

When China becomes supreme leader in Africa

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The Ninth Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation was held in Beijing from September 4 to 6. It brought together almost all African countries around Xi Jinping , who detailed his African policy.

Dependency relationship

The shock announcement is obviously the 50 billion dollars intended for the countries of the African continent. A sum certainly significant but to be put into perspective. Spread over three years, it is broken down into 30 billion in loans, 10 billion in investments by private actors and 10 billion in development aid.

In his opening speech, Xi Jinping tried to respond to the many criticisms about the asymmetry of relations between Africa and the Middle Kingdom. To this end, he announced measures such as the elimination of customs duties on agricultural exports from the 33 poorest African countries and the creation of a million jobs thanks to investments by Chinese companies. The same ones that overexploit African workers in insalubrious working conditions.

These announcements are far from changing the unbalanced relations between the Asian giant and Africa, and they are similar in every way to a North-South relationship resulting in imports of raw materials and exports of manufactured products.

Source of inspiration for dictators

What has gone less unnoticed - yet stated as the primary objective in Xi Jinping's speech - is the promotion of its governance as an alternative to the Western model. This desire is accompanied by a Chinese presence that goes beyond the strictly economic domain. Thus, China plays a major role in the UN peacekeeping policy, as the largest financial contributor and second in terms of the number of soldiers in the various UN missions. It has also strengthened its political weight in recent years through the launch of training institutes for executives of African political parties and senior state officials. The idea defended is that democracy is first and foremost economic development, made possible by the party's domination of state structures, whether civilian or military. This political model is also taught in military training where senior African officers note that the Chinese army is at the service not of the government but of the dominant party. A policy, as one might expect, that is not displeasing to many of the dictators who are rampant on the continent.

One can also legitimately ask the question of the relevance of the need for this type of training, whether it is Chinese or Western. Indeed, it reflects a condescending vision and a lack of knowledge of the rich political culture of Africa, nourished in particular by decades of struggle for its liberation.

Paul Martial

P.S.

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- Paul Martial is a correspondent for International Viewpoint. He is editor of *Afriques en Lutte* and a member of the Fourth International in France.