

Call for Papers*Management and Organization Review***Research Frontiers Conference on
'China Outward Foreign Direct Investment
to Africa'****Local Host: Gordon Institute of Business Science,
University of Pretoria****Co-Sponsor: University of San Francisco China Business
Studies Initiative****Dates: July 21, 22, and 23, 2020**

Chinese investment is transforming the African landscape. Pot-holed roads are being replaced by double-lane highways. In urban areas, Chinese-built office complexes, hotels, and shopping malls are an increasingly common sight and in even remote rural areas, Chinese traders are selling Chinese-made essentials to locals.

Africa is the last frontier to offer attractive investment opportunities to an economy with national capabilities in executing large-scale infrastructure projects. While FDI projects in Africa contribute to maintaining employment of Chinese workers, an important national consideration as China balances the transition to a service economy, increased domestic consumption, spiralling domestic debt, and an ageing population, China, being the largest foreign investor in Africa, has attracted negative views from inside and outside Africa for its investment on this continent and has been criticized by Western Countries for neo-colonialization behaviour.

Moreover, Chinese OFDI into Africa is taking place in an era during which global economic activity is transforming. Deglobalization dynamics, and the fourth industrial revolution arising from digitalization, artificial intelligence, platformization, 3D printing, etc. are predicted to transform global trade, give rise to more regional trade compacts, and redefine global value chains. This highlights the huge opportunities for developing – and perhaps technologically less advanced – markets.

European and American multinationals have been slow to explore investment opportunities in Africa. Large-scale infrastructure development requires huge capital investment financing. The Western developed economies are either not willing or not able to match China OFDI policies for such projects. Even when

financing can be arranged, there has been a lack of interest and the quite recent colonial history complicates the relationship between Africa and especially European countries.

This does not mean that considerations of colonialism and power dependencies are absent from the China/Africa relationship; on the contrary. Facing the pressures of economic development and projected population growth, many African countries are attracted to the top-down approach exemplified by the history of China since opening up in 1978 and by President Xi's aspirations for China to challenge the dominance of the US. The effect of Chinese FDI into Africa also reinforces an affinity between countries that question the efficacy of liberal democracy in how they govern. In an era of increasing populism and the ratcheting trade-war between the US and China, such an affinity has far-reaching implications.

This *Management and Organization Review* research frontiers conference will culminate in a special issue of MOR focused on exploring the history, experience, and implications of Chinese FDI into Africa. Given the wide range of topics, disciplinary perspectives, empirical approaches, and the nature of the questions raised by Chinese FDI into Africa, the guest editors and the program committee hope to attract scholars from a range of disciplines such as international business, political science, corporate strategy, organization theory, cross-cultural research, social movements, and others.

The MOR research Frontiers Conference on China OFDI to Africa is therefore seeking papers that provide insight into why and how Chinese FDI into Africa is playing out. Especially welcome are scholars whose research can contribute to elucidate how Africans understand Chinese FDI on their continent, as well as exploration of the Chinese perspective. The conference seeks to feature rigorous scholarly contributions, including micro perspectives of how individuals experience Africa/China interactions, large-scale macro perspectives on the phenomenon, conceptual contributions, and qualitative case studies. But beyond that, we do not wish to impose specific themes or research questions.

Please submit proposals for sessions (3–5 pages) or extended abstracts of papers (7–10 pages) to MOR Deputy Editor for Africa, Professor Helena Barnard (barnardh@gibs.co.za). The subject line must show China OFDI to Africa. The deadline for submissions is March 20, 2020 and invitations will be issued by April 24, 2020.

This conference is co-sponsored by the University of San Francisco China Business Studies Initiative, a knowledge center that creates and shares knowledge of global Chinese business by providing a platform connecting scholars, practitioners, policy makers, students and alumni through its unique global positioning.