1980). President Moi urged his hosts to send a delegation of irrigation experts to Kenya (*Daily Nation*, 19/09/1980). China at the same time announced that it would write off 80,000 shillings given to Kenya during the 1964-1965 period (*The Standard*, 17/09/1980). China also committed itself to assist Kenya build a modern sports complex at a total cost of 930 million Kenya shillings. China agreed to contribute 52% of the cost of the project in the form of an interest free loan while Kenya would contribute the rest. At the same time, the Chinese government also committed itself to the construction of the Gambigi-Serem highway as well as a teaching hospital for Moi University in Eldoret (Chege, 2007).

President Moi made two further visits to China in October 1988 and May 1994. During these visits bilateral agreements were concluded for more Chinese aid and assistance for Kenya. During the 1988 visit, China gave Kenya a 230 million shilling loan for the completion of various Chinese projects in the country in particular the Moi International sports centre in Kasarani (*Daily*

*Nation*, 7/10/1988). President Moi further requested for China's assistance in the construction of a water project in Timboroa. President Moi also asked China to assist Kenya by transferring its locally made drugs directly to Kenya (Ibid). In May 1994, during President Moi's third state visit, China announced a 350 million shilling loan for Kenya (*Daily Nation*, 7/5/1994).

It was during President Moi's time in office that Chinese funding and expertise in the form of Chinese construction companies began playing an important role in the building and upgrading of Kenya's roads. Chinese financial assistance and expertise contributed to the construction or upgrading of three main roads the Kima-Chemasuru (Emusutswi), Kipsigak-Serem-Shamakhokho road, and Gambogi-Serem-Jebok road (Ministry of Roads Briefing). A Chinese construction company China road and Bridge Corporation received a lot of praise for its successful completion of the World Bank funded Mtito Andei-Voi- Bachuma Gate road (*China Daily*, 22/7/09).

In July 2001 China announced the decision to cancel 55% of Kenya's total debt owed to China a figure that amounted to 13.6 million dollars. The gesture by China drew praise from senior government leaders including Finance minister Chris Okemo who pointed out that debt was a serious impediment to Kenya's development (*People's Daily*, 17/7/01).

### **3.1.3 Education and cultural relations .**

The People's Republic of China first established educational and cultural relations with Kenya while Kenya was still a British Colony. During the first

half of the 1960's a small number of Kenyan students went to China to study (Hevi, 1966). The two countries also established a system of regular cultural exchanges (Ogunsanwo, 1974). Such relations however fell victim to the serious deterioration in relations that begun in 1965. An issue of particular concern was the allegations frequently made by western media outlets to the effect that Kenyans were receiving secret military training in China with the aim of bringing about the overthrow of the government. (Cooley, 1965; Larkin, 1971).

The growing tensions in the relationship resulted in a severe curtailment in the number of delegations visiting each other from the two countries. Not a single Chinese delegation visited Kenya between 1964 and 1970. At the same time, between 1966 and 1970 Kenya did not send a single delegation to China despite having sent several delegations a year since 1958 (Ogunsanwo, 1974; 269-270).

During President Moi's 1980 visit to Beijing a new foundation of education and cultural ties between the two states were established. In a highly symbolic gesture, a group of students from the University of Nairobi were included in the president's delegation (*Daily Nation*, 17/09/1980). The inclusion of university students in the president's delegation was highly significant because it suggested that Kenya's political leadership despite its firm anti-communist views no longer regarded China with strong suspicion.

The 1980 visit to China also yielded to the commitment by China to assist in the construction of a teaching hospital for Moi University in Eldoret

and the supply of teaching equipment and apparatus at the Egerton University. The Chinese government at the same time also gave the undertaking to provide ten annual scholarships to Kenyans (Chege, 2007).

In subsequent years several other bilateral agreements in the areas of educational and cultural cooperation were signed. One of the most interesting of the agreements was signed on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1983. In the agreement China undertook to train 24 young Kenyan acrobats in China. (Bilateral Agreement between Government of Kenya and Government of China on training of acrobats, 14/1/1983). The agreement much like the inclusion of university students in the delegation to visit Beijing in 1980 suggested that fears among Kenya's political elite that the youth might be indoctrinated by the Chinese communists had to a large extent dissipated.

In 1994 Kenya's Ambassador to China successfully lobbied the Chinese government to include air fare as part of its scholarship package to Kenyan students. The earlier policy in which the scholarship only covered tuition and related charges had caused numerous challenges for Kenyans who were interested in Chinese scholarships. (Interview with former Kenya Ambassador to China 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2009). In 2002 there were a total of 58 Kenyan students studying in China (China's Embassy in Kenya website).

#### **3.1.4 Military relations**

During President Moi's time in office Kenya and China established military ties for the first time. During the Kenyatta administration Kenya had

prioritized military relations with Great Britain and a few other western states (Opondo, 1988). Kenya rejected any military relationship with any member of the communist bloc a policy that was put in display when Soviet weapons meant for Kenya were rejected at the port of Mombasa (Ndegwa, 2006).

During President Moi's 1980 visit to Beijing, an agreement was reached for the holding of military exchanges between the two countries (Chege, 2007). Nevertheless the first significant offer of Chinese military aid to Kenya was made in October 1991. China announced that in response to Kenya's request it would extend to Kenya an interest free loan of 5,000,000 US dollars meant for the purchase of weapons from China (Bilateral Agreement between the Government of Kenya and the Government of China on provision of military assistance to Kenya 15<sup>th</sup> October, 1991).

The cooperation between the two countries in military matters increased in the years after the end of the Cold War. This was the logical outcome of the tensions that had developed in the relationship between Kenya and its main military ally the United States. In the aftermath of the end Cold War, the US congress pressurized the Bush administration to make the provision of military aid to Kenya conditional on political and judicial reforms (Munene, 2000). In such an environment the Moi administration began to explore military relations with other countries such as China which had given a commitment that it would not interfere in the internal affairs of other states

The first Chinese military delegation visited Kenya in 1996 (China's embassy in Kenya website). One year later, Kenya's Chief of General Staff, Daudi Tonje, and the head of the Air Force, Major General Leshan, visited Beijing. Due to the increased interactions, Kenya dispatched its first military attaché to Beijing in 1998 (Ibid). In May 2000, China supplied the Kenyan Air Force with six Y-12 transport planes. While receiving the planes, Kenya's Chief of General Staff, thanked China for sponsoring a Masters Degree program for Kenyan military officers (*People Daily*, 26/7/2000).

### 3.2 Evaluating Continuity and Change in Kenya-China relations

A comparison of the various aspects of bilateral relations during President Moi's time in power with that of President Kenyatta's time in office reveals that the relationship was characterized by a greater degree of change than by continuity. There is empirical evidence of change in the nature of diplomatic relations in terms of the number of state visits as well as the significant change in the economic domain in the form of the level of aid and assistance offered to Kenya by China as well as bilateral trade.

The question that one may then pose is in what way did President Moi's September 1980 visit to China fit into the whole issue of continuity or change in Kenya-China relations? This study proceeds from the understanding that the available evidence shows that President Moi's 1980 visit to China was not so much a radical break with the past but rather the logical culmination of earlier policies. In other words, forces of continuity in particular the



*rapprochement* between Kenya and China during the 1970's explains President Moi's 1980 visit to China.

The available evidence points to the fact that beginning in 1970 there was a gradual reduction in tensions between Kenya and China. During this period there were no major diplomatic incidents between the two countries. At the same time, both countries ceased the policy of releasing strongly worded criticisms of each other's policies. In 1974 in an indication of the improvement in relations, the Chinese Red Cross made a significant humanitarian donation to Kenya. During this period a Chinese official met President Kenyatta the first time the President had met a Chinese official in a very long time (Mogire, 1993).

The source of discord between China and Kenya after 1965 was to a large extent the result of China's support for armed struggle in the continent as well as China's alleged support for President Kenyatta's political opponents. However, after 1970 there was a significant shift in China's foreign policy. China's leaders announced that they would respect the status quo in Africa and that they would no longer interfere in the domestic politics of African states (El Khawas, 1973). The change in China's foreign policy created the conditions for a *rapprochement* between Kenya and China.

The culmination of the improvement in relations came in 1977 with China's offer to assist Kenya in the construction of a modern sports complex. (Africa Contemporary Record 1977-1978). The offer was a highly significant one since it represented the biggest offer of aid from China since the

establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The improvement in bilateral relations was also captured when in November 1977, President Kenyatta's son, Peter Muigai Kenyatta, who was also an Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, praised China as a 'friendly nation'. Peter Kenyatta went on to observe that only a lack of funds at the time prevented Kenya from reopening its embassy in Beijing (Africa contemporary record 1979: B 277-278).

The *rapprochement* between Kenya and China during the last years of President Kenyatta's administration did not however culminate in a state visit to China by President Kenyatta. The state visits to China by Emperor Haile Selassie and Mobutu Sese Seko are seen by scholars as providing huge impetus to the normalization of relations between the two states and China (El-Khawas, 1973). However, the fact that no such visit took place is more likely attributable to the fact that President Kenyatta was said by those who knew him well including a former Foreign Minister, Dr. Njoroge Mungai, and Kenya's first Central Bank Governor, Ndegwa to have had a genuine aversion towards air travel (Ndegwa, 2006).

There are however several aspects of change in Kenya-China relations during President Moi's administration in comparison to that during the Kenyatta administration. The change in the relationship is seen in terms of increased interactions by Kenyan and Chinese leaders as well as the people of the two countries and in the numerous areas of cooperation that the two states agreed to cooperate in.

During the Kenyatta administration there were very few diplomatic interactions between Kenya and China. Vice President Odinga's 1964 visit to China was the only high level Kenyan delegation to visit China during the period. The only senior Chinese official to visit Kenya in the same period was Marshall, Chen Yi who attended the Independence Day celebrations in December 1963. A subsequent request by the Chinese Premier, Chou En-Lai, to visit was turned down by the Kenyatta government (Ndegwa, 2006). In comparison, during the Moi administration numerous mutual high level visits took place as seen in Table 1.

The second major aspect of change in Kenya-China relations was discernible in the issue of the level of aid and technical assistance that China extended to Kenya. During the Kenyatta administration China's aid commitment to Kenya was one of the smallest among Kenya's external donors (Cooley, 1965). During that period China did not propose to undertake any major project choosing instead to fund a few small projects in Kenya (Ibid). In the final analysis, the deterioration in Kenya-China diplomatic relations led to the abandonment of a number of the Chinese funded projects (Chege, 2007; Ogunsanwo, 1974). The contrast is seen with regard to the Moi administration where China's funding and expertise was behind the construction of the Moi International sports centre, a number of major roads, as well as a number of major infrastructural projects. The significant change in the nature of China's aid and technical assistance offered to Kenya is shown in Table 2

**Table 1: Bilateral visits of senior Kenyan and Chinese officials during the Moi administration**

<u>Visits to China by senior Kenyan officials during the Moi administration</u>	<u>Visits to Kenya by senior Chinese officials during the Moi administration</u>
<p>Daniel Arap Moi, President (September 1980, October 1988, May 1994)</p> <p>Daniel Okiki Amayo, Chairman of KANU- (1986)</p> <p>Wilson Ndolo Ayah, Minister of Foreign affairs- (August 1991)</p> <p>Bonaya Godana, Minister of Foreign affairs- (April 1999 and 2000)</p> <p>Francis Ole Kaparo, Speaker of the national assembly (April 2000)</p>	<p>Ji Pengfei, Vice premier (August 1980)</p> <p>Zhao Ziyang, Premier (January 1983)</p> <p>Tian Jiyun, Vice premier (Nov 1985)</p> <p>Gu Mu, State council member (Apr 1985)</p> <p>Wu Xueqian, State council member and minister of foreign affairs- (May 1987)</p> <p>Sun Qimeng, Vice Chairman of the National People's Congress (NPC) (Nov 1991)</p> <p>Qian Qichen, Vice premier and foreign minister (Jan 1991, Jan 1994)</p> <p>Chen Muhua, Vice-chairwoman of the NPC (April 1992)</p> <p>Jiang Zemin, President of China (May 1996)</p> <p>Qian Zhengying, Vice chairperson of the NPCC. (June 1997)</p> <p>Tang Jiaxuan, Minister of foreign affairs (January 1999)</p> <p>Peng Peiyun, Vice-Chairwoman of the NPC (Nov 1999)</p> <p>Li Peng, Chairman of the NPC (Nov 1999)</p> <p>Dai Bingguo, Minister of the International liaison department of the CPC central committee (April 2000)</p> <p>Wang Zhongyou, Secretary general of the state council (May 2000)</p> <p>Li Tieying- Member of the political bureau of the CPC central committee- (2001)</p> <p>Zhu Rongji, Premier of the state council- (April 2002)</p>

Source- "Bilateral relations between Kenya and China".  
Website of the China Embassy in Kenya

**Table 2: Comparison of major Chinese aid and assistance projects during the Kenyatta and Moi administrations**

<u>Chinese aid and technical assistance to Kenya during the Kenyatta administration</u>	<u>Chinese aid and technical assistance to Kenya during the Moi administration</u>
<p>May 1964- A cash grant of 2.8 million dollars to Kenya to help balance the budget (Ogunsanwo, 1974)</p> <p>June 1964- An agreement in which China would supply machines worth 18 million dollars to Kenya (Ibid)</p> <p>Early 1965- China committed itself to the construction of a textile factory and a sugar refinery in Kenya (Chege, 2007).</p> <p>N.B. Due to the subsequent deterioration in bilateral relations a number of Chinese projects that were signed during the Kenyatta administration were either not undertaken or in some cases were abandoned midway.</p> <p>Total aid promised as of 1965 calculated as 25 million dollars in total. (Cooley, 1965)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Moi International sports centre Kasarani. (Sports stadium 60,000 seater, Olympic sized swimming pool, and Gymnasium) Total cost of the project- 930 million shillings. China provided an interest free loan to cover 52% of the project's cost the government of Kenya would cover the rest (Chege, 2007).</li> <li>2. Construction of a teaching hospital at the Moi university (Ibid).</li> <li>3. Supply of technical equipment for Egerton University (Ibid). China also established the Sino-Kenyan horticultural technology cooperation centre in Egerton university.</li> <li>4. Gambogi-Serem highway - 20 km in total- cost 314 million Kenyan shillings. China covered 69.5% of the total cost of project. The project stalled in Nov. 1998 due to lack of funds. In 2009 Chinese government agreed to complete the last five km of the road (Ministry of Roads briefing)</li> <li>5. Kima-Chemasuru (Emusutswi) road. - 12.5 km long. Completed in 2001 (Ibid)</li> <li>6. Kipsigak-Serem-Shamakhokho road- 53.3 km. Chinese loan of 6.05 million dollars over five years from September 2001. Completed in 2006 (People's Daily 17<sup>th</sup> July 2001; Ministry of roads briefing)</li> <li>7. July 2001- China cancelled 55% of total debt Kenya owed to China amounting to 13.6 million dollars. (People's Daily 17<sup>th</sup> July 2001)</li> </ol>

### 3.3 Explanations for continuity and change in Kenya-China relations

This study is based on the assumption that the state of Kenya -China relations from the Kenyatta administration to the Moi administration was characterized more by change than continuity. The question therefore is what is the explanation for the degree of change and continuity seen in the relationship? The study is informed by two hypotheses:

- I. Kenya-China relations have improved as a result of changes in the global distribution of power or polarity.
- II. Kenya-China relations have been enhanced as a result of changes in leadership in Kenya and China.

For the first hypothesis to be deemed valid there is need in keeping with the assumptions of neo-classical realism to show that a fundamental shift in the global distribution of power did take place and that those changes in turn contributed to the improvement of Kenya-China relations. There is evidence to support the hypothesis that changes in the global distribution of power improved in the relationship between the two countries.

In the first place, the *rapprochement* in Kenya-China relations that begun during the 1970's was the result of a significant change in China's foreign policy. Several events in 1968 and 1969 had a far reaching effect on China's domestic politics and its foreign policy. The decline of the US dollar,

the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and the challenges the US was facing in Vietnam after the Tet offensive, as well as the increase in the number of Soviet troops amassing on the common border with China convinced the Chinese leadership that a fundamental shift in the global distribution of power was underway and that the USSR was gaining more power and influence at the expense of the United States (O'Leary 1979; Shambaugh, 1994).

The perception of a shift in the global distribution of power by China's leaders led to the Sino-American *rapprochement* of 1971-72. The Chinese leadership became convinced that good relations with the United States were necessary to safeguard China's national interests. The Sino-American *rapprochement* in turn transformed China from being a destabilizing power into a 'status quo power' (Shambaugh 1994: 199). China's foreign policy towards the developing world was as a result transformed. China declared its willingness to support the status quo in Africa and began reaching out to conservative African leaders such as Mobutu Sese Seko and Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia (El-Khawas, 1973). The change in China's foreign policy was in evidence in 1983 when the Ivory Coast finally recognized China and declared that the recognition was the result of the fact that unlike the USSR, China was not interested on spreading revolution (Snow, 1994). This new found moderation in China's foreign policy paved the way for the gradual normalization of Kenya-China relations.

Developments during the 1970's in the horn of Africa region are also likely to have had a significant amount of impact on Kenya-China relations. The government of President Moi was concerned about the growing influence of the USSR and Cuba on the balance of power in the Horn of Africa region. A matter of particular concern for Kenya's political leadership was the attempt by Cuba's leader Fidel Castro in 1977 to convince Yemen, Ethiopia and Somalia to form a confederation of socialist states. There was apprehension at the time that the establishment of such a confederation would result in Kenya's isolation (Makinda, 1983). Although the crisis in the horn of Africa was regional it also had an international or global dimension because of the heavy involvement of both superpowers (Ibid).

The concerns that Kenya's leadership had about the balance of power in the region were shared by US policymakers. Senior officials in the Carter administration, led by National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, specifically made the case for closer coordination between the US and China to contain Soviet-Cuban activities in the horn of Africa (Garrison, 2002). The decision by President Moi to develop military ties between Kenya and the United States would have served indirectly to further Kenya-China relations since the US had roped China into a de-facto anti-Soviet alliance whose focus was the horn of Africa (Ibid). In this regard it is significant to note that during a visit to Kenya in 1980, Ji Pengfei, a senior Chinese official hinted that his government supported Kenya's decision to grant military facilities to the United States (Snow, 1994).



The second major shift in the global distribution of power took place after 1991 with the end of the Cold War. The bipolar world order ceased to exist after one pole the USSR collapsed. The end of the Cold War robbed both Kenya and China of their strategic importance to the West (Shambaugh, 1994; Schraeder, 1994). In the subsequent years both Kenya and China came under heavy pressure from the West on a whole range of issues. Senior Kenyan policymakers complained about the growing attention being paid to Eastern Europe at the expense of Africa. A senior Kenyan diplomat, Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat, sought to capture the disillusionment with the West among African policy makers; “Eastern Europe is the most sexy beautiful girl, and we are an old tattered lady” (Schraeder, 1994: 250). In such an environment, Kenya-China relations were further strengthened on account of the common challenges the two states faced in a new international environment (Interview with former Kenya Ambassador to China, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009).

The Tiananmen Square crackdown of 1989 and the resulting avalanche of western criticism led to a crisis in China’s relations with the West. The result was that China’s leaders turned to Africa the only part of the world where they had not been condemned (Snow, 1994; Taylor, 1998). Western criticism of China on a whole range of issues increased after the end of the Cold War. China’s leaders sought to win the approval of African leaders by speaking out forcefully against interference in the internal affairs of African states by western countries (Taylor, 1998).

Kenya-China relations were particularly strengthened by the fact that the Moi administration was strongly opposed to the criticism of developing nations on issues of human rights and democratization, a concern that was shared by China. President Moi during his 1988 state visit of China assured his hosts that Kenya was strongly opposed to the interference in the internal affairs of small states by powerful states under any pretext (*Daily Nation*, 5/10/1988). During this period both Kenya and China regularly abstained from votes at the United Nations on issues to do with human rights abuses in places as diverse as Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Sudan, Bosnia and the Democratic republic of Congo (Mutwol, 2002). The similarity in the thinking of the leadership of both countries was captured in China's declaration in May 1994, that during the Moi administration the two countries 'have supported and cooperated with each other on the human rights issue' (Taylor 1998: 453).

The sustained pressure on President Moi by western powers, in particular the activities of the US Ambassador, Smith Hempstone, contrasted sharply with China's steadfast support for the Moi regime. The respected *Weekly Review* noted the irony of the situation in light of the country's history. Kenyans who visited the homes of US diplomats were marked out by the Kenya intelligence services. The irony was that such kind of attention had in earlier years been reserved for 'visitors to the Soviet, Chinese and other socialist embassies in Nairobi' (quoted in Munene, 2000).

President Moi became highly mistrustful of western powers and much more trusting of countries such as China. During the 1994 state visit to China,

President Moi confided in Kenya's Ambassador in the country that he was keen on convincing China to prospect for oil in Kenya because he did not trust firms from western countries that were at the time prospecting for oil in the country (Interview with former Kenya Ambassador to China, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009). This account fits well with a media article in 2008 which revealed that during the early 1990's, the Moi administration expelled a western oil company shortly after the company had managed to discover some oil deposits in the Lodwar region of the country (*Daily Nation*, 17/8/08).

The first hypothesis is therefore valid. A shift in the global distribution of power led China's leaders to adopt a less militant and less ideological foreign policy in the 1970's. This action in itself had a direct bearing on Kenya-China relations as it removed a major obstacle to the improvement in relations. In the case of Kenya, the perception by the political leadership that the balance of power in the horn of Africa and the rest of the region was changing led to the decision to forge close military relations with the United States. The decision by Kenya to forge such relations had a direct bearing on Kenya-China relations because China was at the same time part of a US led anti-Soviet alliance and secondly because China's main objective in Africa at that point was the elimination of the Soviet and Cuban presence in the African continent (Makinda, 1983).

In order for the second hypothesis to be deemed valid it is necessary to show that changes in the leadership in Kenya and China significantly improved the bilateral relationship. This hypothesis also has significant amount of

evidence to support it. The fact is that although the bilateral relationship had experienced a gradual *rapprochement* since the early 1970's the relationship was not consolidated until President Moi made his maiden trip to China in September 1980 during which a number of agreements were signed. There is evidence to suggest that the lack of consolidation in the relationship was in part the result of the age, leadership styles and personalities of President Kenyatta and Mao Tse tung.

The fact is that during the 1970's when the bilateral relationship was gradually improving both leaders were not in much position to further consolidate the relationship. President Kenyatta's old age and ill health meant that more focus was placed on domestic politics particularly the question of who would succeed the president (Ndegwa, 2006). In the case of China, Mao Tse-tung's old age (he was 78 when he met Nixon in 1972) and ill health similarly sparked maneuvering for power which in turn affected the country's foreign policy (Hacker, 1986). The fact that both Kenyatta and Mao disliked travel may also have served to keep relations from moving forward. President Kenyatta owing to his fear of flying made his last overseas visit to neighbouring Ethiopia in 1967 (Ndegwa, 2006). Mao Tse-tung on the other hand only made two state visits abroad during his entire time in power both to neighbouring USSR (Medeiros and Fravel, 2003).

The coming to power or prominence within a year of each other of two leaders, Vice Premier, Deng Xiaoping in 1977 and President Moi in 1978 served to significantly boost Kenya-China relations. The rise in prominence of Deng

strengthened the forces of pragmatism that had sometimes been held back by Mao Tse-tung (Millar, 1979). Deng Xiaoping's pragmatism coupled with his policy of embracing of economic reforms and western technology; as well as his steadfast opposition to the Soviet Union's activities in Africa as well as in Asia served as impetus for the strengthening of bilateral relations with the Moi administration.

The coming to power of President Moi in Kenya in 1978 also had a direct bearing on the bilateral relationship. It has been particularly argued that President Moi's realization that he lacked the regional and international status of his predecessor led him to seek to make his own mark on Kenya's foreign policy (Kariuki, 2009). As a result President Moi decided to personally take charge of Kenya's foreign policy. In a departure from what analysts had expected, President Moi choose to make France the first foreign country he would visit ahead of Kenya's former colonial power and traditional ally the United Kingdom. The choice of France as the first port of call was seen as seen by some observers as signifying the intention of the new president to de-emphasize the traditional strong links with Britain while at the same time demonstrating Kenya's new independence in foreign policy (Makinda, 1978).

The wish by President Moi to make his mark on Kenya's foreign policy also drove him to make his maiden trip to China in 1980 despite skepticism in some quarters about the relevance of the visit (*Daily Nation*, 20/09/1980). The visit enabled the new president to claim the credit for being the president who revived relations between Kenya and China. The 1980 state

visit also earned a significant amount of publicity for the president with western media outlets scrambling to interview the president while he was in Beijing (*The Standard*, 20/09/1980). In the aftermath of the visit, the president claimed the mantle of an African statesman whose move was in keeping with Kenya's professed policy of non-alignment (*Daily Nation*, 20/09/1980).

Furthermore, the new President came into office at a time in which due to a combination of factors, Kenya was facing serious economic challenges. The doubling of global oil prices coupled with the collapse of the East African community as well as the decline of British aid to Kenya necessitated the seeking out of new markets as well as new sources of aid and technical assistance in the form of countries such as China (Chege, 2007; Throup, 1993).

The new President also sought to reach out to China because he was keen on enlisting the help of China in the construction of major projects in his home province of Rift Valley (Chege, 2007). When he came into power in 1978 President Moi faced a significant amount of opposition from several leaders in his native Rift Valley province (Throup and Hornsby, 1998). The enlisting of Chinese help in the construction of projects in Rift Valley was an ideal strategy to cement the position of President Moi in his native Rift Valley.

### 3.4 Conclusion

The main argument advanced in this chapter is that Kenya-China relations during the Moi administration were characterized by a significant amount of change when compared to relations during the Kenyatta administration. The aspect of change was vividly captured in the frequent contact between the political leadership of the two countries as well as the growing contact between the citizens of the two countries. During the Kenyatta administration contact between the leadership of two countries had been highly limited. The second major aspect of change was seen in the area of China's contribution of aid and technical assistance to Kenya. During the Moi administration, China became an important contributor of aid and technical assistance for Kenya. The significant change in the relationship was a product of both shifts in the global distribution of power which in turn contributed to changes in China's foreign policy as well as changes in leadership of the two countries which served to consolidate the relationship.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4 Kenya-China relations during the Kibaki Administration (2002-2008)

#### **4.0 Introduction**

The main objective of this chapter is the examination of Kenya-China relations during the period encompassing the first term in office of Kenya's third President Mwai Kibaki. A related objective will be to determine the extent to which the state of bilateral relations during the Kibaki administration compares to that of previous administrations in particular the Moi administration. The aim will be to seek out patterns of continuity and change in the relationship while at the same time providing explanations for the degree of change and continuity in the relationship.

Kenya's second President Daniel Arap Moi officially left office in December 2002. In the historic general elections of 27<sup>th</sup> December 2002, Mwai Kibaki, the presidential candidate for the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), defeated Uhuru Kenyatta, the presidential candidate of the Kenya National African Union (KANU) which had ruled Kenya since independence in 1963 (Cooke and Throup, 2003).

The new President had an extensive background in public service under both former Presidents Kenyatta and Moi. Kibaki had held such important portfolios such as vice president (1978-1988) as well as stints as minister in charge of economic planning, finance, home affairs, and health (Ibid). In view of the serious economic challenges that Kenya faced at the time it was widely



expected that President Kibaki's main focus would be to bring about Kenya's economic recovery and renewal (Cooke and Throup, 2003; Barkan, 2004).

On the specific question of Kenya's foreign policy, it was generally assumed that the new government would maintain Kenya's traditional close ties with the West. Some scholars even argued that the capture of power by a coalition of opposition parties would improve relations with the United States on account of the important role the US had played in Kenya's democratization process (Cooke and Throup, 2003).

There was no firm indication at the time that Kenya-China relations would thrive under the new government. On the contrary, there were indications that President Kibaki was opposed to certain aspects of China's foreign policy in particular, China's strong opposition on visits by Tibetan leader the Dalai Lama to foreign countries. In 1999 Mwai Kibaki, in his capacity as the leader of opposition, had strongly condemned President Moi's decision to reject a request by the Dalai Lama to visit Kenya. Kibaki had at the time accused President Moi of giving in to 'checkbook diplomacy' (*Kenya Times*, 27/5/2007).

The fact however is that despite such initial concerns, Kenya-China relations during the Kibaki administration have remained vibrant even while Kenya's relationship with some of its traditional development partners have significantly been downgraded (*Business Daily*, 22/10/2007). Media commentators have frequently juxtaposed Kenya's growing relations with

China and the perceived deterioration of Kenya's relations with former colonial power Great Britain (*Daily Nation*, 30/08/ 2008).

The state of Kenya-China relations during the Kibaki administration can be analyzed under various sub-headings namely diplomatic and political relations, economic relations including trade, aid and technical assistance, cooperation in the fields of public health, tourism, education and cultural relations, mining and oil exploration, and military relations.

#### **4.1 Diplomatic and political relations**

During the Kibaki administration Kenya and China have maintained very warm and cordial diplomatic and political relations. The two countries have also sustained a high level of diplomatic exchanges and visits. In August 2005, President Kibaki made his first official state visit to China. During this visit a host of agreements were signed by the two countries (Chege, 2007). The significance of the 2005 visit lay in the fact that it displayed continuity in the bilateral relationship. This was because President Kibaki's 2005 visit was actually the honouring of an earlier invitation to visit China that had been made by Chinese President, Jiang Zemin, during his visit to Kenya in 1996 (Interview with a former Kenya Ambassador to China, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009).

In April 2006, the President of China, Hu Jintao, visited Kenya as part of a five-nation tour. During the visit a number of bilateral agreements were signed. In November 2006, President Kibaki again visited China on that occasion joining other African heads of state and government in attending the

Forum on China-Africa cooperation summit in Beijing. Over the same period other senior Kenyan and Chinese officials carried out mutual visits. Kenya's Foreign Affairs Minister Raphael Tuju led a tourism delegation to China (Kabukuru, 2006). Kenya's Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka led an official government delegation to the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

Senior Chinese officials who visited Kenya during the Kibaki administration include China's senior most legislator, Wu Bangguo, in October 2004; China's Defence Minister, Gen. Cao Gangcuan in November 2007; senior Chinese political advisor, Jia Qinglin in April 2007; China's Minister of Commerce, Chen Deming in January 2009 and Chief Executive Officer of the China Africa Development fund Chi Jianxin in August 2009.

#### **4.1.1 Economic relations: trade, aid and technical assistance**

Although there have been a number of changes in various spheres of the bilateral relationship over time no sphere has seen such great changes as the economic sphere of the relationship. During the Kibaki administration bilateral trade has increased significantly both in terms of the variety of goods traded as well as in the total volume of trade (Chege, 2007). At the same time, the share of foreign direct investment emanating from China has seen a significant increase thus benefiting Kenya's economy (Onjala, 2008). According to an official of the Kenya Investment Authority records show that Chinese companies have invested at least 5.173 billion shillings in Kenya over the last few years (E-mail communication with Kenya Investment Authority official, 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2009).

During the Kibaki administration, China has also emerged as one of Kenya's largest and most important bilateral donors. In 2002 China's share in Kenya's total external development assistance was only 0.08 percent. In 2005 China's contribution to Kenya had risen to 13 per cent (Cooke, 2007). In that year for the first time China aid contribution to Kenya outstripped that of traditional western donors (Chege, 2007).

During President Kibaki's time in office, China has assisted Kenya in the modernization and strengthening of Kenya's electricity distribution system while at the same time helping Kenya in its ambitious rural telecommunication development project (Onjala, 2008). In the area of roads infrastructure, China has made a two-fold contribution. The first has been in the funding towards the construction and improvement of roads. The second has taken the form of Chinese expertise and efficiency that has occurred when Chinese companies have undertaken major infrastructure projects thus furthering bilateral relations.

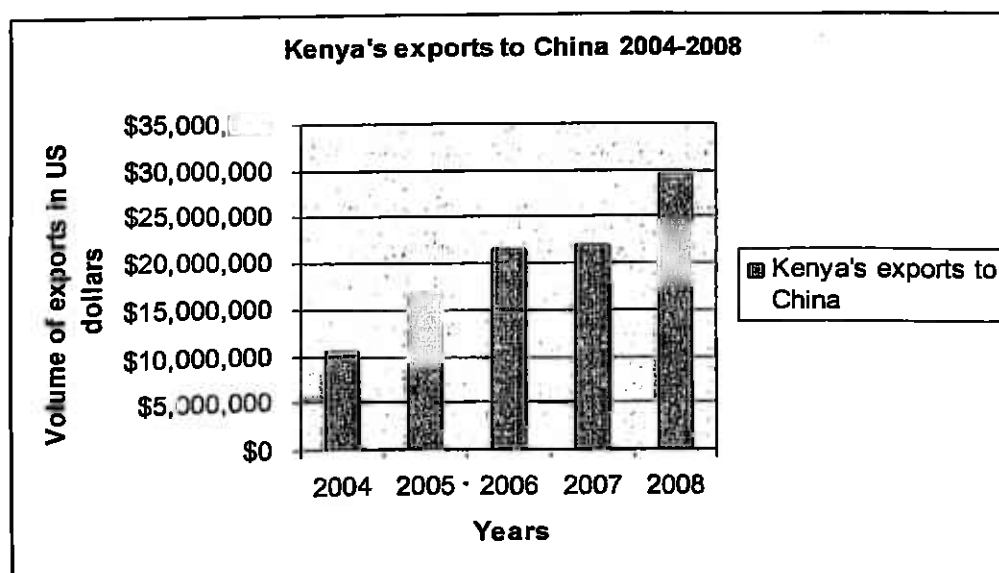
The main road infrastructure project that has been undertaken by the Chinese government during the Kibaki administration is the 2 billion shillings construction and re-carpeting of the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport-Uhuru Highway-Museum Hill-Gigiri road project. The project is expected to significantly ease traffic when complete as one of its objectives is the removal of roundabouts (Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, 26/4/2007).

On the sidelines of the 2006 Forum on China Africa cooperation summit, China's President Hu Jintao, announced that his government would assist

Kenya in the construction of three bypasses to ease traffic in Nairobi thus furthering Nairobi's capability as a regional hub. China agreed to extend a concessional loan to Kenya amounting to 85 per cent of the total cost of 8.5 billion shillings in the funding of the northern and eastern bypasses (*Xinhua*, 22/9/2009).

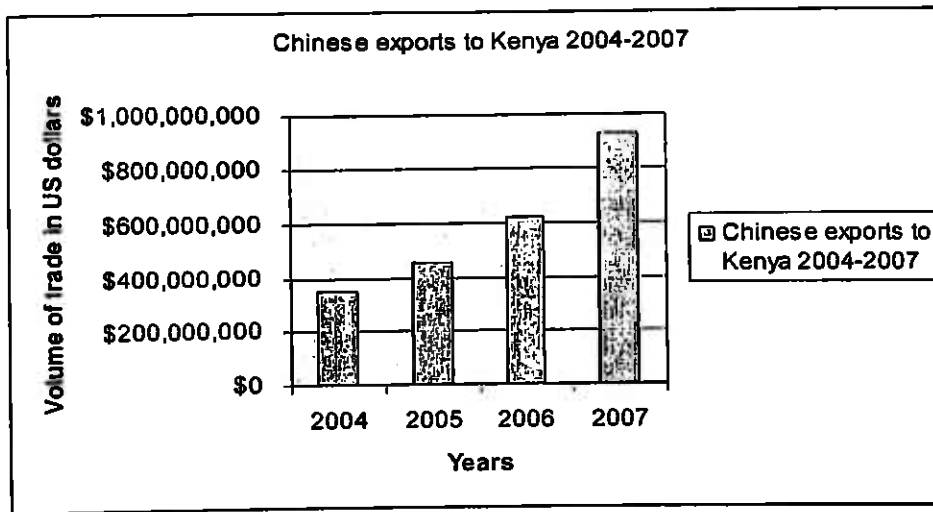
The role of Chinese construction firms in Kenya's infrastructural development is not limited to projects funded by the government of China. A number of Chinese firms have won International contracts. A case in point is the tarmacking of the 530 kilometers long Isiolo to Moyale road that is expected to significantly boost Kenya-Ethiopia trade while at the same time opening up the area for tourism (Reuters, 22/8/2008). Three Chinese firms are also involved in the construction of the African development Bank funded Thika highway (*The Standard*, 15/11/2008).

Figure 1



Source- UN Comtrade statistics

Figure 2



**Volume of Chinese exports to Kenya (2004-2007).** The volume of Chinese exports to Kenya in 2008 surpassed the one billion mark and stood at 1,249, 332,629 US dollars. Source- UN Comtrade statistics

**Table 3**

**Main commitments made by China during the Forum on China-Africa cooperation (FOCAC) Summit of Nov 2006**

1. China to set up a China-Africa development fund gradually amounting to 5 billion US dollars to support Chinese firms which want to invest in Africa.
2. China to increase the number of items exported from Africa that are eligible for zero-tariff treatment.
3. China to double development assistance to Africa by 2009.
4. China to provide 3 billion dollars in preferential loans and 2 billion for preferential export buyers credit to African countries in the next three years.
5. The cancellation of interest free loans that were due by the end of 2005 for the most heavily indebted African countries.
6. The setting up of 100 rural schools and the doubling of Scholarships offered to African students to 4,000.
7. The building of 10 hospitals and 30 anti-malarial clinics and the provision of 37.5 million dollars for purchase of anti-malarial drugs.
8. The sending of 100 senior Agricultural experts to Africa.

Source (Gill et al, 2007)

**Table 4: Major Chinese projects and assistance during the Kibaki administration**

- Kenya power distribution system modernization programme-2005 (Onjala, 2008)
- Rural telecommunications development project-2005 (Ibid)
- Expansion and upgrading of Jomo Kenyatta International Airport-Uhuru Highway-Museum Hill-Gigiri road project- Cost 2.2 billion Kenyan shillings (KBC, 26/4/07).
- Funding of Nairobi Southern by-pass- cost \$ US -56 million, Nairobi Northern by-pass- Nairobi Eastern by-pass- and link roads- total cost 145 million US dollars (KBC, 13/1/09).
- Modernization of National youth service training centre- China to undertake to contribute part of the 4 billion shillings needed for the project (Speech by President Kibaki on return from FOCAC summit, 7 Nov 2006).
- Rehabilitation of the Kasarani International sports complex- Total cost 350 million Kenyan shillings (Ibid).
- Upgrading and equipping of Kakamega, Nyamira, Nyeri and Malindi district hospitals- total cost 380 million Kenyan shillings (KBC, 13/1/09). Upgrading and supplying of equipment to the Moi teaching and referral hospital (Speech by President Kibaki, on return from FOCAC summit, 7<sup>th</sup> Nov 2006).
- Maize flour processing equipment in Bomet and other drought hit areas (Onjala, 2008) Total cost of the project 110 million Kenyan shillings (Speech by President Kibaki on return from FOCAC summit, 7<sup>th</sup> Nov 2006).
- China to partner with the Kenyan government in the high grand Power generation project along the Athi and Tana basins. The project is expected to contribute 200 megawatts to the national grid (Xinhua, 23/8/09).

#### 4.1.2 Cooperation in matters of Public Health, tourism, educational and cultural relations

An important feature of Kenya-China relations during the Kibaki administration has been the fact that several new areas of cooperation have arisen in the relationship. A case in point is in the area of tourism. Since the year 2003, the Kibaki administration has gone out of the way in seeking to diversify Kenya's sources of tourism arrivals (Kariuki, 2009). In 2004 China gave a boost to Kenya's tourism sector when it designated Kenya among its official preferred tourist destination for its citizens. Tourism arrivals from China doubled within a few years and are expected to continue to increase (Onjala, 2008).

The decision of the Chinese government in the matter was warmly welcomed by stakeholders because of two factors. Firstly, China is one of the world's largest growing tourism markets. Secondly, China's designation of Kenya as a preferred tourist designation was issued at a time in which Kenya's tourism industry was buffeted by negative travel advisories from western powers that have traditionally been a mainstay of the sector (Kabukuru, 2006). During the same period Kenya's national airline was given permission to fly directly to Hong Kong and Ghoungzhou thus facilitating not only the travel of Kenyans but also other Africans through Kenya airways which also contributed to the airlines profitability (Chege, 2007).

The state of education and cultural ties between the two countries has also seen significant growth during the same period. China has continued



providing scholarships to Kenyans in various fields. Each year China gives an estimated 100 education scholarships to Kenya with a significant percentage of the scholarships going to medical related fields (Onjala, 2008). In 2006 China launched a program through in which courses on capacity building would be offered to Kenyans in both the private and public sectors (ibid). In February 2006, China established a Confucius Institute at the University of Nairobi the first in the continent with the objective of promoting Chinese language and culture (Chege, 2007; Onjala, 2008). China also contributed to the construction of the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and technology Taita-Taveta campus (*China daily*, 22/7/2009).

The government of China has also assisted Kenya's government improve various aspects of its health sector. In 2006 during the visit by President Hu Jintao, China gave Kenya a donation of Duo cotexcin anti-malaria medicine with a value of RMB 5,000,000 (Joint communiqué between the Government of Kenya and Government of China during President Hu Jin Tao's visit to Kenya, 2006). The government of China has also provided a total of 380 million Kenyan shillings for the upgrading of Kakamega, Malindi, Nyamira and Nyeri district hospitals. During the same period China also committed itself to the construction of a major hospital in the Eastlands area of Nairobi (KBC, 13/1/09). The proposed hospital is expected to contribute significantly to the reduction of the number of patients seeking treatment in the main reference hospital Kenyatta National hospital (ibid).

#### 4.1.3 Military relations

An area of the bilateral relationship that has seen significant change during the Kibaki administration is the military sphere of the relationship. Military ties between Kenya and China were established during the Moi administration. The relationship blossomed from initial military visits and academic courses for Kenyan military personnel to the purchase of some Chinese military hardware. Nevertheless, the Moi administration continued to buy a majority of the Kenya's military hardware from western countries (*Business Daily*, 22/10/2007). However, the situation changed fundamentally with the coming to power of President Kibaki. Chinese companies became major sources of military hardware for Kenya often at the expense of western companies. In 2006 Kenya bought 400 military transport trucks from a Chinese company in the process turning down bids by western companies (*The Standard*, 27/09/2010). The government of Kenya later purchased a group of Z-9 helicopters from China as part of the VIP fleet (*Daily Nation*, 27/3/2010). In 2004 in a case that epitomized the growing influence of Chinese firms at the expense of western firms, a British firm J.S Franklin, which had supplied Kenya's armed forces with uniform and combat gear since independence lost the lucrative contract to a Chinese firm (*Daily Nation*, 4/2/2005). The growing military relationship between Kenya and China was in evidence In November 2007 when China's Defence, Minister Gen. Cao Gangcuan, offered his government's help in the modernization of Kenya's armed forces. President Kibaki welcomed the offer (*Daily Nation*, 19/11/2007).

The growing military links between Kenya and China has however attracted a significant amount of controversy. Serious questions were raised about the manner in which the Ministry of Defence in 2006 awarded a 1.6 billion Kenyan shilling contract to a Chinese firm to supply transport trucks for Kenya's armed forces. At the time, there were queries on why another supplier Renault whose vehicles had been evaluated and deemed as more reliable was bypassed and the contract given to a Chinese firm (*Daily Nation*, 12/9/ 2008).

The Chinese supplied Steyr trucks have in the subsequent years been further dogged by controversy as critics have pointed to their poor safety record which has resulted in a number of accidents and the death of several members of the Kenyan military (Ibid). There have also been reports to the effect that the Chinese manufactured Z-9 helicopters which were supplied to Kenya to replace the VIP fleet are defective and non-operational (*The Nation*, 27/3/2010).

#### 4.1.4 Mining and Oil exploration

During the Kibaki administration Kenya and China have gradually established a very close relationship in the areas of mining and oil exploration. The basis for such cooperation was established during the Moi administration. President Moi during his 1994 visit of China urged the Chinese authorities to assist Kenya in its search for oil deposits in Northern Kenya (Interview with former Kenya Ambassador to China, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009).

In 2006 after the visit to Kenya by China's President Hu Jintao, the Kibaki administration announced that it had granted exclusive rights for oil exploration in six out of the total of eleven oil blocks in the country to the China national offshore oil company (CNOOC). The decision by the Kenyan government to grant the oil blocs without competitive bidding elicited strong protests from a number of western firms which accused the government of favoring CNOOC. (Chege, 2007; Onjala, 2008).

China has also made an important contribution to Kenya's mining sector. In 2007 one of China's most powerful mining companies Jianchuan group Ltd gave \$9.34 million to the cash strapped Canadian Tiomin's titanium mining project in Kwale (Chege, 2007).

#### **4.2 Continuity and Change in Kenya-China relations during the Kibaki**

##### **Administration**

The central argument made in this chapter is that a comparison of the state of bilateral relations during the Kibaki administration with that during the Moi administration reveals that the bilateral relationship has been characterized more by continuity than change. While some elements of change can be seen in the bilateral relationship during the Kibaki administration: elements of continuity with the Moi administration include the close and cordial diplomatic ties between the two countries and the important role that the Chinese government and Chinese companies are playing in Kenya's infrastructure development.

The main aspect of change in Kenya-China relations during the Kibaki administration that differs with that of previous administrations is the economic dimension to the relationship. According to Orwa (1994) and Chege (2007) economic factors in particular the need for new markets played an important role in President Moi's decision to normalize relations with China in 1980. However, as Chege also concedes, political factors also played an important role in President Moi's decision to seek out an improvement in relations in China.

President Moi's visit to China in 1980 was partly aimed at convincing China to undertake a number of major projects in the president's home area of Rift Valley so as to solidify his regional support base (Chege, 2007). Chege's assertion is backed by empirical evidence. Scholars who have reviewed China's activities in the African countries such as Angola point to the fact that Chinese aid during certain periods has tended to mainly be in the form of prestige projects in particular projects that are linked to the ruling elite (Schiller, 2005).

It is illuminating that two of the three major roads projects launched by the Chinese government during the Moi administration namely the Kipsigak-Serem-Shamakhokho and Gambogi-Serem highways transversed the president's home province. According to a senior retired diplomat who served during the Moi administration, the two roads were built in such a way that they directly benefited the interests of figures close to President Moi (Interview with senior retired diplomat, 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2009). China also

built a university hospital in the president's home province in a university named after the president as well as a modern sports complex also named after the president (Chege, 2007).

The political dimension of Kenya-China relations during the Moi presidency was strengthened during the 1980's when Kenya became a *de-jure* one party state and President Moi purposely set out to strengthen the ruling party over other institutions including parliament (Khapoya, 1988). In this endeavour, President Moi turned to China and its communist party for inspiration. It was out of such considerations that several senior officials of the ruling party KANU visited China during the said period (Orwa, 1994; Munene, 2000).

During the Kibaki administration the essence of Kenya-China relations has become almost exclusively economic. Kenya-China relations have become almost devoid of any significant political dimension. The Chinese government has for example not undertaken any prestige projects that would be deemed to serve the interests of the regime in power. The manifestation of this difference is also seen in the composition of the presidential delegations to Beijing as well as in the itinerary of state visits. In a departure from the type of state visits carried out by his predecessor, President Kibaki arrived in Beijing in 2005 with a delegation that included Kenya's business community that was seeking Chinese trade and investment (Chege, 2007). The president's official delegation also included the then chief executive of Kenya

tourism board Dr. Ongong'a Achieng and the managing director of Kenya Bureau of standards (Lokwe, 2008).

The itinerary of President Kibaki's 2005 visit also revealed the economic emphasis of the visit. President Kibaki visited Shanghai where addressed Chinese investors, later the president met the political leadership of another economically vibrant region Hong Kong during which discussions took place on various aspects of economic cooperation (Lokwe, 2008). While in Shanghai, President Kibaki addressed a group of Chinese investors. The president sought to sell Kenya as an attractive base for Chinese investment into the rest of the region while at the same time recommending Chinese investment in the tourism sector (President Kibaki's speech in Shanghai 16<sup>th</sup> August 2005).

A second aspect of change that sets apart Kenya-China relations during the Kibaki administration from that during the Moi administration is on the issue of the granting of lucrative government contracts to Chinese firms. During the Moi administration a number of Chinese construction companies benefited from a few government contracts. However, to a large extent significant government contracts especially in the defence sector remained the preserve of western firms in particular British firms (*Business Daily*, 22/10/07). During the Kibaki administration Chinese firms have in many cases displaced western firms and gained a foothold in sectors as diverse as telecommunications, infrastructure, military supplies and oil exploration (Kabukuru, 2006).

The argument has frequently been made that Chinese firms have benefited from such contracts because they offer the best prices during competitive bidding (*East African*, 30/8/08) However, questions have also been raised about cases in which Chinese firms with more expensive bids have seemingly been favoured in the awarding of government contracts. (Chege, 2007). The question then is what factors account for the perceived favouritism of Chinese companies.

It seems plausible that any favouritism towards Chinese firms is a direct result of the fact that China has in the last few years become a major bilateral donor to Kenya. The government's decision to grant more contracts to Chinese firms many of which are owned or linked indirectly to the government in China appears as a well orchestrated strategy to use such contracts as a means to encourage more Chinese aid and investment in Kenya.

The main aspect of continuity in Kenya-China relations that is seen from the Moi to the Kibaki administration is the area of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The two states have maintained close and cordial diplomatic relations and there have been no major diplomatic incidents between the two states. The conducting of mutual high level visits has continued with senior leaders from both countries visiting each other on a regular basis. President Kibaki visited China twice during his first term in August 2005 and November 2006. President Hu Jintao of China visited Kenya



in April 2006. Senior cabinet ministers, parliamentarians, and military staff from the two countries have continued to carry out regular mutual visits.

The second aspect of continuity in the relationship is seen in the role that the Chinese government and Chinese companies have played in Kenya's infrastructural development. There has been a lot of comment on the role that the Chinese government and Chinese companies have been playing in Kenya's infrastructure development during the Kibaki administration. However the fact remains that China began playing such a role during the Moi administration with the construction of a number of roads. Indeed it is plausible that China's well earned reputation for quality road construction during the Moi administration may account for why the government continues to seek out Chinese funding as well as expertise in this area.

During the Moi administration China funded the construction and upgrading of three major roads: the Kima-Chemasuru (Emusutswi) road, Kipsigat-Serem-Shamakhokho road, and the Gambogi Serem road (Ministry of Roads briefing). It was through these Chinese funded projects that a number of Chinese construction firms entered the Kenyan market.

The quality of workmanship by Chinese construction firms coupled with the speed with which they completed projects drew praise from senior officials in the Moi administration including President Moi himself who urged local contractors to emulate the workmanship of Chinese firms (*China daily*, 22/7/2009). Due to the effectiveness and reasonable costs of Chinese firms, the Moi administration on a number of occasions awarded international

contracts to such firms. A case in point was the awarding of the World Bank funded Mtito Andei- Voi -Bachuma gate road to the China Road and Bridge Company. The road which was opened in 2001 was christened 'China Road' by Kenyans even though it was not funded by the Chinese government.

During the Kibaki administration the Chinese government and Chinese companies have continued playing an important role in Kenya's infrastructural development. There has been a significant amount of media attention on the funding by the Chinese government of several major roads and bypasses that are aimed at easing traffic in Nairobi. However, less attention has been focused on the important role that Chinese construction firms are playing in the linking of Kenya with two of its neighbours Ethiopia and Tanzania. The two projects which are being funded by the African Development Bank are expected to significantly boost regional trade while at the same time opening up parts of the country to tourism (*Reuters*, 22/8/2008; *Daily Nation*, 5/5/2009).

#### **4.3 Explanations for continuity and change in Kenya-China relations**

The main argument that has been advanced in this chapter is that a comparison of Kenya-China relations during the Kibaki administration with that during the Moi administration reveals that the relationship has been characterized more by continuity rather than change. The question therefore is what is the explanation for the degree of change and continuity seen in the relationship? The study is informed by two hypotheses.

- I. Kenya-China relations have improved as a result of changes in the global distribution of power or polarity.
- II. Kenya-China relations have been enhanced as a result of changes in leadership in Kenya and China.

For the first hypothesis to be deemed valid there is need in keeping with the assumptions of neo-classical realism theory to show that a fundamental shift in the global distribution of power occurred and that in turn this change affected Kenya-China relations in a positive manner. The systemic approach stresses above all that 'all foreign policy behaviour is primarily constrained by the structure of the international system' (Ng-Quinn, 1983). A change in the structure of the international system leads to changes in the processes or foreign policy outcomes of states (Ibid).

In 1991 while President Moi was in power the USSR disintegrated and the Cold War came to an end. The bipolar world order that had characterized International relations for nearly fifty years was replaced by a unipolar world order (Wittkopf and Kegley, 2003). In the immediate aftermath of the end of the Cold War, major western powers began a process of reducing their presence in Africa while at the same time announcing drastic cuts in aid and assistance (Michaels, 1992).

The major impact of the end of the Cold War was that the resulting unipolar world order served to unleash the forces of globalization and

capitalism all over the globe which in turn particularly affected the foreign policies of African states (Zaffiro, 2002). In the world that emerged after 1991, more emphasis came to be placed on the issues of political economy. States all over the world came to be influenced by the prevailing circumstances and began looking 'more closely at the economic basis of their relationships' (Mwagiro 2006: 46-47).

The changed environment posed new challenges and called for the adoption of new approaches in foreign relations as President Moi remarked:

'The challenges and new pressures that we face, including those of globalization and trade liberalization, require that we redefine how to respond to the new requirements' (President Moi speech at Banquet in honour of the Premier of China Zhu Rongji, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2002).

The end of the Cold War and the unleashing of the forces of globalization fundamentally transformed the patterns of International trade. While international trade and investment had primarily operated on the basis of the North trading with the South; globalization served to further South to South trade and investment. After the year 2000 India and China's share of trade and investment in Africa saw a significant increase. By 2006 Africa's exports to India and China was almost equal to exports to its traditional markets of Europe and the United States (Broadman, 2007).

The end of the Cold War directly impacted on Kenya and transformed Kenya's foreign policy. Kenya had previously benefited greatly from her geo-strategic position during the Cold War in terms of generous western aid and assistance (Orwa, 1994). The requirements of the Cold War had performed as a powerful constraint on Kenya's foreign policy. In a different world order

characterized by declining aid from the West and globalization and the free movement of capital developing states such as Kenya had no choice but to revamp their foreign policies so as to attract more aid and investment from their non traditional source markets. This reassessment of policy served to further Kenya's relations with China.

The end of the bipolar world order also greatly influenced China's foreign policy. China overnight lost its Cold War strategic advantage as an important card that the US would use in its dealings with the USSR (Shambaugh, 1994). In subsequent years, China became a frequent target of western criticism on issues such as human rights, environmental issues and labour rights (Ibid). China's leaders took the decision to revamp China's policy towards African states with a view to winning more diplomatic allies but also in a bid to gain access to more resources that would further China's economic growth (Zweig and Jianhai, 2005).

The changes in Kenya's foreign policy in terms of seeking new markets and new sources of aid and investment coupled with China's new foray into Africa served as a significant boost to Kenya-China relations. China's steadfast support for state sovereignty and its opposition to western criticism of human rights policies served to cement relations with the Moi administration which was also strongly opposed to pressure by western powers on the government (Interview with former Kenya Ambassador to China 15<sup>th</sup> September 2009).

The first hypothesis is valid because the change in polarity after the end of the Cold War created conditions that gave a significant boost to Kenya-China relations. Both Kenya and China were freed from the powerful constraints that the bipolar world order had exercised on their foreign policies. Kenya had to seek out new markets and new sources of investment at a time of declining assistance from the West. China on the other hand was freed from the constraint of an ally of the West in the struggle against the USSR. China was free to seek more influence in Africa at a time in which the West was reducing its presence in the continent.

The Kibaki administration on coming to power in December 2002 found a solid bilateral relationship in place one whose basis was strengthened by the realities of the post Cold War world. In particular, the new government found a national economy that was experiencing serious difficulties. There is therefore a great deal of continuity in the bilateral relationship that stems from the fact that the end of the Cold War gave a very significant impetus and a new direction to the bilateral relationship one in which a new government was not in a position to ignore.

In order for the second hypothesis to be deemed valid it is necessary to show that changes in leadership in Kenya and China significantly furthered the bilateral relationship. There is ample evidence to validate this hypothesis. Kenya-China relations have improved significantly during the Kibaki administration as a direct result of Kenya emphasizing the economic basis of its diplomacy. The adoption of economic diplomacy although to an

extent based on the realities of the global economy was also predicated on the fact that the new government on coming to power found a national economy that was in shambles. In this regard, Kenya pursued a policy of economic diplomacy with the chief objective of ensuring that diplomacy served the goal of economic renewal (Kariuki, 2007). In a sense therefore, the change in leadership meant that Kenya's foreign policy was reformulated which in turn served to further Kenya-China relations.

The proposal that Kenya should pursue economic diplomacy had been suggested during the 1980's by the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Robert Ouko. However, the idea was not implemented with any seriousness by the Moi administration (Mwagiru, 2006). To a certain extent the lack of changes in Kenya's foreign policy in this regard was the result of Kenya's foreign policy being shaped by the same individuals over a long period of time. With the coming to power of new leadership in 2002 Kenya was finally in a position to fully embrace economic diplomacy. There was a change in personnel which translated to a change in thinking. The new government pursued economic diplomacy out of the conviction that it was not only necessary for Kenya's economic well-being but also necessary in order to safeguard Kenya's sovereignty (Ibid).

The coming to power of a new government headed by President Kibaki a trained economist further served to solidify the economic basis of Kenya's diplomacy. The available evidence clearly shows that during the Kibaki administration, China has become one of Kenya's leading bilateral donors, a

growing source of much needed foreign direct investment, a major trade partner as well as the major source of Kenya's infrastructure development (Chege, 2007).

The fact that economic factors overwhelmingly shape the nature of Kenya-China relations during the Kibaki administration stands in sharp contrast to the state of relations during President Moi's time in office. While there is no doubt that economic factors also shaped the bilateral relationship during the Moi administration, political factors also significantly influenced the relationship. It has been argued that President Moi came to regard the bilateral relationship from the perspective of how best it served the interests of his regime (Ibid).

It was out of political considerations for example, that President Moi sent senior members of the ruling party KANU to meet and learn from the Chinese Communist party (Orwa, 1994). The Chinese communist party dispatched its officials to act as monitors in the controversial 1988 General elections (Munene, 2000). At the same time, President Moi is said to have been keen on Chinese funded infrastructure projects that could then be channeled in his home province of Rift Valley with a view to strengthening the president's base of support (Chege, 2007). It is important in this regard to note that two of the three main roads projects carried by the Chinese government during the Moi administration were situated in or happened to transverse President Moi's home province of Rift Valley (Interview with senior retired diplomat, 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2009).



The fact that Kenya-China relations during the Kibaki administration have become more economic oriented in nature and almost devoid of any political dimension is the result of the difference in beliefs and leadership styles of Presidents Moi and Kibaki. The available evidence suggests that President Moi while not entirely oblivious of the economic dimension of Kenya's foreign policy regarded foreign policy as an important tool for strengthening his rule (Chege, 2007).

The difference between the Moi and Kibaki administration approaches to the place of economics in foreign policy is seen in the manner in which Libyan and Iranian investments were treated by the two administrations. Although President Moi went out of the way to woo western investment, he at the same time, turned down offers of investment in Kenya's oil refinery sector from both Libya and Iran (*The Standard*, 12/7/2008). There have been suggestions to the effect that President Moi's refusal of investment from such countries stemmed in part from the fact that the two countries had tense relations with major western powers (ibid).

The contrast with the Kibaki administration is seen in the fact that despite western concerns about Iran's nuclear programme, President Kibaki in 2008, personally invited President Ahmedinijad of Iran to visit Kenya. The result of the Iranian President's visit to Kenya in November 2009 was the signing of a number of economic and trade agreements. The Kibaki administration unlike the Moi administration has therefore gone out of the

way to seek trade and investment from all quarters (*East African*, 30/8/2008).

The difference between President Moi and President Kibaki appears to be that while the latter is an economist and at heart a pragmatist, President Moi appears to have had strong ideological convictions that led him to often side with the West (Khapoya, 1980). President Kibaki's extensive academic and professional backgrounds in economic matters is likely to have influenced Kenya's foreign policy in terms of the focus being more on economic development and less on non-economic matters. During the Kibaki administration Kenya has forged new relations and established new embassies with emerging economies such as Thailand, Spain, Ireland and Cuba in different continents (*East African*, 30/8/2008).

The change in leadership in Kenya in 2002 was also replicated at nearly the same time in China. In March 2003 Hu Jintao succeeded Jiang Zemin as president of China. President Hu built upon the policies of his predecessor with regard to China's increased involvement in Africa. Although President Jiang Zemin had laid the foundation for China's post-Cold War improvement of ties with the African continent, the focus of China's foreign policy during his rule remained China's relationship with the United States (Bezlova, 2006).

During the Hu Jintao presidency more emphasis has been placed on China's relationship with Africa. One of the main reasons why President Hu prioritized Africa in Chinese foreign policy is because of the belief among Chinese policy makers that Africa is central to the concept of China's

'peaceful rise' (Shelton and Paruk, 2008: 9). President Hu Jintao is associated with the notion that the rise of China will have positive consequences both for developed and developing nations. In this regard China's contribution to Africa's economic take-off serves as proof that China's rise can have beneficial consequences (Ibid).

The increase in emphasis on Africa has been in a number of ways. Between 2006 and 2007, President Hu Jintao visited a total of 17 African states more than any other foreign head of state (Mills and Thompson, 2008). During the same period, China's premier Wen Jiabao also took part in the flurry of what some labeled 'frequent flier form of diplomacy' (Brown and Chun, 2009). In 2006 Premier Wen carried out an eight days visit of Egypt, Ghana, Republic of Congo, Angola, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda (Bezlova, 2006) In commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of China's first involvement in Africa in the modern era, the government of China declared 2006 the year of Africa (Shelton and Paruk, 2008). The beginning of 2006 also saw the release by the Chinese government of a white paper on Africa that was designed as a guide for relations with the continent (Ibid).

The white paper on Africa had a number of notable highlights. The paper stated that relations between China and Africa would be governed by the principles of 'sincerity, equality and mutual benefit, solidarity and common development' (China's African policy, 2006). The paper further stated that China would take several measures to boost trade and investment in African countries. The Chinese government also committed itself to encouraging

more Chinese companies to be involved in the improvement in the infrastructure of African states (Ibid).

The highlight of China's growing relationship with Africa during the Hu Jintao presidency came in November 2006 with the holding of the historic Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) summit. The first FOCAC summit had been held in the year 2000 during the presidency of Jiang Zemin and had been attended by delegations of ministers from Africa and China (Muekalia, 2004). The 2006 summit by contrast had in attendance over forty African heads of state and government (Chege, 2007). During the 2006 summit, China made a number of significant pledges to African countries including a pledge to double aid to the continent (Gill et al, 2007). The fact that China under the leadership of President Hu Jintao has chosen to increase its involvement in Africa has served to boost Kenya-China relations. The Kibaki administration has found a China that is more keen to play a role in Africa than any other time in the past and this has served to boost relations. The change in leadership has therefore served to boost the relationship.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

The main argument advanced in this chapter is that during the Kibaki administration Kenya-China relations have been characterized by a significant amount of continuity with relations during the Moi administration. Continuity has been seen particularly in terms of the maintenance of warm and cordial diplomatic relations as evidenced by the frequency of mutual visits by senior

officials of the two countries. Furthermore, China has continued to play an important role in Kenya's infrastructure development. It has been further argued that continuity in relations is chiefly the result of a shift in the global distribution of power in 1991. The shift in the global distribution of power and the resulting globalization has led to new realities such as the emergence of new economic powers such as India and China. As a result, developing nations such as Kenya had no choice but to reformulate their foreign policies so as to seek out new markets for their goods, services as well as investment from non traditional source markets.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 Conclusions, summary and Recommendations

The purpose of this chapter is to address this study's main conclusions along with its findings and recommendations. The main aim of this study was to shed light on the nature and evolution of Kenya-China relations between 1963 and 2008. A major objective of the study was examining the main patterns of continuity and change in the relationship over the period of the study as well as providing explanations for continuity and change in the relationship.

The main objective for seeking patterns of change and continuity in the study of a bilateral relationship is to gain a deeper and fuller understanding of relationship with a view to providing predictions about the future of the relationship. A great degree of continuity in a bilateral relationship is in many cases assumed to mean that there is a foreign policy tradition in place which serves as a constraint even when the political leadership changes. On the other hand, a great degree of change may suggest not only an absence of a foreign policy tradition but also disagreement among the political elites on certain aspects of a country's foreign policy.

The study was responding to two hypotheses

- I. Kenya-China relations have improved as a result of changes in the global distribution of power or polarity.

ii. Kenya-China relations have been enhanced as a result of changes in leadership in Kenya and China.

The main objective of the study was to examine the extent to which Kenya-China relations between 1963 and 2008 had been characterized by continuity and change. The following is the main summary of the study's findings;

Firstly, the evidence emanating from the study revealed that while changes in leadership had influenced the relationship, the most significant factor that had shaped the relationship was changes in the global distribution of power. The *rapprochement* between Kenya and China during the 1970's was the result of changes in China's foreign policy. As several scholars argued have argued, China's leaders abandoned their radical foreign policy after concluding that the global distribution of power had changed and that the USSR was on the ascendancy (O' Leary, 1979; Shambaugh, 1994). It was on the basis of these changes in China's foreign policy that a *rapprochement* between Kenya and China took place. Furthermore, the end of the Cold War and the resulting changes in the global distribution of power also significantly influenced the relationship to the extent that a change in leadership from President Moi to President Kibaki did not result in a downgrading of relations.

Secondly, the data reveals that there was significant change in Kenya-China relations during the Moi administration when compared with the state of relations during the Kenyatta administration. The evidence is seen in terms of the increased interactions between Kenyan leaders and Chinese leaders

during the Moi Administration as seen in Table 1 in page 74. During the Kenyatta administration, there were very few high level diplomatic interactions between Kenya and China. President Kenyatta did not visit China during his term in office. President Moi by contrast, visited China three times in 1980, 1988 and 1994. The change in the bilateral relationship is also seen in terms of China's aid and technical assistance during the Moi administration when compared with the level of assistance during the Kenyatta administration. During the Kenyatta administration, China's aid to Kenya was miniscule. However, during the Moi administration, China became a significant contributor of aid and technical assistance. China was behind the successful construction of a sports stadium, a university hospital and several major roads. A comparison of China's development assistance to Kenya in the two administrations is made in Table 2 in page 75.

Thirdly, the evidence shows that there was a significant amount of continuity in Kenya-China relations between the Moi and Kibaki administration. The main elements of continuity are seen in the cordial state of relations that began during the Moi administration as well as the role that China's government and Chinese companies have continued to play in Kenya's infrastructural development. Although there has been much media comment about the role China has played in improving Kenya's infrastructure during the Kibaki administration; the data reveals that China began making such a contribution during the Moi administration. During the Moi administration China funded the construction and upgrading of three roads the Kima-



Chemasuru (Emusutswi) road, Kipsigat-Serem-Shamakhokho road, and the Gambogi Serem road. A Chinese firm also constructed the Mtito Andei-Voi-Bachuma road. (Ministry of Roads Briefing). It is plausible that China's reputation for high quality roads and infrastructure gained during the Moi administration may have encouraged the Kibaki administration to seek Chinese expertise in the area.

Fourthly, the evidence points to the fact that Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta administration were largely determined and shaped more by the initiative of the Chinese government rather than the initiative of the Kenyan government. Kenya adopted a largely reactive approach in its dealings with China. It is illustrative to note for example, that it was Chinese statements and actions that were blamed for the serious deterioration in bilateral relations during the mid 1960's and similarly Chinese actions after 1970 that led to a *rapprochement* in relations. The reactive nature of Kenya's relationship with China appears to have largely stemmed from the fact that Kenya had chosen to prioritize relations with states in the western world.

The fifth finding of the study is that Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta administration were significantly shaped by China's relations with other African states. This conclusion is backed by considerable evidence. It is noteworthy that the deterioration in Kenya-China relations after 1965 was mirrored in several African countries over the same period. During this period a number of African states downgraded and in some cases severed relations

with China they included Benin, Burundi, Niger, Tunisia, and Central African Republic (Snow, 1994).

The linkage between the state of Kenya-China relations during the Kenyatta administration and that of China's relations with other African states over the same period is also brought out by the fact that during parliamentary debates in Kenya, a number of parliamentarians cited some of China's alleged subversive activities elsewhere in the continent as providing sufficient justification for Kenya to sever relations with China (Hutchinson, 1975).

The sixth finding of the study is that while Kenya adopted a largely reactive approach in its dealings with China during the Kenyatta administration, during the Moi administration Kenya began taking an initiative in the bilateral relationship. President Moi unlike President Kenyatta came to regard close and cordial relations with China as serving not only the economic interests of Kenya but also those of his regime thus necessitating his travel to Beijing three times during his time in office to further the bilateral relationship.

The seventh finding of the study is that the Taiwan issue has shaped Kenya-China relations at various junctures during both the Kenyatta and Moi administrations. According to a senior retired diplomat who was interviewed in the course of the study, during the 1970's there were attempts by domestic forces to have Kenya switch recognition from China to Taiwan. The retired diplomat was of the view that Kenya's refusal to recognize Taiwan

gave a significant boost to bilateral relations between Kenya and China. The retired diplomat further argued that China's initial offer to build the Moi international sports centre complex in 1977 may have been in large part a good-will gesture following Kenya's decision to uphold the One China policy.

The important role played by the Taiwan question in Kenya-China relations was also emphasized during an interview with a former Kenya ambassador to China who served during the Moi administration. According to the former ambassador, during the 1990's there were attempts by certain domestic as well as external forces to convince President Moi to switch recognition from China to Taiwan. According to the former Ambassador, President Moi's decision to be steadfast in upholding the One-China principle significantly contributed to the strengthening of bilateral relations during the 1990's.

The eighth finding of the study is that economic issues whether in the form of trade, aid and technical assistance as well as foreign direct investment have gradually come to dominate the bilateral relationship during the Kibaki administration. During the Moi administration there was a significant political dimension to the relationship. A close relationship had been established between the ruling party KANU and the Chinese communist party during the 1980's (Orwa, 1994). During the Kibaki administration on the other hand, the relationship has become less political and almost exclusively economic. The change in the nature of the relationship is captured in the composition of President Kibaki's delegations to Beijing as well as in his

itinerary which involved Kibaki meeting the economic and political elites of Shanghai and Hong Kong in pursuit of investments as well as Chinese tourists.

The ninth finding of the study is that the source of strength that holds the bilateral relationship together has changed between the Moi and Kibaki administrations. The evidence points to the fact that the cement holding the bilateral relationship during the Moi administration was Kenya's unwavering stand on the One-China policy. During the Kibaki administration on the other hand, the bilateral relationship has largely been buttressed through the awarding of lucrative government contracts to Chinese companies. During the Kibaki administration Chinese companies have in a number of cases won contracts in sectors that were a preserve of British firms. While the argument of cost has frequently been made to justify the awarding of such contracts one cannot rule out the possibility that just as British firms were once given contracts so as to further a bilateral relationship so are Chinese companies (many of them with state connections) benefiting today in order to further the bilateral relationship.

The tenth finding of the study was that there has been a significant shift in the thinking of Kenya's political and social elite with regard to the question of whether China could meaningfully contribute to Kenya's development and that the shift was responsible for the improved state of the relationship that begun during the Moi administration. During the Kenyatta administration China was regarded by Kenya's elite as an unreliable development partner owing to its underdevelopment as well as its political instability as evidenced

during the Cultural Revolution. During the Moi administration there was a noticeable shift in thinking by Kenya's leadership a process that began with the September 1980 visit to China. President Moi himself during a state dinner for the visiting Chinese Premier, Zhu Rongji acknowledged that his own personal views on China had evolved tremendously as a result of his three state visits to China. (Speech by President Moi at the Banquet in honour of Premier Zhu Rongji, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2002). The result was that gradually over time Kenya's political and social elite have come to regard China as a country worthy of emulation especially with regard to China's economic development. President Kibaki has also declared in a number of speeches that he regards China's high economic growth and successes in the reduction of poverty as worthy of emulation by Kenya (Speech by President Kibaki on return from FOAC summit, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2006).

The eleventh finding of the study is that there is growing public support in Kenya for the mushrooming relations between Kenya and China. In 2010 a pew research poll found that an impressive 86% of Kenyans had a favourable opinion on China. Remarkably, this was the highest percentage of positive opinion about China among the 21 countries surveyed. The poll also found that while China's growing economic power was regarded with anxiety by majorities in countries such as Germany, Turkey, Poland and the US the situation in Kenya was markedly different. 90% of Kenyans who were polled stated that China's growing economic power was a good thing (Pew Global

Attitudes project, 17/6/2010). The strong support towards China by the general populace is an indication that the relationship has a bright future.

### 5.1 Recommendations

There are several recommendations that arise from this study.

Firstly, one of the biggest challenges likely to face the fledgling relationship in the future concerns the issue of bilateral trade. The highly unbalanced nature of trade in China's favour is likely to undermine the relationship especially if heavy influx of Chinese products into the Kenyan market leads to the loss of livelihoods for Kenyans. In the Southern African region for example, over 60,000 jobs were lost in the textile sector as a result of unrestricted Chinese textile imports. There is need for Kenyan policy makers to persuade China to adopt policies similar to those eventually adopted in Southern Africa namely the adoption of self imposed quotas on the export of goods such as textiles. Kenyan policymakers must also encourage China to purchase more Kenyans goods as a step of making bilateral trade more balanced.

Secondly, there is need for policy makers to work closely with China on the issue of the quality of Chinese products entering the Kenyan market. There is need to limit the entry of poor quality and in some cases counterfeit goods originating from China. A related matter of concern that needs to be addressed is the issue of Chinese counterfeit products such as shoe polish with the made in Kenya label being sold in other East African countries. Such

products have the potential of damaging ties between Kenya and its neighbours as well as between Kenya and China.

Thirdly, in recognition of China's acute sensitivities on the issues of Taiwan and Tibet and in view of Kenya's steadfast position on the One China policy; there is need for policy makers to come up with an effective coordinating framework that ensures that the government acts and speaks as one on these issues. Incidents such as the one in 2007 when Vice President Moody Awori gave the go-ahead for the Dalai Lama to visit only for the visit to be later cancelled following pressure from the Chinese government should be avoided in the future.

Fourthly, there is need for policy makers to come up with measures to address the complaints by Kenyan companies that they are always losing out to Chinese companies when it comes to government contracts. Policy makers should consider measures which can influence Chinese companies to sub-contract some of their work to local firms. A related issue is the matter of local staff working for Chinese firms. The Kenyan government should encourage Chinese firms to employ more Kenyans. At the same time, the government should work closely with such firms to ensure that their terms of employment for Kenyans are fair and reasonable.

Fifthly, Kenya's policy makers need to aggressively continue to sell Kenya as the preferred headquarters for Chinese companies as they seek to expand in the East African and Central African regions. The government

should ideally adopt important measures to attract such investment including tax holidays among other measures.

Sixthly, in recognition of the fact that China has committed itself to invest in Africa's future there is need for the government to come up with measures to equip young Kenyans for a bright future of China-Africa cooperation. One particular measure that should be adopted is the encouragement of young Kenyans especially those at secondary school level, to learn Mandarin Chinese so as to be effectively equipped for China's future activities in Kenya and the rest of the continent.



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## Appendix I

The following model questions guided the informal interviews and discussions with some past and present officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The interviews and discussions were aimed at getting information pertaining to the history of Kenya-China relations in particular the issue of continuity and change in the relationship.

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS (SERVING AS WELL AS RETIRED) ON CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN KENYA-CHINA RELATIONS

Interviewee- \_\_\_\_\_

Position- \_\_\_\_\_

1 a) How would you characterize the current state of Kenya-China relations?

b) What factors are driving Kenya-China relations today?

2 a) How would you characterize Kenya-China relations during President Kenyatta's term in office?

b) What factors domestic as well external were responsible for the state of relations at the time?

3 a) How would you characterize the state of Kenya-China relations during President Moi's term in office?

b) What factors domestic as well external were responsible for the state of relations at the time?

4 a) How much change is there in the state of Kenya-China relations today in comparison to the state of relations during the Kenyatta and Moi administrations?

b) What factors are responsible for change in the Kenya-China relationship from the Kenyatta administration to the Moi and Kibaki administrations?

5 a) How much continuity is seen in Kenya-China relations from President Kenyatta to President Moi and then President Kibaki?

b) What factors are responsible for any continuity in the Kenya-China relationship from the Kenyatta administration to the Moi and Kibaki administrations?



6 a) In general terms how has the end of the Cold War impacted on Kenya's Foreign policy?

b) Specifically how has the end of the Cold War influenced Kenya-China relations?

7 a) Has there been any change in the basic focus and direction of Kenya's foreign policy during President Kibaki's term in office which may have positively influenced Kenya-China relations?

b) If such a change in focus in the basic direction of the country's foreign policy has indeed taken place, then what factor best explains it, the role of domestic factors or those of external factors in particular the end of the Cold War?

8 a) What direct benefits accrue to Kenya from its relationship with China?

b) Does the current level of bilateral relations between Kenya and China serve Kenya's long term interests?

Explain.

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE for Embassy of China senior staff

- 1 a) How would you characterize the current state of relations between Kenya and China?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b) In your understanding how does the current state of Kenya-China relations compare to earlier periods in the relationship?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2 a) In general terms how has the end of the Cold War impacted on China's foreign policy?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b) In particular how has the end of the Cold War impacted on China's relationship with African countries?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What factors are driving China's increased interactions with African countries?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Why do you think a number of African countries are at present prioritizing relations with China over and above those with western powers?



Research Permit No. NCST/5/002/R/796

Date of issue 31.08.2008

Fee received SHS 1000

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

Prof./Dr./Mr./Mrs./Miss STEPHEN

MOGAKA

of (Address) NAIROBI UNIVERSITY  
PO BOX 30197 NAIROBI

has been permitted to conduct research in  
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN, MINISTRY OF  
TRADE AND MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS

NAIROBI

on the topic CONTINUITY AND CHANGE  
IN KENYA CHINA RELATIONS  
(1963-2008)

for a period ending 30TH OCTOBER 2009



*[Signature]*  
Applicant's  
Signature

*[Signature]*  
Secretary  
National Council for  
Science and Technology

## CONDITIONS

1. You must report to the District Commissioner and the District Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit.
2. Government Officers will not be interviewed without prior appointment.
3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.
4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.
5. You are required to submit at least two(2)/four(4) bound copies of your final report for Kenyans and non-Kenyans respectively.
6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

RESEARCH CLEARANCE  
PERMIT

GPK 6055—3m—10/2009

(CONDITIONS—see back page)