

# China-Kenya Relations: An Analysis of Its Nature since Independence

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**Abstract:** - The study explored China-Kenya relations with a view of examining what defines this relationship trailing it from independence. The study used other African countries such as Zimbabwe, Sudan, and Angola as cases of illustration to ground the papers' argument. The study sought to realize the following objective: To analyze the nature of China-Kenya relations since independence. To achieve this objective, the study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained using interview guides while secondary data was obtained from library research which was subjected to critical textual analysis and interpretation to test the relevance and accuracy of the document for the purpose of the study. The obtained qualitative data was analysed thematically. The study sought to find out if we could theoretically situate China-Kenya relation among the trend that has defined the relationship between China and other African countries. Thus two variables were analyzed; foreign aid and human rights. The study adopted the Rational Choice theory to explain the Sino Kenyan relations. The study found out that China-Kenya relation since independence has been defined by prevailing global political trends. The study concludes that what is engineering the relations between the two countries partly are pull factors (attractive conditions) and the main pull factor is China's no strings attached policy. Although the study highlights the importance of China to Kenya as an important economic partner, it proposes the need to put in place measures to guarantee transparency in dealings between the two countries.

**Key words:** China-Kenya relations, independence

## I. INTRODUCTION

A survey of a number of countries in Africa shows that China tends to give aid to rogue countries. For instance, Angola is an autocratically ruled state that is corrupt, inefficient with persistent poverty (Rothberg & Gisselquist, 2007). Angola also has enormous oil reserves, producing as much annually as Kuwait (Mouwad, 2007). Human Rights Watch (2004) reported that in a five-year period, \$4.2 billion worth of oil revenues were siphoned off of Angola's public accounts. This amount to 10 percent of GDP in a country where most people live on less than \$2 day (World Bank Report NO: 353362-AO, 2004). Due to this, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2004 attached transparency requirement measures to loans given to Angola for post-war reconstruction efforts. As a result, the Angolan government released a statement saying that Western financial markets impose conditions on developing countries that are nearly unbearable and sometimes politically unacceptable (Taylor, 2004). Regarding this, China's Exim Bank offered \$2 billion worth of loans, with no conditionalities regarding corruption or transparency attached. As such, Angola turned down the

IMF's assistance and agreed to provide China with 40,000 barrels of oil per day in exchange of the loan (Taylor, 2006). Western media and aid organizations denounced China for helping Angola to avoid pressure to clean up corruption (Swann & McQuillen, 2006).

The second illustration regards the China-Sudan relations. In the late 1990s, after American and Canadian companies abandoned South Sudanese oil fields in response to North American consumer and investor hostility, China stepped in and filled the void (Rothberg, 2008). The state-owned China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) owns the largest share in Sudan's largest oil venture (Taylor, 2004). Khartoum used Chinese oil money to fund its ethnic cleansing of southern insurgents in Western Sudan (Brown, 2008). China also sold to Sudan \$100 million worth of aircraft and small arms between 1996 and 2003 in violation of a UN embargo (Brautigam, 2009). According to the IRIN Humanitarian news and analysis (March 23, 2006), the Chinese ambassador to South Africa, Liu Guijin, explained that, "[they] don't believe in embargoes, that just means that people suffer from a practical consideration, embargoes and sanctions can't solve problems." The third illustration is the China-Zambia relations where anti-Chinese sentiments became an issue in domestic Zambian politics. In the 2006 presidential election, the opposition candidate, Michael Sata, ran on the platform that the Chinese exploitation of Zambia's resources and mistreatment of workers needed to be countered (Chimangeni, 2007). Due to this, Chinese officials announced that they would withhold further investments until after the election. The incumbent, pro-China candidate, Rupiah Banda, won the elections. Immediately after his victory, China announced it would forgive \$211 million of Zambia's outstanding debt (Keenan, 2007).

In 1954, Chinese premier Zhou Enlai gave five principles of China's foreign policy. These included: mutual respect for other country's sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence (Bergsten, 2008). Webster (2012) argues that these principles form the basis upon which China relates with other countries especially in Africa. Dikotter (2010) observes that regardless of regime change, China has maintained consistency in its foreign policy. It is hardly surprising that several African leaders refer to China as their "all weather friend" (Ndola, 2009 & Guoji, 2010). China's principles and enacting differs vastly sometimes for instance her principle of mutual non-

interference. China firmly believes that it should not, and will not; engage in activities that infringe upon the sovereignty of other nations. In return, she does not permit other countries to interfere in her own internal affairs (Condon, 2012). Yu (1972) is of a different opinion where he argues that throughout 1960s and 1970s, China actively supported guerrillas, and provided financial and material support in Zaire (present-day D.R.C.), Malawi, Zimbabwe, Angola, Rwanda and Burundi. China justified its conduct by claiming to support anti-colonial movements and thus help African countries win freedom and sovereignty from various European states. This observation laid good ground for the study in assessing how China's 'non-interference' policy relates with Kenya's human rights standards.

Chinese investment activity in Africa has skyrocketed in the post-Cold War period. Condon (2012) observes that China finances more infrastructure projects and provides large cheap loans and grants to African governments than the World Bank. For instance, the China Exim Bank provides large subsidized concessional loans to developing countries with interest rates at significantly below market value (Lawson & Chan-Fishel, 2007). The loan terms generally require that at least 50 percent of the money is spent on Chinese goods or services such as materials and construction firms (Brautigam, 2008). These loans are explicitly or implicitly tied to guarantees to market access of African resources such as oil (Alden & Davies, 2006). The aid conditionality is different from the West since it is not tied to observance of human rights and democracy. In 2008, the Congolese government brokered a deal with Beijing for the construction of massive cobalt and copper mines, 1,800 miles of railways, 2,000 miles of roads, hundreds of clinics, hospitals, and schools, and two new universities. The total value of these investments reached \$6 billion-almost half of Congo's GDP. In exchange, China now has the right to extract 12 million tons of copper and cobalt over the next 25 years (Howard, 2010). The Congo deal is referred to as the "resource for infrastructure swap."

Gathii (2001) argues that China's interventions in infrastructural, agricultural as well as educational and medical fields in Africa are not merely ephemeral. She proposes that China's involvement must be examined in the context of Africa's political leadership. This is because the interests of Africa's leadership are not consistent with the majority of African people. Easterly (2006) argues that the deals African leaders have entered into with China must therefore be examined against a different threshold than merely because of the vast increase in China's economic presence in Africa over the last decade or so. Recent commentary accused China of plundering the African continent, coding its dictators, flouting labour laws and environmental standards. Webster (2012) makes a counterintuitive claim in his paper; China's Human Rights footprint in Africa. Where he argues that China's engagement with Africa has improved Human Rights conditions of millions of Africans' particularly in the educational, agricultural, infrastructural and medical fields.

Webster (2012) argues that unlike Western countries, China avoids the hypocrisy of claiming that human rights are central to its foreign policy. Notably, this study does not presume that Human Rights conditionality as undertaken by Western countries is the path that China-African relations should take to promote human rights. This is because in some instances, despite the western aid conditionalities human rights abuses have persisted. Webster (2012) proposes that a 'balanced assessment' must include the hundreds of infrastructure projects, agricultural experiments, educational facilities, pilot projects and other components of Beijing's Africa policy.

China's official policy statement on its trade and aid relationship with African nation states is based on the principle of non-interference as already mentioned. This study adopts the assumption that mutual economic benefit is the main priority of Chinese involvement in Africa, even if this means ignoring corruption and human rights abuses resulting from the cash flows. On their part, Coyne and Ryan (2008) argue that China should use its economic leverage as a political tool, and threaten to cut off financial ties to recipients who repeatedly violate human rights. The West, which typically conditions its loans on initiatives like promotion of democracy and reduction of corruption claim that aid rewards the behavior of dictators and actively funds the oppression of reformists. Morrissey (2004) differs with the above statement by arguing that the political conditionality practiced by the West in Africa over the past decades has failed to actually affect change. Morrissey came to this conclusion after doing a literature survey evaluating the effectiveness of conditionality to force change on trade policy reform. In addition to the critique that aid conditionality simply does not work, Uvin (2004) argues that it is unethical and that it causes more harm than it fixes.

This study has found out that those who are in most need of development assistance often live under autocratic oppression. Therefore cutting off aid to dictatorial regimes means that the poorest are made to suffer for the sins of their rulers. The second argument concerning conditionality, and one that is particularly popular with the Chinese, is that it is a form of interventionism that violates the sovereignty of the targeted nation (Wade, 2008). Uvin and Biagiotti (2004) argue that the West proclaims the existence of universal norms and principles that most of the world had no involvement in codifying yet are forced to observe them. There is a lot of valuable information in literature on China-Africa relations. Whereas the relations between China-Zimbabwe, China-Sudan, China-Angola and China-Zambia are motivated, at least in part by poor human rights profile. The nature of China-Kenya relations had not been clearly defined. That is why this paper sought to find out if we could theoretically situate China-Kenya relations in the trend that has defined the relationship between China and other African countries. A trend we can refer to as a relation of mutual advantages.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study's aim was to analyze the nature of China-Kenya relations. To achieve this, the study adopted an explanatory case study research approach to collect the relevant data and analyze it. Mitchell and Bernauer (2004) define an explanatory case study research as the study that seeks to find out "what made this happen." This is relevant to this study which sought to find out what defines China-Kenya relations. The study used purposive sampling. Respondents were selected based on the office or position they held or are holding at present and also through recommendation of others in the field. These included officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, academicians and political analysts. The study engaged both Secondary and Primary sources of data. The researcher collected primary data through informant interviews and secondary data through library research. The field of international relations focuses primarily on states rather than individuals thus international relations cannot be studied systematically using field experimental methods (Hyde, 2007). Therefore, in this study interview schedules were used as the main instrument for data collection. The research findings were presented in narrative and table form. The authenticity of the data collected was attained through historical criticism, evaluation and comparison of the collected information with the existing one.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section analyzes China-Kenya relations since independence with an aim of finding out what has been defining this relation. In political science there are three levels of analysis that are used to explain world politics; individual, state and system (Baylis, Smith and Owens, 2011). This paper adopted individual level of analysis to analyze China-Kenya relations since independence to present. The individual level in explaining international relations argues that personalities of leaders shapes the country's foreign policy (Mingst and Ivan, 2010). For instance, explaining the Second World War through Adolf Hitler and the end of the Cold War through Ronald Reagan and Gorbachev (Roskin and Berry, 2009).

This paper is based on the assumption that Kenya's foreign policy has, in most instances, been molded and directed by the President. The policy is contextualized through the President's selection of his foreign policy key champion, the Cabinet Secretary of Foreign Affairs. The final authority on foreign policy formulation, conduct and projection lies in the hands of the President; therefore the president is the chief foreign policy shaper. Therefore, in its attempt to find out what has defined the relations between China and Kenya since independence, this section looked at the eras of different presidents. There have been four presidents in Kenya namely the late Jomo Kenyatta, Daniel ArapMoi, MwaiKibaki and currently, Uhuru Kenyatta. Kenya's presidents in the past five decades have been a study in different personalities and abilities. They reacted differently to international geo-political situations. Each faced different challenges, including their

personal input in actual conduct of foreign relations. Therefore, this section is divided into four historical periods, namely Jomo Kenyatta's regime (1963-1978), Daniel ArapMoi's regime (1978-2002) and MwaiKibaki's regime (2002-2012) and Uhuru Kenyatta (2013-present).

### 3.1 Kenya-China Relation during Jomo Kenyatta's Regime (1963-1978)

The relation between China and Kenya were cordial at independence although China embraced communism and Kenya adopted capitalism. The first country to recognize Kenya's independence was Germany (then West Germany), then Russia, Ethiopia and then China. This order of recognition is still reflected in the diplomatic number given to the embassies of these countries which are 1-CD, 2-CD, 3-CD, and 4-CD respectively. China was the fourth country to recognize Kenya's independence in 1963 when the two countries exchanged diplomatic representations. On February 5, 1964 Wang Yutien was appointed China's ambassador to Kenya. (Kamau, 2007). China's embassy in Kenya is arguably their largest embassy in Africa both in terms of size and employees. It is strategically located in a relatively high-security area near the Defence Headquarters, Kenya Army Barracks, and closer to the Kenya's State House. Similarly, Kenya has an embassy in Beijing which serves China and a few countries in the neighbourhood.

In the first decade of independence (1963-73), Kenya operated in a bipolar world split between the Cold War rivals of the capitalist West led by the USA and the communist East led by the USSR (Sandbrook, 1971). At independence in 1963, Kenya was already earmarked as a key regional player in the East-West rivalry. In this case, Kenya was perceived by the two world power blocs as a key country in the Eastern Africa region whose international political and economic relations were valuable, if not critical. As the most advanced country in the region with a fairly well developed infrastructure and a deep natural harbour close to the Gulf of Eden, Kenya's conduct of foreign policy was of keen interest to the rival power blocs. Atwood (1967) in his memoirs portrays the intensity of the battle to win over Kenya from a combined diplomatic offensive by the Soviet Union and China with the USA through Jomo Kenyatta and Tom Mboya, the East's proxy was Jaramogi Oginga Odinga.

Jomo Kenyatta's foreign policy revolved around a neutral phraseology; non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states, non-aligned in the larger East-West global power politics and a supporter of the decolonization movements in Africa (Thomas, 1992). Despite public rhetorical posturing by its leadership, Kenya was deeply integrated into the Western-world's sphere of influence (Flint, 1965). Kenya's most significant ally in the West was Great Britain. The two nations had maintained uninterrupted friendly relations since independence. Britain remained Kenya's principal trading partner, chief source of economic and military assistance, and its major provider of private

investment capital (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 1998). The diplomatic relation between Kenya and China dates back to December 14<sup>th</sup> 1963 when the People's Republic of China opened their embassy in Nairobi with Wang Yutien appointed China's ambassador to Kenya on February 5, 1964. This was courtesy of the radical left wing of the ruling party KANU led by the then KANU vice president and Minister for Home Affairs Jaramogi Oginga Odinga. Jaramogi Oginga Odinga led a high-powered Kenyan delegation to Beijing in May 1964 to discuss enhanced ties between the two countries.

The delegation consisted mainly of his allies in the party. While in Beijing, Odinga asked China to join independent African states in a war against apartheid South Africa and the remaining colonial territories on the continent. His ally, information minister Achieng Ouko, followed suit in August 1964 and met the Chinese vice Premier, military commander, and Minister for foreign affairs Marshall Chen Yi. This was a major achievement considering Marshall Chen Yi's high profile in China's political establishment at the time (Chege, 2008). In July 1964, the Chinese ambassador paid a visit to the then Minister of Finance, James Gichuru to negotiate economic and technical cooperation between the two countries. They agreed on the dispatch of a Chinese delegation of 15 experts to Kenya in order to nail down specific areas of economic cooperation (Chege, 2008). Meanwhile the relevant departments in the Kenya government were invited to forward suitable project proposals to the Ministry of Finance. From a long list of proposals from the Kenyan side, the Chinese delegation in early 1965 committed itself to the construction of a textile factory and a sugar refinery (Kenya National Archives, File AE/14/70, 1965). None of these proposals saw the light of day instead they fell victim to internal political schism within the Kenyan government.

The political schism was between the radical left in the ruling party led by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga and the right wing of the party led by President Jomo Kenyatta and KANU party Secretary General Tom J. Mboya (Attwood, 1967). The radical left wing favoured socialism and closer ties to the Soviet bloc and China while the right wing preferred a mixed economy, predominantly driven by the private sector but with ample room for producer cooperatives, state-operated enterprises, and small-holder production for the market. Kenyatta and Mboya were suspicious of Chinese political intentions in Kenya at the time and were determined to increase cooperation between Kenya, the United States, Britain and Western Europe (Gertzel, 1967). From December 1963 to June 1965, the late Chinese Premier Zhou En-Lai visited Africa three times successively touring 11 African countries. These were Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Sudan, Guinea, Ghana, Mali, Somali, Zaire, Tanganyika and Uganda (Wenping, 2003). Premier Zhou's African tour promoted Sino-African relations to a high level. During his visit, Premier Zhou proposed the Five Principles for developing relations between China, Africa and Arab states as discussed

in chapter three. The Kenyatta government immediate response was that the Chinese premier's expectations did not apply to Kenya, as Kenya had already completed its anti-colonial revolution (Chege, 2008).

The initial stages saw good bilateral ties between China-Kenya, but after 1965 the relations between the two countries were tense and were lowered to the *charge d'affaires* level (Kioko, 2012). Morton (1999) in his biography of former President Moi, *The Making of an African Statesman*, asserts that the British Intelligence had kept a watchful eye on Odinga's close ties with the Eastern bloc countries. In particular, the then Soviet Union and China and were convinced that he was keen on invoking their support to make Kenya a more socialist-friendly country. Morton (1999) writes that by 1966, both Kenyatta and his supporters in the West, especially Britain, were more than convinced that Odinga was a major threat that had to be neutralized. This was effected in the same year when Odinga lost the powerful position of Kanu's vice-president at the Limuru party conference, which saw the creation of eight vice-presidents in the ruling Party. In the growing internal breach, the anti-China side in Kenyan Parliament warned against imperialism from the Eastern bloc, led by cabinet ministers close to Kenyatta and Mboya. As left and right wing in the ruling party fought it out; China became more closely identified with the left wing of the ruling party, much as the Western states were associated with the right wing (Gertzel, 1968).

The Chinese Embassy protested against speeches made by Tom Mboya, J.N. Osogo, and Daniel arap Moi in parliament, claiming that they had subjected the Peoples' Republic of China "to slander, vilification and grave provocation" (*East African Standard*, Nairobi, July 13, 1966: 6). The left wing of KANU lost the battle and was evicted from the government in April 1966 (Gertzel, 1968). In March 1966, Kenya expelled the third secretary in the Chinese Embassy, Yao Chun, on suspicions of plotting subversion. Yao Chun had protested the adoption of a motion by Kenya's Senate condemning Chou En-Lai's remarks on the five principles for developing relations between China and Africa (Chege, 2008). In August 1966, demonstrations were held outside the Kenya embassy in Beijing, with posters protesting Kenya's reactionary politics. The Kenyan government handed a protest note to the Chinese embassy in Nairobi, but unable to get a satisfactory explanation, it recalled Kenya's ambassador to China. In apparent retaliation, youths affiliated to the right wing of KANU staged a counter demonstration outside the Chinese embassy in Nairobi, during which some of the embassy's windows were also broken (Chege, 2008). The relations between the two states deteriorated, ending in a diplomatic break in 1967.

In June 1967, Kenya declared the Chinese *chargé d'affaires persona non grata* ordering him out of Kenya (*East African Standard*, Nairobi, 8 June, 1967, p. 2). In response, China expelled the Kenya *chargé d'affaires* in July 1967, leaving the Kenya embassy without any top-level representation. With the

ambassadors and their deputies now out of their stations, China and Kenya had severed diplomatic relations. This remained the case for 11 years until Mao Zedong and Jomo Kenyatta had exited from the scene (Chege, 2008). At the time of Kenyatta's death in August 1978, Kenya's foreign policy was firmly anchored on the Western sphere. From the above analysis, it emerges that the China-Kenya relations between the period 1963-1978 was defined by the Cold war which was the prevailing global political trend at that time. This was clearly seen from the epic struggle between the two factions in KANU, the radical left wing who favoured socialism with closer ties to the Soviet bloc and China. While the right wing were determined to increase cooperation between Kenya, the United States, Britain, and Western Europe (Gertzel, 1967). When the left side which was pro-China was evicted from government in April 1966, the relations between the two states deteriorated, ending in a diplomatic break in 1967.

### 3.2 Kenya-China Relation during Daniel ArapMoi's Regime (1978-2002)

The year 1978 saw president Daniel ArapMoi come to power, as Kenyatta's successor. He pursued the same foreign policy template with minor variations (Mwega, 2009). By the end of 1980, Kenya was still seen as a client-state of the West and two episodes graphically captured that. One involved the murder of a Kenyan woman, Monica Njeri, by a US sailor known as Frank Sand in Mombasa. The sailor was freed despite huge public outcry and outrage. The other involved Kenya boycotting the 1980 Moscow Olympics by urging the US to protest the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. These two episodes exposed a Kenyan foreign policy ensnared and beholden to the whims and dictates of the Western bloc (Mwega, 2009). By the end of the second decade of Kenya's independence in 1983, Kenya was the biggest ally of the Western bloc in Eastern Africa. Kenya had signed a number of security-cum-military cooperation agreements and mutual defence pacts with the US, Britain and Israel.

With the end of Cold war, fundamental shifts occurred in the configuration and realignment of global power relations. The collapse of the Berlin Wall and the Soviet Union in 1989-1990 caught Moi and his foreign policy advisors wrong-footed. Changing the contours of diplomacy was the emergence of a uni-polar world order, the increasing influence of emerging economies such as China and India and the resurgence of Russia in global politics. The West started agitating for new political dispensations in their client states including pluralism and internal democracy (Koeberle, 2003). In 1982, president Moi had obtained an amendment to Kenya's constitution making Kenya a de jure, one party state (Goldsmith, 2001). His administration also adopted an intimidating new set of electoral procedures that placed new controls on the press. Soon after, Western aid agencies imposed an aid conditionality requiring the government to allow multiple parties, to establish an impartial elections

board, to reinstate secret ballot and to relax censorship of the press (Lawson, 2013). The West demanded for change with the democratic tide or bear the consequences. By 1993 such as Moi and other beneficiaries of Western-bloc that paid little or no premium on internal democracy during Cold War era, the honeymoon was irretrievably over. Also caught in this scenario were Mobutu SeseSeko of Congo, Kamuzu Banda of Malawi and so were the apartheid rulers in South Africa (Barkan, 1994).

President Moi started warming up to newer friends and economic-cum-trade partners especially from the growing Orient due to the West's conditions on pluralism and internal democracy (Elmi, 2012). In particular, the rapidly developing countries of China, India, South Korea and other middle income non-Western nations like Turkey, Brazil and even Iran became potential suitors. President Moi, the same man who had accused China of plotting revolution in Kenya in the 1960s, was reaching out to the People's Republic of China (East African Standard, Nairobi, July 13, 1966). Kenya dispatched an ambassador to China at the end of 1978, thus opening the embassy that had been technically closed in 1967. China also appointed an ambassador to Kenya (Chege, 1980). This saw the relations between China and Kenya restored. JiPengfei, the then vice premier of China's State Council, visited Kenya in August 1980 and Kenya's president Moi paid a state visit to China a month later, the first of the three trips to China before his retirement in 2002. As a result of Moi's first visit to China, Kenya and China signed two agreements. The first one was on economic and technological cooperation, covering a wide variety of projects: a new sports stadium, technical support to two new universities, scholarships, military and cultural exchanges. The second one was a trade agreement between Kenya and China (Alden & Oliveira, 2008).

The most important component of the economic cooperation agreement was the Moi International Sports Center located outside the Nairobi's central business district. It was the biggest sporting facility in Eastern and Central Africa region. It included a sports stadium with a seating capacity of 60,000 people, an Olympic-size swimming pool, and a modern gymnasium thrown into the bargain. It was intended to host the fourth All-Africa games in 1987 to showcase the new China-African cooperation to all of Africa. It was built at the cost of 930 million Kenya shillings, 48 % of which was financed by Kenya and 52% was funded by an interest-free loan from China. This marked a break from the Chinese commodity financed projects of the 1960s and 1970s, such as the aborted Kenya textile mill in 1964 (Chege, 2008). Under the economic cooperation grant, China also constructed a new teaching hospital at the then brand new Moi University in Eldoret, the Gambogi-Serem highway, and provided teaching equipment at Egerton University. It is worth noting that all these projects were located in Moi's Rift Valley Province homeland, although they served the nation. China committed itself to providing 10 scholarships annually to Kenya and two

top-level military exchanges per year. Keen to develop its own tourist industry, China in 1980 requested Kenya to train Chinese students in tourist management at Utalii College in Nairobi, Kenya's flagship training institution for skills in the tourism industry (Ministry of Tourism, February 5, 2007). Chinese officials also seemed interested to learn from Kenya's tea and coffee products that were to feature two decades later in its agricultural modernization drive.

President Moi's state visit opened the way for diplomatic exchanges and negotiations at lower levels of government. A number of Kenyan leaders visited China David Okiki Amayo, president of the KANU in September 1986. Between 1991 and 2000, two Kenyan foreign ministers led delegations to China, Wilson Ndolo Ayah in 1991 and in October 2000 Bonaya Godana headed a delegation to attend the Beijing Ministerial Meeting of the Sino-African Cooperation Forum. But this was a trickle compared to the number of top-level Chinese delegations that came to Kenya during that period. Between 1980 and 2002, 20 top-level Chinese diplomatic entourage came to Kenya. They included Vice Premier (1980), Prime Minister Zhao Ziyang (1983), Foreign Minister Wu Xueqian (1987), President Jiang Zemin (1996), secretary general of the State Council Wang Zhongyu (2000), and Prime Minister Zhu Rongji (2002) (China-Kenya Embassy Website). These visits in turn spurred lower-level technical exchanges and activities such that by 2000 in Kenya, the press reported an important development or commercial initiative involving China every month of the year. At this point it should be observed that China did not just come to Kenya as a donor but as a rapidly modernizing developing economy making the transition from Communist-era. China was also in Kenya to learn from areas where Kenya had made outstanding progress such as agriculture and tourism (Draper & Biacuana, 2010).

In April 2002, President Daniel Arap Moi held talks with visiting Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji at State House. The talks were on bilateral ties and issues of common concern between China and Kenya. Extending a warm welcome to Zhu, president Moi said that the people of Kenya and China enjoyed profound friendship, and that Zhu's visit was bound to further enhance the friendly and cooperative relations between the two countries. President Moi further reaffirmed the Kenyan government's adherence to the One-China policy, and expressed his appreciation for the close cooperation between the two countries in international affairs. Zhu on the other hand said that China and Kenya have a long history of traditional friendship (Beijing Times, Thursday, April 25<sup>th</sup> 2002, p. 2). The Chinese premier expressed confidence that the two countries will continue their good cooperation in international affairs in the future. The premier also appreciated Kenyan government's consistent adherence to the one-China policy and supporting China on the human rights issue. Following the talk, the two sides signed, among others, a memorandum of understanding in agricultural cooperation

and an agreement on the economic and technological cooperation.

Since president Moi assumed the presidency in 1978, the friendly and cooperative relations between the two countries had constantly been consolidating and improving. By the time president Moi left office in 2002, he had succeeded in endearing himself to the political authorities of the People's Republic of China. President Moi's government had a wanting human rights record but China overlooked these realities as it strengthened its economic relations with Kenya. Though some Western governments such as Britain and France had equally done the same till the late 1990s when they introduced conditions. President Moi's era, laid the foundations for improved cooperation with China, diversifying the country's investment sources. President Moi's main motivation was to diversify the sources of Kenya's external development funds and to secure new development projects for his Rift Valley home region in order to shore up his political base. Thus the relation between China-Kenya in the period 1978-2002, during the Daniel Arap Moi's era was defined by personal interest and the prevailing global political trend which was the collapse of Communism.

### *3.3 Kenya-China Relation during MwaiKibaki's Reign (2002-2012)*

In December 2002, president Moi's government gave way to a broad based reform coalition, the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition, which won the general elections. MwaiKibaki was elected the third president of Kenya. When President MwaiKibaki took office in January 2003, his government instituted a broad governance and economic reform program that produced economic recovery within three years and accelerated growth. This resulted in the longest period of sustained growth (2003–2007) since Kenyatta years. GDP growth rose from 2.9 percent in 2003 to a projected 7.1 percent in 2007. Poverty levels declined from 56 percent in 1997 to 46 percent in 2006, according to the best household expenditure survey (CBS, 2007). On taking over power from KANU that had ruled Kenya for 40 years, the NARC government was received with warm hands by the traditional donors who had blacklisted president Moi's government (Branch, 2011). On the contrary, top officials of the new government openly declared that they shall go East if United Kingdom and United States, the traditional allies kept on lecturing the government on corruption. One may ask, is Kenya capable of ditching her traditional Western traditional allies in favour of the East? The study found out that it's possible for a recipient country to ditch one donor for the other.

What started as an innocent exchange between former British Ambassador to Kenya, Mr Edward Clay, and a few powerful members of the cabinet over allegations of corruption culminated into a diplomatic clash between Kenya and her Western traditional allies- the UK and the US (Oluoch, 2006). While government officials maintained that the new Kenyan

government was basically interested in tapping the many economic opportunities that China represents as the fastest growing economy. Kiberenge (2012) argues that it could not have been a coincidence for senior ministers to engage in a public row with the representative of the former colonial master, at a time when the Kenya-China relationship was blossoming. Some senior ministers known to be close to president Kibaki, were not shy to attribute former British High Commissioner to Kenya Sir Edward Clay's much publicized allegations of high-level corruption in the government, to the sulking by the British for losing some lucrative contracts they have controlled for four decades, to Chinese companies among others from the East. President Kibaki paid state visits to Washington and London soon after coming to power. But he also turned to the East and paid similar high level official visits to Beijing, New Delhi and Tokyo. President Kibaki was not expected to pay such high profile visits so soon to what the Western-bloc believed were not traditional major economic trading partners. This led to an outcry from western diplomats, investors and financiers though the Kibaki government appeared not alarmed by Western bloc protestations (New York Times, 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2008).

The former president, expressed to hold a great account of the relations with China and was willing to further deepen and expand the friendly cooperation between the two countries (Kioko, 2012). According to Chege (2008), China-Kenya economic relations in the Kibaki era began with high-level political contacts between the two states followed by a series of agreements. President Mwai Kibaki made an official visit to China in August 2005, accompanied by 11 Kenyan trade- and investment-seeking delegations. This was the first official visit to China by a Kenyan head of state in 11 years. During this visit President Mwai Kibaki held extensive talks with President Hu Jintao and Chinese government officials which resulted in a five-part agreement. The agreement covered official development assistance in grants for infrastructure and energy, extended air services between the two countries, technical assistance for assessment and classification of standards in industrial products, modernization of equipment and training at the state-owned Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (Gadzala, 2009).

The delegation also visited Shanghai, where discussions with its mayor Han Zheng, on the functioning of special export industrial zones were held. The same delegation explored prospects in tourism, joint ventures in power generation and machinery. The outcome of this visit was a highly successful Chinese trade exhibition in Nairobi in mid-2006. The NARC's government had quietly embarked on a "Look East Policy" that laid emphasis on improved relations with countries from the East. Although not stated as an official policy, Kibaki's government seem bent on breaking what has always been perceived by the previous government as Western condescending attitude and lectures on human rights and democracy (Kurlantzick, 2007). It did not help matters for the Kenya-West relations, when the then transport minister, Dr.

Chris Murungaru was banned from visiting both US and UK, due to alleged involvement in grand corruption (Daily Nation of Thursday, February 16<sup>th</sup> 2008, pp.1-2). The move was interpreted as a sign of deteriorating relations and a revenge-driven attempt to hit at the president. Dr Murungaru categorically claimed that attacks against the Kenyan government over official corruption and his subsequent ban from visiting US and UK, arose from the changing fortunes of British contractors who once dominated the lucrative defence and security contracts. This monopoly has been shattered following the government's decision to allow competition from companies from the East (The Guardian newspaper, February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008). Dr Murungaru further noted that the new government's decision to woo investors from the East was inevitable because traditional investors from the West were shying away from Kenya. He lamented that Kenya had been over-reliant on donor support and investors from the West. Dr. Chris Murungaru who was later sacked as a result of concerted pressure from foreign missions in Kenya - accused Britain of not only taking advantage of the then political environment to benefit from lopsided procurement procedures.

True to Dr. Murungaru's words, five British firms involved in multi-billion shilling contracts lost business in the first two years of the NARC regime to firms from China, Japan, Spain, Russia and France. This was unlike president Moi's time, when British firms were the favourite contractors for department of defence and often got lucrative contracts without competition. For instance, De La Rue, the security-printing firm from Britain which had printed Kenya's currency since independence without competition, the NARC government was giving indications that it was prepared to invite other bidders to bid (People's daily, April 29, 2011). Mullin (2009), observes that Chinese goods previously shunned for being counterfeit were fast replacing Indian goods in downtown Nairobi. In 2006, 50 Chinese companies had invested in 96 projects valued at Ksh 4 billion, while at the Nairobi Trade Fair held in September 2006; Chinese companies comprised the majority of the exhibitors (Odhiambo, 2011).

According to the then Kenya's assistant minister for Foreign Affairs, Moses Wetangula Kenya had no intention of abandoning her traditional allies in favour of the newly-found China friendship. He argued that the relationship between Kenya and UK goes back to the days of Imperial British East African Company (IBEAC), the precursor to the British colonial rule and cannot be determined by one individual. He went on to say that "everybody knows that the Eastern Tigers-China, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand-have become increasingly important players in international economy. Everybody is dying to have Chinese economic cake, Kenya included. We are just adding on to the list of important partners and the move is not as a result of any gap in relations with the West". He continued, "we are just waking up to reality of new momentum that China is the fastest growing

economy in the world, and recently overtook US as the largest consumer of raw materials, thus Kenya cannot be left out of the opportunity. It would be a mistake for anybody to think that our relationship with the East is in place of the West, it is simply in addition” (Oluoch, 2006, p. 12).

Since the early years of independence, Kenya had not witnessed diplomatic circuit lively and full of public and private intricate between the Western-bloc envoys and the Chinese diplomat officials as was witnessed in the period 2003-2007. The only difference was that the Western diplomats were playing catch up to their Chinese counterparts, investors, business leaders and even increasingly Chinese tourists (Elmi, 2012). China and to a lesser extent, India, were engaging in infrastructure, mining, service and technological contracts that at the height of the Western-bloc heyday would have been unthinkable. For most Western-bloc diplomats, investors and Bretton Woods financial giants, this was a major reversal of fortunes. In April 2006, President Hu Jintao visited Kenya, as part of a five-nation tour that took him to the United States, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Nigeria (Jones, 2011). This indicated the seriousness with which China was taking Kenya. Although, Kenya was not as aid-dependent as most of its African neighbours, the government was still determined to increase the volume of concessional development aid, to supplement local investment, and Foreign Direct Investment (Kenya External Resources Policy Paper, 2007).

Table 1: Distribution of Aid Sources to Kenya showing China’s contribution between 2002-2005(in million U.S dollars)

SOURCES	2002	2003	2004	2005
<b>Multilateral</b>	181	229	266	242
<b>China</b>	0.20	6.5	7.1	56
<b>Other Bilateral</b>	272.8	300.5	342.9	379
<b>Total</b>	454	536	616	677
<b>China’s Share (%)</b>	0.08	2	2	13

Source: UNDP, Kenya Development Cooperation Report (Nairobi: UNDP, 2006)

From Table 1, it can be observed that China’s contribution in aid to Kenya increased from 0.08 percent of total external assistance in 2002, to 13 percent in 2005. China rose from among the lowest contributors of development assistance to Kenya to become the largest bilateral donor in 2005, second overall to the European Union. As such, China has clearly become an important and popular player among Kenyans. While direct foreign investment from the West to Kenya was declining during President Kibaki’s era, Kenya’s fixation with the traditional European tourism market was affected. The UK and US issued travel advisories to its citizens over what they perceived as the existence of terrorism cells in Kenya. Besides negative travel advisories, the US excluded Kenya from the Millennium Challenge Account, which is rewarded to African countries that have made major leaps in the area of good governance.

With the NARC government in Kenya that had raised hopes for better governance, Kenya had anticipated to benefit from the account (Copson, 2007). China then came to the rescue from 2002 that saw trade between China and Kenya increasing by 46%, mainly due to Kenyan imports from China. This also raised exports to the East African region countries to about \$7.5 billion (Njeru, 2003). For instance, Kenya imported Ksh 13 billion (\$ 1.8 billion) worth of goods from China in the year 2010, while Kenya exported Ksh 903 million (\$12 million) worth of goods, mainly black tea, coffee and leather goods (Samora, 2011). Regardless of this development, it has to be noted that the increased trade between China and Kenya stood in favour of China. Chege (2008) argues that the attraction of Chinese development assistance lies in its bureaucratic simplicity, in comparison to the donor red tape that in part motivated the Paris Declaration toward high efficiency through improved coordination between donors. He further observes that Kenya’s attraction to Chinese projects springs from China’s habit of not asking questions about human rights and democracy in African states the reason for which China has been censured for its operations in Sudan and Zimbabwe. This observation was key to this study that attempted to find out what motivates Kenya towards China.

During president Kibaki’s era, the Chinese managed to get major infrastructure projects, mining and resource concessions, huge technological and service contracts that would previously have been the preserve of Western companies (Kibirenge, 2012). For president Kibaki and his team, the Western-bloc public and private protestations were not only insincere, but borne out of a culture of entitlement that the Western contractors were used to in the past on account of Kenya being beholden to the Western countries. The Western-bloc argued that Kenya needed to evaluate its position more closely as the Chinese and other Eastern suitors were pursuing their interests without due regard to the welfare of Kenya (Copson, 2007). During his visit to China in August 2010, president Kibaki witnessed the signing of an agreement allowing Huawei Technology Company of Shenzhen to provide wireless communication link to all government divisional offices. This service was initially undertaken by UK companies (China Daily, September 21, 2010). The Chinese assistance in health, infrastructure, energy and education by then was more than Ksh 8 billion (\$109 million). Over 10 ministers in the Kibaki government visited China bringing with them tourism, ICT, economic and technical cooperation.

This was a clear departure from president Daniel ArapMoi’s approach who despite his poor record on human rights, retained close ties with the UK through lucrative contracts some of which date back to independence in 1963. This is mainly because, Kenya being a strong ally of the West during the entire Cold War period, ensured that China was locked out from any meaningful relationship with Kenya since independence in 1963. The UK paid back by engaging in what they termed as “silent diplomacy”, even at a time when other



Western countries were pointing out human rights abuse and cutting bilateral aid to Kenya (Barkan, 1994). The director of Foreign Service (training and research) from the institute of diplomacy pointed out that Kenya is China's gateway to the emerging markets of Somalia and Southern Sudan and other regional countries such as Uganda and Rwanda. He also pointed out how a Chinese company established a \$3 million factory to produce concrete poles at a time when campaign against deforestation was threatening the timber industry. He also went ahead to say that besides establishing a China Trade Centre in the up-market outskirts of Nairobi, China continued to supply high-tech telecommunications equipment that were cheaper and of inferior quality compared to their Western competitors.

Under president Kibaki's watch, barriers to Sino-Kenya relations came down. One barrier was that there were only two major airlines, Ethiopian and South African, which had direct flights to Beijing from their respective capitals, Addis and Johannesburg. To overcome this problem the then Kenya's ambassador to China, Dr. Wario negotiated a Bilateral Air Service Agreement which would allow Kenya Airways flights to China. Kenya Airways began flights to Hong Kong via Bangkok (Okulo, 2012). Later a new routing was negotiated from Nairobi via Dubai to Guangzhou and not Beijing. The second barrier to Afro-Chinese relations was that the Chinese were not coming to Africa as tourists. This led to the drafting of the Kenya-China Tourism Protocol. The then Tourism minister Raphael Tuju flew to Beijing to sign the Protocol with his Chinese counterpart (Kenya's Ministry of Tourism, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007). As a result, the Chinese came to Kenya in large numbers first as tourists, then later as investors, road builders, real estate developers and development partners. Ties between China and Kenya did not stop only at business, from August 8<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> 2005, Kenya hosted a week-long Chinese Cultural Festival. The festival was held in Nairobi and the coastal city of Mombasa. The festival co-organized by the Chinese Embassy in Nairobi and the then Kenya's Ministry of Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services, was part of celebrations to mark the 600th anniversary of legendary navigation led by Chinese mariner and explorer Zheng. The festival yielded positive developments and opportunities as Kenyan authorities approved the setting up of a Chinese radio station in Nairobi, the first Chinese broadcasting station to operate outside China.

The China-Kenya Investment Forum convened in March 2006, provided an entry point for Chinese investors to explore investment opportunities in Kenya and to meet potential Kenyan partners. Another entry point for Kenya's foreign policy towards China was the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), a platform established by China and African partners for collective consultation and dialogue as part of South-South Cooperation (Foreign Policy Framework, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009). Kenya's foreign policy goal with regard to China was to expand bilateral political and economic ties, especially in the fields of economic

development, trade, health, tourism and infrastructure. According to Masta (2009), the volume of Kenya's bilateral trade with China reached a record high of \$480 million US dollars in 2005. China exports to Kenya amounted to US\$460 million compared to US\$20 million worth of imports from Kenya. The study found out that this challenges China's principle of mutual benefit as the trade heavily favoured China.

The Chinese choice of partners and its diplomatic philosophy, which preaches non-interference in other countries' internal affairs, was attractive to Kibaki's government, given that Western powers were disillusioned after the government failed to stick to its timetable of economic and political reforms (Kurlantzick, 2007). The reasons behind this can be seen in the trade trends, the rise in official development assistance, investment in the construction industry (particularly roads), and the prospecting for oil in northeast Kenya and the coast. One major area of conflict between president Kibaki's government and the Western powers was the issue of corruption, in which they accused Kibaki's government of paying lip service to the war on graft. President Kibaki seemed bent on breaking what had been perceived by the previous government as Western condescending attitude and lectures on human rights and democracy.

#### *3.4 Kenya-China Relation during Uhuru Kenyatta's Reign (2013-Present)*

Notwithstanding his personal predicament and of his deputy at the International Criminal Court when they took over office, President Kenyatta made clear his intentions to steer Kenya to greater heights at the global diplomatic arena. With a new government, there was perception that the government would continue with president Kibaki's look east policy. This perception arose from the strained relationship between Kenya and the Western countries over the International Criminal Court cases (Brown and Sriram, 2012). Munene (2013) observes that during the inauguration of President Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy William Ruto on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2013, China's flag was the only pennant of a foreign country outside Africa that occupied a flagstaff. Significantly, Beijing sent a high ranking special envoy to the ceremony while the Western nations were only represented by their ambassadors.

President Kenyatta made his first state visit outside Africa to China from August 19<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> 2013. According to state house spokesman Manoah Esipisu, the trip was both official and working as the president had diplomatic and bilateral engagements with China's state officials and investors (Ongiri, 2013). Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang visited Kenya on May 10<sup>th</sup> 2014. President Uhuru Kenyatta and the Chinese Prime minister signed 17 agreements that were expected to unlock billions of shillings to boost Kenya's economy with railway, health, wildlife and security sectors getting major boost. Key among them was the multi-billion standard gauge railway (SGR), which is expected to cost Ksh 327 billion for the Mombasa-Nairobi phase with China

funding 85 per cent of the project. The two leaders also agreed that a China-Africa Development Bank would be set up in Nairobi and Beijing would pump in about Ksh 170 billion. Another major project was the China-Africa Research Centre that was to be funded at a cost of Ksh 5.1 billion. On wildlife conservation, which has been in the spotlight following increased poaching partly blamed on growing demand for ivory and rhino horn in China, Mr Li announced a Ksh 860 million financial support for wildlife conservation in Kenya. Educational issues which were part of Mr Li's high profile visit saw the establishment of an ultra-modern joint laboratory for crop molecular biology estimated as a cost of Ksh 5.1 billion. Addressing the press at state house during Mr Li's visit, President Kenyatta stressed that the Kenyan government was keen on ensuring a steady relationship with China. This was a pointer to the kind of foreign policy the Kenyatta administration was likely to pursue.

The coming of President Obama to Kenya on 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> July 2015 brought a new twist to Kenya's foreign policy. It expressed the renewal of the relationship and direction of the Kenya-US partnership. This was an affirmation of the Jubilee government commitment to widen the network of trade and development partners around the globe. President Obama's visit came with a basket of goodies for Kenya. Key pledges the American president made during the visit was increased funding for the war against terror, a special fund for women and youth entrepreneur as well as an extension of the US visa period from one to five years. The US government also pledged to pump in more money through the power Africa project, an initiative that seeks to connect more households with electricity. On the anti-poaching campaign, president Obama said his government had prohibited the sale of ivory in the US. President Obama also reiterated the commitment of his country to help president Kenyatta deal with corruption in government, offering technical support towards the same (Daily nation, Nairobi, July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015, pp. 4-5).

The visit to Kenya by Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang on May 10<sup>th</sup> 2014 and president Obama's visit from 24<sup>th</sup> July 2015 shows a 'colder' cold war between USA and China. The war is not ideological as it were between capitalists and communists but they are fighting over developing countries. Notwithstanding Kenya's hitherto traditional pro-western foreign policy posture, President Uhuru Kenyatta insinuated that Kenya was seeking a drastic and dramatic new foreign policy engagement with its traditional allies. President Uhuru Kenyatta has been sending a clear and unambiguous message; that the Jubilee Coalition leadership is intent on pursuing a more forceful and driven foreign policy.

On 13<sup>th</sup> March to 18<sup>th</sup> March 2017, President Uhuru attended the Belt and road initiative forum in Beijing where he held bilateral talks with president Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang. In November 2018, the President was also in Beijing to attend the 7th FOCAC summit. In April 2019 President Kenyatta went to China with officials including Orange Democratic Movement leader Raila Odinga, who is the

African Union High Representative for Infrastructure Development in Africa. In the meetings he attended, he urged countries to strengthen connectivity, open up markets, commit to rule-based international trade, strengthen multilateral cooperation and ensure sustainable, people-centred development. Oruko (2019) described the meeting between Presidents Kenyatta and Jinping as "extremely successful" and summed up their results as follows: i) The signing of a trade agreement for the export of frozen avocados from Kenya to China, which followed the signing of an MoU on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards late last year for the export to China from Kenya of various horticultural products. ii) The signing of a Framework Agreement between the Kenya National Highways Authority and the China Road and Bridge Cooperation for the construction of Kenya's first expressway from Jomo Kenyatta International Airport to Westlands. iii) The signing of a financing agreement valued at Sh17 billion between the Kenya and China EXIM Bank for the construction of the Konza Technopolis Data Center and IT infrastructure.

The president was also supposed to use the visit to sign financing for the second phase of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR). But the deal fell through after China asked Kenya to do a feasibility study. Before the visit, transport Cabinet Secretary James Macharia had spoken as if it had been a done deal, that Kenya was going to sign the \$3.8 billion (Sh380 billion) financing deal with Beijing to extend the SGR between Naivasha and Kisumu. It is still a puzzle how Kenya was seeking the project funded without the completion of the feasibility study. In an interview with an official at the Chinese Embassy (personal communication, June 14, 2019). He said that part of the main reason why China went slow on the project was due to the negative media reports from Kenya, rising debt concerns as well as rising hostilities between the two nations.

Wu Peng, the Chinese Ambassador to Kenya on Tuesday April 23, 2019 wrote on an article on the embassy website arguing that in 2018, around 170 Kenyan students were awarded China-sponsored scholarships for further study in China. 686 Kenyans were trained in China. At the same time, over 81,000 Chinese tourists travelled to Kenya. On the same month, 55 outstanding Kenyan employees picked by Chinese enterprises flew to China for a one-week visit. He further argued that China-Kenya relations were standing at a higher stage with new development opportunities. "I will live up to my mission and make into full play the favourable conditions of good timing, right place and right people". Together with our Kenyan brothers and sisters, we will surely promote our bilateral cooperation in all sectors, enhance mutual understanding, and open a new chapter for China-Kenya friendship".

China has been facing criticism in the recent past for using debt to control African nations; it has challenged this narrative on grounds that it was being funded by the West who are losing clout on the continent. Social media has also been

brutal on the President every time he has announced any visits to China. This perhaps explains why his communications team is changing strategy to focus his messaging on investment deals struck and is keeping off the controversial issue of debt. In an interview with an official at the Chinese Embassy (personal communication, June 14, 2019) he said his government is committed to having a long-term relationship with Kenya, but was concerned by negative political and media reports that are threatening this relationship.

In conclusion one can argue that among the four president's Kenya has had China-Kenya relationship has been at its finest in history during the reign of president Uhuru. President Xi Jinping and President Kenyatta have strengthened China-Kenya relations into Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

It was the objective of this paper to analyze China-Kenya relations since independence with an aim of finding out what has defined this relation. The paper was divided into historical periods, namely Jomo Kenyatta 1963-1978, Daniel Arap Moi 1978-2002, Mwai Kibaki 2002-2012, and Uhuru Kenyatta (2013-present). The paper has demonstrated that the presidents being the chief foreign policy shapers reacted differently to international geo-political situations based on their personalities and abilities. In the period 1963-1978, during the late Jomo Kenyatta's era the relations between China-Kenya was defined by the Cold war which was the prevailing global political trend at that time. This was seen from the epic struggle between the two factions in KANU, the radical left wing who favoured closer ties to the Soviet bloc and China. The right wing was determined to increase cooperation between Kenya, the United States, Britain, and Western Europe. When the left side which was pro-China was evicted from government in April 1966, the relations between the two states deteriorated, ending in a diplomatic break in 1967.

In the period 1978-2002, during President Moi's era, the relation between China-Kenya was defined by the president's personal interest and the prevailing global political trends which was the collapse of Communism. The Chinese diplomatic philosophy, which preaches non-interference in other countries' internal affairs, was very attractive to the Kibaki's government (2002-2012), given that Western powers had become disillusioned after the government failed to stick to its timetable of economic and political reforms that came during the post Cold war period. President Uhuru (2013-present) when he took over power he made clear his intentions to steer Kenya to greater heights at the global diplomatic arena. He has associated closely with both the West and the East but has made more visits to China. His reign has also been influenced by global political trend as its believed there is a new Cold War between USA and China which is not ideological as it were between capitalists and communists but they are fighting over developing countries. Among the four

president's Kenya has had, China-Kenya relationship has been at its finest in history during the reign of president Uhuru. President Xi Jinping and President Kenyatta have strengthened China-Kenya relations into Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership.

The chapter concludes that China-Kenya relations since independence has been defined by personalities of the presidents, personal interest and prevailing global political trends such as the Cold War and post-Cold War period. Each president faced different challenges, including their personal input in actual conduct of foreign relations.

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