



Wits University Graduate School of  
Public and Development Management

# *Afrocentrism vs Sinocentrism*

## **Scenarios for 2020**

**A work in progress**

**FIC**

**7<sup>th</sup> November 2007**

**Koffi M. Kouakou  
Wits University, P&DM**

## Rationale

- **Overwhelming and Everlasting emphasis on economic growth of China and the figures that underpinned it.**
- **Another view/world of China and Africa is possible through cultural values and traditions – **a new society.****
- **The relationship between China and Africa, its *actual* meanings and implications.**

## Rationale...

- **My speculations centered around the *centrisms* and the coming extremes .**
- ***Afrocentrism vs Sinocentrism:*  
Scenarios for 2020**
- **The *probable* meanings and implications for Africa, China and the rest of the world.**



Wits University Graduate School of  
Public and Development Management

# *Definitions*

**Definitions. Concepts. Theories.  
Testing an hypothesis.**



Wits University Graduate School of  
Public and Development Management

# *Definitions*

## **Definitions**

### **Two Centrisms :**

**Meaning. Culture. Traditions. Values.  
Geography. Economics. Biology.**

## **First Centrism :**

### **Afrocentrism or Afrocentricity**

**The theory and practice of African people being at the centre of their own reality. That Africans no longer operate from the margins and the periphery of their world. And that they see themselves as accountable agents of their destinies.**

***Molefe Kete Ansante***

## **Second Centrism :**

### **Sinocentrism or Sinocentricity**

**The theory and practice of Chinese being at the centre of their own reality. That Chinese no longer operate from the margins and the periphery of their world. And that they see themselves as accountable agents of their destinies.**

***Reference. Molefe Kete Ansante***

## **Definitions. Concepts. Theories.**

- **Both people are active participants of their own liberations.**
- **Afrocentrism and Sinocentrism as radical transformational waves – political, social and more so economic.**
- **Don't define themselves against any other Centrisms...so far.**
- **Testing some hypotheses.**





Wits University Graduate School of  
Public and Development Management

# *Definitions*

**Definitions. Concepts. Theories.**

- **Afrocentric view**
- **Sinocentric view**
- **Biological view**



Wits University Graduate School of  
Public and Development Management

# *Definitions*

**Definitions. Concepts. Theories.**

**The Long view**

***View Centrisms Scenarios***

***The idea of the next society***

**Testing a hypothesis.  
The essence of the inquiry**

***The idea of the next society***

**Will the synergy, confluence or  
symbiosis of China and Africa spawn  
another entity with new values and  
traditions that can redefine a new  
society with social, traditional,  
technological and economic  
development?**

**And what possible scenarios would  
emerge from this synergy in addition  
to the official “economic” futures  
much discussed today?**

## Combination of methodologies to analyse and test the hypothesis.

- **Storytelling** to examine the metaphors of the *Centrisms*: (i) Middle Way or Third Way; (ii) Balanced; (iii) Equilibrium; (iv) Duality or binary logic; (v) Tao and Confucianism; and (vi) Ubuntu.
- **Scenario Thinking** to scientifically examine the issue at hand: modified Delphi technique, environmental scanning and emerging issues analysis.
- **Biological systems** analysis metaphor.

## **The next society:**

- **What's the Africa-China story?**
- **Who R Africa and China together?**
- **Why R they synergising?**
- **What's the future of such entity, such society?**

## The Next big story?

**AfroChina**

*or*

**ChinAfrica**

**ChIndia**

**What is the Africa-China story?**

**What will the be the power of  
such narrative.**

**Who will tell it?**

**Will it be a simple or a complex  
story?**

***Crisis and Opportunity (in Africa)***

***A man and the tigers.***

- **Storytelling as value transmitters**
- **Storytelling as knowledge sharing**
- **Storytelling as leadership and management tool**
- **Scenario planning as visioning into the future**
- **Scenario as future thinking - myths of the future**

Context: **History. Ancient times. Biblical and others. Usage**

What the a story? **Architecture; the logic; fiction; non-fiction**

- **Beginning and end. Protagonists. The Power of narrative. Plot. Action. Climax. Emotions. Resolution. Meaning. Sense-making. Non-sense. Resonance. Memory. Binary logic. Complex logic. Symbol. Symbolism. Symbology. Allegorical. ...ssshhh!... Vision. Idea of the future. Tomorrow.**
- **Types of stories: Simple and complex stories. Holliwood. Bollywood. Nollywood. Kolliwood. Capewood.**



## **Definition:**

- **Scenarios are myths of the future**
- **Writing scenarios and telling the story of Africa-China relationship helps us spin myths of the future – our future**
- **Africa-China Scenarios for 2020**

- Scenario **thinking** as an instrument for strategy, public policy, management leadership communication
- Its implications for strategy, public policy and leadership about the understanding of the Africa-China relationship - the coming of these two **Centrisms**

- Pierre Wack – Short (hi)story
- Pierre Wack at Shell ('70s)
- **Pierre Wack Test** (*Clem Sunter*)
- Turning scenarios into action;  
changing mindsets of decision  
makers.



**Pierre Wack pioneered  
scenario thinking**



Wits University Graduate School of  
Public and Development Management

# *Methodology*

## **Pierre Wack** **(1922-1997)**





Wits University Graduate School of  
Public and Development Management

# *Methodology*

**Clem Sunter**



## **Clem Sunter's Scenario Matrix**

- **Four (4) quadrants:**
- **Uncertainty and certainty (horizontal)**
- **Control and absence of control (vertical)**
- **High Road and Low Road Middle of the Road, and Toss Up scenarios**
- **The Mind of the Fox**
- **The World and ChinAfrica**

## What is a scenario?

- “For a **scenario learning** to take place, a set of **alternative stories** or **plots** must be prepared... **Three** or **four scenarios** allow decision makers to compare and contrast how a particular future.”
- ...generate an **'Aha!'** ... and leads to **strategic insights** and **mental maps** of the future.



## What is a scenario?

- “A **scenario** transforms information into perceptions... It is a creative experience that generates an **'Aha!'** ... and leads to **strategic insights** beyond the mind's previous reach.”
- “The Gentle Art of **Reperceiving**”, HBR’85
  - *(Voir et Re-voir)*

- *Pierre Wack*

## **Steps of scenario building:**

*Peter Schwartz 'The Art of The Long View'*

- **Step 1: Identify focal issue**
- **Step 2: Key forces in local environment**
- **Step 3: Driving forces**
- **Step 4: Rank by importance and uncertainty**
- **Step 5: Selecting the scenario logics**
- **Step 6: Fleshing out the scenarios**
- **Step 7: Implications**
- **Step 8: Selection of leading indicators and signposts**

## **The new findings on Evolution: *Kevin Kelly, The Long Now Foundation***

### **Five (5) useful biological indicators *for the Long View***

- **Diversity**
- **Specialisation**
- **Complexity**
- **Socialisation**

**Africa-China *simplex* relationship**



Wits University Graduate School of  
Public and Development Management

# *Methodology*

**Focal issue or key question:**

***Afrocentrism vs Sinocentrism:  
Scenarios for 2020***



Wits University Graduate School of  
Public and Development Management

# *Methodology*

---

## **Driving Forces**

### **Afrocentrism and Sinocentrism**

## Driving Forces

### Afrocentrism and Sinocentrism

- *Both driving forces and key uncertainties.*
- *Map the driving forces on two axes, assessing each force on an uncertain/(relatively) predictable and important/unimportant scale.*
- *Potential centrism extremes*

## **Driving Forces**

**Two primary:  
Afrocentrism and Sinocentrism**

**Secondary:**

- ***Ways of Being: Culture. Values. Traditions. Society. Languages. Religion. Belief Systems. Aspirations. Idea of Happiness. Education. Movies.***
- ***Ways of Doing and Having: Politics. Technology. Economics.***

## Scenarios for 2020

- **The paradox of the naming of the scenarios and time horizons**
  - **Tao Inc**
  - **China Inc**
  - **Sun Tzu Inc**
  - **Ubuntu Inc.**



## Scenarios for 2020

- The paradox of the naming of the scenarios and time horizons
- **Tao Inc:** The coming together of two entities. While both strong, China remains the 800-pound gorilla in the relations and on the African continent. Hence the idea of a dominant Taoist underlying belief system that support all elements of the relationship. Chinese belief system dominate the relationship.

## Scenarios for 2020

- The paradox of the naming of the scenarios and time horizons
- **China Inc:** China is overwhelming dominant and dictates the nature of the relationship with Africa as a junior partner in all cultural partnerships. Africa is subjugated and becomes a colony – another Chinese province - 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup>. Chinese migration is in the increase. Fifty (50) to 150 million Chinese migrate to Africa.

## Scenarios for 2020

- The paradox of the naming of the scenarios and time horizons
- **Sun Tzu Inc:** The art of war becomes a mandatory treatise for life both in Africa and China. Confucianism also dominates. Tough useful African values remain very low level priority. The coming together of two entities spawns a society where values are a mix of strong Chinese belief systems. Hence the idea of a new society is fraught with cultural tensions. Africans attempt to resist the dominant culture in vain as they did with Eurocentrism.

## Scenarios for 2020

- The paradox of the naming of the scenarios and time horizons
- **Ubuntu Inc:** African beliefs are dominant and stronger. China is back home to the cradle of humanity. The credo of “I am because you are” rings everywhere and is a dominant drivers in all spheres of society. Africa claims the moral century. Leadership African style becomes the norm and the official future in the partnership and even globally.
- China Inc
- Sun Tzu Inc



Wits University Graduate School of  
Public and Development Management

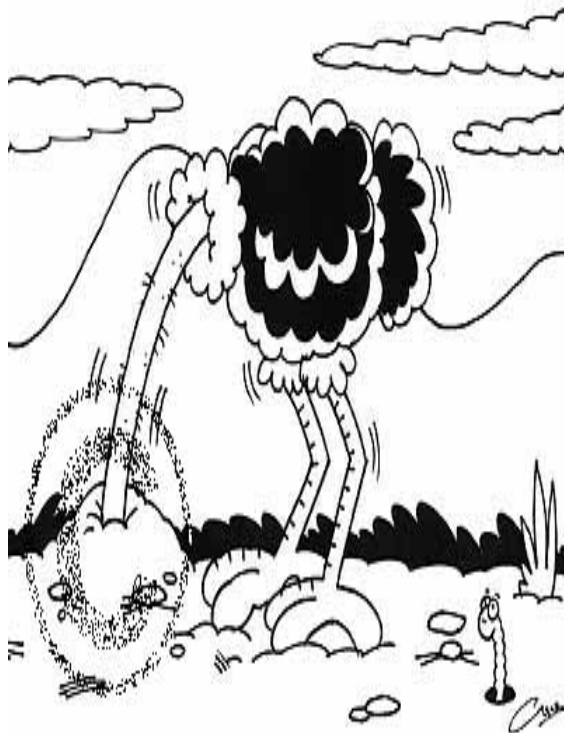
# *Methodology*

---

## **Implications**

## The Mont fleur Scenarios

An **ostrich** with its head buried in the sand





Wits University Graduate School of  
Public and Development Management

# *Decision making time*

## **The Ultimate question**

**Can our leaders in  
Africa and China  
pass the Wack Test?**



Wits University Graduate School of  
Public and Development Management

# *Methodology*

**Leading indicators and signposts**

**China's priorities**

**NEPAD**

**European New strategy toward Africa**

**America's New interest toward Africa  
(Africom)**



## *So What?*

- **Learnings:** Storytelling, scenario thinking and leadership link about the future of Africa-China relations.
- **Storytelling:** Powerful techniques of expression; communications device to tell the story of the new entity and the society to come.
- **The Future:** Scenario thinking and storytelling; the future of Afrocentrism and Sinocentrism.



Wits University Graduate School of  
Public and Development Management

# QUESTIONS?





Wits University Graduate School of  
Public and Development Management

# *Closing and thanks*

**Koffi M. Kouakou**  
**Wits University, P&DM**

**[Koffi.kouakou@wits.ac.za](mailto:Koffi.kouakou@wits.ac.za)**