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**L'Afrique et les défis du XXIème siècle**  
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إفريقيا وتحديات القرن الواحد والعشرين

**Africa-China Relations: Understanding the Discourse**

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China-Africa relations have come under scrutiny recently, with more articles and books having been written on it in the last ten years than in the preceding fifty years all put together. Despite the generous attention, however, the nature and outcome of China-Africa relations are far from clear. It is, in fact, as though the more one reads about China in Africa, the less one knows about it. The empirical evidence seems to lend support to the twin claims that China is looting Africa and that it is developing the continent. The massive literature and seemingly contradictory perspectives about Africa-China relations cry out for a disciplinary framework, disciplinary in both senses of that term. What are the divergent perspectives about Afro-Chinese relations? How did they emerge? What are the driving forces behind them? Is the sustained discourse about Afro-Chinese relations justifiable on empirical grounds? And is it a good thing for Africa in any case? These questions are addressed in this essay from the perspective of social constructivism.