

DOCTORAL THESIS

China-African Union relations: 2001 to the present

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ABSTRACT

The increasing engagement of China in Africa after the cold war has steered debates concerning the growing complexion of this relationship. However, the emphasis of assessment has mainly been narrowed to the bilateral relationship between China and African countries. Insufficient consideration has been focused to the increasing relationship concerning China and African Union which is the continental Regional Organization of African states.

This study explores the nature and impact of China-African Union relationship and its consequences to the African Union member states generally. The study examines the significance of this relationship and demonstrates how both China and African Union are using this relationship to fulfill their objectives and the ultimate effect to the African Union member states that have bilateral relations with China.

By using qualitative design and the lens of constructivism this study has tested the extent of the application of China's objectives under the China African policy and the African Union objectives under the Constitutive Act and Agenda 2063 by analyzing the extent the parties are using this relationship to enhance the fulfillment of their objectives, by testing the study on the objectives of infrastructure development, peace and security, health, and capacity development as the research variables.

This study shows the extent at which the parties' relations has led to the achievement of these objectives thus demonstrating the importance of the relationship between China and African Union. This relationship has enhanced peace and security preservation of the African continent, facilitated the development of African Union Centre for Disease Control and Prevention to boost the health objective on the continent, as well as aggrandized skill development through capacity development initiatives on the continent. China has also supported, consistently praised and acknowledged the role of the AU in solving African problems as well as constructing for it the biggest office block hence giving the continental organization a new face. Nevertheless, the study shows that China is using this relationship to project itself as a more active external partner for the AU and the African continent compared to the rest.

Similarly, China is trying to use this relationship with the AU to socialize the AU member states towards its own priorities, and the relationship is positioning China to initiate, maintain and increase its Soft power interests on the African continent as well as advance its norms. Equally, China is carefully using its relationship with the AU to promote its geostrategic and political interests on the African continent for

instance through its recent establishment of the Chinese military base in Djibouti. The study also highlights how Chinese Africa relations is not only based on interest of exploiting African resources entirely as described by previous authors, but there is also commitment towards increasing its engagement with the African Union basing on each other's policies and priorities in order to fulfill their objectives

Above all, I give glory and honor back to the Almighty God for what I have achieved so far in my Life, *surely with God nothing is impossible!* (Luke 1:37). My faith gives me the motivation to take steps in the unknown.

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