ARTICLE

Leadership-as-Process and International Relations: Re-examining Agency within China-Africa Relations

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ABSTRACT

This article argues for a re-examination of China's engagement with Africa from a leadership perspective. A leadership-as-process framework of analysis recognises leadership as an interactive, dynamic process and better explains the multi-levelled, multi-dimensional nature of agency within global affairs. The work is based on over three years of desktop research and 117 field work interviews conducted in East Africa with local academics, journalists, economists, Chinese businessmen, East African Community experts and officials, NGO workers, subject area specialists, ruling party and opposition politicians, Government Minister's, Military officers, civil society groups and local market traders. The paper asks how do leadership processes affect African agency within China-Africa relations? And how are African state building and regional integration efforts effected therein? Through a case study of East Africa, it highlights how President Museveni of Uganda manipulated mutuality between partners of a regional initiative and incorporated China into his regional manoeuvrings. President Museveni exemplifies how leadership processes occur across the levels and boundaries that most International Relations theorists take as standard tools of analysis. Museveni demonstrates how individuals can assert influence over domestic constituencies, global powers and regional actors (amongst others), thus appearing as an outstanding example of African agency; albeit one that has failed to enact meaningful, transformative change. China would benefit from a more sophisticated understanding of African leadership, in order to better engage the (problematic) social contracts between citizen and state in Africa and remain a valued foreign partner of first choice.

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INTRODUCTION

This article argues for a re-examination of China's engagement with Africa from a leadership perspective, suggesting that a 'leadership-as-process' approach greatly aids understanding of African agency within contemporary China-Africa relations. Political science generally and International Relations (IR) specifically have struggled to explain how particular states have, at certain times, acted against seemingly more powerful actors in ways that would not be expected or predicted through traditional approaches. Rational choice theories, for example, are criticised for failing to account for the constraining complexities of political life,[2] and seeking to impose rigid analytical methodologies on an entire discipline without accounting for context-specific intrigues.[3] Constructivism, meanwhile, discusses actor's social identities yet under-conceptualises agency and fails to explain *why* particular identities prevail over others. It falls into a state-centricity and empiricist methodology that does not explain why certain structures or relationships dominate at particular moments or time periods.[4]

Adopting a leadership framework of analysis, however, which recognises leadership as an interactive, dynamic *process* better explains the multi-levelled, multi-dimensional nature of agency within global affairs. Olonisakin explains that a leadership-as-process framework, which is the analytical framework adopted for this paper, requires asking particular questions that are useful for academic analysis and policy purposes.[5] These include: what is the context and particular situation being studied, and what are the challenges to finding stability and development in that setting?; Whose concerns are mutually connected within that situation?; Where was an exchange of influence occurring and between whom, and who emerged as a leader?; What was the nature of that leader's power and how did they yield it?; Was that leader effective, and how did the situation change as a result? This approach enriches the study of international politics by better explaining some of the phenomenon that traditional IR has struggled with.

International Relations' eternal debate as to the pre-eminence of structure vis-à-vis agency is enhanced by conceptualising leadership as: an actor (the leader) *asserting influence* against, and exchanging influence with, another actor (the follower) within an interactive process that determines the effectiveness of the leading actor. By recognising that these actors - the leaders - appear at different levels of analysis and that their assertion of influence can be cross-cutting across those levels allows for a richer, more sophisticated understanding of African agency within the structural constraints of contemporary global systems and challenges. Individuals can assert influence against other individuals, states (including those seemingly more powerful), regional organisations, or all of these; and the reverse is true in all cases.

Understanding how and why an actor is able to successfully assert influence over another actor, despite being a seemingly weaker partner, greatly enriches our understanding of China-Africa relations as well as International Relations more generally. By stepping out of a traditional institutional framework

[2] Petracca, Mark P (1991), The rational choice approach to politics: a challenge to democratic theory, The review of politics 53, no. 2: 289-319., p.289

[3] Walt, Stephen M (1999), Rigor or rigor mortis? Rational choice and security studies, International security 23, no. 4: 5-48., p.5

[4] Bieler, Andreas, and Adam David Morton (2008), The deficits of discourse in IPE: Turning base metal into gold?, International Studies Quarterly 52, no. 1: 103-128. P.105-106

[5] Olonisakin, F. (2017), Towards Reconceptualising Leadership for Sustainable Peace, Journal or Leadership and Developing Societies, Vol 2, No 1, pp.1-30

and discussion of state action, leadership theory identifies agency occurring outside of the usual normative and material considerations proffered by others. The paper asks how do leadership processes affect African agency within China-Africa relations? And how are African state building and regional integration efforts effected therein? It discusses both the benefits of a leadership-as-process framework for analysing regional security dynamics in Africa, as well as an empirical case study utilising that framework.

Following this introduction, the paper first highlights the shortcomings of political science and IR scholarship generally in explaining China-Africa relations, especially in relation to African agency. Section two outlines the methodology of the study and how a leadership analysis can better explain global, regional and domestic contexts - and the relationships between them - and help us understand the nature of African agency within contemporary global politics. Section three is a case study of China's relationship with the East African Community (EAC) and the assertion of influence by President Museveni of Uganda across various levels against numerous actors. It shows Museveni successfully manipulating *mutuality* between partners of a regional initiative and incorporating China into his regional manoeuvrings during the 2010s as the regional security landscape shifted to notable extents. Finally, the conclusion highlights the utility of adopting a leadership-as-process framework of analysis for understanding African agency within this East African case study and China-Africa relations generally. President Museveni exemplifies how leadership processes occur across the levels and boundaries that most International Relations theorists take as standard tools of analysis. Museveni demonstrates how individuals are able to assert influence over domestic

constituencies, global powers and regional actors (amongst others), thus appearing as an outstanding example of African agency; albeit one that has failed to enact meaningful, transformative change.

Shortcomings of traditional approaches

International Relations (IR) theory's travails in explaining the African context is well known. Cornelissen, Cheru and Shaw succinctly explain:

> 'The continent appears to sit uncomfortably with the discipline's main paradigms, neither displaying the epistemological traditions, nor fitting neatly into the ideal-form typologies that define the different scholarly approaches'.[6]

Classical Realism and Neo-Realism has an unapologetically inherent and explicit focus on Great Powers and nation-states.[7] English Society scholars, meanwhile, see states acting in accordance to the rules of the game: 'If you were new to the game, like the decolonised states in the last century, then you simply had to consult the legal rulebook and learn how to play.'[8] This section explains how this current political science and IR framed literature has misunderstood or failed to explain the nature of African agency generally and within China-Africa scholarship more specifically.

Structure vs Agency in IR

Mainstream IR is a competing world of structures, institutions and states within material and normative

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[6] Cornelissen, Scarlett, Cheru, Fantu and Shaw, Timothy (2012), 'Introduction: Africa and international relations in the 21st century: Still Challenging Theory?", in Cornelissen, Scarlett, Cheru, Fantu and Shaw, Timothy (2012), eds. Africa and international relations in the 21st century (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp.1-20, p.2

[7] Mearsheimer, J.J (2001), The tragedy of great power politics (New York: W.W. Norton & Company), p.1

[8] Dunne, Tim (2001), Sociological investigations: Instrumental, legitimist and coercive interpretations of international society, Millennium 30, no. 1: 67-91, p.89

frameworks, where 'scholars have debated the relative weight of agency and structure in shaping the course of international events'.[9]   *Structure* is the material and normative socio-economic-politico constraints that enable or limit the choice of actions; with *agency* being the capability to make choices and act freely according to one's own wishes.[10] IR scholars are typically seeking to identify and analyse broad, generalised patterns of social interaction, so there has been a preponderance of emphasising the importance of structure (whereas Foreign Policy Analysis, for example, tends to highlight the role of agency due to its focus on specific events).[11]

The actor of primary interest here has been the nation state, which traditionally is seen as a unitary actor with personalised characteristics and capabilities. Since Kenneth Waltz recognition and discussion of the essential structure of international politics being 'anarchy' – that there is no overarching world power or policeman capable of enforcing laws on participant states – material capacity of states have been the key discussion point within IR.[12] An explanation of the role of individual actors, or agency of 'lesser' players is often lacking.   Africa, meanwhile, 'is generally under-represented…(and) usually appears in IR scholarship as a case of delinquency – as the site of conflict, suffering and disorder' that fails to comply with the Westphalian state ideal or have a meaningful impact on the world economy.[13]   Any role for

individuals – i.e. potentially leaders capable of enacting meaningful change – is largely absent.

Yet Greenstein, long ago, understood that any non-social scientist has an instinctive appreciation that – of course – individuals are important in politics. But political scientists are trained to understand and emphasise the constraining or enabling role of institutional factors, party identification, shifting external factors and so forth, at the expense of understanding the importance of individual actors.[14] Peele later noted that mainstream political science has 'remained sceptical about the concept of leadership and has retained a lingering antipathy to addressing the phenomenon of leadership.' This was mainly due to its historic discomfort with interpretive phenomena as well as an assumption that a democratic polity allows for rational choice and therefore 'following of leaders' is not particularly sophisticated.[15] McDermott and Hatemi recognise that 'IR has ignored the causal role and influence of individual actors, assuming that such leaders remain primarily constrained by the overarching political structures within which they operate.'[16]

Yet this missing leadership element has hindered our understanding of the African context in particular. In environments where any institutional constraints that may exist elsewhere are generally lacking, understanding the role of leadership becomes of

[9] Hayes, Jarrod. (2018), 'Agency and Structure in Foreign Policy Analysis'. In Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics.

[10] Barker, Chris (2005), Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice (London: Sage), p. 448

[11] Hayes, Jarrod. (2018), 'Agency and Structure in Foreign Policy Analysis'. In Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics.

[12] Waltz, Kenneth (1979), Theory of international politics (Addison-Webley)

[13] Cornelissen, Scarlett, Cheru, Fantu and Shaw, Timothy (2012), 'Introduction: Africa and international relations in the 21st century: Still Challenging Theory?", in Cornelissen,

Scarlett, Cheru, Fantu and Shaw, Timothy (2012), eds. Africa and international relations in the 21st century (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp.1-20, p.2

[14] Greenstein, Fred I, (1967), The impact of personality on politics: An attempt to clear away underbrush." American Political Science Review 61, no. 3: 629-641.

[15] Peele, Gillian (2005), Leadership and politics: a case for a closer relationship?, Leadership 1, no. 2: 187-204., p.190 (with reference to Gaffney, John. "Imagined relationships: Political leadership in contemporary democracies." Parliamentary Affairs 54, no. 1 (2001): 120-133.)

[16] McDermott, Rose, and Peter K. Hatemi (2014), The study of international politics in the neurobiological revolution: A review of leadership and political violence, Millennium 43, no. 1: 92-123; p.93

critical importance to any meaningful analysis of processes and phenomenon within domestic, regional and international politics. As John Kotter notes, 'the whole purpose of systems and structures is to help normal people who behave in normal ways to complete routine jobs successfully day after day...Leadership is different.'[17]

Missing leadership analysis

International Relations has not utilised this leadership concept in any sustained, meaningful way. Hegemonic Stability Theory, for example, argues that a dominant world power helps engender a more stable global system. This hegemon is willing and able to shoulder the burden of (what might be considered) 'leading' the global order. But the discussions and debates within the broad spectrum of scholar's who prescribe to the theory, retain an state based focus without unpacking and interrogating the role of individual leaders and leadership process in an academically robust way.[18] Joseph Nye's famous explanation of 'soft power', meanwhile, sought to include the importance of non-state actors (such as private banks in relation to international debt), ultimately Nye retained an assumption of a state as unitary actor of primary importance within a largely zero-sum game of international politics, albeit one with an increasing variety of modes of influence beyond the militaristic assumptions of previous eras.[19] When Nye did, indeed, engage overtly and directly with leadership discussions within his 2008 'The Powers to Lead', he provided a useful overview of the

history of leadership as an academic discipline and rightfully acknowledged that 'the leader need not be a single individual, and the goals may be derived from the group, but leadership is the power to orient and mobilize others for a purpose'.[20] He also engaged the issue of defining good-bad and effective-ineffective leadership, by explaining that 'good' can be both a moral judgement or an assessment of effectiveness of any given leader, but that the distinction between these has to be clear (e.g. it is possible to be a morally bad leader but also effective in getting things done).[21] Nye did not, however, utilise such ideas to fully engage with international relations, in theory or in real world practice, as he explicitly remained 'interested in leadership that involves relationships of power within groups' rather than in providing a framework of analysis that recognises leadership occurring across the global, regional and national levels of interest to IR. He also focused heavily on US companies such as Federal Express and General Electric and a great many US politicians, as well as reverting to fairly typical cases of interest such as Stalin, Ghandi, Winston Churchill, Alan Greenspan, Richard Branson, and so forth (with the occasional mention of African autocrats). This belies and reinforces both an inherent Eurocentrism that is decidedly prominent within both IR and leadership studies, as well as a person-based approach that has dominated leadership studies (discussed further below).

In fact, more serious engagement with the role and importance of individual actors and the phenomenon of leadership would better enable Political Science and, in particular, Classical International Relations Theory move away from this Eurocentric bias that

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[17] Kotter, John P, (2001), What leaders really do, Harvard business review 79, no. 11

[18] Cohen, Benjamin (2008), International Political Economy: An Intellectual History (Princeton University Press) p. 77; Ikenberry, G. John (1998), Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Persistence of American Postwar Ordee, International Security, 23 (3), pp. 43–78

[19] Nye, Joseph (1990), "Soft power", Foreign policy, (80), pp. 153-171, p.167

[20] Nye, Joseph (2008), The powers to lead (Oxford University Press), p.19

[21] Ibid, p.146-148

continues to plague the discipline. Post-colonial theory and literature has a central, unresolved debate over the role and nature of agency for the colonial and post-colonial subject.[22] Capan notes that even liberals and constructivists overlook how 'the story of the expansion of international society is also the story of the dissolution of empires, anticolonial struggles and the process of juridico-political decolonisation'.[23] Olonisakin and Tofa argue further that African agency is also actively co-opted by extra-African actors in policy spaces. The Responsibility to Protect doctrine (R2P), for example, has a clear origin in ECOWAS/ECOMOG intervention in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s yet was later re-packaged as a noble UN-led reimagining of humanitarian intervention, without due acknowledgement of or involvement from the African actors that had led the way.[24] Although the leadership analysis discussed below and throughout this paper does not explicitly seek to label itself as a 'post-colonial' study, it does enter into and add value to these debates by utilising a tool of analysis that better showcases the agency and assertions of influence of lesser-studied African actors within international politics.

African agency and China-Africa relations

This need to better articulate and re-insert African agency into general academic discourse has, more recently, also been noted within the steadily expanding China-Africa literature. Valuable and commendable though these efforts are, they often fall short of fully articulating the multi-layered possibilities of exerting agency. Shaw argues there are an increasing number of (potential) developmental states in Africa who are able to resist or utilise both South Africa and the BRICS countries generally.[25] Brown discusses the complex variations in African agency by recognising four broad categories exercised by: the African Union and regional organisations; nation states; state-based actors on behalf of states; and sub- or non-state actors.[26] Mohan and Lampert likewise offer a more sophisticated, nuanced understanding of agency within China-Africa relations. They recognise how the Angolan government has been active in sourcing Chinese capital for reconstruction projects, and that a 'node that sits within the state but is only connected to clandestine elements within it' has been active in shaping the relationship between Angola's GRN/Sonangol Imobiliaria and the equally murky Chinese International Fund (CIF). They also cite local African entrepreneurs in Ghana, Nigeria and elsewhere actively encouraging Chinese to source goods or work in companies.[27] Taylor highlights how traditional state-based analyses downplay the crucial roles of non-sate actors. He notes that 'private (and occasionally public) corporations, diasporic communities, sportsmen and women, musical collaboration and criminal networks' all play distinct, meaningful roles in shaping Africa's international relations outside of state-to-state interactions.[28]

[22] Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. and Tiffin, H (2002), 'Introduction', in Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. and Tiffin, H. eds., (2006), The post-colonial studies reader. Taylor & Francis. p.9; Slemon, S. (2002), The scramble for post-colonialism. In De-Scribing Empire (pp. 27-44) (Routledge), p.22

[23] Capan, Z.G. (2017), Decolonising International Relations?. Third World Quarterly, 38(1), p. 2

[24] Olonisakin, Funmi and Tofa, Moses (2020), 'Appropriating African agency in international relations', in Munyi, Mwambari, and Ylönen (eds), Beyond History, pp. 13–31

[25] Shaw, Timothy M (2015), African agency? Africa, South Africa and the BRICS, International Politics 52, no. 2: 255-268.

[26] Brown, William (2012), A question of agency: Africa in international politics, Third World Quarterly 33, no. 10: pp.1891-1894

[27] Mohan, Giles, and Ben Lampert (2013), Negotiating china: reinserting African agency into China–Africa relations, African Affairs 112, no. 446, pp.98-104

[28] Taylor, Ian (2010), The international relations of sub-Saharan Africa (Bloomsbury Publishing USA), p.8

These discussions remain situated, however, within an International Relations discourse whose key concern, admirably, is to search for examples of African agents acting against other key players rather than being mere passive actors (as traditional analyses and common stereotypes often assume). But these different forms of agency typically fail to appreciate the multi-tiered interactions between them: governments act against governments, murky shadow networks deal with murky shadow networks, and locals utilise opportunities afforded by their counterparts. These analyses, although useful, do not appreciate the importance of seeing leadership as a distinct theoretical, conceptual and practical construct which demands thoughtful analysis. Brown, referring to Taylor's work, does recognise that the personalities of particular African leaders have been key to shaping the continent's relationship with external actors (such as the historical relationship between Ghadafi and Museveni in the AUs efforts to resist NATOs bombing of Libya).[29] The focus, however, is on the need to understand the long, complex histories of structural (colonial) challenges that have encouraged particular leaders to gain power, rather than calling for the need to centralise *leadership* processes as an essential analytical tool.

The Leadership-as-process approach

There is a general understanding within policy and academia that African leaders have, for whatever reasons, consistently failed to deliver the continent's potential to its peoples. Yet it is clear that *leadership* has not been seen or utilised as an analytical construct for understanding Africa's development, security and geo-political challenges – serious leadership scholarship has largely remained the preserve of business (as a sector and academic discipline), along

with psychology and sociology. Leadership scholar James McGregor Burns, writing in 1978, offers a quote that seemingly holds true:

> 'If we know all too much about our leaders, we know far too little about *leadership*. We fail to grasp the essence of leadership that is relevant to the modern age and hence we cannot agree even on the standards by which to measure, recruit, and reject it'.[30]

This section details the leadership-as-process framework of analysis that is used for the paper's case study. This framework provides a useful tool for interrogating African agency and China-Africa relations generally as well as being applicable to – and potentially enriching - wider IR scholarship focussed on other regions and areas.

Understanding leadership

Shaw and Chazan's work in 1982 - a rare example of an effort to discuss African leadership within an international relations framework - argues that the early independence years provided a 'golden age of African diplomacy' when the heroic leaders of the struggle gained international acclaim, but that 'leaders no longer appear to be more important than the structures in which they operate… not that leadership is now irrelevant; it is just less salient.'[31]

This paper challenges this assertion: institutions in Africa have not provided the structural constraints and relative importance that the authors assumed.

As stated earlier, this paper defines leadership as: an actor (the leader) *asserting influence* against, and exchanging influence with, another actor (the follower) within an interactive process that determine

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[29] Brown, A question of agency, pp.1901-1902

[30] Burns, James MacGrego (1978; 2012 edition) Leadership, (Openroad Media, New York), p.20

[31] Shaw, Timothy M., and Naomi Chazan (1982), The limits of leadership: Africa in contemporary world politics." International Journal 37, no. 4: 543-554. P.554

the effectiveness of the leading actor. This is done for a degree of conceptual clarity within this academic discussion; but it is not a fundamental necessity to arrive to and agree upon such a definition of leadership, which Keith Grint has recognised as notoriously difficult to do.[32] Grint's four groupings of different *perspectives* on, or approaches to, leadership are more useful and significant.[33]

Focus on the (i) *person* emphasises the importance of an individual's traits (appearance, charisma, personality, intelligence etc.); but ignores the fact that the same individual will not necessarily lead effectively in different contexts and situations. A (ii) *position*-based approach, which international politics relies upon and China's respect for sovereignty doctrine explicitly champions, ignores that leaders in positions of authority often become mere managers, facilitators or even exploiters, which does not constitute leadership in the intellectually rigorous sense. A (iii) *results*-centred analysis focusses on the outcomes of a leader's actions: success is measured against outputs such as GDP growth, elections held, the number of women attending a series of meetings, and so forth, whilst ignoring the importance of means and methods. These perspectives, therefore, have crucial consequences for both academia and policy: how one conceptualises leadership determines the entry point of analysis and, thus, areas of investigation and modes of intervention.

This paper argues that the (iv) *process-based approach* is better suited as an analytical framework for critically examining complex social interactions within a given

situation and understanding how and why particular outcomes were experienced (or not). It enhances the theoretical discussions on agency by recognising how an "exchange of influence" occurs across a range of social contexts and geopolitical spaces. Within a leadership analysis, the level of analysis chosen usually 'corresponds to whether leadership effectiveness is conceptualized at the individual, dyadic, group, or organizational level.'[34] However, appreciating that multiple levels of analysis 'can be viewed in combination or simultaneously,' recognises how individuals can influence events and actors at other levels.[35] Individual leaders can influence departments within organisations; just as they can influence state behaviour within an international system. Leaders have attributes, presence and agency in their ability to influence others to pursue particular action: such leaders can be individuals, states, regional bodies and actors, organisations and even ideas. Each of these is potentially able to influence the other in discernible ways.

Providing an analytical framework

Process-based leadership - as applied here - accepts the maxim that 'situations make leaders.' As noted by leadership scholar Albert Murphy, who helped transform leadership studies from a psychological to sociological discipline, 'Leadership does not reside in a person. It is a function of the whole situation. The situation calls for certain types of action… The word "process" calls attention to the interplay of factors in a

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[32] Stogdill, R. M. (1974), Handbook of leadership: A survey of theory and research (New York, NY, US: Free Press); Northouse, P. G (2018), Leadership: Theory and practice (Sage publications), p.2

[33] Grint, K (2010), Leadership: A very short introduction (Vol. 237) (Oxford University Press), pp.1-15

[34] Derue, D. Scott, Jennifer D. Nahrgang, N. E. D. Wellman, and Stephen E. Humphrey (2011), Trait and behavioral theories of leadership: An integration and meta-analytic test of their relative validity, Personnel psychology 64, no. 1: 7-52, p.9-11

[35] Yammarino, Francis J., Shelley D. Dionne, Jae Uk Chun, and Fred Dansereau (2005), Leadership and levels of analysis: A state-of-the-science review, The leadership quarterly 16, no. 6: 879-919, p.882

total situation.'[36] Process-based leadership recognises leadership as an interactive process between leaders and followers, where influence is asserted and accepted in the pursuit of mutually shared goals within a distinct context. This conceptualisation and approach to leadership demands asking a series of questions that create a framework of analysis that is usable across contexts. As stated in the introduction, these are: what is the context and particular situation being studied, and what are the challenges to finding stability and development in that setting?; Whose concerns are mutually connected within that situation?; Where was an exchange of influence occurring and between whom, and who emerged as a leader?; What was the nature of that leader's power and how did they yield it?; Was that leader effective, and how did the situation change as a result?

With this approach, a leader's building of mutuality with followers becomes essential for influencing the follower's behavior. The process-based approach is informed by, firstly, recognizing the shared goals by parties linked by mutual concerns, interests and/or experiences. As noted by Allio, 'the task at hand and the context seem to dictate when and how leadership appears. The leadership dynamic thus depends on the situation.'[37] Secondly, leader emergence in this situation is determined by successful assertion of, and exchange of, influence. An emergent leader needs to be seen as 'competent in the group's central task', i.e. capable of solving the follower's perceived problems, as well as being seen as a member of that group.[38] And thirdly, factors that enable a sustaining of

mutuality: these might include a combination of the leader's style as well as stable bases of power (discussed below). As articulated by Mbiatem:

> 'the emergence of leaders is contingent on the perceptions or needs of the followers as they fundamentally constitute the prevailing situation… the emergence and re-emergence of leaders are largely determined by the situation, competences and the relationship with followers.'[39]

The process-based leadership approach does not preclude the other perspectives: individual traits are important; position-based power can be used to assert influence; and results certainly matter. But the process-based approach rigorously assesses the importance of these factors within a given context. Following this approach and assessing these factors uncover that *change* is an inevitable occurrence within a leadership process. Hence, a leader's moment of influence is typically fleeting, 'because each situation demands certain types of actions and an individual may not consistently provide relevance across all situations.'[40] Whether that change is positive or negative is far from pre-determined, but a new situation is always created within which 'there is always an opportunity for new ideas and new leaders to assert influence in response to the new situation.'[41]

The below effort therefore utilizes the leadership-as-process framework of analysis whilst also incorporating various useful leadership concepts from a range of authors, including notions of transformative versus transactional leadership which is part of the leader's style. The relationship between power and influence, and the social sources of that

[36] Murphy, Albert (1941) 'A study of the leadership process,' American Sociological Review, pp. 674-687.

[37] Allio, Robert J (2013), Leaders and leadership–many theories, but what advice is reliable?, Strategy & Leadership, p.5

[38] EP Hollander (2013), Emergent Leadership and Social Influence, in Pierce, Jon Lepley, and John W. Newstrom (2013) Leaders & the leadership process (McGraw-Hill/Irwin), pp.133-136, p.134

[39] Mbiatem, A.P (2016), Leadership Emergence and Style: Fidel Castro of Cuba. Leadership & Developing Societies, 1(1), p.61

[40] Olonisakin, F. (2017), Towards Reconceptualising Leadership for Sustainable Peace, Journal or Leadership and Developing Societies, Vol 2, No 1, pp.1-30, p.22

[41] Ibid, p.26

power, are centrally important to process-based leadership. French and Raven's typologies of the social bases of power - reward, coercive, legitimate, expert and referent - are particularly useful in a process-based analysis and discussed throughout the case study.[42] To be an effective leader one would ideally be able to draw on each of these bases to assert influence, but more common and more realistic would be to have varying degrees of each (with some perhaps extremely limited). Burns calls for a more 'sophisticated understanding of power, and of the often far more consequential exercise of mutual persuasion, exchange, elevation, and transformation - in short, of leadership.'[43] Actor agency occurs through their being able to mobilise various resources - personal, institutional, political, psychological - to mobilise followers to pursue their and the leaders' goals by choice. With naked power the follower has no choice: there is no competing option to pursue. Burns recognises that genuinely *transformational leadership* 'occurs when one or more persons *engage* with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality,' whereby the purpose of both leader and follower 'might have started out as separate but related…become fused'.[44] Institutional or systematic analyses of politics and/or international relations, cannot directly calculate or explain these 'influences on, or the influences of, particular leaders at particular times in particular circumstances,' whereby we see leaders exercising influence and effecting change to a greater extent than standard material and normative frameworks of understanding can explain.[45]

The case study below applies the process-based approach to President of Museveni's role within the East African Community and Uganda's relationship with the increasingly prominent China. The process-based framework requires assessing what were the mutually shared goals between leaders and followers within a given situation, the nature of the relationship forged between that (emergent) leader and the (concerned) community in that given situation, and whether an emergent leader was *effective* in delivering those goals and why. This offers a more insightful analysis than a rather non-descript and morally loaded claim of a leader being good or bad: unlike Joseph Nye, this paper is not interested in the moral aspect of being a 'good' or 'bad' leader, but is only interested in effectiveness or ineffectiveness in terms of outcomes.

The case study is largely based on research undertaken during 2012 to 2016, but includes subsequent follow-up research. This included over three years of desktop research as well as archival research at the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), Tanzania, and the Centre for the Basic Research and Makerere University, Uganda. Four separate field work visits to Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda took place, as well as to South Africa during the 2015 FOCAC VI conference. Local gatekeepers – mostly journalists, NGO workers and academics - were used to introduce the researcher to a cross section of local society actors, with a snowball methodology used in the field to garner a wide range of viewpoints. A total of one hundred and seventeen semi-structured field work interviews were undertaken with local academics, journalists, economists, Chinese businessmen, EAC experts and officials, NGO workers, subject area specialists, ruling party and opposition politicians, Government Minister's, Military officers, civil society groups and local market traders. The transcript data was logged

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[42] French, J. and Raven, B. (1959), The Bases of Social Power, in Pierce and Newstrom, Leaders and the Leadership Process, pp. 146-153

[43] Ibid, p.37

[44] Ibid , p.43

[45] Ibid , p.75

and analysed against the series of leadership-as-process framework questions noted above. The leadership-as-process approach here acts as both a framework of analysis and theory-building methodology that uncovers the complex, multifaceted nature of agency within international affairs whereby actors can assert influence over seemingly more powerful actors. Individual agents are able to transcend their institutional and conceptual nation-state boundaries to lead potentially transformative agendas – even if, as in the Museveni example below, that moment is not successfully grasped.

China, East Africa and President Museveni of Uganda

The discussion of intra-regional politics within East African Community (EAC) below provides a leadership-as-process case study analysis of a leadership moment that occurred between 2010-2015, in relation to China's role in regional integration and mega-infrastructure construction. It focuses on a national figure whose leadership moment transcended inter-personal relations, instead occurring amongst state actors in a regional and global context. Mainstream IR scholarship has often struggled to incorporate Uganda into its conceptual frameworks: its historic duality of general peace in the south amidst violent turmoil in the north, and donor-led democratic development with a steady authoritarian turn, have belied the usual categorisations.[46] Reiterating here again what has been outlined above, the leadership-as-process approach does not take standard IR tools as its entry point, but asks: what is the context and particular situation being studied, and what is the nature of the

prevailing security or developmental challenge experienced in that setting?; Whose concerns (and interests) are mutually connected within that situation?; Where can we observe an influence relationship and emergent leadership in response to these concerns?; What was the nature of the emergent leader's power and how did they yield it?; How effective was this exercise of leadership and how did the situation change as a result?

The case study shows that the context of Chinese interest and EAC integration led to the emergence of Uganda's President Museveni as a leader of the "Coalition of the Willing" initiative in which China would play a key role: a forceful, determined push on regional integration projects between Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda that excluded the more reluctant Tanzania and Burundi. Museveni manipulated the shared mutual interests of a range of actors to successfully incorporate China into Uganda's and East Africa's political economy, to utilise Chinese presence into his geo-strategic manoeuvring against regional rivals. Changes to the regional context, however, now see Museveni's effectiveness and regional influence potentially waning, as regional partners become more suspicious of his intentions and hostile to his agenda.

East African Context: Mutuality and rivalry within integration agenda

What are East Africa's defining security and development challenges, where are the shared interests between citizens and leaders, and where does China's role play into those dynamics? The global level post-2000 is fluctuating across a variety of (interlinked) sectors. The rise of China plays a crucial role in shaping the geopolitical landscape, as does a systematic failure to successfully tackle contemporary security issues such as terrorism, climate change,

[46] Shaw, Timothy M. and Mbabazi, Pamela K. (2007), 'Two Ugandas and a "Liberal Peace"? Lessons from Uganda about Conflict and Development at the Start of a New Century, in The Liberal Peace and Post-War Reconstruction (pp. 77-88). Routledge.

intra-state war and human security issues.[47] The East African context shows some typical characteristics of the wider African experience.[48] The lack of viable and settled social contract between state and society has seen vested local interests and ill-suited foreign frameworks failing to create a stable nation state capable of facilitating sustainable far-reaching economic growth.[49] Peaceful transitions between national rulers or parties have resultantly been lacking or non-existent.[50]

Greater East Africa also has a uniquely brutal and bloody history of genocide, inter-continental warfare, government sponsored proxy forces, civil wars and secessionist movements.[51] Yet the East African Community (EAC) is one of the better-progressed African Regional Economic Communities and with a unique espoused end-goal: the political federation of

its member states. After oil was confirmed in Uganda in 2006, East Africa was also seen as a potential new frontier for the sector, as Kenyan deposits were found along with exciting gas discoveries in Tanzania.[52]

These discoveries and regional progress combined with China appearing as by far the most important, wealthy and Africa-focussed rising power within the shifting geo-political landscape: in November 2011, China signed a Framework Agreement directly with the EAC to boost Chinese trade and investment, the first agreement of its kind between China and an African REC.[53] China's Africa strategy has pursuit of natural resources, gaining UN allies and entering markets at its core, which combines nicely with its capacity to fund and construct mega-infrastructure, all of which are available in East Africa. Within this unstable, challenging and complex environment, mutuality is strongly felt regionally in relation to EAC integration. Citizens, states and the international community all appear supportive of the EAC agenda in principle.[54] A potential leader who espouses moves towards this ambitious project, therefore, is likely to find followers and supporters from a broad spectrum of stakeholders.

The context in Uganda has been dominated by the omnipresence of President Museveni and his National Resistance Movement (NRM) hybrid regime since his guerrilla 'Bush War' victory of 1986. Museveni operates as a master-tactician and deal maker within a yet to fully stabilise state-building framework, where competing institutions and individuals battle for power, position and recognition. Museveni relies on

[47] Climate Change Still Seen as the Top Global Threat, but Cyberattacks a Rising Concern, Pew Research Centre, 10/02/19, available https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/02/10/climate-change-still-seen-as-the-top-global-threat-but-cyberattacks-a-rising-concern/ (accessed 01/06/19); Gray, C. H. (2013). Postmodern war: the new politics of conflict. Routledge.

[48] Fortune, F., Ismail, O., & Stephen, M. (2015), Rethinking Youth, Livelihoods, and Fragility in West Africa. World Bank; Vines, A. (2013), A decade of African peace and security architecture. International Affairs, 89(1), 89-109; Young, C. (2012). The postcolonial state in Africa: Fifty years of independence, 1960–2010. University of Wisconsin Pres; Dodoo, V., & Donkoh, W. (2013), Nationality and the Pan-African State. In Pan-Africanism, and the Politics of African Citizenship and Identity (pp. 163-183). Routledge

[49] Walsh, Barney (2015), Human Security in East Africa: The EACs illusive quest for inclusive citizenship, Strategic Review for Southern Africa, 37: 1, p.87; Chikwanha, A B (2012), "Governance, Citizenship, and Conflicts in the East African Community", Africa Peace and Conflict Journal, Vol 5, No 1, pp. 14-27

[50] Warioba, J. S. (2016), Political Succession in East Africa, in Peter, C. M., & Kopsieker, F. (Eds.). (2006). Political succession in East Africa: In search for a limited leadership (pp.1-13). Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Kenya Office; Booth, D., Cooksey, B., Golooba-Mutebi, F., & Kanyinga, K. (2014), East African Prospects. An update on the political economy of Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. ODI report. London: May

[51] Woodward, Peter (2013), Crisis in the Horn of Africa (London: I. B. Taurus & Co Ltd.)

[52] Augé, Benjamin Oil and Gas in Eastern Africa: Current Developments and Future Perspectives , French Institute of International Relations (Ifri) and OCP Policy Center, March 2015

[53] 'America plots to counter China in EAC with new pact,' Business Daily (Nairobi), 20/05/12

[54] Walsh, Human Security, p.81

French and Raven's reward power, 'defined as power whose basis is the ability to reward', and coercive power, stemming from the expectation that the recipient will be punished in some way if they fail to conform to the influence attempt, to cajole and force reliance upon the NRM.[55] Cash handouts to citizens and MPs have helped Museveni successfully 'win' several elections and change the constitution twice to enable his life-long rule, whilst NRM subordinates and allies are kept on-board through a 'patronage empire' within outwardly appearing democratic institutions.[56] Meanwhile, coercive force is demonstrated through the Ugandan People's Defence Force (UPDF) army, an increasingly militarised police force, and non-state militia gangs and thugs who are all utilised to quell public opposition to the regime when needed. Museveni also periodically reminds his elite inner circle of the leverage he retains over them: Prominent Bush War allies and key regime players have been arrested throughout Museveni's rule.[57]

China's respect for sovereignty and non-interference policy shows an unequivocal position-based conceptualization of leadership that emphasizes the importance of Heads of State, yet the reality of their engagement with the Ugandan (and African) context is more complex. Chinese *methods of influence* have played into Uganda's domestic state-building dynamics by being willing and able to build the pillars of state-hood: during the 2010's China revamped Parliament and built new Prime Minister and Presidential offices, along with the national sports stadium in 1997.[58] China, whether intentionally or not, also feeds into the various competing forces and institutions within the conflictual state building efforts underway. MPs visit China on fact finding and education missions; the UPDF is offered increasing number of training slots with the Chinese People's Liberation Army; NRM party exchanges take place with the Communist Party of China aside from state/government efforts; the NRM elite inner circle and 'King-Makers' are the gatekeepers used to win big Chinese contracts; and increasing numbers of local traders travel to and source goods from China.[59]

Museveni has to balance the interests of all of these actors and institutions in order to maintain power. Competing assertions of influence occur between China and Museveni which the President seems cognizant of as he guards against encroachment onto his terrain. China is seeking to influence key actors and constituencies that are capable of further Beijing's interests, beyond the official Head of State relationship; at the same time that Museveni seeks to keep these domestic players on side for his own purposes. Museveni blocked a Chinese Banking consortium from buying Ugandan MPs debt from them, as personal indebtedness to Museveni and the NRM is key to his reward power for influencing Parliament.[60] In 2014 he dealt forcefully with his Prime Minister, Amama Mbabazi, who had seemingly been selling himself as Museveni's 'heir-apparent' to Beijing whilst in his Foreign Minister role: Mbabazi

[55] French and Raven, Bases of Social Power, pp. 147-148

[56] Conroy-Krutz, Jeffrey and Logan, Carolyn (2012), Museveni and the 2011 Ugandan Election: Did the Money Matter?, The Journal of Modern African Studies, 50; Uganda MPs vote to scrap presidential age limit, BBC News, 20/12/17; Eight Opposition MPs return age limit cash, Kampala), New Vision25/10/17

[57] Reuss, A., & Titeca, K. (2017), When revolutionaries grow old: the Museveni babies and the slow death of the liberation. Third World Quarterly, 38(10), 2347-2366; Kayihura's journey from most feared man to prisoner, The East African (Nairobi), 25/08/18

[58] Eriasa Mukiibi (2013), China's money in Uganda: Where has it gone?, Daily Monitor (Kampala), 04/05/13; Obwona et al (2007), China-Africa Economic Relations: The Case of Uganda, Economic Policy Research Center, September 2007

[59] Various interviews conducted with author in Uganda, with government Ministers, UPDF members, local journalist and local market traders, July-September 2014

[60] Money problems in Uganda's Parliament, Daily Monitor (Kampala), 02/11/14; Uganda: Museveni Says No to MPs' Loan Bailout Deal, Observer, 23/07/13

was sacked and booted out of the NRM party, whilst a Chinese consortium's bid to build Uganda's oil refinery was removed from the bidding process (Mbabazi was the assumed local 'front' for the bid).[61] With the rising China increasing their presence across all of East Africa, however, it could not be automatically assumed that Museveni and land-locked Uganda would be key players in the emerging relationship. The far wealthier neighbour Kenya, China's long-historical partner Tanzania, or even the Rwandan emerging 'developmental state' model might be thought as more logical target points for Beijing. Museveni's regional ambitions, therefore, would need to shift and adapt to this new historical era.

China and Museveni's Regional Processes

How did Museveni offer potential solutions to shared mutual interests and emerge as a leader within East African dynamics? What bases of power did Museveni utilise in order to lead a regional agenda and incorporate China therein? As noted by Salancik and Pfeffer 'an individual's or subgroup's power is never absolute and derives ultimately from the context of the situation'.[62] In a changing situation, 'critical contingencies facing the organization may change. When they do, it is reasonable to expect that the power of individuals and subgroups will change in turn.'[63] The leadership-as-process framework sees that during this change, someone may appear to offer ideas which allowed mutually shared goals to be

realised and a transformational moment to occur (or not). Regarding a specific project or time period where China plays a role, this powerful individual may or may not be a Head of State: it could also be a sub-group such as a particular Ministry or authoritative body with which China has had to deal; or an individual organiser/organisation of local resistance against a Chinese project (examples of local protest in Ghana, for example, may be worthy of study[64]).

Nonetheless, within China-Africa relations the position-based power affording Presidents is clearly significant and Museveni is of worthy interest in the Ugandan and East African context. Museveni enjoys legitimate power regionally and globally, *stemming from an internalised norm or value which compels the recipient to act in a way they feel they 'ought to'*,[65] as the Head of State in Uganda. This is especially relevant considering China's respect for sovereignty principle (although the need to remind Beijing of his position and capability to act against them is evident in the Mbabazi example above). And Museveni's age and longevity also play this role within the East African Community. Justice Kanyeihamba, a well-known former Ugandan High Court Judge, noted in interview: 'his age matters, in an African context to say he is our senior, it's very important to anybody.'[66] Museveni's ideas have shaped the integration process significantly: he successfully pushed for the inclusion

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[61] Source with close links to UPDF, interview with author, July 2014; see also Refinery contractor's military links raise eyebrows, Oil in Uganda, 23/02/15; Obore, Chris (2014) NRM delegates fooled as both Mbabazi and Museveni win, Daily Monitor (Kampala), 21/12/14

[62] Salancik, Gerals and Pfeffer, Jeffret, Who Gets Power – And How They Hold on to It: A Strategic-Contingency Model of Power, Organisational Dynamics, Volume 5, Issue 3, Winter 1977, pp. 3-21, p.8

[63] Salancik and Pfeffer, Who Gets Power, p.16

[64] Ghana: Two labour unions lead protests against alleged poor working conditions at CHEC and Labadi Beach Hotel, Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, 28/05/17, available https://www.business-humanrights.org/en/ghana-two-labour-unions-lead-protests-against-alleged-poor-working-conditions-at-chec-and-labadi-beach-hotel (accessed 30/01/18); How a lone Ghanaian cartoonist stood up to China, Quartz Africa, 25/11/17, available https://qz.com/africa/1137709/how-a-lone-ghanaian-cartoonist-stood-up-to-china/ (accessed 30/01/18)

[65] French and Raven, Bases of Social Power, pp. 148-149

[66] Justice Kanyeihamba, Retired Uganda Supreme Court Judge, interview with author, July 2014

of Rwanda and Burundi in 2007 when Kenya and Tanzania initially resisted; and then drove the 2010 'Fast-Tack' political federation agenda, with a collective effort to push forward with political federation as something of a pre-requisite for further integration rather than its end point. Tanzania was outspokenly hesitant (at least in part due to suspicion over Museveni's ambitions and authoritarian tendencies[67]), at the same time as China was coincidently becoming much more available to fund integration-dependent projects.[68] Museveni's influence on pushing to federate East Africa seemed to be waning: the supposed 'Fast-Track' agreement was not turning into action.

Kotter notes that 'achieving grand visions always requires an occasional burst of energy… by satisfying basic human needs for achievement, a sense of belonging, recognition, self-esteem and feeling of control over one's life, and the ability to live up to one's ideals'.[69] Ugandan mega-project constructions all had major Chinese funding and Ugandan Ministers began stating publicly that China was their preferred partner for infrastructure projects, whilst Museveni deliberately bought Chinese companies into Uganda's fledgling oil sector.[70] With similar Chinese presence appearing across East Africa, Museveni saw fertile ground for manufacturing mutuality between

regional partners, China and other global powers, leading to regional geo-political power plays that no other leader has been able to replicate. China's penchant for infrastructure construction, ambition to gain geo-political allies, and approval of integrated markets in which to sell their goods, meant their mutual interests could be emphasized and aligned with available partners. The "Coalition of the Willing" (CoW) between Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda, agreed to push forward with regional integration and mega-infrastructure construction without waiting for agreement from or inclusion of Tanzania and Burundi.

Museveni first seduced regional partners into favouring projects preferred by himself, by convincing them of the diplomatic and economic investment advantages of creating linkages to and through Uganda rather than other options.[71] His reward and coercive power were again utilised. Museveni is able to 'reward' partners with completed, regionally linked projects. Uganda's oil pipeline project, to be part financed by China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) along with other oil partners, was being used to cement ties with Kenya (the supposed regional hegemon) and link to South Sudan who wanted alternatives to exporting their oil through Khartoum. He pushed Kenya's President Uhuru to link Uganda's oil refinery to Kenya's infrastructure agenda and focus on the wider Northern Corridor EAC Coalition of the Willing agenda. The $11 billion East African Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) became the flagship project of EAC-China relations and the CoW, which and would link Mombasa to Kigali through Kampala. This successfully made Uganda centrally important to the

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[67] Ugandan journalist and EAC expert, interview with author, Aug 2014; EALA representative of Tanzania, interview with author, Feb 2015

[68] Onyango-Obbo, Charoles (2013), Kick Dar out of EAC and watch Juba suffer, The East African (Nairobi), 12/10/13; Tanzania should not slow down EAC integration, Standard Digital Media, 07/01/09, available https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/1144003382/tanzania-should-not-slow-down-eac-integration (accessed 05/05/17)

[69] Kotter, what leaders really do, p.60

[70] Uganda turns east: Chinese money will build infrastructure says Museveni, Financial Times, 21/10/14; Uganda Wants Chinese-Built Infrastructure Paid for With Oil, Bloomburg, 09/07/13; Museveni: I've never received oil bribes, Daily Monitor (Kampala), 13/10/11

[71] ex-Director of Uganda External Security Organisation, interview with author, July 2014; Tanzanian representative EALA, interview with author, January 2015

completion of those plans, with Museveni being applauded in the houses of the East African Legislative Assembly for having arranged agreements in person with Chinese President Xi Jinping on the side-lines of the 2013 BRICS Summit.[72] This shifted Kenya's original ambitions for a 'northward drift' with planned mega-construction linkages to Ethiopia and Sudan that would have geo-strategically disadvantaged Uganda.[73]

Museveni's public and personal support for Kenyatta during his ICC indictment was certainly helpful in this regard.[74] Uganda's coercive power was also displayed through their 2014 intervention in South Sudan, which was yet to join EAC at the time. This was at least partly a strategic decision to remind partners - including the Chinese who have massive investment in Sudan and South Sudan - of Uganda's centrally important regional role, and therefore the need to include Ugandan projects in their initiatives.[75] These plans created much publicity, excitement, and progress amongst the Kenya-Uganda-Rwanda CoW partners, along with public spats and obvious hostility between them and Tanzania (Burundi were also critical but Tanzania more outspokenly so). Some even feared that this northern vs southern corridor split could lead to the collapse of the current EAC project.[76]

Museveni successfully centralised his and Uganda's role into the unfurling dynamics in a way that normative and material conditions would not have foreseen. China was not the domineering global power pressuring its weak African partners or the friendly fair-weather friend offering win-win partnerships for all, and Kenya was neither the wealthy regional hegemon or peaceful democratic partner incorporating others into its agenda. Museveni, again, was able to assert influence successfully over the regional dynamics by presenting himself as capable of utilising global actors' presence to the betterment of all.

Ineffective leadership and lack of transformation

To what extent did Museveni succeed in achieving the aspired goals and effect meaningful, transformative change? How has the situation in East Africa, and its relationship with China, changed as a result? Museveni utilized two further bases of social power during the CoW initiative, but to a more limited extent. His *referent power, which* has its basis in the identification of recipient with the influencer or 'feeling of oneness',[77] occurs through his periodic standing as regionally progressive and certainly his international standing as a protector of Western security interests. Burundi's willingness to commit to the AMISOM mission in Somalia was at least in part them trying to replicate Uganda's standing within the Western donor community, for example.[78] However, at the geo-political level it is not clear that regional partners are somehow drawn towards or admiring of Museveni due to his personal characteristics beyond the rewards and opportunities he may afford them (although likely charming and personable in times

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[72] EALA Hansard 29/05/13
[73] Akampurira, Davis (2014) Lapsset is key in deepening regional integration, Observer, 10/08/14; Will Uganda's oil wealth change LAPSSET into LAPSSEUT?, Indian Ocean Observatory, 31/08/14
[74] Various interviews with author, with local journalists, NRM politicians and EAC conflict early warning specialists. See also Kenya says Chinese firm wins first tender for Lamu port project, Reuters, 11/04/13
[75] Ugandan and East African, NRM MP, interview with author, Kampala, 10/08/14
[76] Is 'coalition of the willing' the beginning of the end for EAC?, The East African (Nairobi), 09/11/13

French and Raven, Bases of Social Power, pp. 149-150
[78] Fisher, J. (2012), Managing donor perceptions: Contextualizing Uganda's 2007 intervention in Somalia. African Affairs, 111(444), 404-423.

gone by). His *expert power*, derived from a recipient's perception of the influencer as knowledgeable in a particular field, sees his regional manoeuvrings and geo-political skills clearly playing a role in gathering momentum within the CoW. Yet these are skills of manipulation that are more noticeable in short-term tactical moves than in long term strategic visioning. Self-interested and cynical manoeuvres, with over-reliance on reward and coercive power ultimately led to the CoWs unravelling.

Having seduced partners and centralized Uganda's importance in regional projects, in 2015 Museveni maneuvered further and disrupted plans: he annoyed Rwanda's President Kagame by saying Uganda's SGR link will go to Juba, South Sudan, rather than on to Kigali; and embarrassed Kenya's President Uhuru by agreeing to build Uganda's oil pipeline to Tanga in Tanzania rather than Lamu in Kenya (as outlined in a recently signed MoU).[79] These oil pipeline and SGR routes were likely chosen to please particular domestic fronts along with international partner preferences at the expense of regional partner priorities (Total, a partner of CNOOC and key financier of the pipeline for example, was known to prefer the Tanzanian option[80]). Following several years of fanfare and publicity around the northern corridor projects, the rapidity of these shifts from the champion of the CoW alignment was rather surprising.

Regional transformation has not occurred and Museveni's regional ambitions were not attained. Rwanda's annoyance at prioritising SGR links to South Sudan ultimately led them to formally abandon the Northern Corridor initiative, instead saying they would link their SGR through Burundi to Tanzania. This has contributed to financing issues. China is increasingly reluctant to fund further links unless a clear, agreed, regional initiative and commitment between Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda is evident. China recognises the lack of genuine mutuality between themselves and the EAC partners, resulting in Kenya struggling to finance SGR links beyond Nairobi. A Ugandan SGR has now been delayed and may even be abandoned. Meanwhile, Kenyan suspicions over a Uganda-Tanzania conspiracy in sideling their influence means they are again looking for linkages with Ethiopia.[81] Having been a well-publicised, controversial, serious and far-reaching integration drive in EAC, the CoW initiative and EAC mega-projects have become muddled, disjointed, problematic and with unclear outcomes.

Conger notes that failures in a leaders' perception of themselves can lead to failure of their espoused vision, whereby 'failure to accurately assess and obtain the necessary resources for the vision's accomplishment' is often noticeable.[82] Relying too much on 'impression management' can ultimately be deceptive to an audience (followers) when the substance does not support it.[83] Museveni's manipulation of mutuality at the global, regional and domestic levels, proved largely short lived. His capacity to garner resources and deliver his own parts of the collective effort did not match the image he had presented of himself as being centrally important. He

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[79] What's going on? Cracks appear in oil company partnership as pipeline saga drags on, Oil in Uganda, 28/12/15; Museveni plays a wicked poker hand on Tanga, Africa Energy Intelligence, Uganda Oil N°756, 27/10/2015
[80] Ugandan oil sector expert, interview with author, Kampala, 02/09/14; Total brandishes Tanzanian card to thwart Lamu pipeline scheme, Africa Energy Intelligence, Uganda Oil N°752, 01/09/2015

[81] Kenya to terminate railway at Kisumu after Rwanda exit, The East African (Nairobi), 18/05/16; Is 'coalition of the willing' the beginning of the end for EAC?, The East African (Nairobi), 09/11/13
[82] Conger, Jay A (1990), The dark side of leadership, Organizational dynamics 19, no. 2: 44-55. (reader ch 14 r 41 p383), p.45
[83] Ibid p.51

has been extremely effective in achieving his primary goal: maintenance of domestic power in Uganda, but his struggles at managing competing power structures have proven counterproductive and he has definitively failed to enact transformative change domestically. The patronage and cynical policy offers used to keep key players and constituencies on board are becoming increasingly difficult to finance, as government coffers become strained.[84] His resultant over-reliance on coercive power, which does not constitute leadership as it removes choice from the follower, is often the final recourse to those unable to influence through other means.   Domestically, therefore, Museveni has been unable to 'show how the goals and values of the follower, the group, the leader, and the organization are in basic agreement.'[85]

He has not been an effective, transformational leader. His regional 'leadership moment', likewise and relatedly, failed to provide genuine transformational change. He has been more of a Burnsian 'power wielder' rather than leader, whose motives 'may or may not coincide with what the respondent wants done… if they must make a choice between satisfying their own purposes and satisfying respondents needs, they will choose the former.'[86] Although his regional importance was maintained, complex local dynamics and international partner priorities meant he was unable to deliver on the espoused regional mega-projects. He ultimately remains someone other partners deem untrustworthy in pushing for political federation. This was a transactional not transformational leadership moment, whereby 'a

leadership act took place, but it was not one that binds leader and follower together in a mutual and continuing pursuit of a higher purpose.'[87]

The regional portrait has therefore changed noticeably since the early 2010s. Those years started with an increasingly assertive regional integration agenda, linked to exciting new oil finds largely bankrolled by a willing and able China. Museveni was a centrally important emergent leader of a regional initiative that no longer allowed itself to be delayed by a more reluctant Tanzania. Museveni's reading of the regional environment and incorporating the resurgent China into his politicking showcases his continued legitimacy and importance as a key regional actor.

The nature, timing and specifics of these moves throughout 2010s would not have been possible without China's new role. Museveni, as a master manipulator of mutuality, had always kept the US and West on board despite various issues.[88] He incorporated China into his regional machinations, with ruthless and cynical brinkmanship that continually shifted the fluctuating regional dynamics. The decade's end, however, saw actors wary of Museveni's motivations, stalled projects, and a collapsed sense of collective purpose, increasing scepticism over oil benefits and a far more reluctant China. Mutuality around regional integration has dissipated. The expectation that a leader's moment is typically fleeting as situations change and demand new responses is very evident in East Africa.

Cooperation may occur over certain projects between specific Chinese companies/actors and African leaders at particular points in time. But overarching long-term regional strategizing, with a clear role for

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[84] Reuss and Titeca, When revolutionaries grow old, pp. 2361-2362; Golooba-Mutebi, F., & Hickey, S. (2016). The master of institutional multiplicity? The shifting politics of regime survival, state-building and democratisation in Museveni's Uganda. Journal of Eastern African Studies, 10(4), 601-618

[85] Bass, Bernard M., and Ronald E. Riggio (2006), Transformational leadership (Psychology press), p. 41

[86] Burns, Leadership, p.45

[87] Ibid, p.57

[88] Epstein, H. (2017), Another Fine Mess: America, Uganda and the War on Terror. Columbia Global Reports

China and in pursuit of the end goal of political federation, is severally lacking. This changing situation saw Tanzania's new President Magufuli potentially emerge as a new leader of the EAC initiative. Appearing more as a 'bull-dozer' than his predecessor Kikwete, he actively forced Tanzania into EAC projects and disrupted any Northern corridor drift or power shift.[89] Museveni is increasingly recognised as a regional annoyance more than visionary.[90] The only consistency is the continued underlying state-society relationship issues and lack of clear development strategy. China has fed into the complex state-building trajectories underway in Uganda and East Africa but has not played any meaningful role in better establishing social contracts between Africans and their leaders.

This leadership analysis helps explain the temporal nature of the assertion of influence which other theories and frameworks struggle to provide. Once the moment of opportunity passed, failure can seem to have been inevitable: of course, Museveni, focussed on his personal pursuit of power, eventually reneged and was unable to fulfil his promises, letting down his partners. Yet that is a misunderstanding of the leadership process that took place. Museveni, with his regional partners surely suspecting his self-interested ambitions, was still able to assert influence by offering a potentially transformative vision of integrated projects and a region capable of enacting rapid, sustained progress. Eventually exposed as a manipulation of mutuality rather than genuinely transformative, that vision nonetheless provided an

agentic moment that was palpable and far-reaching even if transitory.

Conclusion: The importance of leadership

This paper has shown the importance of understanding and utilising leadership theory in analysing China-Africa relations. By understanding different perspectives on what constitutes leadership – using Grint's entry points of person-, position-, results or process- based approaches, as articulated by Olonisakin – it argued that leadership-as-process offers a useful analytical framework for interrogating African agency within International Relations generally and China-Africa relations.

Applying this approach to a case study of East Africa, it highlighted how President Museveni of Uganda's leadership showcased a powerful African agency capable of utilising and manipulating the increasing Chinese presence, oil discoveries, East African integration and continued structural insecurity to cajole and co-opt regional partners into pursuing projects that suited Museveni's own interests. President Museveni is an outstanding example of African agency, demonstrating how leadership processes occur across a variety of levels and boundaries. As an individual, he has asserted influence over domestic constituencies, global powers and regional actors. Ultimately, however, Museveni proved ineffective in grasping the transformative moment that appeared. His regional politicking angered Coalition of the Willing partners and he was unable to efficiently balance competing domestic and regional forces to enact meaningful change.

African 'leaders' have received notable scholarly attention and media publicity, invariably for negative reasons. African *leadership* processes have not. However progressive or transformative the espoused

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[89] Uganda refocuses on metre gauge rail as Kenya delays SGR, The East African (Nairobi), 06/01/18; China plan raises hope for East African SGR project, The East African (Nairobi), 04/06/17
[90] Focus on Kagame, Museveni in simmering diplomatic cold war, The East African (Nairobi), 24/03/18;

constitutional frameworks of African state building and regional integration efforts may be, they lack the well-established legally institutionalised pressure that encourages the behaviours necessary to enact transformation. Individual leaders are therefore still able to impose their personalities, presence and agenda onto their national and regional contexts; and to skilfully incorporate and utilise global powers like China for their own ends. Moving analysis to a process-based understanding of leadership will better explain the role and nature of African agency within China-Africa relations. This approach uses key concepts such as *emergence*, *mutuality* and *effectiveness* that help explain Africa's complex challenges and opportunities within the relationship, as well as the temporary – but nonetheless potentially important – assertions of influence that occur.

China, likewise, would benefit from a more sophisticated understanding of African leadership. The current position-based approach, which assumes Presidents and key state actors have the will and capacity to deliver on agreed projects, calls into question the long-term viability of Chinese strategic regional engagement. For all the excitement and histrionics around China's (re)engagement with Africa and the region discussed here, consistently stalled or questionable projects are likely to be tolerable for all parties involved for a limited time span. In contexts where social contracts between citizen and state are unresolved at best and in open conflict at worst, it is unclear how such relationships will serve a long-term purpose to the African populace or make them see China as the valued foreign partner of first-choice.

Despite East Africa being part of China's increasingly publicised One-Belt-One-Road global initiative, its mineral wealth is not necessarily proving to be as exciting as once was assumed.[91] As other non-Western powers also increase their interest and presence in East Africa and the wider continent - notably Turkey, the Gulf states, Japan and Russia in particular - China confronts a changed situation to the one it found and moved into at the turn of the millennium. In June 2019 Magufuli indefinitely suspended construction of Tanzania's Bagamoyo mega-port (to be part financed by China) declaring 'those investors are coming with tough conditions that can only be accepted by mad people'.[92]

Although China's ultimate role in the region is yet to be determined – projects remain ongoing, relationships in flux, and development outcomes as yet unknown – to date, their engagement has not restructured any of the deep-rooted development and state building challenges faced in Africa. It is not at all clear that this is, indeed, a key aspirational goal of China and there is no indication as of yet that any such shift in understanding or policy is likely to occur. This may well have long term problematic impacts on Africa's development trajectory. The ultimate long-term outcome of China's role in regional progress remains unclear and undetermined at the time of writing. It now requires a new leader to emerge within the changed situation to truly harness the potential that Chinese interest in East Africa brings. To both exercise and sustain agency over a sustained period, such a leader should be cognisant of the mutually shared interests of a range of key actors and - one would hope - possess bases of power capable of

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[91] Patey, L. (2017) Whatever happened to East Africa's oil boom?, African Arguments, 23/08/17, available https://africanarguments.org/2017/08/23/whatever-happened-to-east-africas-oil-boom/ (accessed 25/09/18)

[92] Magufuli Suspends Bagamoyo Port Construction, East Africa Post, 15/06/19, available https://www.eastafricapost.com/news/tanzania/magufuli-suspends-bagamoyo-port-construction/ (accessed 20/08/18)

influencing followers towards a genuinely transformative agenda.

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