Rethinking Humanitarianism and China-Africa Relations in an Era of Expanding Chinese Humanitarianism

A Study of the Expanding Humanitarian Role of Chinese Government and Chinese Humanitarian and Development Organisations in Africa

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CONTENT

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ARC   Advocating the Rights of Children

BCE   Before the Common Era

BNAIE   Beijing Association for the Promotion of International Exchange of Non-Governmental Organisations

BRI   Belt and Road Initiative

BRFIC   Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation

CAESD   China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development

CAITEC   Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation

CANGO   China Association for NGO Cooperation

CAPFA   Chinese-African People's Friendship Organisation

CARA   Control of Alien Refugees Act

CARM   Centre of African Studies

CAS   Community Accountability Reporting Mechanism

CCP   Chinese Communist Party

CCPIT   China Council for the Promotion of International Trade

CDA   Critical Discourse Analysis

CDB   China Development Brief

CDL   The China Democratic League

CFPA   Chinese Foundation for Poverty Alleviation

CHA   China's Humanitarian Aid

CIA   Central Intelligence Agency

CIDCA   China International Development Cooperation Agency

CIFRC   China International Famine Relief Commission

CNIE   Chinese NGOs Network for International Exchange

CNPC   China National Petroleum Corporation

CPC   Communist Party of China

CPPCC   Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference

CRCF   China Red Cross Foundation

CRRF   Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework

CSO   Civil Society Organisation

CYDF   China Youth Development Foundation

DAR   Development Assistance to Refugees

ECHO   European Community Humanitarian Office

FBOs   Faith-Based Organisations

FOCAC   Forum on China-Africa Cooperation

FTI   Foundation Transparency Index

GEI   Global Engagemental Institute

GHD   Good Humanitarian Donorship

GONGO   Government-Organized Non-Government Organisation

HDOs   Humanitarian and Development Organisations

ICAO   International Civil Aviation Organisation

ICRC   International Committee of the Red Cross

ICVA   International Council of Voluntary Agencies

IDPs   Internally Displaced Persons

IGA	Income Generating Activities
ILD	International Liaison Department (ILD)
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
LDC	Graduation of African Least Developed Country
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MC	Mercy Corps
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MND	Ministry of National Deefense
MOFCOM	Ministry Of Commerce, People's Republic of China
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NASTAD	National Alliance of State & Territorial AIDS Directors
NCNA	North China News Agency
NDPII	National Development Plan II
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OCHA	UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PLA	Chinese People's Liberation Army

PRC	People's Republic of China
RCSC	Red Cross Society of China
RehoPE	Refugee and Host Population Empowerment
ROC	Republic of China
SIIS	Shanghai Institute of International Studies
SIRONET	Silk Road NGO Cooperation Network
SPLA/IG	Sudan People's Liberation Army/In Government
SRS	Self-Reliance Strategy
SSCAF	South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund
SSDC	South-South Development Cooperation
STA	Settlement Transformation Agenda
TICAD	Tokyo Conference on African Development
UCT	Unconditional Cash Transfers
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WRSS	The World Red Swastika Society
WTO	World Trade Organisation

XCMG Xuzhou Construction Machinery Group

YMCA Young Men's Christian Association

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ENGLISH ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a comprehensive and critical analysis of the expanding humanitarian role of China in Africa and its impact on China-Africa relations and contemporary global humanitarianism. Through a multi-dimensional approach integrating historical, actor-oriented, and critical discourse analysis perspectives, the study traces the evolution of Chinese humanitarian discourses and practices, examines the complex dynamics of China-Africa humanitarian interactions, and reveals the strategic construction and deployment of Chinese humanitarian discourses.

The research uncovers the deep roots of Chinese humanitarianism in traditional Chinese philosophies, such as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, and analyzes how these indigenous ideas have shaped contemporary Chinese humanitarian concepts and practices through encounters with Western influences since the 19th century. A central focus of the study is China's strategic use of the discourse of 'friendship' in its humanitarian engagements with Africa, which sets it apart from Western approaches and aims to enhance China's moral legitimacy and soft power on the continent.

Through in-depth case studies, including an extensive examination of the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA)'s programs in Africa, the thesis sheds light on the growing role and complex interactions of Chinese state and non-state actors, particularly Chinese Humanitarian and Development Organisations (HDOs) in the African humanitarian landscape. It reveals how China's humanitarianism is driven by a mix of ideological, economic, and political factors, and how it is closely intertwined with the broader trajectories of China-Africa relations and China's global rise.

By critically deconstructing the discursive and practical dimensions of Chinese humanitarianism, the study exposes the underlying power dynamics and strategic calculations behind China's seemingly benevolent actions. It argues that China's humanitarianism in Africa serves as a key platform for China to construct a positive global image, enhance its international influence, and justify its expanding presence on the continent.

Methodologically, the research employs a combination of historical, discourse analysis, and ethnographic approaches, drawing on a wide range of sources including Chinese policy documents, organisational reports, interviews, and participatory observation. This multi-pronged approach enables a nuanced and contextualized understanding of the complex realities of Chinese humanitarianism on the ground.

The thesis makes significant theoretical and empirical contributions to the fields of humanitarian studies, African studies, and Chinese studies. It enriches our understanding of the diverse philosophies, practices, and impacts of humanitarianism from a non-Western perspective, shedding

light on the agency and subjectivity of African actors in the process. It also provides valuable insights into the domestic and international drivers behind China's growing humanitarian ambitions and the implications for global humanitarian governance.

However, the study also recognizes its limitations and calls for a more inclusive and participatory approach to knowledge production in future research. There is a need to further amplify African voices and perspectives and to conduct more comparative studies across diverse humanitarian contexts and actors to build a truly global and pluralistic understanding of humanitarianism.

In conclusion, this thesis offers a timely and important analysis of China's expanding humanitarian role in Africa, with far-reaching implications for theory, policy, and practice. By critically engaging with the complexities and contradictions of Chinese humanitarianism, it opens up new avenues for dialogue, reflection, and collaboration among diverse humanitarian actors and stakeholders, and contributes to a more nuanced and dynamic understanding of humanitarianism in a changing world order.

DANISH ABSTRACT

Denne afhandling giver en omfattende og kritisk analyse af Kinas voksende humanitære rolle i Afrika og dens indvirkning på forholdet mellem Kina og Afrika samt nutidig global humanitarisme. Gennem en flerdimensionel tilgang, der integrerer historiske, aktørorienterede og diskursanalytiske perspektiver, sporer undersøgelsen udviklingen af kinesiske humanitære diskurser og praksisser, undersøger de komplekse dynamikker i humanitære interaktioner mellem Kina og Afrika og afslører den strategiske konstruktion og anvendelse af kinesiske humanitære diskurser.

Forskningen afdækker de dybe rødder af kinesisk humanitarisme i traditionelle kinesiske filosofier, såsom konfucianisme, buddhisme og taoisme, og analyserer, hvordan disse oprindelige ideer har formet nutidige kinesiske humanitære begreber og praksisser gennem møder med vestlige påvirkninger siden det 19. århundrede. Et centralt fokus for undersøgelsen er Kinas strategiske brug af diskursen om 'venskab' i dets humanitære engagementer med Afrika, hvilket adskiller det fra vestlige tilgange og sigter mod at styrke Kinas moralske legitimitet og bløde magt på kontinentet.

Gennem dybdegående casestudier, herunder en omfattende undersøgelse af China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA)'s programmer i Afrika, kaster afhandlingen lys over den voksende rolle og komplekse interaktioner mellem kinesiske statslige og ikke-statslige aktører, særligt kinesiske humanitære og udviklingsorganisationer (HDOs), i det afrikanske humanitære landskab. Den afslører, hvordan Kinas humanitarisme er drevet af en blanding af ideologiske, økonomiske og politiske faktorer, og hvordan det er tæt forbundet med de bredere forløb i forholdet mellem Kina og Afrika og Kinas globale opstigning.

Ved kritisk at dekonstruere de diskursive og praktiske dimensioner af kinesisk humanitarisme, afslører undersøgelsen de underliggende magtdynamikker og strategiske beregninger bag Kinas tilsyneladende velvillige handlinger. Den argumenterer for, at Kinas humanitarisme i Afrika fungerer som en central platform for Kina til at opbygge et positivt globalt image, styrke sin internationale indflydelse og retfærdiggøre sin voksende tilstedeværelse på kontinentet.

Metodologisk anvender forskningen en kombination af historiske, diskursanalytiske og etnografiske tilgange, der trækker på en bred vifte af kilder, herunder kinesiske politikdokumenter, organisatoriske rapporter, interviews og deltagerobservation. Denne flersidede tilgang muliggør en nuanceret og kontekstualiseret forståelse af de komplekse realiteter i kinesisk humanitarisme på jorden.

Afhandlingen yder væsentlige teoretiske og empiriske bidrag til områderne humanitære studier, afrikanske studier og kinesiske studier. Den beriger vores forståelse af de forskellige filosofier,

praksisser og virkninger af humanitarisme fra et ikke-vestligt perspektiv og kaster lys over afrikanske aktørers agens og subjektivitet i processen. Den giver også værdifuld indsigt i de indenlandske og internationale drivkræfter bag Kinas voksende humanitære ambitioner og konsekvenserne for global humanitær styring.

Undersøgelsen anerkender dog også sine begrænsninger og opfordrer til en mere inkluderende og deltagerorienteret tilgang til vidensproduktion i fremtidig forskning. Der er behov for yderligere at forstærke afrikanske stemmer og perspektiver og gennemføre flere komparative undersøgelser på tværs af forskellige humanitære kontekster og aktører for at opbygge en sand global og pluralistisk forståelse af humanitarisme.

Afslutningsvis tilbyder denne afhandling en aktuel og vigtig analyse af Kinas voksende humanitære rolle i Afrika med vidtrækkende konsekvenser for teori, politik og praksis. Ved kritisk at engagere sig i kompleksiteterne og modsætningerne i kinesisk humanitarisme åbner den op for nye veje til dialog, refleksion og samarbejde blandt forskellige humanitære aktører og interessenter og bidrager til en mere nuanceret og dynamisk forståelse af humanitarisme i en foranderlig verdensorden.

TIMELINE OF CHINA HISTORY

Years	Dynasty (Eras and sub-eras)	Periods of Conexisting Kingdoms	Founder (also known as)
c. 2100–1600 BC	Xia Dynasty		Yu the Great
c. 1600–1046 BC	Shang Dynasty		King Tang
c. 1046–256 BC	Zhou Dynasty		Ji Fa (King Wu of Zhou)
c. 1046–771 BC	Western Zhou		Ji Yiju (King Ping of Zhou)
c. 770–475 BC	Eastern Zhou	Spring and Autumn Period	
475–221 BC	Eastern Zhou	Warring States Period	
221–206 BC	Qin Dynasty		Ying Zheng (Qin Shihuang 'First Emperor of Qin')
206 BC–220 AD	Han Dynasty		Liu Bang
206 BC – 9 AD	Western Han (Former Han)		Liu Bang
9–23	Xin Dynasty		Wang Mang
25–220	Eastern Han (Later Han)		Liu Xiu
220–265	Three Kingdoms	Kingdom of Wei	Cao Pi
221–263		Kingdom of Shu	Liu Bang
222–280		Kingdom of Wu	Jianye (Nanjing)
265–420	Jin Dynasty (Sima Jin)		Sima Yan
265–316		Western Jin	Sima Yan
317–420		Eastern Jin	Sima Rui
304–439		Five Hus and Sixteen States	
420–589	Northern and Southern Dynasties		
386–581		Northern Dynasties	
386–534		Northern Wei	Tuoba Gui
534–550		Eastern Wei	Yuan Shanjian (regent: Gao Huan)
535–557		Western Wei	Yuan Baoju (regent: Yuwen Tai)
550–577		Northern Qi	Gao Yang
557–581		Northern Zhou	Yuwen Jue
420–589		Southern Dynasties	
420–479		Song	Liu Yu
479–502		Qi	Xiao Daocehng
502–557		Liang	Xiao Yan
557–589		Chen	Chen Baxian
581–618	Sui Dynasty		Yang Jian
618–907	Tang Dynasty		Li Yuan
907–960	Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Period		
907–923	Later Liang		Zhu Wen
923–936	Later Tang		Li Cunxu
936–946	Later Jin		Shi Jintang
947–950	Later Han		Liu zhiyuan
951–960	Later Zhou		Guowei
907–1125		Liao Dynasty	
960–1279	Song Dynasty		Zhao Kuangyin
960–1127		Northern Song	Zhao Kuangyin

1127–1279		Southern Song	Zhou Gou
1038–1227		Western Xia Dynasty	Li Yuanhao
1115–1234		Great Jin Dynasty (Jurchen Dynasty)	Aguda
1271–1368	Yuan Dynasty		Kublai Khan
1368–1644	Ming Dynasty		Zhu Yuanzhang
1644–1912	Qing Dynasty		Hong Taiji (Aisin Gioro Nurhachi)
1912–1949	Republic of China		Sun Yat-sen (Sun Zhongshan)
1949–present	People's Republic of China		Mao Zedong

1   INTRODUCTION

Overview

Humanitarian aid has long been dominated by a classical, Dunantist paradigm[1] that was based on the ethics of humanitarian principles[2] and centred on international humanitarian agencies within and beyond the United Nations (UN) (Hilhorst 2018). In recent years, however, some new actors have begun to appear in the field of humanitarianism. China is one of them. As a newly emerging humanitarian actor on the global stage, in recent decades China has increasingly engaged with the humanitarian field, introducing its own set of discourses and practices.

China has prioritized Africa as a key continent for its foreign humanitarianism. This complex blend of strategic interests, economic incentives, desire for South-South solidarity, and evolving Chinese engagement on the ground, explains this focus. China's expanding humanitarian engagement in Africa not only reflects its growing global influence but also shapes the evolving dynamics of China-Africa relations and the international humanitarian landscape.

This thesis aims to address the central research question: ***What explains the expanding humanitarian role of China in Africa, and how does this impact China-Africa relations on the one hand, and contemporary global humanitarianism on the other?*** To answer this main research question, the thesis will explore the following sub-questions:

1. What is the history of Chinese humanitarianism, and how has Chinese humanitarianism transformed over time in terms of discourses and practices?
2. What is the nature of China's relationship with Africa?
3. How and why have Chinese state and non-state actors expanded their roles in the global humanitarian arena and become new humanitarian players in Africa?
4. What are the effects of China's expanding humanitarian role in Africa on China-Africa

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[1] Humanitarian aid is rooted in the experience of Henri Dunant at the Battlefield of Solferino in 1859, which set into motion the evolution of International Humanitarian Law and the definition and organisation of modern humanitarianism as a principled endeavour. See Allen, Macdonald and Radice 2018.

[2] Humanitarian principles have long guided the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the various national Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies (OCHA 2012). The principles are humanity, meaning the centrality of saving human lives and alleviating suffering wherever it is found; impartiality, meaning the implementation of actions solely based on need, without discrimination between or within affected populations; neutrality, meaning that humanitarian action must not favour any side in an armed conflict or other dispute where such action is carried out; and independence, meaning the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold about areas where humanitarian action is being implemented. These principles are the guidelines for humanitarian response to a crisis, whether caused by conflict, violence or natural or man-made disaster (from GHD principle). These principles are derived from the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative, which is a collective effort by donor governments to improve the coherence and effectiveness of hu The Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) principles, initially endorsed by the EU and 17 other donors in 2003, underline the importance of coherence and effectiveness of humanitarian action including donor accountability. The GHD principles, now endorsed by no less than 42 donors (including all the EU Member States) manitarian action. See from European Commission, https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/partnerships/relations/ghd_en, accessed on 16 August 2024.

relations (as read through a focus on Chinese Humanitarian and Developments Organisations (HDOs) in Africa)

5.   What are the effects of China's expanding humanitarian role in Africa on contemporary global humanitarianism?

To provide context for addressing these questions, China's approach to the field of humanitarianism has undergone some key changes, including substantial increases in humanitarian spending, institutional reforms, and the emergence of non-state Chinese actors in the humanitarian realm (Gong 2021). Both the Chinese government and Chinese HDOs have increased their presence in Africa within the arena of humanitarianism. Politically, China is framing its humanitarian aid more explicitly in terms of the important field of South-South Cooperation, with an emphasis on enhancing 'friendly ties' in China-Africa relations. Although the emerging and expanding role of Chinese HDOs in Africa has attracted international media attention, few scholars are actively studying it. This thesis aims to fill this knowledge gap, especially with insights from a Chinese perspective.

To investigate these developments and answer the central research question, this thesis adopts a multi-method approach that integrates historical analysis, discourse analysis, case studies, and empirical fieldwork. The historical analysis, conducted in Chapters Four and Five, traces the evolution of Chinese humanitarianism and China-Africa relations, providing a crucial foundation for understanding the contemporary dynamics. Discourse analysis, employed throughout the thesis, examines the construction and implications of key concepts such as 'Friendship', 'South-South cooperation' and 'People to People Bond' in Chinese humanitarian narratives. The case studies of Chinese HDOs, particularly the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA) in Chapters Seven and Eight, offer in-depth insights into the motivations, practices, and challenges of Chinese humanitarian actors on the ground. Finally, the empirical fieldwork, including interviews, surveys, and participant observation conducted in Uganda, provides valuable first-hand data on the perceptions and experiences of aid recipients and local communities.

By examining China's evolving humanitarian engagement in Africa, through this multi-method approach, with a specific focus on Chinese HDOs, the thesis contributes novel insights to ongoing discussions concerning the relevance of Chinese humanitarianism expansion for China-Africa relations, as well as fresh perspectives that can guide discussions on global humanitarianism. This multi-method approach allows for a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of the complex interplay between China's expanding humanitarian engagements, China-Africa relations, and the global humanitarian landscape, making a significant contribution to the field of Chinese African Studies.

To lay the groundwork for this analysis, the thesis first analyses the development of humanitarianism within China and then applies insights thus generated to a fine-grained historiographical analysis of China's engagements in Africa, unfolding the dynamic nature of the relationship between the two. The thesis then examines China's position in Africa from the perspectives of humanitarian policies, discourses, and practices. Empirically, I make use of a case study of the CFPA to investigate the emerging and expanding humanitarian role of Chinese HDOs in Africa, and to explore the effects of expanding Chinese humanitarianism on contemporary humanitarianism and broader China-Africa relations.

The remainder of this introductory chapter is structured as follows. Prior to delving into the main theoretical framework employed in this dissertation (Chapter Two), the next section critically examines the concept of 'global' humanitarianism, highlighting its roots in Western history, multiple logics, and diverse forms. Following this, the chapter delves into the distinctive features of Chinese humanitarianism, characterized by its development orientation, state-centrism, and focus on natural disasters. It then situates the analysis within the broader context of China-Africa relations, discussing the centrality of South-South cooperation, the imbalance between hard and soft power, and growing doubts about the future of the relationship. Finally, it reflects on the development and limitations of African Studies in China. The chapter concludes by outlining the overall structure and organisation of the thesis.

Rethinking 'Global' Humanitarianism

To situate China's humanitarian engagement within the broader international context, it is essential to critically examine the concept of 'global' humanitarianism. Around the world, remarkably similar but not identical conceptualisations of 'humanitarianism' evolved independently of one another, yet many in the West consider their definitions and forms of humanitarianism to be 'global'. This Western-centric view of humanitarianism is problematic, as 'globalization is tantamount to economic, legal, cultural, and symbolic forms of Western imperialism.' (Dechaine 2005:13) According to Hirono and Hagan (2012:8), 'Humanitarianism is not static, nor monolithic. It has evolved and it is influenced by a variety of historical and political factors.' However, the Western-centric narrative of humanitarianism has dominated the discourse, obscuring the diverse histories and forms of humanitarianism in different parts of the world (Barnett 2011). As Everill (2013:2) points out, 'History, policy, theory and practice are all part of the bigger picture of humanitarian assistance and intervention and are necessary for understanding not only the driving forces behind Western interventions in Africa premised upon humanitarian grounds, but also how the people, states and

humanitarian, political, and military organisations involved in such endeavours see their role.' This comprehensive perspective is crucial for rethinking the diversity and complexity of global humanitarianism, and serves as an important reference point for examining the characteristics of Chinese humanitarian practices in Africa.

In the following sections, 'global' humanitarianism is shown to be rooted in Western intellectual history, to gloss over multiple logics, and to take a variety of forms. These are essential elements of a framework that enables us to rethink contemporary humanitarianism, particularly in the context of emerging actors like China.

Rooted in Western History

The dominant conception of humanitarianism is deeply embedded in Western historical and intellectual traditions. The idea of a 'humanitarian' is rooted in Western history and was globalised in ways that were largely shaped by interests and ideas emanating from the West (Ibid.). The doctrine of humanitarianism and the notion of the 'sympathetic man' began to make inroads in Europe in the mid-eighteenth century, leading to an increasing number of organisations formed to alleviate human suffering (Ibid.). By the early nineteenth century, humanitarianism relied on the ability to recognise both moral responsibilities for and causal connections with distant strangers (Skinner and Lester 2012). However, this historical account tends to present a linear and progressive narrative that overlooks the contradictions within Western humanitarian thoughts and practices, such as the gendered and racialized notions of the 'sympathetic man', and the intertwining of humanitarian sentiments with imperial and civilizing missions (Laqueur 1989, Barnett 2011).

Chinese humanitarianism has its roots in ancient Chinese charitable cultural values, which pre-date the Western concept of humanitarianism (Reeves 2018). China has a long history of charity and mutual-aid societies that can be traced back to the pre-Christian era (Ibid.). These values have shaped contemporary Chinese humanitarian discourses and practices in significant ways. Understanding these distinctive historical roots is crucial for grasping the particularities of Chinese humanitarianism and its relationship to the Western-dominated 'global' model.

Multiple Humanitarianism Logics

While the previous section highlighted the Western roots of the dominant humanitarian paradigm, it is important to recognize that humanitarianism encompasses multiple logics and motivations. Scholars have addressed humanitarian logics from four key perspectives. The first focuses on moral logics. Fassin (2011) embeds humanitarianism within a broader moral canopy. Gomez, Newell and Vannini (2020) see compassion and empathy as central humanitarian motives.

The second, which focuses on the 'victim' view, portrays recipients as passive subjects who are dependent on the care and activities of aid agencies, rather than as agents capable of transforming their own moral landscape (Brewer, Hayes and Dudgeon 2014).

The third perspective focuses on a religious logic, which considers humanitarian assistance as a way to unite people of the same faith and protect the entire religious community. Faith-based organisations (FBOs) constitute a prominent part of the humanitarian community today (Ferris 2011). The fourth perspective emphasizes the logic of certain interests, including showing international responsibility and strengthening bilateral relations.

These logics have several limitations. First, the moral logic may lead to a tendency towards depoliticization, obscuring the structural causes behind humanitarian crises. Second, the 'victim' perspective may reinforce unequal power relations in aid, limiting the agency of affected populations. Third, the religious logic may conflict with principles such as humanitarian neutrality, resulting in the politicization of aid. Finally, the interest logic may instrumentalize humanitarian assistance, subjecting it to the strategic agendas of donor countries. Addressing these limitations requires a more critical and reflective approach to humanitarian studies.

Turning to the Chinese context, it is crucial to examine how traditional Chinese values, such as Confucian ethics of benevolence and reciprocity, have influenced the logics and practices of China's humanitarian aid (Hirono 2013). Moreover, the role of the Chinese state in shaping the humanitarian discourses and practices, as well as the interplay between state and non-state actors in the humanitarian field, require careful analysis (Fan 2019). By focusing on the Chinese context and employing a mixed-methods approach that combines discourse analysis, case studies, and interviews with key stakeholders, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of Chinese humanitarianism. It seeks to explore how different humanitarian logics, including moral, religious, and strategic considerations, interact and shape China's humanitarian policies and practices. Moreover, by examining the roles and interactions of state and non-state actors in the humanitarian field, this study contributes to a more dynamic and contextualized understanding of humanitarianism that goes beyond the limitations of singular perspectives. By investigating the distinctive logics and dynamics of Chinese humanitarianism, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of the diversity and complexity of global humanitarianism.

Various Forms of Humanitarianism

In addition to acknowledging the multiple logics of humanitarianism, it is important to recognize the diverse forms that humanitarianism takes in different contexts. In this respect, the dominant Western-

centric narratives have been critiqued for their biases, which tend to present humanitarianism as a universal project emanating from the West (Davey 2015). This 'empire of humanity' narrative risks obscuring the diverse histories of humanitarianism in different parts of the world and reproducing a binary view of the West as the active provider of aid and the Global South as the passive recipient (Barnett 2011, Fassin 2011). A more decolonial approach is needed to decentre Western perspectives and foreground the multiple forms of humanitarianism that have emerged in different contexts.

Three forms of humanitarianism that challenge the dominant Western model are Africa-led humanitarianism, Muslim humanitarianism, and South-South humanitarianism. Africa-led humanitarianism focuses on local humanitarian engagements directed by African religious and political actors (Burchardt 2013, Everill 2020). Muslim humanitarianism encompasses traditional Islamic forms of charity that can be either voluntary (Zakat, waqf and Sadaqah) or obligatory (Abuarqub and Phillips 2009).

Of particular relevance to this thesis is the growing attention to South-South humanitarianism. South-South humanitarianism has begun to enjoy increasing attention in recent years (Pacitto and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2013, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2015, Richey et al. 2021). However, humanitarian action not borne of the Northern-dominated and highly institutionalised international humanitarian regimes remains largely neglected in academia (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Pacitto 2015). The study of South-South humanitarianism challenges the dominant North-South paradigm of aid, and highlights the growing influence of Southern actors in shaping the global humanitarian landscape (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2015). As Pacitto and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2013) argue, South-South humanitarian responses have a long history and diversity, ranging from regional refugee protection frameworks to grassroots solidarity movements. However, these initiatives have often been marginalized in the mainstream humanitarian discourse, which has been dominated by Northern organisations.

Within the broader landscape of South-South humanitarianism, China has emerged as a significant player, particularly in its engagement with Africa. China's fast-growing role as an aid provider has placed it firmly in the spotlight. For example, Pacitto and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2013) note that China's humanitarian assistance to Haiti during the earthquake, and to Syrian refugees, increased the visibility of this 'non-traditional', post-colonial state actor in the humanitarian arena. Although studies are beginning to focus on China's increasing participation and funding in the global humanitarian field and discuss the aims behind China's increasing participation, most limit their focus to China's current practices. Only a few scholars like Caroline Reeves (2018) highlight that Chinese humanitarian aid is deeply rooted in internal charitable cultural traditions, which were formed long before the entry of Christianity into the West. Reeves challenges the misconception that China only began participating

in charitable activity after Christian missionaries brought them to the country, arguing that China has long been noted for its charity ethos and its mutual-aid societies back before Christ. Reeves' study of Chinese humanitarianism from a historical viewpoint contributes significantly to the scholarly discourse on contemporary Chinese humanitarianism. She argues that lessons from the Chinese humanitarian story can improve the contemporary discourse on legitimate expressions of global humanitarianism.

Rethinking Chinese Humanitarianism

Building on the previous discussion of the diverse forms of humanitarianism, this section delves into the distinctive features of Chinese humanitarianism. Chinese humanitarianism, comprising both discourses and practices, is rooted in China's long tradition and culture of internal charitable activities. More recently, these have been affected by a combination of domestic politics and the growing influences of Western humanitarianism around the world. The philosophical foundations of Chinese humanitarianism, such as benevolence, compassion, dedication and sacrifice, can be traced back to the classics of Confucianism and Taoism (Gong 2021). These traditional values, along with China's own experiences of dealing with natural disasters and poverty, have shaped its unique approach to humanitarian aid. Three key features characterize the development of Chinese humanitarianism: it is development-oriented, state-centric, and prioritizes natural disasters. These are discussed in turn in the following sections.

Development-oriented Humanitarianism

A defining feature of Chinese humanitarianism is its close integration with development goals and strategies. China's international humanitarian aid (CHA) policy is part of a holistic development approach (Renwick 2020, Zhang 2019). Unlike in Western development and humanitarian spheres, the Chinese framework does not have a very clear boundary between humanitarian and development aid. Disasters, whether natural or man-made, are considered to be a cause of poverty and underdevelopment. Consequently, relief is provided not only for the sake of saving lives but also for the sake of avoiding poverty in the future. This perspective is rooted in China's own experience of poverty alleviation and development. The Chinese government has long emphasized the importance of development in realizing human rights and improving people's well-being.

The importance of development is reflected in a key sentence: '[o]nly development can remove the root causes of global challenges; only development can guarantee the basic rights of people; and only

development can promote the progress of human society' (China State Council Information Office December 2016).

This development-oriented perspective is further evidenced by China's actual practices. For example, China often combines emergency relief with post-disaster reconstruction and economic recovery in its humanitarian assistance. However, this approach has also drawn criticism. China's aid in post-conflict areas has been seen as driven more by its own economic and strategic interests than humanitarian considerations. For example, China's infrastructure projects in post-war Sri Lanka and Angola have been criticized for benefiting Chinese companies more than local communities (Brautigam and Gallagher 2014).

In sum, the development-oriented feature of China's humanitarianism has its merits in addressing the root causes of crises and promoting sustainable recovery, but it also faces some criticisms. Some scholars argue that China's blending of humanitarian and development aid can undermine the neutrality and independence of humanitarian action, making it more susceptible to political and economic interests (Hirono 2018). This reflects the ongoing debates about the boundaries and principles of humanitarian aid in the international community.

State-centric Humanitarianism

Another key characteristic of Chinese humanitarianism is its state-centric nature, which stands in contrast to the emphasis on non-state actors in Western humanitarian traditions. On the contrary, within China, the Chinese state is perceived as a more legitimate humanitarian actor than NGOs. This is largely due to China's political system and cultural traditions, which emphasize the central role of the government in ensuring people's well-being and maintaining social stability.

China's political system and ruling ideology dominate the government's humanitarian aid sector. Politically, China is a state system in which the government wields absolute authority. Since ancient times, government policies have been expected to be 'people-oriented'. The government is perceived as holding primary responsibility for and duty to protect the people in times of disaster. At the same time, the 'people-oriented' political concept directly links people's lives with the legitimacy and stability of political rule. This extends to humanitarian crises, during which providing welfare and assistance becomes a legitimate popular expectation of the state (O'Hagan and Hirono 2014:415).

In this context, the Chinese government dominates humanitarian aid, both at home and abroad, with the primary aim of fulfilling its responsibility to improve people's lives and secure its political rule. The capacity to provide effective aid may become a marker of state legitimacy (Ibid.). This state-centric model is clearly reflected in China's aid management system. The core institutions responsible

for China's foreign aid are all government agencies, including the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) established in 2018. The decision-making, planning, implementation and evaluation of aid projects are predominantly led by the government, with limited involvement of civil society organisations.

As Gong (2021:243) suggests, 'the preference for a state-centric approach is also reflected in China's humanitarian action overseas, as Chinese humanitarian aid has primarily been provided through the government-to-government channel' (see also Renwick 2020).

While the state-centric model has its advantages in terms of coordination and resource mobilization, it also has some limitations. It can lack transparency and accountability, and may prioritize the interests of the ruling elites over the needs of the most vulnerable populations (Abb and Jones 2021). Some scholars call for a more participatory and inclusive approach that engages local civil society and affected communities in the aid process (Hu 2019). This highlights the need for further reforms in China's humanitarian aid system to enhance its effectiveness and legitimacy.

Natural Disaster-oriented Humanitarianism

In terms of the focus of its humanitarian activities, China has traditionally prioritized responding to natural disasters, both domestically and internationally. '[A]part from increased support for global humanitarian action in conflict settings, China has become more active in responding to natural hazards in other countries' (Gong 2021:239). Natural disasters in Africa remain China's humanitarian aid priority. For example, in 2011 the Chinese government provided emergency food aid to Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti, Somalia and other countries in the Horn of Africa on three occasions (see China's Foreign Aid White Paper 2014). According to the white paper of 'China's International Development Cooperation in the New Era', from 2013 to 2018, China responded to 60 natural disasters in other developing countries, providing emergency aid worth more than 3 billion yuan (about 470 million US dollars). Among these, 25 were in Africa, accounting for over 40% of the total (The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China 2021). These figures show that Africa is indeed a main focus of China's overseas disaster relief efforts.

Two main factors explain China's prioritization of natural disasters in its humanitarian assistance. Firstly, China itself is prone to frequent natural disasters, both historically and in the present. 'This generates empathy toward victims of natural disasters elsewhere', suggest O'Hagan and Hirono (2014:420).

China's own experience of coping with natural disasters has shaped its understanding of and approach to international humanitarian aid. The Chinese government believes that its disaster

management model, which emphasizes strong state leadership, mass mobilization and self-reliance, can provide useful lessons for other developing countries (Gong 2021). This model, known as the 'whole-of-society' approach, has been applied in China's domestic disaster relief operations and is now being promoted in its overseas humanitarian assistance (Zhang 2019).

Secondly, China has long pursued a 'non-interference policy'. According to the same scholars, the historical memories of imperialism and colonial subjugation in Africa, which continue to affect local political cultures, make China particularly reluctant to undertake any humanitarian actions that might be regarded as interference in the domestic affairs of other states. Sensitivity to this issue is especially important, as the People's Liberation Army (PLA) takes on a central role in China's post-disaster relief work (Teitt 2012:7, see also China 2010 Defence White Paper).[3] In this sense, 'responses to natural disasters tend to be less "politicized" or less politically controversial than those to complex emergencies, and thus governments are more willing to extend assistance' (O'Hagan and Hirono 2014:421).

While China's emphasis on natural disasters and non-interference is welcomed by many African countries, it has also drawn criticism from some Western observers. It is also criticized by some Western scholars and media as turning a blind eye to human rights abuses and governance issues in the recipient countries (Bräutigam and Tang 2012). China's no-strings-attached aid can undermine Western efforts to promote political reforms and good governance in Africa. This reflects the tensions and debates around the different aid approaches and norms between China and the West.

Rethinking China-Africa Relations

As this thesis focuses on China's humanitarian engagement in Africa, it is essential to situate this analysis within the broader context of China-Africa relations. According to Abegunrin and Manyeruke (2020:9), 'China-Africa relations refer to the historical, political, economic, military, social, and cultural connections between China and the African continent.' The focus of this thesis is on the modern relationship between China and Africa. Modern China-Africa relations began in the early 1950s. This section highlights three key aspects of contemporary China-Africa relations: the centrality of South-South cooperation, the imbalance between hard and soft power, and growing doubts about the future of the relationship.

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[3] Teitt further notes (p. 5) that the PLA's status as a 'people's army' blurs the line between military and citizen action, thereby helping to legitimise the role of the army in humanitarian relief.

South-South Cooperation Channel

Situating China's humanitarian engagement within the broader context of China-Africa relations is crucial for understanding its drivers, characteristics, and implications. China has framed its engagement with Africa primarily through the lens of South-South cooperation, which emphasizes solidarity, mutual benefit, and non-interference among developing countries. South-South cooperation has a long history dating back to the Bandung Conference in 1955, which emphasized principles such as political self-determination, mutual respect for sovereignty, and non-interference in internal affairs (Grimm 2014). South-South cooperation, exemplified by the Bandung spirit, is often seen as a distinctive model of development cooperation that differs from the traditional -South aid paradigm. It emphasizes principles of equality, mutual benefit, and sharing development experiences, while North-South cooperation is criticized for its paternalistic and donor-driven approach (Mawdsley 2012).

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), established in 2000, elevated the China-Africa relationship from 'strategic partnership' to 'comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership'. FOCAC continues to be a key institutional mechanism and political foundation of China-Africa relations and a step forward in strengthening South-South cooperation (Asante 2018). However, the South-South cooperation framework has also been subject to criticism. Some scholars argue that it obscures power asymmetries and economic interests that underpin China's engagement with Africa (Taylor 2006). They call for an approach that prioritizes the needs and voices of African communities, and that promotes inclusive and sustainable development.

Hard Power and Soft Power Imbalance

An important dimension of China-Africa relations is the interplay between China's hard power and soft power on the continent. As the thesis focuses on China's humanitarian engagement in Africa, it is crucial to examine how the imbalance between China's hard power and soft power has shaped this engagement and its implications for the broader China-Africa relationship.

China's hard power, as manifested in its economic and trade relations with Africa, has expanded rapidly in recent years. However, China's soft power, including its cultural, ideological, and humanitarian influence, has not kept pace (He 2009, Li 2013). This imbalance has raised concerns among African leaders and citizens, as well as international observers, that China's growing economic presence may not be sustainable or beneficial in the long run without a corresponding increase in its soft power influence. These concerns stem from the perception that China's engagement with Africa is primarily driven by its own economic and strategic interests, rather than a genuine commitment to

the continent's development and well-being (Alden and Large 2019). From China's perspective, the limited growth of its soft power influence in Africa may undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of its overall engagement on the continent, as it seeks to strengthen its global image and build long-term partnerships with African countries (Li 2013).

Several factors contribute to this imbalance. First, China's state-centric approach to engagement with Africa has prioritized economic and strategic interests over people-to-people exchanges and cultural diplomacy (Hsu and Hildebrandt 2020). Second, negative perceptions of Chinese products, labour practices, and environmental impacts have undermined China's soft power appeal (Brautigam 2011). Third, the limited presence and capacity of Chinese civil society organisations and academia in Africa have constrained their ability to foster mutual understanding and trust (Brenner 2012). This limitation is significant because it hinders the development of a more diverse and multi-layered engagement between China and Africa. Non-state actors, such as NGOs, universities, and think tanks, play a crucial role in complementing government-to-government cooperation by promoting cultural exchange, knowledge sharing, and collaboration on common challenges. However, the insufficient resources, networks, and expertise of Chinese civil society and academic institutions often prevent them from effectively engaging with their African counterparts and contributing to China's soft power objectives. Consequently, this constraint undermines the potential for building long-term, mutually beneficial relationships between Chinese and African societies, which is essential for enhancing China's soft power influence on the continent.

However, recent evidence suggests that the gap between China's hard and soft power in Africa is narrowing. China's soft power initiatives, such as the expansion of Confucius Institutes, media cooperation, and cultural exchanges, have made notable progress in promoting Chinese language, culture, and perspectives in Africa (Lemtur 2024). Moreover, China's humanitarian engagement, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, has demonstrated its potential to enhance its soft power by providing critical assistance and fostering goodwill (Banwo and Osiki 2024).

Despite these developments, the imbalance between China's hard and soft power in Africa remains a significant challenge. To foster a more balanced and sustainable China-Africa partnership, China needs to prioritize soft power initiatives that promote genuine cultural exchange, encourage the development of independent civil society organisations, and foster a more transparent and inclusive approach to engagement (Lemtur 2024).

This imbalance has important implications for the broader China-Africa relationship. On the one hand, China's growing economic presence and infrastructure investments have created opportunities for deeper cooperation and development. On the other hand, the lack of commensurate growth in

China's soft power has raised questions about the long-term sustainability and mutual benefit of these engagements.

As the thesis delves into China's humanitarian engagement in Africa, it is essential to consider how this engagement is shaped by and contributes to the broader dynamics of hard and soft power in China-Africa relations. By examining the discourses, practices, and implications of Chinese humanitarianism in Africa, the thesis aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of how China navigates the complex interplay between its economic interests and soft power objectives, such as promoting solidarity, cultivating a positive image, and strengthening people-to-people ties. The study will explore how China's humanitarian initiatives, including medical assistance, disaster relief, and development projects, serve to enhance its soft power influence and legitimize its growing economic presence in Africa. At the same time, the thesis will also consider the challenges and limitations of China's humanitarian engagement, such as the perception of instrumentalization and the potential tensions with traditional humanitarian principles. By investigating these dynamics, the thesis seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of China's multifaceted relationship with the continent.

In summary, the imbalance between China's hard and soft power in Africa is a critical issue that not only influences China's humanitarian engagement but also has broader implications for the future of China-Africa relations. By situating this imbalance within the wider context of China's evolving role in Africa and the global humanitarian landscape, the thesis contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the opportunities, challenges, and potential trajectories of China-Africa relations in the 21st century.

Growing Doubts about China-Africa Relations

Despite the rapid expansion of China-Africa ties in recent years, there are also growing questions and concerns about the future of the relationship. Wang and Wei (2017:83) find that 'In recent years, a growing number of Western observers have begun to blame China's Africa policy for worsening governance in Africa and hindering democratization in many countries'. Similarly, Zhang (2012:21) proposes a 'Contribution Theory of China-Africa Relations' in order to explain how China might cope with the deteriorating international public opinion environment of China-Africa relations and meet the development needs of both the country and the continent. She argues that Western criticism of China-Africa relations is becoming more systematic, theoretical, and official, with a focus on China's perceived neglect of Africa's security and stability in pursuit of its own economic interests (Ibid.).

Moreover, 'Africa's traditional understanding of friendly China-Africa relations is being undermined' (Zhang 2012:22). Concerns about issues such as the quality of Chinese goods, the integration of Chinese migrants, corporate social responsibility of Chinese firms, and China's support for authoritarian regimes are increasing in Africa (Ibid.). As an example, in Zambia, 'anti-China sentiment' is becoming a dominant social sentiment (Negi 2008, Lim 2012, Zhang 2012, Chimbelu 2022). These observations further confirm the imbalance between hard power and soft power in China-Africa relations.

While these criticisms reflect genuine challenges, it is important to approach China-Africa relations with a more nuanced and contextualized perspective. On the one hand, some aspects of China-Africa relations bear resemblance to colonial practices, such as unequal economic relationships and neglect of environmental and labour issues (Mohan and Lampert 2013). On the other hand, China's approach also has distinctive features, such as non-interference in domestic affairs and framing aid as South-South cooperation (Power and Mohan 2010, Pere and Shelton 2015, Huang and Tang 2013). A dialectical perspective is needed to fully understand China-Africa relations, acknowledging both limitations and differences from Western colonialism, and situating it within broader historical and geopolitical contexts (Tan-Mullins, Mohan and Power 2010).

In sum, growing doubts and criticisms of China-Africa relations reflect the complex and evolving nature of China's engagement, shaped by both opportunities and challenges. China's increased trade, investment, and development cooperation have contributed to economic growth, infrastructure development, and poverty reduction in many parts of Africa (Brautigam 2009). However, concerns have also been raised about debt sustainability, environmental impacts, labour rights, and governance issues (Taylor 2006). A more nuanced and contextualized understanding is needed, taking into account diverse perspectives and experiences of African actors, and exploring possibilities for mutually beneficial and sustainable cooperation. This calls for a more inclusive and critical dialogue between Chinese, African, and Western stakeholders, and a greater emphasis on evidence-based research and knowledge exchange.

Chinese Perceptions and Discourse on Africa

The growing doubts and criticisms about China-Africa relations are not only shaped by external observers but also reflect limitations and biases in Chinese perceptions and discourses on Africa. Recent studies have shed light on how average Chinese citizens and migrants view Africa and Africans. Kironska, Chen and Turcsanyi's (2022) survey of 3,000 Chinese respondents reveals that Chinese public opinions of Africa are dominated by stereotypes of it as hot, poor, and backward, yet

also pristine and rich in resources. Many Chinese see Africa's development as relying on Chinese aid and cooperation, and describe Africans in paternalistic terms as 'friendly' yet 'lazy'. Similarly, Petersen and Ali's (2018) interviews with Chinese migrants in Mozambique and South Africa find that their perceptions of Africa remain influenced by the Confucian concepts of hierarchy and development, viewing Africa as a backward region in need of China's assistance, although firsthand experiences lead to more nuanced views. Shen's (2010) analysis of Chinese online discussions also reveals negative stereotypes of Africa, such as poverty, backwardness, and laziness, as well as skeptical attitudes towards Africa's motives in China-Africa relations.

These stereotypical and paternalistic views of Africa are problematic, as they reproduce colonial patterns of thinking that have long been critiqued by African scholars and critical Africanist scholarship. The current surge in decolonial thinking, represented by scholars such as Zeleza (2006) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015), represents a concerted effort to confront and dispel these long-standing stereotypes and racializations, and to center African epistemologies and agency in the discourse. While these critical perspectives have gained prominence in some Western academic and political contexts, they have not been seriously engaged with in China. This makes it all the more important to bring critical African studies perspectives into dialogue with Chinese scholarship and public discourse, as advocated by scholars such as Li Anshan (2023). Such dialogical engagement can help to foster a more respectful and mutually enriching relationship between China and Africa, based on a nuanced understanding of African realities and aspirations.

China's official discourse on Africa also reflects a mixture of South-South solidarity, paternalism, and pragmatism. On the one hand, China emphasizes shared historical experiences and sympathies with Africa as previously colonized regions, and frames its engagement as South-South cooperation for mutual benefit. On the other hand, China's rhetoric of viewing African countries as 'brothers' and 'friends' is often tinged with a paternalistic undertone, positioning China as a benevolent elder brother helping younger African siblings develop. This rhetoric, while welcomed by some African leaders, has been criticized by others as a new form of condescension that reinforces unequal power relations (Lumumba Kasongo 2011, Carmody and Kragelund 2016).

In summary, Chinese perceptions of Africa as underdeveloped, solidarity-oriented partners shape an approach centered on ostensible mutual benefit through pragmatic development cooperation and people-to-people ties. But this also advances China's interests on the continent, as evidenced through its humanitarian programs in Africa aimed at building soft power and legitimacy (Leder 2020). To build a more convincingly and mutually beneficial partnership between China and Africa, it is crucial

to critically examine the power dynamics and motivations behind China's engagement, and to foster a more reflexive and empathetic dialogue between Chinese, African, and international stakeholders.

Rethinking African Studies in China

As a Chinese scholar pursuing a doctoral degree in African Studies at a Western institution, it is important for me to reflect on how my background and training have shaped my perspective on the field. Pursuing this doctoral degree at the Centre of African Studies (CAS), University of Copenhagen, within a context of explicitly critical African Studies, has challenged me to rethink the development and limitations of African Studies in China.

African Studies in China has undergone significant changes since the 1950s, with its focus and approach evolving in response to China's shifting foreign policy priorities. Its beginnings can be traced back to the early 20th Century, with a focus on Egypt and early interactions between China and Africa (Li 2020). However, it gained substantial momentum following the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, when the government actively encouraged the study of Africa to foster diplomatic relations with newly independent African nations.

During the 1950s and 1960s, African Studies were predominantly politically motivated, serving as a means to support anti-colonial and nationalist independence movements in Africa, especially those in North Africa. However, this focus shifted during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) towards information collection and analysis rather than academic research, marked by the translation of Western books on Africa into Chinese.

The period from 1977 to 2000 was a fruitful time for African Studies in China, marking a significant revival after the end of the Cultural Revolution. During this phase, African Studies in China were primarily conducted by three main entities: universities, research institutions, and government-affiliated research organisations. Two national organisations, the China Association of African Studies (established in 1979) and the Chinese Association of African History Studies (established in 1980), played a central role in shaping China's engagement with African Studies. This resurgence was characterized by a comprehensive multi-discilinary approach, involving various academic disciplines such as history, politics, culture, literature, geography, ethnicity, and economics.

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), which began in 2000, has greatly promoted Chinese African Studies, focusing on China-Africa relations and the current situation of African countries (Li 2022). According to Li Anshan's research (2022), the new era of Chinese African Studies exhibits three characteristics:

'First, with the increase of monographs, more academics now concentrate on the current situation in politics, the economy, culture, and society, with the economy being the most popular topic and South Africa the most studied state. Yet the proliferation of publications has underscored the importance of research quality, in which Chinese scholars have a long way to go. Second, various studies on African countries or related topics expand interdisciplinary study, which emphasizes the significance of methodology, and solid long-term fieldwork with local language capability is very much needed. Third, more scholars are engaged in international academic exchanges and their views are gradually attracting attention from outside, yet this is concentrated on China-African relations.' (2022:73)

While initial research efforts heavily relied on secondary sources and translations from English, there has been a gradual shift towards more extensive fieldwork, archival research, and primary source analysis, although these activities are still largely concentrated in major cities like Beijing and Shanghai. One notable trend in African Studies in China has been the increasing engagement with the international academic community, facilitated by publications, conferences, exchanges, and collaborative projects involving both Chinese and foreign scholars. Nevertheless, challenges such as language barriers and limited fieldwork opportunities abroad have somewhat constrained the full integration of Chinese African Studies into the global academic discourse.

Despite the progress made, African Studies in China still faces significant challenges and limitations, particularly the predominance of state-centric and policy-oriented approaches, which can constrain critical and independent scholarship on Africa (Li 2023). The close alignment with China's foreign policy and economic interests tend to lead to a narrow and instrumental view of the continent, lacking engagement with African perspectives (Zhang 2020). The focus on contemporary issues and China-Africa relations overshadows the diversity and complexity of African histories, cultures, and societies (Li 2023). A more holistic and interdisciplinary approach is needed, situating China-Africa relations within broader global historical contexts and exploring multiple dimensions of African agency (Liu 2020). A more collaborative and inclusive approach is needed, fostering dialogue between Chinese and African academic communities. This can contribute to a more balanced and reciprocal China-Africa partnership.

This thesis aims to address some of these limitations in Chinese African Studies by bringing a more critical perspective to the analysis of China's humanitarian engagement with Africa. While it mainly focuses on the Chinese perspective and does not comprehensively represent African perspectives, especially those of aid recipients, it reveals the complexities and challenges in China-Africa humanitarian interactions. By examining the discourses and practices of Chinese humanitarianism, it seeks to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of China-Africa relations and highlight the need for greater inclusion of African voices and agency in future research.

In addition to the above, my experience as a doctoral student at the University of Copenhagen has exposed me to critical approaches in African Studies, challenging me to rethink the field's development in China. In this environment, critical African Studies assumes a central role in challenging ingrained assumptions and rectifying misconceptions about Africans and the continent. It confronts the task of addressing disparities in knowledge production power dynamics between the global North and Africa, taking seriously the long history and multiple contributions of African theories, voices, and perspectives (Hammar 2021). As a developing critical African Studies scholar, I recognize the limitations of this study in fully incorporating African perspectives and the need to further strengthen the focus on African subjectivity in future research. The exposure to critical ideas and approaches during my doctoral studies has presented an opportunity to rethink African Studies in China, even if not yet fully realized in this thesis. It has underscored the importance of engaging with African communities on the ground, listening to the perspectives of aid recipients, and examining their assessments of aid projects and perceptions of China.

By critically examining China's humanitarian engagement in Africa, this thesis aims to contribute to the development of African Studies in China in several ways. First, it moves beyond the state-centric and policy-oriented approach to provide a more comprehensive analysis of China-Africa relations, taking into account the role of non-state actors and the complex dynamics on the ground. Second, it engages with critical theories and perspectives from African Studies to interrogate the power relations and knowledge production in China-Africa humanitarian interactions. Finally, it highlights the importance of incorporating African voices and agency in the study of China-Africa relations, and calls for more collaborative and dialogical approaches in future research. Through these efforts, the thesis seeks to enrich and diversify the field of African Studies in China, and to promote a more nuanced and reflexive understanding of China-Africa humanitarian cooperation.

Thesis Outline

This introductory chapter has provided a broad background to understand and ground my research questions, while also introducing some key concepts that will be further developed in the next theoretical chapter and applied throughout the thesis. The remainder of this thesis is structured into an additional eight chapters, each building upon the previous one to construct a comprehensive and coherent analysis of China's expanding humanitarian role in Africa.

Chapter Two establishes a comprehensive conceptual-analytical framework for investigating the expanding humanitarian engagement of China in Africa. The chapter integrates three overarching analytical approaches: historical, actor-oriented, and critical discourse analysis. These approaches

provide a multidimensional understanding of the phenomenon under study, with each approach complementing and reinforcing the others. The chapter unfolds key concepts central to understanding Chinese humanitarianism, namely humanity, compassion, moral obligation, helping, legitimacy, and friendship/partnership. A critical examination of these concepts, including a comparative analysis of Western and Chinese perspectives, reveals shared humanitarian ideals across cultures while highlighting distinct Chinese approaches to operationalizing these concepts. The analysis of these key concepts lays the groundwork for a deeper and more nuanced understanding of Chinese humanitarianism, acknowledging both its commonalities with Western traditions and its unique manifestations. This conceptual-analytical foundation sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of Chinese humanitarian discourses, practices, and implications in the subsequent chapters of the thesis.

Building upon the conceptual-analytical framework from Chapter Two, **Chapter Three** outlines the multidimensional analytical perspective and methodological framework employed to investigate China's expanding humanitarian role in Africa. Integrating historical, actor-oriented, and discourse analysis approaches, the chapter presents a robust methodology for examining the multi-level drivers, practices, and implications of Chinese humanitarianism. It also reflects on the challenges and limitations of conducting fieldwork in cross-cultural settings.

Drawing on the historical approach introduced in Chapter Three, **Chapter Four** provides a critical historical foundation for understanding the evolution of Chinese humanitarian institutions and the unique characteristics of Chinese humanitarianism. The chapter traces the lineage of Chinese charitable giving, shaped by the teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, and examines how these traditional ideals have influenced contemporary forms of Chinese humanitarianism. It explores the development of four traditional charitable models – clan, religious, government, and civil – and their roles in shaping the landscape of ancient Chinese philanthropy. The chapter then investigates the profound impact of Western humanitarian thought on Chinese philanthropy since the 19th century, focusing on the establishment and evolution of key humanitarian organisations such as the Red Cross Society of China, the China International Famine Relief Commission, the Chinese Jishenghui(济生会), and the World Red Swastika Society. Finally, it analyzes the significant shifts in the development of Chinese humanitarian organisations after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, marked by the centralization of disaster relief efforts under state control and the gradual revival and globalization of Chinese HDOs in the reform era. By unravelling these complex histories, the chapter provides crucial insights into the myths, discourses, and knowledge constructs that underpin current humanitarian efforts in China and beyond.

Situating China's humanitarian engagement within the broader context of China-Africa relations, **Chapter Five** provides a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of China-Africa relations, employing both historiographical and critical discourse analysis approaches. The chapter traces the development trajectory of China-Africa relations from the early diplomatic and political engagements driven by Cold War ideologies to the strategic shifts in the post-Cold War era, marked by a growing emphasis on pragmatic cooperation and institutionalized platforms like the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. The analysis reveals the complex interplay of international and domestic factors shaping China's policies and discourses towards Africa, highlighting the shift from revolutionary diplomacy to economic diplomacy and global partnership. The chapter critically examines key discourses such as 'friendship', 'People-to-People Bond', and 'China-Africa Community with a Shared Future', which reflect China's strategic considerations, ideological stances, and aspirations for discursive power in its evolving relationship with Africa. Furthermore, the chapter explores the broader African perspective on China's engagement, drawing on empirical studies to present a nuanced understanding of the prevailing optimism tempered by cautious apprehension among African stakeholders. By situating China's humanitarian engagement within this rich historical and discursive context, the chapter lays the foundation for a deeper understanding of the motivations, dynamics, and implications of China's growing humanitarian role in Africa.

Building on the historical and discursive analysis in the previous chapters, **Chapter Six** presents a comprehensive analysis of the evolution and nature of Chinese humanitarianism in Africa, employing a historiographical approach to trace its trajectory, and an actor-oriented approach to unpack its key features. The chapter demonstrates how Chinese humanitarian discourses and practices on the continent have been intrinsically linked to the broader development of China-Africa relations. These have transitioned from an ideologically driven approach in the early years to a more pragmatic orientation during the reform era, subsequently adopting an open-ended approach aligning with China's expanding economic interests and global aspirations in the new millennium. The chapter highlights the centrality of the state in driving and coordinating Chinese humanitarian efforts in Africa, while also recognizing the growing diversity of actors involved, including Chinese HDOs and multilateral partners. It examines the key modalities of Chinese humanitarian assistance, such as bilateral aid, participation in multilateral initiatives, and the establishment of new funding mechanisms like the South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund (SSCAF), reflecting China's evolving approach. Moreover, the chapter argues that Chinese humanitarianism in Africa is characterized by a distinctly development-oriented approach emphasizing long-term solutions to the root causes of humanitarian crises, grounded in China's own development experience and its philosophy of South-South cooperation. By providing important insights into the dynamic and

multifaceted nature of Chinese humanitarianism in Africa, this chapter addresses the first and third sub-questions of the research, revealing how China's humanitarian engagement has been shaped by a complex interplay of domestic, bilateral, and global factors, reflecting its broader foreign policy objectives and evolving role in global governance.

Delving deeper into the actor-oriented approach, **Chapter Seven** provides an in-depth analysis of the emergence and evolving role of Chinese HDOs in Africa. It traces the historical trajectory of Chinese HDOs' involvement in Africa, from the early state-led period of the 1950s to the more diversified and multifaceted engagement in the 21st century. It systematically reviews the characteristics and preferences of Chinese HDOs' humanitarian aid projects in Africa, revealing their operational logic and value orientations. The chapter also synthesizes the perspectives of scholars and frontline humanitarian workers on the motivations, significance, and challenges of Chinese HDOs' growing presence in Africa's humanitarian landscape. Furthermore, it presents an in-depth case study of the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA), a leading Chinese HDO, to provide a concrete illustration of the developmental trajectory and African practices of Chinese HDOs. The case study examines CFPA's organisational transformation from a government-affiliated institution to an independent non-governmental entity, as well as its internationalization strategy. By investigating the unique role and contributions of CFPA as an emerging humanitarian actor, the case study aims to reveal how Chinese HDOs are promoting China's participation in global humanitarian causes. This analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of how Chinese HDOs are becoming important actors in China's participation in global humanitarian endeavours and their unique contributions to fostering people-to-people exchanges between China and Africa.

Chapter Eight builds upon the insights gained from Chapter Seven to delve into a specific empirical case study of CFPA's humanitarian practices in Africa. It focuses on the 'Brighter Future' program, a collaboration between CFPA and the Western NGO Mercy Corps in the Palabek refugee settlement in northern Uganda. Drawing on two months of intensive field research, including the use of questionnaires, interviews, and participant observation, the chapter provides a detailed analysis of the program's design, implementation process, challenges encountered, and its impact on refugee livelihoods and social integration. Through this case study, the chapter demonstrates CFPA's efforts to establish cooperative relationships with international partners, adapt to international humanitarian standards, and contribute to localizing global best practices in a complex humanitarian environment in Africa. By linking the micro-level insights from the CFPA case study in Uganda to the macro-level analysis of Chinese HDOs' emerging role in Africa from Chapter Seven, this chapter sheds light on the dynamic interactions between Chinese HDOs and Western NGOs in the field of international

development and the implications for China's evolving humanitarian engagements in Africa and beyond.

As the culmination of the research, **Chapter Nine** serves as the concluding chapter, providing a comprehensive overview of the research findings and their theoretical and practical implications. It revisits the core research question and sub-questions, summarizing the key insights gained from the historical analysis, actor-oriented approach, and critical discourse analysis employed throughout the study. The chapter highlights the complex interplay of factors driving China's expanding humanitarian role in Africa, including traditional cultural influences, evolving China-Africa relations, the interplay between state and non-state actors, and the strategic construction of humanitarian discourse. It also critically examines the impact of Chinese humanitarian engagement on China-Africa relations and the global humanitarian landscape, discussing both the achievements and challenges of Chinese humanitarian actors. Furthermore, the chapter reflects on the study's contributions to African Studies, Chinese Studies, and Humanitarian Studies, while acknowledging its limitations and proposing future research directions. It emphasizes the need for more inclusive and diverse theoretical perspectives, increased attention to African agency and subjectivity, and deeper engagement with the domestic drivers and implications of China's humanitarian involvement. The chapter concludes by underscoring the importance of promoting dialogue, mutual learning, and pragmatic cooperation among diverse humanitarian actors to address the complex challenges facing the global humanitarian system.

In summary, this thesis adopts a multi-layered analytical framework, integrating historical, actor-oriented, and discursive approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of China's expanding humanitarian engagements in Africa. Each chapter builds upon the insights gained from the previous one, gradually unfolding the complex dynamics, motivations, and implications of Chinese humanitarianism. By critically examining the interplay between state and non-state actors, traditional and contemporary influences, and domestic and international factors, the thesis contributes to a more nuanced and contextualized understanding of China's evolving role in the global humanitarian landscape and its impact on China-Africa relations.

2 CONCEPTUAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS

Introduction

This chapter presents the analytical and conceptual framework that underpins this doctoral dissertation on the expanding humanitarian engagements of China in Africa. Given the complex and multifaceted nature of this phenomenon, which is deeply rooted in historical, socio-political, and ideological contexts, a multi-dimensional analytical lens is employed, integrating three complementary approaches: a historical approach, an actor-oriented approach, and critical discourse analysis (CDA). To reiterate, this integrated framework aims to address the main research question: *What explains the expanding humanitarian role of China in Africa, and how does this impact China-Africa relations on the one hand, and contemporary global humanitarianism on the other?*

Each analytical approach contributes to answering specific aspects of this overarching question. The historical approach sheds light on the evolution of Chinese humanitarianism and China-Africa relations, providing crucial context for understanding the current situation (sub-questions 1 and 2). The actor-oriented approach illuminates the motivations, interests, and practices of Chinese state and non-state actors engaging in humanitarian efforts in Africa (sub-question 3). CDA uncovers the discursive constructions that shape the meaning, legitimacy, and implications of China's expanding humanitarian role for both China-Africa relations and global humanitarianism (sub-questions 4 and 5).

The historical approach facilitates a critical examination of the diverse narratives surrounding China's humanitarian development and its ties with Africa, tracing the trajectories of its humanitarian initiatives on the continent. This study adopts a historiographical perspective, recognizing that historical accounts are constructed and influenced by prevailing ideologies, power structures, and sociocultural contexts. It critically examines various historical sources, acknowledging the different positions and interests they may represent.

The actor-oriented approach offers insights into the motivations, strategies, interests, and practices of the diverse actors involved in China's humanitarian engagement in Africa. Recognizing the agency, interests, knowledge systems, and power relations among stakeholders, this approach illuminates the complex social interfaces and interactions that shape humanitarian processes and outcomes.

CDA provides a framework for examining the interplay between discourse, power, and ideology in the context of Chinese humanitarian discourses and practices. By analyzing linguistic features, rhetorical strategies, and discursive constructions, CDA helps unveil the underlying moral stances,

geopolitical interests, and ideological leanings that ascribe meaning and legitimacy to China's humanitarian role in Africa.

In addition to discussing these broader approaches, this chapter delves into key concepts central to this dissertation's understanding of Chinese humanitarianism, namely humanity, compassion, moral obligation, helping, legitimacy, and friendship/partnership. By critically examining these concepts through a comparative lens between Chinese and Western perspectives, the study uncovers the philosophical roots, cultural contexts, and socio-political forces that shape humanitarian discourses and practices in China as distinct from similar so-called 'global' humanitarian notions.

The analysis of these key concepts reveals shared humanitarian ideals across cultures while highlighting the distinct Chinese approaches to operationalizing these concepts, influenced by factors such as Confucian philosophy, its specific discourse of friendship, and China's strategic interests.

This chapter lays the conceptual-analytical ground for a deeper examination of Chinese humanitarian discourses and practices and their implications in the subsequent chapters, in order to engage critically with the complexities and nuances of Chinese humanitarianism and their wider geocultural and geopolitical significance with respect to Africa.

Main Analytical Approaches

The three analytical approaches employed in this study - historical, actor-oriented, and CDA - each contribute unique insights while working synergistically to address the research questions: The historical approach critically examines diverse narratives and sources to trace the evolution of Chinese humanitarianism and China-Africa relations, providing essential context for grasping the present dynamics, while the actor-oriented approach investigates the complex interactions, motivations, and practices of Chinese humanitarian actors in Africa, revealing the micro-level processes shaping China's engagement. CDA analyzes the discursive constructions that imbue China's humanitarian role with meaning and legitimacy, uncovering the power dynamics and implications for China-Africa relations and global humanitarianism.

The integration of these methodologies enables a holistic understanding of the multifaceted drivers, manifestations, and consequences of China's expanding humanitarian involvement in Africa, addressing the research questions from complementary angles. In the subsequent sections, I will demonstrate how these approaches work in concert to illuminate the historical trajectories, actor dynamics, discursive dimensions, and broader implications of this phenomenon.

Historical Approach

This study's historiographical approach involves a critical examination of three interrelated aspects: the history of humanitarianism within China, the history of China's longstanding relationship with Africa, and the specific histories of Chinese humanitarian initiatives on the African continent. Both these historical events and the narratives constructed around them are inextricably linked to and shaped by broader socio-political, economic, and ideological forces.

By adopting a historiographical approach, this research acknowledges that historical accounts, particularly those presented by Chinese sources, are not objective truths existing in isolation, but rather are constructed narratives shaped by the specific contexts and factors surrounding their production. These Chinese narratives about humanitarianism and China-Africa relations have been influenced over time by various factors, including changing political ideologies, economic interests, and cultural perspectives.

Deconstructing these Chinese-produced narratives, while also considering alternative perspectives and sources, is crucial for understanding what explains the expanding humanitarian role of China in Africa. This approach allows for analyzing the underlying forces that have driven and shaped this phenomenon over time, as well as how these events have been interpreted and represented by different actors.

Historiography prompts a critical interrogation of how histories are constructed, interpreted, and represented. This is important for shedding light on the evolving narratives surrounding Chinese humanitarian engagements in Africa. This approach fundamentally recognizes the constructed nature of historical accounts, prompting a critical analysis of how prevailing ideologies, power dynamics, and cultural contexts have influenced historians' and other writers' selection of sources, interpretation of evidence, and crafting of particular narratives. In this study, I am also critically aware of my own source selection and interpretation process, striving to maintain a balanced and comprehensive approach.

It highlights the dynamic and continually evolving nature of historical interpretations, which are subject to ongoing revision and reinterpretation as new evidence emerges, paradigms shift, and socio-political landscapes transform. Consequently, a historiographical approach enables a nuanced and contextualized understanding of the complex forces that have shaped the narration and representation of China's humanitarian initiatives in Africa across temporal, geographic, and socio-political dimensions.

By deconstructing these historical narratives throughout Chapters 4 to 7 of this thesis, the approach offers critical ways to illuminate how the expanding Chinese humanitarian role in Africa has impacted, and been impacted by, China-Africa relations and global humanitarian norms and practices over time.

Theoretical Foundations of the Historiographical Approach

A fundamental premise of historiographical theory is the interpretive and constructed nature of historical narratives. Influential scholars like Edward Hallett Carr (1961) and Hayden White (1973, 1987) assert that historical writing does not merely recount objective facts but constitutes a rhetorical construction shaped by historians' subjective perspectives, ideological inclinations, and contemporary contexts. Postmodern and post-structural thinkers such as Michel Foucault (1969), Dominick LaCapra (1983), and Keith Jenkins (1991) further deconstruct the notion of an objective historical truth, arguing that all historical accounts are products of their author's social, cultural, and political milieus, mediated through prevailing discourses and power structures.

Far from static, historiographical interpretations and representations undergo continual reinterpretation and revision as new evidence emerges, socio-political contexts evolve, and intellectual paradigms shift. Scholars like Frank Ankersmit (1983), Alun Munslow (1997), and Gabrielle M. Spiegel (2007) underscore the dynamic nature of historiography, wherein historical narratives are continually reconstructed and reinterpreted in response to changing intellectual and socio-political landscapes. A recurrent theme across historiographical theory is the reciprocal relationship between past and present histories. Our understanding of the past is invariably mediated through the lens of the present, while simultaneously, interpretations of past events shape and inform our contemporary worldviews and discourses.

Philosophers such as R.G. Collingwood (1946) and David Carr (2008) posit that historians engage in a process of 're-thinking' and 're-describing' past events through the prism of present concerns, interests, and ideologies, inevitably influencing the narratives they construct about the past. Jörn Rüsen (2005) argues that historical narratives serve a vital function in providing orientation and meaning for present-day societies, further shaping collective identities, values, and visions of the future. Feminist and postcolonial scholars, including Joan Wallach Scott (1999), Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) and Ranajit Guha (1982) have challenged dominant historical narratives, arguing that they have been constructed through the lens of contemporary gender norms, cultural hegemonies, and power relations, thereby obscuring or marginalizing the experiences and perspectives of marginalized groups.

Implications for Understanding Chinese Humanitarianism in Africa

By embracing a historiographical approach, this study aims to critically examine the interrelated histories of humanitarian development within China (sub-question 1), China's longstanding relationship with Africa (sub-question 2), and the specific histories of Chinese humanitarian initiatives on the African continent. Deconstructing these narratives, including Chinese official, academic, and organisational narratives, as well as international and African perspectives, through a historiographical lens will illuminate how prevailing ideologies, power dynamics, and socio-political contexts have shaped the construction, interpretation, and representation of these histories over time.

Simultaneously, there is a need to consider critically the dominant narratives of 'global' humanitarianism, that have been largely shaped by Western perspectives, experiences, and ideological frameworks, often neglecting or marginalizing non-Western contexts and approaches. Applying a historiographical lens enables us to deconstruct this Western-centric discursive hegemony and recognize the constructed nature of existing seemingly universalized humanitarian histories.

Concurrently, tracing the construction and interpretation of China's humanitarian history reveals how the framing of China's humanitarian work has evolved over time in response to shifting domestic exigencies, geopolitical tensions, and China's changing role and influence in Africa and on the global stage. By situating Chinese humanitarianism within broader socio-political and discursive frameworks, we can analyze how these transitions have reshaped China's own humanitarian paradigm and can explore how China's humanitarian history has influenced its contemporary comportment and engagement in Africa. Different aspects of histories of Chinese humanitarianism will be elaborated in detail in Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven.

In essence, a historiographical approach furnishes a critical perspective on extant humanitarian narratives, facilitating a more nuanced comprehension of the complex histories, power dynamics, and discursive contexts that have shaped the evolution and representation of Chinese humanitarianism in Africa. It compels us to continuously reexamine and reinterpret these histories, acknowledging their constructed nature while simultaneously recognizing their profound influence on contemporary policies, practices, and understandings.

Actor-Oriented Approach

As already noted, a key focus of this study is the expanding roles of Chinese state and non-state actors in the global humanitarian arena in Africa, and the implications for China-Africa relations and contemporary humanitarianism. The actor-oriented approach offers a valuable framework to unpack this complex set of relations by recognizing the agency, diverse knowledge systems, and power

dynamics among actors including Chinese HDOs, Western NGOs, local African communities, and African governments. Focusing on the interactions, knowledge interfaces, and social interfaces between these actors, this approach allows an illumination of the motivations, strategies and processes driving China's growing humanitarian engagements in Africa.

The Actor-Oriented Approach: Theoretical Foundations and Key Concepts

The study of development and humanitarian interventions has long been dominated by conventional top-down approaches that view the process as a linear transfer of resources and knowledge from external agencies to passive beneficiary communities (Escobar 1995, Long 2001). However, in recent decades there has been a growing recognition of the need for alternative critical perspectives that acknowledge the complexity, diversity, and agency of the actors involved in these processes. The actor-oriented approach, pioneered by Norman Long and his colleagues, offers a theoretical and methodological framework that challenges the traditional linear models and emphasizes the agency, knowledge, and strategies of different social actors within these arenas (Long 2001, Long 2003).

The actor-oriented approach is grounded in the premise that development and humanitarian processes are socially constructed and negotiated through the interactions, relationships, and power dynamics among different actors (Long and Van Der Ploeg 1989). It rejects the notion of a homogeneous, passive 'target group' and instead recognizes that actors possess agency, diverse rationalities, and unique knowledge systems that shape their engagement with and responses to interventions (Arce and Long 2000, Long and Long 1992).

This approach challenges the dominant modernization and dependency theories that view development as a unilinear process of transferring Western models and technologies to 'underdeveloped' societies (Escobar 1995, Long 2001). Instead, it emphasizes the heterogeneity of social and cultural contexts, and the diverse ways in which actors interpret, negotiate, and transform development and humanitarian initiatives based on their lived experiences and local realities (Long 2003).

In the context of Chinese humanitarian interventions in Africa, this perspective is particularly relevant in examining the roles and interactions of multiple actors. It allows for a nuanced understanding of not only Chinese actors, who may have different cultural, political, and economic contexts and motivations compared to traditional Western humanitarian actors, but also African actors, including local communities, governments, and NGOs. The approach recognizes that actors are not passive recipients but active participants who strategize and make choices based on their own rationalities, interests, and understandings (Long 2001).

Furthermore, the actor-oriented approach highlights the importance of understanding the diverse knowledge systems, power dynamics, and asymmetries that exist between actors, and how these influence the negotiation and implementation of interventions (Long 2003). It draws attention to the social interfaces where these actors interact and negotiate meanings and practices. These interfaces are critical points of intersection, negotiation, and potential conflict between actors with differing worldviews, interests, and power dynamics (Long 1989, Arce and Long 2000).

The approach also critically examines the discourses and buzzwords used in development and humanitarian interventions, as they shape perceptions, priorities, and actions (Cornwall and Eade 2010). It recognizes that dominant discourses can obscure the diversity of actor perspectives and experiences, and can be used to legitimize or delegitimize certain practices and agendas (Escobar 1995, Mosse 2004).

The actor-oriented approach provides an innovative analytical framework that transcends traditional development paradigms. It emphasizes the socially constructed nature of development processes and the complex interactions and negotiations among actors. The core value of this approach lies in its ability to reveal the often-overlooked micropolitics and power relations in development practices. In examining China's humanitarian engagements in Africa, this theoretical framework will facilitate a deeper understanding of the diverse perspectives, strategies, and impacts of the participants involved. Subsequently, we will employ this approach to analyze the unique dynamics of China-Africa humanitarian engagements and its implications for the global humanitarian landscape.

Illuminating the Dynamics of China's Humanitarian Engagements in Africa

The actor-oriented approach provided a relevant theoretical and methodological framework for addressing sub-question 3: 'How and why have Chinese state and non-state actors expanded their roles in the global humanitarian arena and become new humanitarian players in Africa?' This approach unpacked the power relations and knowledge interfaces between Chinese actors (state and non-state actors), Western NGOs, local communities, and African governments, as well as the social interfaces where they interact, negotiate, and potentially contest or transform the meanings, objectives, and practices of humanitarian aid interventions.

Methodologically, interviews with various stakeholders involved in humanitarian aid projects in Africa (specifically in Uganda) provided insights into their perspectives, interactions, and power dynamics. Additionally, discourse analysis of official documents, reports, and media narratives shed

light on the dominant discourses and buzzwords used in the context of China's humanitarian engagements in Africa and how they shape perceptions and actions.

The approach also recognizes the importance of reflexivity and acknowledges the researcher's positionality and potential influence on the research process. While the ideal of engaging in a fully collaborative process of knowledge co-construction with all actors involved was not always achievable, efforts were made to incorporate diverse perspectives and maintain awareness of power dynamics throughout the research process.

The actor-oriented approach proved particularly valuable in illuminating several key aspects of China's humanitarian engagements in Africa. Through this lens, the study revealed the complex ways in which Chinese actors navigate and adapt to unfamiliar cultural and political environments. It also shed light on how African governments and communities actively engage with and potentially reshape Chinese humanitarian actions, moving beyond simplistic notions of passive aid recipients. Furthermore, this approach facilitated a nuanced examination of the interactions and influences between Chinese actors and Western NGOs in the humanitarian space, revealing both cooperation and competition dynamics.

These insights contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of China's expanding humanitarian role globally, particularly in the African context. By challenging traditional top-down approaches and emphasizing the agency, knowledge systems, power relations, and social interfaces among different actors, this approach provided a nuanced and contextualized understanding of the social realities and lived experiences that shape these processes.

In conclusion, this study critically examined the motivations, strategies, and impacts of Chinese state and non-state actors as they expand their roles in the global humanitarian arena, particularly in Africa. By exploring the interactions, power dynamics, and discourses among various stakeholders, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the effects of China's expanding humanitarian role on China-Africa relations and contemporary global humanitarianism. The details are elaborated in the subsequent Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Contemporary official Chinese humanitarian discourses emerge within China's unique socio-historical milieu as a rising global power actively constructing its international identity and promoting its ideology. This context suggests that while China acknowledges and incorporates internationally recognized humanitarian principles, its official discourse goes beyond these, encompassing distinct geopolitical interests and ideological leanings that shape its evolving role in global affairs. China's

humanitarian approach thus represents a blend of universal principles and nation-specific characteristics. Analyzing this discourse therefore requires theoretical tools that can critically interrogate the complex interplay of discourse, power, and ideology. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides such a framework for examining humanitarian discourse as a social practice intertwined with broader socio-political dynamics.

Theoretical Foundations of CDA

A central premise of CDA is that discourse constitutes social reality while also being constituted by it (Fairclough and Wodak 1997). Applying this lens, the actual practice of humanitarianism - providing relief, saving lives, reducing suffering (Barnett 2005 and 2018, Benthall 2018) – can be viewed as a social practice both shaped by and shaping humanitarian discourses.

Importantly, CDA reveals how discourses operate ideologically, rationalizing and normalizing certain social practices like humanitarianism while marginalizing others (Mulderrig 2011). Vestergaard (2011) notes that humanitarian practices fundamentally emerge as a 'response' to suffering, underpinned by moral rationales and principles that legitimize them as 'humanitarian reason' (Fassin 2011). CDA entails critically unpacking these discursive constructions of 'humanitarian reason' around practices like emergency aid governed by principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh and Pacitto 2015).

The core theoretical concept that ties discourse to humanitarian practices is the 'discursive field' (Steinberg 1999, Snow 2004). A discursive field constitutes the communicative terrain where diverse actors with varying motives engage in ongoing 'discussion and debate about contested issues and events' (Snow 2004:402) related to a particular social phenomenon like humanitarianism. Through this process of discursive interaction and contestation, particular meanings, values and ideological stances become attached to the social practices in question.

Applying CDA to Chinese Humanitarianism

CDA's analytical tools will be used to critically examine the diverse Chinese discourses constituting the humanitarian discursive field surrounding engagement with Africa, especially in addressing sub-questions 4 and 5.

Techniques like textual analysis and cross-discourse analysis have been applied to scrutinize specific discourses and texts, such as policy documents, organisational narratives, media discussions, academic debates. This exposes the underlying moral stances, geopolitical interests, and ideological leanings ascribed to China's humanitarian role in Africa through these discursive constructions.

Methodologically, CDA's analytical tools expose the nuanced interplay of discourse, power dynamics and ideology shaping understandings of Chinese humanitarianism in Africa. This approach complements a practice-oriented view by unveiling the discursive forces that legitimize, contest and ascribe meaning to the enactment of humanitarian practices.

CDA provides powerful analytical insights into the ideological workings of discourse, but its critical stance and conceptions of ideology/power have faced critiques about researcher subjectivity and imprecise operationalization (Widdowson 1998, Schegloff 1997). However, CDA scholars counter by arguing that commitments to historicizing discourses and analyzing their social/intertextual contexts mitigate such limitations. Crucially, integrating CDA with other theoretical frameworks employed in this study allows for a more robust and multi-dimensional analysis.

The actor-oriented approach, for instance, complements CDA's macro-level discursive analysis by foregrounding the strategic motivations and practices of diverse stakeholders shaping the humanitarian discursive field. Historiographic perspectives provide a crucial backdrop for contextualizing the socio-political power relations and trajectories that underpin contemporary Chinese humanitarian discourses and engagement practices. Applying these perspectives to the arena of South-South cooperation, that entails principles like solidarity, friendship and partnership, further reinforces CDA's critical ethos. These alternative framings resonate with and allow for a nuanced interrogation of the key ideological constructs animating Chinese humanitarian discourse itself.

The core concepts centrally applied and/or analyzed in this study include universal humanitarian notions like 'humanity', 'compassion', 'moral obligation' and 'helping', which collectively constitute the idea of humanitarianism. However, this analysis also engages with distinctly Chinese meanings and uses of terms such as 'friendship' and partnership emphasized in China's international cooperation model, which in turn act to assert 'legitimacy'. While humanitarianism encompasses humanitarian ideals, the notion of friendship (for China) provides an alternative rationale and legitimizing framework for engagement, distinct from traditional donorship principles. An in-depth theorization and analysis of these various core concepts will follow in the next main section of this chapter. Here, it is important to note how CDA allows for interrogating the diverse, potentially competing meanings, ideologies and interests projected onto humanitarian practices through the discursive deployment of such concepts across the evolving humanitarian discursive field.

CDA's critical linguistic, dialectical and ideological techniques (Fairclough 2010) enable mapping the diverse discourses circulating the humanitarian discursive field around China's engagement with Africa, as elaborated in subsequent Chapters 5, 6 and 7. By scrutinizing how different actors spanning

state rhetoric, organisational narratives, media discussions and academic debates discursively deploy these core humanitarian concepts, CDA helps to illuminate the diverse moral stances, interests and socio-political ideologies attached to concrete practices. Crucially, CDA facilitates insights into discourses as sites of social interaction and meaning negotiation (Steinberg 1999). In turn, this helps to elucidate how particular notions of 'humanitarian reason' (Fassin 2011), centered on certain concepts like humanitarianism or friendship, become discursively constructed to legitimize certain practices while excluding others. This analytical purchase sheds light on the nuanced power dynamics and social hierarchies underlying how the meanings and rationales surrounding Chinese humanitarian engagement get understood and potentially contested through discourse.

Key Concepts

This section delves into key concepts that are fundamental to understanding Chinese humanitarianism. Through a critical discourse analysis approach, I examine the multifaceted meanings and cultural contexts underlying concepts such as humanity, compassion, moral obligation, helping, legitimacy, and friendship/partnership. By exploring these concepts, I aim to reveal the unique characteristics of Chinese humanitarian thoughts and practices, particularly in the context of China's engagements in Africa. This analysis provides a conceptual foundation for the more detailed discussions in subsequent chapters.

Concepts play a fundamental role in shaping an understanding of complex phenomena like humanitarianism. This section explores several key concepts that are vital for comprehending the distinctive features and evolution of Chinese humanitarianism, its significance in a shifting global context, and its particular relationship to interventions in African contexts. Through a critical discourse analysis approach, attention is given to the multifaceted meanings, socio-political forces, and cultural contexts that underlie selected key concepts such as humanity, compassion, moral obligation, helping, legitimacy, and friendship/partnership.

These concepts not only connect with and reflect the philosophical foundations, emotional motivations, and ethical imperatives of humanitarian thought and action but also reveal the power dynamics, ideological influences, and strategic considerations that shape humanitarian discourses and practices. By examining how these concepts are constructed, disseminated, and operationalized across respectively Western and Chinese contexts, we can gain deeper insights into the combination of shared values, unique perspectives, and potential tensions that characterize Chinese humanitarianism.

This critical conceptual framing lays the groundwork for a nuanced understanding of the multidimensional nature of Chinese humanitarianism, its evolution, and its increasing global prominence. It illuminates the complex interplay between traditional Chinese ideals, contemporary realities, and strategic calculations that inform China's approach to providing humanitarian assistance both domestically and internationally.

Humanitarianism

As already noted, the analysis of humanitarianism is guided by a critical discourse analysis framework through which the dissertation deconstructs the concept into four fundamental elements: 'humanity', 'compassion', 'moral obligation', and 'helping'. Adopting this framework not only reveals the philosophical foundations, emotional motivations, ethical imperatives, and practical expressions behind these elements but also analyzes how they are constructed, disseminated, and practiced across different cultural and linguistic contexts. Particularly, I focus on the power dynamics and ideological impacts involved in this process, thereby unveiling the socio-political forces embedded within the discourses and practices of humanitarianism in the West and China.

The choice to analyze these four fundamental concepts stems from their representation as foundational pillars of humanitarianism, as well as their capacity to reveal the broad dimensions of humanitarianism across emotional, ethical, and actionable levels. These particular concepts not only possess a sense of universality but also allow for culturally specific interpretations, making them particularly suited for the cross-cultural comparative analysis objective of this study. Through comparative analysis, the goal is to explore and elucidate the combination of shared values and unique approaches to humanitarianism between the West and China, further deepening our understanding of this cross-cultural phenomenon.

Moreover, the deep rootedness and common usage of these concepts in both academic and practical discussions of humanitarianism enable this study to effectively bridge theoretical exploration with real-world application. I critically examine existing literature and propose a unique perspective with the aim of filling the gap through a comparison and analysis of Western and Chinese viewpoints on humanitarianism across all these elements. While the chosen four concepts may not cover all dimensions of humanitarianism, they aim to provide a balanced and coherent framework for analysis, allowing for a critical exploration of each aspect while reflecting the interconnected nature of humanitarian principles and actions.

The study not only examines the extensive discussions by Western scholars of the philosophical foundations of 'humanity', and the ethical dimensions of 'moral obligation'. It also explores the long-

historical roots of the concepts of 'compassion' and 'helping' within the cultural and ideological context of China. Through a critical discourse analysis, I aim to offer a more detailed and cohesive understanding of humanitarianism, spanning Western and Chinese perspectives, so contributing to a layered analysis of the differences and similarities in humanitarianism concepts across different languages and cultures.

Humanity

The concept of 'humanity' is central to humanitarianism, both as a guiding principle for humanitarian actors and as a term deeply rooted in the humanitarian ethos itself. At its core, 'humanity' encompasses the ethical disposition to treat all human beings with benevolence, compassion, and respect for their inherent dignity (Oxford English Dictionary OED). This idea is grounded in the assumption of a shared humanity that transcends individual differences (Christie 2015).

While originating as a social construction tied to particular historical contexts (Barnett 2018), the notion of humanity has evolved to encapsulate contemporary claims of universal human equality, rationality, and the moral obligation to regard fellow humans as part of an extended family (Wilson and Brown 2008). This notion and its related discourses filters into the characterization of humanitarianism as a compassionate, apolitical ethics embodying a form of moral exceptionalism that rationalizes interventionist actions aimed at recognizing and restoring the humanity of suffering others (Barnett 2011, Malkki 2015).

Interestingly, the core idea of humanity finds resonance across most cultures, including within the philosophical traditions of both China and Africa. The Confucian maxim, 'a man of humanity and benevolence will care for others' (Binder et al. 2010:13) echoes the spirit of kindness and consideration towards others embedded in the Western conception of humanity. Similarly, the African philosophy of Ubuntu, encapsulated in the phrase 'I am because you are', profoundly reflects a worldview centered on human interconnectedness, dignity, and care, even towards strangers (e.g., Nussbaum 2003, Mnyaka and Motlhabi 2005, Metz 2011).

In Chinese thought, the concept of 'ren' (仁), described as the highest moral ideal, is closely aligned with the notion of humanity (Zhang 2016). 'Ren' is understood as a radiating process of love, emanating from familial bonds and extending outwards to encompass broader social relationships (Ibid.). It is characterized by two moral criteria: a mental component of goodwill leading to benevolent actions, and a behavioral component reflecting a respectful manner towards others, recognizing their inherent worth (Ibid.).

While the fundamental principles of 'humanity' find common ground across cultures, the discourse surrounding it is imbued with socially constructed and ideological dimensions. The rhetoric of 'humanity' is carefully crafted through linguistic tools and frameworks to delineate a specific moral vision (Fassin 2011, Fassin and Pandolfi 2010, Feldman and Ticktin 2010). By emphasizing compassion over human rights and justice, the discourse of 'humanitarian reason' positions humanitarianism as an exceptional ethical domain grounded in a shared humanity, thereby legitimizing interventionist practices.

Despite this commonality, a noteworthy distinction emerges between Western and Chinese perspectives. In the West, the idea of humanity and its ethical imperatives evolved to demand not only words of concern but also concrete actions to alleviate suffering (Barnett 2018). Compassionate rhetoric and practices were seen as necessary, though insufficient, to sustainably address global and local inequalities (Sznaider 1998, Linklater 2014). In contrast, the Chinese tradition of 'ren' emphasizes an innate human urge for compassionate actions, untainted by material motives (Zhang 2016). This concept suggests that the tendency towards benevolence is inherent in human nature, rather than being cultivated through social practices or imposed by external forces. In this perspective, 'ren' represents a fundamental and intrinsic moral quality that naturally leads to compassionate behavior, indicating a profound integration of ethical ideals and their practical manifestations in Chinese thought.

In essence, while the concept of 'humanity' finds shared resonance across cultures, its discursive construction and practical implications reveal both nuanced similarities and differences between Western and Chinese humanitarianism. Both traditions acknowledge the ethical obligation to recognize and uphold the dignity of all human beings. However, they may differ in their approaches to actualizing these ideals. Western humanitarian discourses often emphasize the need for systematic, institutionalized responses to global suffering, while the Chinese concept of 'ren' focuses more on cultivating an internalized ethical disposition that naturally leads to compassionate actions. This distinction, however, is nuanced and not absolute, as both traditions ultimately seek to address human suffering and promote social welfare.

Compassion

The concept of compassion has deep roots in both Western and Eastern philosophical traditions, yet it carries the indelible imprints of the prevailing power structures and ideologies inherent in these traditions. This concept and its varied uses are marked by a central tension between the universalizing and particularistic facets of compassion.

In Western traditions, compassion emerged in the 18th century as a key marker of moral character and a defining feature of what it meant to be fully human. This new understanding necessitated not just expressions of concern but also concrete actions to alleviate suffering (Barnett 2018). Philosophers like David Hume and Adam Smith underscored the universality of sympathy or compassion as a naturally occurring emotion triggered by encountering another's suffering (Goetz et al. 2010, Slim 2015). Hume described sympathy as a universal emotion through which a universal 'we' could identify with others in pain, while Smith posited that humans have inherent principles that make them interested in the fortunes of others (Slim 2015).

However, both Hume and Smith believed that the strength of compassion varied based on proximity and familiarity, with people being more sympathetic to those closer to them than strangers or foreigners (Slim 2015). This variation in sympathy raises critical questions about the potential exploitation of these differences to rationalize unequal treatment or indifference toward distant suffering.

Contemporary scholars like Goetz et al. (2010) seek to legitimize compassion as an innate and adaptive human quality, further bolstering its significance in humanitarian narratives. Compassion is portrayed as a wellspring of moral guidance, prompting inquiries into whose morals and values are championed or prioritized within this framework.

In Eastern traditions, particularly in Confucianism, compassion is also deeply rooted in ideas of being human. The Confucian scholar Mencius, born in 322 BCE, proposed that human beings can feel the pain of others and that 'Compassion is common to all men' (Chen 2011 and 2016, Hu 2011). Mencius believed that in the face of others' difficulties and misfortunes, there is a natural will to have compassion and sympathy, exemplified by the instinctive reaction to save a child falling into a well (Chen 2011 and 2016, Hu 2011).

While Mencius extolled the innate goodness of human nature and the universality of compassion, the Confucian perspective similarly recognized that compassion could vary based on factors such as proximity and familiarity, akin to the Western philosophers Hume and Smith.

However, the philosophical underpinnings and emphases differ. Western philosophers like Hume and Smith emphasize the universality of sympathy, while Confucian scholars like Mencius highlight the innate goodness of human nature as the source of compassion. Additionally, Western perspectives often frame compassion as a moral guide or ethical principle, while Eastern traditions may view it more as a natural instinct or virtue.

In contemporary discourse, the notion of global compassion has gained prominence, transcended geographical and national boundaries, and emphasized a collective moral duty to aid distant strangers (Höijer 2004). This discourse intersects with context-specific politics, humanitarian organisations, media, and public sentiment, shaping the humanitarian aid provided globally by various countries and organisations.

The Western and Eastern conceptualizations of compassion, as discussed above, share significant commonalities while also exhibiting notable differences. Both traditions recognize a fundamental, innate capacity for compassion in human nature. The Chinese tradition, particularly in Confucian thought, emphasizes an innate goodness and natural inclination towards compassion, as exemplified by Mencius' teachings. Similarly, Western philosophers like Hume and Smith acknowledged the universality of sympathy. However, both traditions also recognized variations in the strength of compassionate feelings based on social proximity and familiarity.

These different perspectives on the nature and expression of compassion have significant implications for how humanitarian ideals are conceived and practiced in different cultural contexts. While both traditions value compassion as a core element of humanity, the varying emphases on its universality versus its situational strength may influence approaches to humanitarian action and cross-cultural engagement in humanitarian efforts. This nuanced understanding of compassion across cultures provides a rich foundation for examining contemporary global humanitarian practices.

While compassion is represented as a universal human trait, its manifestation and prioritization are shaped by specific cultural and societal norms, power structures, and ideological leanings. A critical examination of these factors is crucial to understanding the nuances and potential biases inherent in the discourse of compassion and its implications for humanitarian action and global solidarity.

Moral Obligation

The notion of moral obligation to address others' suffering is widely discussed across philosophical traditions, both in the West and China. In Western thought, modern phenomenologist philosophers like Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas, and Paul Ricoeur affirm that our deepest sense of being and meaning arises from encounters with others, creating a sense of personal responsibility (Slim 2015). This aligns with the view that people have an obligation to relieve suffering (Nielsen 1981).

Western discourses on moral obligation confer legitimacy by referencing canonical thinkers like Immanuel Kant and Peter Singer. Singer (1972) argues that affluent individuals and governments are morally obligated to contribute to poverty relief through foreign aid, deeming it 'morally wrong' not to do so. C. Stephen Evans (2013) outlines key features of moral obligation: 1) it is a verdict on one's

actions, akin to a criminal trial; 2) the action is a perfect duty one 'ought' to do, regardless of consequences; 3) it involves accountability and responsibility.

The concept of moral obligation in humanitarian action is deeply rooted in philosophical and theological traditions across cultures. The parable of the Good Samaritan, for instance, illustrates the moral imperative to assist those in need, regardless of their background or relationship to the helper. This idea resonates with George Steiner's assertion that "men are accomplices to that which leaves them indifferent" (Steiner 1967:150), emphasizing the moral responsibility to act in the face of suffering.

However, the application of moral obligation in humanitarian contexts is often complicated by practical realities. As Kant suggests, 'ought implies can', meaning that moral responsibility in humanitarian action is constrained by what is realistically achievable (Slim 2015:179). This introduces a nuanced understanding of moral obligation, where the ideal of universal assistance meets the limitations of real-world situations.

In the Chinese context, the discussion of moral responsibility has deep historical roots, tracing back to Confucius and texts like The Great Learning. These teachings outlined moral responsibilities at personal, familial, and state governance levels, all aimed at promoting social harmony and world peace (Tian 2018). However, as China entered the modern era, the concept of moral responsibility evolved significantly.

This evolution in Chinese thought mirrors broader global trends in understanding moral obligation. The shift from a focus on immediate relationships to a wider societal and even global responsibility aligns with contemporary humanitarian discourses. It reflects a growing recognition of our interconnectedness and the moral imperatives that arise from this global perspective.

The expansion of moral responsibility from subjects to citizens, and from domestic to international spheres, raises important questions about the universality of humanitarian values. It challenges us to consider how cultural and philosophical traditions shape our understanding of moral obligation in a globalized world.

These evolving conceptions of moral obligation have profound implications for humanitarian action. They influence decisions about where, how, and to what extent to intervene in crisis situations. The tension between universal principles and local contexts, as well as the political realities of humanitarian work, further complicate the application of moral obligation in practice.

Ultimately, the discourse on moral obligation in humanitarian action reflects a complex interplay of philosophical ideals, cultural traditions, and practical realities. It calls for a nuanced approach that

respects universal humanitarian principles while remaining sensitive to diverse cultural perspectives and the constraints of real-world situations.

Helping

The idea of 'helping' lies at the heart of humanitarian action, reflecting a fundamental relationship whereby one entity provides assistance to another in need. However, the discourse surrounding 'helping' is complex, involving interplays of ethical motivations, power dynamics, cultural perspectives, and strategic considerations. This section critically examines the nuanced conceptualizations of 'helping' across Western and Chinese contexts.

In the West, the notion of 'helping' originated from the medieval system of almsgiving, where givers were understood to have a moral obligation to assist others in need (Gronemeyer 1992). This evolved into the Christian ideal of the 'Good Samaritan' – a model of unconditional compassion where all deserve care (Redfield and Bornstein 2011).

The ethical underpinnings of helping, according to Hugo Slim (2015), are rooted in deep feelings of compassion and responsibility towards those suffering. However, Hannah Arendt argues that the motivation concerns transferring compassion to the 'generic stranger' by 'unstrangering' them (cited in Czechowski 2017).

Beneath the moral rhetoric, power dynamics are embedded in Western humanitarian 'helping'. Baumeister and Sommer (1997) suggest it can be motivated by desires to enhance one's status. Gronemeyer (1992) views it as an 'elegant instrument of power' whereby assistance conceals control.

In China, the spirit of 'helping' stems from the Confucian virtues of benevolence (ren) and compassion (Guan 2017). Doctrines emphasize emotionally driven assistance prioritizing those closest. However, interest-oriented motivations also feature, such as the Mohist[4] thought of 'mutual benefit' – helping others aids oneself. Buddhist and Legalist[5] views see helping as accruing karmic rewards or direct quid-pro-quo benefit respectively (Qiu et al. 2013).

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[4] Mohism was an influential philosophical, social, and religious movement that flourished during the Warring States era (479-221 BCE) in ancient China. Mohism originates in the teachings of Mo Di, or 'Mozi' ('Master Mo', fl. ca. 430 BCE), from whom it takes its name. Mozi and his followers initiated philosophical argumentation and debate in China. They were the first in the tradition to engage, like Socrates in ancient Greece, in an explicit, reflective search for objective moral standards and to give step-by-step, tightly reasoned arguments for their views, though their reasoning is sometimes simplistic or rests on doubtful assumptions. They formulated China's first explicit ethical and political theories and advanced the world's earliest form of consequentialism, a remarkably sophisticated version based on a plurality of intrinsic goods taken as constitutive of collective human welfare. The Mohists applied a pragmatic, non-representational theory of language and knowledge and developed a rudimentary theory of analogical argumentation. They played a key role in articulating and shaping many of the central concepts, assumptions, and issues of classical Chinese philosophical discourse. See from Fraser, Chris, 'Mohism', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2023 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), URL = https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2023/entries/mohism/

[5] Legalism (which henceforth will be called the *fa* tradition) is a populara – lbeit quite inaccurate – designation of an intellectual current that gained considerable popularity in the latter half of the Warring States period (Zhanguo, 453-221 BCE). *Fa* thinkers were political realists who sought to attain 'a rich state and a powerful army' and to ensure domestic stability in an age marked by intense inter- and intra-state competition. They believed

Within Chinese humanitarianism, the concept of 'helping' is closely intertwined with the notion of 'soft power' (Nye 1990). This approach frames humanitarian assistance as a means of enhancing China's international influence and reputation. The act of helping, in this context, becomes a strategic tool for cultivating positive perceptions and relationships with other nations. China's emphasis on 'peaceful development' and a 'harmonious world' in its humanitarian efforts reflects this soft power approach (Lee 2009). Here, 'helping' transcends mere altruism, becoming a vehicle for fostering goodwill, strengthening diplomatic ties, and promoting China's global image. This strategic dimension adds complexity to the concept of 'helping' in Chinese humanitarian discourse, blending traditional ethical motivations with contemporary geopolitical considerations.

While founded on shared moral ideals like 'humanity' and 'compassion', Western and Chinese traditions of 'helping' have key differences: 1. The West focuses on extending compassion to the 'generic stranger', while China prioritizes emotionally driven assistance to closer relations. 2. Interest-oriented and strategic motivations are more explicit in Chinese perspectives compared to the moral rhetoric of the West. However, both contexts reveal undercurrents where 'helping' can conceal power dynamics and self-interest beneath the surface of altruism and moral obligation.

The discussion exposes potential tensions between the moral rhetoric and pursuit of strategic interests ingrained within these discourses across cultures. It highlights how the idea of 'helping' is actively negotiated and constructed to shape policies, practices and legitimize power structures within the humanitarian domain.

As China's global influence grows, examining the evolution of its humanitarian 'helping' through this analytical lens is crucial. It enables an understanding of how traditional Chinese ideals intermingle with strategic calculations of 'soft power' to construct a distinctly Chinese approach to providing assistance on the world stage.

This examination of 'helping' in Western and Chinese contexts reveals shared humanitarian ideals alongside distinct cultural and strategic approaches. It emphasizes the importance of critically examining the discursive construction of 'helping' to uncover potential biases, tensions, and power dynamics. As China's global influence grows, understanding how traditional Chinese ideals intermingle with strategic considerations of 'soft power' becomes crucial in shaping a distinctly

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that human beings – commoners and elites alike – will forever remain selfish and covetous of riches and fame, and one should not expect them to behave morally. Rather, a viable sociopolitical system should allow individuals to pursue their selfish interests exclusively in the ways that benefit the state, viz. agriculture and warfare. Parallel to this, a proper administrative system should allow officials to benefit from ranks and emoluments, but also prevent them from subverting the ruler's power. Both systems are unconcerned with individual morality of the rulers and the ruled; rather they should be based on impersonal norms and standards: laws, administrative regulations, clearly defined rules of promotion and demotion, and the like. See from Pines, Yuri, 'Legalism in Chinese Philosophy', The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Summer 2023 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), URL = https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2023/entries/chinese-legalism/

Chinese approach to humanitarian assistance on the world stage. This analysis calls for a more reflexive approach to humanitarian thought and action that acknowledges the historical roots, shared ideals, and the influence of power structures in shaping humanitarian discourses and practices across cultures.

Legitimacy

Legitimacy is a crucial concept in that it underpins the justification and acceptance of power relations among institutions and other actors. This doctoral dissertation explores the concept of legitimacy through three interrelated lenses: political legitimacy, organisational legitimacy, and moral legitimacy. The research focuses in part on how these forms of legitimacy shape the humanitarian discourses and practices of the Chinese state and non-state actors.

Legitimacy is a vital concept in this doctoral research for several reasons. First, it provides a framework for a critical examination of how the Chinese state and Chinese HDOs seek to enhance their legitimacy through humanitarian practices and discourses (Fassin 2011, Baldwin and Winter 2020). Second, the concept of legitimacy enables a nuanced analysis of the emergence and trajectory of Chinese HDOs, both domestically and internationally (Suchman 1995, Dart 2004). This analysis is crucial for understanding the evolving role of Chinese HDOs in the global humanitarian landscape. Finally, the lens of legitimacy facilitates a critical assessment of the moral dimensions of humanitarian action and the role of individual leaders in shaping organisational legitimacy (Suchman 1995, Alexiou and Wiggins 2019). This framing is essential for interrogating the ethical foundations and implications of Chinese humanitarian engagement.

Political Legitimacy

The dissertation draws on the work of scholars such as Max Weber (1968), Seymour Martin Lipset (1959), David Beetham (1991) and Bruce Gilley (2006a, 2006b, 2009, 2012) to understand political legitimacy as the belief in the rightfulness of a state's authority and the moral obligation to obey it. Weber (1968) identifies the belief in legitimacy or legitimate authority on the part of relevant social agents as foundational to legitimacy itself, arguing that power relations are legitimate when those involved in them, subordinate as well as dominant, believe them to be so. Lipset (1959) defines the legitimacy of a political system in terms of its capacity to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society. Beetham (1991) describes legitimacy as a multi-dimensional concept, supported by legal recognition, shared norms, and actions expressing consent. Gilley (2006) argues that political legitimacy is a major determinant of both the

structure and operation of states, with more legitimate states devoting more resources to effective governance and being less prone to overthrow or collapse.

The research in this dissertation examines how the Chinese government has long dominated domestic humanitarian aid as a means of enhancing its legitimacy (Krebs 2014, Hechter 2009). In China, the government's capacity to alleviate suffering effectively has historically translated into its legitimacy to rule (Krebs 2014). This connection between humanitarian action and political legitimacy has deep roots in Chinese political thought, dating back to the concept of the Mandate of Heaven in the Western Zhou Dynasty (Hechter 2009). As China has become more globally engaged, this pursuit of political legitimacy through humanitarian action has extended to international humanitarian assistance (Mckay 2021, Kubat 2018).

Building on the previously discussed concept of 'soft power', the Chinese government has experimented with new methods of legitimacy-building and new sources of legitimation. This approach involves referencing traditional culture and drawing on traditional moral virtues in its state policies (Kubat 2018). By doing so, China aims to enhance its political legitimacy both domestically and internationally through humanitarian efforts, blending traditional ethical motivations with contemporary governance strategies.

This approach reflects a distinctly Chinese method of leveraging humanitarian assistance to serve both moral and strategic objectives, ultimately contributing to the government's perceived legitimacy and authority.

Organisational Legitimacy

The dissertation adopts Mark Suchman's (1995) definition of organisational legitimacy as a generalized perception that an organisation's activities are desirable, proper, and appropriate within a socially constructed system of norms, values, and beliefs. Suchman (1995) identifies three types of organisational legitimacy: pragmatic legitimacy, moral legitimacy, and cognitive legitimacy. Pragmatic legitimacy rests on the self-interested calculations of an organisation's most immediate audiences, while moral legitimacy reflects a positive normative evaluation of the organisation and its activities. Cognitive legitimacy, in contrast, involves the taken-for-granted acceptance of an organisation as necessary or inevitable based on some taken-for-granted cultural account.

In the context of this research, organisational legitimacy serves as a crucial lens through which to examine the expanding role of Chinese HDOs in Africa. This study posits that the pursuit of organisational legitimacy is a significant driver behind the increasing engagement of Chinese HDOs in humanitarian aid efforts across the African continent.

For Chinese HDOs, expanding their presence and activities in Africa offers multiple avenues to enhance their organisational legitimacy:

1. Pragmatic legitimacy: By demonstrating their capability to effectively deliver aid and support development in African contexts, Chinese HDOs can strengthen their credibility among stakeholders, including donors, partner organisations, and beneficiaries.

2. Moral legitimacy: Engaging in humanitarian efforts in Africa allows Chinese HDOs to align themselves with globally recognized values of compassion and international cooperation, potentially improving their moral standing both domestically and internationally.

3. Cognitive legitimacy: As Chinese HDOs become more active and visible in African humanitarian contexts, they may gradually be accepted as natural and necessary actors in the international aid landscape, achieving a taken-for-granted status similar to that of more established Western NGOs.

This research examines how Chinese HDOs navigate the complex terrain of organisational legitimacy as they expand their roles in African humanitarian aid. It explores the strategies these organisations employ to build and maintain legitimacy, the challenges they face in doing so, and how the pursuit of legitimacy influences their operational decisions and practices in African contexts.

By analyzing the role of organisational legitimacy in driving Chinese HDOs' expansion in Africa, this study contributes to our understanding of the evolving landscape of international humanitarian aid and the growing influence of Chinese organisations in this sphere.

Moral Legitimacy

The research draws on Suchman's (1995) concept of moral legitimacy, which depends on moral judgments of an organisation's output, procedures, structures, and leaders. Moral legitimacy refers to the normative domain of propriety rather than self-interest, and it is accorded when activities are undertaken as they should be, in reference to broader norms in the sociopolitical environment (Dart 2004). Alexiou and Wiggins (2019) define moral legitimacy as an active assessment of the degree to which an organisation adheres to social norms and shared values in a manner that promotes societal welfare.

The dissertation applies the concept of moral legitimacy to help clarify the emergence and trajectory of Chinese HDOs (Dart 2004), with a specific focus on organisations such as the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA). Maintaining moral legitimacy is crucial for humanitarian organisations, and affirming it can take one of three forms: evaluations of outputs and consequences

(consequential legitimacy), evaluations of techniques and procedures (procedural legitimacy), and evaluations of categories and structures (structural legitimacy) (Scott 1977, Scott and Meyer 1991).

This research examines how Chinese HDOs navigate these different forms of moral legitimacy as they engage in humanitarian action both domestically and internationally. It explores how these organisations strive to align their activities, procedures, and structures with societal expectations and values to enhance their moral legitimacy. Additionally, the study considers how the actions and reputation of organisational leaders may contribute to the overall moral legitimacy of Chinese HDOs, recognizing that personal legitimacy can play a role in shaping perceptions of organisational legitimacy (Suchman 1995).

By analyzing the pursuit of moral legitimacy by Chinese HDOs, this research aims to provide insights into how these organisations are adapting to the challenges of operating in diverse cultural contexts and meeting the expectations of various stakeholders in the humanitarian sector.

Friendship and Partnership

The concepts of friendship and partnership play significant roles in shaping humanitarian aid and diplomacy, but their meanings and applications differ between China and the West. The Chinese concept of friendship, deeply rooted in Confucian philosophy, emphasizes mutual obligations, loyalty, and personal relationships. This understanding of friendship has significantly influenced the distinctive features of Chinese humanitarianism, setting it apart from Western approaches which prioritize formal agreements and procedures. By examining these concepts through the lens of CDA, I can gain insights into the power dynamics, ideologies, and cultural norms that underlie Chinese and Western humanitarian practices.

This section aims to explore the development and meaning of the Chinese concept of friendship, contrasting it with the Western notion of partnership in humanitarian aid, and analyzing the Chinese discourse of friendship using CDA. By doing so, I can better understand how the concept of friendship shapes Chinese humanitarianism and reflects its specificity, while also acknowledging the potential for critical examination of this discourse.

Friendship

In ancient Chinese culture, the concept of friendship was deeply rooted in Confucian thought, surpassing the level of personal emotions and carrying profound moral and social responsibilities (Wang 2017). Friendship played a structural role in both the individual and political systems, serving as a means for political life to remain stable and harmonious. Confucius' sayings in the 'Analects'(论

语 Lunyu), particularly in the chapters 'Yan Yuan' (颜渊) and 'Zi Lu'(子路), emphasized emotional exchange between friends and highlighted the importance of friendship in promoting moral elevation and social harmony.

Confucius' discussions on friendship mainly referred to non-kin and non-status-based relationships. Mencius further developed this idea in his concept of the 'Five Relationships' (五伦 Wulun), which showcased the characteristics of such friendships and marked the significance of friendship within Confucian familial and social relationships. These relationships promoted social harmony through the most basic social orders, highlighting the importance of personal ties and relationships to Confucian morals (Lambert 2017). Among these principles, 'trust among friends' indicated a tradition of mutual assistance, affection, and support in moral perfection (Li 2021).

In the later Ming Dynasty, as Chinese society underwent significant transformations, Neo-Confucians like He Xin used the concept of friendship to theoretically critique imperial power. Opposition leaders and supporters of the Donglin Party proposed institutional innovations based on friendly relations to establish a legitimate political foundation at court and curb the abuse of power. The concept of friendship, reinterpreted as a means of social intervention, challenged and criticized the foundations of imperial order and rule for the first time, highlighting its importance in social transformation (Chu 2017).

In modern Chinese culture, the concept of friendship has been strategically adapted and deployed in both domestic and international contexts. While rooted in Confucian social ethics, the contemporary interpretation of friendship extends beyond personal relationships to encompass societal collectives and international relations. This expanded understanding reflects the Chinese government's efforts to leverage friendship values in shaping its domestic and foreign policies.

President Xi Jinping frequently represents friendship as a key component of China's core value system, discursively constructing an image of China that emphasizes friendliness, peace, and harmony. This rhetorical strategy aims to project China's commitment to maintaining peace and promoting international cooperation, as well as its desire to establish and maintain long-term friendly relations on the global stage. However, it is crucial to recognize that this narrative is part of China's broader efforts to shape its international image and may not always align with the full complexity of its geopolitical interests and actions.

China often employs the language of friendship in its diplomatic interactions, especially with developing nations, to convey a diplomatic philosophy of peace, cooperation, and mutual benefit. The 'Belt and Road' initiative, for instance, utilizes the concept of 'friendship' to strengthen

relationships with participating countries through infrastructure development, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange. While these efforts may indeed foster genuine cooperation in some instances, they also serve China's strategic interests in expanding its global influence and securing economic advantages.

It is important to view China's emphasis on friendship in international relations through a critical lens, recognizing that it represents one aspect of a multifaceted foreign policy. This approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of how China uses the concept of friendship to navigate complex international relationships, balance its national interests, and shape its global reputation. By doing so, I can better appreciate the interplay between China's cultural heritage, its contemporary political strategies, and the realities of global power dynamics.

Partnership

The Western concept of partnership in humanitarian aid has its roots in the Weberian legal-rational approach, which emphasizes formal agreements, rules, and procedures (Weber 1947). This approach to partnership prioritizes transparency, accountability, and the efficient allocation of resources based on objective criteria. The development of this concept can be traced back to the rise of bureaucratic organisations and the increasing professionalization of humanitarian aid in the 20th Century (Barnett 2011).

The Western notion of partnership in humanitarianism has been shaped by various factors, including the growth of international humanitarian law, the emergence of professional humanitarian organisations, and the increasing role of donor governments in funding and coordinating humanitarian aid (Donini 2012). The principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence have become central to Western understandings and representations of humanitarian partnership, as they are seen as essential for ensuring the effective delivery of aid and maintaining the credibility of humanitarian actors (Leader 2000).

The concept of partnership in Western humanitarian aid has evolved over time, reflecting changes in the global political and economic landscape. In the post-Cold War era, the idea of 'new humanitarianism' emerged, which emphasized the need for humanitarian action to be more closely linked to development and peacebuilding efforts (Fox 2001). This shift led to a greater emphasis on partnerships between humanitarian organisations, governments, and local communities in order to address the root causes of humanitarian crises and promote long-term resilience (Macrae 2002).

In the 21st Century, the concept of partnership in Western humanitarian aid has been further influenced by the rise of globalization, the increasing complexity of humanitarian crises, and the

growing role of the private sector in humanitarian response (Calhoun 2008). The United Nations Global Compact, launched in 2000, has promoted the idea of public-private partnerships in humanitarian aid, arguing that businesses can contribute valuable resources, expertise, and innovation to humanitarian efforts (UN Global Compact 2020).

However, critics have argued that the Western concept of partnership in humanitarian aid is often characterized by power imbalances and a lack of genuine collaboration between Western donors and local actors (Eade 2007). Some scholars have pointed out that the emphasis on formal agreements and bureaucratic procedures in Western humanitarian partnerships can sometimes undermine the flexibility and responsiveness needed in emergency situations (Schuller 2012). Others have argued that the increasing involvement of the private sector in humanitarian aid raises questions about the motivations and accountability of corporate actors (Carbonnier 2015). These echoes related critiques of the notion of partnership within the wider development aid arena (Abrahamsen 2004, Lie 2015, Strand 2022).

In response to these critiques, some humanitarian organisations and scholars have called for a more inclusive and participatory approach to humanitarian partnership that recognizes the agency and expertise of local communities and organisations (Hilhorst 2018). The 'localization' agenda in humanitarian aid, which gained momentum after the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, emphasizes the need to shift power and resources to local actors and to promote more equitable and sustainable partnerships between international and local humanitarian actors (Van Brabant and Patel 2018).

Friendship versus Partnership

The Chinese concept of friendship and the Western concept of partnership in humanitarian aid represent two distinct approaches to understanding and practicing international cooperation. By applying critical discourse analysis to these two concepts, we can uncover the underlying power dynamics, ideologies, and cultural assumptions that shape their respective discourses and practices.

From a CDA perspective, the Chinese discourse of friendship in humanitarian aid can be seen as a strategic narrative that seeks to legitimize China's growing influence and challenge Western dominance in the global humanitarian system. By emphasizing the principles of non-interference, mutual benefit, and respect for sovereignty, the Chinese discourse of friendship positions China ostensibly as a benevolent and respectful partner to developing countries, in contrast to the perceived paternalism and conditionality of Western aid (Varrall 2016).

However, a critical analysis of the Chinese discourse of friendship also reveals its limitations and contradictions. The language of friendship provides an important legitimizing strategy that can mask the power asymmetries and strategic interests that underlie China's humanitarian engagement, such as the pursuit of economic opportunities or the desire to secure political allies (Benabdallah 2019). Moreover, the emphasis on state-to-state friendship in Chinese humanitarian aid may marginalize the voices and needs of local communities and civil society actors in both China and Africa (Tan-Mullins et al. 2017). Moreover, the emphasis on friendship in Chinese humanitarian aid discourse may sometimes obscure the lack of transparency and accountability in China's aid practices (Brautigam 2009).

In contrast, the Western discourse of partnership in humanitarian aid is rooted in a legal-rational approach that emphasizes formal agreements, standardized procedures, and measurable outcomes. This discourse reflects the growing influence of neoliberal ideologies and the increasing professionalization of the humanitarian sector, which prioritizes efficiency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making (Barnett 2011).

However, a critical analysis of the Western discourse of partnership also reveals its limitations and biases. The emphasis on technical expertise and bureaucratic procedures in Western humanitarian partnerships can sometimes over-ride the political and ethical dimensions of humanitarian action, such as the need to address the root causes of humanitarian crises or the rights and agency of affected communities (Donini 2012). Moreover, the dominance of Western donors and international organisations in humanitarian partnerships can perpetuate unequal power relations and undermine local ownership and capacity (Eade 2007).

By comparing the Chinese discourse of friendship and the Western discourse of partnership through a CDA lens, I can see how both approaches are shaped by particular cultural, political, and economic contexts and interests. While the Chinese discourse of friendship emphasizes the importance of personal relationships, mutual respect, and non-interference, the Western discourse of partnership emphasizes the importance of formal agreements, technical expertise, and measurable outcomes.

At the same time, both discourses have their limitations and blind spots, such as the potential for masking power asymmetries or marginalizing local voices. By critically examining these discourses and their implications, humanitarian actors and scholars can work towards developing more inclusive, equitable, and context-specific approaches to partnership that recognize the diversity of humanitarian needs and actors.

By critically examining these concepts and their implications, we have established a foundation for understanding the unique characteristics of Chinese humanitarianism. This conceptual framework will inform our analysis in subsequent chapters, allowing for a more nuanced exploration of Chinese humanitarian discourses, practices, and their global implications.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented a comprehensive conceptual-analytical framework for investigating the expanding humanitarian engagement of China in Africa. The three overarching analytical approaches – historical, actor-oriented, and critical discourse analysis – are integrated to provide a comprehensive and multidimensional understanding of the phenomenon under study, with each approach complementing and reinforcing the others.

The historical approach allows for a critical examination of the narratives surrounding China's humanitarianism history, its ties with Africa, and the trajectories of its humanitarian initiatives. The actor-oriented approach offers insights into the motivations, strategies, and practices of the diverse actors involved, illuminating the complex social interfaces and interactions that shape humanitarian processes and outcomes. CDA provides a framework for examining the interplay between discourse, power, and ideology in the context of Chinese humanitarian discourses and practices, unveiling the underlying moral stances, geopolitical interests, and ideological leanings that ascribe meaning and legitimacy to China's humanitarian role in Africa.

Furthermore, this chapter has unfolded selected key concepts central to understanding Chinese humanitarianism, such as humanity, compassion, moral obligation, helping, legitimacy, and friendship/partnership. The critical examination of these concepts including through a comparative juxtapositioning of Western and Chinese perspectives has revealed shared humanitarian ideals across cultures while highlighting distinct Chinese approaches to operationalizing these concepts.

The analysis of these key concepts lays the groundwork for a deeper and more nuanced understanding of Chinese humanitarianism, acknowledging both its commonalities with Western traditions and its own unique manifestations. This understanding is crucial as China's role in humanitarian action continues to grow and evolve, shaping the future of the global humanitarian landscape.

In conclusion, this chapter has presented a tailored conceptual-analytical framework that integrates historical, actor-oriented, and critical discourse perspectives to investigate the origins of Chinese approaches to humanitarianism, its evolving internationalization, and the multidimensional forces

driving China's expanding humanitarian engagement in Africa. It has also laid out and critically examined key concepts central to understanding Chinese humanitarianism, revealing both shared ideals and distinct approaches compared to Western perspectives. This conceptual-analytical foundation sets the stage for a comprehensive and nuanced exploration of Chinese humanitarian discourses, practices, and implications in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

Building upon and linked to the conceptual-analytical framework outlined in this chapter, the next chapter discusses the methodology employed in this study. It provides an overview of how the three analytical approaches – historical, actor-oriented, and critical discourse analysis – are applied, to investigate China's humanitarian engagement in Africa. The chapter outlines the research methods, data collection techniques, and analytical strategies used to gather and interpret empirical evidence. By detailing the methodological approach, the next chapter aims to ensure a systematic and transparent investigation of the phenomenon under study, while acknowledging the limitations and challenges inherent in such an endeavor.

3 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological framework employed to investigate China's expanding humanitarian role in Africa. The chapter begins by discussing the thesis's empirical focus and its evolution, highlighting the rationale behind the selection of the case study and field sites. This is followed by a detailed elaboration of the data collection methods employed, which include document analysis, case study research, and fieldwork conducted in both Uganda and China.

The chapter is divided into three main parts: **Part I.** focuses on the data collection methods employed in this study. **Part II.** discusses the analytical implications of the historical approach, actor-oriented approach, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and document analysis, emphasizing their theoretical foundations, analytical frameworks, and methodological significance. **Part III.** addresses the research limitations and challenges encountered in the study, offering valuable lessons for future research in this field.

By employing a qualitative research approach that integrates multiple data collection methods and analytical perspectives, this study aims to provide a nuanced and contextualized understanding of China's humanitarian engagements in Africa. The application of historical, actor-oriented, and CDA approaches enables a multi-dimensional exploration of the motivations, impacts, and global implications of China's humanitarian engagements.

The subsequent sections of this chapter will elaborate on each of these aspects in detail, laying a solid methodological foundation for the substantive discussions and insights in the following chapters. Through this comprehensive methodological framework, the study seeks to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on China's expanding humanitarian role in Africa and its wider implications for global humanitarianism.

Empirical Focus and its Evolution

This section initially delineates the evolution of the empirical focus in this research, tracing its trajectory from an original emphasis on the role of the Chinese government in humanitarian assistance to South Sudan, to a subsequent concentration on the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA)'s aid programs for South Sudanese refugees in Uganda. This shift not only reflects the integrated application of research methodologies and adaptation to real-world challenges but also exemplifies the intrinsic complexity of China's humanitarian assistance to Africa.

Initially, this doctoral project aimed to explore the role of the Chinese government in humanitarian assistance to displaced persons in South Sudan. This choice stemmed from observations of a significant increase in China's humanitarian aid to Africa in 2017, particularly to refugees and internally displaced persons in South Sudan. At that time, few scholars had conducted in-depth research on China's humanitarian assistance to Africa, suggesting that this project would have unique academic value in addressing this noted research gap. However, this research direction faced multiple challenges: a lack of transparency in Chinese government humanitarian aid data, limited relevant academic literature, difficulties in persuading Chinese government officials to participate in interviews, and significant security threats to field research due to the ongoing conflict in South Sudan. These challenges not only reflected the complexity of researching China's humanitarian assistance to Africa, but also highlighted the need for innovative research methodologies to overcome these obstacles.

The shift in research focus originated from a serendipitous opportunity. Prior to the commencement of the doctoral program, I was informed by Ji Lanlan, a project manager at CFPA, about the organisation's plan to initiate a new humanitarian assistance program for South Sudanese refugees in northern Uganda. This information provided a novel direction for the research: by focusing on the humanitarian practices of a specific Chinese HDO (Humanitarian and Development Organisation) in Africa, it became possible not only to overcome the challenges of data acquisition associated with researching official Chinese aid, but, more significantly, to conduct an in-depth analysis of the micro-mechanisms and motivations underlying China's humanitarian engagement in Africa. This adjustment in research direction not only preserved the academic interest in the growth of Chinese humanitarian assistance, but also created conditions for the subsequent application of an actor-oriented approach and CDA.

The selection of CFPA as the main empirical research subject was primarily based on three criteria: representativeness, pioneering status, and typicality (the rationale for which will be elaborated in a subsequent section). An in-depth study of CFPA, the most established Chinese HDO operating in Africa, facilitated addressing my third thesis research sub-question, namely: how the Chinese state and non-state actors are expanding their roles in the global humanitarian sphere and emerging as new humanitarian actors in Africa. Furthermore, examining the case of CFPA's humanitarian program in Uganda enabled key insights into the impact of China's expanding humanitarian role on China-Africa relations (addressing the fourth research sub-question).

The selection of Uganda as the case study location is equally characterized by typicality and representativeness. As one of Africa's largest refugee-hosting countries, Uganda provides a wealth

of experiential material for examining the role of Chinese humanitarian assistance in addressing Africa's refugee crises. This was particularly valuable in addressing how China's expanding humanitarian role is influencing the contemporary global humanitarian landscape (addressing the fifth sub-question). Moreover, Uganda's relatively stable political environment and open refugee policy offered favorable conditions for my field research, ensuring the feasibility of the study.

This evolution in research focuses not only overcame practical difficulties but also expanded the theoretical and practical significance of the study. By concentrating on CFPA's 'Brighter Future' program, this research allowed me to more effectively integrate the three framing approaches I selected: historical approach, actor-oriented approach, and CDA. The application of these approaches, along with the specific data collection methods employed, will be elaborated in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

In sum, the shift in my research focuses not only surmounted practical obstacles but, more importantly, it generated a novel research pathway that has enabled simultaneous examination of China's humanitarian practices in Africa at both micro and macro levels. By positioning CFPA, a key Chinese HDO, at the center of analysis, this study has delved into the motivations, operational logics, and discursive strategies of Chinese HDOs in their global humanitarian endeavors, as well as the implications of their practices for the understanding of China's humanitarian engagements in Africa.

Part I. Data Collection Methods

This study employs a qualitative research approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of China's expanding humanitarian role in Africa. The research design integrates multiple data collection methods, including document analysis, case study research, and fieldwork conducted in both Uganda and China, to collect data on a specific Chinese-driven humanitarian program in a refugee settlement in northern Uganda. The following sections will elaborate on each of these data collection methods and their collective role in constituting the empirical foundation of this study.

Document Analysis

In this study, document analysis played a central role, providing a crucial framework for systematically reviewing and evaluating a wide range of documentary materials. This method involves a complex process of identifying meaningful and relevant information from policy documents, primary documents, and academic works, and organizing it into major themes, categories, and case examples through content analysis (Labuschagne 2003).

The systematic nature of document analysis is reflected in its rigorous steps: first identifying relevant documents, then conducting a preliminary review, followed by in-depth reading and interpretation, thematic analysis and coding, and finally, information synthesis. This structured approach ensures the comprehensiveness and depth of the analytical process, enabling us to examine issues from multiple angles and extract valuable insights. Particularly in a context of institutional reforms or other conditions limiting direct interviews with state officials, document analysis became a crucial pathway for obtaining key information.

Regarding primary documentary datafor this study, I focused on analyzing three categories of materials. First, I focused on national policy documents, including the White Papers on 'China's Foreign Aid' issued by the State Council (2011 and 2014), the White Paper on 'China's International Development Cooperation in the New Era' issued by the China International Development Cooperation Agency (2021), and three sets of China's Africa policy documents issued by the State Council in 2006, 2015, and 2021. Second, I focused on the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) documents, where I systematically analyzed FOCAC summit declarations and action plans over the years, tracking the evolution of key concepts and discursive strategies through longitudinal comparison. Lastly, I drew on reports on China's emergency humanitarian aid projects to Africa, which provided detailed information on specific aid projects, allowing me to understand the implementation process and effectiveness of China's humanitarian assistance at a practical level.

In terms of academic literature utilization, I extensively searched and analyzed relevant academic papers, monographs, and research reports. This literature primarily came from four sources: research by Chinese scholars, international scholars, African scholars, and academic literature comparing China's humanitarian aid with that of other countries. This diversified literature enabled me to obtain multi-faceted perspectives and comprehensively grasp the complexity of the research topic.

Case Study Research

This research employs a single empirical case study method to conduct an in-depth investigation of CFPA and its role in the 'Brighter Future' refugee assistance program in Uganda. The rationale for selecting a single case study approach lies in its capacity to provide a meticulous, experientially rich, and holistic description of a specific phenomenon (Willis 2014), facilitating the identification of key processes influencing particular situations (Bell 1993). It offers a valuable exploratory pathway for understanding novel issues that have not been thoroughly investigated (Yin 2003). Through a detailed examination of CFPA's program design, implementation processes, and interactions with various stakeholders, this case study aims to shed light on the broader dynamics and implications of Chinese

humanitarian engagement in Africa. Given that the expansion of Chinese HDOs in Africa remains an emerging and under-explored domain, the single case study method emerged as the optimal choice.

Building upon this methodological foundation, this study selected CFPA as its research subject based on three criteria: representativeness, pioneering status, and typicality. CFPA's representativeness as China's most internationalized HDO is evident in its implementation of international humanitarian relief and poverty alleviation projects in 23 countries and regions since 2005, making it an ideal case for studying the internationalization of Chinese HDOs. Its pioneering status is exemplified by its initiative in 2017 to become the first Chinese HDO to start a refugee assistance program in Uganda, signifying a new trend in Chinese HDOs' humanitarian aid efforts in Africa. Finally, CFPA's typicality as the most established Chinese HDO in Africa positions it as a key case for understanding the development of Chinese HDOs on the continent (Kang 2018). An in-depth examination of CFPA, considering these three aspects, contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the internationalization process and development trajectory of Chinese HDOs in Africa.

To comprehensively analyze the 'Brighter Future' program, the case study employs diversified methods including:

1. *Document review*: The collection and analysis of official documents, work reports, and promotional materials from CFPA and the 'Brighter Future' program provides formal discursive representations and official stances.

2. *Field research*: A two-month field study in Uganda, utilizing participatory observation and interviews, provides a key empirical foundation for the research.

3. *Questionnaire surveys*: Surveys of project beneficiaries and relevant stakeholders offer crucial quantitative data support.

4. *In-depth interviews*: A one-month visit to China, involving interviews with multiple members of the Chinese HDO sector, provides internal industry perspectives, further enriching the research's data sources.

Grounded in this multi-method, multi-perspective approach, the field research facilitates an in-depth analysis of Chinese HDOs' humanitarian practices in Africa, revealing their developmental trajectories, operational logics, discursive constructions, and impacts. This not only contributes to an empirically-based understanding and evaluation of China's increasingly significant overseas humanitarian engagement but also provides experiential insights for reflecting on and improving the internationalization process of Chinese HDOs.

Fieldwork in Uganda

The selection of Uganda as the case study location is primarily based on its direct connection to CFPA's 'Brighter Future' program. The Palabek Refugee Settlement in northern Uganda, where the 'Brighter Future' program was implemented, serves as a key program implementation testing ground for CFPA's humanitarian aid efforts in Africa. This direct link between the research subject (CFPA's program) and the research location (Uganda) is the primary reason for choosing Uganda as the case study site.

In addition to this direct connection, several other factors make Uganda an ideal location for studying humanitarian action. Firstly, Uganda is one of the largest refugee-receiving countries in Africa, and the severity and complexity of its refugee issues provide a rich context for examining humanitarian interventions. Secondly, Uganda's relatively progressive refugee policies offer a comparatively favourable working environment for international humanitarian organisations, allowing for an analysis of how Chinese humanitarian organisations operate within a relatively mature refugee assistance system. Moreover, compared to other African countries, Uganda's refugee situation has a certain representativeness, as many countries on the continent face similar challenges of large-scale refugee influxes that require both urgent aid and long-term support from the international community. Therefore, conducting an in-depth case study in Uganda helps us understand the role, positioning, and practical characteristics of Chinese humanitarian action in addressing African refugee challenges (see Chapter Eight for a more detailed discussion on the rationale for selecting Uganda).

From October to December 2018, I conducted a two-month field study in Uganda.The focus of the field work was to gain an in-depth understanding of the local implementation of CFPA's 'Brighter Future' program and to gain insights into the effects of the program on the lives of South Sudanese refugees. To this end, I employed multiple research methods, including participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and questionnaire surveys.

Participant Observation

Participatory observation was central to the fieldwork. By living and working alongside 'Brighter Future' program team members, I was able to closely observe the daily operations of the program and gain an everyday understanding of the practical challenges faced and the strategies employed to address them. I participated in various project activities, including refugee training, distribution of supplies, and community visits, maintaining detailed observation notes (See Appendix 4) throughout. This immersive experience provided me with first-hand information about program operations.

I adopted the following specific steps and methods to conduct participatory observation:

1. *Daily Participation*: I accompanied the program team to the refugee settlement daily, engaging in various project activities, including entrepreneurship training courses, farmer training, and SIM card information collection. This round-the-clock participation allowed me to directly experience all aspects of program operations and closely observe interactions between staff and refugees.

2. *Observation Focus*: I paid particular attention to the following aspects: program preparation work (such as communication with refugees, obtaining permissions from the UN and Ugandan government), actual implementation processes (personnel arrangements, activity schedules), impact assessment methods, how the team addressed challenges, and refugees' daily lives and participation in project activities.

3. *Data Recording*: I employed the following methods to record observational data: detailed daily observation notes, including observations and reflections on the 'field'; recording both objective descriptions and subjective impressions; taking photographs and videos (with permission); and collecting relevant documents and materials.

4. *Participation in Team Meetings*: I attended weekly program team meetings, which gave me a more comprehensive grasp of the internal workings of project management, such as resource allocation and problem-solving.

Through participatory observation, I was able to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation process and impacts of the 'Brighter Future' program. Detailed observation records were kept throughout the fieldwork (See Appendix 4), documenting various program activities, team meetings, and field visits. This method provided me with a unique and comprehensive perspective. Sustained participation over a period of two months enabled me to gain multi-faceted, multi-level insights into project operations. Firstly, personal experience allowed me to intuitively sense the specific operations and practical challenges of the program, obtaining contextualized knowledge that would be difficult to glean from textual materials alone. Extended participation also allowed me to capture subtle body language and interpersonal interactions, enriching my understanding of the program and the relationships within it. Secondly, continuous observation enabled me to grasp the dynamics of program operations, witnessing how the program responded to unexpected situations and adjusted strategies, deepening my understanding of its adaptability and flexibility. Furthermore, physical presence and close contact also allowed me to better comprehend the interactions between multiple actors, their respective circumstances and interests, and how these interactions influenced

both project implementation and refugee lives. This provided a crucial perspective for understanding the program's effects.

However, as an external researcher, I was aware that my identity as a Chinese researcher and positionality might influence not only my observations but also how different actors around me related to me, given that the program was supported by a Chinese HDO. To mitigate this influence, I adopted the following strategies: building trust relationships with the program team to integrate as naturally as possible into daily work; maintaining a reflective attitude, constantly examining my observational perspective and potential biases; and obtaining diverse viewpoints through communication with different stakeholders to balance my personal perspective. The implications of my positionality as a Chinese researcher will be further discussed in the positionality section.

Interviews and Questionnaires

Building upon participatory observation, I designed a series of semi-structured interviews (See Appendix 3) and questionnaire surveys (See Appendix 2) to collect more systematic and in-depth data. A diverse range of stakeholders were interviewed, including program staff, the donor, partner organization representatives, refugee leaders, and beneficiaries (See Appendix 5 for detailed interview records). This combination of methods aimed to obtain multi-faceted perspectives, thereby comprehensively understanding the implementation process, impacts, and implications of the 'Brighter Future' program.

The design of semi-structured interviews considered the roles and viewpoints of different stakeholders. I selected refugee representatives including *seven* block leaders, *two* Zone leaders, and the chairman of the Refugee Welfare Committee, as well as *five* key members of the 'Brighter Future' program team. Additionally, I interviewed He Daofeng, the main individual, private donor of CFPA, and Paul Dudley Hart, a board member of Mercy Corps, to gain perspectives from program funders and partners. This diversified sample selection ensured that I could understand the program's operations and effects from different levels.

In designing the interview guide, I developed specific question lists for different types of interviewees. These questions covered aspects such as project implementation processes, effect evaluation, challenges faced and solutions, as well as views on Chinese aid. Simultaneously, I retained open-ended questions, providing interviewees space to express personal views and experiences. This semi-structured design ensured both the specificity of the interviews and sufficient flexibility to capture valuable unexpected information.

During the interviews, I adopted rigorous data recording methods. With the consent of interviewees, I recorded the interviews while taking detailed notes, including non-verbal information. Immediately after each interview, I organized the notes, supplemented details, and conducted preliminary analysis. This timely organisation and reflection helped maintain the integrity and accuracy of the data.

To complement the qualitative data, I also designed a questionnaire survey. I selected 28 refugees as survey subjects, choosing 2 males and 2 females from each of the 7 blocks receiving aid from the 'Brighter Future' program. Through recommendations from block leaders, I prioritized refugees who could directly understand and use English to reduce the impact of language barriers on data quality. While this sampling method improved research efficiency, it may have introduced selection bias, leading to insufficient sample representativeness. To compensate for this limitation, I adopted supplementary measures such as soliciting broader refugee opinions through focus group discussions and extending participatory observation time to capture the diversity of refugee lives and viewpoints. Although these efforts cannot completely eliminate sample bias, they helped broaden research perspectives and enrich understanding of refugee situations. In data analysis and interpretation, I have also been cautious about the potential impacts of sample limitations.

The questions encompassed various aspects, including evaluations of the program, perceptions of Chinese aid, and improvements in living conditions. When formulating the questions, I used clear and comprehensible language, considering the cultural background and language proficiency of the respondents. In administering the questionnaire, I adopted a one-on-one interview approach. This method allowed me to provide detailed explanations of each question to the respondents, ensuring their thorough understanding of the inquiries. I meticulously recorded their responses and encouraged them to offer additional comments and feedback. This face-to-face interaction not only enhanced the quality of the questionnaire responses but also provided an opportunity to capture non-verbal emotional expressions, thereby collecting richer and more in-depth qualitative data.

During the data analysis phase, I conducted descriptive statistical analyses on the quantitative data, such as calculating frequencies and percentages. For the responses to open-ended questions, I performed thematic analysis to identify common patterns and unique perspectives. Furthermore, I employed comparative and integrated analysis of the questionnaire data with interview and observational data to enhance the credibility and comprehensiveness of the research findings. Triangulating data from multiple methods contributed to improving the validity and reliability of the analysis.

Throughout the research process, I paid special attention to ethical issues. I explained the research purpose and process in detail to all participants, ensuring their voluntary participation. Clark-Kazan

(2017) points out that in situations of forced displacement, research participation may exacerbate risks of power imbalance and exploitation. Recognizing the vulnerable situation of refugees, I was particularly cautious, respecting their dignity and privacy. For example, I offered interviewees the option of using pseudonyms, letting them decide how to be referred to; when quoting refugees' words, I was also careful to protect their identity information. Additionally, I shared research findings with refugees, listening to their feedback, viewing them as collaborators in knowledge production rather than passive research subjects. While these efforts cannot completely eliminate the inherent power imbalances in research, they helped minimize harm and attempted to embody refugee-centered ethical care as far as possible.

In summary, the fieldwork in Uganda provided rich and detailed empirical materials for this study. Through the comprehensive application of the multiple methods, I obtained diverse research perspectives, including macro-level institutional analysis and micro-level individual life experiences. I was able to capture both formal official statements and informal daily interactions, reflecting both the positive effects of aid actions and revealing their limitations and shortcomings. More importantly, the field study allowed me to listen to the voices of refugees, placing them at the center of analysis as far as possible. The aim was to highlight their important position as core stakeholders in humanitarian aid actions. This research approach, grounded in the field and close to the realities of refugee life, not only expanded and deepened my understanding of humanitarian aid, but also provided important insights for reflecting on ethical dilemmas in humanitarian research and for exploring more ethical research practices. The first-hand data obtained from fieldwork provided a solid empirical basis for critical analysis and theoretical reflection. Although there are still some limitations in the fieldwork due to time, resource constraints, limited samples, language barriers, and cultural differences, these lessons also provide valuable references in themselves for future research.

Fieldwork in China

To gain a deeper understanding of CFPA's organisational operations and the broader landscape of China's overseas humanitarian aid, I conducted a month-long visit to China from December 2018 to January 2019. The focus was on visiting relevant institutions such as the headquarters of CFPA, the Red Cross Society of China, and the China Association for NGO Cooperation. Additionally, I visited several HDOs engaged in overseas humanitarian work, including the Amity Foundation[6] and the Beijing Peaceland Foundation. This transnational, multi-site field research design aimed to

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[6] The Amity Foundation is an independent Chinese social organisation founded in 1985 on the initiative of Chinese Christians to promote social development at home and abroad.

comprehensively examine the developmental trajectories and internal logic of China's humanitarian actions from diverse perspectives, including official, civil society, and academic viewpoints.

Seminar Participation

I initially participated in the 'International Disaster Response Seminar on Social Forces in 2018' organized jointly by the China Charity Federation and the Risk Governance Innovation Research Center of Beijing Normal University on December 18, 2018. Through full engagement and detailed documentation of the speeches and discussions from various representatives, I not only acquired abundant first-hand materials but also established valuable academic and professional networks, laying a foundation for subsequent field visits.

Through the networks I established at the seminar, I visited a range of key organisations, including: the Red Cross Foundation of China, where I interviewed its vice president, Liu Xuanguo; the Amity Foundation, where I interviewed Zhen Wei, who oversees the organisation's projects in Africa; and CFPA, where I re-interviewed Wu Peng, director of the international project department. I also interviewed Huang Haoming, Vice Chairman of both the Shenzhen Institute of International Public Welfare and the China Association for the Promotion of Social Organisations. Additionally, I re-interviewed Peng Bin, head of Mercy Corps China, and Wu Haoyin and Ying Binbin, the founders of Common Future[7] which has aid projects in Kenya's slums, as well as in Syria and Lebanon. Further, I interviewed four scholars: Deng Guosheng of Tsinghua University's NGO Institute, who mainly studies social organisations of public welfare and charity; Xu Shiling of Beijing Normal University's Institute of Social Governance Research (currently teaching at the Red Cross College of Suzhou University), who mainly studies the participation of Chinese social forces in emergency rescue; Dong Qiang of China Agricultural University, who studies Chinese public welfare and charity organisations; and He Wenping, professor and research program director at the Institute of West-Asian and African Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, where she specialises in Africa's relations with China and the major Western powers, Africa's democratic transition, and the role of emerging powers and their international performance, including the development of the BRICS countries.

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, with personalized outlines pre-designed according to the diverse backgrounds of the interviewees, while flexibly adjusting questions during the conversations as circumstances warranted. Each interview typically lasted 1-2 hours, with

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[7] Common Future, established in September 2016, is an international volunteer service project under the guidance of Chinese Initiative International Law and China Children and Teenager's Fund. Current projects focus on supporting Chinese youths in Turkey and Lebanon to carry out international volunteer services and provide educational assistance to Syrian refugees (especially adolescents and children).

content recorded in full upon consent, supplemented by detailed notes. After transcription and thematic coding of the interview data, the perspectives of different interviewees were systematically compared to identify consensuses and divergences. Finally, these findings were corroborated with literature materials to explore the overall landscape of Chinese HDOs' development.

In addition to symposium participation and interviews, I extensively collected and analyzed relevant policy documents, annual reports, program evaluation reports, academic literature, media coverage, and other textual materials. Through systematic review of official foreign aid policies and policies for Chinese HDOs 'going global', examination of their practical cases, and reference to relevant theoretical discussions both domestically and internationally, I delineated a multidimensional picture of the development of contemporary Chinese overseas humanitarian endeavours. This step not only provided important background for field observations but also facilitated the interpretation of micro-level experiences within a macro-level context.

This diversified research methodology enabled me to understand the internationalization process of Chinese HDOs from multiple angles. It provided a panoramic perspective, allowing me to comprehensively grasp the roles and impacts of Chinese HDOs in global humanitarian aid. Through in-depth interviews, I gained insider perspectives on HDOs' decision-making processes and strategic considerations, deepening my understanding of their motivations and challenges. Exchanges with scholars and industry leaders helped me understand the evolution of China's foreign aid policies and their impact on HDOs, providing crucial policy context for analysis.

Comparing experiences of different HDOs allowed me to identify common patterns and unique strategies, contributing to the construction of a more comprehensive theoretical framework. Particularly, this method enabled me to gain an in-depth understanding of how Chinese HDOs operate within the local cultural context in Africa and how they address cross-cultural challenges. This finding not only enriched existing international development theories but also provided new perspectives for understanding China's unique role in global governance.

Overall, the field research in China provided me with a unique opportunity to examine Chinese overseas humanitarian development from multiple levels and perspectives. Through interactions with various actors including government departments, HDOs, and academia, I grasped both the macro policy environment and institutional logic shaping this endeavour, as well as insights into micro-level organisational operations and individual practices. Furthermore, I obtained both official narratives and actors' subjective aspirations, and I analyzed normative discourses while also attending to tensions in practice. Notably, interviewing managers and frontline staff of HDOs like CFPA allowed me to directly confront these organisations' internal considerations, implementation strategies, and

specific predicaments in expanding overseas operations, contributing to a deep understanding of their role positioning within the broader wave of China 'going global'. The theoretical visions of academic figures provided me with analytical resources to abstract field findings and connect with academic discussions. The interpretation of official documents further contextualized the research within policy settings, enabling me to examine case experiences within the framework of national strategy. The integration of field practice and theoretical exploration, case interpretation and macro comprehension, provided crucial insights into China's overseas humanitarian endeavours, yielding important clues for transforming empirical materials into theoretical insights. Although there remain some limitations in terms of data representativeness and accessibility, through comparative analysis, multi-source corroboration, and other efforts, I identified and mitigated potential biases that might arise from a single perspective to the extent possible. These limitations themselves became opportunities for reflection, pointing to spaces for expanding subjects and innovating methods in future research.

Part II. Analytical Implications

Having detailed the specific data collection methods employed in this study, this section now turns to a discussion of the analytical implications of the historical approach, actor-oriented approach, critical discourse analysis and document analysis. By examining how these methods contribute to addressing the core research questions and advancing theoretical understandings, the following analysis highlights the methodological significance and innovation of this study.

Historical Approach

The adoption of a multidimensional historical approach has significant analytical implications for a comprehensive understanding of China's humanitarian actions in Africa. This approach transcends the limitations of single-dimensional and linear thinking, providing an in-depth contextualized analysis of China's humanitarian practices from multiple levels, including historical context, cultural roots, and strategic considerations.

This multilayered historical approach included a combination of diachronic and synchronic research methods. Diachronic research aims to explore how and why a phenomenon exists or evolves over time (Gerring 2006). It focuses on change, processes, continuity, development, transformation, or evolution, contrasting with synchronic studies that concentrate on a specific moment in time, such as the present (Widdersheim 2018). The strength of diachronic research lies in its ability to reveal developmental patterns and laws of change, facilitating understanding of causal relationships and internal logic. However, its limitation lies in the difficulty of fully addressing details from different

historical stages, potentially overlooking the uniqueness of specific periods. Synchronic research, on the other hand, emphasizes in-depth analysis of a particular temporal cross-section. Its advantage lies in its capacity to dissect phenomena within specific spatiotemporal contexts, capturing critical nodes and details in the developmental process. Nevertheless, its shortcoming is the tendency to neglect developmental trajectories and historical continuity. The integration of diachronic and synchronic research can leverage their respective strengths while mitigating weaknesses, offering a more comprehensive perspective for understanding complex phenomena.

The interweaving of diachronic and synchronic approaches facilitates the unveiling of the formation and evolution of Chinese humanitarianism within a dynamic historical continuum. The examination of the developmental history of Chinese humanitarianism exemplifies a typical diachronic study, generating valuable insights into the historical origins, formative conditions, and evolutionary paths of Chinese humanitarianism. The in-depth analysis of CFPA's 'Brighter Future' program in Uganda demonstrates characteristics of synchronic study, allowing the grasping of specific practices of Chinese humanitarianism within a particular spatiotemporal context. The organic integration of diachronic and synchronic research reveals long-term trends in the development of Chinese humanitarianism and captures vivid details at specific moments.

The analytical methods employed in this study, such as content analysis, event analysis, narrative analysis, and comparative historical analysis, uncover the historical logic and developmental dynamics of China's humanitarian practices in Africa from multiple levels. These diverse analytical techniques collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of China's humanitarian engagement, while also acknowledging the potential challenges of this historical approach, such as the availability and reliability of historical materials, researcher positionality and biases, and language and cultural barriers.

Actor-Oriented Approach

The actor-oriented approach and the associated data collection and analysis methods have significant analytical implications for understanding the complexities and nuances of China's humanitarian practices in Africa. This approach focuses on the interrelationships among diverse actors, combining top-down and bottom-up perspectives, emphasizing representativeness and diversity, and critically examining power relations and value contestations.

In selecting interviewees among the different categories of actors, this study particularly emphasized representativeness and diversity. The inclusion of both high-ranking institutional leaders and frontline workers and grassroots beneficiaries enabled the research to capture cognitive

differences and interest conflicts between actors at different levels. This multi-level interview strategy contributed to presenting a more comprehensive and multidimensional picture of China's humanitarianism.

The analytical process follows a systematic and in-depth pathway, encompassing social interface analysis, motivational analysis, discourse analysis, and effectiveness evaluation. Social interface analysis focuses on the encounters, conflicts, negotiations, and compromises among different actors during the execution of aid projects, providing insights into the essence of aid relationships and the agency and strategic choices of different actors. The actor-oriented approach not only emphasizes interactions between different actors; it also underscores the heterogeneity within actor groups. For instance, through questionnaires and interviews, this study found significant differences in program perception and evaluation among refugees of different genders, ages, and ethnicities. Recognizing and analyzing this internal differentiation is crucial for comprehensively understanding the complex impacts of humanitarian projects on diverse beneficiaries.

Motivational analysis examines the intrinsic motivations and goal orientations of different actors, revealing the complexities and tensions among their motivations. Due to objective constraints, this study could not conduct direct interviews with Chinese government officials. To compensate for this limitation and still capture the government's perspective, the research systematically reviewed and analyzed official documents, including white papers, archives, policy documents, and leadership speeches. Particular attention was paid to how these documents define humanitarian aid, set objectives, and describe implementation strategies, as well as how these elements have evolved over time. This documentary analysis, combined with interviews with scholars and experts, provided valuable insights into the government's stance, policies, and discourse, enriching the actor-oriented analysis.

Discourse analysis systematically reviews the discursive expressions of different actors on humanitarian issues, analyzing their discursive strategies and the underlying ideologies and value concepts they reflect. Effectiveness evaluation assesses the material outcomes and social impacts of aid projects, considering both direct outputs and long-term impacts.

The actor-oriented approach, through its emphasis on micro-interactions and macro-structures, provides a cross-scale analytical framework. While examining specific interactions between actors through methods such as social interface analysis, this approach also interprets these micro-processes within macro contexts such as China-Africa relations and the global humanitarian system. This integration of empirical facts and theoretical abstraction enhances the analytical depth and explanatory power of the research findings.

This multi-level analytical approach, combining micro-interactions and macro-structures, provides a dynamic analytical framework for exploring China's humanitarian aid practices in Africa. It offers valuable insights into the motivations, negotiations, and impacts of Chinese humanitarian aid and contributes to a more holistic understanding of China's evolving role in the global humanitarian landscape.

Critical Discourse Analysis

By applying CDA to a diverse range of data sources, including official documents, media reports, and academic literature, this study aims to uncover the linguistic strategies, ideological underpinnings, and power relations embedded in China's humanitarian discourses. The three-dimensional analytical framework of CDA, encompassing textual, discursive practice, and social practice dimensions, enables the establishment of organic connections between micro-level language use, meso-level discourse production and dissemination processes, and macro-level sociocultural contexts (Fairclough 1992). This multi-level approach is particularly valuable for grasping the complexity and dynamism of China's humanitarian discourses.

At the textual level, CDA focuses on a close analysis of linguistic features, including lexical choices, grammatical structures, and rhetorical devices. For instance, examining the frequent occurrence of keywords such as 'friendship', 'mutual benefit and win-win cooperation', and 'South-South Cooperation' in China's policy documents can elucidate their centrality in constructing China's humanitarian discourses. Analyzing the evolution of these concepts across different periods can trace the developmental trajectory and underlying foreign policy shifts of these discourses.

The diverse range of data sources provides a holistic examination of the various voices and perspectives shaping China's humanitarian discourses. This multi-perspectival approach contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities and implications of China's humanitarian discourses. The discursive practice dimension explores the processes of discourse production, dissemination, and reception. It examines the roles of various institutions (e.g., government, media, think tanks) in shaping China's humanitarian discourses and how these discourses are disseminated through different channels and platforms. Analyzing how African audiences interpret and evaluate these discourses can reveal the impact of discursive interactions on China-Africa relations.

Specific analytical techniques, such as in-depth textual analysis, interdiscursive analysis, and discourse comparison, offer valuable insights into the linguistic strategies, intertextual relations, and comparative dimensions of China's humanitarian discourses. In-depth textual analysis examines the linguistic features, rhetorical devices, and argumentative structures employed in the construction of

China's humanitarian discourses. Interdiscursive analysis explores the interactions and tensions between China's humanitarian discourses and other relevant discourses, such as the Western-dominated humanitarian discourses and the discourses of South-South cooperation. Discourse comparison analyzes the similarities and differences between China's humanitarian discourses and the discourses of other major humanitarian actors, revealing the unique features and global implications of China's humanitarian approach.

At the social practice level, CDA scrutinizes the influence of broader social, political, economic, and cultural contexts on discursive practices. This includes examining how factors such as China's rising global status, changes in the international development landscape, and domestic ideological trends shape the construction of China's humanitarian discourses.

These analytical techniques provide a robust framework for interrogating the linguistic, intertextual, and comparative dimensions of China's humanitarian discourses, contributing to a more nuanced and contextualized understanding of China's evolving role in the global humanitarian landscape.

Document Analysis

Document analysis, as one of the core methods in this study, has significant analytical implications for tracing the historical context of China's humanitarian aid, understanding its conceptual evolution, and gaining insight into the internal logic of policy formulation. As Bowen (2009) points out, document analysis can reveal the historical roots of specific issues and indicate the conditions influencing the phenomenon under study. This in-depth historical and theoretical exploration provided a solid foundation for the research.

The value of document analysis also lies in its complementarity with other research methods. In this study, by comparing and analyzing the concepts, connotations, and theories of China's humanitarian aid, as well as the key areas of China's humanitarian assistance to Africa, document analysis not only supplemented the findings from fieldwork but also provided a solid theoretical foundation. This integrated use of multiple methods demonstrates the advantages of qualitative research triangulation, which is 'the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon' (Denzin 2017:48). The diversification of methodology enhanced the credibility and reliability of research findings and provided multiple perspectives to examine issues, thereby enabling a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding.

In summary, document analysis, through systematic review and evaluation of policy documents, primary documents, and academic works, provided rich historical perspectives, theoretical foundations, and policy insights. It compensated for the limitations of field research, provided

necessary macro contexts for case studies, and served as a valuable complement to the CDA approach, offering a broader documentary context within which the critical analysis of specific texts could be situated. The development trajectory, conceptual evolution, and practical logic of China's humanitarian aid presented by document analysis constitute important cornerstones for understanding and evaluating China's role and influence in global humanitarian endeavors.

In conclusion, this chapter has presented a comprehensive methodological framework for investigating China's expanding humanitarian role in Africa. By integrating historical analysis, actor-oriented approach, critical discourse analysis, and document analysis, this study has established a multi-dimensional and contextualized approach to understanding China's humanitarian practices, discourses, and evolving global influence. The combination of these methods allows for a holistic examination of the complexities and nuances of China's humanitarian engagement, shedding light on its historical roots, actor dynamics, discursive strategies, and policy implications. While each method has its own strengths and limitations, their synergistic application enables a more profound and textured analysis, contributing to a richer understanding of China's growing humanitarian presence in Africa. Furthermore, the integration of these methods highlights the methodological innovation and rigor of this study, demonstrating the value of employing diverse analytical lenses and data sources in exploring complex social phenomena. Although challenges and limitations exist, they also present opportunities for future methodological refinement and theoretical advancement in this field. Overall, the methodological framework outlined in this chapter lays a solid foundation for the substantive discussions and findings in the subsequent chapters, showcasing the potential of interdisciplinary and multi-method approaches in pushing the boundaries of research on China's humanitarian engagement in Africa.

Part III. Research Limitations and Challenges

Despite this study's efforts to be comprehensive and in-depth, there remain several noteworthy limitations. These limitations primarily pertain to the research scope, time span, sample selection, and the influence of external factors.

Originally, I planned to examine not only the 'Brighter Future' program, but also humanitarian aid projects conducted by other Chinese HDOs in various African countries, including refugee assistance projects. However, due to international travel restrictions during the planned PhD period, resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, I could only complete field research in Uganda and China, and was unable to conduct other planned field studies. This limitation not only narrowed the

geographical coverage of the research but also reduced the sample of organisations that could be studied, affecting the generalizability of the research findings.

Moreover, the limitation of the time span is also worth noting. While the two-month fieldwork in Uganda provided valuable first-hand data, it could not fully capture the long-term effects of the program. Such short-term observation may struggle to comprehensively assess the sustained impact of aid projects on refugee lives.

Another limitation lies in potential bias in sample selection. To enhance research efficiency, as stated earlier I prioritized refugees who could communicate directly in English as interviewees. Although this method improved the directness and accuracy of communication, it may have led to a sample bias towards refugees with higher education levels or specific backgrounds, failing to fully represent the diverse perspectives of the entire refugee population.

Lastly, due to resource and time constraints, as well as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the research could only focus on a limited number of Chinese HDOs. While CFPA is arguably strongly representative of the new trends in Chinese HDO orientations and activities, clearly it could not fully reflect the practices and impacts of the entire Chinese humanitarian aid industry in Africa.

Despite these limitations, this study, through multi-method and multi-perspective data collection and analysis, still provides important empirical foundations and theoretical insights for understanding the humanitarian practices of Chinese HDOs in Africa. The reflections on these limitations and challenges offer valuable lessons for optimizing research design and innovating methodological strategies in future studies.

Practical and Ethical Challenges

Practical and ethical issues and challenges inevitably arise during fieldwork and are a fundamental part of the research process. As Hammar points out, during *any* research conducted 'under conditions of structural inequality and in situations of conflict, questions of ethical responsibility and one's own positionality as a researcher come directly into play' (Hammar 2007:65-66). The purpose of this section is to highlight the practical and ethical challenges throughout the practices of fieldwork and writing this thesis.

Language and Translation

In this thesis, language and translation are considerations in at least two different ways: with respect to research in the Uganda refugee settlement; and in terms of the challenges of translating Chinese terms related to humanitarianism into comparable English terms.

Most people in the Palabek settlement in Uganda, both South Sudanese refugees and locals, are ethnically Acholi, but both English and the local Acholi language are used. The South Sudan refugee community also included people of, for example, Nuer, Dingka, Lotuko, Lango, and Lang ethnicities. Some could speak English; some could only speak their local language.

In order to facilitate the easiest access to information from refugees, those who could speak English were prioritised for participation. This preference for refugees who speak good English was bound to generate research bias when collecting the data. Priority, however, does not connote exclusivity. Ten non-English-speaking refugees also participated in the survey-interview. Joseph Otika, a 'Brighter Future' Program's staff member, served as my translator. Research assistants play an essential role in supporting researchers to connect with participants, particularly in cross-cultural research settings presenting cultural and language barriers (Deane and Stevano 2015, Temple and Young 2004, Turner 2010a). Mr. Otika volunteered his time, energy and linguistics skills. Thanks to his help, my thesis includes the voices of refugees who do not speak English.

However, it is also important to acknowledge the limitations introduced through the translations made during my fieldwork interviews in Uganda. My research assistant and translator, Joseph Otika, was himself a staff member of the 'Brighter Futures' program I was studying. While tremendously helpful in facilitating my access and building rapport with respondents, Otika's position may have influenced what interviewees felt comfortable sharing, particularly any critiques of the program. Furthermore, as a male translator, gender dynamics may have shaped the information women respondents provided during interviews. I aimed to mitigate these issues by also conducting focus groups and observation, but nonetheless my interview data is filtered through Otika's interpretations and translations. A more extensive project with additional resources would ideally involve multiple translators from different subject positions and genders to minimize potential biases. While imperfect, I believe my data still provides meaningful insights into refugee experiences, but it is critical to acknowledge these limitations of translation in my fieldwork.

In addition to the language challenges in Palabek refugee settlement, there was also a challenge in translating from Chinese to English at various stages of the research process, for example in terms of my work in comparing the meaning of *Rendao Zhuyi* (人道主义) with the meaning of Western humanitarianism. Yu Jianping (2001) notes that there are differences between Chinese and English in the ways of expression, culture and thinking.

Crucially, humanitarianism is a foreign word in China, as mentioned by many Chinese scholars (Lai 2014, Li 2009, Liu et al. 1996, Wang 1979). However, Chinese scholars also have different interpretations of *Rendao Zhuyi*, leading both to debates over its meaning in China and 'its'

relationship with its Western cousin, 'humanitarianism'. The term is often divided into 'broad *Rendao Zhuyi*' and 'narrow *Rendao Zhuyi*'. *Rendao Zhuyi* in its broad sense generally refers to all ideas or philosophical ideas that take 'human' as the subject – such as human value, human dignity, human interest or happiness, human development, or liberty (Wang 1986). In the narrow sense, *Rendao Zhuyi* is limited to moral norms, but there are also two kinds of explanations on this point. The first, represented by Zhang Chunnian (1993), attributes *rendao zhuyi* to general moral norms. The second, represented by He Guanghu (2003), emphasises practical assistance to people in distress and misfortune. In this thesis' introduction, I show that the broad concept of *rendao zhuyi* in China is more expansive than the interpretation of the Western concept of humanitarianism and is very close to the concept of 'humanism', which is commonly translated as (*Renwen Zhuyi*). Zhang Chunnian's narrow interpretation is fully within the Western notion of humanitarianism, but is less comprehensive. He Guanghu's understanding of *Rendao Zhuyi* is closest to and most consistent with 'humanitarianism'. Both of these scholars argue that 'humanitarianism' is an adequate translation of '*Rendao Zhuyi*', arguing that there is a clear difference between humanitarianism – both Western and Chinese – and humanism, again as they claim to be understood in both cultures (Lai 2014), while Zhu Guangqian (1979), Wang Ruoshui (1986) and Zhu Longhua (1984) have advocated that *Rendao Zhuyi* and *renwen zhuyi* are essentially the same concept, and both should be translated as 'humanism'.

> 'If you look at the individual and the relationship between individuals, there are three types of rendao zhuyi: the first type is "minimalist humanitarianism" and advocates treating the individual as a person. Firstly, it affirms that the individual has the legitimacy of physical happiness and desire satisfaction; the individual pursues the happiness and enjoyment of this world; and respects the dignity and freedom of the individual. The second type is "maximum humanitarianism", which advocates for making individuals human. It encourages personal creativity, the all-around development of personal talent, self-struggle, self-realisation, to become an ideal person. The third type of humanitarianism is "philanthropic humanitarianism" … It advocates treating all people kindly and caring for all people, especially those who are in an adverse environment of poverty, disease, misfortune or disaster, and providing them with the necessary material and spiritual assistance.' (Lai 2014:40)

As we can easily see, in the context of China, the relevant words paint a quite broad picture of humanitarianism. This enlarged interpretation leads to the 'humanitarianism' in many contexts where 'humanism' would be more appropriate. Some scholars have even suggested that *rendao zhuyi*, not *Renwen Zhuyi*, is the correct translation of humanism (Shen 2018). The result is that there is a lot of humanitarianism research in the Chinese literature, but the word humanitarianism in these studies often means humanism, not humanitarianism as we know it today. These different versions and interpretations have complicated my discussions with scholars and have been troubling my research for some time. In addition to the umbrella category of humanitarianism, a number of subsidiary concepts also differ in ways that complicate their translations from Chinese to English and back again.

Another point that must be mentioned is the translation of direct quotations from Chinese classical works. These ancient works have travelled a multitude of oral and written paths over two millennia, which has resulted in a variety of interpretations of their nuances (Wang 2009), and intensive belief that 'this' interpretation is correct while 'that' interpretation is not. Take for example, a collection of classical essays that presents the idea that 'is it not a delight after all to have friends come from afar'. However, famous English sinologist James Legge translates it as, 'Is it not delightful to have friends coming from distant quarters?' Chinese scholar Wang, on the other hand, proposes 'Isn't it a pleasure for one to have like-minded people coming from faraway places?' (Ibid.). In China, classical collections are often published in classical Chinese, rather than modern Chinese. While in some senses, classical characters are more linguistically sensible than their simplified counterparts, intra-Chinese deviations do occur. If there is some deviation in understanding the content of classical Chinese, the translation into English will be prone to magnified mistakes, resulting in readers' confusion, or the problem of words not communicating their author's meaning. While writing this dissertation's fourth chapter, which draws extensively on classical literature, I was sensitive to this challenge. I hope that my work is adequately comprehensible.

The matter of translation has been a deeply challenging and revealing part of the research process more broadly. To reduce research bias, in addition to getting help from translator assistants during field work, I also discussed the confusing use of the terms 'humanism' and 'humanitarianism' with Xu Shiling, a scholar in Beijing. All these practices have helped to reduce the research bias caused by language and translation problems. Although it is difficult to translate from Chinese to English, as a Chinese scholar, my access to Chinese-language documents, debates, and key actors, has been an immense advantage in undertaking this thesis. Navigating these language barriers and ensuring accurate translation was a significant practical challenge in this research. Another challenge encountered was related to positionality and ethics.

Positionality and Ethical Considerations

Reflecting on one's position as a researcher is a critical element in qualitative studies. The term positionality describes both an individual's place in the world and world view, and the position they adopt about a research task and its social and political context (Foote and Bartell 2011, Savin-Baden and Major 2013 and Rowe 2014). According to Foote and Bartell (2011:46), the positionality that researchers bring to their work, and the personal experiences through which their positionality is shaped, may influence what researchers may bring to and take from research encounters, their choice of processes and their interpretation of outcomes.

Throughout the entire research process, I placed high importance on research ethics and strictly adhered to relevant guidelines. Firstly, informed consent is a fundamental requirement of research ethics. Prior to conducting interviews and questionnaire surveys, I provided each potential participant with a detailed explanation of the research objectives, process, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality principles, and their right to refuse or withdraw at any point. Data collection only proceeded after participants fully understood and voluntarily signed the consent form. Secondly, protecting participants' privacy and safety was of paramount importance. All participants were offered the option to use pseudonyms or remain anonymous. When presenting research findings, I carefully avoided using information that could potentially reveal individual identities. For vulnerable groups such as refugees, I exercised extra caution, avoiding questions that might trigger trauma or discomfort, and respecting their right to share or withhold certain information. Furthermore, I emphasized the proper storage and use of research data.

All raw data, including audio recordings, notes, and questionnaires, were securely stored and accessible only to research team members. When using and publishing data, I strictly adhered to confidentiality principles to ensure no negative impacts on the participants. Lastly, I focused on interaction and communication with participants throughout the research process. I endeavored to treat each participant with equality and respect, listening to their voices and concerns, rather than simply viewing them as research subjects. Where possible, I also shared research findings with participants, enabling them to understand their contributions and the significance of the research. In summary, adhering to research ethics is not only a moral responsibility of researchers but also an important prerequisite for ensuring research quality and harmonious research relationships.

As a Chinese researcher in Uganda, I also had to be aware of local perceptions and historical tensions between Africans and Chinese. I took care not to represent narrow Chinese interests or viewpoints and continually emphasized my role as an independent doctoral student. Throughout the research process, I strived to center the lived experiences and perspectives of the South Sudanese refugees I interviewed, rather than imposing my own assumptions or biases. When analyzing or interpreting findings, I reflected critically on my role as an outsider and how that may have shaped the interactions and what I heard or observed. My position as an outsider required balancing my research goals with ethical imperatives around consent, anonymity, and minimizing potential harm to participants. This meant allowing participants to shape the research directions, excluding identifying details in reporting, and being sensitive to the precarious circumstances of lives spent displaced.

In contrast to being an outsider in Uganda, my position in China was that of an insider. Wiederhold (2015:606) regards researchers who conduct their studies in familiar environments or those having background knowledge of their participants as 'insiders' or 'researchers at home'. As a Chinese woman in particular, conducting fieldwork in my home country, I had to be cognizant of how my gender affected access to spaces and interactions with participants. As a female researcher, I faced some limitations in accessing certain male-dominated spaces, and was conscious of how my femaleness may have shaped the openness and candour, or not, of male participants. However, being a native Chinese facilitated access, trust, and communication with many participants. My 'insider' status provided me with shared cultural understandings and linguistic fluency in navigating research settings.

My earlier experience with CFPA facilitated easier access to conducting fieldwork in Palabek refugee settlement in ways that may have been more difficult for someone lacking those connections. To ensure that my participation was legal and safe, I wore CFPA uniforms on-site and accompanied Brighter Future staff. Although I identified myself as a PhD student associated with CFPA, I was cautious to clarify my independent researcher role when participants assumed I was a Brighter Future team member. Maintaining transparency and reflexivity about my perceived and actual positionality was crucial for mitigating assumptions, navigating privilege dynamics responsibly, and collecting data ethically. My identity provided invaluable access, but also required conscious effort to delineate my specific role.

As a Chinese researcher in Uganda, I also had to be aware of local perceptions and historical tensions between Africans and Chinese. I took care not to represent narrow Chinese interests or viewpoints and continually emphasized my role as an independent doctoral student. Building rapport and trust required sensitivity to the complex dynamics between locals and Chinese both in Uganda and in Africa more broadly. Overall, examining my shifting insider/outsider status and privilege across varied contexts shaped an ethical, reflective, and participant-centered approach to fieldwork.

To address these challenges, I adopted a strategy of reflexivity, continuously examining and reflecting on my own subjectivity within the research. Specifically, I practiced reflexivity through the following methods: Firstly, I maintained a detailed research journal documenting my feelings, thoughts, and perplexities, attempting to analyze potential biases or presuppositions therein. This self-examination helped me recognize the limitations of my understanding of local social and cultural contexts, thereby fostering a humbler perspective on my own cognitions and judgments. Secondly, I actively sought feedback and opinions from local individuals, particularly those whose identity backgrounds differed significantly from mine, such as male refugees. Listening to their views on my

research and identity helped me examine myself from different perspectives and adjust my research methods and interpersonal approaches. Furthermore, I emphasized dialogue and exchange with other researchers, especially scholars with similar cross-cultural research experiences. Their shared experiences and suggestions provided valuable references, helping me identify my shortcomings and areas for improvement. Additionally, I strived to integrate reflexivity into the presentation of research findings, disclosing my identity characteristics and field experiences in the writing, and inviting readers to critically examine my interpretation of the data. Through these reflexive practices, I attempted to maximize the transparency of my positionality and overcome potential biases stemming from my own position, approaching research findings objectively and prudently.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented a comprehensive and systematic methodological framework for investigating China's expanding humanitarian role in Africa. By employing a qualitative research approach that integrates case study research, fieldwork, and discourse analysis, this study aims to provide a nuanced and contextualized understanding of China's humanitarian engagement in Africa.

The study's empirical focus on CFPA's 'Brighter Future' program in Uganda, combined with fieldwork in both Uganda and China, offers a unique opportunity to examine China's humanitarian practices at both micro and macro levels. The application of document analysis, case study research, and fieldwork enables the collection of rich empirical data. The historical approach, actor-oriented approach, critical discourse analysis, and document analysis collectively enable a multi-dimensional exploration of the motivations, impacts, and global implications of China's humanitarian engagement.

While acknowledging the research limitations and challenges encountered, including constraints in research scope, time span, sample selection, and the influence of external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, this study nonetheless provides important empirical foundations and theoretical insights for understanding Chinese HDOs' humanitarian practices in Africa. The reflections on these limitations and challenges offer valuable lessons for future research in this field.

Building upon this methodological foundation, the subsequent chapters of the thesis delve into the historical origins and evolution of Chinese humanitarianism, providing the necessary context for analyzing China's growing humanitarian engagement in Africa. The next chapter specifically examines the genesis of Chinese humanitarian ethics, the formation of Chinese HDOs under the influence of Western humanitarianism, and the development of Chinese HDOs after the founding of the People's Republic of China. This historical exploration lays the groundwork for understanding

the contemporary dynamics and implications of China's humanitarian role in Africa, which are the central concerns of this thesis.

4 HISTORICISING CHINESE HUMANITARIAN INSTITUTIONS

'China has its own approach to humanitarianism that is based on a long history of supplying humanitarian assistance.'

Miwa Hirono (2013: S203)

Introduction

Humanitarianism, in its more 'global' understanding, is a broad concept that manifests actions, movements, and ethics as related to both traditional and modern forms of charity (De Lauri 2021). However, as this thesis argues, Chinese humanitarianism has somewhat different origins, both conceptually and as a set of practices that are deeply ingrained in China's history (Krebs 2014). For this thesis, the historical tradition of the Chinese approach must be recognised. More specifically, a meaningful analysis of the emerging role of Chinese HDOs in Africa demands an exploration of the historical development of humanitarian institutions in China.

This thesis adopts a historiographical lens to unravel the intricate tapestry of Chinese humanitarianism's origins, both conceptually and in practice, deeply embedded within the annals of China's rich historical evolution. By critically examining the constructed narratives and ideologies, I illuminate how distinct historical phases and socio-political contexts have uniquely shaped Chinese humanitarian approaches, and how they differ from Western methods of humanitarianism.

The introduction chapter to this thesis showed that the evolution of the dominant interpretations of humanitarian values has largely been embedded in Western notions of humanitarianism. The chapter confirmed that such dominant ideas or principles can be traced to the forms of 'charity', 'philanthropy' or 'almsgiving' in Western traditions that stem from Christian teachings (Nishikawa 2005, Gronemeyer 1992). Unsurprisingly, in China – influenced over many centuries and even millennia by different philosophical and religious doctrines such as Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism – charitable ideas, practices, and institutions form different patterns.

The present chapter is divided into three sections. The first examines the genesis of Chinese humanitarian ethics, which have been influenced by doctrines of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. Additionally, it explains how the ideals from these doctrines have shaped Chinese humanitarian thoughts and actions over time. This section directly responds to the first sub-question about the history and transformation of Chinese humanitarianism in terms of discourses and practices.

The second section explores the more recent formation of Chinese HDOs, after Western NGOs began coming into China. Taking the cases of the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC), the China International Famine Relief Commission (CIFRC), the 'Chinese Jishenghui', and the World Red Swastika Society[8] (红卍字会 hóng wàn zì huì WRSS) for analysis, it helps to explain how

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[8] The Red Swastika Society, established in 1922 as the nationwide charity branch of the Daoyuan (道院, School of the Tao), is one of many philanthropic organisations established by Chinese philanthropists to accommodate the rising need for relief after severe natural and humanmade catastrophes. In Chinese and other cultures, the swastika (卍 wàn; 'infinity', 'all') is a symbol of the universe, or the manifestation and creativity of God. The use of the symbol in various Asian cultures predates, and is therefore not related to, the symbol's use in Nazi iconography, and the

humanitarian values from the West have influenced the much older traditional Chinese humanitarian ideals and practices. This section also acknowledges the diversity within Western humanitarianism, such as the differences between early 19th-century British philanthropy and the humanitarian practices of the International Red Cross before and after World War I. This part further addresses the first sub-question and provides historical context for understanding the third sub-question about the expansion of Chinese humanitarian actors' roles.

The third section explores the development of Chinese HDOs after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. This aids an understanding of how Chinese HDOs have evolved under the dominance of the Chinese state over time. The analysis emphasizes the impact of socialist transformation and the planned economy system on reshaping China's humanitarian cause. This section sheds light on the domestic factors influencing the expanding humanitarian role of China mentioned in the main research question.

From these examinations, the chapter not only argues that the ethics and practices of Chinese humanitarianism are embedded in a long history of Chinese charity culture, shaped by the integration of Chinese charity ideas and Western humanitarianism, but also traces the evolution of the contemporary Chinese humanitarian institutions that are at the core focus of this thesis. Collectively, the chapter provides the historical and conceptual foundation necessary for analyzing China's growing humanitarian engagements in Africa and its implications for China-Africa relations and global humanitarianism, which are the central concerns of the main research question and the fourth and fifth sub-questions.

Before NGOs: Historicizing Chinese Charities, 221BC to 1904

Tracing the lineage of philanthropy in China reveals ancient roots, predating contemporary constructs of humanitarian aid. The emergence of four traditional charitable models, illuminated through a historiographical exploration, showcases the evolution of Chinese philanthropic thoughts influenced by Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. This section delves into how these models, within their respective historical and socio-political milieus, contributed to a distinctly Chinese conceptualization of charity, contrasting with Western philanthropic traditions.

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organisation is not associated with the Nazi Party (NSDAP). Reports of the Society's strength during the 1920s and 1930s vary widely, with citations of 30,000 'members' in 1927 to 7–10 million 'followers' in 1937. See Prasenjit Duara, 'Of Authenticity and Woman: Personal Narratives of Middle-Class Women in Modern China', in Wen-Hsin Yeh (ed.) Becoming Chinese. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000:348.

The Notion of Charity and Philanthropy

Charity or philanthropy, when translated into Chinese, falls into two characters of *Cishan* (慈善). Both *Ci* (慈) and *Shan* (善) can stand on their own. The term *ci* means the love and care for the people in the society, particularly the love for elderly people and children (Ciyuan Revision Group 1991). The character *shan* has nine meanings: beautiful, bright, happy; friendly; to love, like, be fond of, to treasure something, to value something; large, many; to be good at; to improve; to wipe something clean; to be familiar with (Ciyuan Revision Group 1991). In combination, *cishan* refers to 'benevolence', 'decency' and 'sympathy' (Zhou and Zeng 2007). Chinese scholars Zhou Qiuguang and Zeng Guilin (2007) define *Cishan* as both a motive and a concept, both an act and a career. As a motivator, *Cishan* should be manifested as selfless dedication; as a concept, the basic feature of *Cishan* is to promote humanitarianism.

It is important to note that the terms 'charity' and 'philanthropy' have distinct connotations in Western, Chinese and African cultural contexts. The Western understanding of charity and philanthropy often distinguishes between the two based on the scale and strategy of giving. Charity is typically associated with one-time, ad-hoc giving, often driven by emotional responses to immediate needs, while philanthropy is generally understood as a more strategic, long-term approach to addressing social issues, focusing on root causes and systemic change (Payton and Moody 2008, Frumkin 2006). This distinction is rooted in the Western philosophical tradition, which emphasizes individual autonomy and rational decision-making (Ilchman, Katz and Queen 1998), and is reflected in the legal and tax frameworks that govern charitable giving in many Western countries.

In contrast, the Chinese concept of *Cishan* encompasses both the notions of charity and philanthropy, representing a more holistic view of benevolent acts driven by care and virtue. The term does not make a clear distinction between the two, but rather sees them as complementary aspects of a broader humanitarian impulse. This cultural understanding is shaped by the influential philosophical traditions of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, which emphasize virtuous conduct, social harmony, and concern for the collective wellbeing (Krebs 2014, Wang 2015).

In African cultural contexts, the terms 'charity' and 'philanthropy' have distinct meanings and connotations. Charity is often associated with traditional forms of giving, such as informal support networks and communal solidarity, which have long been practiced in African societies (Aina 2013). This type of giving is considered to be more spontaneous, emotion-driven, and focused on providing immediate relief to those in need. In contrast, philanthropy in Africa is increasingly being understood as a more organized and strategic approach to addressing social problems and promoting long-term social change (Mati 2017). This shift towards strategic philanthropy involves collaboration between

various stakeholders, including government, civil society, and the private sector, to address the root causes of social issues and promote sustainable development (Kania, Kramer and Russell 2014).

The concept of Ubuntu, a philosophical concept that emphasizes the interconnectedness of humanity and the importance of compassion, reciprocity, dignity, and harmony in building and maintaining communities with justice and mutual caring (Metz 2011), is closely related to the terms 'charity' and 'philanthropy' in African contexts. Ubuntu is often expressed through the phrase 'I am because we are', which highlights the interdependence of individuals within a community (Ibid.). This sense of interconnectedness and shared responsibility encourages people to support one another, especially those in need, through acts of charity and kindness.

Ubuntu has a significant influence on the way charity and philanthropy are perceived and practiced in African societies. According to Munyaka and Motlhabi (2009), Ubuntu is a key driver of charitable giving in African communities, as it promotes a sense of empathy, compassion, and solidarity among individuals. The Ubuntu ideology fosters a strong sense of social responsibility and encourages people to help others without expecting anything in return. In the context of philanthropy, Ubuntu encourages a more holistic and community-centered approach to addressing social issues, emphasizing the importance of collaboration, participation, and mutual support (Mati 2017). The influence of Ubuntu on charity and philanthropy is evident in the way communities come together to support one another during times of crisis or hardship. For example, Ringson (2017) describe how the Ubuntu philosophy has been instrumental in mobilizing communities to provide support for orphans and vulnerable children in Uganda, through informal networks of care and support. This demonstrates how Ubuntu can inspire both charitable giving and strategic philanthropic initiatives that aim to address the root causes of social problems and promote long-term social change.

These cultural nuances in the understanding and application of charity and philanthropy highlight the importance of contextual analysis when studying the evolution of charitable practices across different societies. The Chinese and Ugandan examples demonstrate how indigenous philosophical, religious, and social influences can shape the conceptualization and manifestation of benevolent acts, leading to divergent meanings and practices that may not align with Western frameworks. Recognizing these cultural differences is crucial for a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the diverse philanthropic traditions that have shaped global humanitarianism.

The Evolution of Clan Charity

Viewing clan charity through a historiographical lens reveals its foundational role in shaping Chinese humanitarianism. Clan charity is China's earliest structured philanthropy, deeply rooted in

Confucianism. This section critically examines the socio-political evolution that influenced the ethos of clan charity, highlighting how shifts in dynastic governance and societal structures impacted its practices and ideological underpinnings. Tracing the development of clan charity from the Qin Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty, illustrates how changes in political and social structures shaped the nature and scope of clan-based philanthropy.

Clan charity originates in the Qin Dynasty (231-206BC), as family-based kinship organisations offering services such as care for widows and orphans, distribution of grain, and construction of schools for boys in the clan (Shapiro, Mirchandani and Jang 2018, UNDP[9] 2015). During the Han Dynasty (202BC-20AD), the expansion of the imperial bureaucracy and the emphasis on Confucian values led to the growth of intra-clan mutual aid, which now included poverty relief, consolation for young orphans, and funeral aid (Zhou and Zeng 2007). Cui Xun's *Si Min Yue Ling* (*四民月令*) from this period records that clans concentrated on providing relief to orphans and widows during September and October each year (Xu et al. 2018).

The flourishing of clan charity during the Song Dynasty (960-1279) can be attributed to the development of the commodity economy and the convergence of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism in Chinese society (Zhou and Zeng 2007). This period saw the emergence of prominent charitable organisations like the Yih-jong (*Yi Zhuang* 义庄), founded by Fan Zhongyan, which served to promote the standing of prominent families in the community.

Yih-jong literally means 'mansion of righteousness' and originally referred to any charitable organisation. These charities typically were established by prominent families to promote their standing in the community. Scholars Zhao Huawen and Li Yu, in their book *The Truth of Charity* (2012), note that the Yih-jong was the embryonic form of a foundation in China. In ancient society, the main function of Yih-jong was to make the clan harmonious and united, and to ensure the continued economic wellbeing of clan members. The realisation of this goal was seen as not only enhancing the clan members' ability to withstand natural disasters, but also providing insurance in the event of agricultural failures, and was conducive to the stability of the feudal order. In other words, it played an important role in maintaining feudal ethics, laws and discipline (Qu 2015).

Yih-jong mainly benefited members of the same clan. They not only provided food and clothing, but also support for marriage and funerals, and loans that enabled clans people to address almost all other life problems. It also provided free education, disproportionately benefiting the clan's poor children. The lands belonging to the clan are the economic foundation of Yih-jong, and clan charity

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[9] Unleashing the potential of Philanthropy in China, UNDP 2015.

was expected to use the rental income to support the poor or widowed, or victims of famine and accidents (Wang 2015).

There were as many as 70 Yih-jong during the Song and Yuan Dynasties (1271-1368). The number of Yih-jong increased significantly during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), especially in the southern region. This growth reflected the rising economic power of the merchant class and the gradual decentralization of political authority, which allowed local elites more freedom to establish charitable institutions (Li 1988). The Qing Dynasty (1644-1912) saw a further expansion of clan charity participation, with scholars, peasants, artisans, and merchants from various social strata contributing to its support. This broadening of involvement created a more inclusive structure of charitable giving, encompassing three main groups: the gentry, the merchants, and the common people (Li and Chen 2014).

The Confucian notion of 'benevolence' is the ideological foundation of clan charity. Benevolence (*ren*) is an ethical responsibility in terms of caring for the vulnerable, tellingly defined as those without families (鳏寡孤独 *Guan Gua Gu Du*) (Dubois 2015). This is an important concept in Confucianism. A benevolent person is seen as someone who attempts to do kind deeds, act kindly and be generous (big-hearted) and giving (Low 2011). The core meaning of 'ren' is 'the love among individual persons' (Ciyuan Revision Group 1991). The foundation of 'ren' is filial piety (孝 *Xiao*), or love for one's parents, siblings and the whole family, as families can be a good source of happiness for individuals (Low 2011). The idea of virtuous humanity is a key element of benevolence and the psychological basis of clan charity. Mencius (372-289 BCE) believed that human beings are born to do good deeds with four virtues: Ren (仁), Yi (义), Li (礼), and Zhi (智), roughly corresponding to benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom (Ivanhoe 2000). Mencius believed that the psychological cause of all good deeds was human compassion (Xu and Gao 2018).

While clan charity is rooted in Confucianism, it does not represent the full scope of Confucian thoughts on philanthropy. Mencius expanded the idea of kindheartedness beyond kinship by advocating 'benevolence and love for love' (Zhou and Zeng 2007). He urged people to take pleasure in helping non-relatives who are in distress, while still emphasizing the importance of kinship as the basis for mutual aid and good deeds. This dual understanding of charity, 'from near to far' and 'from oneself to others' (Xu and Gao 2018), has become an integral part of Chinese culture and continues to shape the country's humanitarian practices.

In conclusion, the evolution of clan charity in China has been deeply influenced by changes in dynastic governance and societal structures. From its origins in the Qin Dynasty to its democratization

in the Qing Dynasty, clan charity has adapted to the shifting political and social landscape while remaining grounded in Confucian values. The expansion of clan charity beyond kinship, as advocated by Mencius, has contributed to the development of a broader understanding of philanthropy in Chinese culture. By examining the socio-political context in which clan charity evolved, we gain a deeper appreciation of its role in shaping Chinese humanitarianism and its enduring influence on contemporary philanthropic practices.[10]

The Rise of Religious Philanthropy

This historiographical exploration uncovers the profound influence of Buddhism and Taoism on the development of China's charitable ethos. The chapter delves into how these religious traditions, within their unique historical contexts, contributed to the rich mosaic of Chinese philanthropy by blending traditional Confucian ideals with Buddhist and Taoist concepts of mercy, compassion, and cosmic justice. While Confucianism provided a strong foundation of benevolence and social harmony, the influx of Buddhist and Taoist teachings added new spiritual dimensions to charitable work in China.

Buddhist Philanthropy

Buddhism, alongside Confucianism and Taoism, have deeply influenced Chinese society since ancient times. Buddhism's conception of philanthropy spread along with the religion itself during the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220AD). Because of the similarities between Buddhist teachings and traditional Confucian and folk culture, Buddhism underwent localised transformations (Ding et al. 2019, Wang 2015). This framework tended to educate and persuade people to abandon evil and do good (Zhou and Xu 2006). The most widespread Buddhist charitable practices are helping the poor, children or elders, and providing relief to disaster victims (Lin 2017). The alleviation of human suffering that is central to its doctrine has appealed to a great number of people throughout Chinese history (Laliberté et al. 2011).

Buddhist charity reached its peak in the Tang Dynasty (618-907AD), also the heyday of Buddhism in China. During this period, a fixed institution of 'doing good' was established in the monastery, the 'Beitian Sanatorium' (house of mercy). Whenever there was a disaster, for example, this fixed institution coordinated efforts to provide hot rice porridge meals for the victims, or to distribute grain. In the Tang Dynasty, the Buddhist temple was also in charge of the Futian Hospital (later known as the Beitian Hospital), a charitable institution for the care of the elderly and needy (Zhou 2015). The

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[10] Unleashing the potential of Philanthropy in China, UNDP 2015.

scope of charitable activities in Buddhist monasteries, in the period of 618-907AD, was vast, involving relief for the poor and disaster relief, medical treatment and medicine, persuading the practice of doing good among ordinary citizens, etc. (Wang 2015). The thriving of Buddhist philanthropy during this period can be seen as a result of the close connection between Buddhism and the imperial power, as well as the maturity of Buddhist doctrines and institutions in China. The decline of Buddhist charity in later dynasties, on the other hand, was influenced by the change of religious policies and the rise of other religions (Zhou and Zeng 2007).

Mercy and compassion are major elements of Buddhist doctrine. Mercy in Buddhism refers to compassion or pitying someone, but also emphasises 'pure kindness' for the sake of saving all beings, thus promoting a widely inclusive love of all lives. At the same time, an important philosophical basis of Buddhist ethics consists of overcoming suffering (*dukkha*) in both oneself and others (Harvey 2000:33). These Buddhist concepts of mercy and compassion greatly influenced the development of Chinese philanthropy, adding a spiritual dimension to the traditional Confucian ideals of benevolence and humaneness.

Taoist Philanthropy

Taoism, born in China during the Eastern Han Dynasty, also played a significant role in shaping Chinese philanthropy. Taoism emphasises the importance of personal wellbeing and stresses harmonious relationships among individuals, and between individuals and society. It promotes equality and diversity among individuals and harmony among cultures, political ideologies, and societies (Zhao 2015:127). *Taipingjing* (Scriptures of the Great Peace), a classic Taoist work, puts forward the ideal state of a World of Peace, advocates the doctrines of 'Happy Life' and 'Loving Kindness', requires kindness and love for others, and forms the concept of charity in terms of 'Happy to Support People' and 'Help the Needy'.

Taoist masters contributed to the development of Chinese medicine and medical ethics, and free medicine and medical care comprise the most common form of Taoist charity activities (Laliberté et al. 2011:142). Taoist charity advocated acts like saving people, but also initiated the practice of writing books to persuade people to do good, that is, to create an atmosphere for doing good through moral education and the development of folk charity activities (Wang 2014). This kind of instructive literature fostering compassion and philanthropy continued to be influential in later dynasties (Smith 2009:18).

The Taoist concept of cosmic justice, which emphasizes the harmony between humans and nature, as well as the idea of karmic retribution, also contributed to the development of Chinese philanthropy.

Taoism teaches that good deeds will be rewarded and evil deeds will be punished, encouraging people to engage in charitable activities to accumulate merit and ensure a favorable destiny.

While Buddhism and Taoism brought new ideas and practices to Chinese philanthropy, they did not replace the traditional Confucian values of benevolence, righteousness, and filial piety. Instead, these three philosophical and religious traditions interacted and influenced each other, creating a unique blend of philanthropic ideals and practices in China. Confucianism, with its emphasis on social harmony and the importance of fulfilling one's duties within hierarchical relationships, provided a strong foundation for the development of Chinese philanthropy. The Confucian ideal of the 'Junzi' (gentleman) as a moral exemplar who acts with benevolence and righteousness towards others, inspired many Chinese scholars and officials to engage in charitable activities. This philanthropic engagement was largely a class-related practice, with these educated elites having the means and social responsibility to contribute to large-scale charitable projects, reflecting the influence of their wealth and social status on their ability to participate in such endeavors.

Buddhism and Taoism, with their focus on compassion, mercy, and cosmic justice, added a spiritual dimension to Chinese philanthropy, encouraging people to help others not only out of a sense of duty or social obligation but also as a means of cultivating one's own spiritual growth and ensuring a favorable afterlife. Religious charities helped the poor to a certain extent by playing an important role in alleviating social contradictions and maintaining social stability in ancient China (Wang 2015:152).

The Evolution of Government Charity

Government charity was present throughout ancient China and deeply influenced by Confucianism's spirit of concern for the world (天下 *Tianxia*), people-oriented (民本 *Minben*) thought and the idea of benevolent governace (仁政 *Renzheng*)(Zhou and Lin 2014). Among these concepts, the notion of Tianxia (天下) originated in the Zhou Dynasty, emphasizing that the monarch should consider the world as his responsibility and love the people as his own children. This ideology prompted successive rulers to prioritize official charitable endeavors.

This charitable tradition gradually developed and became institutionalized throughout Chinese history. Government charity began to be organised in the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420-589AD). Granaries were built to store grain and thereby prevent famine, and institutions specialising in medical relief were created. In the Tang Dynasty, the first complete special charity organisation,

'Beitian Sanatorium' [11], was set up to provide relief for orphans and widows, and to treat sickness especially among the elderly (Wang 2015).

As time progressed, the scale and significance of government charitable endeavors continued to increase. Benevolent governance helped to stabilise the feudal ruling order and maintain feudal ethics, but official charities also aimed to alleviate social contradictions, which were particularly prominent in the Song Dynasty (960-1279AD). During this period, the rapid development of the commodity economy in the south of the country led to a serious gap between the rich and the poor. In order to solve social problems associated with urban poverty, more and more government charities were established.

Government charities developed rapidly during the Song and Yuan Dynasties. Permanent charities such as the Futian Hospital[12], the Juyang Yuan[13], the Anjifang[14], the Ciyou Ju[15], and the Yangji Yuan[16] (Sanatorium) were established. The development of government charitable institutions began by sending special officials to manage the establishment of special agencies for relief and expanded geographically from the capital to prefectures and counties. Furthermore, coverage grew from providing relief to survivors of disasters to the inclusion of socially vulnerable groups, covering medical care, old-age care, childcare and other aspects, as well as charitable relief networks for a range of vulnerable people, including widows, orphans, disabled people, women and children. By the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912AD), a relatively complete system of official charitable relief agencies had been established (Ibid.). However, in the late Qing Dynasty, due to the lack of financial resources, the government could not deal with charitable relief affairs and withdrew from its dominant position in charitable relief, giving way for the emergence of private or civil charities.

The Emergence of Civil Charity

The emergence of civil charities in the late Ming and early Qing Dynasties represents a pivotal shift in the landscape of Chinese philanthropy. The late Ming ushered in a period of. Heightened nonstate philanthropic activities, which developed new forms and took on new roles in Chinese history (Wang

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[11] Beitian Sanatorium' is a medical relief charity that is either independently built and operated by monks, or supervised by the government, and operated by the specific abbots of monasteries.

[12] Futian Yuan was the earliest shelter in the Song Dynasty. Originally, it was a place to provide wandering beggars with shelter, food and medical attention. Futian Yuan could accommodate 300 people at a time, and the expenses were paid by the central government. See Zhang, W. and Lu, Y. (2011). Official Medical Relief in the Song Dynasty. Economic and Social History Review. (1), 45-55.

[13] Juyang Yuan rose in the middle of the Northern Song Dynasty, and its software and hardware facilities reached the peak of Chinese history. The scope of asylum extended from beggars to widows, oligarchs and the poor. Juyang Yuan provided not only food, but also cooks, nursing mothers for babies, and nannies for the elderly. Juyang Yuan were financed through taxes.

[14] Anji Fang, a charitable hospital run by Buddhist monks, combined the functions of Juyang Yuans and free hospitals to provide free medical care and food supplies. The financial requirements of Anji Fang were shared between central and local government treasuries.

[15] Ciyou Ju is the government's place of adoption and relief for abandoned infants and young children.

[16] Yangji Yuan is a welfare agency for the poor and sick. See Zhang, W. and Lu, Y. (2011). Official Medical Relief in the Song Dynasty. Economic and Social History Review. (1), 45-55.

2009). This section examines how socioeconomic upheavals, increased merchant wealth, and the weakening of imperial control catalyzed the growth of civil charity initiatives, marking a transition towards more diversified and grassroots forms of humanitarian aid. It delves into the ideological undercurrents that motivated this shift, highlighting how civil charity's rise reflected broader societal movements towards autonomy and the reconfiguration of public and private roles in philanthropy.

The late Ming and early Qing Dynasties witnessed the rise of civil charities, sponsored and administered by the populace rather than the government or religious institutions (Liu et al. 2017). This development can be attributed to several factors, including economic growth in the late Ming period, which prompted an increasing willingness among philanthropists to engage in charitable activities. The extraordinary accumulation of wealth and the widening gap between rich and poor facilitated philanthropy. At the same time, increasing literacy and the flourishing print culture made the necessary knowledge, particularly medical knowledge, available in an unprecedented way and facilitated the dissemination of morality literature that promoted the value of charitable acts (Janku 2010).

Societal stratification resulting from economic development, together with improved literacy, led to the emergence of groups of philanthropists, dominated by such new forces as gentry merchants, businessmen and new knowledge groups. These groups were motivated by various factors, including the desire to display their moral integrity and validate their social status through philanthropic activities (Smith 2009). Additionally, the weakening of imperial control, particularly during the late Ming Dynasty, created a vacuum in governance capacity, which civil charity initiatives sought to fill by responding to societal needs, especially in times of natural disasters (Levy et al. 2020).

Charities in Ming times took two basic forms: one-off events such as fundraising events for relief, and institutionalised charity organisations with fixed addresses and permanent employees. The two forms were often combined (Ibid.). Charity organisations often owned real estate and used the rental income for charitable activities (Zhou and Xu 2006:192). Among the different forms of organisations, the Tongshanhui[17] (同善会), the Shanhui (善会) and various other organisations that supported widows, orphaned children and other vulnerable groups and that provided medicine for the poor or relief for disaster victims, were common in Ming times. Smith (2009:248) points out that the late Ming charity endeavours shared a common rhetoric of 'the importance of doing good, the just distribution of resources, and the urgency of saving lives.'

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[17] Tongshan Hui, which was established at the end of the Ming dynasty.

As noted, the rise of civil charity in the late Ming and early Qing Dynasties reflected broader societal movements towards autonomy and the reconfiguration of public and private roles in philanthropy. The organisations and forms of activities developed further from the Ming to the Qing Dynasty, with a certain degree of increased institutionalisation. This development can be attributed to two main factors: firstly, the expansion of the merchant class and their growing recognition of the social and reputational benefits of participating in public affairs, which could enhance their status and influence in society; and secondly, the increasing number of poor people and the growing frequency of natural and man-made disasters (Peng et al. 2010). Relief in the Qing Dynasty took two forms: Shanhui (善会) and Shantang[18] (善堂). Both were set up mainly by the local gentry, such as Yangjiyuan[19] for the widowed, orphaned and disabled, nurseries for abandoned babies, and drugstores for the poor. The other one is the 'She storehouse' and 'Yi storehouse' which were used to store grain, run by civil society but assisted by the government, to store grain and set up porridge factories to help the people in times of famine.

Summary

The four charitable models – clan, religious, government, and civil – formed the bedrock of ancient Chinese philanthropy, each reflecting the unique sociopolitical circumstances of its time while sharing the common goal of alleviating suffering and maintaining social stability. Clan charity, rooted in Confucianism, fostered mutual support within kinship networks. Religious philanthropy, inspired by Buddhism and Taoism, infused charitable acts with spiritual meaning and expanded the scope of giving. Government charity, guided by Confucian principles of benevolent governance, sought to address social issues and preserve political order. The rise of civil charity in the late Ming and early Qing periods signaled a shift towards more autonomous and diverse forms of philanthropy, driven by socioeconomic changes and a weakening of imperial control.

These indigenous traditions laid the groundwork for modern Chinese humanitarianism, but their limitations became increasingly evident as China's engagement with the West intensified from the mid-19th century onwards. Understanding the interplay and evolution of these charitable models offers valuable insights for navigating the complexities of contemporary philanthropy in China, as the nation seeks to balance its rich cultural heritage with the demands of an increasingly globalized world.

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[18] Shanhui and Shantang, translated into English as 'benevolent society' or 'philanthropic association', or literally 'charity hall', is a group of Chinese organisations that focuses on charity.
[19] Yangjiyuan, one of Shanhui and Shangtang organisations focus on the widowed, orphaned and disabled, nurseries for abandoned babies, and pharmacies for the poor.

Impacts of Western Influence Since 19 Century

The incursion of Western humanitarian ideals into China in the 19th century represents a critical juncture in the historiography of Chinese philanthropy, prompting a reevaluation and gradual transformation of traditional charitable practices. This section critically analyzes how the collision and amalgamation of Western and Chinese philanthropic ideologies catalyzed the evolution of humanitarian institutions in China, examining the socio-political ramifications of this encounter and the adaptive responses of Chinese society. Through a historical perspective, I explore the complexities of integrating Western humanitarian models with indigenous philanthropic traditions, focusing on the ways in which these different approaches articulated with each other in specific contexts.

The 19th century marked an important turning point in the evolution of Chinese humanitarianism, as China began to encounter and absorb Western humanitarian thoughts and practices. To contextualize China's encounter with Western humanitarian thoughts, this analysis begins by tracing the origins and dissemination of Western humanitarianism itself. This historical overview not only elucidates the ideological foundations that missionaries and colonial powers brought to China but also highlights the diverse motivations, participants, and ideological tensions that have shaped the Western humanitarian movement. Understanding this complex genealogy is crucial for appreciating the multifaceted nature of China's engagement with humanitarian discourses, as well as the processes of adaptation and indigenization that unfolded.

This section explores the complex process of interaction between Chinese indigenous charitable traditions and Western humanitarian thoughts, tracing the gradual shift of Chinese humanitarian efforts from traditional relief-oriented charity to an integrated aid model that incorporates elements such as education, vocational training, and development assistance. By examining the establishment and evolution of key humanitarian organisations such as the Red Cross Society of China, the China International Disaster Relief Committee, the China Relief Association, and the World Red Swastika Society, this section highlights the unique synthesis of Chinese and Western humanitarian ideas that emerged during this period, as well as the tensions and challenges triggered by this cross-cultural exchange.

For example, the formation of the CIFRC in 1921 (see details in later sub-section) demonstrates how Chinese and Western approaches to disaster relief articulated in practice. The CIFRC combined Western scientific methods of famine prediction and prevention with Chinese local knowledge and networks, resulting in a more effective approach to disaster management. This case illustrates how different humanitarian traditions did not simply collide, but rather engaged in a process of mutual adaptation and learning.

The Evolution and Dissemination of Western Humanitarianism

The history of Western humanitarianism is a complex and multifaceted narrative, shaped by religious, secular, political, and economic influences over centuries. This overview will trace the evolution of key philosophical and institutional developments, as well as the entanglement of humanitarian efforts with colonial and imperial projects. It will also explore contemporary critiques and debates surrounding the ideological foundations and practices of Western humanitarianism, critically examining the interplay between religious, secular, political, and economic factors in shaping these narratives.

Religious Roots and Secular Humanitarianism

The roots of Western humanitarianism can be traced back to the Enlightenment era, where the ideas of human rights, equality, and the alleviation of suffering gained prominence (Barnett 2011). This period marked a significant shift in how people perceived their moral obligations towards others, both within and beyond their immediate communities. The works of philosophers such as John Locke and Immanuel Kant, who emphasized the inherent dignity and rights of all human beings, laid the foundation for the development of humanitarian thought (Lauren 2011).

However, the motivations behind humanitarian efforts have been diverse and multifaceted. Religious organisations, particularly Christian missionaries, played a significant role in early humanitarian efforts (Barnett 2011). Driven by a belief in the universal brotherhood of mankind and a desire to spread their faith, these missionaries often combined humanitarian aid with proselytization (Stamatov 2013). The Great Famine in Ireland (1845-1852) and the Indian Famine of 1876-1878 saw significant involvement from religious organisations in relief efforts beyond their own borders (Kinealy 2013, Brewis 2014).

Simultaneously, humanitarian traditions rooted in different philosophical and religious frameworks also flourished in various parts of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, sometimes intersecting and cross-pollinating with Western approaches. In China, for example, the Confucian tradition has long emphasized the importance of benevolence, compassion, and the duty of those in power to care for the welfare of the people, which has been mentioned before. Similarly, Buddhism, which spread from India to China and other parts of East Asia, teaches the value of compassion and the imperative to alleviate suffering. These indigenous humanitarian traditions have not developed in isolation from Western influences, however. The arrival of Christian missionaries in China in the 19th century, for example, brought new ideas about charity, social welfare, and the provision of aid to the needy. Missionaries established schools, hospitals, and orphanages, often combining their proselytizing

efforts with the delivery of social services. These activities had a significant impact on the development of modern humanitarian practices in China, which will be elaborated in detail in later section.

On the other hand, secular humanitarianism emerged in the West in the late 19th century, emphasizing the importance of human rights and the alleviation of suffering without religious overtones (Calhoun 2008). The founding of the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1863 and the signing of the Geneva Convention in 1864 marked important milestones in the development of secular humanitarian principles (Forsythe 2005). The works of Henry Dunant, who advocated for the humane treatment of wounded soldiers and the creation of neutral aid societies, exemplified this shift towards a more secular approach to humanitarianism (Dunant 1862).

Imperial Humanitarianism and its Critiques

The late 19th century also marked an important period in Western humanitarian history, including the era of 'Imperial Humanitarianism' which occurred during the peak of European colonialism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Skinner and Lester 2012). This period was marked by the complex entanglements between humanitarian efforts and the violence of colonial and imperial projects of Western powers, particularly across the British Empire. As Lester and Dussart (2014) argue in their influential work *'Colonization and the Origins of Humanitarian Governance'*, the origins of modern humanitarianism are deeply rooted in the colonial encounter, with humanitarian discourses and practices often being used to justify colonial interventions and assert moral superiority over colonized peoples.

The historiography of imperial humanitarianism has revealed how humanitarian sentiments and practices were often mobilized to legitimize and support imperial projects, from the 'civilizing mission' of European colonialism to military interventions in the Global South (Fassin 2011). Scholars have examined specific cases of imperial humanitarianism, such as the Congo Reform Association's campaign against abuses in King Leopold II's Congo Free State (Grant 2005), and the British and American humanitarian responses to the Armenian Genocide (Watenpaugh 2015). These studies highlight the ways in which humanitarian concerns were intertwined with imperial interests and how humanitarian discourses could be used to justify colonial violence and exploitation.

However, the relationship between humanitarianism and imperialism is not straightforward. As Michael Barnett (2011) argues in 'Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism', the history of humanitarianism is characterized by both complicity with and resistance to imperial power. While some humanitarian efforts were deeply implicated in colonial projects, others challenged imperial

abuses and advocated for the rights of colonized peoples. Barnett suggests that humanitarianism has always been shaped by the political, economic, and cultural contexts in which it operates, navigating the tensions between its moral imperatives and the realities of power and inequality.

Being shaped by political, economic and cultural factors, colonial powers often used humanitarianism as a tool to justify their presence in foreign lands and to spread their influence (Lester and Dussart 2014). The Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, which laid the groundwork for the colonization of Africa, was in part justified by the notion of the 'civilizing mission' and the need to protect and uplift the 'backward' peoples of the continent (Klose 2013). Similarly, the United States' involvement in humanitarian efforts in the early 20th century, such as the relief efforts following the 1917 East Africa famine, was often tied to its growing global influence and desire to project soft power (Rosenberg 2013).

The Cold War era further complicated the landscape of Western humanitarianism, as aid efforts often became entangled with geopolitical interests and ideological battles (Barnett 2011). The United States and the Soviet Union both used humanitarian aid as a tool to win hearts and minds in the developing world (Westad 2005). The rise of neoliberalism in the late 20th century also had significant implications for humanitarian efforts, as the emphasis on market-driven solutions and the privatization of aid delivery reshaped the sector (Chimni 2000).

In recent decades, the increasing influence of media and public opinion on humanitarian efforts has also become a significant factor. The 'CNN effect', which refers to the impact of media coverage on public and political responses to humanitarian crises, has both driven and complicated aid efforts (Robinson 2002). The Ethiopian famine of 1984-1985, for example, received significant media attention, leading to an outpouring of public support and donations (Franks 2014). However, the media's focus on certain crises over others has also led to accusations of selectivity and bias in humanitarian responses (Hawkins 2008).

Closely related to media influence is the phenomenon of 'celebrity humanitarianism', which has become increasingly prominent in recent decades. Scholars like Lisa Richey have critically examined how celebrities engage with humanitarian causes, often amplifying awareness but also potentially oversimplifying complex issues (Richey and Ponte 2011). This celebrity involvement has reshaped public engagement with humanitarian efforts, sometimes leading to increased donations and visibility for certain causes, but also raising questions about the authenticity and long-term impact of such interventions (Richey 2016).

The rise of social media has further amplified the impact of public opinion on humanitarian efforts. The Arab Spring in 2010-2011 and the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015 saw significant mobilization of

support and resources through social media platforms (Wolfsfeld et al. 2013, Barisione et al. 2019). However, the rapid spread of information through social media has also led to concerns about the accuracy and reliability of information, as well as the potential for 'clicktivism' to replace more substantive forms of humanitarian engagement (Chouliaraki 2013).

The ideological foundations of Western humanitarianism have also been the subject of much debate and critique. Some scholars have argued that humanitarian efforts are rooted in Western liberal values and assumptions, which may not always align with the needs and perspectives of those receiving aid (Fassin 2011). The emphasis on individual rights and freedoms, for example, may not always translate well to contexts where communal values and obligations are prioritized (Ager and Ager 2011). Others have criticized the paternalistic and neo-colonial undertones of some humanitarian efforts, arguing that they perpetuate power imbalances and dependencies between aid providers and recipients (Escobar 2011). The tendency of humanitarian organisations to prioritize immediate relief over long-term development and structural change has also been called into question (Rieff 2003). Critics argue that this approach can create a 'humanitarian trap', where aid becomes a substitute for political action and systemic reform (Barnett 2011).

The professionalization and institutionalization of humanitarianism in the 20th century have also raised concerns about the accountability and effectiveness of aid efforts. The creation of large, bureaucratic aid organisations has led to questions about the efficiency and responsiveness of humanitarian efforts (Barnett 2011). The need to maintain neutrality and impartiality in complex political environments has also proved challenging for many organisations (Leader 2000).

In recent years, there has been a growing push for more locally-driven and participatory approaches to humanitarian aid. The concept of 'localization', which emphasizes the importance of working with and through local actors, has gained traction in the humanitarian sector (Van Brabant and Patel 2018). This shift reflects a recognition of the need to move away from top-down, externally-driven interventions and towards more context-specific and culturally-sensitive approaches (Slim 2015). However, the localization agenda also faces significant challenges, including issues of capacity, funding, and power dynamics between international and local actors (Roepstorff 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted the importance of local responses to humanitarian crises, as travel restrictions and lockdowns limited the ability of international aid workers to operate on the ground (Barbelet et al. 2020).

In conclusion, the motivations, participants, and ideological foundations of Western humanitarianism are diverse and multifaceted, shaped by a complex interplay of religious, secular, political, and economic factors. While humanitarian efforts have undoubtedly saved countless lives

and alleviated immense suffering, they have also been shaped by colonial legacies, geopolitical interests, and changing media landscapes. The ongoing debates and critiques surrounding Western humanitarianism underscore the need for continued reflection, reform, and adaptation within the humanitarian sector.

The Evolution of Humanitarianism in China: From Indigenous Philanthropy to Western Influences (19th-20th Centuries)

The evolution of Chinese humanitarianism was driven by the complex interplay between indigenous philanthropic traditions and the influx of Western ideologies brought by missionaries, colonial powers, and progressive intellectuals. This interaction catalyzed a gradual shift from traditional relief-oriented charity towards a more comprehensive approach that integrated education, vocational training, and developmental aid. Examining the processes of adaptation and mutual influence that unfolded as Chinese society grappled with these new ideas and practices is crucial for understanding this transformative period.

In the 19th century, the Western colonial presence in China and the ensuing Opium Wars exposed China to modern humanitarian concepts, which challenged the traditional Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist notions of philanthropy. This encounter between local and foreign ideologies led to a gradual transformation, manifested in the selective adoption of Western relief methods. For example, the introduction of vocational education and self-reliance for aid recipients.

The late 19th and early 20th centuries marked a pivotal period, as domestic upheavals, frequent natural disasters, and growing nationalist sentiments converged with the continued proliferation of Western humanitarian thought. This confluence of factors gave rise to a new generation of Chinese humanitarian organisations that sought to integrate traditional values with modern practices, exemplified by the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) and the China International Disaster Relief Committee (CIFRC). These organisations, shaped by Sino-Western cooperation, not only adopted Western relief methodologies but also adapted them to the local context, retaining elements of traditional philanthropic ideals. For instance, the RCSC's early emphasis on 'accumulating virtues by doing good deeds' resonated with Confucian ethics while aligning with the humanitarian spirit of the International Red Cross.

The proliferation of homegrown organisations like the Chinese Jishenghui and the World Red Swastika Society (WRSS) further exemplified this synthesis of traditional and modern humanitarian thoughts. These groups extended their relief efforts beyond geographical boundaries while maintaining a strong emphasis on both Buddhist principles and nationalistic motivations, reflecting

the complex interplay between universal humanitarian values and local cultural identities (see details in later sub-sections).

However, as the 20th century progressed, the dynamic interplay between Chinese and Western humanitarian ideals underwent another significant shift. The rise of the Chinese Communist Party and the subsequent establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 led to a centralization of disaster relief efforts under state control, marginalizing the role of independent humanitarian NGOs. This shift was driven by the regime's desire to assert national sovereignty and legitimacy, as well as ideological concerns over the perceived interference of foreign-funded organisations. The Chinese Liberated Areas Relief Federation, under the direct leadership of the CCP, became the dominant force in disaster relief, effectively curtailing the development of autonomous humanitarian NGOs.

Throughout these phases, the trajectory of Chinese humanitarianism was shaped by a complex web of socio-political events, intellectual currents, and the process of adapting and integrating traditional cultural values with the influx of global humanitarian discourse. This process involved both direct interactions, such as the establishment of Sino-Western cooperative organisations like the RCSC and CIFRC, and more subtle forms of influence, as seen in the way homegrown organisations like the WRSS combined Buddhist teachings with modern relief techniques. The drivers of change included not only the direct influence of Western ideologies but also domestic upheavals, nationalist movements, and shifting power dynamics within China.

Western Influence on Chinese Philanthropy

As mentioned earlier, after the Opium War in 1840, various Western powers, including Britain, France, and the United States, established their presence in China. These diverse groups of Westerners brought their culture to China, including their notions of philanthropy. Chinese philanthropy manifested new features with the influence of Western ideologies which was spread primarily via missionaries, foreign newspapers and intellectuals who had studied abroad and returned with new ideas.

However, it is important to note that China did not simply adopt Western humanitarian ideas wholesale. Instead, the process of integrating these new concepts with traditional Chinese philanthropy was characterized by a selective and adaptive approach. This approach reflected the Chinese cultural principle of 'harmony without uniformity' (*和而不同*, he er bu tong), where different ideas could coexist and blend without losing their distinct characteristics. As a result, Chinese intellectuals and philanthropists sought to find points of convergence between Western and Chinese philanthropic traditions, creating a unique synthesis.

These progressive intellectuals found that the relief agencies in Europe and the United States provided food, clothing, housing and transportation services, and also attached importance to the teaching of vocational education. They recognised that simple relief can only provide the recipient with food and clothing for a while, and that education and relief can be sustained for life (Ren 2007). Thus, education was added to the spectrum of charity activities to aid the poor in a more positive way, functioning like a cure rather than a palliative for chronic social problems, and becoming more oriented to the needs of the beneficiary (Liu and Zhang 2017). For example, beggars were sheltered and equipped with the necessary skills to support themselves, instead of merely receiving alms (Ibid.). Feng Guifen, a famous reformist in the late Qing Dynasty, strongly advocated the adoption of child-rearing laws similar to those of Holland and Sweden, which gave aid to the disabled and education to the youth (Ding and Wang 2019). Jing Yuanshan, a famous merchant and philanthropist at the end of the Qing Dynasty, combined Western relief ideas with his humanitarian practices, advocating that it was better to save people in the emergency than to save the poor. Additionally, he attached great importance to the improvement and cultivation of autonomy for recipients (Chen 2007). He launched a temporary donation after the He Nan famine in 1877 (Wang 2015), and helped to establish the Shanghai Society Relief Office to carry out large-scale relief activities one year later.

Influenced by the West, coupled with the declining rule of the Qing government (1644-1912), internal and external troubles, years of war, and the large number of unemployed vagrants threatened social stability. The functions of Shanhui, Shantang and other private charities also changed. Firstly, the Shantang was a non-governmental organisation (NGO) composed of officials, the gentry and businessmen. It went beyond the geographical and clan boundaries of the traditional Shantang as it extended operations to include support for unemployed vagrants, including opium addicts, women who commit crimes, prostitutes, insane people, and people who were wounded in war (Huang and Ma 2008). Secondly, the Shanhui and Shantang no longer focused solely on food and clothing for recipients, but also on teaching skills that would enable recipients to be self-reliant. By this time, traditional Chinese charitable philosophies and practices had evolved from 'aid relief' to 'aid and development relief'. By the late Qing Dynasty, Shanhui and Shantang had the characteristics of modern Western charitable organisations (Yang 2010).

From the mid-19th Century onwards, the spread of Western church charities led to a change of charity ideals in China. At the same time, the growth of relief work in China stimulated the development of local relief by Western church charities. China's first large-scale international charities took form during the decade between the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), as Dubbers (2011) notes. For example, the RCSC, founded in 1904,

was inspired by the rescue work of the Japanese Red Cross Society, during the Sino-Japanese War. The RCSC can be considered the first international humanitarian NGO in Chinese history. If this was the starting point of Sino-Western *medical cooperative relief*, then the CIFRC, established in 1922, is the best example of Sino-Western *cooperative disaster relief*. The Qing government became increasingly incapable of providing relief in the face of a growing frequency of natural disasters. In 1905, it implemented a policy of local self-government, which handed over the responsibility for disaster relief to the local society. It is in this context that the CIFRC was established (Yangku 2013).

The RCSC and the CIFRC are Chinese organisations modelled on Sino-Western cooperation. Their establishments confirm the spread and development of Western humanitarian ideas in China. In addition, China produced localised humanitarian organisations such as 'Chinese Jishenghui', in 1917, and the WRSS in 1922. These are modelled on traditional charitable organisations and carry out humanitarian relief activities throughout the country and even globally. Their emergence confirms that the integration of traditional Chinese philanthropic thinking and Western humanitarian thoughts has generated the concept of humanitarian assistance and aid practice with Chinese characteristics. The aid models of these two organisations are closer to the vast majority of Chinese HDOs today. The above-mentioned four key organisations are outlined below.

Key Chinese Humanitarian NGOs

Red Cross Society of China

The establishment of the Red Cross Society of China in 1904 marked a pivotal integration of Chinese philanthropic traditions and Western humanitarian ideologies. While inspired by the neutrality and universality espoused by the Red Cross Movement, the RCSC's initial framing of 'accumulating virtues by doing good deeds' reflected a deliberate attempt to align the new organisation with deep-rooted Confucian principles. This linkage to traditional values facilitated local acceptance and participation, enabling the successful integration of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)'s humanitarian culture within the Chinese context.

The encounter and synthesis of these charitable cultures manifested in several key events. Externally, Chinese philanthropists witnessed firsthand the perceived neutrality of the Japanese Red Cross Society during the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, impartially rescuing victims regardless of nationality or geography (Zhou 2000). Internally, when the Russo-Japanese War broke out in 1904 affecting China's northeastern provinces, they studied the ICRC's guidelines with the aim of establishing a relief organisation for refugees (Zhou and Zeng 2007).

On March 3, 1904, a group of 24 led by Shen Dunhe, Shi Zexing, Ren Xifen and Zeng Zhu founded the Red Cross Charity of Three Provinces in Northeast China in Shanghai's British Concession (Zhou 2000). However, this body was not recognized by the ICRC due to the inclusion of 'Charity' in its name, contradicting ICRC principles, as well as China's non-accession to the Geneva Convention, hindering its relief efforts (Zhou and Zeng 2007). To overcome this, Shen Dunhe collaborated with British missionary Timothy Richard to establish the Shanghai Cosmopolitan Red Cross under joint Chinese-foreign sponsorship, gaining recognition for its 'national' and 'international' character (Yang and Zhou 2006). This new society swiftly raised funds, playing a vital role in assisting those affected by the Russo-Japanese War (Zhou 2000).

The Shanghai Cosmopolitan Red Cross was disbanded after the Russo-Japanese War, but it became the model for the RCSC, which in 1908 began to build hospitals and schools, train medical personnel, carry out medical donations and disease treatment, and perform other charitable activities. In 1911, the Chinese Red Cross Society set up the Universal Board of Directors, adopting the board system, with Shen Dunhe and the Englishman Sue Marley as general directors. Sino-Western cooperation helped the RCSC to run smoothly and enabled it to play a central relief role in the Revolution of 1911 (Zhou and Zeng 2007). After the outbreak of the Xinhai Revolution in 1911, the Chinese Red Cross sent ambulance medical teams to Wuhan, Nanjing and other places to carry out humanitarian rescue. It was also during this period that the Chinese Red Cross Society flourished, with 65 branches and more than 30 branch hospitals established throughout the country (Chi 2004).

Over time, as China grappled with the devastation of wars and conflicts, the RCSC's understanding of humanitarianism evolved. The wartime imperative of protecting aid workers superseded the traditional emphasis on personal virtue, reflecting a pragmatic adaptation to changing circumstances. Simultaneously, the RCSC increasingly emphasized a sense of public responsibility and justice, gradually aligning its mission with the universalist principles of the international humanitarian movement. This evolutionary process, as highlighted through a historiographical lens, entailed both incorporation and preservation. The RCSC actively sought to identify and highlight similarities between the RCSC's humanitarian culture and Chinese charitable traditions. For this reason, the RCSC was endowed with the meaning of 'accumulating virtues by doing good deeds' and then gradually shaped into a charitable organisation that can 'accumulate good deeds and cultivate virtue' (Du 1942:7). Although this notion is different from the humanitarian purpose of ICRC's culture, it aroused the enthusiasm of local people to participate in RCSC activities at that time, thereby facilitating the successful integration of ICRC's culture into China. However, the inability to guarantee aid worker safety during wartime, for instance, made the traditional notion of personal

virtue inapplicable, necessitating an adaptation toward a responsibility and service-based rationale (Yang 1948).

Ultimately, while the RCSC gained a foothold by finding common ground with international humanitarian norms, it also preserved local variations, promoting an integration of cultures (Guo 2020). The RCSC's establishment exemplified both the challenges and pragmatic pathways for integrating external humanitarian ideologies within a locale's existing socio-cultural fabric. Its ability to evolve in alignment with the Red Cross Movement's universalist principles, while retaining core elements of China's philanthropic heritage, enabled its critical humanitarian role during major conflicts and its institutional longevity as an indigenized yet globally recognized Red Cross society.

The China International Famine Relief Commission (CIFRC)

The China International Famine Relief Commission was a professional disaster relief organisation jointly organized by missionaries and emerging forces (including businessmen, industrialists, new intellectuals, etc.) in Chinese society. It was established in the 1920s and disbanded in the late 1940s. The CIFRC's establishment marked a milestone in the development of Sino-Western cooperative relief efforts. It was driven by the escalating frequency of natural disasters that overwhelmed the Qing government's capacity to respond effectively. The diverse array of foreign missionaries and emerging Chinese social forces that coalesced around this initiative catalyzed a cross-cultural exchange of ideas and practices. This exposed Chinese philanthropists to novel Western concepts such as disaster prevention, welfare-to-work programs, and professionalized relief operations.

At the same time, Western actors also gained valuable insights from this cross-cultural exchange. For instance, the CIFRC's work led to a greater appreciation among Western relief workers of the importance of local knowledge and cultural sensitivity in disaster response. As noted by Janku (2012), Western members of the CIFRC learned to adapt their scientific approaches to famine prevention to better suit the Chinese context, incorporating local agricultural practices and social structures into their relief strategies.

The CIFRC originated in 1920 as an international relief campaign against severe drought in Hebei, Shandong, Shanxi, Shaanxi and Henan provinces. Never before had so many people been affected in so many places and attended to by so many organisations. According to a report published in the aftermath of the disaster, more than 800 foreigners, including at least 650 missionaries, came from the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Canada, Russia, Austria, Scandinavia, Norway, Denmark, and Finland. This was the first time a large number of foreign missionaries participated in disaster relief work in China and, in the process of disaster relief, had in-depth exchanges with China's

emerging forces on disaster relief methods and concepts. Christian missionaries advocated the ideas of disaster prevention, welfare-to-work, and so on. All these encounters provided a cognitive basis for cooperation between China and the West (Cai 2003). However, these activities also exposed many shortcomings of the diverse disaster relief organisations, such as fragmentation, lack of rules and regulations, lack of contact, weak professionalism, and so on. As a result, all sides realised the importance of establishing a permanent and professional disaster relief organisation (Cai 2009). They first merged and restructured their organisations, then organised themselves according to region, and finally integrated themselves into a nationwide agency dedicated to serving domestic and international disaster victims (Cai 2003).

The CIFRC was comprised mostly of traditional relief organisations, but remarkable progress was made subsequently in the scale of mobilisation, organisational structure, disaster relief mechanisms and other aspects (Ibid.). In disaster relief, the CIFRC had something in common with traditional Chinese charities. When a disaster occurred, the priority was to save lives. But the difference is that the CIFRC attached great importance to disaster prevention by building infrastructure. In 1920, the American Red Cross was the first to adopt the principle of 'welfare-to-work' in disaster relief. After the disaster relief method was seen to be effective, the CIFRC regarded it as the best and most scientific approach to disaster relief.

The unprecedented development of the CIFRC can be said to have been the highest peak in terms of NGO participation in relief activities in modern times. In addition, it changed the age-old perception that only governments had the resources needed for effective disaster relief by demonstrating the ability of NGOs to lead disaster relief activities (Cai 2003). However, in 1928, shortly after the establishment of the National Government at Nanjing, a government relief office was set up to formulate and promulgate disaster relief policies, followed by the establishment of an official relief committee in 1930, responsible for refugees from natural disaster and civil war areas, as well as for other matters of relief for migrants. The State reassumed responsibility for disaster relief, ensuring that relief work returned to the realm of State administration (Yangku 2013).

The nationalist government's move was linked to China's long-standing desire for independence and a growing sense of national self-determination. In the field of famine relief, the issue of national self-determination was particularly important because of its close relationship to political legitimacy (Yangku 2013:18). As one example, during the period of international cooperation in disaster relief in the 1920s, the American Red Cross pointed out in its report on the famine investigation in China, that '[t]he famine in China was caused by the irresponsibility of the government.' (Ibid.). This kind of criticism was viewed as a direct challenge to the political legitimacy of the National Government

by the National Government itself. Therefore, the National Government reconstructed and reassumed national authority and responsibility over relief efforts.

At the time, the CIFRC, led by Xu Shiying, made clear that the time had passed for international organisations such as China International Famine Relief Commission to take the lead in China's disaster relief. When asked in 1930 whether they should cooperate with foreign charities, Xu explicitly said that it was up to the Chinese government to decide how and how much to cooperate. A flood of the Yangtze River in 1931 opened up the era in which the National Government led the relief work. It not only set up the national relief and flood committee but also carried out large-scale relief activities and built large-scale water conservancy projects (Cai 2003). Although the state directed disaster relief activities after 1928, NGOs had a flexibility that enabled them to play valuable subsidiary roles. When the Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937 and generated a large number of displaced people, the CIFRC made a quick adjustment from disaster prevention/relief to refugee relief and established the Shanghai International Committee of the RCSC (hereinafter referred to as the 'Shanghai International Red Cross') together with the American Chinese Disaster Relief Association and the American Red Cross Society (Ibid.).

This tension between the pursuit of international cooperation and the preservation of national autonomy proved to be a defining dynamic that shaped the CIFRC's evolutionary trajectory and eventual marginalization, reflecting the deeper ideological contestations underpinning China's complex engagement with global humanitarian movements during this period. After the outbreak of the Pacific War (7 December 1941 to 15 August 1945), because of its long-term funding from the United States, the increasingly influential Chinese Communist Party considered the CIFRC to be an unwelcome interference in Chinese politics, one that hindered the establishment and consolidation of a Communist regime. Thus, the CIFRC was marginalised. After this, the Chinese Liberated Areas Relief Association (established in April 1946), under the direct leadership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), came to dominate and lead disaster relief work in liberated areas. In 1949, the CIFRC, the largest humanitarian NGO in modern China, which had been active for nearly 30 years, came to an end (Ibid.).

The CIFRC marked an unprecedented collaboration between foreign missionaries and emerging Chinese social forces to professionalize disaster relief through novel concepts like disaster prevention and welfare-to-work programs. However, its reliance on international leadership and funding increasingly challenged the nationalist government's sovereignty after 1928, leading to the state's reassertion of control over relief efforts. Though NGOs like the CIFRC retained flexibility to aid refugees during conflicts, its marginalization after 1941 by the rising Communist Party, wary of

foreign interference, signalled a new era of humanitarian efforts under firm domestic political authority. The CIFRC's trajectory encapsulated China's enduring struggle to balance the benefits of international cooperation against jealous guarding of national autonomy – an ideological tension that continues to shape China's engagement with global humanitarian movements.

The Chinese Jishenghui and the World Red Swastika Society

The Chinese Jishenghui and the World Red Swastika Society (WRSS) represent unique amalgamations of traditional Buddhist philanthropy and modern humanitarian principles. Unlike the CIFRC's Western-influenced trajectory, both organisations were entirely home-grown, home-staffed and home-financed, remaining firmly rooted in cultural narratives of spiritual salvation, yet simultaneously innovatively adopting Western relief approaches. Emerging as extensions of traditional Chinese charitable organisations, the Jishenghui and WRSS integrated indigenous philanthropic thoughts and practices with Western humanitarian concepts. Their participation in international relief reflected a common origin that viewed aid as a form of salvation. This echoed traditional societal values of compassion and benevolence, while reframing 'saving the world' through a nationalistic lens of self-determination. Crucially, their international humanitarian efforts were also inextricably intertwined with nationalistic aspirations to assert China's humanitarian prowess on the global stage vis-à-vis Western counterparts. This intricate interplay between universal humanitarianism and cultural nationalism characterized the era.

Founded in 1917, **the Chinese Jishenghui** (*中国济生会*) is a relatively pure Buddhist organisation. In addition to traditional charity activities, it pursues activities under a new conceptualisation of 'relief' that is manifested in three aspects. First, it integrates traditional charity with humanitarian assistance activities. In normal times, the Chinese Jishenghui carries out ordinary charity undertakings such as delivering medicines, donating medicines, resettling the elderly, and caring for widows. After a disaster occurs, it sends special personnel to the disaster area to assess the situation, and most relief takes the form of loans, grain and coats. In addition, they have opened many porridge factories and shelters for children affected by disasters throughout the country to provide relief to the victims. During wars, the Chinese Jishenghui sends White Cross ambulance teams (created to distinguish them from the Red Cross) to help the wounded and refugees. Second, they have broken through the traditional geographical restrictions, extending disaster relief across more than a dozen provinces. Third, Jishenghui relief activities are not limited to the distribution of materials and the rescue of people, but also include the establishment of charitable educational undertakings like primary schools and infrastructural undertakings such as land reclamation, embankment construction and river

dredging. These long-term efforts are intended to improve cultural skills and economic development capacity, and ultimately to solve livelihood problems (Bai 2007).

The Chinese Jishenghui also maintained certain traditional aspects in its approach to disaster relief, particularly in its emphasis on spiritual rewards for charitable acts. This concept, deeply rooted in Chinese Buddhist traditions, was seen as a motivating factor for donors and volunteers. In 1919, Wang Zhen, the president of the Chinese Jishenghui, suggested that the organisation had succeeded so well after just two years because 'people … like to do good deeds in various places. [E]very time they see the suffering of sentient beings, they are happy to lose their ambitions, save hunger and drown, and enhance their happiness in the future.'

Furthermore, Wang Zhen viewed the Chinese Jishenghui's disaster relief activities as a means to support and strengthen the government, thereby linking humanitarian activities to the welfare of the nation-state. This approach reflected the complex relationship between charitable organisations and political entities during this period of China's history. For example, in 1930, Wang Zhen published a map showing the distribution of people displaced by natural disasters, which was intended to support the nationalist government's relief work. In 1931, in response to a major national calamity, he organized public prayer sessions (Yangku 2013). These actions demonstrated how the Chinese Jishenghui intertwined its charitable mission with nationalistic concerns, reflecting the organisation's commitment to both humanitarian aid and national welfare.

The World Red Swastika Society (*世界红卍字会*), a private charitable relief organisation founded in 1922 and emerging from Buddhist monasteries, had the aim of 'promoting world peace through disaster relief' (Fang and Cai 2005). In 1923, the second year of earthquake relief by the WRSS in Kanto, Japan, the WRSS established the Kobe Daoyuan and Red Swastika Society in Japan. The WRSS developed rapidly in Japan, with about 200 branches in 1934. In 1936, Singapore also established a Red Swastika organisation. By 1940, the WRSS had nearly 400 branches in mainland China, Hong Kong, Singapore, North Korea and elsewhere (Li 2009).

When natural disasters or wars occured, the WRSS prioritised relief and rescue. At other times, its charitable activities were geared towards supporting, among others, orphans' invalids, pensioners, hospitals and civilian schools (Fang and Cai 2005). Humanitarian NGOs in modern China still retained traditional Chinese charities and combined them with modern humanitarian relief activities. The WRSS not only participated in rescue and relief for floods, droughts and other disasters across China but also provided materials and donations elsewhere, such as to people affected by earthquakes in Japan and the United States. For example, after the 1924 earthquake near Tokyo, the WRSS donated 5,000 yuan to the Japanese government for relief in the amount of 2,000 stone (equivalent to

120 tons) of rice. In 1933, the WRSS raised 2,000 yuan and JPY10,000 for relief after an earthquake rocked northern Honshu, and sent special commissioners to the disaster area to carry out relief work. In the same year, the WRSS raised 100,000 yuan for relief after an earthquake in Los Angeles, America (Ibid.). These international humanitarian aid activities involved a completely new approach, compared to previous international efforts by Chinese philanthropic organisations. In 1905 and 1906, when Chinese philanthropists provided relief to war victims in Vladivostok and victims of the San Francisco earthquake, their only targets were overseas Chinese. Yangku (2013) argues that the relief in 1905 and 1906 differs from what the WRSS did because Chinese humanitarian organisations believed that providing relief to 'others' demonstrated the equal or even superior status of Chinese humanitarian organisations over other international organisations. This highlights the point that Chinese humanitarianism has been intimately linked to nationalism.

As the Qing dynasty (1644-1912AD) faded, along with the large-scale importation of Western knowledge and the deepening national crisis, nationalist ideologies emerged (Guo 2020). The entry of Western humanitarian NGOs into China and the outbreak of various conflicts during 1904-1949 not only promoted the emergence of Chinese humanitarian NGOs but also inspired these organisations to engage in international relief activities. The interweaving of nationalism and an outward-looking humanitarian spirit was very obvious at this stage. Although the Western humanitarian focus on humanity gradually influenced the Chinese people, philanthropists, ordinary citizens and humanitarian organisations did not abandon the traditional Chinese charity culture. On the contrary, Chinese traditional charitable culture, modern humanitarianism and philanthropy became integrated in a way that continues to affect people's understanding and cognition of humanitarianism (Yangku 2013). This era marked the peak of emergence and development for China's humanitarian NGOs. However, as the government-affiliated Chinese Liberated Areas Relief Federation began to dominate disaster relief, the growth of China's humanitarian NGOs became increasingly restricted, especially after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949. Levy et al. (2020) argue that by 1978, foundations no longer played a role in China.

Summary

The period from the 19th century to the mid-20th century witnessed a profound transformation in Chinese humanitarianism, driven by the complex interplay between indigenous philanthropic traditions and the influx of Western humanitarian ideologies. The establishment of organisations like the RCSC, CIFRC, Chinese Jishenghui, and WRSS exemplified the unique synthesis of Chinese and Western humanitarian ideals that emerged during this period, as these organisations sought to integrate traditional Chinese values with modern Western relief practices. However, this process of

cross-cultural exchange was not without its tensions and challenges, as evidenced by the CIFRC's eventual marginalization due to concerns over foreign interference and the reassertion of state control over disaster relief efforts. The rise of the Chinese Communist Party and the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 marked a significant shift in the trajectory of Chinese humanitarianism, as the centralization of disaster relief efforts under state control effectively curtailed the development of independent Chinese humanitarian NGOs. Nonetheless, the legacy of this formative period in Chinese humanitarian history continues to shape contemporary understandings and practices of humanitarianism in China, highlighting the enduring importance of cultural context and national identity in shaping humanitarian ideals and actions.

The Founding of the People's Republic of China: New Developments in Chinese Humanitarian Organisations

The establishment of the PRC in 1949 marked a significant turning point for Chinese humanitarian organisations. To better understand their evolution in the new political landscape, this section introduces the term 'Chinese Development and Humanitarian Organisations' (HDOs), which encompasses the multifaceted roles and distinct characteristics of these organisations in both humanitarian and development contexts. This shift in terminology from 'Chinese Humanitarian NGOs' to 'Chinese HDOs' reflects the development-oriented approach that sets Chinese humanitarianism apart from traditional Western humanitarian NGOs.

The section critically assesses how the Communist government's ideologies and policies reshaped the operational landscape for these organisations, focusing on the integration of traditional humanitarian practices with socialist principles. It also examines the development of Chinese HDOs across three distinct phases: the near elimination of independent HDOs from 1949-1978, the gradual revival and partnership-building from 1978-2008, and the accelerated expansion and globalization from 2008 to the present.

By adopting the 'Chinese HDOs' framework, this section aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and transformations that have shaped the trajectory of Chinese humanitarian organisations in the post-1949 era, setting the stage for an in-depth exploration of their evolving roles and contributions in the subsequent decades.

The Term 'Chinese HDOs'

Within the context of this doctoral thesis, the term 'Chinese HDOs' encompasses Chinese Development and Humanitarian Organisations. These organisations are non-governmental entities

operating in China, primarily dedicated to providing development assistance and humanitarian aid. In the Chinese context, such organisations are commonly referred to as 'charitable organisations'. The Charity Law of the People's Republic of China (Presidential Decree No. 43) defines charitable organisations as entities involved in activities related to poverty alleviation, disaster relief, accidents, public health emergencies, and other unexpected events leading to damages.

In China, the terms 'non-governmental organisations' (NGOs), 'social organisations', 'non-profit organisations', and 'the third sector' are often used interchangeably (Fisher 1998, Wang and Jia 2002, Wang and Gan 2008, Ma 2012, Wang 2023). Liu Shuangzhou (2018) highlighted that social organisations in China encompass various non-governmental entities beyond political parties and the government. This includes membership-based organisations established on specific social relationships, known as Social Groups; non-membership organisations funded by private individuals or groups directly offering diverse social services, such as private schools, hospitals, and welfare institutions – referred to as Privately-run Non-enterprise Units (renamed as Social Service Institutions in 2018); Foundations formed based on specific property relations; and certain intermediary organisations and community activity teams.

This doctoral dissertation specifically focuses on Chinese NGOs involved in both domestic and international humanitarian assistance. While some scholars may use the term 'humanitarian NGOs' (Schlomas 2003, Çelik and İşeri 2016, Dromi 2020) to convey a similar meaning, it is important to note that Chinese NGOs engaged in humanitarian assistance often participate not only in humanitarian aid but also in development aid. Moreover, one of the characteristics of Chinese humanitarianism is development-oriented, therefore, utilizing the term 'Chinese HDOs' ensures accuracy and clarity in comprehending the distinct characteristics and comprehensive nature of these organisations within the Chinese context.

By employing the terminology 'Chinese HDOs', this study aims to provide a more precise and nuanced understanding of the multifaceted roles played by these organisations in their humanitarian efforts both in China and internationally. This approach allows for a comprehensive examination of Chinese HDOs, taking into account their unique characteristics, operational methods, and the specific socio-political context in which they function. Through this lens, we can better analyze the evolution, challenges, and impacts of these organisations in the realm of humanitarian and development work, both within China and on the global stage.

Having clarified the key terminology and the conceptual framework of Chinese HDOs, I am now turn the attention to their historical development. The founding of the People's Republic of China in

1949 marked a significant shift in the landscape for civil society organisations, particularly those focused on humanitarian activities.

The following sections will explore in detail how these political and social changes shaped the evolution of Chinese HDOs in the early years of the PRC and beyond. By examining this historical context, we can gain a deeper understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities that have influenced the development of Chinese HDOs, and how these factors continue to shape their role in both domestic and international humanitarian efforts today.

1949-1978：Limited Humanitarian Space for Chinese HDOs

The founding of the PRC in 1949 marked a significant shift in the landscape for civil society organisations, particularly those focused on humanitarian activities. The new communist government implemented a highly centralized political system, promoting socialist public ownership and a planned economy. This approach left little space for independent HDOs to operate, as the government sought to exert control over civil society as part of its efforts to consolidate power and build a socialist state.

The dominant discourse during this period emphasized the need for a strong, centralized state to control public goods and services. Education, health, social welfare services, and other 'public goods' were provided entirely by the government or government-run institutions. This 'strong state, weak society' framework effectively delegitimized independent humanitarian initiatives, portraying them as potential threats to the socialist project (Deng 2004).

The *Interim Measures on Registration of Social Organisations (Shehui Tuanti Dengji Zanxing Banfa 社会团体登记暂行办法)*, adopted in September 1950, had a significant impact on the development of China's NGOs. Some NGOs became politicized and were redefined as 'Democracy' Parties and Groups (*Min zhu dang pai 民主党派*), such as 'China Democracy Alliance' (*Zhongguo minzhu tongmeng 中国民主同盟*), and the 'Jiusan Society' (*Jiu san xueshe 九三学社*) (Wang 2001:55), while others were banned as 'feudal' or 'anti-government' organisations' (Ibid.).

Following this reorganisation, influential humanitarian organisations like the Red Cross Society of China were integrated into the state apparatus. By 1965, the number of domestic social organisations (*Shehui Tuanti*[20] 社会团体) had risen from 44 to 6000 (Wu 1999). However, the Cultural

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[20] *Shehui Tuanti* refers to NGOs that were formed voluntarily by citizens and whose charter emphasises the goal of realising the common will of their members (Ministry of Civil Affairs 1999). These generally include guilds, joint associations, chambers of commerce, foundations, academies, research societies, sodalities, and so on (Wang 2001:53).

Revolution[21], which began in 1966, brought the development of China's social organisations to a halt. According to the *Encyclopedia of Chinese Social Organisations* (1995, cited in Ma Qiusha[22]), no social organisations were established between 1966 and 1976 (Wang 2001).

This period from 1949 to 1978 thus saw a dramatic reduction in the space for independent HDOs to operate in China. The government's desire to maintain firm control over civil society and public resources effectively limited the growth and influence of HDOs during this era.

The case of the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC)

In the 1950s and 1960s, the RCSC transitioned from an independent entity to a state-integrated organisation, set against the backdrop of China's socio-political upheavals. Later, the RCSC became a people's rescue group directly under the Ministry of Health (see details later). The Chinese government had many reasons to reorganise rather than ban the RCSC. First of all, the government understood that the Red Cross had accumulated rich medical and health experience in long-term war rescue and disaster relief, and that it had comparative advantages and unique resources in medical and health care and civil diplomacy (Xu 2013:59). Furthermore, the 1949 *Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference*, a Constitution-like document, stipulated that 'the promotion of national sports, the promotion of health and medical services, and attention shall be paid to the protection of the health of mothers, infants and children.'[23] In short, the development of health care in New China needed the participation of the RCSC.

Yet the change of regime in 1949 resulted in a sharp division of Red Cross organisations and leadership changes, which led to poor internal management and semi-paralysis of work; the RCSC found it difficult to adapt to the new social environment (Xu 2013). More importantly, being viewed as a 'Western-influenced' organisation in a now-communist country, the RCSC came to be affected by Cold War politics. The International Committee of the Red Cross had a seat for China but, consistent with Western practice at the time, interpreted 'China' as referring to the government in Taiwan, which Beijing did not like. Even so, the New China leaders understood the value of the RCSC and sought to 'take over and maintain' it. After the founding of New China, the Red Cross Society started to play an important role in non-governmental diplomacy. For example, exchanges

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[21] The 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution', usually known simply as the Cultural Revolution (or the Great Cultural Revolution), was a "complex social upheaval that began as a struggle between Mao Zedong and other top party leaders for dominance of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and went on to affect all of China with its call for 'continuing revolution'. This social upheaval lasted from 1966 to 1976 and left deep scars upon Chinese society. See 'Introduction to the Cultural Revolution', in Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 2001. https://fsi9-prod.s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/CRintro.pdf

[22] Ma, Qiusha. The Current Status of NGOs in China, working paper https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.istr.org/resource/resmgr/working_papers_geneva/Ma.pdf

[23] CPC Central Documentation Research Office (1992). Selected Important Documents Since the Founding of the People's Republic (Vol. 9). Central Documentation Press.

between the Red Cross Societies of China and Japan contributed to the eventual normalisation of Sino-Japanese relations (Xu 2013:60). Finally, war casualties not only affected economic production but also led to a high incidence of domestic infectious diseases. The reorganisation of the RCSC was seen as helping to heal the wounds of war and ensuring the completion of production tasks, while protecting the health of the people and preventing epidemic diseases (Xu 2013).

During this period, RCSC underwent a significant transformation, becoming a rescue group under the government's leadership. The reorganisation of the RCSC was a complex process that reflected the changing dynamics between state and society in the newly established People's Republic of China. After the founding of the PRC, the RCSC proactively adjusted its operational approach, requesting the Central Government to take over and lead it. The Central Government responded promptly, taking charge of the restructuring process (Xu 2013:60-61). The reorganisation involved participation from various government departments, including the Ministries of Health, Interior, and Foreign Affairs, as well as the Ethnic Affairs Commission, the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission, and the People's Revolutionary Military Commission. Several social organisations also played a role in this process, such as the Chinese People's Relief Association, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, the All-China Democratic Women's Federation, and the All-China Federation of Democratic Youth. These government departments and social groups contributed to both the reorganisation and subsequent direction of the new Red Cross (Xu 2013).

Interestingly, the RCSC's reorganisation coincided with efforts to restore China's seats in the United Nations, highlighting the broader geopolitical context of these changes (Xu 2013:64). The restructuring extended beyond the national level, with the reorganisation of local branches viewed as an integral part of expanding, enriching, and improving the RCSC as a whole (Ibid.). This comprehensive reorganisation process demonstrates how the Chinese government sought to align humanitarian organisations with its broader political objectives, effectively integrating them into the state apparatus.

The RCSC's reorganisation is only one element of the new Party-state's governance of national humanitarian associations in China. As the Red Cross Society was reorganising, the governance of associations throughout the country established a hierarchical registration system according to the law. Following the promulgation in 1950 of the *Interim Measures for the Registration of Social Organisations*, on 23 March 1951, the *Implementing Rules for the Measures for the Registration of Social Organisations* were promulgated, requiring national social organisations to apply for registration to the Ministry of the Interior of the Central People's Government. At the same time, local social organisations and local branches of national social organisations had to apply for

registration to the local people's governments (Xu 2013:66). During this period, social organisations were characterised by a typical political and administrative tendency, and lacked social personality and practical character such as independence and autonomy (Wang et al. 2001).

The RCSC is a classic case of development and change within Chinese humanitarian organisations. As a Chinese HDO established to some extent as the model of Sino-Western cooperation, combining the influence of the West and its own needs, it was reorganised and reformed into a humanitarian organisation under the leadership of the New China government. This explains Deng Guosheng's (2004) observation that between 1949 and 1978, China's independent HDOs had almost no room for development and survival. At the same time, it illustrates that the main body and system of rescue after New China underwent institutional changes. This will be elaborated upon later.

1978-2008: Gradual Revival and Partnerships

The second phase of change began in 1978 with China's Reform and Opening Up policy and gradual economic liberalization. This policy not only aimed to stimulate economic growth but also signaled a relative openness to Western ideas and practices, including those related to the role of HDOs in modernization. While this period witnessed the gradual revival of Chinese HDOs, the discourse surrounding their development continued to emphasize the need for state control. The government maintained strict regulation through laws and policies, reflecting its desire to harness NGOs to supplement public service provision while limiting their autonomy.

A 2000 survey revealed that the majority of HDOs focused on social service delivery, with their involvement in areas like disaster relief and international assistance remaining limited. This suggests the government retained a more restrictive approach in these domains, likely due to concerns over political legitimacy and control. The state discourse framed HDOs as partners in achieving the state's development and poverty alleviation goals, rather than as independent civil society actors.

The re-entry of international NGOs in the late 1970s served as a critical catalyst for the evolution of Chinese HDOs. However, the government retained oversight over these organisations, seeking to leverage their resources and expertise while constraining their independent influence. This reflected an ongoing tension between the opportunities presented by external engagement and the state's imperative to maintain control.

Resumption of HDOs' development

The period following 1978 marks a significant epoch in the historiography of Chinese HDOs, ignited by sweeping economic, political, and social reforms under Deng Xiaoping's leadership. This section

critically examines the phased resurgence and diversification of HDOs against the historical backdrop of China's Opening-Up policy. Employing the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), it assesses the nuanced recalibration between state control and HDOs autonomy, highlighting the evolving role of HDOs in China's quest for modernization and its implications for the landscape of humanitarianism.

Since 1978, China has successively carried out economic, political and social reforms that break the pattern of state-monopolised resources and strictly controlled private and public social spaces. Having lain dormant for decades, Chinese charities began to revive in the 1980s and grew steadily throughout the 1990s. By 1989, the number of nationwide social organisations had reached nearly 200,000, thirty-three times more than before the Cultural Revolution (Huang et al. 2008:109). With the development of the market economy, more and more individuals and social forces began to sponsor schools, hospitals, social welfare institutions, and research academies (Wang 2001:55).

The rapid development of social organisations sparked concerns within the government about potential challenges to its control over society (Zhang 2005:10-11). A series of laws and regulations was introduced to strengthen control over social organisations (Wang 2018). For instance, *The Regulations on Registration and Administration of Social Organisations* were adopted in October 1989 and *the Interim Regulation on Registration and Administration of Private Non-profit Organisations* was promulgated in October 1998 (Wang 2001:55). The latter stipulated that a single state department would be in charge of Social Organisations registration while another would supervise the administration of routine Social Organisations activities (Wang 2001:56). These legal measures reflected the government's efforts to reassert its authority over the burgeoning social sector.

The findings of a large-scale survey conducted in 2000 by Tsinghua University's NGO Institute shed light on the concentration of NGO activities in the social services sector during this period. The survey results also reveal a limited involvement of social organisations in disaster prevention and relief (11.27%) and international assistance (3.32%) (Wang and Jia 2002). This suggests that despite the Chinese government's delegation of power to social organisations in many areas of social services, it maintained a more restrictive approach in the domains of domestic disaster relief and foreign humanitarian assistance. The government's stance on these issues can be understood through the lens of political legitimacy discourse, which has deep roots in both traditional and modern Chinese society. Across millennia, Chinese governments have portrayed taking the lead in disaster reliefas a demonstration of their political legitimacy and governmental responsibility. This perspective, coupled with a strong concern for maintaining national sovereignty, may explain why the New China government systematically refused to accept help from other countries, even in the face of major

natural disasters that challenged its ability to serve its citizens. The government's stance reflected a desire to project strength and self-reliance, while also avoiding any perceived infringement on China's sovereignty through foreign intervention. The 'bringing in and going out' policy, introduced as part of the Reform and Opening-up in 1978, signaled a shift in China's approach to engaging with the international community. This policy aimed to attract foreign investment while carefully managing the scope of international involvement to preserve China's sovereignty.

The revival of Chinese HDOs during this period was thus shaped by a complex interplay of expanding opportunities and persistent state control. While HDOs could fill service gaps, the government sought to limit their autonomy and align their activities with official priorities. This dynamic reflects the evolving power relations between the state and civil society in post-reform China.

Re-entry of International NGOs into China

The re-entry of international NGOs starting in the late 1970s served as a critical catalyst for the evolution of Chinese HDOs. However, the government retained oversight over the activities of these organisations, reflecting an attempt to harness their resources and expertise while limiting their independent influence. These international NGOs brought funding, technical expertise, organisational models and partnership opportunities that aided domestic counterparts in building capacity for disaster response and development work. However, the government maintained a regulatory framework to ensure these external actors operated within acceptable boundaries.

In 1978, China's desire to obtain overseas funds and technical assistance for economic construction and development led to a tentative welcome of international NGOs, including international humanitarian NGOs. However, as late as 1995, only about 15 international NGOs operated in China (excluding multilateral international agencies such as the United Nations Children's Fund). These included 'Médecins Sans Frontières, the U.S. Peace Corps, Oxfam Hong Kong, and Save the Children (UK)' (Howell 1995:12). The number of international NGOs coming to China grew rapidly beginning in 1996 (Li et al. 2018). At the time of writing, 671 overseas NGO representative offices and 4,569 temporary activities have been registered in China. [24]

The gradual re-entry of international humanitarian NGOs enabled more substantive cooperation, learning, and capacity building for Chinese HDOs aspiring to expand their operations abroad. International humanitarian NGOs have made significant contributions to 'China's economic and social development in the fields of environmental protection, humanitarian aid, poverty alleviation,

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[24] Data from China Overseas NGO Office Service Platform, https://ngo.mps.gov.cn/ngo/portal/toInfogs, accessed on 19 October 2022.

development assistance, health, education, family, and more' (Yin 2009:522). Some partnered directly with international NGOs in major domestic disaster response efforts, such as the devastating 1998 floods that displaced millions (Flood Relief 1998, Hillis 1999). Others received funding, technologies, training, and implementation guidance from international counterparts (Ma 2006). Organisations like Mercy Corps actively facilitated Chinese HDOs participation in overseas humanitarian and development projects. In an interview on 12 December 2018, Peng Bin, the head of Mercy Corps' Beijing office, stated:

> 'The focus of Mercy Corps in China is in four areas: supporting China's social organisations in international humanitarian relief capacity building; supporting Chinese HDOs to carry out international development poverty alleviation projects; supporting and promoting Chinese overseas companies to perform better in corporate social responsibility and community repaying; promoting exchanges between China and the world'.

This statement highlights the multifaceted role played by international NGOs in China, encompassing capacity building, project implementation, corporate social responsibility, and cross-cultural exchange. These diverse activities reflect the complex dynamics of international engagement in China's humanitarian and development sectors.

2008-Present: Accelerated Growth and Globalization

The 2008 Wenchuan earthquake marked a critical turning point that catalyzed immense growth in charitable donations and disaster relief HDOs in China. This catastrophic event disrupted the government's near-monopoly in the humanitarian sphere, spurring the emergence of new organisational models like professional rescue teams and foundations.

In the aftermath of Wenchuan, the public discourse surrounding Chinese HDOs underwent a noticeable shift. Media reports and official statements increasingly highlighted their growing role in shaping the country's international humanitarian engagement and soft power projection. As China's strategic priorities evolved, these organisations were increasingly seen as important actors in conveying the country's humanitarian ideals on the global stage. The integration of traditional Chinese principles and Western humanitarian norms reflects the complex interplay of cultural, political, and institutional factors in the development of Chinese HDOs.

A critical discourse analysis of the evolving discourses and power dynamics surrounding China's HDOs reveals, the broader sociopolitical transformations unfolding in the country. The shifting role of these organisations illuminates how the state-society relationship has been renegotiated in the context of China's reform and opening-up, as well as the country's evolving global ambitions. This analysis highlights the importance of considering both continuity and change in the discourses

shaping Chinese humanitarianism, as well as the complex interplay of actors and power relations in this field.

Major HDOs in China and their development

Foundations have emerged as the most critical and dominant force among HDOs currently involved in humanitarian assistance in China. During an initial 'foundation phase' from 1978 to 2004, government-initiated foundations were particularly prevalent. Most of these first-generation foundations were established by CPC-related mass organisations or the government itself. Examples include the China Children's and Teenager's Fund, the Soong Ching Ling Foundation, the China Foundation for Disabled Persons, and the China Population Welfare Foundation.

The China Children's and Teenager's Fund (*中国儿童少年基金会*), the first foundation of this type, was established on 28 July 1981 in a joint action of 17 national associations, including the All-China Women's Federation (*中华全国妇女联合会*), the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (*中华全国总工会*) and the Communist Youth League of China (*中国社会青年团*) (Wang and Xu 2010:26). Other typical examples of the first-generation foundations with a CCP or government background are the Soong Ching Ling Foundation (*宋庆龄基金会*) (established in 1982), the China Foundation for Disabled Persons (*中国残疾人福利基金会*) (1984) and the China Population Welfare Foundation (*中国人口福利基金会*). These foundations raised funds on local, national and international levels to enable them to provide local public services (Wang 2001, Deng 2004).

These foundations raised funds internationally and provided local public services, which the government viewed as essential to its development and poverty alleviation policies (Levy et al. 2020). The discourse surrounding these foundations emphasized their role in supporting the government's agenda, reflecting the ongoing power dynamics between the state and civil society. Prior to 2004, non-government-initiated foundations were extremely rare. The Amity Foundation[25], established by a politically well-connected bishop, was a notable exception.

A Turning Piont of Wenchuan Earthquake in 2008

As earlier indicated, the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake had a huge impact on the development of HDOs in China, especially foundations. According to China's Ministry of Civil Affairs, from 12 May 2008

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[25] The Amity Foundation was established in 1985 in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, by Bishop K. H. Ting and other Chinese Christians. Bishop Ting was a prominent figure in China's Protestant church and had connections with both religious and political circles. The foundation focuses on social services, development programs, and interfaith dialogue. Its establishment and operation were made possible due to Bishop Ting's unique position and relationships with government officials, making it an early example of a non-government foundation in China. Notably, Amity Foundation has since expanded its operations to include international humanitarian activities, particularly in Africa. It is one of the active Chinese Humanitarian and Development Organisations (HDOs) operating overseas, as will be discussed in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7 of this study.

to 5 November 2008, more than 75 billion yuan (USD 11 billion) was donated by by various sectors of society, including individuals, businesses, and organisations both domestically and internationally. Furthermore, private charitable donations for the entire calendar year of 2008 totalled 107 billion yuan (USD 15.67 billion), a significant increase from 31 billion yuan (USD 4.53 billion) in 2007. In the aftermath of the Wenchuan earthquake, countless HDOs participated in the rescue operations and the number of volunteers who entered the disaster area has been conservatively estimated at three million people. In addition, the disaster spurred the establishment of numerous HDOs for disaster relief, protection of vulnerable groups, education and psychology, which changed the earlier near-absolute monopoly position of the New China government in the humanitarian sphere.

The rescue teams mentioned above can be considered a new form of humanitarian non-governmental organisation. In China, there are mainly two kinds of emergency rescue teams: one is the professional emergency rescue team established by some organisations or departments, like those of the National Emergency Rescue Management Center, the emergency rescue team of the RCSC and the emergency rescue team of the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation.[26] The other kind includes civilian volunteer rescue teams like the 'Blue Sky Rescue Team' and 'Shengzhen Rescue Volunteer Federation'. Various private voluntary rescue organisations have emerged not only to improve China's in-country's emergency rescue level but also to fill many gaps in the international emergency rescue field (Guo et al. 2011).

Since its founding in 2007, the Blue Sky Rescue Team (*Lantian Jiuyuandui* 蓝天救援队) has participated in all major disasters in China and carried out eight international rescue operations in the Philippines, Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka.[27] In addition, it is seeking to expand its operations to other humanitarian contexts, including conflict areas such as South Sudan and Somalia (Hirono 2018). This professional and independent rescue organisation aims to establish and promote the development of China's private rescue system, and provide free emergency rescue services to people worldwide. Its professional staff, together with more than 30,000 volunteers, have set up 369 branches in 31 provinces and autonomous regions in China. It can be seen that Blue Sky Rescue, a new-generation humanitarian and development organisation, shows the increasing potential for Chinese HDOs to serve humanitarian needs also in Africa.

Xu and Wei found that between 2017 and 2018, the proportion of Chinese social relief teams participating in international disaster emergency relief increased significantly, while the number of

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[26] After a departmental restructuring in 2019, the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation stopped deploying emergency rescue teams.

[27] Zhongqing Zaixian, the Blue Sky Rescue Team (*Lantian jiuyuandui* 蓝天救援队), April 12, 2019, https://news.cyol.com/hdzt/2019-04/12/content_1 7987143.htm, accessed on April 20, 2023.

other types of Chinese social organisations decreased. The Amity Foundation and the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA) were among the few Chinese HDOs still active in international disaster emergency response (Xu and Wei 2019). In international humanitarian emergency response work, Chinese emergency rescue teams take 'search and rescue' as their core focus, even as they participate in such work as material collection and distribution, and epidemic prevention and elimination (Ibid.).

In the wake of the Wenchuan earthquake, HDOs in China became increasingly involved in international humanitarian relief. Drawing on experience gained after Wenchuan, the CFPA, One Foundation and Amity Foundation provided international emergency relief, relocation and reconstruction in Nepal after an earthquake there in 2015 (Zhang and Zhang 2018). The Amity Foundation has provided medical, food, sanitation and living materials assistance in the face of droughts in Ethiopia, floods in Sri Lanka and hurricanes in the Philippines (Xu and Wei 2019). In March 2019, Cyclone Iday made landfall in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi, triggering flash floods and landslides. A Chinese government rescue team and two civilian rescue teams were dispatched immediately.

The discourse surrounding the involvement of Chinese HDOs in international relief efforts reflects the growing influence and recognition of these organisations on the global stage. As China's strategic role in global humanitarian affairs evolves, these HDOs are increasingly seen as important actors in shaping the country's humanitarian engagement and soft power projection. The integration of traditional Chinese principles and learning from Western humanitarian experience and norms highlights the complex interplay of cultural, political, and institutional factors in the development of Chinese HDOs.

Summary

The development space for Chinese HDOs has undergone a profound transformation since the founding of New China, driven by the implementation of the Reform and Opening-Up policy and the growing integration of international NGOs. This has prompted Chinese humanitarian organisations to seek greater independence and a broader scope for their activities, while also driving their globalization. Today, Chinese humanitarian aid actors like major foundations and emergency relief teams are actively participating in disaster response operations both domestically and internationally. As they expand their global reach, these HDOs are blending traditional Chinese humanitarian principles with adaptations of Western experience and practices. While still operating within a regulated environment, the landscape of Chinese HDOs has been vastly transformed from the limited

space of the Mao era. Drawing on their legacy of responding to major domestic disasters like the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake, as well as China's evolving strategic priorities as a rising power, these organisations are now becoming an increasingly vital force in the international humanitarian field, integrating new thinking and approaches that convey China's evolving humanitarian ideals on the global stage.

Conclusion

This chapter's historical analysis of Chinese humanitarian organisations reveals the complex evolution of Chinese humanitarian ideals and practices over time. The long lineage of Chinese charitable giving, shaped by the teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, has deeply influenced moral understandings of helping and aid. Confucian benevolence, Buddhist compassion, and Taoism's principle of 'helping the needy' have formed the foundation for both traditional and contemporary forms of Chinese humanitarianism. Moreover, the Confucian 'people-oriented thought' discourse has guided Chinese governmental disaster relief work across time, with the alleviation of suffering serving to legitimize successive Chinese governments' political rule.

The gradual opening up to Western ideas and practices since 19 century has also brought about a new understanding of the role of NGOs in China's modernization process. While the state has maintained a degree of control over these organisations, their revived growth and evolving roles have contributed to China's development and engagement with the international community. The increasing encounters between Chinese and Western humanitarian traditions over many decades have led to mutual influence and new syntheses. The establishment of organisations like the Red Cross Society of China, the China International Famine Relief Commission, the Chinese Jishenghui, and the World Red Swastika Society exemplified the unique integration of Chinese and Western humanitarian ideals. These organisations adopted Western relief methods while retaining elements of traditional Chinese philanthropic thoughts and practices. They also expanded their scope of operations, engaging in cross-border and international humanitarian aid.

However, the development of Chinese humanitarian organisations was significantly impacted by the socio-political changes following the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. During the first 30 years of the PRC, Chinese humanitarian organisations were directly or indirectly subsumed into the government's administrative structure, limiting their autonomy and growth. This period of stagnation meant the development and internationalization of China's humanitarian organisations lagged behind that of Western NGOs.

The Reform and Opening-Up policy in 1978 marked a turning point, leading to a gradual revival of Chinese NGOs and increased engagement with international humanitarian actors. The 2008 Wenchuan earthquake further catalyzed the growth and diversification of Chinese HDOs, with the emergence of new organisational models like professional rescue teams and foundations.

Today, Chinese humanitarian aid actors are actively participating in disaster response operations both domestically and internationally, blending traditional Chinese humanitarian principles with adaptations of Western experience and practices. While still operating within a regulated environment, the landscape of Chinese HDOs has been vastly transformed from the limited space of the Mao era.

By exploring these intertwined histories, we gain critical insight into the myths, discourses, and knowledge constructs that underpin current humanitarian efforts in China and beyond. The evolution of Chinese humanitarianism reflects the complex interplay of cultural, political, and institutional factors, as well as the ongoing process of conscious and unconscious encounters and exchanges between indigenous traditions and global humanitarian norms.

5 CHINA IN AFRICA：AN EVOLVING RELATIONSHIP

Introduction

This chapter primarily employs historiographical approach and critical discourse analysis to explore the historical evolution of China-Africa relations, addressing the second sub-question of the thesis of 'what is the nature of China's evoving relationship with Africa'. Through longitudinal historical analysis, it reveals the development trajectory, driving mechanisms, and underlying geopolitical and ideological considerations of China-Africa relations in different periods.

During the Cold War era, China's policy towards Africa was heavily influenced by ideology, supporting African countries' anti-colonial struggles and national independence movements, with the aim of gaining diplomatic support from African countries and making the voice of the Third World heard on the international stage. However, as China began its economic reform and opening-up in the late 1970s, China-Africa relations gradually shifted towards a more pragmatic direction, with both sides placing greater emphasis on economic and trade cooperation and common development.

Entering the 21st century, China-Africa relations further evolved towards institutionalization and diversification. The establishment of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000 marked the beginning of a new chapter in comprehensive cooperation between the two sides in political, economic, social, and cultural fields. Although China plays a leading role in the FOCAC process, African countries also actively participate in agenda-setting, demonstrating their agency in cooperation.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) reveals that China has constructed a discourse system for Africa to consolidate the friendly and cooperative relationship between the two sides. On the one hand, the 'friendship' discourse emphasizes the traditional friendship between China and Africa, enhancing emotional ties; on the other hand, the 'People-to-People Bond' and 'China-Africa Community with a Shared Future' discourses set the direction for China-Africa relations in the new era, laying the discursive foundation for deepening cooperation.

By systematically reviewing the development of China-Africa relations, analyzing the interests and demands of both sides, and examining the construction of China's discourse system towards Africa, this chapter lays the foundation for further in-depth exploration of China's humanitarian practices in Africa in subsequent chapters. Understanding the historical context and the evolving dynamics of China-Africa relations is crucial for comprehending China's approach to humanitarian action in the region and its significant for the China-Africa cooperation.

Historical Context and Evolving China-Africa Relations

The political, economic, and diplomatic ties between China and African nations have undergone profound shifts over the past seven decades. This section provides a comprehensive historical analysis that traces the dynamic evolution of China-Africa relations across distinct eras, illuminating the complex interplay of factors that have shaped this strategically significant partnership. By adopting a longitudinal perspective, the analysis reveals how China's engagement with the African continent was initially framed through the lens of Cold War politics and ideological solidarity, with Beijing extending support to anti-colonial movements and newly independent African states. However, as China instituted sweeping economic reforms from the late 1970s onwards, the relationship acquired an increasingly pragmatic orientation, marked by a growing emphasis on mutual trade and investment interests.

The establishment of the FOCAC in 2000 marked a pivotal turning point, institutionalizing a multilateral framework for multifaceted cooperation that has expanded from economic affairs to encompass diverse areas such as security, governance, and people-to-people exchanges. The analysis underscores how both China and African countries have actively shaped the FOCAC agenda, reflecting the evolving dynamics of a partnership rooted in the pursuit of common development goals.

By grounding the analysis in a close examination of key events, policy documents, and leadership statements, this section offers invaluable insights into the evolving nature of China-Africa relations. It situates the contemporary landscape within a rich historical tapestry, illuminating the path dependencies, ideological underpinnings, and strategic calculations that continue to inform this influential South-South partnership.

Early Diplomatic and Political Engagements

Modern China-Africa relations began in the 1950s (Abegunrin and Manyeruke 2020). Historical accounts of this period have often portrayed China's support for African liberation movements and anti-colonial struggles as primarily driven by ideological solidarity and a desire to challenge Western hegemony, though more recent scholarship has highlighted China's pragmatic pursuit of diplomatic influence and resource interests as well.

Throughout the 1950s to the 1970s, China's foreign strategy underwent several adjustments in response to changes in relations with the United States and the Soviet Union, transitioning from a policy of 'leaning to one side' (Yibiandao 一边倒) to 'two lines fighting' (Liangtiao Zhanxian 两条战线), and then to a more nuanced approach of 'one line' (Yitiaoxian 一条线). This period illustrates

the severity of China's diplomatic environment. In the 1950s, newly established China faced multiple military challenges from the United States in events such as the Korean War, the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty, and the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty, particularly in Korea, Indochina, and the Taiwan Strait. To safeguard national security, China adopted a diplomatic policy of siding with the Soviet Union against the United States, culminating in the signing of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance (He 2000). However, concurrently, as a newly independent socialist state, China actively sought solidarity with other oppressed nations, as explicitly stated in the interim constitution adopted in September 1949, advocating for unity with the Soviet Union, people's democracies, and oppressed nations. China's diplomatic strategy during this period reflects its considerations of seeking support and maximizing national interests on both ideological and geopolitical levels.

The Asia-Africa Conference held in Bandung in April 1955 marked the true beginning of substantive exchanges between China and Africa (Liu and Lin 2019). The conference provided a platform for China to engage with African countries, establish diplomatic relations, and promote its diplomatic policies and ideals. Through direct contact with representatives of African countries, particularly through personal relationships established with leaders like Nasser, Zhou Enlai laid the groundwork for the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Egypt. In May 1956, the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Egypt inaugurated a new chapter in China-Africa diplomatic relations. Guinea's establishment of diplomatic relations with China in 1959 further reflected China's diplomatic extension to the region south of the Sahara. From a geopolitical perspective, China's policy towards Africa at the Bandung Conference was closely tied to the awakening and unity of the oppressed nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Egypt, and between China and Guinea, demonstrated China's consistent support for national independence and opposition to colonialism.

In the early 1960s, amidst deteriorating relations between China and the Soviet Union[28] and escalating confrontation with the United States, China found itself isolated in its dual struggles against imperialism and the Soviet Union. To break out of this impasse, China proposed the strategic concepts of the 'Two Intermediate Zones' (*Liangge Zhongjian Dida*i, 两个中间地带)[29] and the 'Three

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[28] There are two broad views on the reasons for the deterioration of Sino–Soviet relations at home and abroad: 1. It is believed that the deterioration was mainly due to the conflict between the national interests of China and the Soviet Union and the basic state policies embodying national interests (Shen 2011; Sun 2001; Qu 2005; Sun and Tang 2002). 2. The deterioration was due to ideological differences (Yang 2008; Luthi 2008); 3. The essence of the deterioration was a power struggle for the leadership of the international communist movement (Radchenko 2009).

[29] The first of the two intermediate zones referred to that between the United States and the Soviet Union. The second consisted of Western Europe, Japan, Canada and Australia, that is, key Western regions and countries other than the United States. Additionally, a middle zone consisted of national independent states and states striving for national independence (He 2000:22).

Worlds Theory' *(Sange Shijie Lilun*, 三个世界理论)[30] (He 2000), aiming to unite the developing countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America and expand its diplomatic space. This strategic adjustment reflected China's pragmatic imperative to survive and develop in a complex international environment and its aspiration to position itself within the Third World and pursue a voice in the international system. Guided by this strategic thinking, Premier Zhou Enlai conducted his first extensive visit to ten African countries from December 1963 to February 1964. During the visit, Zhou Enlai put forward the 'Five Principles for Developing Relations with African and Arab Countries'[31] and the 'Eight Principles of Chinese Foreign Economic and Technological Assistance'[32] (Zhang 2009, He 2000). Consequently, China-Africa relations entered a new stage characterized by equality, mutual benefit, and mutual assistance, laying the foundation for a new partnership between the two sides (He 2000:22). However, it is essential to recognize that Zhou Enlai's visit to Africa and China's diplomatic principles were fundamentally products of Cold War thinking, driven by the need to unite allies and confront adversaries in both ideological and geopolitical dimensions.

In the 1960s, China fully supported the anti-colonial struggles of African countries, providing significant financial and material assistance (Luo 2013). Iconic projects like The Tanzania-Zambia (or TanZam) Railway exemplified China's determination to assist Africa (Ibid.). Analyzing China's motivations for aid, there are both ideological considerations, such as supporting national liberation movements and fulfilling its obligations of internationalism, and pragmatic objectives aimed at garnering diplomatic support and enhancing international influence through aid. The support of African countries in the restoration of China's seat in the United Nations in 1971, coupled with the

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[30] The 'three worlds theory' identified the United States and the Soviet Union as the 'First World', while developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, including China, were the 'Third World' and developed countries in between were the 'Second World'.

[31] From Zhou Enlai to answer reporter's question [N]. *People's Daily*, December 22, 1963. The five principles are (1) To support the peoples of Africa in their struggle against imperialism and colonialism, and in their struggle for and preservation of their national independence; (2) To support African governments in their pursuit of a peaceful and neutral policy of non-alignment; (3) To support African states in the peaceful settlement of their disputes with each other; (4) To support the unity and unity of the peoples of Africa in the manner they choose; and (5) To advocate respect for the sovereignty and independence of African States and oppose any foreign aggression and interference.

[32] The relevant document is worth quoting in full: 'When providing economic aid and technical assistance to other countries, the Chinese Government shall act in strict compliance with the following eight principles: (1) The Chinese Government always bases itself on the principle of equality and mutual benefit in providing aid to other countries. It never regards such aid as a kind of unilateral alms but as something mutual. (2) In providing aid to other countries, the Chinese Government strictly respects the sovereignty of the recipient countries, and never attaches any conditions or asks for any privileges. (3) China provides economic aid in the form of interest-free or low-interest loans and extends the time limit for the repayment when necessary, so as to lighten the burden of the recipient countries as far as possible. (4) In providing aid to other countries, the purpose of the Chinese Government is not to make the recipient countries dependent on China but to help them embark step by step on the road of self-reliance and independent economic development. (5) The Chinese Government tries its best to help the recipient countries build projects which require less investment while yielding quicker results, so that the recipient governments may increase their income and accumulate capital. (6) The Chinese Government provides the best-quality equipment and material of its own manufacture at international market prices. If the equipment and material provided by the Chinese Government are not up to the agreed specifications and quality, the Chinese Government undertakes to replace them. (7) In giving any particular technical assistance, the Chinese Government will see to it that the personnel of the recipient country fully master such technique. (8) The experts dispatched by China to help in construction in the recipient countries will have the same standard of living as the experts of the recipient country. The Chinese experts are not allowed to make any special demands or enjoy any special amenities.' "The Chinese Government's Eight Principles for Economic Aid and Technical Assistance to Other Countries," January 15, 1964, in Zhonghua renmin gongheguo waijiaobu and Zhonggong zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi, eds., Zhou Enlai waijiao wenxuan (Selected Diplomatic Papers of Zhou Enlai) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 1990), 388. Available at the Wilson Center History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121560.

subsequent wave of 'breaking ties' with Taiwan (Kang 2009), stands as a successful example of China's aid policy. These actions not only solidified China's international standing but also signaled a new height of political mutual trust between China and Africa.In addition to the international situation, the domestic situation within China had a great impact on China-Africa relations, especially after China ended its ten-year Cultural Revolution in 1976. The Cultural Revolution not only destroyed political and social life, but also had a devastating impact on national economic development. Afterwards, China began a series of reforms, and political and economic exchanges with countries in Africa were adjusted accordingly. Liu Hongwu and Lin Chen (2019:57) argue that 'since the 1980s, the adjustment and formulation of China's foreign relations have been in more and more obvious interaction with the domestic political and economic reform process.' China's reformed political strategy towards Africa was reflected mainly in the exchange of visits by high-level leaders, the weakening of the ideology in inter-party exchanges, and the development of new inter-party relations. At the same time, China's reformed economic policy towards Africa was reflected mainly in a transformation from unilateral economic and technological assistance to a focus on mutual benefit and common development. These shifts and their effects are discussed below.

More generally, political and economic adjustments throughout the 1980s led China to focus more on developed countries like the US and Europe, owing to its need for foreign investment and technology. Hence, 'Africa was somewhat neglected' (Zhang 2012:22). Indeed, the momentum in China-Africa relations had been declining for some time (Li 2006). What changed the situation substantially was the international response to events in and around Tiananmen Square in 1989. After Western countries imposed sanctions, China sought to enhance its international legitimacy by turning its focus toward African countries. These initiatives enabled China to improve its international position in the short term and laid the foundation for a new stage of China-Africa relations in the 1990s.

Exchange visits between senior leaders

By the end of the 1970s, there were frequent exchanges of visits between senior leaders of China and many African countries. Between 1978 and 1980, the Chinese government sent three delegations – headed by Vice Premier Chen Muhua, Vice Premier Geng Biao and Vice-Chairman Ji Pengfei, respectively – to a total of 33 African countries. This trend continued through the 1980s. From December 1982 to January 1983, Premier Zhao Ziyang visited 11 African countries, including Zimbabwe, Angola and Côte d'Ivoire, with which it established diplomatic relations. These were the first visits by a Chinese premier to any African country since Premier Zhou's tour in the early 1960s. African leaders reciprocated by visiting China. In the 1980s, 55 heads of state from 44 African

countries visited China. Following the establishment of a relationship by high-level leaders, the two sides sent government and civilian delegations at various levels for further development.

Ideological weakening of interparty communication and development of new interparty relations

As mentioned earlier, China's pre-1976 foreign policy was linked to ideology, which was directed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). At the party level, the CCP limited its engagements to communist parties in African countries, and this became complicated when Africa's communist parties were forced to take sides after the 'Sino-Soviet Split' [33]. Nearly all chose to side with the Soviet Union; only the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party and a few 'communist groups' (Li 2006:13) interacted with the Chinese Communist Party prior to the late 1970s.

After meeting with a Mozambican delegation in Beijing in July 1977, the CCP leader instructed the CCP's International Department of the Central Committee and the country's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to explore the possibilities for contact with political parties in African countries. In November of that year, the two ministries jointly submitted a 'Request for Instructions on the Issue of Establishing Relations with Our Country by the Ruling Parties of Some Nationalist Countries in Black Africa and Other Regions' to the CCP Central Committee Politburo for approval. As a result, the Politburo decided to engage with various ruling parties (Li 2006:13) and, from 1978, the International Liaison Department (ILD) of the CCP Central Committee began to 'receive visitors from a range of African ruling parties' (Ibid.). This foreign policy adjustment marks a breakthrough in the history of the CCP's foreign relations, changing the practice of dealing only with African communist parties and thus broadening the development of China-Africa relations (Li 2006).

After 1978, the interaction between the CCP and political parties in Africa, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, grew rapidly (Ibid.). After the CCP's 12th National Congress in 1982, which established the principles of 'independence and autonomy, complete equality, mutual respect and non-interference in each other's internal affairs', the CCP increasingly engaged in exchanges with political parties of developing countries (Li 2006:13). From 1978 until the end of the 1980s, political parties in sub-Saharan Africa sent more than 230 delegations to China, including 134 party chairmen,

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[33] The term 'Sino-Soviet Split' refers to the gradual worsening of relations between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, and between their respective Communist Parties. While discomfiture between them had long roots, reaching back to civil wars in China prior to the establishment of the People's Republic, the disagreements gained momentum in the decades after China's liberation and would eventually lead to the Soviets referring to the Chinese as 'splittists', 'left-wing adventurists', 'anti-Marxist' enemies of Socialism 'in league with Imperialism', while the Chinese came to regard the Soviets as 'revisionists' and 'social-imperialists', or 'socialist in words, imperialists in deeds', and as 'the principal danger in the world today'. Graduating from words to deeds, the conflict was expanded from an ideological one between two political parties to a conflict between nation-states as relations between the USSR and the PRC were severed and, in 1969, their troops clashed across their common border. Though various authors place emphases differently, it is generally agreed that the main issues separating the CCP from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union revolved around the questions of evaluation of Stalin, 'Peaceful Coexistence', 'Peaceful Transition to Socialism', and War and Imperialism. See https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/sino-soviet-split/index.htm, accessed on December 12, 2022.

general secretaries and politburo members. During the same period, the Chinese Communist Party sent 56 delegations to visit the ruling parties of 39 countries in sub-Saharan Africa (Ibid.). These in-depth exchanges and rapid development at the party level became an important element of China-Africa relations.

An economic policy of mutual benefit and common development

After the end of the ten-year 'Cultural Revolution' in 1976, China was left in ruins and needed funds for its domestic construction. In 1978, the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the CCP proposed the 'Reform and Opening-up' policy, which shifted the focus of Party work towards economic construction. As a result, China's aid to and trade with Africa declined for a short period. At the Sixth National Conference on Foreign Aid in 1983, the main leaders of the State Council stressed that China would send only as much foreign aid as its capabilities allowed (Li 2012), which at this time was substantially reduced. From 1979 to 1994, China's annual foreign aid fund averaged 1.38 billion yuan (USD 0.81 billion), equal to the mid-1960s level (Li et al. 2009).

In addition, the volume of trade between China and Africa also showed a downward trend in the 1980s, as can be seen from Chart 1 below, except for a brief spike after visits to Africa by Chinese leaders in 1982. This did not recover until 1986 (Li 2006).

Chart 1   Total China-Africa Trade (1980-1987)
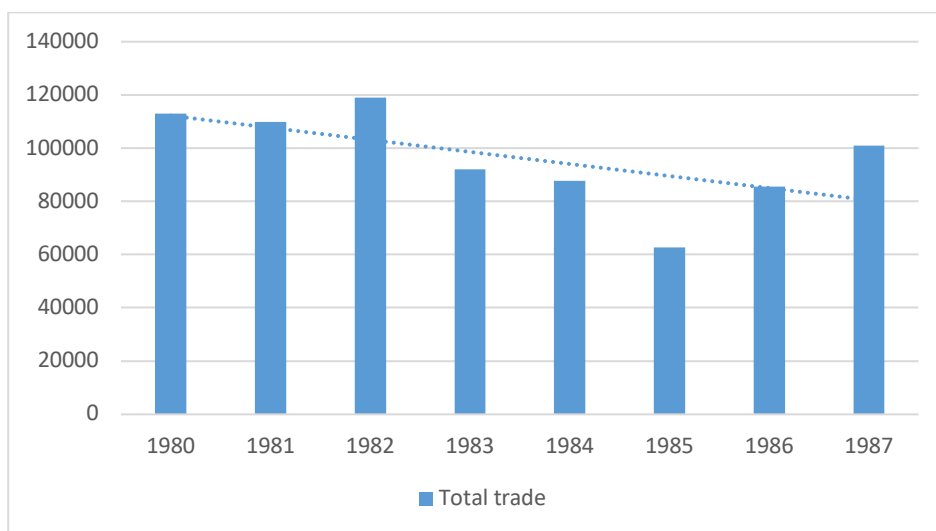
Source: Li 2006.

In the early 1980s, China was in a transition period of strategic rethinking (Li 2006). In 1982, it reiterated its intention to pursue an independent foreign policy.[34] At the same time, it transformed its understanding of the times from 'war and revolution' to 'peace and development', while also transforming its understanding of the relationship between diplomacy and economy from 'serving diplomacy with the economy' to 'serving the economy with diplomacy' (Qu 2000). With China's new understanding of the domestic and international situation, the framing of China's assistance to Africa changed from a unilateral provision of economic and technical assistance to an approach of mutual benefit and common development. During visits to Africa from December 1982 to January 1983, China's leaders proposed that China should further implement the four principles – equality and mutual benefit, practical results, diversity and common development – in its economic and technological cooperation with African countries.

These four basic principles were conceptualized and concretized as follows: China's economic assistance does not require any privilege, nor does it carry any overpowering overtones; China-Africa economic cooperation should proceed from the actual conditions of both sides and achieve good economic results; China will provide various types of services in light of local conditions without seeking special treatment for personnel; and China and Africa will learn from each other's strengths and help each other (Liu 2017). These four principles had their origins in, and developed out of, the eight principles of foreign aid that Zhou Enlai had articulated in the early 1960s, but they placed greater emphasis on economic reciprocity, economic bi-directionality, and the diversity of forms of economic and technological cooperation. The introduction of the Four Principles marked a new phase in China-Africa economic and technological cooperation (He 2000, Liu 2017).

Although China and Africa entered a new phase of development in their respective economies following changes in China's economic policies and aid concepts,

> 'In fact, during the 1980s, Africa became less important for China as it sought international recognition from Washington and Moscow and intensified Chinese contact with both countries to promote economic development. African states were no longer supported by China in their struggle against dictators or assisted in times of need, because China lacked the financial resources to do so.' (Looy 2006:5)

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[34] In 1949, at the very beginning of the founding of the People's Republic of China, a foreign policy with the main theme of safeguarding national independence and maintaining world peace was put forward and written into the Common Programme, the quasi-constitution of the new China. On the one hand, the new Chinese government did not inherit the old diplomatic relations established between the Kuomintang government and other countries, but wanted to establish new diplomatic relations with other countries on a new basis, so that China changed its semi-colonial status and established politically independent and autonomous diplomatic relations. On the other, New China first worked to remove the remnants of imperialism from the country and did not rush to establish diplomatic relations with imperialist countries to avoid the impact on its fledgling independence. During the development stage, faced with the Cold War situation in which the two camps led by the United States and the Soviet Union were confronting each other, New China stood firmly on the side of the Third World countries and pursued a "non-aligned" policy, continuing its independent foreign policy since the founding of New China.

This trend changed after the 'June Fourth Incident' in 1989. 'In 1989, the events in Tiananmen Square shocked the western world, which questioned the operations of the Chinese government. Third World countries were silent and relations were less affected by the trouble in Beijing' (Eyombo and Bachmann 2021:25). China was forced to focus on old relationships, giving African states a new priority. Liu Hongwu (2008:85) argues that in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the West again tried to contain China, China-Africa relations once again became 'a strategic fulcrum to leverage relations with the West and the outside world'.

In December 1989, President Yang Shangkun paid an official visit to Egypt at the invitation of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. While the visit came at a time of Western sanctions against China, President Mubarak was not affected by such sanctions. In his welcoming speech to President Yang, he said, 'The feelings between Egypt and China are a loyal brotherhood and mutual reliance in times of difficulty.'[35] China-Africa relations played a key role in breaking Western containment, restoring China's national image and improving its international standing. Beginning in 1991, China honoured that support in its time of need by establishing a diplomatic practice that continues to this day: its foreign minister's first visit at the beginning of each year is to an African country. This unwritten approach reflects China's emphasis on African countries and affirms Africa's special role in China's diplomacy (Liu and Lin 2019:57).

Strategic Shifts Post-Cold War

Entering the 1990s, with the end of the Cold War, the world's diplomatic and scape underwent significant changes. The dramatic changes in Eastern Europe and the collapse of the Soviet Union marked the beginning of a unipolar world order dominated by the United States. Simultaneously, China accelerated its economic development process, leading to an ever-increasing demand for international markets and natural resources. In this context, two factors became crucial in shaping the development of China-Africa relations: firstly, the ongoing diplomatic competition between China and Taiwan in Africa; and secondly, China's need to expand African markets and resources to support its domestic economic construction.

Against the backdrop of the post-Cold War restructuring of the international order, the diplomatic struggle between China and Taiwan in Africa did not cease. After the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident, Taiwan intensified its diplomatic activities on the African continent, including the implementation of 'dollar diplomacy' to win over African countries, elevating the level of visits, and

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[35] President Mubarak Welcomes President Yang, *People's Daily*, 20 December 1989

promoting democratic values (Yuan 1989, Jiang and Wang 2000, He 2000, Liu and Pan 2006, Kang 2009). These actions directly undermined the Chinese government's influence and legitimacy in Africa, threatening the ruling legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party, which relied on economic development to gain public trust. Therefore, from the perspective of both the unification cause and the maintenance of party legitimacy, China would not compromise in its diplomatic struggle in Africa.

Concurrently, as China sought to advance its domestic economic development, the need to secure overseas markets and natural resources became increasingly pressing. This elevated China's strategic requirements in Africa from the previously relatively singular diplomatic and political needs to a dual objective encompassing both political and economic goals (Zhang 2018). To this end, China began to adjust its Africa policy from the 1990s, first by reforming its aid modalities, promoting joint-venture aid projects, and opening up concessional loans (He 1997). Furthermore, China integrated its aid projects, separating aid agencies from equipment companies and placing medical aid teams under the management of the Ministry of Health, while also providing training for African technical and management personnel. These measures laid the foundation for the rapid development of China-Africa relations.

Entering the new century, China-Africa economic and trade cooperation entered the fast track, with China becoming Africa's largest trading partner and bilateral trade and investment amounts skyrocketing (Shen 2020). During this period, some Western public opinion questioned China's pursuit of resource plunder, environmental destruction, and exploitation of cheap labor in Africa. Some analysts pointed out that in terms of energy and resource activities on the continent, the Chinese were no different from other former colonial powers, which exploited foreign resources for their own development rather than to serve the host countries' needs (Taylor 2006). Moreover, China's economic engagements with Africa were severely criticized as brutally capitalistic exploitation of local labour, hence widening inequalities and worsening environmental and ecological conditions, all within a backdrop of widespread political and economic corruption, no sense of corporate responsibility and transparency, and no experience or expertise of democratic governance (Jiang 2009).

Simultaneously, Western countries such as the United States, Japan, and France also readjusted their Africa policies, increasing their influence in Africa through international conferences and aid initiatives (Liu and Zhu 1996, Fei 1999, Xia 1998, Yao 1998, Du 2006, Li 2009, Jin 2000). For example, Japan, together with the United Nations and the African Union, hosted the Tokyo Conference on African Development (TICAD) in 1993, at which it elaborated on its policy towards

the continent. By holding international conferences and taking aid measures, Japan greatly enhanced its position as a donor to Africa. For its part, the United States not only introduced the African Growth and Opportunity Act in 2000, but also followed Japan's example and established a US-Africa conference mechanism.

Faced with the intensifying competition from Western countries in the African region, some African leaders suggested that China emulate the West and establish similar cooperation mechanisms with Africa. The first such proposal was made by Albert Tevoedjre of Benin, but China's Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade put the matter on hold (Li 2012). Subsequently, Ahmed Haggag, a senior Egyptian diplomat, made both indirect and direct proposals to establish a multilateral cooperation mechanism between China and Africa. Again, China declined, this time because it believed that multilateral cooperation was not easy to operate (Ibid.). In 1999, Madagascar's foreign minister, Lila Ratsifandrihamanana, visited China and held talks with Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan, saying that African countries were eager to form a partnership with China in the form of a 'China-Africa Forum'. Tang Jiaxuan attached great importance to this proposal and asked his deputies to study it. In time, their report on '*Proposing to Convene the "China-Africa Cooperation Forum 2000 Ministerial Meeting"'* was approved by the CCP Central Committee.

While Ian Taylor's claim that China dominates the FOCAC merits consideration, it is crucial to recognize the agency and active participation of African countries in shaping the forum's agenda and outcomes. The establishment of FOCAC itself was driven by the proposals and initiatives of African leaders, demonstrating their desire to engage with China in a structured, multilateral framework. Furthermore, the joint declarations and action plans emerging from FOCAC ministerial meetings reflect the shared priorities and consensus reached through dialogue and negotiation between China and its African partners.

It is undeniable that China, as the convener and a major economic power, wields significant influence in the FOCAC process. However, characterizing the forum as a unilateral Chinese enterprise overlooks the complex dynamics of China-Africa relations and the strategic calculations of African states. By participating in FOCAC, African countries seek to leverage their collective bargaining power and to secure Chinese investment, infrastructure development, and support for their own economic and social agendas. The forum provides a platform for African leaders to articulate their needs and to shape the terms of engagement with China.

Rather than a one-way street, FOCAC represents a negotiated space in which China and African countries navigate their respective interests and priorities. While power asymmetries undoubtedly exist, the portrayal of African countries as passive recipients of Chinese dictates fails to capture the full picture. The following section will delve deeper into the dynamics of the FOCAC mechanism, examining how it reflects the intricate interplay of China-Africa relations and the strategic considerations that motivate African countries to engage with this platform. By exploring these factors, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of FOCAC as a forum for mutual cooperation and negotiation, rather than an instrument of unilateral Chinese control.

The New Era of China-Africa Cooperation under FOCAC

The lynchpin of China-Africa relations is the FOCAC (Enuka 2010). In 2000, the FOCAC was officially established and held its first ministerial meeting, adopting the Program for China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development, laying the foundation for the new century's China-Africa strategic partnership.

The FOCAC has continued to grow and develop, becoming the most important platform for cooperation between China and Africa in the political, economic, cultural, security and other fields. The evolution of the forum can be divided into three stages: The first stage (2000-2009) focused on economic and trade cooperation, shifting from a single trade orientation to an emphasis on both trade and investment (Shen 2020). In 2000, China adopted the 'Programme for China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development' to help Africa diversify its exports and change Africa's dependence on primary, single-product and raw materials (Ibid.). During the second ministerial conference in 2003, China announced that it would grant duty-free treatment to some products from so-called 'Least Developed Countries' (LDCs) in Africa. In 2006, China pledged to further open markets to African countries, expand zero-tariff treatment from 190 tariff items to more than 440, properly resolve trade differences and frictions, and gradually improve the China-Africa Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mechanism. Driven by these measures, China-Africa trade reached USD 220 billion in 2014, 22 times more than in 2000, and China's investment portfolio in Africa exceeded USD 30 billion, 60 times more than in 2000. In 2009, China became Africa's largest trading partner, including USD 48 billion in imports from China and USD 43 billion in exports to China, 18 times as much as in 1999 (Ibid.).

The second stage (2009-2015) focused on deepening economic and trade relations and promoting cultural exchanges. In the field of trade, China further opened its markets to African countries and gradually granted zero-tariff treatment to 97 per cent of the products from African LDCs with which

it had diplomatic relations. At the same time, China provided trade promotion assistance and established special loans for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. It also dispatched agricultural technicians to African countries and increased the number of agricultural technology demonstration centres from 10 to 20. Furthermore, it cooperated with Africa to implement the Initiative on Three Transport Networks (railways, highways and regional aviation), the first projects of which were the Mombasa-Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway and the Yaji Railway (Zhou 2016).

While these developments are significant, the major innovations during this period were in social, civic, and academic fields. China officially launched the China-Africa Joint Research Program and hosted the China-Africa Non-Governmental Forum, the China-Africa Think Tank Forum and the China-Africa Youth Leaders Forum. The fifth ministerial conference in 2012 began an attempt to reform the Forum mechanism, hoping to strengthen soft-power building in Africa[36] (Shen 2020). It also emphasized the importance of people-to-people exchanges and cooperation between China and Africa, and achieved the following results: the China-Africa Cultural Visitors Exchange Program, China-Africa Radio and Television Media Cooperation Forum, and China-Africa Civil Friendship Action were launched; the China-Africa Non-Governmental Forum, China-Africa Think Tank Forum and China-Africa Youth Leaders Forum were institutionalized; and the China-Africa Joint Research Exchange Program began to be implemented, which opened funding channels for academic institutions and scholars on both sides to start academic research and cooperative exchange projects (Shen 2020:85).

The third stage (2015 to present) has expanded the areas of cooperation to production capacity, infrastructure, peace and security, etc., with the joint construction of the 'Belt and Road' Initiative (BRI) between China and Africa becoming a priority. In this context, peace and security cooperation emerged as important areas and exchanges of governance experience rose to new levels. In his keynote speech at the Johannesburg Summit, President Xi Jinping identified security cooperation as one of the 'five pillars' of China-Africa comprehensive strategic cooperation, and included peace and security cooperation in his Ten Cooperation Plans. He also pledged,

> China will provide USD 60 million … to support the building and operation of the African Standby Force and the African Capacity for the Immediate Response to Crisis. China will continue to participate in UN

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[36] Shen Xiaolei's interview with Lu Shano on October 22, 2019.

peacekeeping missions in Africa and support African countries' capacity building in areas such as defense, counter-terrorism, riot prevention, customs and immigration control.[37]

To better understand the development characteristics of the FOCAC in the new era, this section systematically reviewed the Original archival documents of the 2015 Johannesburg Summit and the 2018 Beijing Summit, including summit declarations, action plans, and speeches by Chinese and African leaders. These materials recorded the entire process of setting the summit agenda and forming outcomes, which can relatively comprehensively and objectively reflect the mechanism for reaching consensus on China-Africa cooperation.

Through repeated interpretation of the texts and extraction of topic words, it was found that expressions such as 'win-win cooperation', 'common development', 'equality and mutual benefit', and 'consultation and co-construction' frequently appeared, becoming a common thread running through the policy documents of the FOCAC. Take the 2018 Beijing Declaration of the FOCAC as an example, the word 'cooperation' appears 716 times, 'common' appears 231 times, 'equality' appears 20 times, 'mutual benefit and win-win' appears 14 times, and the notion of 'China-Africa Community with a Shared Future' appears as many as 37 times. This reflects the change in the positioning of China-Africa relations at the discourse level, namely, the shift from one-way aid to two-way mutual benefit, from the asymmetry of giving and receiving to equal consultation and joint progress. Further analysis found that the proposal of practical measures such as the 'Ten Cooperation Plans' and the formation of strategic alignment concepts such as co-building the BRI all highlight one feature: closely following Africa's development needs, responding to African concerns, forming consensus through consultation, and fully reflecting the interests of African countries. This shows that the FOCAC is no longer limited to resource input and project landing, but has become an interest-linking mechanism for complementary advantages and sharing development outcomes on the basis of equality and mutual benefit, serving as an important platform for mutual exchange and consensus-building between the two sides.

Through a longitudinal comparison of the Johannesburg Summit and the Beijing Summit, some noteworthy changes can be observed. First, the primary position of African countries has become increasingly prominent, from setting the direction for the future development of the forum and planning key areas at the Johannesburg Summit, to equally consulting on the 'Eight Major Initiatives' and signing a series of cooperation agreements at the Beijing Summit, with African participation

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[37] The International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, 'Open a New Era of China–Africa Win-Win Cooperation and Common Development', address by H. E. Xi Jinping, President of the People's republic of China, at the Opening Ceremony of the Johannesburg Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, December 4, 2015. http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2015/xi1204.htm.

reaching unprecedented breadth and depth. Second, the issues have become increasingly focused on Africa's own development demands, covering industrialization, poverty reduction and agricultural benefits, infrastructure, green development, and many other aspects, with China's initiatives and measures aimed at helping Africa break through development bottlenecks. Third, led by the BRI, multilateral cooperation platforms are being co-built to align with the African Union's 'Agenda 2063', promoting regional interconnectivity, and cooperation outcomes are moving from bilateral to multilateral and from local to holistic, elevating Africa's global status and discourse power. In a horizontal comparison of the speeches by the Chinese and African sides, although there are some differences in emphasis in specific areas, they are highly consistent and mutually responsive overall, particularly reaching broad consensus on the principles of peaceful development, mutual benefit and win-win outcomes, and openness and inclusiveness, which point the way for China-Africa cooperation in the new era.

The study shows that the FOCAC is a platform for equal and mutually beneficial cooperation and joint consultation and construction. Both China and Africa are important actors in setting the forum's agenda and forming its outcomes, with China as an active promoter and participant, and Africa playing a key role in win-win cooperation. Overall, the FOCAC has shifted from pure aid to a strategic partnership, from government leadership to multi-stakeholder participation, not only providing a platform and direction for the development of China-Africa relations but also promoting South-South Cooperation, enriching the connotation of bilateral cooperation, and reflecting the multi-layered characteristics of the cooperative relationship. The sub-forums under the FOCAC, such as the Think Tanks Forum and the People's Forum, provide important communication mechanisms for the development of China-Africa relations and channels for Chinese civil organisations to participate.

In general, whether it was the early contact with Africa based on ideology and geopolitics, or the increasingly prominent orientation toward economic and trade cooperation that followed, the development trajectory of China's relations with Africa has been deeply embedded in China's own domestic and international environments at different periods.This section provides an overview of the evolving dynamics that have shaped China-Africa relations over the past seven decades through an extensive historical analysis. By tracing the key political, economic, and diplomatic developments across different eras, it illuminates how the relationship between China and African nations has been influenced by shifting global power dynamics, ideological currents, and the changing domestic situations in both China and African countries. As the research transitions to the next section employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the historical foundations laid here will provide a

robust backdrop for interrogating the discursive constructions and power relations that underpin China's engagements with African nations in recent times.

Discourses Shaping China-Africa Relations

China-Africa relations have evolved significantly in recent decades, underpinned by a set of key discourses that shape perceptions, policies and interactions between China and African countries. Utilizing a CDA approach, this section examines three main discourses that have been instrumental in guiding China's engagement with Africa: 1) China's Africa policies as articulated in its 2006 and 2015 white papers; 2) The notion of 'friendship', 'People-to-People Diplomacy' and 'People-to-People Bond'; and 3) The concept of 'China-Africa Community with a Shared Future'. By analyzing the language, ideological underpinnings, and power dynamics embedded within these discourses, this section aims to shed light on how China constructs its identity, legitimizes its actions, and advances its strategic interests in its evolving relationship with Africa. The CDA approach reveals how China leverages these discourses to position itself as a responsible global power, distinguish its engagement approach from Western countries, and shape the narrative around China-Africa relations. At the same time, the analysis also uncovers tensions and complexities within these discourses that reflect the multifaceted nature of China's role in Africa.

China's Africa Policies

China's first Policy on Africa was published in January 2006, to mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Egypt, the first African country to recognize China. The document affirms that strengthening unity and cooperation with African countries has been an important part of China's independent foreign policy of peace, which has guided the all-around development of China-Africa relations (Huang 2018). The second China Policy on Africa, a ten-year revision of the first white paper[38], was published in December 2015. This policy paper further clarifies China's stated firm determination and goodwill to develop friendly and cooperative relations with Africa.

China's policies towards Africa have included both continuities and changes over the past decade. The content and tone of the two policy documents are compared in Table 1 and further analyzed below.

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[38] Online Interview with Shuzhan, who is the former ambassador of China to Rwanda, on January 28, 2021.

Table 1   China's White Wapers on Africa Compared: 2006 and 2015

	Africa Policy Paper (2006)	Africa Policy Paper (2015)
Policy Objectives	A new type of China-Africa strategic partnership featuring political equality and mutual trust, economic win-win cooperation and cultural exchange.	Work with African countries to build and develop a China-Africa comprehensive strategic and cooperative partnership featuring political equality and mutual trust, win-win economic cooperation, mutually enriching cultural exchanges, mutual assistance in **security**, and solidarity and coordination in **international affairs**, consolidating and bolstering the **Community of Shared Future between China and Africa.**
Conceptual Principles	**Sincerity, Equality and Mutual Benefit, Solidarity and Common development** ● **Sincerity, Friendship and Equality.** China adheres to the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, respects African countries' independent choice of the road of development and supports African countries' efforts to grow stronger through unity. ● **Mutual Benefit, Reciprocity and Common Prosperity.** China supports African countries' endeavours for economic development and nation-building, carries out cooperation in various forms of economic and social development, and promotes common prosperity of China and Africa. ● **Mutual Support and Close Coordination.** China and Africa will strengthen cooperation in the UN and other multilateral systems by supporting each other's just demands and reasonable propositions, and will continue to appeal to the international community to give more attention to questions concerning peace and development in Africa.	**Sincerity, Practical Results, Affinity and Good faith** Enhancing **solidarity** and **cooperation** with African countries has always been the cornerstone of China's independent foreign policy of peace. ● **'Sincerity'** means China insists on the principles of equality, mutual trust, solidarity and mutual support. China respects African countries' independent choice of a way to develop as well as their practices and efforts to promote economic and social development and improve people's living standard, exchange governance experience with African countries based on equality and voluntarism. China has always sincerely supported Africa's development. It never interferes in African countries' internal affairs, never imposes its will on them, and attaches no political strings when providing aid to Africa. On issues involving each other's core interests and major concerns, China will enhance communication and coordination, mutual understanding and mutual support with African countries, and safeguard the common interests of both. ● **'Practical Results'** means that China aims to achieve practical and efficient results, seeks cooperation and mutual

- **Learning from Each other and Seeking Common Development.** China and Africa will learn from and draw upon each other's experience in governance and development, strengthen exchange and cooperation in education, science, culture and health. Supporting African countries' efforts to enhance capacity-building, China will work together with Africa in the exploration of the road of sustainable development.

benefits, China will support African countries' efforts in infrastructure and human resources development to help them overcome these two major bottlenecks that have long been constraining Africa's development, and promote China-Africa industrial alignment and capacity cooperation to facilitate Africa's industrialization and agricultural modernization. China will adhere to the idea of pursuing peace through development and promoting development by maintaining peace, and support Africa's efforts to seek independent and sustainable development, resolve African issues in an African way, and play a more constructive role in regional hotspot issues.

- **'Affinity'** means the hearts of Chinese and African people are connected, and they will live together in harmony, promote intercultural dialogue, and enhance exchanges of ideas, policy alignment and mutual understanding to provide a solid popular and social basis for China-Africa friendship. China will strengthen exchanges and cooperation with Africa in education, science, culture, health and other social and cultural fields, expand exchanges between Chinese and African people, increase think tanks, university and media exchanges, and support sub-national contacts and cooperation. The Chinese government encourages Chinese enterprises and citizens in Africa to care more about the well-being of local people and repay local society, create a good environment for the Africans working, studying and living in China, and constantly extend and consolidate the social basis of China-Africa friendship.

- **'Good Faith'** means China cherishes good faith and settlement of problems in an appropriate manner. It views and promotes China-Africa relations from strategic and long-term perspectives, and seeks joint efforts with Africa to create a good environment for friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation. China stands ready to strengthen policy coordination and communication with African countries, adheres to the principles

	of mutual respect and win-win cooperation, faces squarely and sincerely the new developments and problems confronting their relations through equal and friendly coordination, and ensures that both sides benefit from sincere, friendly and mutually beneficial cooperation.
Value	**Upholding Morality while Pursuing Shared Interests** It is about both morality and benefits, with morality as the first, the core meaning is to closely combine helping developing countries such as Africa to achieve autonomous and sustainable development with promoting China's own development, achieving win-win cooperation and common development, and promoting more balanced, inclusive, and sustainable development in the world.
One-China Policy	The Chinese Government appreciates the fact that the overwhelming majority of African countries abide by the one-China principle, refuse to have official relations and contacts with Taiwan, and support China's great cause of reunification. China stands ready to establish and develop state-to-state relations with countries that have not yet established diplomatic ties with China based on the one-China principle.
	The one-China principle is the political precondition and foundation for the establishment and development of China's relations with African countries and regional organisations. The Chinese government appreciates the fact that African countries abide by the one-China principle, support China's reunification, and refuse to have official relations and contacts with Taiwan. China is committed to developing friendly cooperation in an all-around way with all African countries based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence.
Practical Principles	'Africa-proposed, Africa-agreed and Africa-led' principle and with an active, open and inclusive attitude. China will explore tripartite and multilateral cooperation in Africa to jointly contribute to peace, stability and development on the continent.

The Political Field	High-level visits, exchanges between legislative bodies, exchanges between political parties, consultation mechanisms, cooperation in international affairs, exchanges between local governments	Intensifying high-level exchanges, boosting experience sharing in governance, improving intergovernmental consultation and cooperation mechanisms, promoting exchanges in various sectors including those between legislative bodies, consultative bodies, political parties, the military and local governments, deepening cooperation in international affairs
The Economic Field	Trade, investment, financial cooperation, agricultural cooperation, infrastructure, resources cooperation, tourism cooperation, debt reduction and relief, economic assistance, multilateral cooperation	Industrialization, agricultural modernization, infrastructure development across the board, financial cooperation, trade and investment, bolstering resource and energy cooperation, expanding cooperation on the marine economy
The Development Cooperation Field		**Development Cooperation between China and Africa:** development assistance, public health system and capacity building, education and human resources development, Sharing and popularizing the experience in poverty alleviation, science and technology cooperation and knowledge sharing, climate change and environmental protection
The Culture Field	**Education, Science, Culture, Health and Social Aspects:** Cooperation in human resources development and education, Science and technology cooperation, Cultural exchanges, Medical and health cooperation, Media cooperation, Administrative cooperation, Consular cooperation, People-to-people exchange, Environmental cooperation, Disaster reduction, **Relief and humanitarian assistance**	**Cultural and People-to-people Exchanges:** exchanges and cooperation in culture and sports, tourism cooperation, cooperation on press, radio, film and television, exchanges between academia and think tanks, Enhancing people-to-people exchanges
The security field	Military cooperation, conflict resolution and peacekeeping operations, judicial and police cooperation, cooperation in non-traditional security areas	Supporting Africa in realizing peace and security, deepening military cooperation, supporting Africa in confronting non-traditional security threats
Other fields		Strengthening exchanges and cooperation in consular, immigration, judicial and police areas

Source: author's translation of important excerpts from China's Africa policy papers, 2006 and 2015.

Comparing the China-Africa policy documents from 2006 and 2015 reveals both continuity and significant differences. In terms of continuity, both documents emphasize that China-Africa relations are built on the principles of equality, mutual benefit, solidarity, mutual assistance, and win-win cooperation, with a focus on political, economic, and cultural cooperation. This reflects the consistency and stability of China's Africa policies and its efforts to build a long-term strategic partnership.

Analysing the China's Africa Policies from a CDA perspective, it presents the following characteristics:

1. *Constructing China as a Legitimate and Responsible International Actor:* The policy emphasizes words such as 'cooperation' 'common development', 'friendship', and 'solidarity'. This language constructs China as a legitimate international actor pursuing common interests with African countries and positions it as a responsible actor with a moral obligation to support and help Africa. By emphasizing equality, mutual benefit, and non-interference, China positions itself as a benevolent partner in contrast to Western countries, which are often seen as domineering and conditional in their aid.

2. *Expanding the Scope of China-Africa Cooperation:* The 2015 policy expands the focus to include security cooperation, elevating China-Africa relations to a 'comprehensive strategic partnership'. This discursive shift reflects China's attempt to redefine its role and identity in Africa. By emphasizing security cooperation and providing military assistance, China seeks to present itself as a responsible global actor capable of contributing to Africa's peace and stability. At the same time, this discursive strategy serves to protect China's economic and commercial interests in Africa. By engaging in African security affairs, China further consolidates its influence in Africa and creates a favorable environment for its economic activities.

3. *Introducing New Values and Principles:* The 2015 policy introduces new values and principles such as the 'upholding morality while pursuing shared interests' and 'sincerity, practical results, affinity and good faith'. These new values reflect China's attempt to shape a new discourse system to guide and legitimize its actions in Africa. The value of 'upholding morality while pursuing shared interests' emphasizes adhering to moral principles while pursuing interests, aiming to counter Western criticism of China's motives in Africa and portray China as a responsible and moral actor. Meanwhile, the principles of 'sincerity, practical results, affinity and good faith' emphasize the sincerity and mutual benefit of China-Africa relations, aiming to contrast with Western countries' relationships with Africa and gain the trust and support of African countries.

4. *Distinguishing Economic Cooperation from Development Cooperation:* The 2015 policy separates economic cooperation from development cooperation, reflecting a shift in China's aid discourse to Africa. Traditionally, China's aid to Africa was seen as part of economic cooperation aimed at promoting China-Africa trade relations. However, influenced by international development discourse, China began to recognize the need to distinguish development aid from economic cooperation. This discursive shift has several significant implications: firstly, it allows China to present itself as a responsible development partner while pursuing its own economic interests. By emphasizing development cooperation, China aims to shape a new identity as a South-South cooperation partner committed to helping Africa achieve sustainable development. Secondly, this distinction is also a result of China adapting to and learning from international development norms. By adopting international concepts such as 'Official Development Assistance' (ODA), China seeks to improve the transparency and effectiveness of its aid and enhance its legitimacy as a responsible major power. Lastly, distinguishing development cooperation also reflects China's attempt to differentiate its aid approach from that of Western countries. China emphasizes that its aid is based on equality, mutual benefit, and non-political conditionality as South-South Cooperation, whereas Western aid is often seen as conditional charity.

5. *Emphasizing People-to-People Exchanges and Cultural Exchanges:* The 2015 policy places more emphasis on people-to-people exchanges and cultural exchanges, reflecting China's attempt to address criticisms such as 'neo-colonialism' and reshape its image in Africa. By emphasizing mutual understanding and promoting the involvement of social organisations, China seeks to present its relationship with Africa as all-encompassing cooperation that benefits the people. This discursive strategy aims to dispel perceptions that China-Africa relations are overly focused on economic interests at the expense of social development, thereby garnering broader social support for China's activities in Africa. This policy shift also provides more opportunities and space for HDOs to participate in China-Africa cooperation.

6. *Introducing the Concept of 'China-Africa Community with a Shared Future':* The concept of a 'China-Africa Community with a Shared Future' marks China's attempt to construct a new discourse system to guide and legitimize its relations with Africa. This concept emphasizes the interconnectedness and common development of China and Africa, elevating China-Africa relations to a new strategic level. At the same time, this concept reflects China's ambition to reshape global governance discourse and promote the construction of a Community of Shared Future for Mankind. By positioning China-Africa relations as a model for building a

Community of Shared Future for Mankind, China seeks to play a larger role in the international arena.

'Friendship': A Comparative Analysis with 'Partnership' in Western Aid Discourse

In the cooperative relationship between China and Africa, the term 'friendship' is frequently mentioned and emphasized, becoming an important discursive element in promoting and legitimizing China-Africa relations. At the same time, in Western humanitarian aid discourse, the concept of 'partnership' is central. These two concepts reflect the different approaches and strategies adopted by China and Western countries in handling their foreign relations.

This section will explore the roles and significance of the discourses of 'friendship' in China-Africa relations from the perspective of CDA. By analyzing the connotations, practices, and impacts of this concept, it aims to reveal the unique ideas and strategies of China's diplomacy towards Africa and provide new perspectives for a deeper understanding of the development of China-Africa relations.

On the other hand, this section will also examine the application and impact of the Western aid concept of 'partnership' through a case study of Swedish aid discourse. By contrasting the two different discursive approaches of 'friendship' and 'partnership', we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the various cooperation strategies employed by different countries in the fields of global development and diplomacy.

Overall, this section will present to readers China's unique cooperative model based on friendship with Africa, as well as the idea of 'partnership' embodied in Western countries' aid practices, thereby revealing the rich and diverse discursive resources in international cooperation.

Deeply Rooted in Confucianism: 'Friendship'

The earliest understanding of 'friendship' in the Chinese context comes from the vastly influential Confucian classics. As Wang Ping (2017:45) points out in his research, 'the concept of friendship is deeply rooted in Confucian thoughts, transcending personal emotions and bearing profound moral and social responsibilities.' In ancient thought, friendship played a structural role for both individuals and political systems, acting as a means to achieve stability and harmony in political life. Confucius' Analects emphasizes this, for instance in Yan Yuan (*颜渊*), stating 'friendship with upright men, with faithful men, and with men of much information: such friendship is beneficial', and in Zi Lu (*子路*), stating '[a] leader strives for harmony but not conformity. A petty person strives for conformity but not harmony'. These discussions not only highlight emotional exchanges between friends but also underscore the importance of friendship in promoting moral improvement and social harmony.

Friendship was not confined to intimate relationships. The aforementioned discussions in Confucius' Analects mainly refer to non-blood-related and non-status-based friendships. Mencius' 'Five Relationships' further illustrate the non-blood-related and non-status-based characteristics of friendship. Mencius stated, '[i]f people are well fed, warmly clothed, and comfortably housed, but without education, they are close to animals. The sages were concerned about this, so they appointed Qi as the Minister of Education, who taught people the human relationships – affection between father and son, righteousness between ruler and subject, distinction between husband and wife, order between elder and younger siblings, and trust between friends.'

The establishment of the 'Five Relationships' marked the recognition of the status of friends in Confucian human relationships (Li 2021). The 'Five Relationships' theory promotes social harmony through the five basic social relationships, clarifying the importance of personal bonds and relations to Confucian morality. These relationships are typically seen as social roles, and fulfilling these roles is essential for personal cultivation and social harmony (Lambert 2017). The 'trust between friends' proposed in the 'Five Relationships' signifies the traditional mutual assistance and love between friends, as well as the mutual support in the pursuit of moral perfection (Li 2021). Mencius' mention of 'affection is benevolence; respect for elders is righteousness; nothing else, and it spreads throughout the world' also reflects the importance of friendship in the Confucian 'Five Relationships'. In Confucian culture, friendship, as one of the 'Five Relationships', is not only an emotional bond between individuals but also a cornerstone for maintaining social harmony and order. The core of friendship lies in mutual respect, moral support, and personal growth, acting as a bridge connecting individuals and the collective.

During the late Ming period, Chinese society underwent significant transformations. Neo-Confucians, represented by He Xinyin, utilized the concept of friendship to theoretically criticize imperial power. Leaders and supporters of the Donglin movement, such as Gu Xiancheng, Gao Panlong, and Huang Daozhou, proposed institutional innovations based on friendly relationships to establish a legitimate political foundation in the court, curbing the abuse of power by the court and eunuchs (Chu 2017). The concept of friendship was reinterpreted during the late Ming period as a means of social intervention, challenging and criticizing the foundations of the imperial order and imperial rule for the first time, demonstrating its importance in social change (Ibid.). In summary, in ancient thought, friendship had a structural role for both individuals and political systems. Linked with virtue, friendship was a means to achieve stability and harmony in political life.

Beyond the political sphere, friendships in traditional Chinese culture also emphasized the importance of physical contact in expressing and reinforcing emotional bonds. Compared to Western

cultures, Chinese people tend to use more body language to convey feelings in social interactions. Intimate friends may put their arms around each other's shoulders, walk hand in hand, or sit very close to each other, all of which are manifestations of deep friendship. This kind of physical contact, as an emotional bond, strengthens the connection between friends and has special significance for maintaining and deepening friendships.

The emphasis on physical contact as a means of expressing friendship has persisted into modern Chinese culture. As a deeply ingrained social ethical relationship in Confucian culture, friendship extends beyond the personal level to encompass social collectives and international relations. This deepened understanding reflects the widespread influence of friendship values in contemporary Chinese society and foreign policy.

This understanding of friendship rooted in traditional Confucian culture has been continued and developed in contemporary China-Africa relations. In modern China-Africa relations, this emphasis on physical contact as a means of expressing friendship is particularly evident. Whether in formal diplomatic occasions or informal exchanges, Chinese and African representatives often use enthusiastic handshakes, hugs, and other warm gestures to bridge psychological distances and enhance mutual trust. This type of communication, which transcends language and cultural differences, has played a vital role in strengthening China-Africa friendly cooperation.

It is evident that friendship, with its emphasis on emotional bonds and physical expressions of closeness, has been a central value in Chinese culture throughout history. This cultural heritage continues to shape China's contemporary relationships, both domestically and internationally. Domestically, China advocates the concept of a harmonious society, emphasizing the establishment and maintenance of friendly relationships among different social groups. Internationally, China is committed to building peaceful and cooperative international relations, integrating the concept of friendship into its foreign policy.

President Xi Jinping views friendship as a key component of China's core value system. By emphasizing friendship in various political speeches and diplomatic occasions, he has shaped an international image of China as friendly, peaceful, and harmonious. This strategy not only reflects China's commitment to maintaining peace and promoting international cooperation but also demonstrates China's willingness to establish and maintain long-term friendly relations on the global stage. This perspective is also reflected in various international actions (Nordin and Smith 2018).

First, in China's interactions with other countries, especially in its interactions with developing countries, it frequently uses the language of 'friendship' to convey its foreign policy concepts of peace, cooperation, and mutual benefit. This strategy is significantly reflected in bilateral exchanges

and multilateral forums (Xinhua News 2023). Particularly in the process of interacting with African countries, Xi Jinping has repeatedly emphasized the importance of friendship. In the context of China-Africa relations, 'friendship' is seen as the key to the close relationship and deep bonds between the two sides. In his keynote speech delivered via video link at the opening ceremony of the 8th Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Xi Jinping emphasized the spirit of China-Africa friendship and cooperation, reflecting the shared challenges and the driving force for further strengthening China-Africa relations (CGTN 2021, China Daily 2023).

Second, China uses the concept of 'friendship' to strengthen its relations with developing countries, especially in cooperation under the BRI. This initiative aims to strengthen ties with participating countries through infrastructure construction, economic cooperation, and people-to-people exchanges. The initiative of cultural exchanges reflects the concept of harmony and mutual assistance emphasized in Confucian culture. For example, China has promoted cultural interactions and educational cooperation with countries along the route by establishing Confucius Institutes, providing scholarships, and organizing cultural exchange activities. These measures have not only deepened cultural understanding with countries along the route but also fostered the establishment of long-term friendly relations.

Furthermore, when dealing with international disputes, China usually adopts a conciliatory and dialogical approach rather than confrontation. For example, despite facing territorial disputes in the South China Sea, China has always adhered to the position of resolving issues through peaceful negotiations (The State Council 2016). Similarly, in China's relations with African, Latin American, and Southeast Asian countries, China emphasizes the principles of mutual respect and win-win cooperation, which are concrete manifestations of friendship values.

Analysis shows that as time progresses and situations develop, the connotations of 'friendship' are also constantly evolving, expanding from traditional political mutual trust and spiritual identification to multiple levels such as economic cooperation, security collaboration, and development assistance. The flexibility of this discourse form helps China to promptly adjust its policy focus on Africa according to the international situation and its own strategy. In a broader sense, 'friendship' has become an important discursive resource for China's soft power diplomacy. By emphasizing the moral attributes of China-Africa relations, China has been able to effectively dispel various doubts raised by Western countries about its presence in Africa and further highlight the unique value of its own diplomatic concepts. As a result, the 'friendship' narrative not only legitimizes the expansion of China's influence in Africa but also defines the relationship between the two sides as a natural extension driven by traditional ties and common interests. By emphasizing equality, reliability, and

win-win cooperation, the discourse aims to distinguish China from Western powers and their colonial legacy. Julius Nyerere distinguished Chinese assistance from all other forms of foreign aid when he stated that '"China is a Third World country"; and that although some other countries might use economic aid to exploit or to politically dominate Africans, "it is not China's policy at all".' (North China News Agency, NCNA 1975)

The theme of 'friendship' was used extensively to describe Chinese development assistance projects in Africa; according to Philip Snow, 'friendship roads, friendship ports and friendship buildings sprang up all over the continent' wherever the Chinese invested in aid (Snow 1988). Among them, the Tanzania-Zambia Railway project is considered a monument to China-Tanzania and China-Africa friendship.

The Tanzania-Zambia Railway, which was established in the 1960s, is a material example of China-Africa traditional friendship (see Picture 1). Surveying for the Tanzania-Zambia Railway began in May 1968, construction began in October 1970, service began in June 1975 and it was fully completed in July 1976. Over that decade, tens of thousands of Chinese engineers, technicians and managers travelled to Tanzania and Zambia to build the 1860-kilometre line (Wang 2010). Jamie Monson's (2009:40) *Africa's Freedom Railway* vividly describes some of the newly forged personal relationships that emerged through this vast infrastructural enterprise: 'First, a Chinese technician encountered unexpected danger; a Tanzanian worker stepped up in spite of risks to his own safety, and saved his Chinese comrade. Not long after, when a Tanzanian worker fell into trouble, a Chinese worker used his own body and saved his comrade's life.' Such tales of love and support between workers from the two countries are frequently told on this road of friendship (Ibid.).

Picture 1　The Friendship Road: the TANZAM Railway

Translation: Blood and Life Forge the Road of Friendship - Chinese Expert Commemorating the Sacrifice of Helping Tanzania-Zambia Railway.
Source : https://chineseposters.net/posters/pc-1976-s-003

The Tanzania-Zambia Railway project created a powerful narrative of China-Africa solidarity, showcasing China's efforts to deepen traditional ties with African countries through infrastructure development. By reviving the traditional values of 'friendship' and integrating them into modern national discourse, China flexibly employs this discursive element at bilateral, multilateral, and even global levels. This aims to shape the image of a responsible major power, enhance solidarity with developing countries, and consolidate its influence in international affairs. This approach of modernizing traditional cultural resources demonstrates China's unique perspective in building new types of major power relations and global governance systems.

Overall, the interpretation of friendship in modern Chinese culture not only reflects the profound influence of Confucian culture but also becomes a key strategy in China's international relations. Whether advocating for a harmonious society domestically or establishing and maintaining peaceful and cooperative relations on the international stage, China uses friendship as an important means to achieve consistency in its values and diplomatic goals. Through this approach, China not only promotes harmony among groups within its domestic society but also showcases its image as a responsible major power on the international stage.

Western Aid Discourse: A Case Study of 'Partnership' in Swedish Aid

The concept of partnership is a cornerstone in Western humanitarian aid discourse. Rooted in Weberian legal-rational principles, this concept emphasizes formal agreements, rules, and procedures that prioritize transparency, accountability, and the efficient allocation of resources. These principles, has already discussed in the theoretical chapter of this dissertation, highlight the historical and contemporary factors shaping the Western notion of partnership. This section aims to further explore the specific case of Swedish aid which focus on the concept of partnership. Through this lens, we can better understand the practical applications and implications of the Western partnership model.

Sweden's aid discourse provides a quintessential case study of the Western partnership model in practice. In 1997 the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs elaborated a *'New Policy for Africa'*. Its purpose was to co-ordinate the country's cultural assistance, trade and development aid to African countries by giving these activities a frame of common goals and an ideological rationale, emphasising 'partnership' rather than 'solidarity or aid' (Dahl 2001). The new documents on partnership with Africa explicitly advocate that the African countries, formerly regarded as recipient countries, should be treated as equal and autonomous partners. The Swedish party should, to a much higher degree than before, be sensitive to how the African partners formulate needs, goals and strategies for regulating mutual transactions. The key word in the new partnership is 'equality' and this can only be guided by mutual respect (Widmalm 1999).

In practice, this partnership approach involves extensive dialogue and collaboration with recipient countries. It includes joint planning and implementation of aid projects to ensure that local perspectives and needs are fully considered. For instance, Swedish aid projects typically involve substantial input from local stakeholders, ranging from government officials to civil society organisations, to ensure the relevance and benefits of the provided assistance to the communities they aim to support.

However, Dahl's in-depth examination reveals the complexities and contradictions within Sweden's partnership discourse. On the one hand, Swedish officials attempt to break away from the donor-recipient dichotomy and emphasize an equal, mutually beneficial cooperative relationship. The new aid policy claims to empower African countries, acknowledge them as autonomous agents, and abandon the condescending, paternalistic approaches that previously characterized aid relations.

On the other hand, Dahl (2001:19-20) points out that the so-called 'partnership' also provides Sweden with a space to impose additional conditions and demands, enabling it to require recipient countries to accept supervision in areas such as human rights, good governance, and the efficient use of aid funds. The reciprocity of the partnership is more rhetorical than substantive.

Furthermore, despite Swedish officials' claims of discarding stereotypes of passive, misguided, and spoiled aid recipients, Dahl's analysis reveals that these images persist in a different guise within the official discourse. For instance, the aid discourse attributes 'aid dependency' to the irresponsibility and corruption of recipient country leaders while rarely addressing the structural roots of global inequalities (Dahl 2001:21). Simultaneously, African countries are homogenized, and their internal diversity and complexity are overlooked. This tendency to assign responsibility and moral deficiencies to aid recipients renders the partnership mere rhetoric.

Dahl's case study of Swedish aid discourse exemplifies the broader tensions and contradictions inherent in the Western partnership model. While the partnership concept purports to establish an equal, mutually beneficial relationship, it often serves as a vehicle for donor countries to advance their own agendas and interests. The discourse of empowerment and respect for recipient country autonomy coexists uneasily with the power imbalance that allows donor countries to dictate the terms of the aid relationship.

The Swedish case illustrates how the Western partnership model, despite its egalitarian rhetoric, remains constrained by unequal global power structures. Donor countries maintain control over the aid agenda and can use aid as leverage to pressure recipient countries. In this context, the structural power imbalance between donor and recipient countries renders the 'partnership' superficial.

A comparison between the discourse of 'friendship' in China-Africa relations and the discourse of 'partnership' in Western aid reveals differences in their emphases and specific connotations. The 'friendship' discourse highlights historical and cultural ties, as well as moral bonds, aiming to foster solidarity and legitimize cooperation. The 'partnership' discourse, on the other hand, focuses on pragmatic cooperation, mutual accountability, and alignment of interests, with the goal of enhancing aid efficiency and sustainability. Despite these differences, the two discourses share some commonalities, reflecting certain convergences in China's and the West's concepts of international cooperation. Both discourses emphasize equality and mutual benefit, aiming to move beyond the traditional donor-recipient relationship and establish a more equal, new-type partnership. Additionally, both discourses strive to promote the common development of all parties involved, whether based on cultural identification or practical interests, with the ultimate goal of achieving win-win outcomes. Moreover, both discourses reflect their respective cultural traditions and value systems. The 'friendship' discourse is rooted in traditional Chinese culture, embodying the ideals of peaceful coexistence and harmony. The 'partnership' discourse aligns with Western legal-rational traditions, emphasizing procedural norms and institutional construction.

By comparatively analyzing these two distinct discursive practices, we can more comprehensively grasp the rich linguistic resources employed by different countries in international affairs and deeply understand the cooperation concepts and strategic orientations they uphold in global development and diplomacy domains. Discourse analysis provides insights into a nation's political ideologies and value orientations, illuminating the nuances and convergences in China's and the West's approaches to international cooperation.

The 'People-to-People Bond' Shift in China-Africa Relations: The Role of NGOs in 'People-to-People Diplomacy'

The China-Africa friendship is manifested not only at the national level but is also deeply rooted in people-to-people exchanges. Both the 2006 and 2015 Chinese policies towards Africa encourage, support, and focus on people-to-people exchanges. In fact, emphasizing connections and exchanges between people is a significant embodiment of China's consistent 'People-to-People Diplomacy'.

'People-to-People Diplomacy' can be viewed as a specific discursive practice, which, through the use of specific words such as 'friendship' and 'mutual benefit and win-win', internalizes an international interaction perspective that emphasizes enhancing mutual understanding and prioritizing the interests of the people as its ideological foundation, forming a stark contrast with the traditional diplomacy perspective that places national interests above all else. The people-oriented concept advocated by this discourse is realized through various channels such as cultural exchanges, educational cooperation, sports events, tourism promotion, as well as economic and trade collaboration between non-governmental entities of China and African countries.

In the new era, the renowned Chinese scholar Wang Yiwei proposed that 'People-to-People Bond' is the essence of 'People-to-People Diplomacy' (Wang 2020 and 2024). 'People-to-People Bond' is one of the five focuses (the other four focus being Policy Coordination, Facilities Connectivity, Unimpeded Trade, and Financial Integration) put forward by President Xi Jinping in his Belt and Road Initiative in September 2013. Wang Yiwei pointed out that 'People-to-People Bond' is the core of China's 'People-to-People Diplomacy', emphasizing 'two-way or multi-way communication and connection between people, rather than controlling others' emotions and rationality' (2020:11). He proposed that 'People-to-People Bond' has at least three levels: mutual understanding; trust and friendship; and a community with a shared future (2020:12). His research indicates that exploring the way to achieve 'People-to-People Bond' could promote the practice of 'People-to-People Bond' in

the 'Global South' prompting the 'Global North' to reflect on public diplomacy within a Western context.[39]

The concept of 'People-to-People Bond' emphasizes enhancing mutual understanding, building trust and friendship through two-way communication and connection between people, ultimately forging a community with a shared future. This aligns with the value pursuit of 'People-to-People Diplomacy', injecting new impetus into the development of China-Africa relations in the new era, shifting the relations from solely government-led to more diverse and extensive participation of civilian forces. The proposal of 'People-to-People Bond' has expanded the breadth and depth of China-Africa cultural exchanges, particularly highlighting the important role of NGOs in promoting civil exchanges between China and Africa. The white paper 'China and Africa in the New Era' points out that China and Africa actively implement the 'China-Africa People-to-People Friendship and Cooperation Initiative', encouraging the implementation of the 'China-Africa People's Friendship Action', the 'Silk Road Family' program, and the 'China-Africa Civil Friendship Partnership Program', and supporting deepened exchanges between Chinese and African trade unions, NGOs, and social groups. These statements underscore the status of NGOs as important participants and driving forces in 'People-to-People Bond', reflecting China's positive vision of shifting China-Africa relations from 'government-led' to 'civilian participation'.

This shift reflects the new development in the relationship between the Chinese government and Chinese NGOs. This shift has benefited from the continuous evolution of the relationship between the Chinese government and NGOs. Early on, the relationship between the Chinese government and NGOs was mainly characterized by high government control and restriction. Due to the government's strict control over social organisations, NGOs faced considerable constraints in their foreign exchanges and social activities. This relationship model was primarily manifested in the government's political commissioning of NGOs as agents, where the roles and scope of activities of NGOs were largely subject to close government scrutiny and guidance (Wang 2017). Scholars have pointed out that the interaction between the government and NGOs during this period was characterized by a top-down management model, with NGOs often serving as auxiliary executors of government policies rather than independent civil forces. Under this model, the development space for NGOs was limited, and their activities and influence, both domestically and internationally, were not fully realized.

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[39] China News: Launch of the new book 'China's Practice of Connecting with the People's Hearts'. https://m.chinanews.com/wap/detail/chs/zw/10 184380.shtml, accessed on 15 May 2024.

In the early stages of reform and opening up, the relationship between the government and NGOs was mainly manifested as a social commissioning agency relationship, where the government authorized government-organized non-governmental organisations (GONGOs) to undertake some of the government's social functions. During this period, as described by Yang Qianglong, Xu Liping, and Shuai Xueming (2010), the cooperative relationship between the government and NGOs began to shift from institutionalized coordination to an embedded linkage mode, marking a new pattern in the government-NGO relationship.

Entering the 21st century, with the construction of a moderately prosperous society and the increasing demand for public services, the Chinese government's attitude toward NGOs began to change, and it started to attempt to cooperate with NGOs in providing public services (Yu 2007, An 2013). However, during this period, the government's attitude toward NGOs remained cautious, and it imposed restrictions on their scope of activities and methods (Yu 2007). Through an analysis of environmental NGO cases, Zou Wei (2016) proposed four types of interactions between the government and NGOs: 'competitive confrontation', 'extended attachment', 'occasional symbiosis', and 'embedded absorption', highlighting the diversity and complexity of their relationship.

In recent years, the Chinese government has become increasingly open to the participation of NGOs in public governance and foreign exchanges. The relationship between the Chinese government and NGOs is undergoing a transformation from 'control' to 'cooperation'. This transformation has provided institutional space for NGOs to participate in engagement with Africa. In fact, Chinese NGOs have already begun to participate in engagement with Africa on a certain scale. Ketels (2020) pointed out that when China strives to establish friendly political relations and good economic cooperation with other countries, it must convince local people of its good intentions and demonstrate a sense of responsibility for social affairs. NGOs can precisely add a social responsibility factor to China's diplomacy and enhance their understanding of the social and cultural environment of the recipient countries when cooperating with Chinese economic and political actors. Chinese NGOs have also actively responded to the government's call to 'go global' and participate in global charitable causes, fulfill social responsibilities, and contribute to global poverty reduction and global governance (Xinhua News 2017). It can be seen that NGOs, particularly HDOs have become an important channel for China to practice the 'People-to-People Diplomacy' and deepen non-governmental friendship with Africa.

To promote the 'going global' of NGOs, the Chinese government has adopted a series of encouraging measures. On the one hand, official supportive policies have been introduced to guide the internationalization of NGOs; on the other hand, in 2017, the Silk Road NGO Cooperation

Network (SIRONET) was founded as an initiative by the China NGO Network for International Exchanges (CNIE), aiming to establish a dialogue platform for nongovernmental organisations in countries along the BRI (Ketels 2020). However, despite the Chinese government's strong ideological support for NGOs to 'go global', funding and substantial policy support remain inadequate (Li and Dong 2018). This issue may constrain the breadth and depth of Chinese NGOs' participation in 'People-to-People Bond'.

From the perspective of CDA, the discourse of 'People-to-People Bond' are granting NGOs more discursive power and space for action, China attempts to present a more open and inclusive stance toward engagement with Africa, enhancing the non-governmental foundation and social recognition of China-Africa relations. However, in practice, the establishment and operation of China-Africa non-governmental exchange projects may still be influenced by official will, challenging the autonomy and independence of nongovernmental organisations (Ketels 2020). Furthermore, in terms of resource allocation, Chinese NGOs may occupy an advantageous position, leading to inequity in exchanges.

Overall, as 'People-to-People Bond' have become an important component of China's discourse system toward Africa, NGOs play an increasingly important role in it. On the one hand, NGOs actively practice the 'going global' strategy, injecting non-governmental vitality into the construction of a 'China-Africa Community with a Shared Future' through exchanges and cooperation in areas such as culture, education, and health; on the other hand, the participation of NGOs also responds to the international community's questioning of the 'government-led' model of China-Africa relations, demonstrating China's positive stance in transforming its engagement with Africa from 'official diplomacy' to 'People-to-People Diplomacy'. Of course, while affirming the role of NGOs, efforts should also be made to promote them as truly independent and autonomous entities for exchanges, deepening China-Africa nongovernmental friendship on the basis of equality and mutual benefit, and consolidating the social foundation of China-Africa relations. Only in this way can 'People-to-People Bond' truly become a distinctive discourse and practical paradigm of China-Africa relations, contributing non-governmental forces to the construction of a community with a shared future for mankind.

'China-Africa Community with a Shared Future'

Whether it is the discourse of 'friendship' mentioned earlier or the emphasis on 'People-to-People Diplomacy' and 'People-to-People Bond', both aim to construct the concept of the 'China-Africa Community with a Shared Future'. This concept represents a new discursive system constructed by China to guide and legitimize its relations with Africa. It builds upon China's longstanding emphasis

on 'friendship' to consolidate its historical relationship with Africa. However, the 'China-Africa Community with a Shared Future' discourse goes further, aiming to construct an even stronger and closer relationship between China and African countries.

The 'China-Africa Community with a Shared Future' is part of China's broader philosophy of 'a community with a shared future for mankind'. This overarching philosophy serves as an important guiding framework for China-Africa cooperation across political, economic, cultural, security, and international development domains. This section will analyze in depth what precisely the 'China-Africa Community with a Shared Future' concept entails. Utilizing a CDA perspective, it will examine the discourses, power dynamics, and ideological underpinnings embedded within this concept. Such an analysis can shed light on how this new discursive construction aims to shape and legitimize China's evolving relationship and practices visa-vis Africa.

During Xi's visit to Africa in early 2013, he defined China-Africa relations in terms of a community with a shared future that features 'common historical experience, common development objectives and common strategic interests' (Zhang 2018:43). The phrase 'China-Africa Community with a Shared Future' sums up the traditional China-Africa friendship and includes a number of principles: sincerity, pragmatism, affinity, and good faith, as discussed in detail above. These principles represent the traditional Chinese way of treating others, and also communicate that China claims to better perform the role of a responsible major power in its diplomacy with Africa (Zhang 2018). During the FOCAC Beijing summit in September 2018, 'President Xi Jinping announced that China will launch eight major initiatives in close collaboration with African countries in the next three years and beyond, to build an even closer China-Africa Community with a Shared Future in the new era' (Huang 2018:58).

The discourse of the 'China-Africa Community with a Shared Future' has also been endorsed by many African leaders and scholars. South African president Ramaphosa said: 'President Xi Jinping's proposal to jointly build a closer community with a shared future for China and Africa is very far-sighted. The concept of "China-Africa Community with a Shared Future" between China and Africa is based on equality, oriented to the people, and is very feasible and exemplary.'[40] In addition, Charles (2018), director of the China Research Center in Nigeria, said that the 'China-Africa

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[40] In an interview following the 2018 Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), South African President Cyril Ramaphosa praised the summit's success and highlighted the China-Africa community of shared future, based on equality and focused on the people. He emphasized the mutual benefits of the partnership and China's role as a reliable development partner for Africa. Accessed on August 17, 2024, from https://news.cri.cn/20180906/1fc1ccb7-9f93-9309-33c5-2e892c0c1391-3.html.

Community with a Shared Future' plays an exemplary role, and it can become an exemplary role because it is at the forefront of building a human destiny in many ways.

Through the concept of a 'China-Africa Community with a Shared Future', China portrays an image of sharing weal and woe with African countries, emphasizing the commonalities between the two sides in historical experiences, development goals, and strategic interests. This discursive strategy helps consolidate and strengthen the traditional friendly relations between China and Africa, laying the foundation for deepening cooperation in various fields. At the same time, this concept also reflects China's ideological stance in international development cooperation. China advocates for 'a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind', attempting to construct a development cooperation model distinct from the Western one, emphasizing the principles of equality, mutual benefit, and win-win cooperation. This is consistent with China's long-standing diplomatic principles of non-interference in internal affairs and non-imposition of conditions, reflecting China's self-positioning and identity as a responsible major power. Furthermore, the proposition and promotion of this concept highlight China's growing discursive power and influence in its relations with Africa. China repeatedly emphasizes the 'China-Africa Community with a Shared Future' on important occasions, guiding and shaping the international community's perception and evaluation of China-Africa relations. The recognition and support for this concept by many African leaders and scholars reflect the enhancement of China's discursive power and soft power.

In summary, the analysis of the concept of a 'China-Africa Community with a Shared Future' helps us examine its role as one of the important discourses shaping contemporary China-Africa relations more deeply. This concept reflects China's strategic considerations, ideological stances, and aspirations for discursive power in its relations with Africa, providing a crucial perspective for understanding China's behavioral logic and role positioning in Africa.

Broader African Perspective on China in Africa

To gain a comprehensive understanding of China-Africa relations, it is crucial to grasp the diverse viewpoints contained in African perspectives. Björnsdotter (2018) notes that there are few comprehensive empirical studies of African perspectives on China-Africa relations in general. However, there are some scholars that have undertaken fairly large-scale surveys of certain groups of Africans. Björnsdotter's (2018) own work focuses on analyzing views of China-Africa links as they appear in East African media. Through a quantitative content analysis of 586 news articles in major newspapers from Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, the author aims to shed light on how media in these countries portray China's growing involvement on the continent. Björnsdotter finds that economic

factors, especially related to economic development and job opportunities, make up the main focus of examined articles. The overall results show that positive and negative views are expressed to an almost equal extent. However, the author notes that media content seems more negative than the generally positive views held by the East African public according to survey data. The analysis also reveals some differences between the three studied countries, with Tanzanian newspapers covering China-Africa links in a more positive way compared to Kenyan and Ugandan media (68% positive views in Tanzania versus around 50% in Kenya and Uganda). According to Björnsdotter, these findings indicate that African perspectives of China, as portrayed through media, are more varied and complex than commonly assumed.

Among these, Barry Sautman and Yan Hairong's (2009) seminal work emerges as a definitive exploration of African sentiments toward their relationship with China. Through rigorous analysis of data culled from multiple surveys, including their own exhaustive study spanning 2,000 African university students and faculty across nine countries, Sautman and Hairong unearthed intriguing insights. Their findings reveal optimism, portraying a prevailing inclination among at least these Africans to embrace deeper economic and political connections with China. In most surveyed countries, majorities leaned favorably towards nurturing bonds with China, perceiving Chinese influence as a more constructive force compared to that of Western counterparts. Furthermore, a substantial majority expressed satisfaction with the tangible outcomes of Chinese development projects in their respective countries. It is important to note, however, that these studies also have certain limitations. For instance, Sautman and Hairong's research sample primarily focused on educated urban populations, potentially failing to comprehensively reflect the perspectives of rural African communities. Future research necessitates more extensive coverage of diverse groups and in-depth grassroots studies to more fully present the complexity of African public opinion towards China.

Intriguingly, Shen and Taylor's (2012) research builds upon this narrative, shedding light on how a specific demographic – young Ugandans – view China's role in Africa. Their empirical survey of 500 urban Ugandan youth, aged 18 to 30, uncovers an intricate mosaic of perceptions. The survey results depict a complex dichotomy. On the one hand, a significant segment associates China's image with 'economic cooperation', underlining a hopeful outlook. Yet, concerns linger regarding China's activities, particularly its extraction of natural resources and potential job displacement. Notably, despite these concerns, a substantial proportion of respondents retain a positive perception of China, viewing it as an economic juggernaut and a 'real friend' to Uganda (2012:706-711). This nuanced portrayal unveils a profound tension within African viewpoints. While many Ugandans anticipate China to adopt an anti-imperialist stance, they acknowledge China's pragmatism. Moreover, even as

they hold China in high regard, a substantial portion believes China's benevolence is on par with that of the West.

To substantiate these findings, the Afrobarometer (Lekorwe et al. 2016) amplifies the chorus of African voices. A comprehensive survey, encompassing 36 African countries in 2014/2015, offers a panoramic view of public opinion regarding China's engagement in Africa. The resonance with Sautman and Hairong and Shen and Taylor are unmistakable. Africans, on average, exhibit a penchant for favorability towards China's economic endeavors and contributions to the continent. Notably, the United States and China emerge as the top two developmental models for African nations, with China trailing only slightly behind the U.S. Moreover, in specific regions like North, West, and Central Africa, China eclipses the U.S. in popularity. Astonishingly, when questioned about the external power wielding the greatest influence in their respective countries, China garners second place, trailing only slightly behind the spectre of their former colonial powers. Most significantly, the prevailing sentiment is one of optimism, with a significant majority perceiving China's influence as positive rather than negative.

This reflects the survey approach to African perspectives. I do not discuss here scholarship that addresses more intimate and more localized perspectives. I am aware of there being a substantial body of literature on close engagement between Chinese and Africans, which focuses on actual experiences and views of each other in different local contexts, especially African views of Chinese. However, in this present discussion, I am not drawing on the available empirically based scholarship[41]

Turning our gaze to African leadership perspectives, Besada (2013) weighs in with a view that underscores the divergence between African leaders and critics regarding China's involvement in the continent. Amidst criticism from Western quarters, African leaders have predominantly embraced China's participation as a catalyst for economic development. The allure lies in Chinese investments in infrastructure and extractive industries, even when accompanied by loans and imported Chinese labor. However, it is essential to acknowledge the existence of dissenting voices within Africa. Critics argue that Chinese exports undermine local African's industries, Chinese firms exploit African labor, and China's resource appetite perpetuates Africa's reliance on commodity exports. Intriguingly, the spectre of South African President Mbeki's cautionary words looms large, namely a warning against permitting China to metamorphose into a 'neo-colonial power' in Africa (Besada 2013:98). The

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[41] African scholars of Adams Bodomo (2013)'s book 'Africans in China: A Sociocultural Study and Its Implications on Africa-China Relations' examines the experiences of Africans living in China; Deumert and Mabandla's (2013) research about 'South Africa's "New" Chinese Diaspora and the Multilingual Transformation of Rural Towns; Adebayo and Omololu (2020) have published an article about 'the paradox of 'homing' and child upbringing among Nigerian-Chinese families in Guangzhou city'.

responsibility, as posited by Besada, squarely rests on African leaders' shoulders. It falls upon them to ensure that their engagement with China transmutes into tangible benefits, fostering African development and good governance (Besada 2013:99).

In conclusion, the empirical evidence presented reveals generally optimistic yet still cautious and complex African perspectives on China's growing multifaceted involvement on the continent, illuminating insights relevant to research on China's growth in the humanitarian field. The prevailing embrace of China's economic cooperation and infrastructure development points to African openness to deeper ties, though concerns about labor, business, and resources signify calls for judicious engagement to foster mutual benefits. This indicates that while prevailing positivity may enable China's humanitarian soft power projection, dissenting voices skeptical of a neo-colonial China could constrain its humanitarian initiatives. Essentially, nuanced understandings of varied African viewpoints, grounded in both aspiration and apprehension, suggest China-Africa humanitarian collaboration faces opportunities but also challenges. The complexity of African perspectives signifies that China must grasp nuanced African attitudes to successfully develop mutually beneficial China-Africa humanitarian programs. In essence, comprehending the multifaceted spectrum of African sentiments will prove key to analyzing the terrain for China's humanitarian growth on the continent.

Conclusion

Through the methods of historical study and critical discourse analysis, this chapter comprehensively examines the developmental trajectory of China-Africa relations, revealing the complexity and multidimensionality of the evolving relationship between the two sides. The historical analysis showcases the transformation of China-Africa relations from being ideology-driven to pragmatic cooperation, a shift closely linked to adjustments in China's domestic development strategies. The development trajectory of China-Africa relations reflects the evolution of China's foreign strategy, from revolutionary diplomacy to economic diplomacy, and then to global partnership diplomacy.

The establishment of the FOCAC is a milestone in the development of China-Africa relations, constructing an institutionalized platform for multidimensional cooperation between the two sides. Although China occupies a leading position in the forum, African countries are not passive recipients but actively influence and shape the forum's processes in their own ways, reflecting the agency and demands of African nations.

Discourse construction is another important means for China to consolidate its relations with Africa. From traditional 'friendship' to 'a Community with a Shared Future', and the assistance discourse of 'People-to-People Bond' penetrating the humanitarian field, these discourses reflect China's priorities and demands in its relations with Africa. On the one hand, these discourses strengthen the emotional bonds between China and Africa, while on the other hand, they provide discursive support and impetus for pragmatic cooperation between the two sides.

African countries have their own strategic considerations in developing relations with China. On one hand, China offers diversified development paths for Africa and is an important partner in promoting African industrialization and economic diversification. On the other hand, African countries also put forward demands for improvements in China's behavior in Africa to better align with African interests.

In summary, by analyzing the developmental trajectory of China-Africa relations, discourse construction, and the African perspective, this chapter elucidates the multiple influencing factors and interactive features of China-Africa relations. This provides the necessary background knowledge and analytical perspectives for subsequent chapters to delve deeper into China's humanitarian practices in Africa.

6 UNPACKING CHINESE HUMANITARIANISM IN AFRICA

China will actively carry out personnel exchanges, training and technical cooperation in the field of disaster reduction and relief. China will actively respond to the urgent humanitarian assistance requests of African countries, encourage and support the Red Cross Society of China and other NGOs to carry out exchanges and cooperation with relevant groups in African countries.

China's Policy on Africa, 2006

China has also received support and assistance from African countries in a timely manner whenever it is stricken by a big natural disaster. It stands ready to continue to provide and gradually increase emergency aid and necessary assistance to African countries in a spirit of sharing weal and woe and standing together through thick and thin with the latter. While providing the assistance in light of its own financial capacity and economic situation and the pressing needs of African countries, China sticks to the principles of no political strings attached, non-interference in others' internal affairs and no demands imposed on others. China will come up with innovative assistance models and optimise assistance conditions. China's assistance will be primarily used in the areas of human resources development, infrastructure, medical care and health, agriculture, food security, climate change response, desertification prevention and control, and wildlife and environmental protection, and for humanitarian purposes, with the aim to help African countries alleviate poverty, improve people's livelihoods and build up capacity for independent development.

China's Policy on Africa, 2015

Introduction

This chapter employs historiographical approach and actor-oriented approach to analyze the evolution and characteristics of China's humanitarian aid in Africa. The historiographical method allows us to examine how China's humanitarian discourses and practices in Africa have corresponded with the overall development of China-Africa relations from the 1950s to the present. This approach reveals that China's humanitarian aid has transitioned from being primarily driven by ideological considerations in its early stages, to a more pragmatic orientation during the reform and opening period, and then to an open approach in the 21st century that aligns with China's expanding economic interests and global ambitions.

The actor-oriented approach reveals the various actors involved in shaping and implementing China's humanitarian aid in Africa. This includes an examination of the roles and coordination mechanisms of relevant Chinese government institutions (such as the Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of National Defense), as well as the participation of Chinese humanitarian and development organisations (HDOs) and the establishment of new financing mechanisms like the South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund (SSCAF).

By combining these two analytical approaches, this chapter addresses two key sub-questions in the study from the state perspective: 1) How has Chinese humanitarianism transformed over time in terms of discourses and practices? 2) How and why has Chinese state increasing and expanding its role in Africa?

The first section of this chapter focuses on the evolution of China's discourse and practices of humanitarian aid in Africa from 1950 to the present, within the context of the development and changes in China-Africa relations. Studying the evolving humanitarian discourses and practices of China helps explore Chinese humanitarianism itself, laying a foundation for understanding China's approach to humanitarian aid. The second section initially examines the structure and implementation methods of Chinese humanitarian assistance, which have undergone significant changes in recent years. I highlight the involvement of Chinese HDOs and the establishment of a new funding mechanism, the SSCAF. The third section, based on discussions from the first two sections regarding discourse, practices, and structures, comprehensively presents the nature and role of China's humanitarian efforts in Africa.

This chapter demonstrates that China's humanitarian assistance in Africa has undergone significant transformations shaped by the complex interplay between China's evolving domestic priorities, deepening interactions with Africa, and an ever-evolving role within the global humanitarian

landscape. The characteristics of China's humanitarian assistance in Africa are centered around a state-centric approach, development-oriented goals, and increasingly involve diverse actors and methods. This shift includes moving from bilateral to multilateral engagements, from ideological to pragmatic approaches, and emphasizing the provision of long-term solutions. The chapter provides important insights into two sub-questions regarding the evolution of China's humanitarian assistance in Africa and its modes of engagement, highlighting the dynamic and multifaceted nature of China's involvement in African humanitarian efforts.

The Evolution of China's Humanitarian Assistance to Africa in the Context of Developing China-Africa Relations

The evolution of China's humanitarian assistance discourse and practices in Africa has been intrinsically linked to the historical development trajectory of China-Africa relations. As elaborated in the previous chapter (Chapter 5), the relationship between China and African nations has undergone significant transformations over the past seven decades, shaped by shifting ideological currents, economic imperatives, and the changing global order. Against this backdrop, this section will focus on how China's approach to humanitarian assistance in Africa has evolved in tandem with the broader reorientation of China-Africa ties, analyzing the underlying political, economic, and socio-cultural dynamics that have driven these changes.

In the early years following the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, China's humanitarian aid to Africa was primarily motivated by ideological solidarity and a desire to support socialist states and anti-colonial struggles – a phase characterized as 'Ideological Humanitarian Aid' from 1950 to 1978. During this period, China's provision of assistance to newly independent African nations served to foster unity with the Third World and challenge Western hegemony, reflecting the Cold War dynamics and China's quest for international legitimacy as a leader of the developing world.

As China embarked on economic reforms and an 'opening up' from the late 1970s to 2000, its humanitarian assistance took on a more 'pragmatic' orientation. Aid disbursements were increasingly shaped by China's domestic situation and the need for resources to fuel its economic development, as well as its pursuit of soft power and international influence. While aid volumes contracted temporarily as China prioritized its own construction needs, the geographical scope of China's assistance expanded as it sought partnerships across Africa, transcending earlier ideological constraints and reflecting the changing global power dynamics.

The establishment of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000 ushered in an era of 'open-ended humanitarian aid' that aligned with China's burgeoning economic interests and clout

in Africa, as well as its aspirations for a more prominent role in international affairs. China ramped up its humanitarian responses to natural disasters, health crises, and the refugee situation across the continent, reflecting the evolving global challenges and the need to address Africa's development needs. Its aid modalities diversified from the earlier state-dominated approach to include the participation of Chinese HDOs and companies, mirroring the rise of new actors in the global humanitarian landscape.

Crucially, this expansion of humanitarian activities mirrored the deepening economic and diplomatic engagement between China and Africa, facilitated by the FOCAC mechanism. As the two sides forged a strategic partnership for common development, humanitarian cooperation was framed as a key pillar alongside economic, security, and people-to-people ties, reflecting China's broader foreign policy objectives and its pursuit of a more prominent role in shaping global governance. China portrayed its humanitarian efforts as embodying the 'win-win' essence of these relations based on equality and mutual benefit, tapping into the shared aspirations for development and South-South cooperation.

At each stage, the evolution of China's humanitarian aid policy and activities in Africa has been shaped by the complex interplay of domestic, regional, and global dynamics. While China's economic interests and resource needs have played a significant role, its humanitarian engagement with Africa has also been influenced by shifting socio-cultural landscapes, governance challenges, and the agency of African nations in shaping the terms and priorities of aid programs. Moreover, the changing global humanitarian landscape, including the rise of new donors, evolving norms and practices, and emerging challenges such as climate change and pandemics, has necessitated adjustments in China's approach to humanitarian assistance in Africa.

As China's influence on the global stage has grown, its humanitarian assistance to Africa has increasingly become intertwined with its broader foreign policy objectives, such as promoting the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), securing access to natural resources, and projecting a more prominent role in international affairs. The complex interplay between these various factors – domestic priorities, regional dynamics, and global ambitions – has shaped the evolution of China's humanitarian engagement with the African continent.

While the drivers and manifestations have evolved over time, humanitarian cooperation has emerged as an integral component underpinning China's multi-layered engagement with the African continent, reflecting the changing dynamics of the global order and China's pursuit of a more prominent role in shaping international norms and practices.

'Ideological' Humanitarian Aid, 1950-1978

Shortly after the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, China provided a large amount of humanitarian aid to neighbouring countries. This was the prologue of China's approach to foreign aid (Li 2012). Apodaca (2017:12) argues that foreign aid can help to win allies, garner support in international fora, and advance foreign policy objectives. From 1950 to 1978, the main objective of China's international humanitarian aid – as with its overall foreign assistance – was to support socialist states and the anti-colonial struggle (Hirono 2018). This ideological motivation was deeply rooted in China's domestic political climate under Mao Zedong's leadership, which emphasized exporting socialist revolution and cultivating solidarity with the Third World as a counterweight to Western and Soviet influence. Yin Qingfei's (2011) analysis of 89 declassified files of China's foreign humanitarian aid confirms that Africa and Latin America received 14 of the 40 dispersals of foreign humanitarian aid between 1960 and 1965, accounting for 35 per cent of the total. She argues that during 1960-1965, China's foreign humanitarian assistance exhibited three characteristics: the scope of assistance to the Third World gradually expanded, the scale of assistance fluctuated, and the whole served a diplomatic strategy of developing relations with Third World countries. Aid had multiple political functions, such as communicating China's moral superiority over the Soviet Union and the United States as it engendered bilateral relations with recipient countries. This period illustrates how China's humanitarian assistance was closely aligned with its broader foreign policy objectives of challenging the existing global order and establishing itself as an important partner and supporter of developing countries.

According to declassified Foreign Ministry files, China sent 10,000 tons of rice to Guinea as early as 1960 (China Newsweek 2008). After flooding ravaged Somalia in November 1961, China established a relief fund of 150,000 yuan (USD 61,000) and domestic medicines worth 150,000 yuan (USD 61,000). Somalia had just established diplomatic relations with China. On 3 July 1962, after nearly a decade of armed struggle against France, the Algerian people faced a severe shortage of medical personnel and supplies. In January 1963, China became the first country to send a medical team to Algeria (Li 2009). This team included the best doctors from Beijing, Shanghai and Wuhan[42] (Wang 2013).

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[42] African History of Chinese Foreign Aid Medical Team – Dedicated to the 50th Anniversary of Dispatch of Chinese Foreign Aid Medical Team, 2013-08-01, Deputy Director of the International Department of the National Health and Family Planning Commission, Wang Liji. http://www.nhc.gov.cn/gjhzs/gzdt/201308/043fa7164ff44cb2bcf2ff330f08d266.shtml

More broadly, China regarded its medical teams as an important humanitarian element of its policy of supporting revolutionary movements worldwide[43] (Jiang 2015). In addition to Algeria, medical rescue teams (Li 2009) were sent to Zanzibar (from Jiangsu, in 1964), Somalia (from Jilin, in 1965), Congo (from Tianjin, in 1967), Mali (from Zhejiang, in 1968), Tanganyika (from Shandong, in 1968), Mauritania (from Heilongjiang, in 1968), and Guinea (from Beijing, in 1968), to name just a few. These medical teams were sent to support African countries that had won their struggle against colonialism and imperialism. After 1971, China-Africa relations improved significantly and China increased its assistance to the continent. Between 1971 and 1978, Chinese medical teams were deployed to Sudan, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Togo, Cameroon, Senegal, Madagascar, and Morocco (Li 2009). Between 1963 and 1977, 25 of the 30 Chinese medical teams sent abroad went to Africa (Ibid.).

A wide range of stakeholders attempts to influence the decision-making process in China regarding when, where, and how to distribute humanitarian aid, which has become a habitual practice. These stakeholders included embassies, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC), the CPC Central Steering Committee for International Activities[44], and high-level policymakers. The process of foreign humanitarian assistance began when an embassy and the RCSC put forward a proposal for assistance and, after consultation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), requested instructions from the CPC Central Steering Committee for International Activities. At the same time, the MFA would submit the draft relief opinions to the Foreign Affairs Office of the State Council. Ultimately, government leaders in Beijing had the power to decide on the amount and form of aid that would best serve the country's foreign policy (Yin 2011), see Chart 2 below. The government directly managed the RCSC as a rescue team under the Ministry of Health. Under this established mechanism, during this period China's external humanitarian assistance primarily took bilateral forms.

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[43] 'Report on the Foreign Aid Work Conference Convened by the Ministry of Health'; 'Notice of the Ministry of Health on Convening the Foreign Aid Work Conference, Minutes', 1964, Health File No. 148-WS-17-1964-Y-414.

[44] The plans for international activities, relevant policies, principles and issues, examination of work reports, and necessary summaries of experience of all people's organisations shall be carried out under the resolutions and instructions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China or upon the approval of the Central Committee of the Steering Committee for International Activities. See Yin Qingfei, "1949~1965nian Zhongguo duiwai rendaozhuyi yuanzhu fenxi", 94.

Chart 2　China's Early Humanitarian Assistance Mechanism (1950-1978)
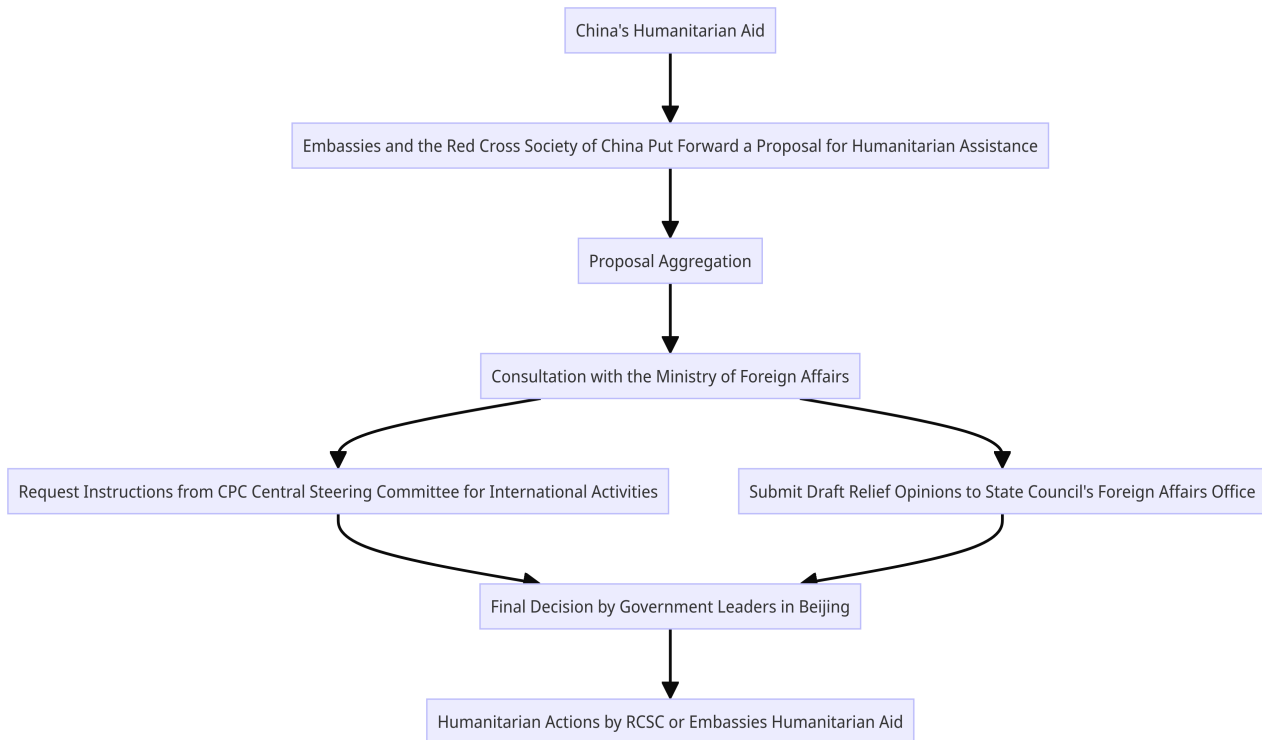
Source from Yin (2011).

'Practical' Humanitarian Aid, 1979-2000

With the adjustment of domestic policies and changes in the international situation in this period, China-Africa relations progressed from neglect, to warming up, and finally to establishing a holistic cooperation platform. Under the influence of the general evolution of China-Africa relations, China's humanitarian assistance to the continent underwent an expansion of geographical scope and a reduction of bilateral humanitarian input in favour of multilateral humanitarian cooperation. This shift was driven by China's transition towards a more pragmatic foreign policy under Deng Xiaoping's leadership, which prioritized economic development and engagement with the broader international community.

At the beginning of this period, both aid to and trade with Africa declined as China emphasised its own economic construction. The proportion of China's foreign aid to its fiscal expenditure dropped from six per cent in 1973 to 0.7 per cent in 1979. China's humanitarian aid funds to Africa declined in line with this overall shrinking.

Although the proportion of humanitarian assistance funds to GDP was reduced, the geographical scope of assistance was significantly expanded and redirected to developing countries that were coping with natural disasters. This shift towards a more globalized approach to humanitarian aid was

driven by China's desire to project a more responsible image on the international stage and to garner soft power influence, aligning with its broader foreign policy goals. Unlike the earlier period, when aid supported a broader political agenda, China began to explore soft power development by providing aid to a wide variety of countries. During 1984-1985, for example, China provided humanitarian food assistance to 31 African countries affected by severe drought.

After China resumed its legitimate seat in the United Nations in 1971, it devoted several years to learning about the affairs of the United Nations and multilateral diplomacy. Finally, in 1979, China officially joined and donated to the United Nations Children's Fund (USD 11.8 million) (UNICEF), the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). China has contributed USD 21 million annually to the WFP since 1981(WFP 2023). Despite this beginning of multilateral participation, the bulk of China's aid was bilateral.

China's approach to humanitarian aid in Africa was more practical in this stage. Project implementation emphasised non-interference in a recipient country's internal affairs, and project selection was weighted toward responses to natural disasters, regardless of where they occurred. The aid programs during this period sought to build long-term partnerships with African countries and help promote sustainable economic growth and development.

'Open-ended' Humanitarian Aid, 2000-present

Since 2000, Chinese humanitarians have responded to drought, famine, epidemic, epidemic diseases, lightning, earthquakes, and landmines in at least 32 African countries (Yan 2020). In addition, China is ramping up its assistance to global refugees, particularly African refugees, and devoting more political energy to the issue in international fora. This expanded humanitarian engagement with Africa has been driven by China's growing economic interests on the continent, as well as its aspirations for a more prominent role in shaping global governance norms and practices.

Strengthening aid to African refugees is closely related to the expansion of China's role in security cooperation in Africa. As discussed in the previous chapter (Chapter Five), since 2000, China has gradually increased its security assistance and cooperation with African countries. By dispatching peacekeeping forces, providing military training, and offering equipment support, China has significantly enhanced the security and stability of African nations. These measures not only help maintain peace and security in the African region but also provide the necessary safeguards for China's economic and humanitarian aid activities in Africa. Through participation in UN peacekeeping operations and bilateral military cooperation, China's security role in Africa has continuously expanded, thereby enhancing its influence and reputation in the region.

Specifically, China's assistance to refugees in South Sudan is a prime example. After the outbreak of armed conflict in South Sudan in 2013, the country has consistently ranked among the world's five largest refugee-producing countries for five consecutive years, with the most refugees in Africa. China initially provided USD 100,000 of emergency humanitarian assistance. Follow-up projects in February 2014 included nine containers of humanitarian aid delivered to the Government of South Sudan, and the dispatch of a second batch of medical rescue teams. In April, it delivered USD 6,915,000 of humanitarian aid in 31 containers, followed in August with an additional USD 2,766,000 of humanitarian aid and medicine and medical equipment valued at USD 1,383,000. In 2015, China provided the country with USD 300,000 in cash assistance for expenses associated with a cholera outbreak. In 2017, an additional USD 1,000,000 was added to contain the cholera epidemic, and 8,750 tons of rice were provided in addition to USD 5,000,000 via the WFP in response to a famine crisis in the country (Qu 2017). By providing substantial humanitarian aid to South Sudan, China aimed to project an image of a responsible global power while also securing its economic interests and diplomatic influence in the region. Beyond South Sudan, China's participation in Africa's multinational emergency food and non-food aid through the SSCAF in 2017 and 2018 were targeted overwhelmingly at refugees and internally displaced persons.

The new millennium also witnessed a China that sought greater multilateral coordination on humanitarian assistance. China gradually increased its participation in the international humanitarian assistance system and actively participated in international humanitarian assistance activities led by UN agencies such as the UNICEF, the WFP, and the UNHCR, and international NGOs such as Oxfam, International Action Assistance, and the International Association of the Red Cross (Li 2012, see also Xinhua News 2009). This shift towards multilateralism in humanitarian assistance reflected China's desire to gain legitimacy and influence within existing global governance structures, aligning with its broader foreign policy objectives of projecting a more prominent role on the world stage.

At the same time, the Chinese government encouraged the participation of Chinese HDOs in humanitarian assistance to Africa. Most HDOs that provide humanitarian assistance in emergency situations are foundations and professional rescue teams. They carry out rescue missions, provide disaster risk assessment, solicit and and deliver goods and materials to victims in disaster-impacted areas, as well as contribute to post-disaster reconstruction. The Amity Foundation (*Ai De Jijinhui* 爱德基金会), for example, provided HK$ 250,000 (USD 32,000) to drought relief efforts in Africa in 2011, and food aid for 1,500 people in Kenya. The foundation also helped local communities build small dams, securing a stable water supply and an improved food source and, thus, building resilience. In 2019, the foundation launched the Lighting Children in the Field project, which distributes health

kits to refugee children in Kenya and Uganda. In the same year, Gong Yanghui, a professional rescue team, provided humanitarian medical assistance in Mozambique after it was hit by a strong tropical cyclone. And in 2020, the Red Cross Foundation of China, the China Foundation for Peace and Development, the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation, and others provided material medical assistance to Africa. The involvement of Chinese HDOs in humanitarian assistance efforts in Africa not only expanded the scope of China's aid activities but also served to bolster its soft power and public diplomacy efforts on the continent.

It is noteworthy that China's increased aid to refugees in African conflict zones somewhat contradicts its long-standing policy of 'non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries'. Traditionally, China has been reluctant to engage in humanitarian aid for refugees in conflict areas due to concerns over political sensitivity. However, as China's economic and strategic interests in Africa have expanded, its role in international affairs has also evolved. China's growing involvement in African conflict zones demonstrates its willingness to take on greater responsibilities in global governance, but it also faces new diplomatic challenges and political risks.

In summary, China's humanitarian engagement with Africa has undergone a significant expansion, underpinned by two major driving forces. Firstly, China's growing economic stakes on the African continent have necessitated increased humanitarian assistance efforts to safeguard its burgeoning interests. Secondly, China's aspiration to exert greater influence in shaping global governance norms has rendered humanitarian aid an important vehicle for projecting its great power status and realizing this objective. In pursuit of these dual imperatives, China has adopted a comprehensive and multi-pronged approach to escalating its humanitarian assistance to Africa. This has entailed direct bilateral aid, participation in humanitarian initiatives spearheaded by the United Nations and non-governmental organisations, as well as encouragement and support for Chinese humanitarian organisations operating in Africa. The scope of China's assistance has encompassed a wide array of humanitarian crises afflicting the region, ranging from drought and famine to disease outbreaks, natural disasters, and refugee emergencies. Amang this, China's response to the South Sudanese refugee crisis exemplifies the multifaceted nature and resolve underlying its humanitarian endeavors. In tackling this crisis, China has not only provided substantial financial aid, material supplies, and medical personnel, but has also engaged in multilateral coordination efforts to effectively address the humanitarian plight on the ground. Overall, China's intensification of humanitarian assistance to Africa reflects a strategic intent to transition towards a more proactive global development and security role commensurate with its rising power status. Through these humanitarian efforts, China

has not only sought to safeguard its burgeoning economic equities in Africa, but more crucially, to amplify its voice and influence in global governance affairs.

Approaches and Mechanisms of Chinese Humanitarianism in Africa

In the introduction chapter, I discussed three approaches to Chinese humanitarianism: development-oriented, state-centric and natural disaster-oriented. Over the past few years, China's increasing involvement in global affairs and humanitarian actions has prompted a shift towards a more structured approach to humanitarianism. Central to this approach is the China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA), established as the agency primarily responsible for coordinating and implementing China's foreign aid programs, including humanitarian aid. Moreover, the South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund was created as a novel means of financing humanitarian challenges. This approach also makes it easier to explain what Chinese humanitarianism entails.

Institution-building of humanitarian assistance mechanisms in China

The institutional construction of China's humanitarian aid mechanism reflects the country's growing participation and influence in global humanitarian affairs. The implementation structure of China's humanitarian aid has evolved from a fragmented to a systematic framework, and from a singular to a diversified approach. This trajectory mirrors profound changes in China's interests and strategic positioning. The evolution of these institutions can be seen as a shift from 'habitual practice' to 'institutional embedding'. Early Chinese humanitarian aid often exhibited characteristics of emergency response and ad hoc arrangements, lacking systematic top-level design. As China's status in global affairs has risen, the diplomatic functions and strategic significance of humanitarian aid have become increasingly prominent, driving the process towards institutionalization.

The evolution of China's humanitarian aid institutional mechanisms began in 2004 with the establishment of the Humanitarian Relief and Assistance Emergency Response Mechanism, marking China's start to pay attention and begin constructing the institutional framework for humanitarian assistance. Subsequently, in 2008, the MOFCOM collaborated with the the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Ministry of Finance, and other relevant departments and agencies to establish an inter-ministerial liaison mechanism for foreign aid work. In February 2011, this mechanism was upgraded to an inter-ministerial coordination mechanism (Xinhua News 2011), further promoting the improvement and maturity of China's humanitarian aid mechanisms. The key departments in this inter-ministerial coordination mechanism include the MOFCOM, the MFA, and the People's

Liberation Army (PLA). The MOFCOM and the MFA jointly determine aid recipients and amounts, while the PLA is responsible for organizing and coordinating delivery operations.

Under the inter-ministerial coordination mechanism, the humanitarian aid work of the MOFCOM is primarily managed by the Department of Foreign Assistance at the Ministry of Commerce of China. The work mainly involves two aspects: one is to sign aid agreements with international organisations and provide them with cash assistance; the other is to offer humanitarian cash and material assistance to other countries, including African countries, in a bilateral format. The MFA leverages its diplomatic channels to play a role in humanitarian aid by: firstly, coordinating with the Department of Foreign Assistance at the Ministry of Commerce and the General Staff Headquarters to provide emergency humanitarian assistance to other countries, including African nations; secondly, transferring humanitarian aid through overseas embassies; and thirdly, cooperating with the Ministry of National Defense (MND) to host and conduct humanitarian demining technology training courses. The MND utilizes its unique organisational mobilization capabilities and professional rescue techniques for several initiatives: first, conducting medical/disaster relief drills for humanitarian purposes with other countries including African nations (MND 2018); second, providing free humanitarian medical services using Peace Ark (MND 2018); third, dispatching military medical expert teams for medical aid; fourth, carrying out humanitarian rescue operations using peacekeeping forces; and fifth, collaborating with both the MOFCOM and the MFA in delivering humanitarian aid supplies.

Notably, a distinctive feature of China's humanitarian aid is the high level of military involvement, reflecting China's commitment to positioning itself as a responsible and active participant in the international system (Engstrom 2013, Kamphausen 2013). In 2002, the PLA conducted one of its first humanitarian aid and disaster relief missions when it delivered relief materials to Afghanistan after an earthquake (Southerland 2019). Since then, it has participated in several large-scale international humanitarian assistance activities, of which a typical case is China's support during the Ebola outbreak in 2014. In response to requests for assistance by the affected countries' governments and the WHO, Beijing deployed approximately 500 PLA personnel to Sierra Leone and Liberia between 2014 and 2015. Their activities included treating Ebola patients, establishing an Ebola diagnosis and treatment centre, and training local medical personnel (Lu et al. 2016, Xu et al. 2015). The PLA was also involved in gathering and transporting humanitarian aid materials. The PLA effort was its largest medical assistance mission abroad. Beyond the PLA deployment to Sierra Leone and Liberia, Beijing's response to the Ebola disaster included aid valued at more than USD 120 million, dispatching 500 additional civilian medical personnel, and training medical personnel in six other

countries (Southerland 2019). In the case of the Ebola epidemic response, in the opinion of scholar Huang (2017), the humanitarian assistance was consistent with China's foreign policy objective of enhancing soft power in Africa, but it was also intended to prevent the Ebola viral disease from spreading into China.

Although the inter-ministerial coordination mechanism has greatly facilitated the efficiency of emergency humanitarian aid disbursal by sharing resources and information, it has also resulted in complex and fragmented management. China has long been criticised by the international community for the lagging development of its humanitarian aid system, opaque data, and weak accountability and supervision mechanisms, compared to the growth of its humanitarian aid footprint. To adapt to the needs of its major power status and the process of globalization, China established the CIDCA in 2018. This agency not only took over the function of coordinating foreign aid previously under the MOFCOM, but also unified the top-level design of foreign aid affairs. It made institutional arrangements for relevant policies and regulations, highlighting China's desire to pursue normalization in humanitarian governance (Administrative Measures for Foreign Aid 2021).

Based on a 2021 study of the newly promulgated 'Administrative Measures for Foreign Aid' policy and other literature, this new inter-ministerial coordination mechanism for foreign aid can be divided into two parts: the CIDCA assumes the coordinating and decision-making role, while the implementation is carried out by MOFCOM, MFA, Ministry of Emergency Management, MND, and the PLA under the Central Military Commission.

In the new inter-ministerial coordination mechanism for foreign aid, the SSCAF has become an important platform for China's humanitarian assistance. Through the SSCAF, the CIDCA cooperates multilaterally on humanitarian efforts with several international organisations, including the WFP, the UNICEF, and the WHO. This practice helps enhance the credibility of humanitarian aid and highlights China's willingness to actively participate in and promote global humanitarian governance. At the same time, it also reflects China's efforts to align its aid projects with the international system, including the United Nations.

It is worth analyzing in depth that the new measures clarify for the first time that the SSCAF will also support the implementation of relevant projects by various entities, including social organisations. This means that the SSCAF can provide a support channel for humanitarian aid projects by Chinese HDOs, making Chinese HDOs one of the important implementing bodies for China's foreign aid.

Based on the above research, the author has constructed a chart (See Chart 3) depicting China's latest inter-ministerial coordination mechanism for foreign aid, clearly delineating the implementing bodies and institutional mechanisms for China's foreign aid, including humanitarian assistance.

Chart 3　New Inter-Ministerial Coordination Mechanism for Foreign Aid

The State Council

Coordination and decisionmaking departments

- CDICA

Executive Departments

- Ministry of Commerce
  - Department of International Cooperation
  - South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Emergency Management
- Ministry of National Defense
- People's Liberation Army
- China Association of Civil Society Organizations for International Exchanges

Central Military Commission of the Communist Party of China

Central Committee of the Communist Party of China

Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China

CDICA functions:
- Formulation of foreign aid guidelines and policies
- Promote the reform of foreign aid methods
- Manage the scale and direction of use of foreign aid funds
- Prepare annual budgets and final accounts for foreign aid projects
- Deciding on foreign aid projects
- Supervise and evaluate the implementation of foreign aid projects
- Organization of international exchange and cooperation in foreign aid

Ministry of Commerce functions:
- Proposals for foreign aid
- Undertake specific implementation of foreign aid
- Consult with the recipient and handle specific matters of foreign aid project implementation
- Responsible for project organization and management
- Selection of foreign aid projects to implement the main body or send foreign aid workers
- Manage the department's foreign aid funds

Ministry of Foreign Affairs functions:
- Make foreign aid-related proposals according to the needs of foreign affairs
- Embassies and consulates abroad (missions) to coordinate the management of foreign aid work in the country (international organizations)
- Assist in foreign aid-related matters; communicate with recipients about aid needs and conduct policy reviews
- Responsible for the supervision and management of the implementation of foreign aid projects

Ministry of Emergency Management functions:
- By the Department of International Cooperation and Rescue under the Ministry of Emergency Management
- Carry out international cooperation and exchange in emergency management
- Fulfillment of international treaties and cooperation agreements
- Organizational participation in international emergency relief

People's Liberation Army functions:
- Participate in international disaster relief and humanitarian assistance
- Sending professional relief forces to the affected countries for relief and mitigation
- Provide relief supplies and medical assistance to strengthen international exchange of relief and disaster reduction

China Association of Civil Society Organizations for International Exchanges functions:
- Promoting the participation of Chinese civil society organizations in international NGO exchanges and cooperation
- Collaborate with local partners to organize charity events in various regions including Africa

Source: made by author.

China's new foreign aid coordination mechanism aims to strengthen the formulation, decision-making, and coordination of foreign aid policies in order to better utilize aid as a tool of national diplomacy. As the top agency, the CIDCA plays a crucial leading and coordinating role, making China's foreign aid more systematic, coordinated, and effective. The participation of Chinese HDOs and the establishment of the SSCAF have significantly broadened the scope and diversity of China's foreign aid. These factors will play an increasingly important role in China's foreign aid endeavors.

This series of institutional reforms reflects several development trends in China's humanitarian assistance: First, the decision-making and implementation of aid are becoming increasingly refined and professionalized, with enhanced national coordination capabilities. Second, the aid actors are becoming more diversified, with the government and non-governmental forces forming a joint force, highlighting China's efforts to mobilize social forces to participate in global humanitarian endeavors. Third, aid channels are more diversified, combining bilateral and multilateral approaches, which helps improve China's international image and discourse power in humanitarian assistance. Finally, the trend of integrating humanitarian aid with development aid is becoming more prominent, which is highly consistent with China's long-standing advocacy of a 'development-oriented humanitarianism' concept.

Overall, the institutional development of China's humanitarian aid mechanism is a constantly evolving and maturing process. This process reflects China's efforts as an emerging donor country to not only continue the advantages of its traditional aid model but also actively absorb international norms and seek greater international discourse power and rule-making power. Looking ahead, with the further improvement of relevant institutional and legal frameworks, China is expected to play a more active and unique role in global humanitarian governance. The next section will specifically explore how the Chinese government recognizes and incorporates Chinese HDOs into foreign humanitarian assistance and how the South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund facilitates China's humanitarian aid to Africa.

Involvement of Chinese HDOs in China's humanitarian aid in Africa

In the previous chapter (Chapter 5), I briefly described the evolution of the relationship between the Chinese government and Chinese NGOs from initial 'control' to 'cooperation'. I also analyzed and explained the motivations and reasons why the Chinese government views Chinese NGOs as an important channel for its public diplomacy. This section uses Chinese HDOs participating in humanitarian assistance as a case study to illustrate the specific practices of the Chinese government incorporating Chinese HDOs into its foreign aid mechanism, and to analyze the impact of

incorporating Chinese HDOs into the foreign aid mechanism on China's humanitarian assistance to Africa.

The Chinese government's official incorporation of Chinese HDOs into China's foreign aid system marks a major turning point in the history of China's foreign aid. This incorporation reflects the Chinese government's commitment to opening up foreign aid funds to social organisations and aligning its foreign aid policies with international standards. However, the Chinese government's recognition of the role of social organisations in foreign aid was not an overnight process, but rather a gradual one that can be traced back to the participation of Chinese HDOs in domestic poverty alleviation efforts, from which they accumulated valuable practical experience.

The Chinese government's initial recognition of the importance of social organizations' participation in poverty alleviation was reflected in the 1994 National Plan for Poverty Alleviation (1994-2000), which called for them to play an active role in poverty reduction efforts (Zhao and Guo 2017). After entering the 21st century, the government issued several policy documents emphasizing the creation of favorable conditions for social organisations to participate in and implement government poverty alleviation and development projects. The Chinese government recognized that, compared to government agencies, HDOs are more flexible, diverse, and efficient in project implementation, and have achieved higher success rates in poverty alleviation work (Kuang and Wang 2010). Therefore, Chinese HDOs have played a key role in domestic poverty alleviation efforts, and their professionalism has been recognized by the Chinese government.

In fact, the Chinese government's decision to incorporate HDOs into the foreign aid system was not only based on the experience accumulated from domestic poverty alleviation practices, but more importantly, on political and strategic considerations. On the one hand, the Chinese government believes that these non-governmental organisations help enhance and legitimize China's voice in international affairs and contribute to the development of China-Africa relations. Cooperation between Chinese and African NGOs could make a significant contribution to avoiding conflicts and helping African communities communicate effectively with Chinese companies (Zadek 2013). In 2015, Chinese Africa expert Li Anshan suggested expanding the role of Chinese NGOs in foreign aid and international development to improve China-Africa relations and help Chinese companies fulfill their social responsibilities in Africa.

On the other hand, the Chinese government also has long been aware of the importance of people-to-people exchanges between China and Africa, and believes that questions and criticisms emerging from the continent may stem from a weak understanding of China's development model and culture. The important role of Chinese NGOs in promoting 'non-governmental exchanges and cooperation'

was affirmed at the Second China-Africa Cooperation Forum, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 2003. Non-governmental exchanges have been formally incorporated into the national Action Plan since then. From the standpoint of the Chinese state, Chinese NGOs are seen as facilitators of friendlier relations with African nations (Hsu et al. 2016). Therefore, cooperation among NGOs is viewed as promoting non-governmental friendships, enhancing mutual understanding and identity, and deepening China-Africa friendship. The 2006 White Paper on China's Policy towards Africa proposed encourage NGOs to cooperate and exchange with relevant African groups in disaster mitigation, relief and humanitarian assistance. In the 2015 edition of China's Policy on Africa, the government clarified further that it would encourage and support NGOs from both sides to carry out various forms of experience exchange and practical cooperation in poverty reduction.

The Chinese government's decision to incorporate HDOs into its foreign aid mechanism was not an expediency made overnight but a well-considered major decision. This decision not only had practical considerations, such as using the civilian force of HDOs to improve the professionalism of China's foreign aid, especially humanitarian assistance, but also had theoretical depth and strategic vision. It aimed to promote mutual understanding and friendship between the Chinese people and people of other countries by mobilizing HDOs, enhance the public affinity of China's foreign aid, and lay a solid foundation for China to connect with the people of the world. Chinese HDOs have become important practitioners of China's concept of 'People-to-People Bond' (mentioned in Chapter 5) in the field of foreign aid.

Establishment of The South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund

SSCAF was established in 2015 as part of a new, holistic approach to South-South cooperation. The new South-South cooperation, which includes the BRI, opens new channels for participation in multilateral development. The new South-South cooperation has expanded from the original economic cooperation to comprehensive cooperation in politics, economy, society and culture, and the main participants include not only the government, but also private economic and social institutions (Xu 2019). Each partner in the new South-South cooperation has its own unique, long-term development experiences and resources. Under this framework, the SSCAF's objective is to pool Chinese and international resources and direct them toward helping developing countries implement the goals set out in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The SSCAF prioritizes areas such as humanitarian assistance, agricultural development and food security, health, poverty alleviation, disaster prevention and reduction, education and training, sustainable industrial development, ecological environmental protection, trade promotion, and investment facilitation. The main focus is on implementing small and micro livelihood projects. Since

its establishment more than seven years ago, the Fund has cooperated with international organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), WFP, WHO, UNICEF, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), World Trade Organisation (WTO), International Organisation for Migration (IOM), UNHCR, and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). It has implemented more than 130 projects in over 50 developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, benefiting over 20 million people (China MOFCOM and CIDCA 2021).

Humanitarian assistance is one of the SSCAF's priority areas. The Fund has played a crucial role in supporting China's humanitarian aid to Africa by pooling Chinese and international resources, collaborating with international organisations to implement aid projects, and investing substantial funds. From 2015 to 2018, these United Nations agencies received humanitarian aid funds from the SSCAF and then delivered humanitarian assistance to several African countries: emergency food aid to South Sudan, Somalia and Kenya in 2017; emergency food aid to the Central African Republic, Nigeria and Cameroon in 2017-2018; food and non-food aid to Zimbabwe in 2018; and much more. According to China's 2021 White Paper on New Era China's International Development Cooperation, by the end of 2019, agricultural development and food security accounted for about 38 per cent of SSCAF disbursements, post-disaster reconstruction eight per cent, migrant and refugee protection five per cent, and health response three per cent. These areas of assistance are all closely related to humanitarian aid, demonstrating the Fund's significant contribution to China's humanitarian efforts globally, including in Africa.

The primary source of funding for SSCAF is investment from the Chinese government. In 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the establishment of the USD two billion SSCAF and, two years later, he announced an additional investment of USD one billion by Chinese government into the fund (Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, BRFIC 2017). The emergence of SSCAF has also greatly alleviated the funding gap of United Nations humanitarian assistance. The emergence of SSCAF has greatly alleviated the funding gap of United Nations humanitarian assistance, enabling more effective collaboration between China and international organisations in delivering humanitarian aid to African countries.

Conceptual Innovation of Combining Emergency and Non-emergency Humanitarian Aid in China

Over time, China has developed a distinct definition for its humanitarian practices. The new definitions encompass non-emergency humanitarian assistance, expanding beyond the traditional emergency aid framework. China's concept of development, mentioned in the introduction chapter,

shapes the emergence of non-emergency aid and highlights its unique approach to humanitarianism. This innovative concept of combining emergency humanitarian aid with non-emergency aid reflects the characteristics of China's humanitarian assistance, which differs from the Western traditional humanitarian assistance that mainly focuses on emergency relief. Analysis of three white papers on foreign aid issued by the Chinese government in 2011, 2014 and 2021 demonstrates that China has gradually incorporated this understanding into its humanitarian aid practices. This temporal analysis provides insights into China's evolving approach to humanitarianism.

The 2011 White Paper on Foreign Aid introduced and summarised the basic situation, experience, and major achievements of China's foreign aid from the founding of New China in 1949 to 2010. It identified three types of Chinese foreign aid: grant aid, interest-free loans, and concessional loans. Emergency humanitarian aid was part of China's foreign grant aid. In addition to emergency humanitarian assistance, grant assistance included small and medium-sized social welfare projects such as assistance in the construction of hospitals, schools, and low-cost housing; well drilling and water supply projects; and cooperative projects in the areas of human resources development, technical development, and material assistance. The 2011 Paper also noted that China's emergency humanitarian assistance included the provision of emergency relief materials on China's initiative or at the request of the disaster-stricken country or region under the circumstances of various severe natural or human-made disasters, in order to mitigate the loss of life and property and help the disaster-stricken country to cope with the situation. At that time, the practice of disbursing humanitarian aid from China took the form of emergency donations, with no expectation of repayment, in response to severe natural and humanitarian disasters, and the aid contents included physical materials, cash and rescue workers. At this stage, China's humanitarian aid efforts were relatively singular in form, primarily focused on natural disaster response.

A White Paper on China's Foreign Assistance issued in 2014 analysed China's foreign assistance from 2010 to 2012 (The State Council Information Office of China 2014). Like its predecessor, this Paper characterised humanitarian assistance as grant-based. However, it introduced two changes in the content of assistance. First, China replaced the title 'Emergency Humanitarian Assistance' with 'Carrying out Humanitarian Assistance', indicating that China no longer views humanitarianism solely as a response to emergency situations. Second, the paper clearly states that China responds quickly to appeals for humanitarian assistance from the international community after natural-humanitarian disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, and droughts, as well as human-caused humanitarian disasters such as wars, by providing relief materials or cash aid and dispatching rescue and medical teams as needed, to help the victim countries with disaster relief and post-disaster

reconstruction. The 2014 white paper reflected an important transformation in the form of China's humanitarian assistance, explicitly proposing to address humanitarian issues caused by man-made disasters including wars, expanding the breadth and depth of assistance content. This change also confirms that China has changed its previous form of natural disaster-oriented humanitarian assistance to attach importance to the humanitarian problems caused by human-made disasters.

In 2018, the Red Cross Society, Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RCSC) held a Workshop on Capacity Building for Non-Emergency National Assistance in the African Region, and invited participants from the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management, the Parliament, the Presidential Palace and other units in the Gambia, South Sudan, Mauritius, Uganda, Sierra Leone and Nigeria (RCSC 2018). The RCSC argued that China had begun to attach importance to cultivating capacity for emergency response and disaster prevention/mitigation in non-natural disasters and non-war, non-emergency periods. It also formally put forward the concept of 'non-emergency humanitarian assistance'. Although the government had not yet forwarded a formal definition for this concept, it attached increasing importance to the general idea.

The most recent White Paper on China's International Development Cooperation for a New Era, issued in January 2021, is much different from the previous two White Papers. A major innovation is that the term 'foreign aid' has been replaced with 'international development cooperation', which is defined as 'multi-bilateral international cooperation in the field of economic and social development, including humanitarian assistance, carried out by China through foreign aid and other means within the framework of South-South cooperation.' 'International development cooperation' shapes a new form of partnership between China and other developing countries, including African countries, emphasising a more equal and mutually beneficial partnership based on shared development goals and priorities, different from the traditional aid approach of the West. In addition, this Paper sets out China's philosophy and policies on international development cooperation for the first time. Furthermore, it closely aligns international development cooperation with national development strategies and initiatives, making foreign aid an important vehicle for China's deeper involvement in global affairs.

The 2021 Paper disaggregates China's humanitarian assistance into six parts: carrying out emergency relief for natural disasters, responding to public health emergencies, providing food aid to cope with famine, participating in post-disaster recovery and reconstruction, improving disaster prevention and mitigation capacity, and helping to alleviate the crisis of migrants and refugees (The State Council Information Office of China 2021). The 2021 white paper further enriched and innovated the forms and content of China's humanitarian assistance. On the one hand, China more

systematically incorporated post-disaster recovery and reconstruction and improving recipient countries' disaster prevention and mitigation capabilities into the scope of humanitarian assistance, reflecting the concept of integrating humanitarian assistance with development assistance. On the other hand, participating in new forms such as alleviating the crisis of migrants and refugees further expanded the extension of China's humanitarian assistance. In terms of volume, China's foreign humanitarian assistance has expanded for each of the past eight years. In addition, in terms of scope, China's foreign humanitarian assistance now includes humanitarian assistance in non-emergency situations. From 2013 to the present, China has participated more and more in post-disaster recovery and reconstruction under non-emergency conditions, cultivated its disaster prevention and reduction capacity, and established a pioneering cooperative mechanism for disaster reduction. China's non-emergency humanitarian assistance has become more frequent and mature.

Overall, through innovations in assistance content and forms, China has gradually built a 'Chinese-characterized' humanitarian assistance model that is distinct from traditional Western humanitarian assistance. This model places greater emphasis on integrating humanitarian assistance with development assistance, and stresses improving recipient countries' long-term disaster prevention and sustainable development capabilities, contributing new concepts and practices to the global humanitarian cause. Changes in China's foreign humanitarian assistance is compared in Table 2.

Table 2   White Paper Comparisons: 2011, 2014 and 2021

China Foreign Aid White Paper (2011)	China Foreign Aid White Paper (2014)	China's International Development Cooperation in the New Era White Paper (2021)
Theme: Emergency humanitarian assistance	*Theme:* Humanitarian assistance	*Theme:* Responding to Global Humanitarian Challenges Together
Content/focus: 1. Emergency disaster relief 2. Cash assistance 3. Dispatch of rescue personnel	*Content/focus:* 1. Emergency disaster relief 2. Cash assistance 3. Emergency food aid 4. Post-disaster reconstruction 5. Disaster preparation and mitigation	*Content/focus:* 1. Emergency disaster relief (including cash assistance) 2. Emergency food aid 3. Post-disaster recovery and reconstruction 4. Disaster preparation and mitigation 5. Responding to public health emergencies 6. Easing migrant and refugee crisis

Source: the author

Through an analysis of three foreign aid White Papers, it becomes apparent that China's approach to humanitarian issues and aid has undergone significant systematic extensions. The country has demonstrated a notable shift in its response to humanitarian crises, from focusing solely on emergency situations to also addressing non-emergency challenges. This shift reflects China's more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of humanitarian issues and the diverse approaches required to address them effectively. Furthermore, China's humanitarian aid actions have expanded to encompass post-disaster reconstruction and recovery, highlighting the country's recognition of the long-term impacts of disasters on affected communities. This expansion also underscores the importance of sustained support and recovery efforts beyond the immediate aftermath of a crisis. Lastly, China has expanded its humanitarian aid efforts from natural disasters to include warfare and conflicts. This development is particularly significant in light of the increasing number of individuals worldwide who have been displaced from their homes due to conflict, persecution, and other factors.

While policies have changed, a specifically Chinese view of development continues to guide them. China has a unique understanding of the relationship between development aid and humanitarian aid. From the ancient traditional society to the modern society of China, disaster and poverty are inseparable and interrelated. The deep-rooted viewpoints of 'disaster will lead to poverty' and 'disaster will return to poverty' are inherited by China's development culture. Therefore, there is no clear 'boundary' between disaster-induced humanitarian aid and development aid carried out for poverty alleviation in China. China's traditional context helps to explain why Chinese humanitarian

assistance now includes both emergency and non-emergency assistance. Emergency humanitarian assistance includes emergency material assistance in the event of natural disasters or human-made conflicts, spot assistance, food aid and dispatch of rescue teams, as well as medical assistance and dispatch of medical teams for public health emergencies. Non-emergency humanitarian assistance includes long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction, long-term enhancement of disaster prevention and mitigation capacities, and long-term improvement and mitigation of refugee migration crises.

Upon examination of China's humanitarian implementation structure, materials delivered, and recipient characteristics, it is evident that the nation's foreign humanitarian assistance, particularly towards countries on the African continent, has undergone a noteworthy evolution towards a more structured, systematic, and institutionalised approach. This emerging trend of Chinese humanitarianism can be attributed to its indigenous humanitarian thoughts and philosophy, which has facilitated China's greater involvement and crucial contributions in global humanitarian affairs. As such, China's growing humanitarian presence has become increasingly indispensable in shaping the contemporary landscape of global humanitarianism, which is the focus of the next section.

The Nature and the Role of Chinese Humanitarianism in Africa

The nature and role of China's humanitarian assistance in Africa has long been a focus of attention in the international academic community. With the Chinese government's increasing emphasis on humanitarian assistance in recent years, and its increasingly important role in global humanitarian assistance, especially the large-scale medical assistance carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic, China's humanitarian assistance to African countries has sparked widespread discussion internationally.

Currently, there are two main perspectives in the international academic community regarding the nature and role of China's humanitarian assistance in Africa. The first perspective believes that China's humanitarian assistance in Africa is driven by political and economic interests. Piveteau (2019), through his research on China's medical assistance projects in Africa, pointed out that such assistance is often combined with infrastructure construction projects, reflecting China's political and economic considerations. This view is supported by Wild (2015), who believes that China's humanitarian assistance in Africa is mainly a diplomatic act to strengthen political and economic relations with recipient countries. Additionally, Daly et al. (2021), through surveys of the public in Tanzania and Malawi, found that some Africans believe China's medical assistance to Africa has hidden motives, with the core being to expand China's political influence in low- and middle-income countries and the global health sector. However, Dreher et al. (2018)'s research shows that China's

assistance is not always driven by political considerations, and assistance in the health sector is more influenced by the needs of recipient countries.

The second perspective interprets China's humanitarian assistance to Africa from the angle of soft power, arguing that this is mainly aimed at enhancing China's national soft power (Gong 2021, Lee 2021, Chipaike et al. 2021). Gong (2021), by analyzing China's medical aid to Africa during the Ebola and COVID-19 pandemics, finds that this is crucial for China to shape a positive and responsible great power image. Research by Chipaike et al. (2023) also shows that China's medical assistance to African countries during the COVID-19 pandemic is a way of projecting soft power, serving both as a public diplomacy tool and an opportunity for Chinese pharmaceutical companies to explore the African market, while also presenting the image of China as a responsible great power providing international public goods. However, some scholars have questioned this perspective. For example, Foot (2014) argues that China's soft power effects in the humanitarian field are limited because the benevolent motives behind its assistance are often questioned.

I believe that in analyzing China's multiple objectives in humanitarian assistance to Africa, we cannot ignore the profound influence of China's traditional humanitarian thoughts and moral ideals. Returning to the analysis of Chapter 4 of this thesis, China's humanitarian thoughts is deeply rooted in the Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist traditions, which emphasize benevolence, compassion, moral obligations, and helping, requiring helping those in need at home and abroad, especially those suffering. During the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake relief, these traditional values played an important role, arousing love and assistance actions across society (Teets 2009). The Chinese government's humanitarian assistance in Africa is, to some extent, also an extension of these values overseas.

At the same time, the legitimacy pursued by the Chinese government also affects its humanitarian assistance approach in Africa. Based on the Confucian concept of the state, ancient China's humanitarian activities emphasized the leading role of the state in responding to disasters, a tradition that has deeply influenced China's contemporary humanitarian approach (Hirono 2013). Ancient China's 'people-oriented' disaster management approach, which emphasized placing the needs of affected populations at the center of the response (Ibid.), aligns with contemporary humanitarian principles. By providing effective humanitarian assistance in Africa, the Chinese government demonstrates its image as a responsible great power, which helps enhance its legitimacy both at home and abroad. At the same time, incorporating humanitarian organisations in foreign aid not only improves the targeting and effectiveness of assistance but also showcases the vitality of Chinese civil society (Zadek 2013), further consolidating the government's legitimacy base.

Since the new millennium, China's humanitarian engagement with Africa has expanded significantly, driven by two major forces. On one hand, China's growing economic interests on the African continent have prompted it to increase humanitarian assistance to safeguard these interests. On the other hand, China hopes to play a greater role in global governance, and humanitarian assistance has become an important tool for achieving this goal and asserting its great power status. To this end, China has adopted a comprehensive, multi-pronged approach to assistance, including direct bilateral aid, participation in United Nations and non-governmental humanitarian actions, and support for Chinese HDOs operating in Africa. China's assistance covers various types of humanitarian crises in the region, such as drought, famine, disease, natural disasters, and refugee crises. For example, in responding to the South Sudanese refugee crisis, China has provided substantial funding, supplies, and medical aid, as well as participating in multilateral coordination, fully demonstrating China's determination and capability in the humanitarian field.

In summary, China's humanitarian assistance in Africa serves multiple self-interested and altruistic purposes, reflecting China's humanitarian traditions and international responsibilities, serving China's political and economic interests and the pursuit of enhancing its soft power, and providing legitimacy for China's presence in Africa. This finding explains the complex motivations behind China's growing humanitarian assistance to Africa from the government's perspective, answering the question of why China's humanitarian role is growing in the third sub-question. In participating in global humanitarian affairs, China is striving to explore a humanitarian assistance approach that aligns with its national conditions and differs from the Western model. This assistance model, emphasizing respect for sovereignty, mutual benefit, and pragmatic cooperation, has begun to show success but still faces many challenges, such as the benevolent motives behind assistance being constantly questioned and the need to enhance assistance capabilities. Overall, China's strengthening of humanitarian assistance to Africa reflects its strategic intent to transition toward a more proactive global development and security role commensurate with its rising great power status. Through these humanitarian efforts, China not only seeks to safeguard its burgeoning economic interests in Africa but, more importantly, to expand its voice and influence in global governance affairs.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a comprehensive analysis of the evolution and nature of Chinese humanitarianism in Africa, employing a historiographical approach to trace its trajectory and an actor-oriented approach to unpack its key features. It has shown how Chinese humanitarian discourse and practices on the continent have been intrinsically linked to the broader development of China-Africa

relations. In the early years, it was driven by an ideological 'proletariat internationalism'. During the reform era, it transitioned to a more pragmatic orientation. In the new millennium, it has adopted an open-ended approach aligning with China's expanding economic interests and global aspirations.

The chapter has highlighted the centrality of the state in driving and coordinating Chinese humanitarian efforts in Africa, while also recognizing the growing diversity of actors involved, including Chinese HDOs and multilateral partners. It has examined the key modalities of Chinese humanitarian assistance, such as bilateral aid, participation in multilateral initiatives, and the establishment of new funding mechanisms like the SSCAF, reflecting China's evolving approach.

Moreover, the chapter has argued that Chinese humanitarianism in Africa is characterized by a distinctly development-oriented approach emphasizing long-term solutions to the root causes of humanitarian crises, rather than just short-term relief. This approach is grounded in China's own development experience and its philosophy of South-South cooperation stressing principles of equality, mutual benefit, and non-interference.

This chapter has provided important insights into the first and third sub-questions of the research, revealing the dynamic and multifaceted nature of Chinese humanitarianism in Africa. It has shown how China's humanitarian engagement has been shaped by a complex interplay of domestic, bilateral, and global factors, reflecting China's broader foreign policy objectives and evolving role in global governance. As China's economic and strategic interests in Africa grow, and as it seeks to project an image as a responsible great power, its humanitarian efforts are likely to assume even greater significance.

7 EMERGING HUMANITARIAN ROLE OF CHINESE HDOS IN AFRICA

'The China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation's (CFPA) experience provides a historical lens that reflects all charitable organisations in China during the era of Deng Xiaoping. The term "historical lens" refers to individuals or organisations that can "see the whole picture through a glimpse", allowing us to understand the historical process of an era through their development trajectory. Establishing an organisation's goals and values, determining how to implement the mission and values into organisational culture and how to take action through a set of strategies and achieve the mission; how to solve problems and win development through innovation. These are the issues that China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation faces. More importantly, it has taken the lead in proposing its own solutions, effectively implementing them and achieving fruitful results. The problems faced by the CFPA are the problems faced by all charitable organisations in this era, and the way the CFPA solves them has an exemplary value for all other charitable organisations. This means that through the CFPA, we can understand the development of charitable organisations in China during the Deng Xiaoping era. In this sense, we say that the CFPA is a historical lens of contemporary Chinese philanthropic organisations.'

> Kang Xiaoguang, from Preface II 'The Historical Lens of Contemporary Chinese Philanthropic Organisations' of *A Brief History of the Reform and Development of China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (1989-2015)*, published in 2018, P52-53.

Introduction

Building upon the analysis presented in Chapter Six, this chapter further focuses on the growing humanitarian aid practices of Chinese humanitarian and development organisations (HDOs) in Africa. It examines their operational logic and developmental drivers from multiple perspectives including historical origins, characteristics of aid projects, and viewpoints of scholars and practitioners. Employing a historiography approach from the perspective of non-state actors and taking the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA) as a case study for in-depth analysis, this chapter endeavours to address the third sub-question of the research inquiry: How and why are Chinese non-state actors increasing and expanding their role in Africa? By addressing this question, the chapter aims to deepen the understanding of Chinese HDOs' humanitarian practices in Africa and their implications for China's overall engagement in global humanitarianism.

To better contextualize the contemporary practices of Chinese HDOs in Africa, the chapter begins by tracing the historical evolution of Chinese social organisations' engagements with the continent. This historical background is crucial for understanding the roots and trajectories of Chinese-African civil society interactions. The chapter explores the evolutionary path of Chinese social organisations' work in Africa, focusing on three critical phases: the state-led period (1950-1978) represented by the Chinese-African People's Friendship Association (CAPFA); the economic-driven period (1978-2000) following China's reform and opening-up, which saw new directions in social organisations' international cooperation; and the global network-building period (post-2000) marked by the establishment of the China NGO Network for International Exchanges (CNIE). By examining these distinct stages, I can gain insights into how Chinese social organisations have gradually transformed from diplomatic tools to active participants in global governance, and their unique contributions to fostering people-to-people exchanges between China and Africa.

Entering the 21st century, with China's increasing involvement in global affairs, Chinese HDOs have begun to implement a growing number of humanitarian aid projects in Africa. In so doing, they are emerging as a new force in China's participation in global humanitarian endeavours. This chapter will focus on analysing the expanding humanitarian aid practices of Chinese HDOs in Africa, systematically reviewing the characteristics of their aid projects, and dissecting their preferences and patterns in humanitarian assistance. Through an in-depth interpretation of Chinese HDOs' humanitarian practices in Africa, the chapter reveals their operational logic and value orientations. This not only helps to understand the roles and contributions of Chinese HDOs as emerging humanitarian actors but also provides a new analytical perspective for exploring the integration of Chinese humanitarian efforts into the global humanitarian system.

Furthermore, this chapter elucidates the reasons and methods for Chinese HDOs' entry into the international humanitarian arena, particularly in Africa, from multiple dimensions and from the perspectives of both scholars and humanitarian workers. The discussion adopts a dynamic developmental perspective, analysing how HDOs have evolved from being state-led to a coexistence of multiple actors, from a focus on material aid to capacity building, from unilateral assistance to mutual learning and exchange, and from passive adaptation to active shaping of the international humanitarian agenda, thereby showcasing the growth trajectory of Chinese HDOs' participation in global humanitarian undertakings.

Finally, the chapter presents an in-depth case study of the CFPA, a leading Chinese HDO, to provide a concrete illustration of the developmental trajectory and African practices of Chinese HDOs. CFPA's experience is particularly illuminating due to its pioneering role in the internationalization of Chinese HDOs and its extensive engagements in Africa. By examining CFPA's organisational transformation and international exploration, the case study aims to reveal the unique role and contributions of Chinese HDOs, as emerging humanitarian actors, in promoting China's participation in global humanitarian causes. The case study not only adds empirical depth to the chapter's analysis but also serves as a microcosm of the broader trends and dynamics discussed throughout the chapter.

Before HDOs: Chinese Social Organisations in Africa

To understand the contemporary practices of Chinese HDOs in Africa, it is essential to first examine the historical evolution of Chinese social organisations' engagements with the continent. This section explores three critical phases in the development of these engagements, each characterized by distinct actors, motivations, and strategies.

Diplomatic Tools: Social Organisations under State Steerage (1950-1978)

From the 1950s to the 1970s, the international situation was intricate and complex. With the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations and the intensification of Sino-American confrontation, China's diplomatic space was severely constrained. To break through this diplomatic impasse, China actively sought alliances with African nations opposing colonialism to garner international support and achieve diplomatic breakthroughs. Concurrently, China was in a recovery phase following the 'Great Leap Forward' movement domestically. The revitalization of the national economy provided a certain material foundation for the development of social organisations. Against this broad domestic and international backdrop, China's foreign aid through social organisations was primarily state-led, serving official diplomatic objectives.

During China's phase of 'ideological humanitarian aid' to Africa (for details, see Chapter Six), social organisations were largely dependent on state power for their promotion and formation. Their foreign aid actions were closely intertwined with government-led political engagement and cultural exchanges abroad, with the boundaries between the two being relatively indistinct. Among them, the Chinese-African People's Friendship Association (CAPFA) is a typical example of state-led social organisations engaging in foreign aid.

CAPFA was founded in April 1960 on the initiative of 17 organisations, including the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, All-China Federation of Trade Unions, All-China Youth Federation and All-China Women's Federation[45]. Being the first national NGO established to specialize in people-to-people diplomacy regarding Africa, CAPFA was precisely targeted with broadening ties with African countries and consolidate diplomatic relations.

As a state-led organisation, CAPFA primarily functioned to serve the government's foreign policy objectives (Yan 2021). CAPFA adopted a top-down operational model, with central government officials serving as its main leaders. It conducted people-to-people exchange activities to enhance friendship with African countries. This aimed to strengthen ties with entities such as civil society organisations and NGOs.

Since its founding, CAPFA has been actively involved in non-governmental activities to advance friendship with African countries. Thirty-three out of fifty-three African countries – including Burkina Faso, with whom China has not established diplomatic relations – have organisations to facilitate friendly exchanges in a range of fields with China (Feng 2010). Exchanges and cooperation among local authorities are an important part of China-Africa friendly exchanges, serving as an important channel to deepen an emotional bond between the two sides (Ibid.).

The activities of CAPFA in Africa have had five main aims: 1) to develop friendly and cooperative relations with friendly African organisations, social groups and people from all walks of life through mutual visits, commemorative meetings, press conferences, symposiums, participation in bilateral and multilateral meetings, exchange of information, etc. to enhance mutual understanding and friendship; 2) to promote China-Africa civil, economic, trade, social, educational, scientific and technological cooperation; 3) to carry out cultural exchanges between Chinese and African people; 4) to promote exchanges and cooperation between local governments in China and Africa, and facilitate the establishment and development of friendship city relations between China and African countries;

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[45] See CAPFA's introduction on the CPAFFC website: https://cpaffc.org.cn/index/xiehui/diquguobieyouxie_detail/id/2/lang/1.html, accessed on March 29, 2023.

and 5) to carry out social welfare activities that are conducive to promoting friendship between China and Africa.

As already noted, before the 1990s, social organisations within China were mainly promoted and formed by the state (Yan 2021). Consequently, CAPFA's staff were central government officials when it was created. By contrast, two-thirds of its current staff come from business, academia, media, and other non-governmental sectors (Brenner 2012). 'CAPFA is increasingly engaged as a philanthropic charity arm for Chinese private and state-owned enterprises that work in Africa' (Brenner 2012:142). For instance, CAPFA frequently lobbies Chinese enterprises for donations to support its plans, for example, to send eye surgeons to African countries to operate on cataracts and related diseases.

Economic Drivers: New Directions in Foreign Cooperation for Social Organisations (1978-2000)

In 1978, China initiated its reform and opening-up policy, shifting its focus to economic construction and dedicating efforts to accelerate the process of modernization. After prolonged endeavors, China's gross domestic product surpassed 10 trillion yuan in 2000, overtaking Italy to become the world's sixth-largest economy[46]. From the late 1970s to the early 21st century, China entered a phase of 'practical humanitarian aid' (for details, see Chapter Six). As the government and enterprises actively engaged in 'economic diplomacy' and 'economic and trade cooperation', Chinese social organisations also experienced a degree of development, promoting 'people to people diplomacy' through their activities. The reform and opening-up policy attracted global attention to China, first by 'bringing in' and later by 'going out', with assistance beginning to exhibit economic characteristics. Many social organisations participated in hosting foreign economic and trade delegations and organized provincial, municipal, enterprise, financial, scientific, technological, and economic inspection teams to visit abroad, fostering mutually beneficial cooperative relationships between China and foreign economic circles (Yan 2021:33-34).During this period, the number of Chinese social organisations grew, their autonomy strengthened, and they acquired a certain international perspective and global awareness. However, the boundaries between social organisations' foreign aid and foreign economic cooperation became blurred (He 2019). For instance, in 1985, the China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges established the International NGO Liaison Office as China's coordinating body for international NGO cooperation, marking the beginning of international civil society affairs (Tao and Zhang 2014). This was later reorganized in

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[46] Major Changes in China's Socio-Economic Data from 1950 to 2018. (n.d.). Accessed on July 9, 2019, from http://www.qqijsj.com/show70a84518.

1992 into CANGO (China Association for NGO Cooperation). Since engaging in international NGO cooperation, CANGO has maintained good cooperative relationships with international NGOs, bilateral and multilateral institutions involved in development and economic and technical exchanges. In 1986, it signed China's first cooperation agreement with foreign NGOs, namely the European China Aid Group (German Agro Action, Oxfam UK, and the Netherlands Organisation for International Development Cooperation) (Yan 2021). During CANGO's first seven years, it established connections with over 140 foreign NGOs and institutions. By the end of 1990, it had successfully organized and implemented cooperation programs worth more than $800 million with foreign non-governmental institutions, arranging 841 cooperative projects nationwide in fields such as agriculture, industry, energy transportation, and communication (Cai and Lv 2006).

Charity-Oriented: Global Network Construction by Social Organisations (Post-2000)

Entering the 21st century, the role of Chinese social organisations in foreign engagement has become increasingly prominent, particularly in China-Africa relations. The establishment of the China NGO Network for International Exchanges (CNIE) symbolizes this transformation: from state-led diplomatic auxiliaries to more autonomous builders of transnational public welfare networks. Although CNIE's vision is not confined to a single continent, Africa has consistently remained its focal point. From practical projects such as well-drilling and free medical clinics to constructing dialogue platforms for Chinese and African civil societies, CNIE exemplifies a new paradigm of Chinese social organisations' work in Africa – rooted in African needs, oriented towards global challenges, and deepening China-Africa civil friendship with philanthropy as the nexus. This section will explore how CNIE has guided Chinese social organisations to more profoundly integrate into Africa's development agenda, practicing the concept of 'boundless benevolence' on a broader stage.

CNIE, an umbrella organisation mainly of national NGOs, was established in October 2005 as a national non-profit social organisation. The founding of CNIE took place in a different domestic and international context compared to CAPFA. Compared to CAPFA, CNIE adopted a more flexible, bottom-up operational model that emphasized the role of non-governmental forces. CNIE's members are mostly well-known domestic NGOs with rich experience and resources in their respective fields. Through the CNIE platform, these NGOs can engage in exchanges with international counterparts, learn from advanced experiences, and enhance their capabilities. Although CNIE is a national organisation, it places greater emphasis on the independence and agency of NGOs in its operations. This model helps mobilize the enthusiasm of various sectors of society and creates conditions for Chinese NGOs to 'go global'.

As its name suggests, CNIE is 'chiefly a networking platform' (Hus et al. 2016). It engages with NGOs and personages at home and abroad to promote exchanges and cooperation between Chinese NGOs and their counterparts worldwide and enhance people-to-people friendship.[47] CNIE is not restricted to the African continent; however, working with African NGOs is a dominant focus (Brenner 2012:139-140).

Since its founding, CNIE has been working actively, on the one hand, to encourage its members to participate in major international NGO events, and, on the other, to stage impressive activities on its own, such as well-drilling, free cataract surgeries and classroom equipment donations through collaboration with local partners. Among CNIE's many activities, the most important is the China-Africa Civic Forum. In 2011, the first 'China-Africa Civil Forum' was held in Nairobi, Kenya, under the initiative of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) and the Kenya NGO Coordination Committee, on the background of the international community's concern about severe drought and famine in the Horn of Africa. It called on governments and NGOs around the world to render more support to the people of the region to avert further suffering and loss of lives. Under the theme 'Enhance partnership and promote friendship between China and Africa', the Forum focused on the UN MDGs and particularly Goal No. 8 of the Global Partnership for Development. Serious discussions were held and views exchanged in 7 areas: people's dialogue and cooperation; climate change and food security; credibility and transparency of NGOs; NGOs' relationships with government; corporate and community; preserving cultural tradition and facilitating education development; the role of women and youth in development, and sharing experiences in fighting HIV/AIDS. Among the Chinese NGO participants were the All-China Women's Federation, Chinese People's Association for Peace and Disarmament, Chinese Association for International Understanding and the All-China Environment Federation.

In summary, the evolution of government-NGO relations, coupled with changes in domestic and international environments, have jointly influenced and shaped the modes and pathways of Chinese NGOs' participation in global affairs. The developmental trajectory from CAPFA to CANGO to CNIE reveals three transformations in Chinese social organisations' work in Africa: from serving official diplomacy to promoting economic cooperation, and then to constructing transnational public welfare networks; from state dominance to gradually enhanced autonomy; and from singular cultural exchange to multifaceted development cooperation. This process not only embodies the progression of China's Africa policy with the times but also reflects the growing agency and influence of Chinese

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[41] China NGO Network for International Exchanges, http://www.cnie.org.cn/english/Column.asp?ColumnId=29, accessed 29 March 2023.

social organisations on the international stage. Notably, CAPFA, CANGO, and CNIE have, directly or indirectly, engaged in humanitarian and development aid projects in Africa throughout their development, manifesting characteristics of being 'semi-official, semi-civil' or having a 'dual official-civil identity' (Chen 2003; Hasmath and Hsu 2021). This feature has laid the foundation for their unique roles in China-Africa relations. As Chinese social organisations' work in Africa deepens, a new trend is emerging: Chinese HDOs are beginning to come to the fore in Africa. These organisations not only continue their predecessors' tradition of building bridges of friendship but also shift their focus towards addressing humanitarian crises and providing emergency relief. Their emergence signals that Chinese social organisations' work in Africa has entered a new phase. It is worth emphasizing that organisations like CAPFA, CANGO, and CNIE have played a critical role in safeguarding and facilitating the rise and project implementation of Chinese HDOs in Africa. The experience, resources, and networks they have accumulated over the years provide invaluable support and guidance for HDOs entering Africa. In the next section, I will focus on these emerging humanitarian forces, exploring how they conduct their work in Africa and the new changes they bring to China-Africa relations.

Emerging Humanitarian Players: Chinese HDOs Enter Africa

Entering the 21st century, Chinese HDOs have exhibited a rapid development trend. This trend among Chinese HDOs is the result of multiple social, economic, and global factors interacting. Firstly, China's sustained economic growth, the rise of the middle class, the emergence of internet philanthropy, and increased public awareness of social participation have provided favorable socio-economic conditions for the growth of Chinese HDOs (Ma and Jia 2015, Wang and Zhang 2016, Wang 2015). These domestic structural changes have not only expanded the resource base for Chinese HDOs but also reshaped societal expectations regarding their roles and responsibilities. Secondly, the impetus of China's 'Going Out' policy and its increasing global engagement, exemplified by initiatives such as the Belt and Road and the further deepening of South-South cooperation development strategies, have driven Chinese HDOs to conduct humanitarian aid projects overseas, including in Africa (Lv 2013, GEI 2016, Hsu et al. 2016). This political push for greater international presence has opened up new spaces for Chinese HDOs to operate, while also aligning their activities with the country's broader foreign policy objectives. Moreover, the emergence of global challenges such as climate change-induced natural disasters and global public health emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic have prompted Chinese HDOs to accelerate their emergency response and overseas deployment (Tang et al. 2020, Yan 2021). These global crises have not only highlighted the

need for more diversified humanitarian actors but also provided opportunities for Chinese HDOs to demonstrate their capabilities and value on the international stage.

Prior to the engagement of Chinese HDOs in Africa, Chinese social organisations collaborated with Africa primarily through emotional and humanistic exchanges. In 2006, Chinese HDOs were included in China's initial Policy on Africa, which encouraged Chinese NGOs to engage in disaster relief and emergency humanitarian assistance activities. The second edition of China's Policy on Africa, released in 2015, reiterated the government's encouragement for Chinese NGOs to participate in poverty reduction efforts through experience-sharing and pragmatic cooperation. The overarching objective was to disseminate China's successful rural poverty reduction practices, reinforce project demonstration cooperation, and aid African countries in enhancing their poverty reduction and development capacities. These two policy documents demonstrate that the Chinese government has progressively recognised the increasing significance of Chinese social organisations in the 21st century. This includes their humanitarian endeavours, disaster prevention and reduction, and poverty alleviation, in addition to their traditional roles in building friendships, developing non-governmental diplomacy, and enhancing exchanges and collaboration. The explicit inclusion of HDOs in these policy frameworks reflects a shift in the Chinese state's perception of their legitimacy and utility, creating a more enabling environment for their growth and international engagement. At the same time, it also suggests a degree of state instrumentalization of HDOs to advance China's soft power and development agenda in Africa.

In 2020, Dr Ying Wang, a PhD fellow affiliated with Leiden University, and her team established the Chinese NGOs Internationalisation Database. This database maps over 100 Chinese non-governmental organisations engaged in international donations or aid projects in more than 100 countries, including 37 countries in Africa.

The Chinese NGOs Internationalisation Database reveals that Chinese humanitarian and development organisations are highly active in East African countries. Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and Sudan host the largest number of Chinese aid programs among African nations. Notably, Ethiopia stands out as the African country with the most aid projects undertaken by Chinese HDOs (see Chart 4).

Chart 4   The Number of Chinese HDOs in African Countries, 2006-2020
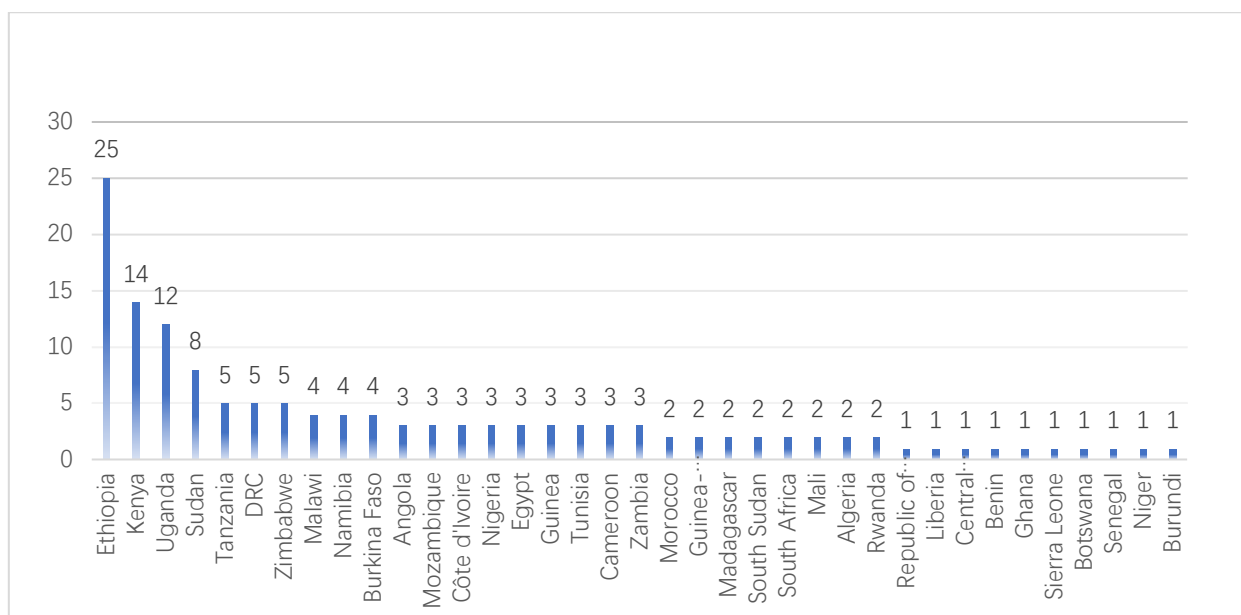
Source: Chinese NGOs Internationalisation Database, updated 6 September 2020

Ethiopia has emerged as a prime destination for Chinese HDOs. Some have established their resident offices there. On 1 July 2015, the Amity Foundation inaugurated its first overseas office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, while the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA) established its third overseas office and first office in Africa on 19 September 2019. In an interview with *China Philanthropist* magazine, Qiu Zhonghui, President of the Amity Foundation, cited three reasons for choosing Ethiopia for their permanent African office. Firstly, the country had a sizable poor population in 2010, accounting for 5.2 per cent of Africa's extremely poor population and over 25 per cent of the national population. Secondly, Ethiopia is a gateway to Africa in terms of transportation, culture, and history, with the African Union headquartered there. Lastly, Ethiopia maintains friendly diplomatic relations with China and has many Chinese firms operating within its borders, resulting in increased cooperation between the Ethiopian government and China.[48] These considerations highlight the complex interplay of humanitarian needs, geostrategic factors, and economic interests in shaping Chinese HDOs' locational preferences in Africa. They also underscore the close alignment between the humanitarian activities of Chinese HDOs and the broader contours of China-Africa relations, suggesting a degree of synergy between state and non-state actors in advancing China's engagement with the continent.

Chinese HDOs in Africa engage in a wide range of activities, including development assistance projects that focus on constructing welfare infrastructure, providing one-off aid supplies, and offering

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[42] *China Philanthropist*, 'Amity Foundation: Ending the "Four Nothings" of Internationalization of Chinese Civil Society Organisations', 13 September 2015 https://posts.careerengine.us/p/5d14481ca3886c68ed4b46e6?from=latest-posts-panel&type=title, accessed on 2 April 2023.

technical vocational training, as well as humanitarian assistance projects that provide cash, food, one-off aid supplies, and medical supplies to those affected by natural disasters, conflicts, and epidemics. Additionally, they provide medical equipment, hospitals, and treatment services, and construct schools and similar structures.

Chinese HDOs typically engage in a combination of humanitarian and development aid in Africa, with a smaller proportion focusing solely on humanitarian aid. Recently, however, there has been an increase in projects that are specifically focused on emergency relief efforts, such as those by the Beijing Peaceland Foundation and the China Rams Rescue Team, both of which provided aid during the 2019 'Idai' floods in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Malawi. Moreover, the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2019 led to an increased involvement of Chinese HDOs in providing centralised medical supplies and humanitarian aid. Twelve HDO organisations in China provided medical assistance to 25 African countries during the pandemic, with five organisations (Mammoth Foundation, Fosun Foundation, Zall Foundation, Tencent Foundation, and Zhejiang Zhiai Foundation) working in Africa for the first time. This shift towards more specialized and responsive humanitarian interventions reflects the growing capacity and confidence of Chinese HDOs in operating in complex emergency settings. It also points to the influence of global crises in catalyzing new forms of Chinese humanitarian engagement, as well as the potential for such crises to attract new actors into the field.

Based on Dr Wang Ying's database, I have analysed all of the aid projects undertaken by Chinese HDOs from 2006 to 2020 in Africa(see Chart 5). These projects were categorised as development assistance, humanitarian assistance (including COVID-19 and Ebola aid), and medical assistance.

Chart 5   Aid Activities of HDOs in China by Type and Location, 2006-2020
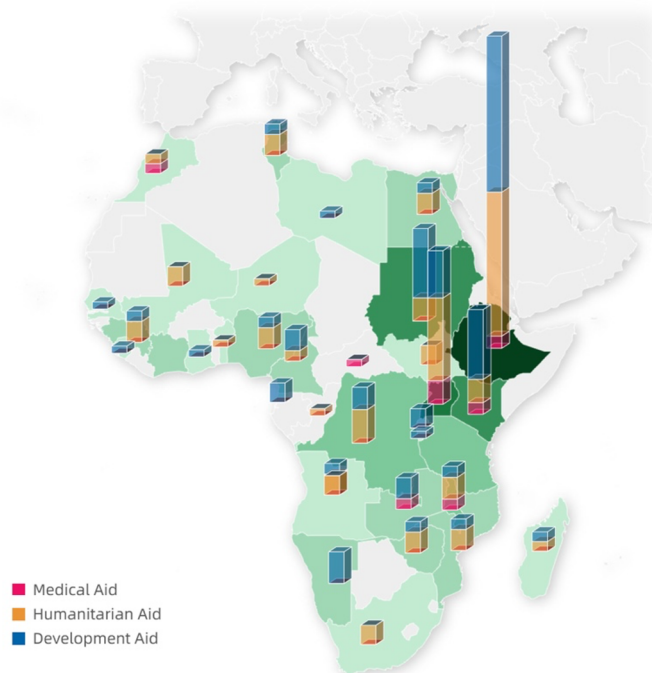
Source: Chinese NGO Internationalisation Database, updated 6 September 2020 (Made by author)

The map presented here visually represents Chinese HDOs' aid projects in Africa, categorised by location and type of assistance provided. It reveals that humanitarian aid supplied by Chinese HDOs has reached most African countries. Further analysis of the Chinese HDO involvement in humanitarian aid yields Table 3 below, which reflects a growing number of Chinese organisations and their expanding humanitarian aid projects in Africa from 2011 to 2020. Notably, several Chinese organisations have displayed a high level of activity in Africa, such as The Amity Foundation, the first Chinese HDO to provide humanitarian aid in Africa; the CFPA, which has been involved in humanitarian aid every year since 2017; and the Mammoth Foundation, Chinese Red Cross Foundation, Fosun Foundation, and Zall Foundation, which were particularly active in providing humanitarian aid during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 3   Chinese HDOs Involved in Humanitarian Aid in Africa

Year	Number of Humanitarian Projects	Chinese Humanitarian and Development Organisations	Number of Pojects
2011	1	The Amity Foundation1	1
2012	1	China Foundation for Peace and Development	1
2014	1	ZTE Foundation	1
2016	1	ZJ Wonder Foundation	1
2017	4	ZJ Wonder Foundation	1
		China Foundation For Poverty Alleviation	1

Year	Total	Organisation	Count
		The Amity Foundation	2
2018	9	The Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries	1
		ZJ Wonder Foundation	1
		Chinese Red Cross Foundation	2
		Chinese Red Cross Foundation and Kunshan Yu Ting Charitable Foundation	2
		China Foundation For Poverty Alleviation	2
		Mammoth Foundation	1
2019	6	ZJ Wonder Foundation	1
		China Foundation For Poverty Alleviation	1
		Peaceland Foundation	3
		RamUnion	1
2020	46	Mammoth Foundation	7
		China Family Planning Association	2
		China Foundation For Poverty Alleviation	2
		China Foundation for Peace and Development	3
		Chinese Red Cross Foundation	9
		The Amity Foundation	4
		Huamin Charity Foundation	1
		Tencent Foundation	3
		Fosun Foundation	6
		Zhejiang Zhiai Foundation	2
		TCL Foundation	1
		Zall Foundation	5
		Dragon Design Foundation	1

Source: Chinese NGO Internationalisation Database, updated 6 September 2020 (Made by author)

Chinese HDOs' current humanitarian aid projects in Africa fall into four main categories: cash, food aid and non-food aid; life-saving support in disasters; material aid and medical aid geared towards treating infectious diseases; and projects aimed at increasing resilience. These categories reflect the evolving priorities and approaches of Chinese HDOs, as they adapt to the changing humanitarian landscape in Africa and seek to align their interventions with global best practices. This shift in approach is a significant focus of this thesis's analysis of Chinese HDOs' humanitarian aid in Africa. Notable among the projects that have emerged from this evolving approach are the Red Cross of China's 'Fraternity Home' project and the CFPA's 'Brighter Future' refugee assistance program. The latter, CFPA's 'Brighter Future' program, serves as the primary empirical case study for this thesis and will be discussed in depth in Chapter 8.

The first category of humanitarian aid projects conducted by Chinese HDOs in Africa comprises cash, food, and non-food aid items, which are the most commonly used forms of assistance. For instance, the Amity Foundation launched the East Africa Food Aid Program in August 2011, which included conducting disaster research and needs assessments in Kenya and actively fundraising in

China. In November of the same year, the Kenya Food Aid Project was launched, in cooperation with local organisations, to distribute relief goods such as corn flour, corn kernels, soybeans, cooking oil, and nutritional supplements to 250 families in the drought-stricken eastern region. Furthermore, the Amity Foundation launched a relief project in July 2017 to provide drought-affected people in Ethiopia with an RMB 4 million (USD 600,000) relief fund from the Hong Kong SAR Government. Drinking water, water purification materials, and hygiene kits were sent to Ethiopia for distribution to local people in Harshin village and Keberibeyah wordea.[49] Another example is the China Peace Development Foundation, which partnered with the Sanad Foundation in June 2012 to donate relief supplies worth USD 20,000, including blankets, clothing, and food, to the severely flooded Tindal region in Sudan's Sennar State.[50]

The second category of humanitarian assistance provided by Chinese HDOs in Africa is life-saving aid during disasters. This type of aid has undergone significant transformation in recent years due to the growing international presence of China's rescue teams. With a strong presence on the frontlines of global humanitarian crises, such as the Pakistan earthquake in 2013, the Nepal earthquake in 2015, and the Mexico earthquake in 2017[51], these rescue teams have demonstrated their capacity for prompt and effective emergency response. More recently, in 2019, when Tropical Cyclone 'Idai' caused widespread flooding and destruction in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Malawi, two Chinese HDOs – the Beijing Peaceland Foundation and the RamUnion – dispatched teams to provide relief supplies, vaccinations, and water purification equipment to those in need.[52] The increasing visibility and professionalization of Chinese rescue teams in international disaster relief operations reflect the growing technical and organisational capacities of Chinese HDOs. It also highlights their efforts to establish themselves as credible and effective humanitarian actors on the global stage, thereby enhancing China's soft power and international image.

The third category of humanitarian aid provided by Chinese HDOs involves material and medical aid specifically for infectious diseases. In 2014, the CFPA launched an online donation campaign called 'Help Children and Families in Ebola Crisis', which raised RMB 1,128 million (USD 184,000) to provide dietary supplements to children in Ebola-affected areas (CFPA 2014 Annual Report) through the World Food Programme's World Hunger Relief program. In response to the COVID-19

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[43] The Amity Foundation, 'Amity Foundation's first major Africa aid project officially lands in Ethiopia', 25 July 2017, http://47.99.106.46/index. php?m=Home&c=News&a=view&id=409, accessed on 4 April 2023.

[44] Tuanjie Wang, 'Gao Yunlong attended foreign affairs activities, "rare" title behind the organisation, do you understand?' 20 February 2019, http:// www.tuanjiebao.com/2019-02/20/content_166541.htm, accessed on 4 April 2023.

[45] China Youth Daily, 'How China's social rescue force can go further', 14 February 2023, http://m.cyol.com/gb/articles/2023-02/14/content_xaxq zlcVxO.html, accessed on 4 April 2023.

[46] National Defense Times, 'Why did the Chinese civilian rescue team go to Africa?' 24 April 2019, https://epaper.gfxww.com/20190424/2608.html accessed on 4 April 2023.

outbreak in 2019, Chinese HDOs became actively involved in the global fight against the pandemic. Twelve HDOs in China provided anti-epidemic assistance to 25 African countries. Their engagement included fundraising, material donations, online information-sharing platforms, experience-exchange meetings, and support for research and development of vaccines for new coronavirus strains. Table 4 briefly introduces three of the most prominent Chinese HDOs carrying out international anti-epidemic assistance.

Table 4   Summary of Three Chinese HDOs Carrying out Anti-epidemic Assistance

China Red Cross Foundation	Established the International Humanitarian Assistance Fund for the Fight against the Epidemic (procured and delivered urgently needed medical supplies, protective materials, etc.)	Ethiopia, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Algeria
Fosun Foundation	Co-hosted 'Webinar on the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 in Africa' to provide African countries with medical protective materials, including nucleic acid testing boxes, medical surgical masks, gloves and frontal temperature guns.	Kenya, DRC, Uganda, Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Burkina Faso
Zall Foundation	Donated epidemic prevention materials	Mali, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, DRC, Tanzania

Source: Made by author

The fourth category is humanitarian assistance projects that aim to increase resilience. Improving the resilience of the most vulnerable is an essential response to the complex and protracted nature of current humanitarian situations. Food and non-food assistance is often applied in the humanitarian emergency phase, but this kind of assistance does not address the root causes of humanitarian problems and may exacerbate aid dependency and disaster scale (Rieff 2011). As such, there is an awareness of the need to broaden the scope of relief efforts by incorporating risk reduction into sustainable development assistance (Warner 2013). Different organisations define resilience in different ways. For instance, the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction defines resilience as 'the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb, accommodate to and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner.' Meanwhile, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change describes resilience as 'the amount of change a system can undergo without changing state.' The UK Department for International Development defines it

as 'the ability of countries, communities and households to manage change, by maintaining or transforming living standards in the face of shocks or stresses… without compromising their long-term prospects.' In this thesis, the UNDP definition of resilience is used. The UNDP sees resilience as a transformative process of strengthening the capacity of people, communities and countries to anticipate, manage, recover and transform from shocks.[53]

In recent years, Chinese HDOs have demonstrated a growing interest in implementing humanitarian assistance projects that enhance community resilience. Two noteworthy initiatives are the China Red Cross Foundation (CRCF)'s overseas 'Fraternity Home' project in Ethiopia and Uganda, and the CFPA's 'Brighter Future' program, which focuses on refugee self-reliance and community integration in Uganda. The latter program comprises the key empirical case study within this thesis, that will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. The 'Fraternity Home' project, implemented by the CRCF in Ethiopia and Uganda in 2018, is a comprehensive community resilience project centred on water and sanitation. It comprises community water projects, disaster prevention and mitigation training, grassroots organisation building, and livelihood development projects. The Fraternity Home project draws on the CRCF's experience implementing a similar initiative in six earthquake-prone Chinese provinces. The project was expanded to 17 other provinces and cities in 2012 and has since become a flagship project for the CRCF. Fraternity Home's overarching goals are to strengthen community governance, build disaster prevention and mitigation infrastructure, and enhance overall community resilience in the face of disasters and promote development.[54] These goals reflect a growing recognition among Chinese HDOs of the need to address the underlying vulnerabilities that exacerbate the impact of disasters, rather than simply providing short-term relief. They also underscore the potential for Chinese HDOs to draw on their domestic experiences and expertise in community-based disaster risk reduction and apply them in international settings.

The above analysis highlights the active involvements of Chinese HDOs in disaster emergency relief and development-focused humanitarian assistance programs in Africa. One notable feature of these organisations is their ability to draw on domestic experience and technical expertise to enhance the effectiveness of their humanitarian responses, as noted by Venturi (2022). This suggests that Chinese HDOs' unique operational strategies and organisational behaviors, which have been shaped by their experiences in China's specific socio-cultural and political context, can offer valuable insights and alternative approaches to humanitarian action in Africa. At the same time, it also raises

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[47] All of these definitions are presented in The New Humanitarian, 'Understanding resilience', 4 March 2013, https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2013/03/04/understanding-resilience, accessed on April 6, 2023.

[48] Red Cross Society of China Wuhan Branch, 'Introduction to the Red Cross fraternity home project', 24 December 2018, http://www.wuhanrc.org.cn/info/1153/1818.htm, accessed on 6 April 2023.

questions about the transferability and adaptability of these Chinese models to different African contexts, and the potential challenges of cultural and institutional translation.

Further, my research reveals that the distribution of Chinese HDOs in Africa closely corresponds to the geographic scope of China's development aid to Africa, as evidenced in Chart 6. This finding suggests that Chinese HDOs prioritise countries where the Chinese government or enterprises already provide development assistance. This observation aligns with the statement made by the president of the Amity Foundation, who highlighted the friendly diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and China, the presence of numerous Chinese companies operating in Ethiopia, and the high level of cooperation between the governments of Ethiopia and China as critical factors for selecting Ethiopia as the location for Amity's overseas office. These patterns point to the close entanglement of humanitarian, economic, and geopolitical considerations in shaping Chinese HDOs' engagement in Africa. They also raise questions about the extent to which Chinese HDOs' activities are driven by humanitarian imperatives versus instrumental objectives of advancing China's broader interests on the continent. It is worth noting that in this respect, Chinese HDOs are not necessarily unique, as many Western NGOs also operate in countries and regions where their governments have significant aid and economic interests.

Chart 6   The Circles Pinpoint the Location of Chinese-funded Development Projects
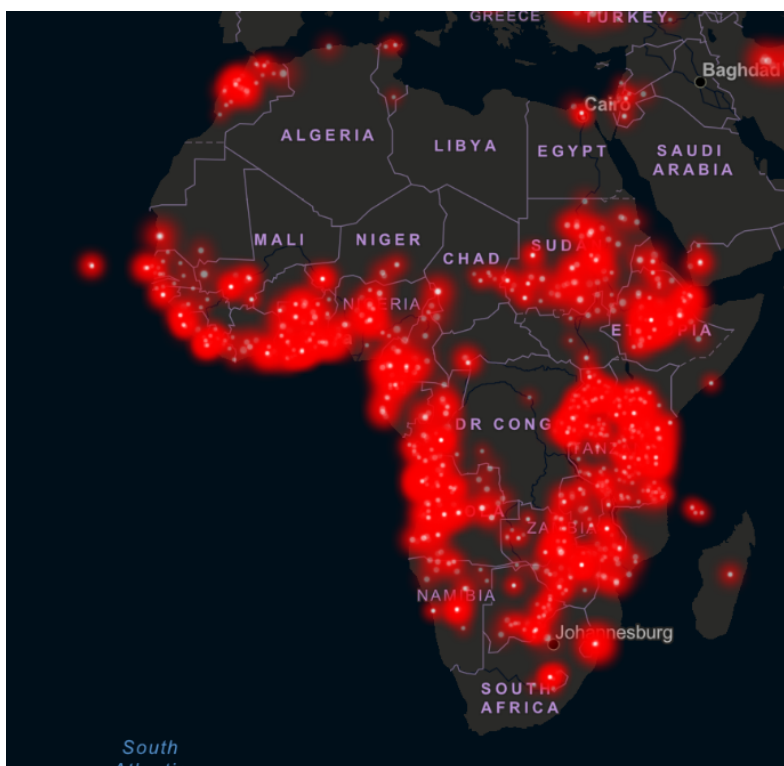
Source: Soren Patterson, Aid Data/William & Mary/Screenshot by NPR

The above cases of Chinese HDOs' humanitarian aid in Africa are only part of Chinese HDOs' international humanitarian aid as a whole up to 2020, the endpoint of Dr Wang Ying's database. At the time of writing this thesis, Chinese HDOs are engaged in a variety of humanitarian assistance activities in many regions and countries around the world, including across Africa, and collaboration on humanitarian programs is increasing. In 2023, a large number of Chinese HDOs formed the 'China Social Initiative for International Humanitarian Aid: Turkey and Syria Earthquake 2023' to promote Chinese HDOs' safe, orderly and effective conduct of humanitarian relief operations including emergency relief, transitional resettlement, post-disaster recovery and reconstruction work. [55] Collaborating organisations included the CFPA, CRCF, Shenzhen One Foundation, Nandu Public Welfare Foundation, Amity Foundation, China Merchants Charity Foundation, Tencent Charity Foundation, Beijing New Sunshine Charity Foundation, Risk Governance Innovation Research Center of Beijing Normal University, and more, together with China Charity Federation Disaster Relief Committee, CNIE, China Emergency Management Society Community Safety Special Committee, China Association for Disaster Prevention, Institute of International Development Cooperation of the Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation of the Ministry of Commerce, Red Cross International Academy of Emergency Management and Humanitarian Assistance Teaching and Research Center, Beijing Peaceland Foundation, Youcheng Entrepreneur Rural Development Foundation, Beijing Sany Charity Foundation, Lingshan Charity Foundation, Beijing Meiling Charity Foundation, and Cainiao Logistics. This extensive collaboration among Chinese HDOs in response to a major international disaster reflects their growing capacity for collective action and coordination, as well as their increasing integration into global humanitarian networks. It also suggests the emergence of a more cohesive and influential Chinese humanitarian sector, which can leverage its combined resources and expertise to make significant contributions to international relief efforts.

In conclusion, since the 21st century, the rise and increasing activity of Chinese HDOs in Africa have significantly propelled the expansion of China's humanitarian endeavors on the global stage. This trend stems from multiple factors, including China's sustained economic growth, heightened public awareness of participation, government policy support, and the emergence of global challenges. Chinese HDOs, drawing on their rich domestic disaster relief experience, have provided recipient countries in regions such as Africa with operational strategies and organisational behaviors distinct from Western traditions. While these Chinese approaches offer valuable insights and potential

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[49] One foundation, Earthquake Relief, 'Humanitarian Assistance - Social Forces International Humanitarian Assistance Collaboration Platform Launched', 12 February 2023, https://onefoundation.cn/news/63e7ca9fe31fd95d15/, accessed on 8 April 2023.

alternatives to conventional humanitarian practices, they also raise questions about their adaptability to different cultural and institutional contexts, as well as their alignment with international humanitarian principles and standards.

The expansion of Chinese HDOs' humanitarian activities in Africa has also been closely intertwined with China's broader economic andgeopolitical interests on the continent, as reflected in the close correspondence between their geographic distribution and the scope of Chinese development aid and investment. This entanglement of humanitarian and instrumental objectives suggests a degree of state-NGO synergy in advancing China's soft power and influence in Africa, even as it complicates the humanitarian identity and autonomy of Chinese HDOs.

Despite these challenges and ambiguities, the growing presence and diversity of Chinese HDOs in Africa have undoubtedly injected new dynamism and pluralism into the global humanitarian landscape. Their experiences and lessons learned in navigating the complex realities of humanitarian action in Africa can offer valuable insights for other emerging humanitarian actors, as well as for the ongoing debates on the future of the international humanitarian system.

As Chinese HDOs continue to evolve and expand their engagement in Africa and beyond, it will be crucial to deepen our understanding of the structural, political, and cultural forces that shape their identities, strategies, and impact. Only by situating their emergence and development within the broader context of China's domestic transformation and global rise can we fully appreciate their significance and potential as new humanitarian players on the world stage.

Strategies of Chinese HDOs' humanitarian aid in Africa

From the preceding content, I observed that the evolution of the relationship between the Chinese government and Chinese NGOs (including HDOs) has provided a crucial policy foundation and institutional space for Chinese HDOs to conduct humanitarian aid projects in Africa. As elucidated in Chapter Six, in recent years, the Chinese government has adopted an increasingly open attitude towards NGOs' participation in public governance and foreign engagement, with the government-NGO relationship transitioning from 'control' to 'cooperation'. This shift has afforded HDOs greater autonomy and flexibility in their involvement in African affairs.

Within this context, Chinese HDOs have adopted project strategies that closely align with national development strategies to gain domestic legitimacy and resource support. This strategy stems from multiple factors: while Chinese HDOs have gained significant autonomy in recent years, as

exemplified by CFPA's reforms, the political system still necessitates that HDOs maintain a certain relationship with the government to secure space for survival and development; responding to national calls enables HDOs to obtain more domestic resources, such as funding, talent, and publicity support; and participating in national development strategies helps enhance HDOs' domestic influence and discourse power. It's important to note that this alignment with national strategies does not necessarily imply a lack of independence. As demonstrated by CFPA's transformation, Chinese HDOs have been able to achieve considerable autonomy in their operations and decision-making processes. Notably, although Chinese HDOs need to maintain certain connections with the government, the Chinese government does not excessively intervene or restrict the selection and implementation of specific overseas projects (Wang 2024). This provides HDOs with considerable autonomy in conducting humanitarian projects in Africa. In this context, closely following national strategies is more about gaining domestic support and leveraging resources rather than being substantively influenced or constrained in project content.

Furthermore, Chinese HDOs have adopted strategies of learning from and cooperating with international NGOs, aiming to gain international legitimacy and experience, but ultimately aspiring to surpass them and become a leading force on the international humanitarian stage. The rationales behind this strategy are: international NGOs, especially Western NGOs, have rich experience in humanitarian aid, and learning from them helps Chinese HDOs rapidly enhance project professionalism and international influence; cooperating with international NGOs can improve Chinese NGOs' international image and discourse power, laying the foundation for their international development; and international cooperation helps broaden Chinese NGOs' funding channels and technical sources, accumulating resources for their long-term development. However, Chinese HDOs are not content with simple following and imitation. Instead, they hope to explore a distinctive development path based on learning and referencing, combined with the actual situations in China and Africa, to innovate humanitarian aid concepts and models, and ultimately surpass Western NGOs to become a mainstay in leading global humanitarian endeavors (Interview with He Daofeng, Kitgum, Uganda, 16 October 2018). The impacts of this strategy are: on one hand, learning from international experience enhances the targeting and effectiveness of projects, better benefiting African people; on the other hand, the unique advantages and development potential demonstrated by Chinese HDOs in cooperation are gradually winning recognition and respect from the international community, creating favourable conditions for further elevating their international status and influence. Meanwhile, in this process, Chinese HDOs have also more profoundly realized that in certain concepts and practices, adjustments and innovations are needed based on the realities of China and Africa, and Western

models cannot be blindly copied; when cooperating with Western NGOs, they also need to cautiously handle some politically sensitive issues to maintain their independence and China's national interests.

In summary, Chinese HDOs actually face a dilemma. On one hand, they face legitimacy challenges both domestically and internationally. Especially domestically, due to the lack of a mature legal and policy system to regulate and guide HDO development, Chinese HDOs have to follow government development strategies to a certain extent to obtain more resources and support from the government. But on the other hand, excessively following government development strategies can easily lead to Chinese HDOs being misperceived by outsiders as organisations under government control, lacking independence and autonomy, thereby affecting their international reputation and credibility. In this situation, how to find a balance between relying on government support and maintaining their own independence is a major challenge facing Chinese HDOs.

The Emerging Humanitarian Role of Chinese HDOs: Insights from Scholars and Humanitarian Workers

In recent years, the increasing involvement of Chinese HDOs in international humanitarian aid efforts, particularly in Africa, has generated discourses among scholars and practitioners on the role of Chinese HDOs in the global humanitarian system. This section aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of these discussions to better understand how Chinese HDOs (are perceived to) fit into the international humanitarian landscape and the roles they currently play and are likely to play in future global humanitarian assistance. The analysis will explore the motives, significance, and challenges associated with Chinese HDOs' entry into and implementation of humanitarian aid in Africa, as viewed by scholars and humanitarian workers.

Humanitarian Role of Chinese HDOs：Perspectives from Scholars

Scholars have examined various aspects of Chinese HDOs' international aid activities, including their role in Africa (Brenner 2012, Lai 2013, Hsu, Hildebrandt and Hasmath 2016, Zan 2020, Dong and Li 2020), their contribution to China's foreign aid policy (Ketels 2021, Hasmath and Hsu 2021, Yan 2021), and their engagement in global humanitarian aid, particularly in response to major international disasters (Wang and Deng 2017, Zhang and Zhang 2018, Xu and Wei 2019, Zhang 2021, Xu and Qian 2021).

The analysis presented here seeks to synthesise the perspectives of scholars on various issues surrounding the involvement of Chinese HDOs in overseas humanitarian aid. Drawing from these scholarly discourses, three questions will be addressed. Firstly, how do scholars understand the

motives behind Chinese HDOs' entry into Africa? Secondly, what is the significance of Chinese HDOs' engagement in humanitarian aid beyond their borders, according to scholars? Lastly, how do scholars perceive the impact of the growing number of Chinese HDOs providing humanitarian assistance in Africa and elsewhere on China-Africa relations and the global humanitarian system?

In exploring the *motivations* behind the entry of Chinese HDOs into Africa, scholars have adopted one of three main perspectives. The first perspective suggests that the primary objective of Chinese HDOs is to safeguard China's economic interests in Africa. Brenner (2012) argues that Chinese HDOs have emerged and grown in Africa in response to local African NGOs' criticism and questioning of China's investment in the continent. According to Brenner, the initial goal of these Chinese NGOs was to improve China's image in Africa. The second perspective highlights the China-Africa relationship. As China's economic growth persisted, it was expected to assist Africa, which is seen as economically weak and prone to disasters. Zan (2020) describes Africa as an economically, politically, and socially undeveloped region, combined with looming food crises, epidemics, and droughts. This, combined with China's interest in deepening relations with African states, leads Zan to conclude that Africa is a prime destination for Chinese foreign aid, delivered by increasingly mature and internationalised Chinese HDOs. The third perspective emphasises government leadership as a driving force behind the entry of Chinese HDOs into Africa. Dong (2020) argues that the participation of Chinese HDOs in African aid programs is part of China's outreach strategy and is consistent with China's foreign policy toward Africa. The policy encourages cooperation and exchanges between civil society organisations and relevant groups in Africa, with a focus on disaster mitigation, relief, and humanitarian assistance.

Scholars have extensively studied the *significance* of Chinese HDOs' participation in humanitarian aid delivery beyond their borders from two critical perspectives. Firstly, leaders of Chinese HDOs have helped scholars identify several HDO institutional goals, such as expanding international presence, enhancing professionalism and normativity in the humanitarian field, and increasing legitimacy and influence. Secondly, scholars have looked at the significance of Chinese HDOs' engagement in humanitarian aid from the viewpoint of the Chinese government, which sees it as a way to establish friendly relations with other countries, foster emotional connections with people in other nations, and demonstrate China's commitment to humanitarian morality and philosophy.

According to the research conducted by Xu and Wei (2019), Chinese humanitarian and disaster-relief organisations have enhanced their capacity in the areas of regional disaster monitoring mechanisms, international communication, operational tools, and logistical support through their participation in international humanitarian assistance. Xu and Qian (2021) present similar findings.

This improvement is seen to contribute to better disaster relief operations by Chinese HDOs. Zhang's (2021) research reveals that by engaging in humanitarian aid overseas, Chinese HDOs are exposed to standard processes and norms of international humanitarian aid, which enhances their professionalism and standardisation, and reinforces the legitimacy of their humanitarian aid. Moreover, Chinese HDOs have strengthened their global voice and expanded the influence of civil society organisations by improving communication and cooperation with the United Nations. Ketels' (2020) research suggests that Chinese HDOs participate in global governance to address global problems and act as ambassadors, conveying the concept of Chinese governance to people in countries along the Belt and Road. Finally, Zhang Qiang and Zhang Huan (2018) argue that Chinese HDOs' participation in international humanitarian aid showcases the Chinese experience and demonstrates the value of the Chinese system, the Chinese way, and Chinese power.

The question at hand pertains to how scholars perceive the *significance* of the growing number of Chinese HDOs aiding in Africa and elsewhere, on China-Africa relations and the global humanitarian system.

The research on the significance of China-Africa relations highlights two distinct views. On one hand, Chinese HDOs have exerted a positive influence on China-Africa relations by improving the lives of local people, fostering friendly relations, and deepening South-South cooperation (Dong 2020, Zan 2020). Conversely, due to their small scale, lack of systematic organisation, insufficient funding, and constraints from recipient countries, Chinese HDOs have had a limited impact on the broader China-Africa relations (Xu and Wei 2021, Brenner 2012).

Despite limited research on the significance of Chinese HDOs on the international humanitarian system, existing studies can be categorised into two main views. The first view suggests that Chinese HDOs have a positive impact on the global humanitarian system. For instance, Xu and Qian's (2021) research indicates that Chinese HDOs, as powerful practitioners of China's distinctive aid concept of 'combining humanitarian aid with long-term development assistance', have increasingly strengthened their cross-border humanitarian assistance capabilities. This will help bridge the gap between global humanitarian assistance and development aid within the United Nations humanitarian aid system to some extent. Moreover, Xu and Qian believe that the rich experience accumulated by Chinese HDOs in domestic disaster response and relief, as well as their unique humanitarian relief approach closely relying on local Chinese communities and organisations in cross-border operations, is also becoming an important feature that the United Nations humanitarian aid system is learning from.

Conversely, the second view argues that the expansion of Chinese HDOs in humanitarian assistance could challenge the existing Western-dominated international humanitarian system.

Hasmath and Hsu's (2021) research on five Chinese social organisations found that because Chinese NGOs grow, develop, and thrive under an authoritarian system, their values and norms differ from those of Western NGOs. These five organisations are the CAPFA, Beijing NGO Association for International Exchanges, CNIE, CFPA, and China Youth Development Foundation. According to their research on the five qualities of global civil society – extra-governmental space, interlinked social processes, civility, pluralism, and social production – Chinese HDOs are already starting to contribute to and legitimise global social processes that challenge existing Western norms and rules of behaviour for social organisations (Hasmath and Hsu 2021:15).

Scholars hold diverse views on the motivations, significance, and impact of Chinese HDOs in global humanitarian assistance. Based on my research and personal observations, I posit that Chinese HDOs have forged a path distinct from Western NGOs in their process of becoming global humanitarian actors. Chinese organisations initially focused on accumulating extensive rescue and development experience domestically. Subsequently, encouraged by foreign policy and the accumulation of relief experience, they began to undertake humanitarian assistance missions in African countries and other global regions. Their objective is to share the relief experience accumulated in China, driven by two primary factors: the needs of recipient countries and the organisations' own needs.

The urgent needs of African countries as aid recipients are a key factor propelling Chinese HDOs to conduct humanitarian work in Africa. Many African countries have long faced issues such as famine, poverty, natural disasters, and public health crises, urgently requiring humanitarian assistance from the international community. Chinese HDOs acutely recognized this and began actively participating in humanitarian aid actions for Africa. As early as 2007, Chinese HDOs responded to the famine crisis in Horn of Africa countries, dispatching rescue teams and providing food and material aid. Since then, Chinese HDOs have continuously attended to the humanitarian needs of African countries, offering assistance based on actual situations. In 2019, after Tropical Cyclone Idai struck Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Malawi, Chinese HDOs swiftly launched emergency responses, sending rescue teams to the affected countries to provide emergency medical services, distribute relief materials, and assist with post-disaster reconstruction. When the COVID-19 pandemic spread globally in 2020, Chinese HDOs also provided anti-epidemic assistance to multiple African countries, donating urgently needed supplies such as masks, testing reagents, and protective clothing, and dispatching medical expert teams to share anti-epidemic experiences with African countries (as mentioned in previous sections). These actions strongly supported African countries' disaster relief

and anti-epidemic efforts, demonstrating Chinese HDOs' responsibility in providing aid based on African countries' humanitarian needs.

Although the aforementioned scholars indeed explicated several main motivations for Chinese HDOs entering Africa, including safeguarding China's economic interests in Africa, deepening China-Africa relations, and responding to the foreign policy orientations of the Chinese government, they overlooked an important factor: the autonomous development needs of Chinese HDOs themselves. In fact, the organisations' own diverse needs are also a significant catalyst driving Chinese HDOs to expand humanitarian aid projects in Africa. On one hand, these organisations believe that international aid projects are crucial for their own survival, development, and enhancement of capabilities and influence. By participating in African humanitarian projects, Chinese HDOs can accumulate overseas work experience, improve project operation capabilities, expand global networks, and strengthen international discourse power, thereby achieving their own growth and progress. As He Daofeng, former Secretary-General of the CFPA, stated: 'International projects are a necessity for the survival and development of civil organisations, as well as for realizing their values, building capacity, and enhancing influence.' (Interview with He in Kitgum, October 16, 2018) On the other hand, as humanitarian organisations originating from China, Chinese HDOs also shoulder the mission of improving China's image and disseminating Chinese humanitarian concepts. They hope that through their humanitarian practices in Africa, they can demonstrate the goodwill of the Chinese people to African populations, dispel misunderstandings and biases towards China, narrow the distance with African societies, and promote China-Africa civil friendship (will be demonstrated in the next section.).

Humanitarian Role of Chinese HDOs：Perspective from Humanitarian Workers

This section examines the perceptions of humanitarian workers regarding the role of Chinese HDOs in Africa, including executive staff of Chinese HDOs and international nongovernmental organisations (INGOs) that have collaborated with Chinese HDOs. These perspectives are crucial to a deeper understanding of the humanitarian role and impact of Chinese HDOs in Africa.

During my research visit to Beijing in December 2018, I had the privilege of attending the 'International Disaster Response Seminar on Social Forces in 2018'. This seminar brought together a multitude of domestic HDOs that are actively involved in providing global humanitarian aid. These organisations included the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation, the Edwards Foundation, the Blue Sky Rescue Team, the Shen Zhen Charity Rescue Team, and the China Charity Federation, among others. Throughout the workshop, these organisations shared their experiences and challenges

in the field of international humanitarian aid. Additionally, they discussed their perspectives on how Chinese HDOs can increase their involvement in international humanitarian aid efforts in the future and what contributions Chinese HDOs can make to the broader international humanitarian system. During the seminar, a number of Chinese HDOs emphasised the significance of establishing effective partnerships with embassies, governments, and local Chinese companies in recipient nations. Such collaborations were considered crucial for gaining access to overseas disaster relief operations and expediting relief efforts. Notably, the Beijing Peaceland Foundation, renowned for its extensive experience in humanitarian relief endeavours abroad, underscored the importance of conducting overseas humanitarian aid delivery in a manner that acknowledges local needs and adopts a neutral, professional, and sustainable approach to relief work. Throughout the workshop, Chinese HDOs posed thought-provoking queries regarding the alignment of Chinese domestic humanitarian relief standards with international relief standards and the development of Chinese humanitarian discourse values within the existing discourse system. Although these inquiries remained unanswered during the workshop, they persist as pressing concerns that Chinese HDOs continually contemplate and strive to address on their path towards internationalisation.

It is worth noting that such seminars are not uncommon among Chinese HDOs, many of which invite INGO staffs to share their experiences and practices related to international humanitarian aid. For instance, in 2022, the China Association of Civil Society Organisations for International Exchanges organised 'Building a Platform for Chinese Social Organisations to Go Global', which brought together representatives from international and Chinese organisations. The seminar explored the experiences of Chinese social organisations in international advocacy, overseas projects, and collaboration with HDOs, as well as the strategies and approaches for creating platforms and mechanisms to support the internationalisation of Chinese HDOs.

After synthesising their perspectives, I find that Chinese HDOs perceive their function in foreign aid efforts, particularly in Africa, as primarily focused on spreading the philanthropic aspects of Chinese cultural values, facilitating interpersonal communication, supporting Chinese-backed enterprises operating abroad, aligning with the 'Belt and Road' initiative, and advancing the creation of a unified 'community of human destiny'. During the '2018 China Philanthropy Internationalization Roundtable Forum', Xu Yongguang, the Chairman of Nandu Philanthropy Foundation, expressed his conviction that philanthropy has been deeply rooted in Chinese culture since ancient times – a view supported in Chapter Four, above. He emphasised the importance of exploring how to effectively leverage the long-standing philanthropic traditions of the Chinese people in the process of

philanthropy internationalisation.[56] Despite the rapid growth of charitable organisations in China, its philanthropic culture has not kept pace with its extraordinary economic development. Chen Yueguang, the president of the Dunhe Foundation in 2017, pointed out that there is still much untapped potential in combining traditional Chinese philanthropic thinking with modern approaches. He argued that it is essential to consider how these two perspectives can be better integrated in order to promote philanthropy in China and beyond.[57] During the 2020 China Corporate Social Responsibility Summit, the Executive Deputy Secretary General of CFPA, Chen Hongtao, presented his perspective on why Chinese HDOs should expand globally. He outlined four reasons that support his belief. Firstly, 'the universality of love' demands that Chinese HDOs be responsive to the needs and expectations of the global community. Secondly, the interconnectedness of people's hearts and minds and the importance of Chinese HDOs can and do facilitate better mutual understanding. Thirdly, Chinese HDOs must promote corporate social responsibility in Chinese-funded enterprises overseas. Finally, 'going global' is a way for Chinese HDOs to support the 'Belt and Road' initiative, connect people, and advance the goal of building a community with a shared future for humankind.[58]

At the same time, Chinese HDOs are aware of their shortcomings in providing international aid, including limited internationalisation capacity, inadequate collaboration and cooperation, insufficient funding for international projects, and unsustainable project development. Wu Peng, Director of the International Development Department at the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation, articulated these challenges.[59] He also questioned whether Chinese HDOs' internationalisation capacity is consistent with international standards, including applying international rules, integrating with international discourse systems, and applying internationalisation theories to its project designs. During the same conference, Liu Zhihua, Executive Secretary of the Beijing Peaceland Foundation, highlighted the lack of synergy among Chinese HDOs on international projects, noting that most HDOs work alone, even on long-term projects. The COVID-19 pandemic further compounded the issue by making it difficult to raise resources, leading to most initiatives taking the form of short-term disaster emergency projects. Qian Xiaofeng, Senior Director of Regional Development at the Amity Foundation, also discussed challenges of 'going global' that extend beyond the shortage of funds. Responses to these challenges, it was noted, should include designing projects that reflect

[50] Shenzhen Foundation For International Exchange and Cooperation, Roundtable Dialogue | 'How Chinese NGOs can go global: They have something to say!' Novermber 28, 2018, https://www.sfiec.org.cn/whatsNew/Inner/229, accessed on 12 April 2023.

[51] Xinhua News, 'Experts: China's charity culture lags far behind the development of charitable organisations', 6 July 2017, http://m.cyol.com/content/2017-07/06/content_16272642.htm, accessed on 12 April 2023.

[52] China Business News, Chen Hongtao, Executive Deputy Secretary-General of China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation: 'China's public welfare should go global: Enhancing the awareness and action of international public welfare', 19 September 2020, https://news.sina.cn/2020-09–16/detail-iivhvpwy6995770.d.html, accessed on 13 April 2023.

[53] Wu Peng spoke at the 'Chinese NGOs' Experience, Challenges and Responses' roundtable in 2021.

development concepts and principles such as empowerment and sustainability, as well as balancing efficiency, cost control, and scale.[60]

Various Chinese HDO staff have proposed ways HDOs can become more actively engaged in international humanitarian aid and contribute to the global humanitarian system. These proposals include enhancing international rescue capacity, prioritising the expansion of mature domestic projects to a global level, and integrating with the international humanitarian system by joining international councils and coordination mechanisms. During a Briefing Forum 2020 roundtable discussion on 'Challenges and Responses to International Public Goods in the Face of the Epidemic', Qian Xiaofeng, Senior Director of Regional Development at Amity Foundation, mentioned that Amity has 'embedded' itself into the international humanitarian aid system. In the early days of international humanitarian relief, the Amity Foundation, like other domestic organisations, relied on the local Chinese community and sought help from local Chinese people. However, starting with the Nepal earthquake relief, Amity began to explore how to place itself in the international humanitarian aid system. Over time, its leaders realised the Foundation's status as a member of the International Disaster Response Coalition (ACT Alliance) helped them open the door to not only a lot of information, but also to find working partners in other countries to carry out relief work, and to understand and learn the rules related to the operation of global decision-making. At the same time, they began to explore how to find their unique niche in the process. This year (2023), Amity became the first Chinese agency to join the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA). Joining these international networks, Qian Xiaofeng insisted, will help Amity 'embed' more quickly and easily into the international humanitarian aid system and play a more prominent role there. He also mentioned that Southern NGOs also need to actively understand the new trends and discourses of the international system. In other words, Chinese organisations need to understand emerging 'hot topics' in international humanitarian aid, such as 'localisation', and integrate this quest for understanding into broader efforts to participate actively in international relief operations and dialogues.[61]

Furthermore, several INGOs, including Oxfam and Mercy Corps, have partnered with Chinese HDOs, and their executives have shared their views on the role played by Chinese HDOs in the field of development and humanitarian aid globally, especially in Africa. On one hand, these organisations recognise China's significant experience in domestic humanitarian and development initiatives and believe that this expertise could contribute fresh perspectives to the current global humanitarian

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[54] China Development Brief, 'Experiences, challenges and responses of Chinese NGOs going global', accessed on 11 January 2021, http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.org.cn/customer/details.html?id=25169&type=, accessed on 13 April 2023.

[55] China Development Brief, 'Experiences, challenges and responses of chinese ngos going global', 11 January 2021, http://www.chinadevelopme ntbrief.org.cn/customer/details.html?id=25169&type=, accessed on 13 April 2023.

landscape. On the other, they acknowledge that Chinese HDOs may require additional support to increase their capacity for international assistance and become more effective global actors in the humanitarian arena. Therefore, these INGOs have pledged to offer guidance and share their experience in international aid. INGOs' deep involvement with Chinese HDOs in international humanitarian assistance, including guidance and support, has helped shape Chinese HDOs as key global humanitarian actors. INGO efforts to inform Chinese HDOs about international humanitarian principles and promote concepts such as empowerment, sustainability, and minimum standards for humanitarian action, are helping to widen and reproduce a standardised version of the humanitarian world.

In a 2020 interview with China Development Brief, Dr Liu Hung To, Program Director for Mainland China at Oxfam Hong Kong, expressed the view that Chinese NGOs operating abroad reflect China's economic, political, and cultural strength, as well as its international position. However, the pace and scale of Chinese NGOs crossing borders are comparatively slow and do not fully align with China's development trajectory and global status. Consequently, Oxfam has devoted part of its efforts to supporting Chinese HDOs in carrying out aid and humanitarian programs overseas. Drawing from his experience working with various Chinese social organisations, Liu noted that most Chinese HDOs operating abroad primarily focus on healthcare, disaster relief, and education, with a small number emphasising local community engagement. He further explained that in the early 1980s, international NGOs contributed to significant progress in Chinese society by prioritising community-based development principles and taking time to learn about local contexts and needs. Currently, Chinese HDOs are in the nascent stages of incorporating this principle into their work.

In 2011, Paul Dudley Hart, a Senior Vice President for Global Partnerships and Alliances at Mercy Corps, authored a paper titled 'Mercy Corps in China: Combining Global Experience with Successful Chinese Models'. Mercy Corps is an international non-governmental organisation based in the United States. It has worked with the Chinese HDO CFPA on the Ugandan refugee assistance program and I engaged with it in this regard, as discussed in the next chapter. Drawing from his experience working with Chinese HDOs, Paul provided insights into the underlying factors contributing to this Mercy Corps' expansion in China. He praised the remarkable achievements of Chinese social organisations in alleviating poverty and emphasised that developing partnerships with these organisations is crucial to advancing development and humanitarian efforts, particularly in Africa. With this objective in mind, Mercy Corps committed CFPA's extension of its outreach to other regions around the world.

During my interview with Peng Bin, Mercy Corps' China representative, on 12 December 2018 in Beijing, Peng commented on the Chinese HDO approach to aid activities. According to Peng, Chinese

HDOs are willing to align their efforts with the Chinese government's objectives. They might leverage their capabilities and social networks to identify areas where aid is needed. Rather than solely focusing on demanding the autonomy to determine their aid activities, these organisations may take a gradual approach, starting with more straightforward initiatives and gradually increasing the difficulty level. Therefore, Chinese HDOs tend to concentrate their aid efforts in Asia and Africa. In Africa specifically, the aid programs of Chinese HDOs are similar to those of the government's foreign aid projects, with a focus on education and healthcare. The initiatives tend to be in the form of direct assistance, with limited emphasis on in-depth and long-term community development projects, such as the feeding projects of the CFPA and the medical projects of the RCFC.

Bruno Pommier, deputy head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC's) regional delegation for East Asia, gave a keynote speech on 'China-Africa cooperation: A Humanitarian Perspective' at the second forum on China and International Development, hosted by the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation (CAITEC) on 13 January 2022. He confirmed that China's influence, resolute focus on peace and development, leadership in response to COVID-19, as well as active contributions to global governance, are very important to the ICRC in dealing with and addressing fundamental challenges in humanitarian operations in situations of armed conflict and violence in Africa. Pommier acknowledged the pivotal role played by China in dealing with fundamental challenges associated with humanitarian operations in situations of armed conflict and violence in Africa. Specifically, he lauded China's influence, unswerving commitment to peace and development, exceptional leadership in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and significant contributions to global governance. Pommier's remarks exemplify the ICRC's recognition of the importance of collaboration with China and its potential to address crucial humanitarian concerns in Africa, a stance that underscores the organisation's emphasis on partnership and cooperation in achieving its mission.

In this section, I have delved into the rise and expansion of Chinese HDOs in Africa and other regions worldwide, examining the perspective of humanitarian workers involved with Chinese HDOs and INGOs. Drawing from previous discussions and incorporating insights from my observational research, it becomes evident that interactions between Chinese HDOs and INGOs play a vital role in propelling Chinese humanitarianism on a global scale.

One of the key factors driving the success and growth of Chinese HDOs is the unwavering determination exhibited by these organisations. This determination is notably exemplified by their strong identification with and steadfast commitment to the Chinese humanitarian philosophy, elaborated in Chapter Four. Chinese HDOs actively embrace the core principles and values that

underpin their nation's humanitarian efforts and serve as guiding forces in their endeavours. Furthermore, these organisations actively participate in diverse discussions aimed at enhancing their effectiveness. By engaging in such deliberations, Chinese HDOs seek to continuously refine their approaches and strategies, ensuring their contributions align with global best practices and standards. In this process, they also eagerly absorb knowledge and insights from INGOs, leveraging the expertise and experience of their international counterparts to bolster their own capabilities.

Additionally, endorsements and support by INGOs play crucial roles in fostering the global advance of Chinese humanitarianism. INGOs serve as mentors and advisors, offering valuable guidance to Chinese HDOs as they navigate the complex landscape of international humanitarian practices. Through these advisory relationships, INGOs share their expertise as they help Chinese HDOs adapt their operations to align with established international standards. This collaborative exchange of knowledge and practices is a mutually beneficial process that contributes to the growth and effectiveness of Chinese HDOs in their global humanitarian endeavours.

The backing of INGOs extends beyond mere guidance and mentorship. They actively promote the international humanitarian assistance practices of Chinese HDOs, recognising the value and impact of their contributions. This endorsement is manifested through tangible support, including financial assistance directed towards international humanitarian aid projects undertaken by Chinese HDOs. By providing the necessary resources, INGOs enable Chinese HDOs to expand their reach and implement initiatives that address pressing humanitarian needs across different regions. Additionally, collaboration between Chinese HDOs and INGOs strengthens the collective response to global humanitarian challenges. Through joint efforts, these organisations maximise their collective impact and contribute to building a more effective and coordinated humanitarian ecosystem.

Based on the analysis of Chinese HDOs' expansion in Africa and globally, as well as the perspectives of Chinese HDO staff and INGOs, several key conclusions can be drawn. Chinese HDOs are gradually establishing a more active role on the international humanitarian stage, focusing on disseminating philanthropic aspects of Chinese cultural values, facilitating 'People-to-People Bonds', supporting Chinese enterprises abroad, aligning with the Belt and Road Initiative, and advancing the creation of a community with a shared future for mankind. This reflects their efforts to integrate traditional Chinese philanthropy with modern approaches to meet global demands. While acknowledging their limitations in international assistance – such as restricted internationalization capacity, inadequate collaboration, insufficient funding for international projects, and unsustainable project development – Chinese HDOs have proposed enhancing international rescue capacity, prioritizing the expansion of mature domestic projects globally, and integrating into the international

humanitarian system through membership in international councils and coordination mechanisms. INGOs play a pivotal role in propelling Chinese humanitarianism globally by recognizing China's domestic humanitarian experience and supporting Chinese HDOs in building international assistance capacity. They offer guidance, share experiences, and promote concepts such as empowerment, sustainability, and minimum standards for humanitarian action, thereby facilitating Chinese HDOs' development as effective global humanitarian actors. The interaction between Chinese HDOs and INGOs is driving the global advancement of Chinese humanitarianism, with Chinese HDOs demonstrating strong identification with Chinese humanitarian philosophy and eagerly absorbing knowledge from INGOs, while INGOs provide endorsement, mentorship, and tangible support for Chinese HDOs' international humanitarian projects. Although Chinese HDOs still face numerous challenges on the international stage, they are progressively expanding their influence and evolving through collaboration with INGOs. This process not only promotes the globalization of Chinese humanitarianism but also injects new vitality into the international humanitarian system, holding the promise of unique contributions to addressing global humanitarian challenges.

Case Study: The Development and Internationalization of the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation

In the preceding analysis of the rise and expansion of Chinese HDOs in Africa, I have observed that these organisations are becoming a new force in China's participation in global humanitarian endeavors. They not only continue the tradition of their predecessor social organisations in building friendship between the Chinese and African peoples, but also shift their focus to addressing humanitarian crises and providing emergency relief. As a typical representative of this trend, the development trajectory of the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA) vividly reflects the evolution of Chinese HDOs and embodies China's increasingly important role in the global development landscape. In the following sections, this chapter will take CFPA as the core case to delve into how it transformed from a government-led domestic poverty alleviation institution to an independent social organisation with international influence. By examining the background of CFPA's establishment, organisational transformation, and internationalization strategy, I can clearly understand the coping strategies of Chinese HDOs when facing domestic reform and globalization challenges. The CFPA case provides a unique perspective for observing how Chinese HDOs gradually integrate into the global development cooperation system while maintaining their local characteristics.

Foundation's Roots: The Establishment and Early Development of CFPA

The establishment of the CFPA is closely associated with China's socio-economic conditions in the late 1980s. During the early stages of reform and opening-up, China faced widespread poverty issues, particularly in rural areas. The government recognized that relying solely on official efforts was insufficient to comprehensively address poverty, necessitating the development of additional channels to supplement national poverty alleviation efforts (Estes 1998). Against this backdrop, CFPA was established in March 1989, though initially named 'the China Poverty-stricken Area Development Foundation'. Its primary objective was to utilize donations from overseas Chinese and international non-governmental organisations to address social issues such as poverty, serving as a significant supplement to national poverty alleviation funds. CFPA was supervised by the State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, with initial start-up funding of 100,000 RMB (USD 26,600) provided by the Ministry of Agriculture (Ling 2010).

CFPA's fundraising methods evolved from a singular to a diversified approach. In addition to initial government support, CFPA gradually expanded its fundraising channels, including donations from domestic and international corporations, international enterprises, individual contributions, grants from international non-governmental organisations and foundations, as well as funds raised through public events. For instance, Xiamen Huamei Cigarette Company donated 10 million RMB (USD 2,090,650) in 1990, and ExxonMobil (China) Petroleum Co., Ltd. donated 1.15 million USD in 1998 (He et al. 2018). This diversified fundraising model not only enhanced CFPA's financial strength but also improved its independence and capacity for sustainable development.

In its early stages, CFPA's leadership primarily comprised senior government officials, with 70% being retired government officials. At its establishment in 1989, CFPA had 50 board members. By the second board meeting in 1993, this number had increased to 73, including retired provincial and ministerial leaders (Ibid.). The first honorary president of the CFPA was former Chinese President Li Xiannian (1993-1996). As honorary presidents are generally not directly involved in the decision-making and management of the organisation but rather aim to increase the organisation's influence, it is more relevant to note that the first president was former Fujian Provincial Party Secretary Xiang Nan. The second honorary president (1996-2000) was Rong Yiren, vice president of the Chinese State, and the second president was Yang Rudai, vice president of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). This high-level leadership composition reflected CFPA's close relationship with the government during its initial establishment.

CFPA's early work primarily focused on exploring how to mobilize social forces to raise funds and implement poverty alleviation projects. It mobilized people from all walks of life to participate

in poverty alleviation by organizing cadre exchanges between East and West, as well as promoting outreach by journalists and authors. It also explored the ways science and technology could be used for poverty alleviation, encouraged activities by entrepreneurs, and identified and issued commendations to the top ten national poverty alleviation scholars (He et al. 2018). Since its establishment, the CFPA has supported efforts of poor communities and populations to improve their production, living and health conditions and to enhance their quality and capacity to achieve poverty alleviation and sustainable development. It has also aimed to position itself as a complement to the main channel of government poverty alleviation, and to promote Chinese and foreign private forces to open up channels of funding for poverty alleviation (China Philanthropy Times[62]).

The relationship between CFPA and the government is a complex and evolving issue. The period from 1996 to 1999 was a time of restructuring for CFPA, with significant reforms being introduced from 2000 to 2002. The core of these reforms was to transform CFPA from a 'government-run foundation' into an independent non-government social organisation. In this transformation process, the role of individuals should not be overlooked. This shift reflected an important trend in the development of Chinese civil society, signalling that non-governmental organisations in China were beginning to gain greater autonomy and independence. During this transition, the role of individuals was significant as in the example of He Daofeng[63], the initiator and facilitator of the reform, who played a crucial role. His reform-minded thinking and business background brought a fresh perspective to CFPA, propelling the organisation towards greater independence and professionalization. The importance of individual leadership in the development of Chinese NGOs exemplifies the uniqueness of China's social transition period, where personal charisma and capability often drive institutional change.

Initiating reforms at CFPA was a condition for He Daofeng's acceptance of the position of CFPA Secretary-General. The agreement between He Daofeng and CFPA also stipulated that He's role as the foundation's secretary-general was a completely voluntary and unpaid position. It was further

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[56] China Philanthropy Times, Introduction to China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation, http://www.gongyishibao.com/zhuan/csdh/qita/fpjj.html, accessed on June 19, 2023.

[57] After graduating from the Department of Economics at Fudan University in the early 1980s, He Daofeng joined the Central Rural Policy Research Office. During his tenure at the Central Rural Research Office, he participated in the drafting process of the annual Central No. 1 Document, a crucial document guiding national agricultural economic system reform at that time. In 1989, when the Central Rural Research Office was disbanded, He Daofeng subsequently left the government. He transitioned to the business sector in 1992. In addition to his commercial activities, in 1994, He Daofeng accepted a government commission to lead the design and implementation of World Bank projects under the State Council's Poverty Alleviation Office. These projects included the labor export sub-project of the World Bank's poverty alleviation loan project for three southwestern provinces in China and the microcredit sub-project of the World Bank's poverty alleviation loan project in the Qinba Mountains area. Through this process, he accumulated extensive experience in poverty alleviation work and established a broad network within the government's poverty alleviation system. This laid the foundation for his subsequent invitation by leaders of the government's poverty alleviation department to serve as the Secretary-General of the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation. See from He, D., Wang, X., Liu, W., and Yang, Q. (2018). A Brief History of Reform and Development of China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (1989-2015). Social Sciences Academic Press.

specified that the CFPA, as a non-governmental public welfare organisation, would no longer be assigned administrative ranks, and the foundation's leadership would not be incorporated into the administrative sequence of state organs or public institutions (He et al. 2018). These conditions and regulations reflected He Daofeng's attempt to promote CFPA's de-administration and professionalization through personal example. Simultaneously, this also embodied an important transition that the Chinese NGO sector was undergoing: from semi-official institutions dependent on the government to far more politically and institutionally independent social organisations. This transformation involved not only organisational structure but also fundamental changes in management concepts and operational models.

The reform in 2000 primarily involved three aspects. Firstly, the administrative establishment of the foundation was abolished. The flow of personnel between the Business Supervisory Unit (a specific government entity responsible for guiding and supervising a particular social organisation under a filing management system; different organisations have different Business Supervisory Units) and the affiliated charitable organisations in the dual management system was cut off. As a result, the Business Supervisory Unit was not allowed to intervene in personnel appointments of the charitable wing, thereby establishing a system of equal competition for talent (Kang 2018). Secondly, issues of appropriation of resources from the China Poverty Alleviation and Development Association were resolved. Separate financial accounts and independent accounting were established, and fundraising was no longer conducted through central government administrative power. After this asset divestment, the CFPA's assets mainly consisted of funds for public welfare projects donated by society and the foundation's own resources (including fixed assets and current assets). Thirdly, brand assistance projects (Ling 2010) were implemented to demonstrate the organisation's value through effective project management. A number of projects were established, including the Mother and Child Safety Project, Microcredit Project, Angel Project, New Great Wall Project, and the Emergency Relief Project.

These reforms fundamentally altered CFPA's operational methods and its relationship with the government. CFPA repositioned itself as a 'third sector' social welfare organisation, characterized by its new kind of organisational structure, legitimacy, independence, non-governmental nature, volunteerism, and non-profit status. It accepts supervision and guidance from government departments but is no longer a subordinate institution, instead maintaining an equal cooperative relationship with governmental bodies. This transformation represents a significant milestone in the development of Chinese civil society, signalling that NGOs have begun to play a more independent and crucial role in Chinese society.

Post-reform, CFPA experienced notable changes in its autonomy. In terms of personnel, CFPA gained the authority to independently recruit and manage staff, including in senior management positions. Financially, CFPA established independent financial accounts and accounting systems, no longer relying on the government's administrative power for fundraising. Regarding project selection and fund utilization, CFPA acquired greater autonomy, enabling decision-making on projects and fund allocation based on its own assessments. This increased autonomy, however, exists within the unique political context of China, where the overarching principle of 'Party leadership in all aspects' (Wang and Chen 2019) continues to shape the operating environment for NGOs. Despite the ongoing if far more distant and subtle shadow of the state's political principle, organisations like CFPA have in fact been able to operate in a substantially more autonomous way since the reform.

CFPA must still align with China's overall political direction to maintain legitimacy while striving for greater independence, creating an ongoing tension between these dual requirements. This tension reflects the fundamental dilemma faced by Chinese organisations in balancing their pursuit of autonomy with the need to maintain legitimacy. On one hand, CFPA must assert its independence in personnel, finance, and project management to shed the perception of government control and enhance its international reputation and credibility. On the other hand, as an organisation operating within the Chinese political system, CFPA has to navigate the government's development strategies and political imperatives to a certain extent to secure necessary resources and support, thereby maintaining organisational legitimacy. Finding a balance between these two demands is a significant challenge faced by CFPA and all Chinese organisations. CFPA's approach is to carve out greater autonomy within the overall political direction, but the effectiveness of this strategy remains to be seen.

As CFPA achieved success and accumulated rich experience in domestic poverty alleviation, the organisation faced new development opportunities and challenges. Especially in the context of globalization, how could CFPA extend its successful experiences to the international stage? How could it respond to the nation's growing international ambitions and influence while maintaining independence? These questions propelled CFPA into a new development stage, namely exploring internationalization strategies.

Next, I will discuss in detail how CFPA utilized its domestically accumulated experience and resources to gradually achieve internationalization and play a larger role in global poverty alleviation and humanitarian aid. This process not only demonstrates CFPA's ability to adapt to new challenges but also reflects the efforts of Chinese non-governmental organisations to assert themselves on the international stage while navigating the complex political realities at home.

Transformation and Evolution: CFPA's Reform and International Exploration

Entering the 21st century, CFPA faced dual challenges: on the one hand, the need to enhance organisational independence and professionalism, and on the other, the necessity to respond to growing internationalization demands from the Chinese government and the global humanitarian community. During the early 2000s, CFPA's development strategy focused on two key aspects: organisational transformation and international exploration (He et al. 2018). While seemingly distinct, these two aspects were mutually reinforcing, jointly promoting CFPA's comprehensive development vision. The efforts in these two areas were mutually beneficial: organisational independence provided the necessary flexibility and autonomy for internationalization, while international experience, in turn, promoted further optimization and professionalization of organisational management.

CFPA's organisational transformation involved significant changes in its internal governance, fundraising strategies, and decision-making processes. 2000, CFPA began reforming its institutional governance structure. This involved strictly delineating the responsibilities, powers, and interests of the decision-making and management layers, and establishing corresponding organisational forms and activity modes. The decision-making layer was only responsible for institutional decision-making affairs, not directly intervening in the foundation's daily management and general business activities, and could not bypass the secretariat to issue directives directly to the institution's departments and employees. The responsibilities and powers for the institution's daily management and business activities were entirely entrusted to the secretariat led by Secretary-General He Daofeng, with the secretariat independently exercising management and operational rights over the institution (He et al. 2018). These reforms aimed to create a more professional and efficient management structure, laying the foundation for CFPA's further development.

In terms of diversifying fundraising methods, CFPA began to explore diverse fundraising channels, reducing dependence on government funds. Through cooperation with Mercy Corps, CFPA learned advanced online fundraising techniques, significantly increasing the proportion of private donations. As Paul Dudley Hart, the Senior Vice President for Global Partnerships and Alliances at Mercy Corps stated, 'Within five years, I think CFPA raised more private money than we did.' (Interview with Hart, Kitgum, Uganda, 17 October 2018). In terms of optimizing decision-making mechanisms, CFPA gradually established more transparent and scientific decision-making mechanisms. For example, at the third meeting of the fourth Board of Directors in 2000, CFPA formulated the working policy of 'learning from advanced international public welfare organisations' experiences and strengthening international connections', reflecting the emphasis on internationalization and professionalization in the organisation's decision-making process (He et al. 2018).

The internationalization of CFPA primarily unfolded through international exchanges and cooperation, establishing strategic partnerships, introducing international standards, and implementing international aid projects. In terms of international exchanges and cooperation, CFPA adopted a proactive stance. From 2000, it engaged in discussions with embassy representatives from Germany, the United States, Japan, and other countries, as well as representatives from international organisations and institutions such as the World Bank, European Union, and Asian Development Bank. In a significant milestone, from October 28-30, 2001, CFPA successfully hosted the 'International Poverty Alleviation Conference for Chinese Non-Governmental Organisations' in Beijing, marking CFPA's formal debut on the international stage. The conference brought together over 200 representatives and leaders from more than 170 relevant institutions across five continents, as well as influential scholars and research experts in the field of NGOs and poverty alleviation from China and abroad. Participants jointly discussed the development of Chinese NGOs and poverty alleviation strategies. The conference culminated in the adoption of the 'Beijing Declaration on Anti-Poverty by Chinese NGOs', signaling CFPA's commitment to engaging with global poverty alleviation efforts.

In terms of establishing strategic partnerships, CFPA formally established a strategic partnership with Mercy Corps in 2001. Over the next decade, Mercy Corps provided assistance to CFPA in areas such as organisational development, senior management training, international exchange and cooperation, emergency relief projects, and microfinance project development. He Daofeng pointed out that there were three main reasons for choosing Mercy Corps as a strategic partner: both parties desired rapid growth; the leaders of both organisations shared common ideas and saw mutual opportunities; and CFPA recognized that it could learn the necessary management and fundraising skills from Mercy Corps' experiences (He et al. 2018). Through this cooperation, CFPA not only learned about institutional IT platform construction and online fundraising techniques but also gained valuable humanitarian relief experience. Paul Dudley Hart confirmed this.

> The CFPA and Mercy Corps were able to enter into a partnership mainly because of two factors: personal relationship and common strategic interest … Daofeng was an important figure for their partnership as he realized that it is important to have connections with Western agencies. This related to the program methodology, philosophy of international NGOs, business methods of international NGOs and governance methods, all of which interested him. (Interview with Hart, Kitgum, Uganda, 17 October 2018).

In terms of introducing international standards, CFPA made significant contributions to the wider Chinese humanitarian arena. In September 2001, CFPA translated and published the 'Humanitarian

Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response' (Sphere Handbook[64]). As a common guide for international relief organisations, the publication of its Chinese version greatly promoted the standardization and timeliness of disaster relief work by the Chinese government and Chinese social organisations. Moreover, CFPA became the first organisation in China to be established using the international humanitarian relief standards in the Sphere Handbook.

Regarding the implementation of projects based on international standards, CFPA's flagship 'Emergency Relief Project', established in May 2001, played a crucial role. This project followed international disaster response standards and established a systematic relief approach covering disaster prevention, emergency relief, and post-disaster reconstruction. To advance this project, CFPA took several initiatives, including attempting to establish an international disaster relief network, organizing international disaster relief seminars (in 2004 and 2006), and strengthening exchanges and cooperation with international humanitarian organisations. From 2008 to 2015, CFPA carried out emergency relief activities based on these international standards in 22 provinces (autonomous regions and municipalities) in China, accumulating rich practical experience in applying these standards to the Chinese context. While these activities were primarily domestic, the 'Emergency Relief Project' nonetheless became an important avenue for CFPA to engage in international dialogue and learning (He et al. 2018).

CFPA's transformation process exemplifies the development trajectory of Chinese non-governmental organisations under specific historical contexts. Through reform, CFPA not only improved its independence and professionalism but also laid a solid foundation for future international development. In particular, CFPA played a pioneering role in introducing international humanitarian standards and practices to the Chinese context. However, transformation solely within the domestic scope was insufficient to meet CFPA's long-term development needs. As China's role on the global stage becomes increasingly important, CFPA also faces new challenges in internationalization. Next, I explore how CFPA has utilized its domestic experience and resources to gradually achieve internationalization and play a greater role in the field of global humanitarian aid.

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[58] The Sphere Handbook is Sphere's flagship publication. It comprises the Humanitarian Charter, the Protection Principles, the Core Humanitarian Standard, and minimum humanitarian standards in four vital areas of response: Water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH); Food security and nutrition; Shelter and settlement; Health. The Handbook is one of the most widely known and internationally recognized tools for the delivery of the quality humanitarian response. National and international NGOs, United Nations agencies, and governmental authorities across the globe make use of its guidance when planning, delivering and evaluating humanitarian operations.

Going Global: CFPA's Internationalization Strategy and Practices

The internationalization process of CFPA is a natural continuation of its organisational development, as well as a response to China's growing global influence. CFPA's internationalization strategy can be viewed as a gradual learning process, progressing from initial financial donations to direct participation in international projects, and then to the establishment of overseas offices. Each step embodies the organisation's careful deliberation and practical experience. This progressive internationalization strategy not only reduced risks but also allowed CFPA to accumulate valuable international experience.

The CFPA's international humanitarian aid program is divided into three phases. The first phase was 'without going abroad', from 2005-2009. During this period, the CFPA simply donated funds to foreign NGOs, allowing them to decide how to use and allocate the donations; it did not directly participate in project implementation or send staff to stations in the recipient countries. In 2005, for example, China provided funds and non-food items to tsunami victims in Indonesia, hurricane victims in the United States, and earthquake victims in Pakistan. These funds and goods were distributed by the CFPA through the respective embassies in China.

The second phase, from 2010-2011, can be described as the 'business trip' phase. During this stage, the CFPA started to send staff to the recipient countries. For example, in August 2011, the CFPA launched a humanitarian aid campaign called 'Love without Borders, Good Deeds for Africa – Emergency Relief Action for Famine Victims in the Horn of Africa'. In addition to raising more than RMB 300,000 (USD 48,000), the CFPA also sent a relief team to the drought-stricken areas in Kenya to investigate the situation and carry out relief activities (He et al. 2018:2698). The CFPA also officially established its International Development Department in 2010.

The third stage involved the establishment of country offices outside of China. In 2012, the CFPA began to establish project offices in recipient countries and recruit professional staff locally (Wang and Jia 2002). On 27 July 2015, the CFPA established its first overseas office in Myanmar. After establishing its first overseas office in 2015, the CFPA launched the 'Myanmar Kokang War Refugee Humanitarian Relief Operation' with its first office director, Lin Yuan, from the Department of International Development. The project distributed 100 tents, 630 'family emergency kits' and 6.47 million RMB (USD 1,038,790) worth of clothing to war-affected refugees in Myanmar. On 25 April of the same year, a major earthquake with a magnitude of 8.1 struck Nepal. The very next day, the CFPA rushed to Nepal to carry out earthquake relief. To engage in post-disaster reconstruction projects in Nepal, the CFPA set up its second overseas office in Nepal in August 2015. Ethiopia

became the host for the CFPA's third overseas and first African office on 19 September 2019, when its opening ceremony was held (see Picture 2).

Picture 2   The Opening Ceremony of CFPA Ethiopia Office

Source: 'China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation Annual Report 2019'

From the above analysis, one can conclude that the CFPA has undergone several significant transformations. These changes include transitioning from a government-managed foundation to an autonomous non-governmental organisation, and expanding its scope from domestic poverty alleviation and emergency relief to international endeavours. These fundamental changes are intricately intertwined with the decision-making processes of the CFPA's leadership, as well as the shifts within China's domestic political, economic, and social landscape.

The evolution of CFPA reflects broader trends in Chinese civil society development and the country's growing role on the global stage. Key factors contributing to CFPA's transformation and internationalization include:

1. *Leadership vision*: The reform strategies initiated by leaders like He Daofeng were instrumental in driving CFPA's organisational transformation and international expansion. Their foresight in recognizing the need for greater autonomy and professionalization set the foundation for CFPA's future development.

2. *Government policy shifts*: The Chinese government's gradual decentralization of power to social organisations provided CFPA with the necessary autonomy to exercise independent personnel

and financial decisions, a crucial prerequisite for its advancement.

3. *Alignment with national goals*: CFPA's internationalization strategy aligns with China's evolving international development agenda and increasing presence in the global humanitarian arena. This alignment has facilitated CFPA's efforts to expand its activities beyond China's borders.

4. *International partnerships*: Collaborations with international NGOs, particularly Mercy Corps, played a pivotal role in CFPA's development. These partnerships broadened CFPA's vision, enhanced its professionalism, increased its international visibility, and improved its technical capacity in the humanitarian field.

5. *Gradual internationalization approach*: CFPA's three-phase approach to international humanitarian aid – from financial donations to direct participation and finally to establishing overseas offices – allowed for a measured and strategic expansion of its global footprint.

However, CFPA's journey towards internationalization has not been without challenges. The organisation's early international experiences, such as the collaboration with Mercy Corps in Nepal, highlighted the need to adapt domestic expertise to international contexts and develop more strategic approaches to humanitarian aid. As Paul Dudley Hart from Mercy Corps noted, differences in implementation methods and lack of international experience initially hampered collaborative efforts (Interview with Hart, Kitgum, Uganda, October 17, 2018).

Despite these challenges, CFPA's internationalization process and practices in Africa provide a unique perspective on the evolving role of Chinese HDOs on the global stage. The 'Brighter Future' program, a collaboration between CFPA and Mercy Corps in Uganda, represents a significant milestone in the internationalization strategy of Chinese HDOs.

Through the analysis of the CFPA case, this chapter has revealed the opportunities and challenges in the development journey and internationalization process of Chinese HDOs. As a representative case of the internationalization of Chinese HDOs, what outcomes and impacts have CFPA's humanitarian projects in Africa achieved? What challenges do they face? What implications does this have for understanding the humanitarian role of Chinese HDOs in Africa? These questions will be further explored in the empirical research of the next chapter. Chapter 8 will focus on the 'Bighter Future' program jointly carried out by CFPA and Mercy Corps in Uganda. Utilizing field research data, it will conduct an in-depth analysis of the operation, impact, and broader significance of this program, with the aim of providing a micro-level perspective for deep understanding the expanding humanitarian role of Chinese HDOs in Africa.

It is worth noting that in June 2022, the China CFPA underwent a significant change, being officially renamed as the China Foundation for Rural Development. This change was driven by China's historic achievement in eradicating absolute poverty and the subsequent shift in focus from poverty alleviation to rural revitalization. Despite this domestic strategic adjustment, it is important to emphasize that international humanitarian aid remains a crucial aspect of CFPA's work. The organisation remains committed to its global humanitarian mission, even as it adapts to the new landscape of rural development in China. This commitment is evidenced by CFPA's continued engagement in various humanitarian assistance projects and initiatives, both before and after the renaming. A prime example of this continuity is the CFPA's Humanitarian Rescue Network, which celebrated its tenth anniversary in May 2024. The network's annual meeting, held under the theme 'Rationality, Development, Multi-party Participation', brought together over 120 participants, including strategic corporate partners, national humanitarian rescue network partners, experts, scholars, media representatives, and CFPA representatives. This event, taking place nearly two years after the renaming, demonstrates CFPA's ongoing dedication to building and strengthening humanitarian rescue capabilities.[65] Another compelling case is the Africa Water Cellar Project, a joint initiative by Xuzhou Construction Machinery Group (XCMG) and CFPA to address the persistent issues of drought and lack of clean water sources in Ethiopia. Launched in 2016, the project has constructed 161 family water cellars across various regions of Ethiopia, benefiting over 12,000 people. In 2024, the fifth phase of the project was officially launched, aiming to build 40 above-ground water cellars for 38 drought-affected households and a public primary school in the Dukan region of Oromia State[66]. This sustained effort, spanning the period before and after CFPA's renaming, underscores the organisation's unwavering commitment to international humanitarian assistance.

These examples clearly illustrate that while the renaming to China Foundation for Rural Development reflects a strategic alignment with China's new rural revitalization strategy, it does not signal a retreat from CFPA's international humanitarian commitments. The organisation remains dedicated to its global mission, with projects like the Humanitarian Rescue Network and the Africa

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[59] The China Foundation for Rural Development (formerly CFPA) held a conference in Hangzhou to mark the 10th anniversary of its Humanitarian Rescue Network. The event highlighted the network's efforts in disaster response and resilience building over the past decade, including over 325 rescue operations benefiting millions across multiple countries. Accessed on August 17, 2024, from https://www.cfpa.org.cn/news/news_detail.aspx?articleid=4141.

[60] The China Foundation for Rural Development (formerly CFPA) and XCMG Group launched the fifth phase of the African Water Cellar Project in Ethiopia, aimed at addressing long-term drought and water scarcity issues. The project supports local communities by providing essential water resources, with the completion of the fourth phase also being celebrated. Accessed on August 17, 2024, from https://www.cfpa.org.cn/news/news_detail.aspx?articleid=4119.

Water Cellar Project demonstrating its ongoing efforts to make a meaningful impact in the humanitarian landscape, both domestically and internationally.

Conclusion

This chapter employs a historiographical approach to comprehend the emergence of Chinese HDOs and their role in humanitarian aid in Africa. Through the analysis of data from scholars, humanitarian workers, and aid projects participants from various sectors, this chapter provides important insights into the behavioural motivations and practical significance of Chinese HDOs as emerging forces in global humanitarianism.

The rise of Chinese HDOs in Africa has been a gradual process, and is ongoing. Initially, Chinese social organisations primarily engaged in cultural exchanges with Africa under government guidance. Entering the 21st century, an increasing number of Chinese HDOs began to work independently in Africa, both continuing the history of emotional exchange and humanitarian interaction between Chinese social organisations and African countries and NGOs, and presenting new characteristics and trends. These organisations' aid projects have become increasingly diverse in type and expanded in coverage, playing an increasingly important role in addressing humanitarian challenges faced by Africa.

Through a systematic review of Chinese HDOs' aid program in Africa, this chapter examines the preferences and methods of these organisations in humanitarian aid practices. The analysis reveals that Chinese HDOs operate in a wide range of aid sectors, with notable performance in healthcare, education, and emergency relief. Overall, their humanitarian practices both inherit traditional Chinese charitable culture and absorb modern international humanitarian concepts, presenting unique characteristics of cultural integration.

In discussing the humanitarian role of Chinese HDOs in Africa, scholars and frontline workers provide nuanced and multidimensional perspectives. They affirm the contributions made by Chinese HDOs to global humanitarian causes while also analysing the challenges faced and areas for improvement. Chinese HDOs are at a critical juncture transitioning from quantitative expansion to qualitative enhancement. In the future, crucial issues facing Chinese HDOs will include how to further strengthen capacity building, deepen international exchange and cooperation, and voice more Chinese perspectives in participating in the formulation of the global humanitarian agenda.

Through an in-depth analysis of the CFPA case, this chapter further reveals the unique development trajectory and practical model of Chinese HDOs in the process of internationalization. The

development journey of CFPA reflects the transformation of Chinese HDOs from government-led to independent social organisations, as well as the expansion from domestic poverty alleviation and disaster relief to international humanitarian assistance. This transformation process is influenced by the dual factors of the general trend of Chinese civil society development and the country's increasingly important global role. CFPA's practices in Africa, especially its collaborative program with Mercy Corps in Uganda, provide valuable experience and insights for Chinese HDOs' participation in African affairs. It not only reflects the opportunities and challenges faced by Chinese HDOs in complex humanitarian environments but also offers new ideas for synergy and complementarity between Chinese and foreign humanitarian actors.

In summary, the development of Chinese HDOs in Africa is not only an essential component of China's participation in global humanitarian endeavors but also a bond and bridge for friendly exchanges between the Chinese and African peoples. As China's comprehensive national strength and international influence continue to grow, Chinese HDOs are expected to play a more significant role in promoting the building of a community with a shared future for mankind and forging a closer China-Africa community with a shared future. At the same time, we must also recognize that the development of Chinese HDOs in Africa not only reflects the growing humanitarian concern of China as an emerging power but also serves its broader political and economic interests in the region. The development of Chinese HDOs in Africa bears witness to the deepening of China-Africa friendly relations and heralds a new stage in China's participation in global humanitarian causes and its pursuit of soft power influence.

8   A NEW HUMANITARIAN ROLE? THE CASE OF CFPA IN NORTHERN UGANDA

'We look forward to expanding our activities to 10 countries, including Africa.'

Wu Peng, CFPA's Director of International Development, speaking to 27 African journalists on 24 August 2017 in the organisation's head office in Beijing.

Map 1   Map of Kitgum Town and Lamwo District, Uganda

Source: Mercy Corps website. https://daofengandangelafoundation.org/project/brighter-future-programme/, accessed on 3 July 2023.

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the 'Brighter Future' program implemented by the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA) in northern Uganda. Through an in-depth case study, it analyzes the specific practices, challenges, and impacts of Chinese Humanitarian and Development Organisations (HDOs) in conducting humanitarian aid in Africa. The 'Brighter Future' program provides a unique perspective for understanding China's humanitarian practices in Africa, delving into the internationalization process of Chinese HDOs, their interactions with Western humanitarian organisations, and their expanding role in the African humanitarian sphere. Through this critical examination of a specific Chinese HDO's practice in Africa, we can gain a deeper understanding of how China's expanding humanitarian role is reshaping its relationship with Africa and influencing the contemporary global humanitarian landscape.

This chapter, while providing an in-depth analysis of the 'Brighter Future' program, also offers a prudent reflection on the limitations of the research and proposes prospects for future research directions. A key insight is that research on the overseas humanitarian practices of Chinese HDOs needs to advance through the interaction between empirical exploration and theoretical reflection. This research approach not only helps to deepen our understanding of this issue but also holds promise for pioneering new pathways in reshaping the concept of 'humanitarianism'.

To better comprehend the context of this program, it is necessary to first understand the overall refugee situation in Africa. Since the early post-colonial period, the African continent has experienced large-scale refugee displacement due to political instability, armed conflicts, and ethnic violence. From the civil wars in Nigeria, Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda in the 1960s and 1970s, to the massive refugee outflows in the Great Lakes region following the Rwandan genocide in the 1990s, to the outbreak of civil war in South Sudan in 2013, Africa's refugee crises have been continuous. In this context, Uganda's refugee situation is particularly prominent. Despite challenges in fully implementing progressive refugee policies (Betts 2021), the country is known for its open refugee policy and progressive legislation.

The selection of Uganda as the empirical focus of this study is significant. As a major refugee-receiving country in Africa, Uganda provides an ideal backdrop for observing the performance of Chinese HDOs in complex humanitarian environments. The core content of this chapter revolves around the 'Brighter Future' refugee aid program jointly implemented by CFPA and the Western NGO Mercy Corps in Uganda. Through an in-depth analysis of this program, we can not only observe the specific cooperation model between CFPA and Western NGOs but also assess the capability of Chinese HDOs in addressing humanitarian issues in Africa.

To deep understand the actual impact and challenges of the 'Brighter Future' program, this study employed field research methods, including on-site observations, questionnaire surveys, and face-to-face interviews. These methods were applied during a two-month field visit to the Palabek refugee settlement in northern Uganda. Through this approach, the study collected first-hand data on the actual living conditions of refugees, the program's impact, and refugees' perceptions of Chinese humanitarian aid. These data not only help evaluate the actual effectiveness of the program but also provide important evidence for analyzing China's soft power influence and potential humanitarian contributions in Africa.

In terms of analytical framework, this chapter will primarily unfold along two dimensions. First, it analyzes Uganda's long history of refugee reception and its evolving refugee policies, exploring the ongoing tensions between refugee rights and host community needs. This background analysis provides an important context for understanding the environment in which CFPA implemented the 'Brighter Future' program in Uganda. Second, based on field observations and research, it evaluates the specific implementation process and impact of the 'Brighter Future' program. On one hand, it focuses on analyzing the multidimensional impacts of program activities on refugee livelihoods, social integration, and the shaping of China's humanitarian image. On the other hand, it delves into the practical challenges faced during program implementation, as well as the interactions and adjustments between CFPA and Mercy Corps in cross-cultural cooperation. Through these two analytical dimensions, this chapter aims to comprehensively present the specific practices of CFPA as a Chinese HDO participating in African humanitarian affairs, assessing its role and impact in addressing the refugee crisis. Meanwhile, through the analysis of the 'Brighter Future' program, this chapter also attempts to provide a micro-perspective for in-depth understanding of the internationalization process of Chinese HDOs, the cooperation model between Chinese and Western humanitarian organisations, and the prospects for China-Africa humanitarian cooperation.

Through an in-depth analysis of CFPA's program in Uganda, this chapter aims to answer the third sub-question of the dissertation: How and why have Chinese state and non-state actors expanded their roles in the global humanitarian arena and become new humanitarian players in Africa? At the same time, by analyzing the impact of this program on China-Africa relations and contemporary global humanitarianism, this chapter also provides important clues for answering the main research question of the dissertation.

Why Uganda?

Before delving into the discussion of the CFPA's 'Brighter Future' program in northern Uganda, we need to first understand the refugee background of the region and the reasons for choosing Uganda as a case study.

There are several important reasons for selecting Uganda as a case study for Chinese humanitarian action. Firstly, Uganda is one of the largest refugee-receiving countries in Africa, and the severity and complexity of its refugee issues make it an ideal location for studying humanitarian action. According to data from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Uganda had received approximately 1.5 million refugees by the end of 2021. Secondly, Uganda's relatively progressive refugee policies provide a comparatively favourable working environment for international humanitarian organisations, which helps us examine how Chinese humanitarian organisations function within a relatively mature refugee assistance system.

Compared to other African countries, Uganda's refugee situation has a certain representativeness. Many African countries face the challenge of large-scale refugee influxes, requiring urgent aid and long-term support from the international community. At the same time, Uganda's unique refugee policy model, which emphasizes refugee self-reliance and integration with local communities, also provides valuable experience for other countries. Therefore, conducting an in-depth analysis using Uganda as a case study helps us understand the role-positioning and practical characteristics of Chinese humanitarian action in addressing African refugee challenges.

However, it is also important to recognize the specificity of the Ugandan case. The relatively favourable policy environment means that research findings may not be fully generalizable to countries with stricter refugee policies. Nevertheless, the Ugandan case still provides a window to observe how Chinese humanitarian action unfolds in a specific context, offering an important perspective for understanding China's humanitarian practices in Africa.

Based on the above background, this section will first provide an overview of Uganda's refugee policies, including their historical evolution and current main features. This not only reveals the policy environment in which CFPA operates but also provides context for evaluating the adaptability and effectiveness of its projects. Subsequently, I focus on the Palabek refugee settlement, which is the main implementation site for CFPA's 'Brighter Future' program. By introducing the specific situation in Palabek, we can better understand the actual challenges and opportunities faced by CFPA.

The Evolution of Refugee Policies in Uganda

Uganda is a party to the 1951 UNHCR Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, its 1967 Protocol, and the 1969 Organisation of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. Uganda hosts the largest population of refugees in Africa and as already noted, its national refugee policy has developed and evolved.

Uganda's first refugee law, the Control of Refugees from Sudan Ordinance, was enacted in 1955 and replaced in 1960 by the Control of Alien Refugees Act (CARA) (Mujuzi 2008). CARA provided some refugee rights but did not include what are now considered fundamental rights and freedoms. For example, it did not mention women's or children's refugee rights (Ibid.). Yet it remained on the books until a new legal instrument emerged in 2006 (Mulumba and Olema 2009). The Refugee Act 2006 was first tabled before parliament in 1988, passed in 2006, and entered into force in 2008 (Hovil 2018:7). The Refugee Act 2006 clarified the definitions and standards of refugee protection, the procedures for gaining refugee status, and presented a framework for dealing with refugee issues in Africa based on the 1951 UNHCR Refugee Convention and the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention. At a policy level, it granted refugees freedom of movement and the right to work (Hovil 2018). In this regard, Hovil argues that '[i]t is progressive, human rights and protection oriented' (Hovil 2018:7).

One of Uganda's refugee policy tenets is the Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS), a strategy formulated by UNHCR and the Government of Uganda (GoU). The policy aimed '[to empower] refugees and nationals in the area to the extent that they would be able to support themselves' and 'to establish mechanisms that will ensure integration of services for the refugees with those of the nationals' (UNHCR 2003:3). The SRS fits into UNHCR's 2003 global strategy of Development Assistance to Refugees (DAR). The DAR has been defined as

> A programming approach which aims to place refugee concerns and those of the host communities in development agendas, mobilize additional development assistance and improve burden-sharing with countries hosting large refugee populations. It seeks to promote a better quality of life and self reliance for refugees and prepare them for durable solutions, and to contribute to poverty eradication in refugee-hosting areas. (UNHCR 2005).

In September 2016, the UN General Assembly adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, through which states re-committed to protect the rights of refugees and other migrants within the existing international law framework. Additionally, this acknowledged sharing the burden and responsibility for hosting and supporting the world's refugees (Hovil 2018).

To achieve the goals of the New York Declaration, the UNHCR developed and initiated a multi-stakeholder approach known as the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), and the

CRRF Road Map was adopted in January 2018 (Hovil 2018:12). The CRRF focuses on five mutually reinforcing pillars: admission and rights, emergency response and ongoing needs, resilience and self-reliance, expanded solution and voluntary repatriation. CRRF is an integrated UN refugee management model that provides refugees access to land and social services, and to a national strategy framework called the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (RehoPE). The RehoPE framework, adopted within CRRF, grants access to land and social services and allows people to work and move freely. It aims to bring together stakeholders and integrate humanitarian and development responses to refugee situations in order to best support long-term support resilience (UN 2017). RehoPE is led by the Government of Uganda and the United Nations, in partnership with the World Bank, donors, humanitarian and development partners, NGOs and INGOs, the private sector, and civil society.

RehoPE is viewed as a transformative strategy for responding to specific challenges faced in delivering protection and achieving social and economic development for both refugee and host communities. In the same year, the Ugandan government implemented the Settlement Transformation Agenda (STA) in an attempt to support refugees' integration into the National Development Plan II (NDPII 2015/16-2019/20). The STA was endorsed by the World Bank, which provided a loan for use in Uganda's refugee-hosting northern districts. It viewed the local host communities as key stakeholders who needed support to increase their willingness to receive refugees, as the area was already marginal, and the economic situation was worsening. When the number of refugees increased, the community largely refused to give up their land (Zakaryan 2018). Schiltz and Titeca (2017) argue that land given to refugees is too small to provide a decent living to the refugees and the local population still officially owns it.

The Debate of Refugee Policies in Uganda

Uganda's refugee policies have been widely praised by the international community for their progressive nature. However, a closer examination reveals a complex landscape of motivations, challenges, and ongoing debates surrounding these policies. This section critically analyses the various perspectives on Uganda's refugee policies, their implementation, and their impact on both refugees and host communities.

While Uganda's refugee policies, including the Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS) and the 2006 Refugee Act, have been discussed earlier, it's crucial to examine the motivations behind these policies more closely. As Hovil (2018:15) astutely observes, 'Uganda adopted progressive refugee policies not only out of goodwill but also because its geographic and diplomatic circumstances allowed its government

to adopt such policies without paying a high political price domestically and with at least the hope that these policies would translate into benefits at the international and national levels.' This strategic consideration reveals that Uganda's government views these policies as an opportunity to strengthen its regional leadership and legitimacy in refugee response, thereby enhancing its position as a reliable partner of the international community. Interestingly, this approach parallels China's efforts to enhance its legitimacy and soft power in the region and internationally through humanitarian aid and development assistance. Both countries seem to recognize the potential diplomatic benefits of their humanitarian efforts.

While these policies have garnered international praise, their implementation faces significant challenges. Zakaryan (2018:4) notes that refugee settlements in Uganda are often located in 'geographically remote and underdeveloped districts where resources are scarce for both refugees and host communities'. This is particularly evident in the remote parts of the West Nile region and Lamwo district, where livelihood conditions are poor for both refugees and Ugandans, leading to similar challenges in agricultural production. Such circumstances exacerbate resource allocation pressures and increase the potential for conflicts between refugees and local communities.

Scholars have raised critical points about the effectiveness and impact of Uganda's refugee policies. Hovil (2007), for instance, emphasizes that the settlement policy, particularly the restriction of freedom of movement for refugees, violates international human rights standards. She has argued that this limitation extends to refugees' freedom to choose the means of self-support and freedom of thought and conscience. It's important to note, however, that Hovil's critiques were based on policies from the mid-2000s, and Uganda has since made significant strides in granting refugees greater freedom of movement and economic rights.

More recent research by Ahimbisibwe (2019) highlights ongoing challenges, including increasing refugee numbers, protracted refugee situations, the burden of hosting refugees, limited resources, and insufficient international support. These factors collectively threaten Uganda's ability to maintain its welcoming stance towards refugees. Additionally, Easton-Calabria and Omata (2018) critique the negative portrayal of refugees' aid dependency within Uganda's refugee regime, arguing that this labelling can have harmful effects on refugees, particularly those in camps.

Despite these challenges, it's crucial to acknowledge the progress Uganda has made. The adoption of the CRRF in 2017 aligned Uganda with global priorities on refugee self-reliance and integration. This framework, along with the STA, attempts to support refugees' integration into national development plans and provides them with plots of land. These initiatives represent significant steps towards a more inclusive and sustainable approach to refugee management.

However, tensions remain regarding land access and service delivery in refugee-hosting areas. As refugee numbers continue to rise amidst new influxes, Uganda faces ongoing challenges in fully realizing its progressive refugee policies. The evolving policy framework presents opportunities for non-governmental organisations, including Chinese ones, to strengthen refugee rights and host community resilience through targeted interventions. Yet, structural constraints persist, and a clear-eyed assessment shows that while Uganda's policies are more progressive than many counterparts, they continue to face limitations in reconciling refugee and host community priorities.

In conclusion, the debate surrounding Uganda's refugee policies reflects a complex interplay of progressive intentions, strategic considerations, and practical challenges. While the country has made significant strides in creating a more welcoming environment for refugees, the implementation of these policies continues to face obstacles. The ongoing tensions between policy ideals and on-the-ground realities underscore the need for continued critical analysis and adaptive strategies in addressing refugee needs while balancing host community concerns.

This complex policy landscape forms the backdrop against which international humanitarian actors, including the CFPA, operate in Uganda. On one hand, Uganda's relatively progressive policy framework provides a conducive environment for refugee assistance and empowerment projects. On the other hand, the practical challenges and local tensions necessitate careful consideration and adaptive strategies. It is within this intricate context that CFPA's 'Brighter Future' program seeks to address a combination of refugee self-reliance and host community resilience, responding to both the opportunities and challenges presented by Uganda's refugee policy environment.

Palabek Settlement and Refugees

Palabek Settlement, as the implementation site for the CFPA's 'Brighter Future' program, holds significant importance for an in-depth study of China's humanitarian role in Africa. During my two-month field research in the settlement, I employed a combination of on-site observations, questionnaire surveys and face-to-face interviews [67]. Through extensive contact with refugees, including participant observation of their daily lives and informal conversations, including some refugee leaders involved in camp management. I gained a more intuitive understanding of the internal operations of the refugee camp and the actual needs of refugees. On this basis, I conducted systematic questionnaire-based surveys, collecting quantitative data on refugees' current living conditions and aid requirements. For key issues identified in the survey, I carried out face-to-face interviews to obtain

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[61] The Participant Observation Records, questionnaire content, and interview outline see Appendices 2, 3, and 4.

richer qualitative insights. These empirical data offer important insights into China's growing humanitarian presence, role and impacts within Africa.

However, I acknowledge that this study has certain limitations. Firstly, due to language barriers, the research primarily involved refugees who could communicate in English, potentially overlooking refugee groups who only used local languages. Secondly, due to security and access restrictions, my research survey was mainly concentrated in specific areas of the refugee camp and could not cover a wider area, which may have affected the general applicability and representativeness of the research results even from within this single settlement. Nevertheless, the data still provide meaningful insights that help us better understand the current situation and challenges in refugee camps.

Palabek refugee camp was established in April 2017 in the Lamwo district of northern Uganda, just 35 kilometers from the South Sudan border. The settlement is divided into eight zones, each consisting of 8-9 blocks. Each block has about 120 families, with a total population of approximately 53,000. Women and children make up 86% of the settlement's population, with 60% of residents under the age of 12. As I observed during my fieldwork, these figures highlight the special challenges and needs faced by this population. In addition to the UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP), over 20 non-governmental organisations provide various forms of assistance within the settlement, forming a complex aid network (Field research notes, October 2018).

The historical background of the Lamwo district is crucial for understanding the current refugee situation. The area experienced a twenty-year civil war, forcing many residents to relocate to internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps (Hopwood 2015). In these camps, they faced not only attacks from rebels but also extreme poverty and harsh living conditions. As several refugee leaders pointed out during our conversations, the local Ugandan population in the Lamwo district experiences living conditions similar to those of refugees, providing important background for the relationship dynamics between refugees and local communities.

During my fieldwork, I conducted one-on-one interviews with several refugee leaders. While the interviewees seemed able to express their thoughts freely, likely due to the trust we had built and the relatively private setting of our conversations, in an interview with Block leader 3, he stated, 'Relations between refugees and locals are good. There are no problems, no conflicts. Everyone is very peaceful.' (Interview with Block leader 3 on November 12, 2018) While this response appears to paint a harmonious picture, my analysis suggests that such simplified statements may obscure more complex dynamics in refugee-host community relations. The phrasing of my questions and the context of our dialogue likely influenced the interviewee's choice to emphasize the positive aspects of these relations. However, there are some restrictions on resource use. As Block leader 1 mentioned,

'the host community has provided some land for refugees, while also indicating where they cannot go. Refugees cannot go too far and can only obtain firewood in specific places.' (Interview with Block leader 1 on November 5, 2018) This restricted relationship reflects tensions and a delicate balance between refugees and local communities.

In conducting these interviews, I sought to listen attentively to the interviewees' narratives, occasionally probing for further details to elicit more layered accounts. I also promptly organized notes after the interviews, recording important points and new thoughts. While these interviews provided valuable insights into the refugees' experiences and their relationships with host communities, I recognize the limitations of relying on a small number of refugee leaders' perspectives. The empirical material presented here offers a glimpse into the complex realities of refugee life in Palabek, but a more comprehensive understanding would require a deeper exploration of the nuances and contradictions within these narratives.

My research reveals that, refugees in Palabek settlement face numerous challenges, with land, food, and funding shortages being the most prominent. With the assistance of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), refugees were allocated 30*30 meter plots of land for growing some of their family's food needs. However, as Block leaders 3 and 6 emphasized, coupled with the uncertainties brought by climate change, agricultural production faces enormous challenges. Yet despite the land shortage, there is still a high demand for agricultural inputs in the refugee community, as they hope to supplement relief food through small-scale planting. However, support in this area is limited. I observed that refugees from the Nuer and Dinka tribes particularly need agricultural training, as they have limited experience in agriculture (Field research notes, October 2018).

Food access is one of the main challenges faced by newly arrived refugees. Due to resource scarcity, the rations allocated by UNHCR per person are limited and cannot guarantee long-term adequate supply. In the words of Block leader 5 the amount of food provided is insufficient and cannot sustain people for the entire month, often running out after two weeks (Interview with Block leader 5 on November 13, 2018). Moreover, I learned that the food quality is poor, often expired. Refugees are provided with whole corn instead of ground cornmeal, forcing them to sell part of their food to pay for milling costs (Field research notes, October 2018).

In addition to food shortages, refugees also face severe funding shortages. As Block leader 1 explained: 'they have limited access to money. Some people's children work outside, but receiving remittances is a challenge.' (Interview with Block leader 1 on November 5, 2018). Another, Block leader 7 also emphasized: 'They need money to buy the things they need.' (Interview with Block

leader 7 on November 15, 2018) This funding shortage not only limits the quality of life for refugees but also hinders their ability to establish sustainable livelihoods.

The lack of infrastructure and service facilities within the settlement emerged as another key issue during my fieldwork. The shortage of service facilities such as schools and hospitals lead to overcrowded classrooms and low teacher-student ratios. Both refugees and locals face similar difficulties in accessing education and medical services. In an interview, Block leader 2 stated that, 'they need more schools, teachers, and educational opportunities, as well as more hospitals, medicines, and better medical services.' (Interview with Block leader 2 on November 9, 2018). This lack of infrastructure not only affects the daily lives of refugees but may also have negative impacts on their long-term development and social integration.

My research also shed light on the socio-economic relationships between refugees and local communitiesm which show imbalanced characteristics. In northern refugee settlements, aid often enables refugees to employ earlier-arrived refugees or local Ugandans to build houses or dig latrines, while local Ugandans rarely employ South Sudanese refugees because they lack the ability to pay. As several interviewees suggested, imbalanced economic relationship exacerbates tensions between communities. Furthermore, employment opportunities within refugee settlements are limited, making it difficult to obtain sustainable employment. Only refugees with English language skills can find long-term work with international aid agencies, such as health promoters or translators, which further exacerbates inequality within refugee groups.

My interviews also revealed refugees' desires for sustainable livelihoods. For instance, Block leader 1 suggested: 'Give people money to start businesses, like selling small fish.' (Interview with Block leader 1 on November 5, 2018). Block leader 4 stated: 'If we could go to work, we could maintain our lives without the help of NGOs.' (Interview with Block leader 4 on November 12, 2018) These voices reflect refugees' desire for economic independence and self-sufficiency, while also providing important reference directions for aid agencies and policymakers.

Reflecting on my fieldwork experience, I am struck by the complex challenges faced by refugees in Palabek settlement, as well as their resilience and agency in navigating these difficulties. The insights gained from this research, while partial and situated, offer valuable ground-level perspectives that can inform more nuanced understandings of refugee realities and the impacts of humanitarian interventions.

The research findings serve as a critical backdrop for understanding and evaluating the 'Brighter Future' program implemented by CFPA in collaboration with Mercy Corps. The following section will delve into the details of this program, paying particular attention to CFPA's learning process,

adaptive strategies, and potential value-added in the face of the complex realities on the ground. By maintaining this analytical focus, and drawing on the empirical insights presented here, the chapter aims to shed light on the evolving role and capacity of Chinese HDOs in the global humanitarian landscape, and their engagement with the intricacies of protracted refugee situations in Africa.

The 'Brighter Future' Program: CFPA's Refugee Response in Uganda

This section focuses on the humanitarian practices of Chinese HDOs in the Palabek refugee settlement. Through an in-depth analysis of their specific activities, implementation processes, challenges faced, and impacts generated, this case study is used to explore the evolving role of Chinese HDOs in refugee assistance in Africa, as well as the dynamic interactions between Chinese and other humanitarian actors in the field. The case not only reflects the opportunities and challenges in the internationalization process of Chinese HDOs but also provides a new perspective for understanding the positioning of emerging donor countries in the global humanitarian landscape.

The 'Brighter Future' Program was a short-term refugee assistance program in northern Uganda. In April 2018, the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA), a Chinese HDO, and Mercy Corps, an American-based international NGO, launched a 15-month assistance program for South Sudanese refugees and local community farmers settled in the Palabek Refugee Settlement, 60 kilometres from Kitgum, Lamwo District, Uganda (See picture 3). The 'Brighter Future' program would run from March 2018 through May 2019 and be divided into three projects: providing Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCT) to beneficiaries (host communities and South Sudanese refugees), Agriculture Facilitation, and income generation activities (IGA). According to CFPA, the overall goal was to meet basic needs and improve food security and livelihood opportunities for refugees and Ugandan hosts in Lamwo District, thereby advancing refugee self-reliance and economic resilience for the host community.

Map 2　　Map of Palabek Refugee Settlement, Uganda
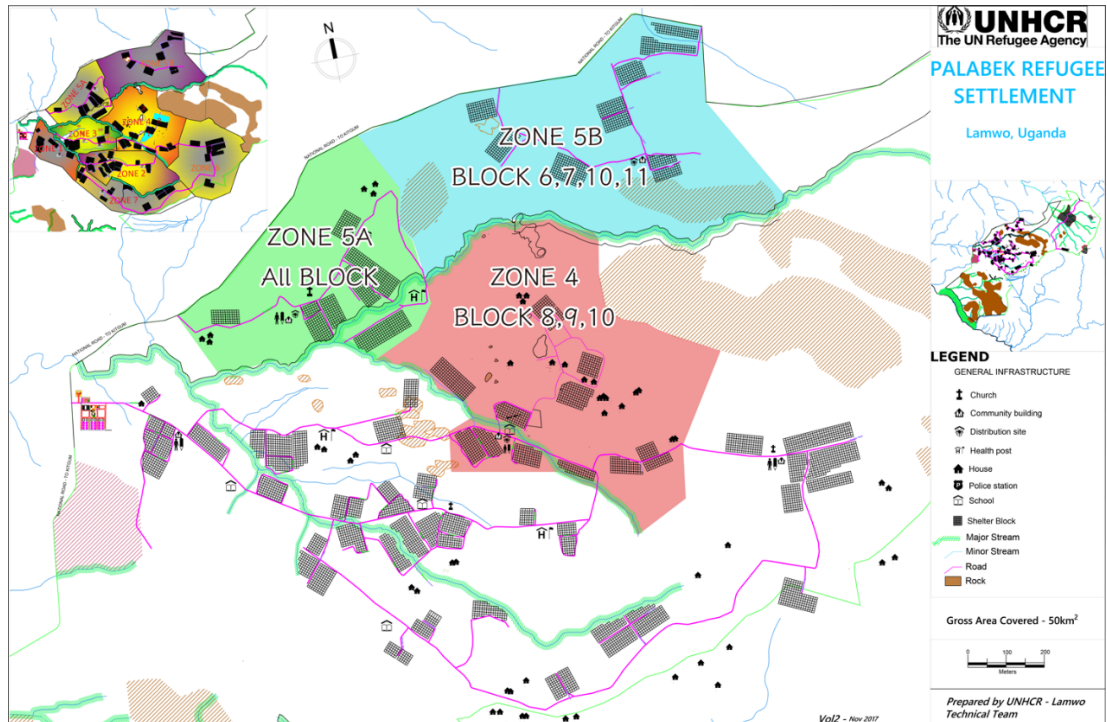
Source: China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation.

Picture 3　　Main Entry to the Palabek Refugee Settlement

Source: Photo by author 2018 at the Palabek refugee settlement in Lamwo, northern Uganda.

The design and implementation of the 'Brighter Future' program not only embody the mission and vision of CFPA as a Chinese humanitarian organisation but also reflect the core concepts and values advocated by Chinese humanitarianism more generally (as discussed in Chapter Two). In my

interviews with He Daofeng, the former executive president of CFPA, and Paul Dudley Hart from Mercy Corps, they emphasized that, the 'Brighter Future' program demonstrates the friendship-style cooperative relationship established between CFPA and Mercy Corps, based on a principle of 'friendship'. The two parties established an equal and mutually trusting partnership, embodying the principle of 'mutual benefit and win-win', reportedly achieving complementary advantages and resource sharing at the project level (Interview with He Daofeng and Paul Dudley Hart, Kitgum, Uganda on October 16, 2018). However, it is crucial to critically view CFPA's role in this program. As the first Chinese HDOs to conduct refugee assistance in Africa, CFPA is still largely in a learning phase, learning mature program models and management experiences from Western partners like Mercy Corps. While this learning process itself is an important manifestation of the principle of friendly cooperation, as portrayed by CFPA, it also reflects CFPA's strategic interest in enhancing its global reputation and impact through partnerships with established international actors.

This program had two distinctive elements that merit further examination. Firstly, as elaborated in Chapter Seven, the 'Brighter Future' program aimed to enhance refugee resilience. This differs significantly from previous humanitarian initiatives undertaken by Chinese HDOs, which primarily involved the provision of food aid, non-food aid, life-saving aid, and medical aid in response to natural disasters. Chinese HDOs have very limited experience in this type of program. As the first Chinese HDO to conduct a refugee resilience program in Africa, CFPA's participation in the 'Brighter Future' program carries important symbolic and practical significance. It demonstrates the expanding role and ambition of Chinese HDOs in the field of African humanitarianism, potentially signalIng a shift from short-term relief to longer-term development approaches. Secondly, the program's design demanded intense collaboration between CFPA and Mercy Corps. The partnership between CFPA and Mercy Corps was built on a foundation of familiarity and complementarity. Having operated in China since 2001, Mercy Corps was a known entity to CFPA. As a US-based organisation with extensive practical experience in refugee assistance, Mercy Corps brought valuable expertise to the table. For CFPA, collaborating with Mercy Corps was a strategic choice to gain international exposure and learn from an established humanitarian actor. An in-depth exploration of how the program was designed and carried out, the challenges encountered in its implementation, and the program's ultimate impact provides valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of Chinese HDOs' interaction with international NGOs and their expanding role in international humanitarian assistance, particularly in the context of refugee aid.

During my two-month field research in Kitgum, Northern Uganda from October 1 to December 1, 2018, I closely shadowed the 'Brighter Future' program team within and outside the Palabek Refugee

Settlement. I arrived five months after the program's establishment, thus having the opportunity to witness its operational dynamics in the mature stage. Through participant observation, I gained firsthand insights into a wide range of program activities, including: 1) Business training courses for IGA projects, mainly comprising classroom lectures (see picture 4). 2) Cash distribution activities, such as collecting and verifying beneficiaries' mobile accounts (see picture 5). 3) Agricultural activities, including distribution of farming tools, group training sessions, and field visits (see pictures 6 and 7). Additionally, I regularly attended the program team's weekly meetings every Monday. These meetings, where the 'Brighter Future' program team discussed the previous week's challenges and planned for the current week's work, provided me with valuable opportunities to understand the operational realities and adaptive strategies employed in the program.

Picture 4   Income Generating Activities Training Classes

Picture 5   Activation of a Cell Phone Number, One of Many Cash Transfer Activities

Picture 6   Sunflower Plantation, a Major Agriculture Facilitation Activity

Picture 7　　Sunflower Plantation

Source: all photos above taken by author 2018 at the Palabek refugee settlement in northern Uganda

In addition to participant observation, I conducted extensive individual and group interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, including South Sudanese refugees, Refugee Welfare Committee leaders, program donors, relevant personnel from the 'Brighter Future' program and CFPA, as well as staff from Mercy Corps International. These interviews, which I will discuss in more detail in the following sections, provided rich, firsthand data that ensured a multi-faceted understanding of the program's impact and challenges from different perspectives.

The Origin Story

Despite its relatively small size, the 'Brighter Future' program represents a pivotal moment in the evolution of Chinese HDOs' humanitarian role in Africa, directly reflecting the internationalization trends discussed in earlier chapters of this thesis. The 'Brighter Future' program stems from the strategic transformation between CFPA and Mercy Corps, reflecting the dual needs of Chinese NGOs' 'going out' strategy and international NGOs adapting to China's policy environment.

The shifting legal and policy landscape for NGOs in China, particularly the introduction of the 2017 Foreign NGO Law, played a significant role in shaping the strategic considerations of both CFPA and Mercy Corps. For Mercy Corps, the new regulatory environment prompted a reevaluation of how to maintain its connections and influence in China while complying with the new rules. Partnering with CFPA on the 'Brighter Future' program offered a way to navigate this shifting

landscape by aligning with a well-positioned Chinese HDO. For CFPA, the program presented an opportunity to further its ambitions of global expansion, particularly in Africa, capitalizing on the Chinese government's encouragement for HDOs to 'go out' and contribute to international development efforts. The convergence of these organisational shifts created fertile ground for collaboration, leveraging Mercy Corps' international experience and CFPA's favourable position within China's 'going out' strategy. This partnership exemplifies the complex dynamics at play as Chinese HDOs seek to enhance their global role and reputation through strategic collaborations with international actors, while international NGOs navigate China's evolving policy landscape to maintain their relevance and impact.

The 'Brighter Future' program, a collaboration between CFPA and Mercy Corps, emerged from a unique convergence of organisational strategies, personal initiatives, and pressing humanitarian needs. The program's conception was catalysed by a series of interconnected events, reflecting the complex dynamics of international humanitarian cooperation in an increasingly globalized world.

In 2017, the Ford Foundation provided a grant to Mercy Corps, enabling them to select Chinese HDOs' employees for internships in their international offices. This initiative led to Yang Zeqi, an employee of CFPA's international development department, being chosen for an internship at Mercy Corps' Kitgum office in Uganda. Yang's experience there, focusing on economic and market development, agriculture, financial services, and women's empowerment, provided crucial on-ground insights and connections that would later prove invaluable.

Concurrently, Uganda opened the Palabek refugee camp in March 2017 to accommodate a steady influx of South Sudanese refugees fleeing from the large-scale conflict that erupted in Juba in July 2016. Mercy Corps, which had been operating in Uganda since 2006 in 28 districts including the Bidi Bidi refugee settlement, saw an opportunity to expand its operations to the newly established Palabek refugee resettlement area. The organisation arranged for He Daofeng, who had just completed his tenure as CFPA's executive president, to visit Uganda. The visit included a tour of an agricultural project in Kitgum and a visit to the Palabek refugee settlement. In my interview with He Daofeng, he described how this firsthand exposure to the refugee situation had a profound impact on him, stating, 'Seeing the dire conditions in the refugee settlement and the urgent needs of the displaced South Sudanese people, I felt a strong sense of responsibility to contribute to the humanitarian response. As a former leader who once spearheaded the internationalization of CFPA, I firmly believe that even after leaving the foundation, I should continue to fully support its development and internationalization' (Interview with He Daofeng, Kitgum, Uganda, October 16, 2018).

For Mercy Corps, the collaboration with CFPA on the 'Brighter Future' program was not just about the immediate project goals, but also carried broader strategic significance. In our interview, Paul Dudley Hart from Mercy Corps emphasized the importance of engaging with China in the current global context, stating, 'If you do not understand China, if you do not have some forms of partnership with China, some forms of collaboration with China, you will not be relevant' (Interview with Paul Dudley Hart, Kitgum, Uganda, October 17, 2018). This perspective underscores the growing recognition among international NGOs of the need to adapt to China's increasing influence in global affairs, including in the humanitarian domain.

The 'Brighter Future' program marked CFPA's significant foray into refugee assistance in Africa, representing a new chapter in Chinese NGOs' international humanitarian efforts. The program highlighted the potential for innovative partnerships that bridge different approaches to humanitarian aid, potentially leading to more comprehensive and effective responses to complex crises like the South Sudan refugee situation.

The alignment of various factors, including CFPA's internationalization goals, Mercy Corps' desire to expand its operations and emphasize cooperation with Chinese humanitarian and development organisations, Yang Zeqi's internship experience, and He Daofeng's passion for serving refugees, made the 'Brighter Future' program seem not just coincidental, but inevitable. As we delve deeper into the implementation and outcomes of the program, it is crucial to keep in mind the conjuncture of these foundational motivations and strategic considerations. They provide a framework for understanding not just the program's immediate impacts, but also its broader implications for Chinese humanitarian efforts in Africa and beyond.

Design and Implementation of the 'Brighter Future' Program

The 'Brighter Future' program exemplifies a complex model of international aid significantly influenced by the host country's legal and political environment. Chinese HDOs' effectiveness in Africa is closely linked to their adaptability to local political and regulatory frameworks (Hsu, Hildebrandt, and Hasmath 2016). This reality shaped how CFPA approached the implementation of this program within Uganda's unique political and refugee policy framework.

My field research revealed that CFPA faced significant regulatory constraints, particularly the Non-Governmental Organisations Act of 2016 in Uganda, which requires all NGOs to register with and obtain approval from the NGO Bureau. These constraints prompted CFPA and Mercy Corps to adopt an innovative collaborative model to ensure smooth project implementation. The specific organisational structural arrangements will be discussed in detail in subsequent sub-sections.

The 'Brighter Future' program was staffed by a diverse team of ten individuals[68], blending international and local expertise to address the needs of the refugee population effectively. The team included Mercy Corps' Program Manager Leon, alongside CFPA's Project Manager Owen (Yang Zeqi) and Volunteer Zhang Shenyue. Sam, from the United States Peace Corps, was also a team member. Local Ugandans Joseph, Olivia, Jacob, Sisto, Monica, and Joe played pivotal roles in the project's execution, ensuring that the initiatives were culturally congruent and well-received by the community. Additionally, the program enlisted 12 research assistants, 20 community mobilizers on a six-month contract, 20 agricultural trainers, and eight business mentors to support various aspects of the program. The team's structure was pivotal in managing the extensive tasks ranging from data collection for baseline surveys to executing agricultural and business training initiatives, aimed at fostering economic independence and improving livelihoods among refugees.

The Palabek Refugee Settlement, where the program was implemented, was organized into eight zones further divided into blocks, with international NGOs attached to each zone. This structured approach facilitated targeted interventions, allowing organisations to focus their efforts on specific areas and populations within the settlement. According to data I collected during my fieldwork, international non-governmental organisations conducting humanitarian relief activities within the refugee camps include CESVI, LWF, IRC, Red Cross, OXFAM, and ARC[69], among others. Activities in these zones included nutritional training, medical services, business finance, window interaction, sanitation, hyginene, establishment of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), and vocational training aimed at improving both food security and economic resilience among refugees (Fieldwork data). CFPA and Mercy Corps focused their efforts in Zone 4 (including Blocks 8, 9, 10), zone 5A (including Blocks 1, 2, 3, 4), and zone 5B (including Blocks 6, 7, 10, 11), serving over 13,670 individuals.

In accordance with Uganda's refugee policy ReHoPE (as mentioned earlier), local host communities must also be considered key stakeholders. Consequently, the design and implementation of the 'Brighter Future' program in Palabek settlement had to simultaneously address the basic needs of both refugees and Ugandan hosts in the Lamwo region, improving their food security and livelihood opportunities, thereby advancing the goals of refugee self-reliance and host community economic resilience. The total number of direct beneficiaries was 3,800, comprising 70% South Sudanese refugees (2,660 individuals) and 30% local host community farmers (1,140 individuals).

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[62] All names mentioned in this section are real names of the individuals involved in the 'Brighter Future' program. Permission has been obtained from these individuals to use their real names in this dissertation.

[63] Full names of the acronyms: CESVI (Cooperazione e Sviluppo), LWF (Lutheran World Federation), IRC (International Rescue Committee), OXFAM (Oxford Committee for Famine Relief), ARC (American Refugee Committee).

As already mentioned, the program's main components included Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCT) to beneficiaries (host communities and South Sudanese refugees), Agriculture Facilitation, and income generation activities (IGA), reflecting a comprehensive aid approach. The UCT component, as I learned through interviews with program staff, identified 2,500 beneficiaries meeting the project criteria, providing them with $14 monthly through the MTN mobile money platform for six months (October 2018 to March 2019). This enabled beneficiaries to meet basic needs such as food and hygiene. Twenty community mobilizers were recruited and trained to support UCT consent signing, cash disbursement, and the Community Accountability Reporting Mechanism (CARM). According to data shared by the program team, over 70% for household food purchases, 15% for small business startups, and 13% for school fees and learning materials. This data reflects the program's comprehensive impact on refugee livelihoods and development.

The Agriculture Facilitation project particularly emphasized fostering integration between refugees and local communities. Instead of leasing land, the project established integrated agricultural groups comprising landowners and refugees who shared the harvest. The project formed 40 farmer groups of 25 members each, with a 70:30 ratio of refugees to host community members, promoting social integration between the two groups. These groups were formed based on member interests and under community guidance, with community leaders and the project team involved in the establishment process. To incentivize landowners to provide land, the project designed a mechanism whereby for every 5 acres of land provided, landowners received agricultural inputs for an additional 1 acre of personally owned land. The 40 agricultural groups collectively received 266 acres of land.

The IGA component aimed to enhance income-generating capacity among youth aged 18-35 through self-employment. The project collected 450 business proposals, and selected and trained 150 groups (58% male, 42% female) in basic business knowledge. 100 groups (three persons each) completed the training and received project funding to start businesses. Additionally, Mercy Corps organized business tours for all group leaders, providing practical business experience and basic business skills with support from Gulu Main Market and Freedom in Creation farm. These businesses covered areas such as retail, small-scale livestock, liquid soap production, and beauty salons. Groups were connected with business mentors to improve their operations.

The 'Brighter Future' program, through its multifaceted and inclusive approach, demonstrates innovative ways of implementing international aid in complex political and legal environments. The design and implementation of this program not only reflect a response to the immediate needs of refugees and host communities but also highlight the unique challenges and opportunities in cross-cultural collaboration between CFPA and Mercy Corps. To fully understand the practical effects and

significance of the 'Brighter Future' program, in the following section I will examine in depth its specific impacts on the beneficiary groups, drawing on authentic feedback from the communities gathered through my field research.

Program Impact and Community Feedback

The analysis of the 'Brighter Future' program reveals the multidimensional impact and complexity of refugee aid projects. Through a mixed-methods approach combining questionnaire surveys, face-to-face interviews, and participant observation, I assessed not only the direct effectiveness of the program but also explored its profound impact on refugee livelihoods, social integration, and the shaping of China's humanitarian image.

My analysis of questionnaires and face to face interviews indicates that the 'Brighter Future' program had significant impacts in two core dimensions: economic empowerment and social integration. As one refugee beneficiary stated, 'the cash transfers and agricultural support from the program have greatly improved my family's economic situation. We can now afford to buy more food and send our children to school. And working together with the host community in the agricultural groups has helped us build better relationships and understanding' (Interview with refugee beneficiary, Palabek Settlement on November 15, 2018). This sentiment was echoed by many other participants, who generally reported improved economic conditions and enhanced integration with local communities. This finding aligns with Jacobsen's (2014) argument that refugee aid programs should address both economic and social aspects. Specifically, the program directly enhanced refugees' economic capacity through cash transfers and agricultural inputs, while cross-community activities included in the program design effectively promoted interaction between refugees and local community members, fostering mutual understanding. These results support the refugee integration theoretical framework proposed by Ager and Strang (2008), which highlights the dual importance of economic participation and social connections in facilitating the integration process.

However, my research also revealed challenges and limitations in the program implementation. During interviews and informal conversations, several participants raised concerns about program launch delays, seed quality problems, and slow cash disbursement, underscore the importance of execution quality in impacting refugee livelihoods. These findings are consistent with Chambers and Conway's (1992) discussion on the importance of timing in livelihood project implementation, while also corroborating the practical obstacles to refugee economic autonomy emphasized by Betts et al. (2017).

Deeper analysis reveals potential structural contradictions in capacity building and sustainable development aspects of the program. In my interviews with refugees, most expressed a need for vocational skills training, particularly in business management and financial literacy. However, the disconnect between existing training content and market demands highlights a key issue: skills training alone may be insufficient to ensure refugees' economic autonomy. This concern was aptly summarized by a Refugee Welfare Council leader: 'The business training was helpful, but it didn't really address practical issues like how to get raw materials or where to sell our products. We need more support in linking our skills to actual market opportunities' (Interview with Refugee Welfare Council Leader, Palabek Settlement, November 10, 2018). This finding echoes Lischer's (2017) view on the need for refugee aid to focus on long-term capacity building, while also highlighting the systemic barriers to refugee economic integration emphasized by Betts et al. (2019).

In addition to the above, my research provides insights into refugees' perceptions of Chinese humanitarian aid. My fieldwork data shows that most refugees asked (over 80%) were unaware of the aid's country of origin (Fieldwork data). This is consistent with Pacitto and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh's (2013) observations on the 'invisibility' of non-Western donor countries in the humanitarian field. However, over half of the interviewed refugees reported having heard of Chinese NGOs, a seemingly contradictory phenomenon reflecting the complex impact and/or mixed perceptions of China's increased involvement in the humanitarian sector. As one refugee remarked, 'I've heard about Chinese organisations working in the settlement, but I'm not sure exactly what they do. It's good that they're here to help, but I think they could do more to let us know about their programs' (Interview with refugee beneficiary, Palabek Settlement on November 18, 2018). This perceptual discrepancy may stem from the limited visibility of Chinese aid in the traditional humanitarian discourses, which historically has focused on Western donors, given the relatively limited non-Western humanitarian assistance until recently.

Despite the limited awareness of Chinese-specific aid, some refugees expressed expectations of Chinese assistance in areas such as agricultural support, livestock development, and business training. In an interview, Block leader 1 emphasized that 'China has experience in planting and cultivating on small plots of land. We could really benefit from their knowledge and support in improving our agricultural practices' (Interview with Block leader 1 on November 5, 2018) This view not only reflects the refugee community's recognition of China's development model but also resonates with Dreher et al.'s (2022) discussion on the applicability of Chinese development experiences in African countries. These expectations may stem from awareness of China's rapid development experience or reflect dissatisfaction with the limitations of existing aid models among refugee groups.

Beyond its material impacts, the 'Brighter Future' program also had a significant effect on the emotional well-being of the refugees, largely due to the sense of friendship and human connection fostered by the Chinese participants. This was particularly evident in the way they interacted with the refugees during their visits to the settlement.

During a visit on October 17, 2018, the Chinese donor He Daofeng and his spouse engaged in warm and friendly physical interactions with the refugees. They shook hands, exchanged hugs, and even joined in informal dancing. Despite the language barriers, they managed to communicate through gestures and facial expressions. This sincere and equal physical contact and emotional exchange, treating unfamiliar refugees as friends, vividly interpreted the friendship principle in Chinese humanitarian assistance. For refugees who had experienced significant hardship and loss, these seemingly simple actions carried a profound meaning, conveying a sense of respect, empathy, and human connection.

These interactions were a manifestation of the friendship principle that underlies Chinese humanitarian assistance. For the Chinese participants, physical interactions such as handshakes and hugs were a way to express friendship, to break down barriers, and to establish a human connection with the refugees. This approach, which places a strong emphasis on building emotional bonds, is deeply rooted in Chinese culture and values. As discussed in Chapter Five, in the Chinese perspective, physical contact is an important way to convey goodwill and establish emotional bonds. Through intimate interactions such as hugs and hand-holding, Chinese participants sought to ease cultural barriers, quickly close the psychological distance with refugees, and lay a friendly and trusting foundation for the program. This unique humanitarian assistance philosophy injected a distinct human touch into the 'Brighter Future' program, becoming a bond connecting the hearts of Chinese and African people.

This focus on friendship and human connection through physical interactions distinguishes Chinese humanitarian aid from the more professionalized and standardized approaches often associated with Western humanitarian organisations. While the latter tend to maintain a certain professional distance, the Chinese approach prioritizes the human element and the building of emotional bonds. By emphasizing the importance of human connections and emotional support, the Chinese approach complements and enriches the Western model, adding a unique and valuable dimension to international humanitarian aid.

Moreover, this emphasis on friendship and human connection not only benefited the refugees emotionally but also helped to shape a positive perception of Chinese humanitarian actors. Through these personal interactions, the Chinese participants demonstrated their care and commitment, leaving

a favorable impression on the refugee community. This people-centered approach, rooted in the concept of friendship, has the potential to enhance China's soft power and influence in the region by fostering a positive image of Chinese humanitarian engagement.

However, it is important to acknowledge limitations in my research. Firstly, the relatively limited sample size does not fully represent the views of the entire refugee population. Secondly, due to the limited time span of the study, it is not possible to fully assess the long-term impact of the program. Future research could expand the sample size and extend the tracking time to obtain more comprehensive and robust results.

Dynamic Interaction Between CFPA and Mercy Corps

The collaboration between CFPA and Mercy Corps in the 'Brighter Future' program brought to the surface a range of differences, tensions and resolutions that do or can arise in such partnerships between Chinese and Western NGOs in the field.

Firstly, the role positioning of CFPA and Mercy Corps in the program presents a significant shift. Unlike their previous collaborations within China, CFPA assumed the role of fund manager and supervisor for the first time in this program, while Mercy Corps became the primary implementer. This role reversal, as I learned through interviews with project staff, reflected differences in understanding the nature of cooperation between the two parties, while also highlighting potential changes in power dynamics. As Leon, the Mercy Corps project manager, pointed out in an interview with me: 'In the Uganda project, Mercy Corps is the main implementer, while CFPA has become the manager and supervisor of funds, monitoring fund flows. This is a significant change from our previous collaborations in China, where CFPA was usually the implementer' (Interview with Leon, Kitgum, Uganda, November 7, 2018). This arrangement stems from practical needs (CFPA's lack of a registered office in Uganda) on one hand, and on the other, it embodies CFPA's strategic intent to seek a more active and equal role on the international stage. However, this role transition also brought new challenges, particularly in power balance and decision-making processes.

Secondly, the shift in role positioning directly influenced the organisational structure design of the program, becoming a key challenge in the cooperation between the two parties. This challenge manifested primarily in two aspects: how to effectively integrate Chinese personnel into the program team, and what specific roles Chinese personnel should play within the team. Mercy Corps tended to view CFPA as merely a donor, while CFPA saw the program as a joint collaborative endeavour. As Yang Zeqi, CFPA's project officer, explained to me, 'There were some disagreements between CFPA and Mercy Corps on the program's organisational structure. Mercy Corps initially wanted to limit

CFPA's involvement to a monitoring and evaluation role, but we felt that as a partner, we should be more deeply engaged in the program's implementation' (Interview with Yang Zeqi, Kitgum, Uganda on October 26, 2018). If executed entirely according to Mercy Corps' model, CFPA personnel might be restricted to purely monitoring and evaluation roles, unable to deeply engage in program execution details. Conversely, following CFPA's ideal model might result in excessive intervention in the program.

To resolve these differences, both parties negotiated an innovative organisational structure arrangement: the staff for the overall framework would be recruited by Mercy Corps, but would include a Chinese staff member as a project officer and assistant project manager. This arrangement ensured that CFPA personnel could access specific project details and participate in project management work while maintaining Mercy Corps' position as the primary implementer. As Paul Dudley Hart from Mercy Corps noted, 'This compromise allowed us to leverage the strengths of both organisations. CFPA brought valuable insights from their development experience in China, while Mercy Corps contributed our expertise in refugee assistance. By finding a middle ground in the organisational structure, we were able to create a more balanced and effective partnership' (Interview with Paul Dudley Hart, Kitgum, Uganda on October 17, 2018).

During the research and design process of the 'Bright Future' program, conflicts and divergences between CFPA and Mercy Corps emerged, providing an important window for observing the interaction between the two organisations. Mercy Corps relied more on existing experience and baseline research conducted after project initiation, initially referencing experiences from West Nile, Uganda's largest refugee camp. In contrast, CFPA emphasized the importance of in-depth preliminary research. As Yang Zeqi recalled, 'CFPA insisted on conducting additional field visits in December 2017 to better understand the local context and refugee needs. During these visits, we uncovered some errors in the initial assumptions, such as the amount of land allocated to each refugee family' (Interview with Yang Zeqi, Kitgum, Uganda on October 26, 2018). Drawing on its extensive experience in rural China, CFPA stressed the need to fully consider refugees' actual land requirements. Mercy Corps, however, was more inclined to adhere to the host country's standard policies. Through repeated discussions and consultations, both parties eventually agreed on an innovative land allocation scheme, incorporating additional land-related activities (Interview with Yang Zeqi, Kitgum, Uganda on October 26, 2018). Witnessing this process firsthand, I realized that successful cross-cultural cooperation requires both parties, on the basis of aligned goals, to resolve differences and reach consensus through thorough communication and flexible adaptation. This experience highlighted significant implications for understanding how humanitarian organisations with different

backgrounds can collaborate. This example also reflects CFPA's cautious attitude in international projects and its emphasis on local realities.

The 'Bright Future' program was CFPA's first program strictly executed according to international standards, providing a valuable opportunity to observe how Chinese NGOs adapt to international norms. As Mercy Corps' program manager Leon emphasized in our interview: 'The Uganda program is strictly executed according to international standards, which is a first for CFPA. This includes professional emergency response knowledge and standardized procedures for program design, monitoring, and evaluation' (Interview with Leon, Kitgum, Uganda on November 7, 2018). For CFPA, adapting to these standards presented both challenges and opportunities. On one hand, it needed to adjust its own working methods and processes to comply with international norms; on the other hand, this process also promoted CFPA's professional development on its path to internationalization.

Lastly, organisational cultural differences were also a significant factor affecting the cooperation between CFPA and Mercy Corps. In my interviews with program staff, Mercy Corps was often described as having a 'bureaucratic' working style. As Yang Zeqi from CFPA noted, 'Mercy Corps has a very structured way of working, with lots of paperwork, many documents to sign, and multiple layers of decision-making. While this can sometimes slow things down, it also ensures transparency and accountability' (Interview with Yang Zeqi, Kitgum, Uganda on October 26, 2018). Yang further explained, 'While this working style might reduce efficiency, it also helps avoid the centralization of power and prevents the organisation's development from being swayed by an individual's will'. This reflects the standardized, institutionalized management model commonly adopted by Western NGOs, emphasizing dispersed responsibility and decision-making transparency. In comparison, CFPA demonstrated greater flexibility and efficiency in its domestic operations, particularly in projects' execution and resource mobilization. These differences presented both challenges and opportunities for complementarity. CFPA needed to adapt to Mercy Corps' more stringent documentation requirements and decision-making processes, while Mercy Corps needed to understand and adapt to CFPA's more flexible working methods, especially in interacting with local stakeholders and rapidly responding to changing situations.

The 'Brighter Future' program exemplifies an attempt to integrate Chinese developmental experiences with international humanitarian aid practices. The program sponsors aspired to apply China's experiences in areas such as agricultural reform, microfinance, and cooperatives to the African context (Interview with Leon in Kitgum, Uganda on November 7, 2018). This reflects the unique challenges faced by Chinese NGOs in their internationalization process: how to appropriately

combine Chinese experiences with international humanitarian practices, and how to contribute Chinese wisdom in international development cooperation.

However, this close collaboration also faced numerous challenges. As Yang Zeqi from CFPA pointed out, 'The "Brighter Future" program was CFPA's first overseas refugee aid program. We faced many difficulties, including lack of experience and personal risks. Operating in a conflict-affected area like northern Uganda was a completely new challenge for us' (Interview with Yang Zeqi, Kitgum, Uganda on October 26, 2018).

These challenges illustrate the substantial barriers CFPA had to overcome as a newcomer to this type of project. From a technical perspective, CFPA had limited prior experience in designing and implementing refugee aid projects, particularly those focused on long-term resilience building. This inexperience led to difficulties in adapting to the local context and effectively addressing the complex needs of the refugee population. Additionally, CFPA staff faced personal security risks operating in a conflict-affected area, a challenge common to many humanitarian agencies but one that Chinese HDOs have limited experience navigating.

Moreover, as a Chinese HDO, CFPA had to navigate the complex policy landscape of both China and Uganda. This included obtaining necessary approvals and permissions from Chinese authorities for overseas operations, as well as complying with Ugandan regulations on NGO activities. While these policy challenges are not unique to Chinese HDOs, CFPA's limited experience in international humanitarian operations may have exacerbated the difficulties in managing these issues.

The 'Brighter Future' program thus serves as a valuable case study in understanding the challenges and opportunities Chinese HDOs face as they seek to expand their international humanitarian engagement. It underscores the need for Chinese HDOs to invest in capacity building, knowledge sharing, and risk management strategies to effectively navigate the complex realities of overseas aid provision. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of partnerships and collaboration with more experienced international NGOs, such as Mercy Corps, in facilitating the learning and growth of Chinese HDOs in the humanitarian sector.

In summary, the interaction between CFPA and Mercy Corps in the 'Brighter Future' program indicates the kind of dynamic relationship possible between Chinese and Western NGOs in global humanitarianism. Through role reversal, methodological adjustments, standards adaptation, cultural integration, and experience exchange, both parties explored a new cooperation model in practice. This case not only reflects the challenges and opportunities in the internationalization of Chinese HDOs but also provides important insights for understanding the complexity of cross-cultural cooperation in the field of international humanitarian arena. As Chinese HDOs increase their

involvement on the international stage, this cooperation model may further evolve, ultimately forming a new, more inclusive and effective paradigm for international humanitarian cooperation.

Challenges and Significance of the 'Brighter Future' Program

Based on my field observation and interviews, the 'Brighter Future' program encountered several additional noteworthy practical challenges during its implementation. These challenges encompass a range of factors, such as the constant movement of populations within the refugee settlement, the uncertainties posed by climate change on planned agricultural activities, and the difficulties associated with monitoring the program's effectiveness. One of the most striking challenges I witnessed was related to the cash transfer project. In an environment where the population shifts frequently, to ensure that cash distribution reaches the intended recipients, the program team must obtain the beneficiaries' consent through a signed agreement every month, thereby confirming their continued presence within the settlement.

To better understand how CFPA and Mercy Corps responded to this challenge, I interviewed several key program staff. As Yang Zeqi, CFPA's project manager, explained, 'We established a system of community mobilizers who were responsible for tracking the movement of beneficiaries and ensuring that they were present for the monthly cash distributions. These mobilizers, who were recruited from within the refugee community, served as a vital link between the program team and the beneficiaries, helping to maintain the integrity of the cash transfer process' (Interview with Yang Zeqi, Kitgum, Uganda on October 26, 2018). Owen further noted that CFPA staff had to learn to be flexible in their approach, adjusting their plans and activities as needed to accommodate the fluid nature of the refugee settlement. This required a significant shift in mindset from the more structured and predictable environment of their domestic operations in China. Through this experience, CFPA built valuable capacity in managing complex humanitarian operations in challenging environments. As Yang reflected, 'We gained practical skills in beneficiary tracking, community engagement, and adaptive programming, which will serve us well in future international humanitarian endeavors. Furthermore, the close partnership with Mercy Corps provided us with hands-on learning opportunities, allowing us to absorb best practices and institutional knowledge from a more experienced international NGO' (Interview with Yang Zeqi, Kitgum, Uganda on October 26, 2018).

Moreover, during my regular attendance at the program team's weekly meetings, I learned about four key challenges faced during the implementation of the agriculture promotion project: 1) Due to insufficient food provided by the United Nations Refugee Agency and the Prime Minister's Office, refugees lacked the physical strength to cultivate the allocated land; 2) The availability of cultivable

land allocated by the host community to the refugees was limited; 3) Many refugees had already abandoned farming before they left South Sudan due to the impact of the war and had lost interest in agriculture; 4) Climate instability factors affected the potential of agricultural cultivation.

One of the most pressing issues that came up repeatedly in these meetings was unstable rainfall, driven by the impacts of climate change. The inadequacy of rainfall in 2019, particularly during the critical planting season of July and August, severely impeded agricultural production and ultimately affected overall productivity. To better understand how the program adapted to this challenge, I interviewed Olivia, the agricultural project manager. She explained, 'To tackle this predicament, the program team adjusted the type of seeds provided to beneficiaries. These seeds were either resilient to high temperatures or had a shorter maturation period. As a result of these measures, the 40 farmer groups harvested an impressive collective total of 8,004 kilograms of sunflower after a single farming season, but farmers lamented land transfer delays that kept them from planting in 2019's first season' (Interview with Olivia, Palabek Settlement on November 20, 2018). Additionally, as I learned from participating in some of the agricultural training sessions, the farmer groups received training in post-harvest handling techniques and were equipped with the necessary tools to enhance their post-handling practices. As Yang Zeqi further noted, 'These experiences highlight how CFPA was able to learn and adapt its programming in the face of complex humanitarian challenges. By adjusting its approach and working closely with local partners, CFPA demonstrated its growing capacity to contribute effectively to such challenging environments' (Interview with Yang Zeqi), Palabek Settlement on November 20, 2018).

Another significant challenge that emerged from my interviews with program staff and beneficiaries related to its limited duration, which hindered the effective monitoring of its impact. The program had a relatively short lifespan of only 15 months. In addition, team members experienced delays in both the cash distribution process and the agricultural activities. The cash distribution process experienced setbacks due to the time required to finalize a contract with an electronic wallet service provider. Conducting thorough monitoring of the program's outcomes within the constrained time frame of a short-term intervention presented an exceedingly challenging task. This limitation underscores the need for longer-term engagement and sustained support in refugee assistance programs to ensure their lasting impact and effectiveness. As Yang Ziqi from CFPA acknowledged, 'All of these challenges were unprecedented for CFPA, and they would be equally very unfamiliar and highly challenging projects for any Chinese HDO' (Interview with Yang Zeqi, Kitgum, Uganda on October 26, 2018). Despite these difficulties, CFPA's experiences in Uganda demonstrate its growing capacity to adapt and contribute to such environments. While CFPA

still has much to learn, the 'Brighter Future' program represents an important step in its development as an international humanitarian actor.

The 'Brighter Future' program holds significant implications for CFPA's evolution as a Chinese humanitarian organisation and its potential impact on the broader landscape of Chinese HDOs. Firstly, the expansion of CFPA's humanitarian role to encompass refugee aid in war conflicts signifies a key shift in its focus. Traditionally, CFPA concentrated primarily on providing relief and assistance after major natural disasters. However, the 'Brighter Future' program addressed the urgent needs of refugees displaced by armed conflicts. By extending its reach and resources to address the long-term development and well-being of refugees, CFPA showcased an approach of cooperation with Mercy Corps to emphasize sustainable solutions over short-term material assistance. This shift in focus highlighted the organisation's commitment to holistic humanitarian support and aligns with evolving global perspectives on refugee aid.

Secondly, the 'Brighter Future' program serves as a valuable reference point for other Chinese HDOs contemplating engaging in refugee aid efforts. This effective and well-structured model provides a blueprint for future initiatives in the field. Other HDOs can inform their own interventions by assessing the program's strategies, methodologies, and best practices. The program's success serves as inspiration as it helps to streamline and optimize efforts within the landscape of Chinese HDOs involved in refugee aid. This dissemination of knowledge and expertise strengthens the collective impact of Chinese organisations in addressing refugee challenges. A prime example of this ripple effect can be seen in the collaboration between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Amity Foundation. On 8 March 2019, Xiwangka Danapala, the representative of the UNHCR China Office, and Ling Chunxiang, the Secretary-General of the Amity Foundation, signed an MoU to promote humanitarian cooperation between the two parties as they worked together to protect the rights and interests of refugees and displaced persons, further advancing the development of humanitarian relief efforts worldwide. Under this partnership, jointly initiate special projects to provide assistance to women, children and other vulnerable populations of refugees of concern to the UNHCR were initiated. In July of the same year, the Amity Foundation partnered with the UNHCR and launched an aid project called 'Lighting the Girls' Dream in War', which would provide basic school uniforms and hygiene kits for conflict-affected girls in four African countries, such as Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, and Cameroon. These developments demonstrate the growing engagement of Chinese HDOs in international refugee assistance, building on the foundations laid by pioneering programs such as the 'Brighter Future' program.

Thirdly, the 'Brighter Future' program has had a tangible impact on the presence and influence of Chinese HDOs in Africa. By implementing targeted initiatives and interventions, the program effectively expanded the local visibility of CFPA among the refugee communities it served. This increased presence created opportunities for greater engagement with local communities, stakeholders, and governments. As a result, CFPA has begun to establish a foundation of trust and partnership with the local refugee communities, positioning itself to better address the challenges they face. During my fieldwork, a notable proportion of refugees I interviewed demonstrated awareness of Chinese humanitarian presence, despite the previously mentioned figure of 80% not knowing the specific country of origin of the aid they received. For instance, when I asked these refugees which Chinese HDOs they knew about, 40 per cent said that Mercy Corps was a Chinese NGO, 20 per cent said they had heard about it from others, and more than 13 per cent said they believed there must be a Chinese NGO active because they often saw Chinese people in and out of the camps (Fieldwork data). While these figures are based on a limited sample size, they suggest a growing awareness of Chinese humanitarian actors among the refugee population, even if this awareness is often associated with misconceptions about the national identity of organisations like Mercy Corps. This increased visibility, however fragmented, represents an important first step for Chinese HDOs like CFPA in establishing a meaningful presence and impact in the region.

Lastly, the 'Brighter Future' program was crucial in facilitating CFPA's deepening cooperation with international humanitarian organisations. By engaging in joint initiatives and fostering partnerships, the program strengthened the bridge between Chinese and international actors in the humanitarian field. The collaboration enabled CFPA to tap into a wider and more culturally diverse pool of resources, expertise, and networks. This enhanced cooperation not only benefitted the program's implementation but also promoted knowledge exchange and intra-organisational learning. As the CFPA adapts and integrates into the international humanitarian system, it further enhances its effectiveness and responsiveness in addressing global humanitarian challenges.

My research and analysis have convinced me that the Chinese government and Chinese HDOs are not operating in isolation when it comes to providing aid to refugees in Africa. On the contrary, there is evidence of fostering fruitful collaborations with international governmental organisations, with a particular emphasis on partnering with UN-affiliated humanitarian agencies. This concerted approach is exemplified by the Chinese government's response to the refugee crisis in South Sudan, wherein they have proactively allocated financial resources to the WFP, as outlined in Chapter Six. Simultaneously, Chinese HDOs have sought partnerships with internationally recognized NGOs such

as Mercy Corps in the 'Brighter Future' program, while also engaging with UNHCR through initiatives like the Amity Foundation's 'Lighting the Girls' Dream in War' project.

The 'Brighter Future' program's foremost significance lies in its potential to serve as a learning opportunity for Chinese HDOs to bridge the gap between the Chinese humanitarian framework and the international humanitarian system. By engaging in such collaborative initiatives, Chinese HDOs like CFPA can gain valuable exposure to international humanitarian standards and practices, thereby enhancing their capacity to contribute effectively to refugee assistance efforts. This exposure is particularly crucial given the relative inexperience of Chinese HDOs in the complex landscape of protracted refugee situations. While the Chinese government and Chinese HDOs possess a commendable history of involvement in natural disaster assistance, domestically and internationally, their experience in refugee aid is relatively limited. As He Daofeng, the former executive president of CFPA, admitted in our interview, 'When we first got involved in the "Brighter Future" program, we had very little prior experience in refugee assistance. We had to learn a lot on the job, from our partners at Mercy Corps and from the refugees themselves' (Interview with He Daofeng, Kitgum, Uganda on October 16, 2018). Recognizing this, they have been working actively to adapt from lessons learned in the field, and integrate more smoothly into the international humanitarian system. Their goal is to glean valuable insights from established international humanitarian standards and practices in order to enhance their own effectiveness in assisting refugees. As He Daofeng further explained, 'Through our participation in the "Brighter Future" program, we have had the opportunity to confront the complexities of protracted refugee situations firsthand. While the program's direct impact may be limited, it has provided us with invaluable exposure to the challenges and realities of refugee assistance. This exposure has prompted us to adapt our approach and seek to integrate more effectively with the international humanitarian system, demonstrating our commitment to learning and growth as a humanitarian actor' (Interview with He Daofeng, Kitgum, Uganda on October 16, 2018).

Although the direct impact of the 'Brighter Future' program may be limited, it marks a significant shift in the role of Chinese HDOs from mere financial supporters to more proactive and comprehensive participants in international humanitarian affairs. This transformation reflects China's gradually increasing position and influence within the global humanitarian system. The collaboration between CFPA and the international NGO Mercy Corps in the 'Brighter Future' program exemplifies the new role, and ambitions, of Chinese HDOs in international humanitarian aid. Through partnerships with experienced international counterparts, Chinese HDOs are hoping to gain valuable

practical experience and enhance their professional capabilities. Simultaneously, they aim to integrate China's development experiences and unique perspectives into humanitarian aid.

Moreover, the collaborative model illustrated by CFPA and Mercy Corps in the 'Brighter Future' program in northern Uganda helps facilitate the continued deepening of China-Africa relations. By conducting on-the-ground humanitarian actions across the African continent, Chinese HDOs are developing greater capacities to understand the development needs of African countries and foster mutual understanding and trust with local populations. This lays a more solid foundation for the 'People-to-People Bond' discursively promoted by China for practical cooperation between China and Africa in other domains.

From a broader perspective, the emerging participation of Chinese HDOs signifies interesting changes occurring within the international humanitarian system. Beyond the traditional Western-dominated structure, forces from emerging economies and developing countries in the global South are coming to the fore, introducing alternative approaches and perspectives to humanitarian action. These approaches, often rooted in South-South cooperation and emphasizing principles of mutual benefit and respect for sovereignty, have the potential to reshape the humanitarian landscape. However, the actual impact of these new perspectives on addressing contemporary humanitarian crises remains to be seen and will be further explored in the concluding chapter.

However, it is important to recognize that for Chinese HDOs to play a more significant role on the international humanitarian stage, they need to accumulate experience while further exploring aid models that reflect their unique characteristics and advantages. These distinctive characteristics may include a focus on long-term development, an emphasis on infrastructure projects, and a commitment to non-interference in domestic affairs. By leveraging these strengths and adapting them to the humanitarian context, Chinese HDOs have the potential to develop innovative approaches to refugee assistance that complement and enrich existing international efforts. As Paul Dudley Hart from Mercy Corps noted in our interview, 'Chinese HDOs bring a fresh perspective to the humanitarian table. Their emphasis on long-term development and infrastructure could be a valuable complement to the more immediate relief-focused approaches of many Western NGOs. By working together and learning from each other, we can develop more holistic and sustainable solutions to the complex challenges faced by refugees' (Interview with Paul Dudley Hart, Kitgum, Uganda on October 17, 2018). In this process, maintaining long-term, stable and friendly cooperative relationships with international organisations like Mercy Corps will be crucial. Through sustained cooperation and exchange, Chinese HDOs are poised to gradually develop overseas aid models that reflect their unique perspectives and experiences, making greater contributions to global humanitarian efforts.

In conclusion, while the 'Brighter Future' program may have had relatively limited practical impact, as an important attempt at China's participation in global humanitarian governance, it provides a valuable case study for understanding and researching the role of emerging donor countries in reshaping the international humanitarian landscape. Future research could build upon this case to further explore how to better translate and apply China's development experiences and principles to humanitarian practices in regions such as Africa, with the aim of providing new ideas and solutions for resolving complex humanitarian crises. This exploration will be crucial in assessing the actual impact and potential of Chinese humanitarian engagement, and in identifying areas where Chinese HDOs can make the most meaningful contributions to the evolving global humanitarian system.

Limitations and Future Prospects: Reflections and Directions for Future Research

This chapter, through an in-depth analysis of the 'Brighter Future' program, provides valuable insights into the evolving humanitarian role of Chinese HDOs in Africa. However, the study has certain limitations. Firstly, due to the relatively limited sample size, the perspectives of refugees may not fully represent the entire refugee population. Secondly, constrained by the research timespan, the assessment of the program's long-term impact is insufficient. Future research could consider expanding the sample size and extending the tracking period to obtain more comprehensive and robust results. This would help us more accurately grasp the actual effects of the program and gain a deeper understanding of the views and demands of different stakeholders.

Moreover, this chapter primarily focuses on a single case study, lacking breadth in the analysis of Chinese HDOs' overseas humanitarian practices. Future research could conduct cross-case comparisons, exploring the similarities and differences in aid practices of Chinese HDOs in various contexts, and summarizing their common characteristics and general patterns. Simultaneously, it is necessary to track the long-term impacts of the 'Brighter Future' program and similar initiatives, evaluating their sustainability in areas such as improving refugee livelihoods and social integration. This will provide important references for comprehensively understanding the role positioning and potential contributions of Chinese HDOs in global humanitarian affairs.

It should be noted that the empirical research in this chapter is closely connected to the analytical framework and core concepts proposed in Chapter Two. The case analysis, on one hand, tests the explanatory power of relevant concepts, and on the other hand, provides new material for enriching the connotations of these concepts. Future research should advance through the interaction between

the two, using empirical findings to reflect on and develop theoretical frameworks, while using theoretical perspectives to guide and deepen empirical exploration.

Overall, the humanitarian participation of Chinese HDOs in Africa and globally is still in its initial stages, with ample room for future development. They need to continuously learn in practice, accumulate experience, improve their own capabilities, while exploring aid models that align with their characteristics and highlight their comparative advantages. This requires maintaining close cooperation with international humanitarian organisations, including UN agencies, learning from each other in exchanges, and progressing together through adjustments. As this process advances, Chinese HDOs are expected to form their own distinctive features, contributing unique wisdom to promoting innovation and development in 'humanitarian' concepts and practices. This is significant for constructing a more diverse and inclusive global humanitarian ecosystem. This will undoubtedly be a long-term evolutionary process, requiring joint attention and continuous exploration from both academia and practitioners.

In conclusion, based on the analysis of the 'Brighter Future' program, this chapter has conducted a prudent reflection on the limitations of the research and proposed prospects for future research directions. A core insight is that research on the overseas humanitarian practices of Chinese HDOs needs to advance through the interaction between empirical exploration and theoretical reflection. This research approach not only helps deepen our understanding of this issue but also has the potential to open new pathways for rethinking and reshaping the concept of 'humanitarianism'. This point will be further elaborated in the summary of the next chapter.

Conclusion

This chapter, through an empirical analysis of a Chinese HDO's, namely CFPA's humanitarian aid practices in northern Uganda, provides crucial insights into understanding the evolving humanitarian role of Chinese HDOs in Africa. This case study not only reveals the specific practices of CFPA as a representative of Chinese HDOs in Africa but also provides a solid foundation for discussing China's evolving forms of humanitarian engagement more generally, and their impact on China-Africa relations and global humanitarianism.

The collaborative model between CFPA and Mercy Corps in implementing the 'Brighter Future' refugee aid program provides an innovative paradigm for interaction between Chinese HDOs and Western NGOs. This cooperation not only promotes the exchange of knowledge and experience but also offers new avenues for China's participation in global humanitarian governance. By leveraging the strengths of both parties, this model enhances the effectiveness of humanitarian responses while

fostering capacity building and mutual learning. The implications of this collaborative approach extend beyond the immediate project, potentially shaping China's future humanitarian practices in Africa and globally.

Through the 'Brighter Future' program, the case study unveils the opportunities and challenges Chinese HDOs face in their humanitarian assistance efforts in Africa. On one hand, it showcases Chinese HDOs' growing capacity to engage in complex humanitarian settings and their potential to make substantial contributions to addressing refugee needs. On the other hand, it highlights the learning curve these organisations must navigate as they adapt to unfamiliar cultural, political, and operational environments.

Furthermore, CFPA's practices in Uganda provide a micro-perspective for assessing the impact of China's soft power in Africa. The 'Brighter Future' program demonstrates how Chinese HDOs provide substantial assistance that also shape local perceptions of China. The field research indicates that refugees and local communities responded positively to CFPA's efforts, suggesting that China's humanitarian aid can make meaningful contributions to addressing refugee needs while also helping to foster positive views of China in Africa. This 'People to People Diplomacy' may have significant implications for the long-term development of China-Africa relations, aligning with China's broader diplomatic policy objectives in the region.

This chapter's research sheds light on both the strengths and limitations of Chinese HDOs in addressing global humanitarian challenges, specifically within the intricate refugee policy landscape of Uganda. The evolution of Uganda's refugee policies, from the Control of Alien Refugees Act to the Refugee Act of 2006 and the recent Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, presents a complex environment for humanitarian actors to navigate. Chinese HDOs must adapt to this legal and political framework while also considering the socio-economic conditions on the ground. Furthermore, the multifaceted needs of refugee populations in Uganda, encompassing material, psychological, and social aspects, require Chinese HDOs to develop a thorough understanding of these needs and tailor their aid programs accordingly.

The case study also highlights the challenges Chinese HDOs face in their internationalization process, including cultural differences, language barriers, and the need to adapt to local contexts. These experiences underscore the importance of cultural sensitivity and local engagement in humanitarian work. Moreover, partnerships with experienced international NGOs suggest that Chinese HDOs are still developing their capacities in international humanitarian action. While their initiatives have had positive impacts, the scale and scope of their operations are relatively limited compared to more established humanitarian organisations.

These findings contribute to the understanding of China's evolving humanitarian engagement and its potential implications. The growing involvement of Chinese HDOs in Africa's humanitarian landscape indicates their capacity to contribute to crisis response, but also emphasizes the need for ongoing learning, adaptation, and collaboration with international partners. As Chinese HDOs continue to navigate the complexities of internationalization and refine their approaches, they have the potential to contribute to a more diverse and inclusive humanitarian system. This aligns with China's perspective on its role as a global actor and its approach to integrating development, humanitarian action, and peacebuilding. As China's global influence grows, the development of its humanitarian sector may play a more prominent role in shaping its international relations and image.

In summary, this chapter's case study of the 'Brighter Future' program provides valuable insights into the evolving role and practices of Chinese HDOs in Africa's humanitarian landscape. It highlights the transformative journey of these organisations, the innovative collaborative models they are forging with international partners, and the implications of their expanding presence for China's soft power and global humanitarian governance. While acknowledging the challenges and limitations faced by Chinese HDOs, the chapter underscores their potential to make meaningful contributions to addressing humanitarian crises in Africa and beyond. Simultaneously, this chapter also presents a careful reflection on the limitations of the research and proposes prospects for future research directions, emphasizing that the study of Chinese HDOs' overseas humanitarian practices needs to advance through the interaction between empirical exploration and theoretical reflection. This point will be further elaborated in the subsequent chapter.

9 CONCLUSIONS

'The stories we tell about humanitarian responsibilities are the stories we tell about ourselves and others.'

Von Czechowski (2017:615)

Research Overview and Methodology

This research aims to answer the core question, '*What explains the expanding humanitarian role of China in Africa, and how does this impact China-Africa relations on the one hand, and contemporary global humanitarianism on the other?*' To systematically address this question, the study employed a combination of approaches: historical method to trace the evolution of Chinese humanitarian discourses and practices; an actor-oriented approach to analyze the interaction both among Chinese actors and between Chinese and African actors; and critical discourse analysis to examine the construction of Chinese humanitarian discourses. With respect to the empirical aspects of the research, the study selected the refugee assistance program of the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA) in Uganda as a case study, assessing the effects and impact of Chinese humanitarian actions in the selected site.   By employing multi-dimensional perspectives, including macro and micro, historical and contemporary, discourse and practice, the thesis has endeavoured to reveal the development dynamics, practical logic, and multiple influences of Chinese humanitarianism in Africa, thereby responding to the research question.

This study examines core concepts such as legitimacy, humanitarianism, compassion, moral responsibility, helping, and friendship, providing detailed definitions and explanations to form the conceptual-analytical foundation for understanding Chinese humanitarianism. Among these, the concept of *legitimacy* was explored in some detail with respect to how it shapes the humanitarian discourses and practices of both the Chinese state and non-state actors, through three interrelated dimensions: political legitimacy, organisational legitimacy, and moral legitimacy. Drawing on these conceptual lenses, the research critically examines how the Chinese government, and humanitarian and development organisations (HDOs) construct and enhance their legitimacy through humanitarian practices and discourse construction. It also analyzes the domestic and international development trajectories of Chinese HDOs over time, and assesses the moral dimensions of humanitarian assistance actions and the role of organisational leaders in shaping organisational legitimacy (Fassin 2011, Baldwin and Winter 2020, Suchman 1995, Dart 2004, Alexiou and Wiggins 2019).

Furthermore, this study delves into the crucial use of the concept of *friendship* in Chinese humanitarian discourses and practices. China's notion of friendship is deeply rooted in Confucian thoughts, transcending personal emotions and carrying profound moral and social responsibilities also for strangers. In the context of China-Africa relations, friendship is regarded – and represented – by China as a key characteristic of the close ties and deep affection between the two sides. By emphasizing its relationships with African states in terms of traditional friendship, China asserts the

cultural authenticity and moral legitimacy of its humanitarian actions, additionally associating it with concepts of peace, cooperation, and mutual benefit in bilateral exchanges and multilateral forums.

Core Research Findings

Through systematic research, this thesis has arrived at a number of core findings. From a historical perspective, contemporary Chinese humanitarian discourses and practices have been influenced by both traditional Chinese culture and modern Western thoughts. From a relational perspective, practical China-Africa cooperation has laid a crucial foundation for humanitarian interaction between the two sides. From an actor perspective, Chinese state and non-state actors have established a mutually beneficial cooperation mechanism, despite potential differences and tensions, in overseas humanitarian assistance. From a discursive perspective, the construction of Chinese humanitarian discourse reflects the China's evolving role in the global humanitarian landscape. From an impact perspective, Chinese HDOs have achieved certain accomplishments in Africa but still face numerous challenges. And from a global perspective, China is increasingly integrating into the global humanitarian system in its own particular ways, providing new ideas for innovating humanitarian concepts and practices. The following discussions elaborate on these respective dimensions, detailing the research findings and their significance.

The **historical dimension** reveals the continuity and transformation of Chinese humanitarian discourses and practices. The research finds that Chinese humanitarianism is deeply rooted in Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist traditions, emphasizing benevolence, compassion, and moral obligation. These traditional values have profoundly influenced the ideas and practices of contemporary Chinese humanitarianism. From the concept of benevolence in Chinese traditional thoughts to the introduction of modern Western humanitarian ideas and the globalized practice of contemporary Chinese humanitarianism, Chinese humanitarianism presents a complex picture of the fusion of traditional and modern, indigenous and foreign ideas. This finding not only enriches our understanding of the evolutionary process of Chinese humanitarianism but also provides an important perspective for comprehending the cultural underpinnings of contemporary Chinese humanitarian practices.

The **relational dimension** focuses on the historical evolution of China-Africa relations and its impact on humanitarian interactions between the two sides. This study reveals that China-Africa relations have evolved from ideology-driven interactions to pragmatic cooperation, reflecting the shifts in China's domestic development strategies and foreign policy priorities. This transformation

has significant implications for understanding the motivations and dynamics of China-Africa humanitarian cooperation.

An in-depth analysis of the impact of the evolution of China-Africa relations on the interaction between the two sides in the humanitarian field, helps us move beyond the binary opposition thinking of donor and recipient countries. It reveals the convergence of interests and strategic cooperation between China and African states in the field of humanitarian assistance. The establishment of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) has provided an institutionalized platform for policy coordination between the two sides in areas such as humanitarianism. Although China plays a dominant role in the Forum, African countries are not passive recipients. Rather, they actively strive to incorporate their development needs into the Forum agenda and to utilize cooperation with China to promote their own economic and social development.   This pushes us to consider more fully the respective interests and agenda-setting capabilities of each side when analyzing China-Africa humanitarian interactions, rather than simply assuming that the donor country dominates everything.

Against the backdrop of China's humanitarian thought tradition and the development of China-Africa relations, China's humanitarian assistance to Africa has undergone an important evolution. In the early stages, China's humanitarian assistance to Africa had a strong ideological color, aiming to support socialist countries and specific African countries in their anti-colonial struggles, reflecting the notion of Third World solidarity. With the transformation of China-Africa relations and the adjustment of China's domestic development strategy, China's humanitarian assistance to Africa has gradually become more pragmatic, focusing more on economic interests and the cultivation of soft power, and expanding the geographical scope of assistance. Since the new millennium, China's humanitarian assistance to Africa has further diversified, not only including responses to natural disasters and health crises but also emphasizing long-term development solutions, reflecting China's distinctive development-oriented humanitarian approach. This evolution process reflects how China's humanitarian assistance continuously adapts both to changing China-Africa relations and domestic and international environments. Through the historical evolution of China's humanitarian assistance to Africa, one can more comprehensively understand the motivations and logic of China's humanitarian practices, as well as how China balances traditional values, national interests, and international responsibilities.

The **actor dimension** focuses on the interactions and dynamics among different Chinese and African actors in humanitarian assistance. At the official level, the Chinese government has incorporated humanitarian assistance into its overall foreign policy and foreign aid framework, making it an increasingly important diplomatic tool for China. It has established key institutions such

as the China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) to improve programme design, strengthen departmental coordination, and enhance the systematization and standardization of aid. It has also constructed innovative financing mechanisms such as the South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund (SSCAF) to provide more diversified funding sources for humanitarian assistance. These initiatives reflect China's growing efforts to play a greater role in global humanitarian governance, doing so by actively absorbing international norms while continuing to draw on the advantages of its traditional aid model.

At the non-governmental level, with the support and encouragement of the government, Chinese HDOs have begun to internationalize and are becoming increasingly active in global humanitarian 'hotspots' including in Africa. They leverage their flexible and efficient organisational advantages and rich domestic disaster relief experience to carry out extensive humanitarian projects in areas such as health care, education and training, and livelihood development, becoming a new force for China's participation in global humanitarian causes. These HDOs also shoulder the mission of spreading Chinese philanthropic culture and enhancing 'People-to-People Bonds' between China and Africa, playing an important role in China's 'People-to-People Diplomacy'.

Chinese state and non-state actors have formed established a mutually beneficial cooperation mechanism, despite potential differences and tensions, in overseas humanitarian assistance. On the one hand, the Chinese government provides policy support and resource guarantees for Chinese HDOs to 'go global'; on the other hand, the practical experience of HDOs feeds back into the improvement of government aid concepts and methods. This cooperation allows both state and non-state actors to leverage their respective strengths and resources to enhance China's overall humanitarian engagement. However, it is important to acknowledge that this relationship is not without challenges, as the different priorities and approaches of state and non-state actors may sometimes lead to tensions and negotiations. At the same time, Chinese HDOs actively engage in exchanges and cooperation with international NGOs, learning international humanitarian norms and standards and enhancing their own capacities. This in turn opens up new paths for Chinese and foreign humanitarian actors to work together to address global challenges.

This research reveals the trends and driving factors of the role expansion of Chinese state and non-state actors on the global humanitarian stage from the perspective of actor interaction. While practicing humanitarianism according to broadly held ideals, Chinese HDOs also serve China's diplomatic strategies and economic interests, reflecting the multiple ambitions and demands of China as an emerging actor in global humanitarian governance.

The **discourse dimension** focuses on the construction and representation of Chinese humanitarian discourses, revealing how these have become an important strategic means for China to consolidate its relationship with Africa. Official discourse emphasizes the image of a 'responsible great power', highlighting concepts such as 'South-South cooperation', 'win-win cooperation', and 'community of shared future'. These notions reflect China's strategic attempts to construct a discourse system distinct from that of the West within the humanitarian field. The concept of a 'community of shared future' particularly highlights China's efforts to emphasize the importance of development cooperation and 'People-to-People bonds' in addressing humanitarian challenges. Non-state discourse, on the other hand, focuses more on the aid recipients, emphasizing terms such as 'benevolence' and 'kindness' in Chinese traditional culture. This discursive strategy not only aims to strengthen the emotional bond between China and African states but also provides support for pragmatic cooperation. China places greater emphasis on conducting humanitarian cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual benefit, highlighting the cultural characteristics of Chinese humanitarianism. This distinct approach helps China to represent itself as a friendly and trustworthy partner in Africa, providing legitimacy for its humanitarian practices in Africa.

However, although Chinese humanitarian discourses emphasize the concept of 'equality', it has yet to fully recognize the diversity and agency of African aid recipients. While Chinese discourse has broken away from the binary opposition of benefactors and beneficiaries more common in Western discourses, it still tends to view Africa as a single entity, paying less attention to the differentiated realities and demands among and within African countries. To a certain extent this reproduces the kinds of familiar power inequalities present within traditional Western humanitarianism. This points to the limitations of Chinese humanitarian perceptions, discourses and practices, despite aims and claims to be constructing a more equal and mutually beneficial partnership. Future Chinese humanitarian discourses and practices need to incorporate aid recipients into planning and implementation processes more directly and actively in order to achieve a fundamental change in aid relationships.

At the same time, through a comparative analysis of Chinese and Western humanitarian discourses, this research finds that although the two share commonalities in their uses of core concepts such as humanity, compassion, moral obligation and helping, they exhibit significant differences in discourse construction and practical models. As already noted, Chinese discourses place greater emphasis on the concept of 'friendship', advocating for humanitarian cooperation on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. This finding reveals the diversity of humanitarian discourses in different cultural contexts, providing a new perspective that critiques the idea of universally applicable humanitarian

concepts and norms. This kind of cross-cultural comparative research not only expands the theoretical horizons of humanitarian studies but also provides an important foundation for constructing a more comprehensive and inclusive global humanitarian theoretical framework.

In the **impact dimension**, through an in-depth analysis of CFPA's program in Uganda, this study evaluates the practical effects of a Chinese HDO in an African setting, offering insights into the impact of Chinese HDOs more generally on China-Africa relations. At the program level, the 'Brighter Future' program, implemented by CFPA in collaboration with the international NGO Mercy Corps, has achieved certain results in improving refugee livelihoods and promoting the integration of refugees with local communities through multi-dimensional interventions such as cash transfer, agricultural facilitation, and income-generating activities. This indicates that Chinese HDOs are exploring more comprehensive and sustainable assistance models, rather than being limited to short-term material relief. However, the program also faces numerous challenges in its implementation, including the frequent mobility of the refugee population, agricultural risks brought about by climate change, and difficulties in monitoring and evaluation due to the short project duration. This highlights the capacity limitations of Chinese HDOs in responding to complex humanitarian crises and the need for further optimization and improvement in program design and execution.

The data in the field showed that the program has, to a certain extent, shaped the positive perceptions of local people towards Chinese aid. Over half of the interviewed refugees indicated that they had heard of Chinese HDOs and believed that China should leverage its strengths in areas such as agricultural support and livestock development. This suggests that the practice of Chinese HDOs in Africa is influencing, or has the potential to influence, public opinion about China-Africa relations. Through direct interaction with refugees and local communities, CFPA has begun to gain a better understanding of the development needs of African countries and of enhanced mutual understanding and trust with grassroots people. This lays a more solid foundation for the principle of 'People-to-People Bonds' between China and Africa, and the possibility to carry out practical cooperation in other fields.

From a more macro perspective, CFPA's participation in global humanitarian affairs reflects the efforts of China, as an emerging donor country, to reshape the international humanitarian landscape, albeit at a rather small scale to begin with. On the one hand, Chinese HDOs independently are actively adapting to and integrating into the international humanitarian system, learning from the standards and norms of international humanitarian actions, and enhancing their own professionalism and level of internationalization. On the other hand, they are also exploring overseas assistance models that align with their own characteristics and strengths, striving to contribute Chinese wisdom and

experience to solving global humanitarian crises. This process not only enriches the practical paths of humanitarian relief but also injects new vitality into the construction of a more inclusive and balanced global humanitarian governance landscape. At the same time, this process also reflects the efforts of Chinese HDOs in pursuing their own organisational legitimacy. By demonstrating their ability to provide assistance effectively and support African development, aligning with widely recognized humanitarian values and gradually being accepted as indispensable actors in the international humanitarian aid field, Chinese HDOs are enhancing their organisational legitimacy at multiple levels.

In the **global dimension**, this study focuses on the process of China's integration into and effects on the existing global humanitarian system. Through an analysis of the evolution of Chinese official aid policies and the overseas practices of HDOs, this study finds that China is forming a unique model of humanitarian engagement, characterized by a development orientation, state leadership, and a focus on disaster response, while also showing new trends of diversified actors and diversified approaches.

China's integration into the global humanitarian system is reflected in two aspects. On the one hand, China actively participates in multilateral humanitarian mechanisms such as the United Nations, learning and adapting to international norms and standards. The Chinese government has not only significantly increased its financial support for UN humanitarian agencies but has also provided important resource supplements for global humanitarian actions through innovative initiatives such as the establishment of the SSCAF. At the same time, an increasing number of Chinese HDOs have begun to go overseas to participate in international humanitarian relief. While learning from the experience of international humanitarian actions, they also exhibit their own characteristics in aid concepts and approaches, such as placing greater emphasis on promoting refugee self-reliance and sustainable development.

On the other hand, China has proposed the concept of a 'Community of Shared Future for Mankind', injecting a 'Chinese element' into global humanitarianism. This concept emphasizes addressing humanitarian challenges and achieving universal security and lasting peace through strengthening development cooperation and promoting 'People-to-People Bonds'. In practice, China advocates combining humanitarian assistance with development aid, focusing on playing a role in the post-disaster reconstruction and recovery phase, and striving to provide more long-term and sustainable solutions for recipient countries. This highlights the uniqueness of the Chinese humanitarian approach, which places greater emphasis on the developmental attributes and state role in humanitarian actions.

Examining the research findings through the lens of deconstructive humanitarian theory, this study argues that China, as an emerging humanitarian actor, exhibits unique discourse construction logic and action strategies in its aid practices. China strategically uses humanitarian discourses to shape its image as a responsible great power, leveraging image building to gain legitimacy for political and economic activities. Specifically, China actively participates in the formulation of international humanitarian rules, proposing development-oriented aid concepts and striving to reshape global humanitarian governance. For instance, at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, China actively engaged in the discussion on reforming the global humanitarian system, and put forward its vision of building a 'community of shared future for mankind' (Gong 2021). Moreover, China has been increasingly involved in UN peacekeeping operations and disaster relief efforts, aiming to provide 'Chinese solutions' to global humanitarian challenges (Hirono 2018). This indicates that the humanitarian field has become a new arena for strategic competition among states, with increasingly fierce competition for discursive power and rule-making authority.

The process of China's integration into the global humanitarian system has had a significant impact on traditional humanitarian concepts and practices. Traditional humanitarianism is based on the four principles of 'neutrality, impartiality, independence, and humanity', emphasizing that humanitarian actions should be independent of political considerations. However, China's humanitarian practices demonstrate that aid behaviors cannot be completely detached from national interests and foreign strategic objectives. As a proponent of a state-led aid model, China's humanitarian actions are more pragmatic and more focused on the economic, political, and reputational benefits brought by aid. At the same time, China's development-oriented humanitarian aid approach challenges the traditional humanitarian approach of emphasizing emergency or disaster relief which largely neglects post-disaster recovery and reconstruction. China attempts to more comprehensively incorporate development issues within the humanitarian framework. Moreover, with the rise of Chinese HDOs on the humanitarian stage, the importance of non-governmental actors in humanitarian governance has become increasingly evident, impacting the traditional humanitarian landscape dominated by intergovernmental organisations.

Overall, China's integration into the global humanitarian system is a complex interactive process, reflecting the dual roles of 'learner' and 'shaper'. As a latecomer to the international humanitarian stage, China inevitably faces numerous challenges in the process of integrating into the existing system, such as insufficient discursive power in the humanitarian aid environment and limited ability to participate in rule-making. However, at the same time, China has accumulated unique ideas and practices in the humanitarian field, especially in responding to domestic and regional disasters,

epidemics and pandemics, accumulating rich experience, technology, and expertise. These experiences provide an important foundation for China's participation in global humanitarian affairs. The Chinese experience reveals the complex entanglement between humanitarianism and politics, development, and national interests, providing insights for rethinking the framework and boundaries of humanitarianism and building a more diverse and inclusive global humanitarian system.

Theoretical Significance of Research Findings

The findings of this study challenge traditional Western-centric humanitarian theory in several aspects and contribute to the innovation of a broader humanitarian theory:

Firstly, this study deepens the understanding of power dynamics in humanitarian practice. The research findings show that the process of China's participation in global humanitarian affairs introduces complex power relations and interest games. Humanitarian assistance is not a simple one-way act of beneficence but involves the interaction and negotiation of multiple actors, including donor countries, recipient countries, international organisations, and NGOs. This finding challenges the simplistic perception of traditional humanitarian theory that views aid as a purely selfless contribution, confirming and expanding the theory of the politicization of humanitarianism proposed by Barnett (2011).

It is particularly noteworthy that the research finds that when faced with criticism of its African aid policies, China strategically employs humanitarianism to enhance its image and alleviate pressure. However, this study finds that China's humanitarian diplomacy also serves, to a certain extent, as a strategic tool to promote its political and economic ambitions. This finding not only helps us understand more comprehensively the multiple motivations and impacts of humanitarian actions, but also provides new ideas for how to seek a balance between humanitarian principles and national interests.

Secondly, this research offers a reflection on humanitarian theory from a cross-cultural perspective. The findings reveal that Chinese humanitarian discourses exhibit unique cultural characteristics, such as emphasizing the concepts of 'friendship' and 'win-win cooperation', reflecting the profound influence of cultural backgrounds on humanitarian ideas and practices. The unique expression of Chinese humanitarian discourses provides a new perspective for understanding international humanitarian norms, offering insights for constructing a 'world humanitarianism' theory that is inclusive and diverse. This discovery challenges the Western-centric humanitarian theoretical framework proposed by scholars such as Barnett and Weiss (2008), indicating that humanitarian practices worldwide require more diverse and inclusive theoretical explanations.

This cross-cultural perspective not only expands the theoretical horizons of humanitarian research but also provides new insights for understanding the interactions and dynamics of global humanitarian actors. For example, the differences and impacts that may arise in practice between the concept of 'friendship' emphasized by China and the principle of 'neutrality' traditionally emphasized by the West deserve further in-depth research. Such comparative studies are expected to enrich the cultural diversity of humanitarian theory and provide theoretical support for building more equal and mutually beneficial global humanitarian partnerships.

Thirdly, this study provides a new perspective for the theoretical understanding of the role of emerging humanitarian donor countries. The research finds that as an emerging humanitarian donor, China exhibits a dual role of 'learner' and 'shaper' in the process of integrating into the global humanitarian system.

The research results show that China exhibits complex role characteristics of 'bidirectional norm adaptation' between learning international norms and promoting norm transformation. This perspective not only has potential significance for humanitarian research but may also provide new thinking in relation to norm diffusion and global governance research in international relations theory, with implications for more comprehensive understandings of the process of change in the contemporary international order.

It is worth noting that China's growing economic and political strength in Africa foreshadows a restructuring of global power relations and global governance institutions more broadly. China's approach to strengthening cooperative relationships with African countries by expanding economic and political ties has brought new variables to the global humanitarian governance landscape. In particular, China's rich experience in responding to domestic and regional disasters, epidemics, and pandemics when appropriately shared under the norms of humanitarian principles, may provide new ideas for resolving contemporary humanitarian dilemmas and improving global humanitarian capacity and disaster prevention capabilities.

However, the impact of China's integration into the international humanitarian system on its domestic policies and ideological stance requires further research. As China adapts to emerging international norms and practices, its domestic policies and ideological stance may also undergo subtle changes. Understanding how China's growing international humanitarian engagement reshapes its domestic governance and foreign policy is crucial for assessing the implications of China's rise for global governance. Future research needs to focus on this domestic-international policy interaction to better understand the complex dynamics of emerging powers' participation in global governance in the context of globalization.

Research Contributions and Limitations

This research makes contributions in three areas: African Studies, Chinese Studies, and Humanitarian Studies, while also having some limitations. In terms of African Studies, I demonstrate the agency of African countries in humanitarian interactions, providing a new perspective for understanding China-Africa relations from an African viewpoint. In terms of Chinese Studies, I analyze the development trajectory of China's overseas humanitarian undertakings, revealing its dialectical interaction with domestic changes. In terms of Humanitarian Studies, this study expands the typology of humanitarian actors and explores humanitarian discourses and practices from the perspective of developing countries. However, the research still needs to be deepened in terms of exploring African discourses, analyzing Chinese domestic factors, and comparing Chinese and foreign humanitarian concepts and approaches. Additionally, this study also has some limitations not least in the application of methodology, which may affect the universality and generalizability of the research conclusions. The following section discusses the specific contributions and limitations of the research in detail and proposes future research directions.

Contributions and Limitations in relation to African Studies

Through analyzing China's humanitarian practices in Africa, this research reveals how this process influences China-Africa relations and African development. On the one hand, the humanitarian assistance provided by China has played a positive role in improving people's livelihoods and promoting African development; on the other hand, this process also faces challenges in aid effectiveness and cultural adaptation. More importantly, African people's perceptions and evaluations of Chinese aid constitute an important public opinion foundation for China-Africa relations. However, when analyzing the characteristics of Chinese humanitarian discourses and practices, this study mainly focuses on the Chinese perspective, with insufficient representation of African perspectives, especially the perspectives of aid recipients. This highlights the need to further strengthen the focus on African subjectivity and agency in future research, paying substantial attention to how African society understands and evaluates Chinese humanitarianism, and exploring both the forms of cooperation and conflicts in China-Africa humanitarian interactions. Future research needs to address African grassroots communities, listen to the voices of aid recipients, and explore their evaluations of and responses to aid projects and their perceptions of different aspects of China's image and presence.

This study demonstrates that China-Africa humanitarian interactions constitute a complex, multi-actor relational process. African countries and African civil society are not passive aid recipients but

selectively absorb and actively shape Chinese aid based on their own interests and demands. However, when analyzing the discourses of China-Africa relations, this study mainly focuses on Chinese discourses, with limited engagement with African perspectives. Future research needs to further explore the agency of African actors in humanitarian interactions, analyzing how they seek their own development space through cooperation with China, and leverage their relations with China in order to achieve their own demands. Only by fully incorporating African perspectives can research on China-Africa humanitarian cooperation truly achieve a paradigm shift from 'on Africa' to 'with Africa'.

Contributions and Limitations in relation to Chinese Studies

Taking China's humanitarian practices in Africa as a case study, this study analyzes the experiences and challenges of the Chinese government and Chinese HDOs 'going global' in humanitarian assistance. On the one hand, this process reflects China's desire to participate in global governance and enhance its international influence; on the other hand, it also exposes China's deficiencies in foreign aid capabilities, cultural adaptation, and other aspects. This provides important insights for how to promote the reform and improvement of China's foreign aid system and enhance China's overseas image. However, when analyzing the evolution of Chinese humanitarianism from ideologically driven to pragmatic, this study's analysis of specific influencing factors is not yet sufficiently in-depth and needs to be further refined and improved in subsequent research. Moreover, when analyzing the interactions between the Chinese government and Chinese HDOs, this study mainly focuses on their cooperation and coordination, paying insufficient attention to the possible differences and tensions between the two sides in aid concepts, methods, and other aspects. Future research can further explore the role positioning and the boundaries of responsibilities of the government and HDOs respectively in foreign humanitarian assistance.

The analyses in Chapters 4 and 6 indicate that China's humanitarian discourses and practices are deeply influenced by domestic political, economic, and social factors. For example, the Chinese government's attitude towards the participation of social organisations in humanitarian affairs has undergone a shift from control to cooperation, which is closely related to the development of domestic civil society. At the same time, the 'going global' of Chinese enterprises has also created conditions for HDOs to carry out overseas projects. Future research needs to explore further the domestic drivers of China's participation in global humanitarian affairs, analyzing how domestic political, economic, and social changes have shaped China's humanitarian approaches and practices, with the aim of providing a more multi-dimensional and dynamic perspective for understanding the internal logic of Chinese humanitarianism.

Contributions and Limitations in relation to Humanitarian Studies

By examining China as an emerging humanitarian actor, this study expands the empirical scope and theoretical perspectives of humanitarian research. At the empirical level, China's humanitarian practices, which integrate traditional and modern, indigenous and foreign ideas, provide an important case for enriching the typology of humanitarian actors. At the theoretical level, China's role positioning between learning international norms and promoting South-South cooperation provides a new entry point for reflecting on the power relations in global humanitarian governance. However, when discussing Chinese humanitarian concepts such as the 'community of shared future for mankind', this study's interpretation of their meanings is not yet clear and specific enough, and there is little discussion of the extent to which these concepts are accepted and recognized by the international community. This points to the need to further expand theoretical horizons in subsequent research, to analyze more fully the origins and characteristics of Chinese humanitarian discourses, and to focus on the relationship between discourse and practice. This would facilitate an important examination of the influence of Chinese humanitarianism within the global context from a more multi-dimensional perspective, helping to explore the implications of Chinese experiences for humanitarian theory innovation, and to promote a more open dialogue between different humanitarian traditions.

As pointed out in the introduction and Chapter 2, mainstream humanitarian research has long exhibited a tendency towards Western-centrism, ignoring the rich humanitarian thoughts and practices traditions of the non-Western world. By focusing on the Chinese case, this study attempts to break through this cognitive limitation and highlight the diversity of the global humanitarian landscape. However, although this study uses CFPA's program in Uganda as an example to evaluate the practical effects of Chinese HDOs in Africa and their impact on China-Africa relations, the selected case has its particularities. It mainly relies on interview data from program stakeholders, lacking the support of long-term tracking data. Future research can incorporate a wider range of types of Chinese HDOs, conduct comparative studies with larger samples, and focus on long-term evaluations of specific projects. This could be combined with feedback from beneficiary groups, to examine the impact of Chinese humanitarian actions from a more comprehensive and dynamic perspective. Moreover, this study mainly conducts analysis based on Chinese empirical material and theoretical perspectives, with a lack of examination of other emerging humanitarian countries. In the context of contemporary global humanitarian governance becoming increasingly diversified and complex, future research needs to strengthen cross-national comparative perspectives. This could entail examining Chinese experience in the broader context of the 'global South' through country

comparisons and systematic examinations from regional and global perspectives, as well as analyzing the multidimensional impact of emerging actors' transnational practices. This will not only help expand the theoretical horizons of humanitarian research but also provide intellectual resources for promoting North-South dialogue, drawing wisdom from exchanges and mutual learning, and thus building a more inclusive and balanced global humanitarian governance system.

Methodological Limitations

In terms of the theoretical framework, this study mainly draws on theories from political science, international relations, and development studies to analyze China's humanitarian engagement in Africa. However, the application of these theories may not fully capture the complexity and uniqueness of the Chinese context. Future research can further incorporate theories from other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of Chinese humanitarianism.

Regarding concept definition, although this study provides detailed explanations of key concepts such as humanitarianism, legitimacy, and friendship, the boundaries and meanings of these concepts remain somewhat ambiguous, especially when applied in cross-cultural contexts. Future research needs to further clarify and refine these concepts based on empirical evidence from diverse cultural settings, and to explore their similarities and differences with related concepts in African languages and knowledge systems.

In terms of case selection, while CFPA's program in Uganda provides valuable insights into Chinese HDOs' humanitarian practices, it is only one case and may not be representative of the broader landscape of Chinese humanitarian engagement in Africa. Future research can include more cases of Chinese HDOs with different organisational types, sectors, and geographical locations, and conduct comparative analyses to identify common patterns and variations in their approaches and impacts.

Moreover, this study focuses on the perspective of Chinese humanitarian actors, with limited attention to the views and experiences of African recipients and stakeholders. Future research should adopt a more participatory and dialogical approach, engaging African communities, organisations, and scholars as co-producers of knowledge, rather than mere subjects of study. This can help generate more grounded and culturally sensitive understandings of the complex realities of humanitarian interactions on the ground.

Future Research Prospects

In the previous sections, I have discussed the contributions and limitations of this research in relation to African Studies, Chinese Studies, and Humanitarian Studies. Building on these reflections, this section further explores some key directions and prospects for future research on China-Africa humanitarian cooperation. Specifically, future research should focus on expanding the scope and depth of analysis in terms of research methods, case selection, theoretical perspectives, and cross-cultural dialogue. This will help to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the complex realities of China-Africa humanitarian interaction on the ground.

Chapter 8 conducted an in-depth analysis of the refugee assistance program in northern Uganda based on field research, showcasing the subjective expressions of refugee groups during program implementation. For example, in the use of aid funds, refugees put forward diversified demands according to their own needs, including urgent expectations for livelihood improvement and earnest hopes for their children's education. This finding suggests that when analyzing the effects of humanitarian assistance, we should not view aid recipients as a single, passive whole, but should fully recognize their internal heterogeneity and agency. At the same time, it is also necessary to pay attention to the power dynamics in program implementation and analyze the different senses of gain and/or losses among local elites and vulnerable groups in relation to aid. This micro-oriented ethnographic approach helps to grasp the social effects of humanitarian assistance in a more multi-dimensional and dynamic manner. Future research should further expand this path, incorporating a wider variety of Chinese HDOs, and conducting comparative studies with larger samples. It should also combine, qualitative methods ethnography (Hammersley and Atkinson 2019) and quantitative methods and if possible, focus on long-term evaluations of specific projects, combining this with feedback from beneficiary groups. This would help to provide a multi-dimensional picture of the operation of humanitarian aid projects at the grassroots level, and reveal the impact of Chinese humanitarian actions from a more comprehensive and dynamic perspective. It could also provide policy insights with more practical applicability for humanitarian actions.

In addition to expanding research methods and case selection, future research also needs to conduct comparative analyses in a broader transnational context. As mentioned in Chapter 7, China is not the only emerging humanitarian donor country active in Africa. Countries such as India, Brazil, and Turkey have also increased their humanitarian assistance to Africa, becoming important emerging forces on the global humanitarian stage. Future research needs to expand the scope of examination from China to other emerging donor countries, to conduct cross-national comparative analyses,

analyze the similarities and differences in their aid concepts, policies, and practices (Lijphart 1971), and explore the diverse characteristics of emerging humanitarian forces.

At the same time, research also needs to incorporate more African country and regional cases to analyze the differences in aid practices under different geopolitical and socio-cultural contexts. This could be expanded to other key countries receiving Chinese aid, such as Ethiopia and Kenya, as well as countries severely affected by conflicts and disasters, such as South Sudan and Somalia. Such multi-case, cross-contextual comparative analysis (Basedau and Köllner 2007) would also help to expose the diversity and complexity of humanitarian assistance under the framework of South-South cooperation and generate innovations in humanitarian theory and practice (Murithi 2017, Mawdsley 2012). It would also help to reveal the multidimensional impact of emerging actors' transnational practices and the commonalities and characteristics of aid practices in different types of humanitarian crises. This could in turn provide new theoretical and practical perspectives for promoting international cooperation in humanitarian action.

To this end, future research should, on the one hand, investigate the historical origins and cultural connotations of humanitarian concepts in different regions, such as Ubuntu in Africa, Buddhist compassion in Asia, and Fraternity in Latin America, and compare them with the dominant Western humanitarian discourses to identify their commonalities and particularities. On the other hand, it is necessary to pay attention to the innovative practices of humanitarian action emerging in the Global South, such as South-South cooperation, localization of aid, and community-based resilience building, and to evaluate their effectiveness and scalability through empirical research. By facilitating cross-regional and cross-cultural exchanges of knowledge and experience, it is possible to gradually construct a truly 'global' humanitarian theoretical framework and governance model that transcends the Western-centric paradigm and embraces the plurality of humanitarian traditions around the world.

Admittedly, promoting such an inclusive global humanitarian dialogue is a long-term and arduous task, requiring the joint efforts of academics, practitioners, and policymakers from different countries and fields. However, as this study has shown, China's growing humanitarian engagement and its distinct philosophies and practices, while not without limitations and challenges, provide a valuable opportunity and impetus for this endeavour. This study preliminarily analyzes the unique concepts in Chinese humanitarian discourses, such as 'friendship' and 'People-to-People Bond', revealing their value connotations and practical significance. On this basis, future research can employ critical discourse analysis methods (Fairclough 2013) to further explore the connections and distinctions between these local concepts and international humanitarian discourses such as 'humanity', 'responsibility', and 'helping', and to clarify the formation logic of Chinese humanitarian discourses.

Moreover, the Chinese humanitarian discourses system can be compared with the discourse systems of other countries and regions to find commonalities and differences between them. By building a 'conceptual dialogue' between different discursive traditions, it is hoped that a shared understanding of humanitarian ideas and norms can be achieved, laying an epistemological foundation for constructing a diverse and inclusive global humanitarian community (Wiener 2014).

At the same time, research also needs to pay attention to the practical effects of Chinese humanitarian discourses. It is necessary to examine the meanings of Chinese concepts such as the 'community of shared future for mankind', analyze the extent to which these concepts are accepted and recognized by the international community, and investigate how Chinese concepts are transformed into concrete aid actions and how these actions are perceived and evaluated by aid recipients. Such research will help clarify the logic behind the generation and evolution of humanitarian discourses and provide insights into how different humanitarian narratives and practices interact and shape each other in the global arena. This, in turn, will contribute to a more reflexive and dialogical approach to humanitarian governance, one that acknowledges the plurality of humanitarian cultures and experiences, and seeks to build common ground while respecting differences.

Everill (2013:2) reminds us that 'exploring this theme [the bigger picture of humanitarian assistance and intervention] can illuminate both our present understanding of contemporary humanitarian intervention practices in Africa and our understanding of its historical origins.' In this spirit, research on China-Africa humanitarian cooperation needs to further expand in terms of theoretical perspectives, research methods, and case selection, and strengthen cross-cultural and interdisciplinary dialogue, in order to contribute intellectual resources to the construction of a more inclusive, balanced, and pluralistic global humanitarian governance system. This requires a holistic approach that integrates historical, policy, theoretical, and practical dimensions, and delves into the roles, motivations, and interactions of diverse humanitarian actors. Such an approach can help foster dialogue, mutual learning, and collaboration among all parties involved in humanitarian efforts, and ultimately contribute to more effective and equitable humanitarian action.

Conclusion

This study investigates the expansion of China's humanitarian role in Africa and its impact on China-Africa relations and global humanitarianism. The findings reveal that this expansion is driven by multiple factors, including China's domestic development, the evolution of China-Africa relations, and changes in the international humanitarian landscape. In turn, China's growing humanitarian

engagement has profound implications for the trajectory of China-Africa cooperation and the transformation of the global humanitarian system.

China strategically employs humanitarian discourses and practices to shape its image as a responsible and benevolent partner for Africa. By emphasizing concepts such as friendship, mutual benefit, and community of shared future for mankind, China seeks to enhance the legitimacy of its political and economic activities in Africa and beyond. However, China's humanitarian approach, while gaining traction, also faces challenges in terms of norms, capacity, and cultural adaptation.

China's integration into the global humanitarian system reflects a dual process of adaptation and innovation. On the one hand, China is learning from established international norms and practices; on the other hand, it is promoting alternative ideas and models, such as the localization of aid and South-South cooperation. This two-way interaction between China and the international humanitarian community has the potential to reshape the paradigm of global humanitarian governance.

This study contributes to the fields of African Studies, Chinese Studies, and Humanitarian Studies by offering new empirical insights and theoretical perspectives. It highlights the agency and subjectivity of African actors in humanitarian cooperation, the domestic-international nexus of China's humanitarian policymaking, and the diversification of humanitarian cultures and traditions. However, the research also has limitations, particularly in its methodology and scope.

Future research should adopt a more participatory and interdisciplinary approach, engaging diverse stakeholders and knowledge systems. Comparative studies across regions, cultures, and organisations can help to build a more inclusive and pluralistic understanding of humanitarianism. Ultimately, the goal is to foster dialogue, mutual learning, and joint actions for addressing humanitarian challenges and promoting the well-being of all people.

As China's humanitarian role continues to evolve and expand, it is crucial for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to critically reflect on its implications and strive for more inclusive, effective, and accountable humanitarian cooperation. This study hopes to contribute to this ongoing endeavour by offering new perspectives and opening up space for further dialogue and research.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Overview of Research Activities

This appendix provides an overview of the main research activities conducted for this study from October 2018 to January 2019 in Uganda and China.

Uganda Field Research:

1. Kampala (October 1-9, 2018):

- Visited and conducted informal talks with representatives of Chinese enterprises in Kampala, including:
    - Zheng Biao from China Communications Construction Company Limited
    - Li Ji from PowerChina Resources Limited
- Interviewed Hong Yonghong, Director of the Confucius Institute at Makerere University, Kampala
- Interviewed Zhang Ming, Director of the Economic and Commercial Office of the Chinese Embassy in Uganda

2. Kitgum and Palabek Refugee Settlement, Lamwo (October 10-18, 2018):

- Conducted informal talks with 'Brighter Future' program team members, including:
    - Mercy Corps' Program Manager Leon
    - CFPA's Project Manager Owen (Yang Zeqi) and Volunteer Zhang Shenyue
    - United States Peace Corps Volunteer Sam
    - Local Ugandan staff Joseph, Olivia, Jacob, Sisto, Monica
- Conducted a qualitative interview with He Daofeng, the donor of the 'Brighter Future' program
- Conducted a qualitative interview with Paul Dudley Hart, Senior Vice President for Global Partnerships and Alliances at Mercy Corps
- Conducted participant observation of the 'Brighter Future' program in the Palabek refugee settlement, Lamwo
- Attended 'Brighter Future' program weekly meetings

3. Kitgum and Palabek Refugee Settlement (October 19-December 1, 2018):

- Conducted participant observation of three projects under the 'Brighter Future' program
- Conducted qualitative interviews with block leaders and zone leaders in the Palabek refugee settlement
    - Administered questionnaire surveys with refugees in Palabek refugee settlement
    - Conducted qualitative interviews with 'Brighter Future' program team members

China Field Research (December 2018 to January 2019):

Beijing:

- Visited the headquarters of Chinese HDOs:
    - China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation
    - Red Cross Foundation of China
    - Beijing Peaceland Foundation
    - China Association for NGO Cooperation

- Attended the 'International Disaster Response Seminar on Social Forces in 2018'
- Conducted qualitative interviews with Chinese HDO staff and Chinese scholars, including:
    - Wu Peng, Director of the international project department of CFPA
    - Liu Xuanguo, Vice President of the Red Cross Foundation of China
    - Huang Haoming, Vice Chairman of both the Shenzhen Institute of International Public Welfare and the China Association for the Promotion of Social Organisations
    - Peng Bin, Head of Mercy Corps China
    - Zhen Wei, Head of the Africa Department, Amity Foundation
    - Shu Zhan, former Ambassador to Eritrea and Rwanda, Vice President of the Chinese Society of African Historical Studies
    - Wang Ke and Qiu Lili, Head of the Beijing Peaceland Foundation
    - Wu Yin and Ying Binbin, Founders of Common Future
    - Deng Guosheng, Tsinghua University's NGO Institute
    - Xu Shiling, Beijing Normal University's Institute of Social Governance Research (currently teaching at the Red Cross College of Suzhou University)
    - Dong Qiang, China Agricultural University
    - He Wenping, Professor and Research Program Director at the Institute of West-Asian and African Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
    - Zhou Jingyan, Researcher at the Institute of West-Asian and African Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Desk Review:

- Collected and analyzed documentary sources including policy papers, project reports, media articles, and scholarly publications in both English and Chinese.

Appendix 2: Profiling Questionnaire for 'Brighter Future' Program Refugees Participants

Date: _____

Name of interviewer: _____Yingjie Zhao_____

For a brief introduction, I am a PhD student at the university of Copenhagen. This is my fieldwork for my PhD research. I want to collect some data and information about the role of NGOs in the Palabek Refugee Settlement. I assure you that all your information will be protected, and I thank you for your assistance!

(1) Are you willing to take part in my research?
A. Yes   B. No
(2) Are you willing to use your name in my research?
A. Yes   B. No

Details of Respondents:
If yes, what is your name: _____
If not, you can write down your alternate name: _____
Original Address (within South Sudan):
Present Address: _____
Ethnic group: _____
Age: _____   Gender: _____

Questions are as follows:

1.   For what reason you choose Uganda as your destination? (Please choose only one)

     A. Your families are here   B. Refugees Settlement Policy

     C. Short distance   D. Same Tribe   E. Others: _____

2.   Is there any quarrel or conflict between refugees and host community?

     Yes   B.   No

     If yes, please to specify or explain (Date/where/type/solution):

     _____

3.   At present, what do you think as refugees you need most for your well being in this settlement (Please choose only one)?

     A. Water   B. Foods   C. Lands   D. Money   E. Jobs   F. Training

     G. Tools   H. Education   I. Shelter   J. Others: _____

4.   Which organisations have you ever received assistance (Multiple options)?

UNHCR	WFP	Mercy	Corps	CFPA
Refugees Law Project	Acord	ICRC	LWF	Oxfam
Samaritan Purse	Drop in the bucket	Food for the hungry	IRC	AVSI
War Child	Fund a Field	VEDCO	CESVI	Children of the World Foundation
Windle Trust International	WORUDET	ARC	NURI	Others:

5. Please answer the questions as follows:

   (a)   Why do you think NGOs are important to you?

   _____

   (b)   What are possible areas you think NGOs may need to improve on?

      A. Education   B. Medical   C. Food items   D. Non-food items

      E. Vulnerable Groups   F. Businesses   G. Others: _____

6. Please answer the questions as follows:

   (a) What makes the 'Bright Future' project important for you?

   _____

   (b) How about other NGOs?

   _____

   (c) What are the possible areas you think MC should improve on?

   _____

7. Please answer the questions as follows

   (a)   Are you a beneficiary for a cash transfer?

      A. Yes   B. No

   If no, skip all the following questions; if yes, please answer the questions as follows:

   (b)   Have you received cash this month?

A. Yes   B. No

If no, skip all the following questions; if yes, please go on

(c)   What is your plan to use the cash transferred by Mercy Corps (you can choose more than one)?

A. Buy food   B. Buy seeds for farming   C. Buy clothes   D. Start a business

E. School Fees   F. Saving   G. Non-food items   H. Others: _____

(d)   How convenient is the use of MTN services for Cash Transfer?

A. Excellent   B. Very good

C. Fair   D. Poor

If C or D, please explain:

_____

8.   Please answer the questions as follows:

(a)   Do you have land to do farming or are you in MC Agriculture group?

A. Yes   B. No

(b)   If no, why are you not do farming (Please choose only one)?

A. No enough money for renting   B. No experience on farming

C. Have a small business   D. No enough time for farming

E. No enough money to hire labors   F. No land

G. Others: _____

(c)   If yes, is this your own land or you rented it from host communities, or it is for the famer group?

A. Own land   B. Rented it from host communities

C. For free from host community   D. Others: _____

(d)   In which aspect does this agriculture project help you the most (Please choose only one)?

A. Consulting with the landowner for renting lands

B. Contacting with the agro-dealer for buying high qualities seeds

C. Providing the agricultural training

D. Contacting with the market for sailing products

E. Improved on teamwork (improved fields)

F. Others: _____

9. Please answer the questions as follows:

(a) Do you have an idea of starting a business?

A. Yes   B. No   C. Already has a business

If you choose B, skip all the following questions

(b1) If you choose A, are you a beneficiary of IGA training?

A. Yes   B. No

(b2) If no, please explain:

_____

(b3) If you choose C, then what kind of business are you currently running?

_____

(c) What are the likely challenges you are facing now?

_____

10. Do you know where the donor of this 'Bright Future' project come from?

A. Yes   B. No

If yes, please to specify (country):

_____

11. Please answer the questions as follows:

(a) Have you ever heard about Chinese NGOs?

A. Yes   B. No

If yes, please to specify:

(b) Do you know the 'Bright Future' project is collaborated by Mercy Corps and one Chinese NGO called the China Foundation of Poverty Alleviation (CFPA)?

A. Yes   B. No

12. What can you say about China?

13. What are the likely interventions you think Chinese NGOs should support for this settlement?

Appendix 3: Examples of Interview Guides

Interview Guide for Zone Leaders and Block Leaders in Palabek Refugee Settlement

Introduction:

My name is Yingjie Zhao, and I am a PhD student at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. My research focuses on the role of NGOs in the Palabek Refugee Settlement, with a specific emphasis on the 'Brighter Future' program. I would like to ask you some questions concerning the general situation of the Palabek Refugee Settlement, as well as the practices and challenges of the 'Brighter Future' program. With your permission, I would like to record this interview for accuracy. Please be assured that your personal information will be kept confidential, and if I quote any of your responses, I will not mention your name. Thank you for your assistance.

A. General Questions about the Palabek Refugee Settlement:

   1. Can you briefly introduce your work and responsibilities in the settlement?

   2. How would you describe the relationship between refugees and the host community in your block?

   3. In your opinion, what are the most significant challenges faced by the Palabek Refugee Settlement?

B. Importance and Impact of NGO Assistance:

   1. Do you consider the assistance provided by NGOs to be important for the settlement? Why or why not?

   2. What kind of assistance do you find to be the most helpful for the refugees and the host community?

   3. How do you think the settlement can achieve sustainability, and what are the main challenges in achieving this goal?

C. Community Mobilization:

   1. In your view, is community mobilization important for the success of humanitarian assistance programs in the settlement?

   2. How do NGOs and community leaders work together to mobilize the community and ensure participation in various programs?

D. 'Brighter Future' Program:

1. Are you familiar with the 'Brighter Future' program implemented by the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA) in collaboration with Mercy Corps?

2. What aspects of the 'Brighter Future' program do you think need improvement, and why?

3. How has the 'Brighter Future' program impacted the lives of refugees and the host community in your block?

E. Perceptions of International and Chinese Humanitarian Assistance:

1. Which countries and organisations are currently providing humanitarian assistance in the Palabek Refugee Settlement?

2. What is your perception of China and Chinese Humanitarian and Development Organisations (HDOs) in terms of their role and impact in the settlement?

3. In your opinion, what specific types of assistance could Chinese HDOs provide to better support the refugees and the host community in the settlement?

Closing Remarks:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this interview. Your insights and experiences are invaluable to my research. If you have any further questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Interview Guide for the Donor of 'Brighter Future' Program

Introduction:

This interview guide is designed as part of a doctoral research project that examines the humanitarian role of Chinese Humanitarian and Development Organisations (HDOs) in Africa, with a specific focus on the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA) and its 'Brighter Future' Program in Uganda. The purpose of this guide is to facilitate an in-depth interview with the donor of the 'Brighter Future' Program, aiming to explore their perspectives on various aspects of Chinese HDOs' engagement in African humanitarian contexts.

The interview will cover the following key themes:

1. Conceptualization and characteristics of NGOs in China

2. Comparison between Chinese and Western NGOs

3. CFPA's internationalization journey

4. The Uganda 'Brighter Future' Program

5. Chinese perspectives on humanitarianism and philanthropy

6. Chinese humanitarian assistance

7. Development trends of Chinese HDOs

8. Relationship between the state and HDOs in China

The interview will be conducted in a semi-structured format, allowing for open-ended discussion while ensuring the key themes are addressed. With the interviewee's permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to ensure accurate representation of their responses in the research. The researcher will also seek the interviewee's consent regarding the use of their name in the study.

A. Conceptualization of NGOs in China:

1. How do different academic perspectives (Chinese and Western) on the categorization of Chinese social organisations (as NGOs, NPOs, or GONGOs) affect their development and internationalization? What are your views on the accuracy of these definitions and the necessity to clarify them?

2. Using CFPA as an example, what were the main reasons, key aspects, and outcomes of the 'de-administratization' reforms implemented during your tenure as president? How do these reforms affect CFPA's autonomy and organisational form compared to Western NGOs?

B. Comparison between Chinese and Western NGOs:

Beyond the definitional controversies, what are the main differences and similarities you observe between Chinese and Western NGOs in terms of their external relationships, operational models, project funding channels, aid philosophies, and collaboration with local partners in Africa? What distinctive features of Chinese HDOs can you identify? What motivated the decision to collaborate with a Western NGO for the 'Brighter Future' Program?

C. CFPA's Internationalization Journey:

Which project marked the first step in CFPA's international exploration under your leadership? What factors influenced the decision to initiate charity projects in Africa, and how did you perceive the relationship between China and Africa at that time?

D. The Uganda Project:

As the donor and initiator of the Uganda 'Brighter Future' Program, what motivated CFPA's decision to engage in refugee assistance, specifically for South Sudanese refugees, at this stage of its development? What were your expectations for the project, and how do you assess its achievements so far? Do you agree that this project represents an important expansion of Chinese HDOs' overseas assistance from development aid and natural disaster relief to refugee assistance and conflict response?

E. Chinese Perspectives on Humanitarianism and Philanthropy:

In a previous interview, you mentioned that philanthropy is rooted in faith. How do you see this faith reflected in traditional Chinese culture? In the Chinese context, how would you define the Chinese humanitarian and philanthropic perspectives, and do you consider humanitarianism and philanthropy to be the same?

F. Chinese Humanitarian Assistance:

Considering the Chinese humanitarian perspective, how do you assess the importance of humanitarian assistance? What are the current goals and priorities of Chinese humanitarian assistance, and how do you envision its future development?

G. Development Trends of Chinese NGOs:

1. Among the Chinese HDOs focusing on refugee issues, CFPA focuses on African refugees while the Common Future Fund focuses on Syrian refugees. Are you aware of any other Chinese HDOs working in this area? Do you think refugees and displaced persons will become a more prominent focus for Chinese HDOs in the future, and what forms of assistance would you advocate?

2. Recognizing that refugee and displacement issues are becoming increasingly complex and protracted global challenges, what contributions do you think Chinese HDOs can make in assisting refugees and displaced persons, and what limitations might they face? What forms of national-level support or cooperation would be needed to facilitate Chinese HDOs' work in this area?

H. Relationship between the State and NGOs:

1. How would you characterize the relationship between Chinese HDOs and the Chinese government? In what ways does the state influence the actions of Chinese HDOs, and conversely, how do Chinese HDOs' actions impact government decision-making? How do you think new policies and developments, such as the establishment of the China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) and the opening of the South-South Cooperation Fund to HDO applications, will shape the future development of Chinese HDOs?

2. Are there any other important issues concerning Chinese humanitarian assistance that you feel should be addressed in this research?

Interview Guide for Paul Dudley Hart, Senior Vice President for Global Partnerships and Alliances at Mercy Corps

Introduction:

This interview guide is part of a doctoral research project examining the humanitarian role of Chinese Humanitarian and Development Organisations (HDOs) in Africa, with a specific focus on the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA) and its 'Brighter Future' Program in Uganda. The purpose of this guide is to facilitate an in-depth interview with Paul Dudley Hart, Senior Vice President for Global Partnerships and Alliances at Mercy Corps, to explore his perspectives on the partnership between Mercy Corps and CFPA, as well as the broader context of Chinese humanitarian engagement in Africa.

The interview will cover the following key themes:

1. Motivations and strategic considerations behind Mercy Corps' partnership with CFPA

2. Comparison of approaches and philosophies between Chinese and Western NGOs

3. Challenges and lessons learned from collaborations between Mercy Corps and CFPA

4. The evolving role of Chinese HDOs in international humanitarian assistance

5. The potential for collaboration and mutual learning between Chinese and Western NGOs in Africa

The interview will be conducted in a semi-structured format, allowing for open-ended discussion while ensuring the key themes are addressed. With Mr. Hart's permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to ensure accurate representation of his responses in the research.

A. Motivations for Partnership:

1. What were the personal and strategic factors that led Mercy Corps to choose CFPA as a partner?

2. How did the relationship between Mercy Corps and CFPA evolve over time, and what were the key milestones in the partnership?

B. Comparison of Chinese and Western NGO Approaches:

1. Based on your experience, what are the main differences and similarities between Chinese and Western NGOs in terms of their philosophies, operational models, and approaches to humanitarian assistance?

2. How have these differences influenced the collaboration between Mercy Corps and CFPA, and what have been the main challenges and opportunities arising from these differences?

C. Collaboration Challenges and Lessons Learned:

1. Can you share some specific examples of successful collaborations between Mercy Corps and CFPA, as well as instances where challenges arose? What lessons were learned from these experiences?

2. How have Mercy Corps and CFPA navigated differences in organisational cultures, decision-making processes, and reporting requirements in the context of their partnership?

D. The Role of Chinese NGOs in International Humanitarian Assistance:

1. How do you see the role of Chinese HDOs in international humanitarian assistance evolving, and what factors do you think will shape their engagement in the future?

2. In what ways can Chinese HDOs contribute to the global humanitarian landscape, and what unique strengths and perspectives do they bring?

E. Potential for Collaboration and Mutual Learning:

1. What are the key areas where Chinese and Western NGOs can learn from each other and collaborate more effectively in the context of humanitarian assistance in Africa?

2. How can partnerships like the one between Mercy Corps and CFPA serve as a model for future cooperation between Chinese and Western NGOs, and what factors are critical for the success of such collaborations?

Closing Remarks:

Thank you for taking the time to share your valuable insights and experiences. Your perspectives will greatly contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the evolving landscape of Chinese humanitarian engagement in Africa and the potential for collaboration between Chinese and Western NGOs.

Interview Guide for Leon Cheng, Mercy Corps' Program Manager for the 'Brighter Future' Program

Introduction:

This interview guide is part of a doctoral research project examining the humanitarian role of Chinese Humanitarian and Development Organisations (HDOs) in Africa, with a specific focus on the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA) and its 'Brighter Future' Program in Uganda. The purpose of this guide is to facilitate an in-depth interview with Leon Cheng, Mercy Corps' Program Manager for the 'Brighter Future' Program, to explore his experiences and perspectives on the implementation of the program, the collaboration between Mercy Corps and CFPA, and the broader context of Chinese humanitarian engagement in Africa.

The interview will cover the following key themes:

1. The role of Chinese identity in working for an international HDO

2. The unique features and challenges of the 'Brighter Future' Program

3. Comparison of approaches and philosophies between Mercy Corps and CFPA

4. The development of Chinese HDOs in the international humanitarian sphere

5. The characteristics and potential of Chinese humanitarian assistance

The interview will be conducted in a semi-structured format, allowing for open-ended discussion while ensuring the key themes are addressed. With Mr. Cheng's permission, the interview will be audio-recorded to ensure accurate representation of his responses in the research.

A. Chinese Identity in an International HDO:

1. How has your Chinese identity influenced your work at Mercy Corps, both in terms of opportunities and challenges?

2. Can you describe Mercy Corps' approach to talent development, particularly for Chinese staff, and how it differs from your previous experiences in Chinese organisations?

B. The 'Brighter Future' Program:

1. What are the key features that distinguish the 'Brighter Future' Program from other Mercy Corps projects you have been involved in, particularly in terms of its collaboration with CFPA?

2. From your perspective, what were the main motivations for CFPA and its donor, Mr. He Daofeng, to support this program, and how do these motivations align with or differ from Mercy Corps' objectives?

C. Comparison of Mercy Corps and CFPA:

1. Based on your experience working with CFPA on the 'Brighter Future' Program, what are the main differences and similarities between Mercy Corps and CFPA in terms of their approaches, operations, and philosophies?

2. In what areas do you think CFPA can learn from Mercy Corps, and conversely, what strengths of Chinese HDOs could be valuable for international HDOs to learn from?

D. Chinese NGOs in the International Humanitarian Sphere:

1. What do you see as the main reasons for the limited engagement of Chinese HDOs in overseas humanitarian projects, and what factors have led to CFPA's involvement in the 'Brighter Future' Program?

2. How do you think the 'Brighter Future' Program, as the first refugee assistance project by a Chinese HDO, reflects the broader trends and potential of Chinese humanitarian engagement in Africa?

E. Chinese Humanitarian Assistance:

1. From your perspective, what are the key characteristics and principles guiding Chinese humanitarian assistance, and how do these compare to Western approaches?

2. How do you envision the future development of Chinese humanitarian assistance, and what role can Chinese HDOs play in shaping this trajectory?

Closing Remarks:

Thank you for sharing your valuable insights and experiences. Your perspectives, as a Chinese national working for an international HDO and directly involved in the 'Brighter Future' Program, will significantly contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the evolving landscape of Chinese humanitarian engagement in Africa and the potential for collaboration between Chinese and Western HDOs.

Appendix 4: Participant Observation Records

Category	Date	Location	Event/Activity	Observations	Reflections/Insights
			Training Activities		
Income Generation Activities (IGA) Training	2018-10-11	Palabek Refugee Settlement	IGA Training on Business Typology and Financial Management	Approximately 15 refugees participated in the training. The participants showed high enthusiasm for learning and actively engaged in discussions.	The training provided refugees with essential business skills. The interactive teaching approach effectively enhanced participants' motivation and engagement.
	2018-10-12	Palabek Refugee Settlement	IGA Training on Business Plan Development	Around 20 refugees attended the training. Participants shared their business ideas and demonstrated good business ideas.	The practical training content facilitated participants' application of knowledge to real scenarios. The refugees' active participation and business ideas indicate their strong desire for self-reliance, which aligns with the goals of the 'Brighter Future' program and reflects the importance of livelihood support in humanitarian aid.
	2018-10-22	Palabek Refugee Settlement	IGA Training on Fundamental Business Skills and Financial Management	Approximately 16 refugees participated. The instructors used their own success stories to illustrate the content.	Case-based teaching enabled refugees to understand business operations more intuitively.
	2018-10-23	Palabek Refugee Settlement	IGA Training Assessment	Around 25 refugees took part in the assessment. Most refugees completed the exam satisfactorily.	The exam results reflect the effectiveness and tailored design of the training program. The assessment helps ensure the quality of the training and its relevance to refugees' needs, which is crucial for the successful implementation of the 'Brighter Future' program.

	Date	Location	Activity	Description	Analysis
Agricultural Training	2018-10-17	Palabek Refugee Settlement	Agricultural Training on Crop Selection and Yield Improvement	Farmers showed strong interest in refugees' farming productivity and food security. The combination of theory and practice facilitates farmers' learning.	Agricultural training is crucial for enhancing refugees' farming productivity and food security. The combination of theory and practice facilitates farmers' learning.
	2018-10-24	Palabek Refugee Settlement	Agricultural Input Distribution	Program team distributed seeds and agricultural tools to the farmers.	The provision of agricultural inputs creates the necessary conditions for farmers to engage in agricultural production. This material support complements the training and reflects the comprehensive approach of the 'Brighter Future' program in addressing refugees' needs.
	2018-10-25	Palabek Refugee Settlement	Agricultural Tool Distribution	Program team distributed hoes and sickles to the farmers.	Distributing agricultural tools provides farmers with essential production materials, indicating that the 'Brighter Future' program is dedicated to supporting the livelihoods of refugees.
	2018-10-29	Palabek Refugee Settlement	On-site Inspection of Crop Growth and Farmer Discussions	The crops were growing well. Farmers were confident about the harvest prospects.	The farmers' anticipation of a good harvest indicates the project's positive impact. The on-site discussions with farmers provide valuable feedback for the program team and help strengthen the partnership between the Chinese HDO and the local community.

Meetings

	Date	Location	Activity	Description	Analysis
Coordination Meetings	2018-10-16	Kitgum	Meeting between 'Brighter Future' Program Team and UNHCR Kitgum Office	The two parties had an in-depth discussion about the program progress and refugee needs. UNHCR provided contextual information and suggestions on camp management.	Communication with UNHCR helps the program team better understand the refugee situation and optimize project design. Building a strong partnership with UNHCR is key to the smooth implementation of the program and reflects the importance of coordination in humanitarian work.
	2018-10-30	Kitgum	Meeting with the Refugee Welfare Council Leader	The refugee leaders introduced the current situation in the camp, Uganda's refugee policies, and their views on the 'Brighter Future' program. They also explained some challenges faced by refugees.	Listening to the voices of refugees contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the actual conditions in the camp and the perception of Chinese aid. The insights from refugee leaders help the program team tailor their interventions

Category	Date	Location	Event	Summary	Analysis
	2018-10-16	Kitgum	Meeting between 'Brighter Future' Program Team, Donor He Daofeng and Paul Dudley Hart from Mercy Corps	Donor He Daofeng and Senior Vice President of Mercy Corps Paul Dudley Hart were briefed on the progress, achievements and challenges of each project. The two parties had a candid discussion about project challenges and suggestions for improvement. The meeting emphasized the importance of sustainability and localization.	and highlight the importance of refugee participation in humanitarian projects. A consensus was reached between both parties on project optimization, setting the direction for future efforts. Sustainability and localization were identified as key elements for the program's long-term development. The collaboration between a Chinese donor and an international NGO in this meeting signifies the growing trend of multi-stakeholder partnerships in humanitarian aid.
Program Review Meetings	2018-10-22	Kitgum	Weekly Meeting of 'Brighter Future' Program Team	Team members reported their work progress and challenges encountered. The group discussed the project obstacles and proposed suggestions for improvement.	Regular team meetings facilitate timely issue identification and problem-solving, thereby improving operational efficiency. The discussions in these meetings also foster a culture of learning and adaptation within the program team, which is essential for navigating the complexities of humanitarian work.
	2018-10-31	Kitgum	Monthly Meeting of 'Brighter Future' Pogram Team	The monthly program progress report was presented, including a summary of achievements and an analysis of gaps.	Monthly reviews enable the systematic assessment of project progress and timely identification and resolution of issues. The gap analysis in these reviews helps the program team identify areas for improvement and adjust their strategies, demonstrating a commitment to accountability and learning.
Field Visits	2018-10-22	Palabek Refugee Settlement	Visit to the Market in Palabek Refugee Settlement	An investigation was conducted into the business conditions of refugees within the camp. Some refugees reported a lack of capital and skills, making their businesses unsustainable.	On-site visits contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the economic conditions and refugee needs in the camp. Refugees generally face challenges of insufficient capital and skills. These findings underscore the importance of livelihood support and market-based interventions in refugee aid, which are key focus areas of the 'Brighter Future' program.

Cash Transfer Activities	2018-10-17	Palabek Refugee Settlement	Verification of Mobile Phone SIM Cards for Cash Transfer	The functionality of mobile phone SIM cards was verified. Beneficiary information was cross-checked to ensure accurate fund disbursement. Some beneficiaries reported difficulties in operating mobile phones.	Project implementation needs to consider the beneficiaries' actual circumstances and needs. The challenges faced by some refugees in using mobile phones highlight the importance of providing technical support and tailoring aid delivery methods to the local context.
	2018-10-29	Palabek Refugee Settlement	Verification of Cash Transfer Disbursement	Cash transfer disbursement was verified. A sample of beneficiaries was selected for examination to ascertain fund utilization patterns and identify existing issues.	Verification of fund disbursement is a crucial component of project monitoring and management. Understanding beneficiaries' fund usage contributes to assessing the project's actual effectiveness. The monitoring process also helps ensure accountability and transparency in the use of donor funds, which is particularly important for Chinese HDOs operating abroad.

Appendix 5: Interview Records

Interviewee Category	Name/Pseudonym	Position/Identity	Interview Date	Interview Location
Program Staff	Sam	CFPA Project Manager	Octorber 15, 2018	Palabek Refugee Settlement
CFPA program Donnor	He Daofeng	Former Executive President of CFPA	Octorber 16, 2018	Kitgum, Uganda
International Non-government Organisation	Paul Dudley Hart	Senior Vice President for Global Partnerships and Alliances at Mercy Corps	Octorber 17, 2018	Kitgum, Uganda
Program Staff	Yang Zeqi	CFPA Project Manager	Octorber 26, 2018	Kitgum, Uganda
Refugee	Refugee Welfare Council Leader		Octorber 30, 2018	Kitgum, Uganda
Refugee	Block leader 1	Program beneficiary in Block 9, Zone 4	November 5, 2018	Palabek Refugee Settlement
Program Manager	Leon	Mercy Corps Program Manager	November 7, 2018	Kitgum, Uganda
Refugee	Block leader 2	Program beneficiary in Block 9, Zone 5B	November 9, 2018	Palabek Refugee Settlement
Refugee	Block leader 3	Program beneficiary in Block 6, Zone 5B	November 12, 2018	Palabek Refugee Settlement
Refugee	Block leader 4	Program beneficiary in Block 11, Zone 5B	November 12, 2018	Palabek Refugee Settlement
Refugee	Block leader 5	Program beneficiary in Block 8, Zone 4	November 13, 2018	Palabek Refugee Settlement
Refugee	Block leader 6	Program beneficiary in Block 10, Zone 4	November 14, 2018	Palabek Refugee Settlement
Refugee	Block leader 7	Program beneficiary in Block 10, Zone 5B	November 15, 2018	Palabek Refugee Settlement
Refugee	Refugee beneficiary	Program beneficiary	November 15, 2018	Palabek Refugee Settlement
Refugee	Refugee beneficiary	Refugee beneficiary	November 18, 2018	Palabek Refugee Settlement
Program Staff	Olivia	CFPA Project Manager	November 20, 2018	Kitgum, Uganda
Program Staff	Yang Zeqi	CFPA Project Manager	November 20, 2018	Kitgum, Uganda
Refugee	Zone Leader	Refugee beneficiary, Zone 4	November 21, 2018	Palabek Refugee Settlement
International Non-government Organisation	Peng Bin	Head of Mercy Corps China	December 12, 2018	Beijing, China
Chinese HDO	Huang Haoming	Vice Chairman of both the Shenzhen Institute of International Public Welfare and the China Association for the Promotion of Social Organisations	December 13, 2018	Beijing, China
Chinese HDO	Wu Haoyin	The Founders of Common Future	December 14, 2018	Beijing, China
Scholar	Dong Qiang	Studies on Chinese public welfare and charity organisations, China Agricultural University	December 17, 2018	Beijing, China
Chinese HDO	Liu Xuanguo	Chinese Red Cross Foundation	December 18, 2018	Beijing, China

Scholar	He Wenping	the Institute of West-Asian and African Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences	December 18, 2018	Beijing, China
Chinese HDO	Wu Peng	China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation	December 21, 2018	Beijing, China
Scholar	Xu Shiling	Beijing Normal University's Institute of Social Governance Research (currently teaching at the Red Cross College of Suzhou University)	December 21, 2018	Beijing, China

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