

Thesis proposal

Title of the research project: France, China and Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa from 1950s to 2001: the question of cooperation in international relations.

Joint supervision: yes (name/surname) /no

Joint PhD (cotutelle): yes (name/surname) /no

Thesis supervisor: Pr. Laurent WARLOUZET.

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Institution: Sorbonne Université.

Doctoral school (N°+name): ED 188 Histoire moderne et contemporaine
(Early modern and modern history)

Research laboratory: Sorbonne, identity, international relations and civilisation of Europe (SIRICE, UMR 8138).

Name of the laboratory director: Pr. Marie-Pierre REY.

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ECOLE DOCTORALE - NOTICE AND VALIDATION :

Full approval of the research project.

Pr. Reynald ABAD
Director of the Doctoral School « Histoire moderne et contemporaine » (ED 188)



Sorbonne Université/China Scholarship Council program 2021

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Keywords: France, China, Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa, sino-african relations, international cooperation.

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Institution: Sorbonne University

Doctoral school (N°+name): ED II (n° 0188) Modern and contemporary history.

Research laboratory: Sorbonne, identity, international relations and civilisation of Europe (SIRICE, Europe (SIRICE, UMR 8138).

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Name of the laboratory director: Marie-Pierre REY

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Subject description (2 pages max):

1) Study context

Nowadays, everybody is convinced that the Sino-African, Sino-French and Franco-African relationships are major topics. However, the trilateral relations between China, France and francophone Africa have seldom been examined, especially before 2001, when China became member of the WTO, a milestone considered as the emergence of this country as a major global trade power. However, it is important to examine the origins of the current interest of China in francophone Africa, and it is impossible to ignore the strong linkages that the former colonies maintained with their former imperial power. The trilateral relationships between China, France,

and francophone Africa was visible in several economic projects implemented since the 1960s, even a few years after the independence (for example with a project of sugar factory in Mali). Beyond the economic realm, the Chinese presence in francophone Africa was also visible from the cultural, political and geopolitical points of view. In China, the academic research on Franco-Chinese relations is mainly focused on the period of the new millennium. There are few studies on Sino-African relations during the Cold War, and even less on interactions with France in Africa. French historians have already done abundant work on the African policy of France, but not on its interaction with China.

2) Details of the proposal

The aim of the project is to study the Sino-African relations (both from the economic and from the geopolitical points of view) from the French decolonization in Africa to the admission of China in WTO in 2001. The French view and reaction to the Chinese presence in its 'pré carré' should attract the most attention. Among the many countries in francophone Africa, the PhD student will select those where the Chinese interest seems to be the most vivid, notably Guinea, Mali and Congo Brazzaville. Other case-studies can be added later on depending of the findings in the archives. The influence of broader dynamics such as the Cold war, economic crisis, and European integration (as France's African policy was partly influenced by European policies) should also be taken into account.

The PhD is expected to last 4 years. The PhD student should apply the following historiographical methods to bring contribution to the field:

1. Investigation of the existing documents, both published and archival materials, including:
 - the existing bibliographical resources which relates to the subject. The important works on Cold War history, African history, Sino-French history should be consulted. The history of Chinese and French politics in Africa and their possible interaction in the francophone sub-saharan African countries is ought to be insightful.
 - the French archives, which are extremely rich on Franco-African relations and the general history of Africa. These documents would be indispensable for a better understanding of the French view of Sino-African interactions.
 - the published material or original Chinese archives, which are of great value to the present research. The PhD student is expected to be able to discover the relevant Chinese documents which are rarely exploited by Francophone scholars.
2. Specific research techniques like the relevant selection of case study are strongly recommended in order to extract generalities out from the carefully chosen countries in the designated area of Africa. Besides, the comparison between Sino-African and Franco-African relations is helpful to portray the question of cooperation in international history. Oral history can also be performed, to record the experience of important witnesses.

3. Several innovations are expected in the final demonstration of the thesis. The role of Francophone sub-saharan Africa should not be neglected. The emphasis of the question of cooperation in international relations could be used for reference in the current day's policy making for both French and Chinese government.

3) References

- Aurégan, Xavier, *Géopolitique de la Chine en Côte d'Ivoire*, Riveneuve éditions, 2016, 382p.
- Bat, Jean-Pierre, *Le syndrome Foccart. La politique française en Afrique, de 1959 à nos jours*, 2012.
- Charles L. Glaser, *Rational theory of international politics: the logic of competition and cooperation*, Princeton (N.J.), Princeton university press, 2010, 314p.
- David H. Shinn; Joshua Eisenman, *China and Africa: a century of engagement*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012, 524p.
- Lucas, Pony, La problématique de la Coopération Sino-Camerounaise face à la Zone F CFA: Enjeux et Perspectives, in *European Scientific Journal*, Apr 2019, Vol. 15, Issue 10, pp.27-42.
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- Robin, Thierry, *Le Coq face au Dragon: deux décennies de relations économiques franco-chinoises de la fin de la seconde guerre mondiale au milieu des années 1960*, Droz, 2013, 594p.
- Wintgens, Sophie; Aurégan, Xavier, *Les dynamiques de la Chine en Afrique et en Amérique latine: enjeux, défis et perspectives*, Louvain-la-Neuve/Académia-l'Harmattan, 2019, 324p.
- Tao, You, *Une étude comparative entre les stratégies africaines de la Chine et de la France dans le 21e siècle*, Beijing, Editions des sciences sociales de la Chine, 2015, 207p.
- Turpin, Frédéric, *De Gaulle, Pompidou et l'Afrique, 1958-1974*, les Indes savantes, 2010, 335p.

4°) Profile of the Applicant (skills/diploma...)

This research project should be carried out by somebody who has the following three skills:

- 1) a proven experience of conducting a successful research in history of international relations, proven by a master's degree in this field.
- 2) an ability to work on documents written in French and in Chinese, and to read the literature written in English.
- 3) a knowledge of the francophone African countries.

Contacts:

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