

Chinese Racism against Africans in the Coronavirus Era: A Multiple Historical Paradigm

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Abstract

Racism is a societal threat which has shaken the core of social relations in many societies all over the world. Over the years, it has been perceived as the notion in which races are averteedly ranked higher or termed superior over races based on the differences in their abilities, traits and shared values. This research work aims to study the discrimination, prejudice, bigotry, xenophobia and chauvinist attitudes that Africans encountered in China during the coronavirus pandemic period. Data obtained through typical case sampling and content analysis was used for this study. Certain factors such as cultural racism, institutional racism, biases, prejudice and xenophobia were selected for this study. It adopts the psychological theories of prejudice and discrimination as a framework of analysis. The study ascertains that Chinese racism against Africans spilled out due to the social perceptions, practices and inherent traits of Africans in China. It discovered that Chinese racism is well embedded in the cultural superiority of China over Africans and observed that Chinese racism against Africans could have negative implications on Sino-African relations and engagements. This work concludes that Chinese racism is hinged on its societal beliefs, customs, assumptions and traditions which transmits a great deal of xenophobia and stereotypes.

Keywords: Cultural racism, Institutional racism, Biases, Prejudice and Xenophobia.

Introduction

The concept of racism is a social phenomenon that has plagued human civilization over centuries. Blackburn (1997) asserts that racism can be traced back to the ancient period of colonialism and slavery. From the 16th and 18th centuries, racial discrimination was known to be more prevalent in Europe's American colonies (Lampert, 2004). It further became even more popular because many scientists from the 19th century believed that human population can be divided into races. Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1983) defines racism as the state of being racist that is subscribing to the belief that the human population can or should be classified into races with differential abilities and dispositions, which in turn may motivate a political ideology in which rights and privileges are differentially distributed based on racial categories. Cazenave and Maddern (1999) defines racism as a highly organized system of race-based group privilege that operates at every level of society and is held together by a sophisticated ideology of color/race supremacy.

Race supremacy has been embedded in Sino-African relations since its earliest engagement when emissaries from an East African kingdom were invited to China to make tributes in 1071. Since then African giraffes, zebras and incense were exported to the Ming

Empire of China as trade routes increased between Somali merchants and China (Ooi, 2004). As China increased its trade expeditions to Africa during the Ming dynasty through Zheng He's fleet, it had a central mission of spreading Chinese culture and displaying Chinese strength (Snow, 1998). From then till present times, Sino-African relations have oscillated from one form to another. In the 1950s, China's support for Africa during colonialism witnessed immense support for liberation movements to push for independence. China's support was mainly motivated by ideology which later changed as China embarked on its opening up and reform policy. From ideologies came economic and geo-strategic interests rather than the desire to export a specific political philosophy. The intensity also changed with the increasing economic and political power as well as hunger for resources, China's relations with Africa intensified (Gebrehiwot and Hongwu, 2013).

The outbreak of coronavirus in Wuhan, China brought about new measures to monitor and control the pandemic in the wake of the crisis in 2019. Chinese government policies include isolation of suspected cases for treatment, close monitoring of contacts, epidemiological and clinical data collection from patients and development of diagnostic and treatment procedures (Zhu et al. 2020). These measures brought forward renewed dimensions into the Sino-African relations as people from different parts of Africa encountered strict and precarious treatments from government officials aimed at tracing and monitoring the pandemic.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2020) argued that COVID-19 has provoked a series of discriminatory acts across continents with different groups as targets. It posits that the instability and fear that the pandemic engenders is exacerbating existing human rights concerns, such as discrimination against certain groups as posited by the UN Secretary-General. UNESCO (2018) also stated that profile of victims varies from country to country and it has been observed that there is a common pattern in discriminatory acts occurring during the pandemic, more often than not the target is generally the 'other', that is foreigners or someone belonging to an ethnic or cultural minority. UNESCO noted that the discriminatory episodes consists of verbal assaults in public places, denigrating campaigns on social media boycott of business activities and in some cases difficulties in access to public institutions and facilities. Discrimination and stigmatization took new forms during the pandemic as the fear of contagion led progressively to attacks on people who for different reasons were particularly exposed to the virus. It also arose as a result of certain government officials looking for scapegoats in order to vent their frustrations, worries and fears.

Devakumar et al. (2020) posits that outbreaks create fear and this fear is the key ingredient for racism and xenophobia to thrive. The pandemic has uncovered social and political fractures within communities, with racialized and discriminatory responses to fear, disproportionately affecting marginalized groups. They further argue that acts of discrimination occur within social, political and historical contexts. Political leaders have misappropriated the Covid-19 crisis to reinforce racial discrimination, doubling down policies with anti-immigrant rhetoric.

From the above, we can infer certain tenets, Chinese cultural supremacy has been in existence since ancient times. Likewise, Africans were seen as an inferior race to the Chinese race, this has been evident in historical documents as stated above and which would be discussed further. China's transplant of its ideology in colonial times also connotes an ideological process of implanting Chinese political thought and philosophies on Africans. Likewise, the coronavirus pandemic provoked a lot of racial and discriminatory activities in China such as discrimination assault, stigmatization, xenophobia and profiling.

This study examines Chinese racism on Africans as experienced during the coronavirus era. It intends to study the discriminatory attitude, prejudice, bigotry, xenophobia and chauvinism that Africans experienced during the foremost period of the coronavirus outbreak in China. It shows that government, political actors and people have the tendency to act in such manner due to certain factors such as cultural strength, historical antecedents, perceptions, fear and scapegoatism. It observes that China denied Africans their fundamental human rights to life, existence and association during the early coronavirus era. Lastly, it observes that Sino-African relations can be threatened and negatively impacted by such activities that emanates from different cultures. The objective of this study is to examine and explore the racist behaviors of China towards Africans during the early outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. In pursuing these goals, this study explores the notion of Chinese cultural supremacy, Chinese cultural strength, race perception and discriminatory attitudes. It further attempts to answer the following questions, what are the controversial statements or interpretations made against Africans? What are the racial experience of Africans in China? What were the power structures that aimed to protect the interests of the Chinese against Africans?

Literature Review

Chinese engagement with Africans has a lot of historical antecedents and narratives both from Chinese scholars and Western scholars. To understand the undertones of Chinese racism towards Africans in the pandemic era, we need to examine and comprehend these narratives and engagements. Chinese cultural strength and superiority emanated from the concept of race superiority and its theories. Evidently these notions are not new in world history since humans had been categorized into different races based on their colors (black, white, yellow and red). With the categorization of races came the discrimination and the radicalization of certain beliefs about different races of the world. Similarly, the Chinese also developed a strong concept of themselves against other races since the most primitive advancement of time and space. They saw themselves as a unique race, one that was way supreme and stood at the center of the world. At the center of the world, they perceived themselves as existing under heaven (Tian xia 天下) and living in the Royal Domain which holds the culture and the civilization of the world and all other zones should pay tributes or adopt its culture. The world domain is followed by the pacification zone, allied barbarians zone, and the culture-less savagery zone. This representation of world culture and world civilization was the central knowledge of Chinese about other races and cultures (Zaidi, 1976).



Chinese traditional assumption was that all parts of the world outside its domain are inferior, they had the right to pay homage to the Imperial Court of China. The Chinese Emperor was inclined to rule virtuously but also to gracefully bestow mercy on the other zones which were seen as the Zones of Savage Barbarians (Siyi 四夷). Chinese tradition grouped them into the following: Eastern Barbarians (Dongyi 東夷), Southern Barbarians (Nanman 南蠻), Western Barbarians (Xirong 西戎) and Northern Barbarians (Beidi 北狄). These zones were compelled to pay homages to the supremacy of the Chinese courts. Thus the superiority of Chinese culture and race has been a prominent phenomenon that has influenced China's interaction with the world and races (Mungello, 2012).

The foremost perceptions of Africa came from physical contacts and historical texts that the Chinese archived during their acquaintance with Africa. The perceptions of Africans have been in the records of China since the fourth century AD. The astuteness of Africans is embedded in a term used to describe them, the Kunlun Slave (Kunlun nu 崑崙奴). Their name had several connotations and consequences, it often connoted primitive anarchism of a tribe which lacked a geographical boundary on the one hand and on the other it was also used in reference to a magical mountain. The first records of blacks in the Chinese courts can be traced to the extraordinary visit of the Arab delegation to the Song Court in 977 AD. Chinese archives documented that "their slaves had deep-socket eyes and their bodies were as black as coal". The Arabs presented the Kunlun to the Chinese around the eighth and the tenth centuries to provide service to the Tang dynasty courts (Snow, 1988).

Snow (1988) asserts that the presence of blacks in the Chinese ancient historical texts and archives were monumental, specifically as slaves there were many stories about their exploits and escapades. Firstly, in the Tang encyclopedia there were narratives about how the blacks got easily assimilated into the Chinese culture thus earning a high revere from the Chinese. Secondly, their heroic skills were highly celebrated as slaves who had imaginative skills and dynamic capabilities. Thirdly, these black African slaves were also documented as being skillful and quick-witted swimmers with exceptional skills who expressly fished up treasure in the seas for their masters. They had fore knowledge of traditional herbal medicines as they attended to their masters' health by providing the necessary medicine to heal their ailments and afflictions. Fourthly, they had cosmological knowledge and as such acted as diviners who saw looming perils and drew the attention of their masters to them. Snow (1988) therefore concluded that the identity of blacks in the early dynastic Chinese era was constructed as being bizarre, ingenious, unwavering and dependable workers who conscientiously served and protected their masters with their lives

Hsing-lang (1930) offers more insights into the identity construction of blacks in ancient China. Specifically, in the New Dynastic History of Tang (Xin Tangshu 新唐書), it describes the black tribes and their living conditions. It revealed a place where black tribes live in a low and moist climate with the inhabitants walking unclothed. It also mentioned another African tribe that used salt wells to survive while having an abundance of ebony, sandalwood, spices, glazed wares, medicinal herbs and precious stones in their environment. This historical document also



mentioned that blacks were slaves to many wealthy people in Arab and Asia. Blacks were endowed with prodigious strength and can carry burdens of enormous weight. It also reported their habits and languages as being extraordinary, their taste was different from other people and they are submissive and do not abscond from their place of abode. Their skin is inky black, red lips, white teeth, wholly hair and tawny. They were great hunters that live beyond the sea and they ate raw food. Their digestive system could not hold cooked food thus they have dysentery because they are savages. Dikötter (2015) also examined the diaries of Xu Jiyu who also offered his discernment of Africa through his expeditions in the Ming dynasty. He saw Africa as a frenzied, virulent and blistering place populated by black savages with the worst climate. He asserted that they fed on creepy-crawly animals and lived in an underground shallow place. He went further that the people from the West of Africa were a promiscuous enslaved race that was resilient in carrying out the orders of their masters.

Lin (2002) draws inferences from the Chinese Gazetteer of Four Continents to expose the culture of Africans as perceived by the Chinese. Africans were seen as very poverty-stricken and overweight with a straight face with yellow and black colors. It also mentions that they were mischievous, tricky and cunning race who were highly uncivilized in their behaviors. He asserts that they were barbaric, acted and sounded like animals that feasted on raw foods. He observes that African continent is plundered with constant civil wars in which different tribes waged war against each other. He observes that they had a filthy dress habit, some dressed with the unclean intestines of ox, some naked and others covered themselves with leaves.

Shinn and Eisenman (2012) alludes that perceptions came through China's extensive expeditions to Africa. While Africans might misconstrue these expeditions as that of trade, it's highly contestable. The interaction with Africa in the Chinese conceptualization was not seen as trade, it was seen as a tribute or homage from people of a remote barbarian culture paying homage to the Son of Heaven in China. Thus, exotic African objects were presented to the Emperor as a sign of good gesture and generosity. Some of the objects presented to the Chinese court include elephant tusks, rhinoceros horn, frankincense, myrrh, tortoiseshell, aloes, precious stones and rare woods. Others include animals such as giraffes, zebras, and ostriches all came from Africa as a sign of a subservient country paying accolade to a more powerful nation.

The above literature has examined the work of different scholars on Chinese conceptualization of the African race. It observed that the Chinese see themselves as a supreme and powerful race. This notion transmits a high sense of Chinese cultural strength and superiority towards other races. They see other races as barbarians and savages. Africans were seen as slaves through different historical Chinese texts and encyclopedias. Africans are also seen as ill-mannered, uncultured, savages, mischievous, trick, cunning and an animalistic race living in an impoverished condition.

Theoretical Framework

This work adopts the psychological theories of prejudice and discrimination which argues that social perceptions are developed between different persons or group of persons. It claims that

stereotypes are some of these attitude which often is developed on the basis of some physical characteristics of physical trait. It posits that people attribute internal properties to a person such as behaviors or character traits or the basis of external properties such as skin color. Group stereotypes makes an attribution to a whole group while an individual stereotype makes a judgment about someone, that judgment could be about a whole group or about the individual. Stereotypes are sometimes overgeneralized, inaccurate and resistant to new information but can sometimes be accurate. Quick generalizations about groups of people may be useful when making quick decisions, they may be erroneous when applied to particular individuals and are among the reasons for prejudiced attitudes (Bandura, 1977).

The term stereotype was introduced by Walter Lippmann (1922) who compared stereotypes with stable images in our head that shorten our perceptions. They are economical in the sense that previous experiences mould current perceptions. Several other scholars have contributed to this theory of stereotypes such as Smith and Bond (1994) that sees it as a set of shared convictions or beliefs about members of a particular group. Doise et al., (1999) argue that it connotes perceptions of a genuine correspondence between group membership and certain traits. Drozda-Senkowsks (1999) perceive stereotypes as social constructs that describe both personality traits and behaviors patterns.

These scholars have all agreed that stereotypes are defined by their social, shared, generalized, contextual, dial and schematic nature. That is stereotypes are shared beliefs between group or category members about the in or out group members about their personality and behaviors which is usually formed during the process of social interaction. They are schematic often simple or essentialist and generalized by describing all members and ignoring individual differences. Stereotypes are attitudes that are said to have three components: a cognitive component which comprises a set of beliefs about the group or individual, an affective component which is a feeling towards the group or individual or a behavioral component which is a set of behaviors or actions directed towards the group or individual based on the other two components.

This theory is applicable to this research work because it exposes the social perceptions the Chinese have developed about Africans. It offers an in-depth understanding to the creation of Chinese racism about Africans which is based on their physical characteristics, traits or skin color. It informs that these notions are widely shared between different groups such as the Chinese. It also reveals the inherent fact that these stereotypes about individuals or groups might be over generalized, inaccurate and resistant to new information about certain groups. It identifies how Chinese perceptions about Africans have been molded over the years which might facilitate prejudiced attitudes

Methodology

Data were collected from several sources and databases. Racism as depicted in cultural racism, institutional racism, biases, prejudice and xenophobia were downloaded through the internet. Relevant information as related to the subject matter was selected through the typical case

sampling method. Racist behaviors, attitudes and perceptions was downloaded from the internet, specifically on how they emit Chinese cultural strength, biases, and prejudices, xenophobic attitudes that are all supported and reinforced by Chinese institutions. Hence, the data for this work was considered representative of how they shape Chinese thoughts, ideas, perceptions and behaviors during the coronavirus era. The data used for this work was analyzed through content analysis that aims to reveal and expose Chinese racism of Africans as crafted in cultural racism, institutional racism, biases, prejudice and xenophobia.

Historical Background and Evolution of Chinese Racism Towards Africans in the Coronavirus Era

Chinese racism of Africans did not begin with the coronavirus pandemic. In fact, it can be traced to the early influx of Africans to China after the opening up policy of the country in the seventies. As China was just beginning to open up to the world, most of its populace still lived in rural areas with no access to international media, and had not seen a black person outside of propaganda posters let alone met one. From the beginning, clashes were reported across the nation when African students started arriving in the country. In 1979, Africans in Shanghai were attacked for playing music too loudly, leading to 19 Africans being hospitalized. Another fracas occurred in 1986, this time in Beijing, 200 African students marched through the capital, shouting that Chinese claims of "friendship were a mask for racism," according to a New York Times report." African students proclaimed that they had been deceived with Chinese aim of friendship. Most students claim that they now know the truth from the reality. Media reports also exposed documentations of Africans being called black devils as they tried to mingle and associate with the local populace. In 1988, African students were attacked in what was called the Nanjing event in which Africans were attributed to be carriers of the AIDS virus. In the same year, about 2,000 Beijing students boycotted classes to protest Africans dating Chinese women and in Wuhan, posters appeared around campuses calling Africans "black devils" and urged them to go home (Marsh, 2020).

Chinese media also has contributed largely to the discourses of African race construct. Chinese media had reports about Africans being characterized as a backward, primitive and an unattractive race. Virulent racism common on Chinese social media is largely unchecked by censors and as such there are several unverified claims that Africans are rapists, drug dealers, or AIDS carriers. These prejudices have led to a string of incidents amid coronavirus-induced paranoia about Africans (Sui, 2020).

The coronavirus pandemic brought renewed racist elements and hostilities from the Chinese towards Africans. It rekindled existing stereotypes, prejudices, biases and racial perceptions the Chinese had about Africans. Chinese media and reporters have conjectured the reasons for these stringent measures towards Africans, specifically associating it with an event that occurred in April, 2020. There were unverified reports filtering through social media and blogs about a Nigerian coronavirus patient who had attacked and bite off the face of a Chinese

nurse in a bid to escape quarantine. This event erupted xenophobic and racist sentiments against Africans in China (Linder, 2020).

Eleanor (2020) asserts that Africans living in Guangzhou China faced huge discrimination during the Covid-19 pandemic in China. She claimed that a lot of Africans were evicted from their homes and others barred from hotels and restaurants. Many had their passports seized and forced to undergo Covid-19 testing and arbitrary self-quarantines, regardless of their travel history and in the absence of symptoms. Police officers also rough handled and mistreated Africans by pushing them into the streets while dislodging them from the place of their abodes.

Likewise, Fifield (2020) reported that local authorities with the aim of curbing the transmission of the novel coronavirus, embarked on a xenophobic campaign against Africans in the southern part of the country. Guangzhou often known as "Little Africa" or "Chocolate City" saw Africans evicted from their apartments and refused entry into restaurants. Reports of being evicted from restaurants and forced into hotels for consecutive 2 sessions of 14 days' quarantines and isolation after being tested negative for the virus despite not embarking on any international or domestic travel were widely disseminated by the media.

Kwasi (2020) claimed that Chinese state media reported that certain Africans tested positive for Covid-19 and they broke the quarantine measures thereby infecting more people in the community, hence stricter measures and controls mechanism were put in place to control the spread of the virus. Chinese local authority through the health commission asserted that it found 111 infected cases amongst Africans in the city of Guangzhou (Vincent, 2020). African ambassadors in Beijing reacted to these events by writing a letter to China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemning the persistent harassment and humiliation of African nationals. African families with young children were forced to sleep on the streets and passports were being confiscated they claimed. They also observed that Africans were denied their rights to life by locals who refused to offer them services of food and water (Pilling and Wong, 2020). Africans experienced horrible racist behaviors from Chinese by denying Africans access to public services and institutions. Taxi drivers refused them entries on their vehicles, bus drivers designated back seats for Africans, people shouted and scorned at them when on the streets and others closed their noses when passing them despite the fact that they were wearing masks. Cases of Africans being refused on the subway were reported and denied entry into hospital institutions based on the color of their skin (Kirton, 2020).

Cheng and Ohikere (2020) postulated that China was profiling Africans as Covid-19 carriers and agents. This was based on the statistics given the Chinese Foreign Affairs, as government banned foreigners from entering the country, anyone who returned had to go through a mandatory 14-day quarantine. Of imported cases, about 90 percent were Chinese nationals but Africans were the ones bearing the most stringent lockdown measures. Chinese profiling of Africans emitted a mechanism to rewrite the true narratives of the carriers of the virus.

Several African leaders reacted to China's racist behavior towards Africans. For instance, Chinese ambassadors in Abuja, Nigeria and Accra, Ghana were summoned by their respective

host governments to give an explanation. In Addis Ababa, Moussa Faki, chairperson of the African Union Commission invited the Chinese ambassador to the AU to express their extreme concern. Also, Nigerian authorities evacuated 268 nationals from China amid the coronavirus pandemic and alleged discrimination while South African and Kenyan authorities had expressed their disapproval of how the Chinese authorities were treating Africans (Tih, 2020).

The international community also called on China to conform to the existing human right practices and conventions of which China is a member. Specifically, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) obligates governments to “undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, color, national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law.” Likewise, the United Nations expert committee that monitors state compliance with the ICERD has specifically called on governments to “fully implement legislation and other measures already in place to ensure that people of African descent are not discriminated against.” Furthermore, government should “review, adopt and implement national strategies and programs with a view to improving the situation of people of African descent and protecting them against discrimination by State agencies and public officials, as well as by any persons, group or organization” (Thornberry, 2016).

Despite all these events that happened in Guangzhou, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, Zhao Lijian stated that all foreigners are treated equally in China. He states that China rejects differential treatment and it has a zero tolerance of discrimination. He further alludes that western media were reporting fake news about the discrimination of Africans by Chinese (Kirton, 2020). Several scholars such as Eric Olander have reaffirmed that racism poses a major threat to Sino-African relations and as such both governments have to manage the situation assiduously. While Africa remains an important market for China and its investors, China remains Africa’s top creditor having lent an estimated \$152 billion to nearly 50 African states between 2000 and 2018.

From the above, we have observed that Chinese racist construct and perception of the African race did not begin with the coronavirus pandemic, it is well embedded and crafted in Chinese historical tradition and philosophy. Likewise, it has been established that the media plays an important role in the shaping of Chinese knowledge about African culture and traditions. While it’s unarguable that the Chinese displays a strong cultural strength and supremacy over other cultures, it specifically sees Africans as being at the bottom of world race classifications. Chinese racist tendencies towards Africans exhibited a lot of stereotypes, prejudices and biases of a perceived backward and primitive race.

Chinese Perception and Racism Towards Africa: The Trends and Paradigms

The first finding from this work is the display of Chinese cultural strength and supremacy as transmitted by the Chinese towards Africans in China. Over the years, the Chinese have continuously portrayed their race as sophisticated, advanced, cultured and well developed over the African race which they opine as uncultured, backward, uncivilized and extremely primitive.

These opinions have reinforced certain stereotypes about Africans in the Chinese consciousness. Lippmann (1922) argues that stereotypes are images in our head that shorten our perceptions. Chinese images of Africa since traditional times have been strengthened in modern types. Chinese initial perception of Africans were slaves having no rights or human dignity. As such, the events that spilled out from Guangzhou during the coronavirus pandemic radiated Chinese deep-seated traditional perceptions of Africans.

Secondly, this research work observed that Africans were discriminated against during the coronavirus initial era in Guangzhou, China. A lot of Africans witnessed direct discriminations because they were treated differently from other races in China due to the color of their skin, perceived characteristics and perceptions. Many restaurants, shops and supermarkets refused to offer their services to Africans during this period.

Thirdly, Africans were harassed by several police officers in China during this period. A lot of Africans were displaced from their homes to the streets and abused physically, mentally and psychologically. Africans encountered the seizing of their passports and they were forced into capricious Covid-19 testing and endless self-quarantines.

Bandura (1977) alleges that quick generalization about groups can lead to prejudice attitudes. A lot of preconceived feelings, biased attitudes which were transmitted through media channels or other communication channels incited a lot of Chinese negative behavior towards Africans. Demonization of Africans in news reports and social media served to increase incidents of racial prejudice. Guangzhou, a hitherto commercial and friendly city to Africans that is often known as "Little Africa" or "Chocolate City" became a city of nightmare for Africans.

Chinese prejudices might have also arisen from imported cases of Covid-19 which sparked fear among the citizenry and triggered anti-foreigners' sentiments in China towards black people. Many Africans were shocked about how Chinese people changed in the way they treated them, welcoming them in a few months earlier and shunning them off few months after. Cases of landlord evicting Africans for no just reasons became baffling and worrisome.

The Chinese share a set of negative convictions about Africans. Smith and Bond (1994) in their theory of stereotypes argue that people often radiate a set of shared conviction or beliefs about members of a particular group. The Chinese share the belief that Africans are disease carriers and their bodies are hosts to many virulent diseases, as such they have to be carefully contained and isolated from their society. In Chinese historical texts and events that happened in the early nineties in China, Africans were seen as AIDS carriers. These earlier convictions and beliefs which have no scientific proof and lack objectivity represent the beliefs of the Chinese about Africans.

It was also observed that the Chinese profiled Africans based on the few personal characteristics and behaviors of other Africans to make generalizations about Africans in Guangzhou. The few imported cases of the symptoms of Coronavirus from Africa, few reported cases about Africans and the hospital incidents amongst other factors sparked profiling of

Africans in the early coronavirus pandemic era in China. Such behavior from the Chinese authorities displayed no objectivity in their actions and lacked all scientific proofs.

Lastly, this work has discovered that the racist issue in Guangzhou would continue to raise fear and suspicions between the two cultures. The unprecedented events that happened cast a thorn in Sino-African relationship. While China has a strong diplomatic front for African countries, its nationals radiate hostilities against African nationals.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this work has observed that there are several reasons for racism during pandemic. Scholars have posited that the fear of the pandemic itself is one reason why people discriminate against one another. Others have suggested that scapegoatism is another reason why discrimination existed during a pandemic. As such, the act of accusing others or pointing fingers at certain individuals for being responsible for the pandemic spread is widely common. The pandemic has also revealed that Chinese existing perception of its cultural superiority is well enshrined in the conscious and subconscious minds of its citizenry. They perceive all other cultures as inferior to them, most especially the black race and as such has displayed a lot of calculated prejudices, biases and stereotypes to them.

Chinese traditional knowledge about Africa reveals a caricature that is embedded with a lacuna of what actually exists as an African culture. Chinese historical texts have labelled Africans as barbarians living in a culture-less savagery zone. Africans are perceived as slaves by the Chinese and as such they have no fundamental human rights to enjoy certain privileges. Albeit, these existing thoughts and perceptions about Africans came into play in the initial era of the coronavirus pandemic in China. The Chinese cognitive, affective and behavioral components of stereotypes radiated existing beliefs, feelings and behaviors of Chinese towards Africans. Chinese racism had the full support of some government institutions such as the Chinese police who went round to implement heinous acts against Africans and deprive them of their rights while assaulting them physically. Chinese state media also fueled these racist tendencies by reporting unverified events and publishing racist comments or statements about Africans.

Despite all these events, Sino-African economic relationship is getting stronger and deeper each year. China remains a strategic partner for most African countries, Chinese aid, loans, constructions and commodities are all over Africa. Africa on the other hand, provides the resources China needs to support its population. The Guangzhou incident of 2020 remains a strain that might have monumental effect on Sino-African relations if not properly managed and controlled. China has to respect Africans and Africans have to do the same to enjoy a cordial relationship and allow harmony to thrive.

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