

THE GEOSTRATEGY OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (AfCFTA) AND THIRD PARTIES: A FOCUS ON CHINA

Juliet Eileen Joseph

*Department of Politics and International Relations
University of Johannesburg
PO Box 524, Auckland Park, South Africa 2006
jjoseph@uj.ac.za*

Abstract

The primary objective of this article is to interrogate Sino-Africa trade relations and questions if Africa a passive receiver of both Chinese and Western influence? This paper is divided into four sections. The first section of the paper outlines the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). It is followed by a discussion of the political factors, driving Africa's desire for greater integration. The second section explains the potential trade impacts of the AfCFTA on African states and illustrates the rationale and appetite for the AfCFTA. Section three examines bilateral relations with third-parties, with a focus on China, speculating about the future of Sino-African trade relations and the AfCFTA. Finally, section four concludes the study. The discussion and findings suggest the following. Firstly, that African officials perceive the role of China in a positive light, and China is seen as a fellow developing country. Secondly, African leaders laud China for its contribution to the growth of African nations and their economic development. Thirdly, however, China is criticized for poor working conditions, this section should read and is seen to negotiate is seen to negotiate unfair deals and for some scholars China perpetuates the neo-colonial relationship and, in some countries, there have been violent protests against China. This study encompassed a qualitative, exploratory approach, which relied heavily on both primary and secondary sources of data.

Keywords: AfCFTA, Intra-Africa Trade, RECs, Sino-Africa Relations, liberalisation.

DOI: 10.21303/2504-5571.2022.002460

1. Introduction

The AfCFTA was signed in Kigali by 44 members of regional economic communities from the African continent on 21 March 2018. 54 of the 55 African Union states had signed the agreement, with Eritrea the only country not to do so [1]. AfCFTA was officially established in May 2019, it started trading on 1 January 2021. All AfCFTA-related negotiations are being coordinated by the African Union Commission's Department of Trade and Industry [2].

The objectives of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA): is to Deepen regional economic integration and integrate the African market [3]; propel Africa's industrialisation and structural transformation; view cooperation rather than unilateralism as the most important path to intensifying regional economic integration, increased local and global trade, securing economies of scale and market access [3–6].

The geostrategy of the AfCFTA and the African Union suggests that a united Africa will promote the continent's interests on the global stage, the continent's states have reaffirmed [7, 8]. However, theoretically, African states may gain better trade deals with third parties like China if they negotiate as a bloc [9–11]. In practice, the large number of African states, and the diversity of their trade interests, makes negotiating as a bloc much more likely if a single entity can represent them in such negotiations [12]. But no institution has a mandate to represent African states in this way [12–15]. The AfCFTA Agreement does not establish any supranational institutions, nor does it grant treaty-making power to the AfCFTA Secretariat or to the AU [12, 14]. In short, the AfCFTA does not create a body to negotiate trade agreements on behalf of African states

African Union (AU) Commission Deputy Chairperson proposed joint collaboration to develop modalities for continental cooperation on trade, indicating that such collaboration would be "fully aligned" with the AfCFTA and deepen economic integration in Africa [15]. There is, therefore, a need to explore if and how the establishment of the AfCFTA might alter Africa's external

trade dynamics with China and other partners, and, if at all, how the AfCFTA might create the conditions for African countries to forge trade agreements with China and other partners as a bloc.

Specifically, this study focuses on the potential for advancing the prospects of the AfCFTA in response to trade agreements with the African continent. In essence, a robust AfCFTA can be achieved by deepening trade integration through an African integration mode. In particular, the study explores the rationale and appetite for an AfCFTA. In order for an AfCFTA to achieve deep integration, commitments must be made, and implementation must be effective in, addressing: democracy, good governance, human rights, constructive conflicts resolution, gender equality, increasing capacity for dealing with pandemics and security challenges, as well as implementing operational plans that lead to the peaceful solution of conflict and peace.

The article is divided into four sections. The first section provides some background on the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, and discusses the main political calculus behind the decision by African states to join it, focusing on the larger strategic factors, associated with Africa's desire for deeper integration. Section two discusses the rationale, African states motivations and assesses the impact of AfCFTA on them, suggesting the appetite for the AfCFTA. Section three discussed Sino-Africa bilateral relations and speculates about the future of Africa's rise. Section four concludes the study.

The primary objective of this article is to interrogate Sino-Africa Relations and questions if Africa a passive receiver of both Chinese and Western influence?

2. Materials and Methods

The study employed a qualitative approach to the study, examining primary and secondary literature, including national statistics, government reports, journal articles, and interview documents. First, a literature review was conducted in order to collect, search, and evaluate definitions, theories, policies, viewpoints, principles, methods, and other research findings, as well as to collect statistics from municipal institutions. AfCFTA trade advances as well as bilateral relations between African member states and China were examined in the study. Many different sources were reviewed, including documentaries, reports, press releases, manuscripts, articles, the Internet and reports, pertaining to the AfCFTA and regional trade agreements.

3. Results

3. 1. Background on the study

In exploring China's engagement with Africa, it is perceived as similar to colonial-era extractive relations [16–18]. Some argue, on the other hand, that these relations are quite different because the Chinese government does not coerce African governments into trade relations. Furthermore, many of the Chinese projects on the continent focus on infrastructure like ports, even though it can also be argued, that these projects are geared toward commodity trade with China [19–21]. To study the relationship between a country (China) and a whole continent (Africa) is therefore bound to produce varied results. African countries will naturally merge and deviate from each other in their interactions with China, suggesting to refer to China's engagement with all 54 African countries may not be entirely helpful, as countries on the continent exist at various levels of development [21, 22]. Hence ascribing the problems of some countries to the whole continent could lead to unsatisfactory generalizations. The idea that China-Africa relations exist implies political and economic homogeneity across the continent, which is far from the truth [23, 24]. As even within a single country, different political parties will have variations in their policy orientation toward China [25–27]. Furthermore, the ancestors of Chinese-born South Africans (SABCs) started arriving in South Africa in small numbers as early as the late 1870s, highlighting those migrant laborers from China have contributed significantly to the African economy for over a century, suggesting that China has been doing business in Africa for the longest time [28]. Contrary to what Western media portrays, African views are varied. A difference in attitudes toward China in African countries can be said to be attributed to the extent, to which politicians have raised the “Chinese problem [29] “ and to the extent, to which Western media and myths have influenced the subject [30, 31].

3. 2. The rationale for the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)

The AfCFTA's potential outcomes stand to impact 68 million people out of moderate poverty and make African countries more competitive [27]. If implemented fully, the trade pact could boost regional income by 7 % or \$450 billion by 2035 [32]. The AfCFTA will harness development and collectively grow economies; enhance competitiveness, which brings about more jobs for young people, higher wages, better working conditions, and ultimately, a better informal industry, which accounts 99 % of Africans whose businesses are small and medium, or which include young entrepreneurs [33].

Furthermore the Agreement paves the way for opportunities for a rapidly growing middle class, and a young population that allows for more innovation and technological advancements [11, 34]. Importantly the AfCFTA will allow for Africa to produce more finished products as opposed to only exporting natural resources [35], and Africa's considerations for the digital economy and how Africa regulates the digital economy and technology [36].

3. 3. The Appetite for the AfCFTA

The AfCFTA is meant to stimulate economic development, increasing trade within Africa countries. Where 97 percent of trade across African markets is tariff-free, there are reduced trade barriers and services are liberalized. By reducing trade costs, countries will be able to join international value chains more easily [37]. Furthermore the AfCFTA aims at developing the manufacturing sector and diversifying the economy away from agricultural and natural resource-based economies and promote the development of the manufacturing sector [38, 39]. Essentially, what remains at the heart of the AfCFTA is the building of cross-border value chains, exchanging regional industrial production and increasing its socio-economic welfare [40]. The suggested benefits of the AfCFTA include \$16.1 billion in welfare gains, GDP growth of 1-3 %, employment growth of 1.2 %, intra-Africa trade growth of 33 %, and a reduction in the continent's trade deficit of 50 % [41]

In 2020, Asia and Pacific had the most trade agreements with 42. It is followed by South Asia with 12 trade agreements and Central Asia with 7 trade agreements (**Fig. 1**).

Regions	Asia and the Pacific	South Asia	Central Asia	Middle East and North Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa	Europe	North America	South America
Asia and the Pacific	42							
South Asia	12	7						
Central Asia	7	2	15					
Middle East and North Africa	3	3	9	2				
Sub-Saharan Africa	1	1	2	42	6			
Europe	13	1	29	19	7	31		
North America	8	2	1	10	1	6	1	
South America	26	4	2	4	2	9	28	26

Fig. 1. Inter- and Intra-Regional Trade Agreements, 2020

Source: World Trade Organization [42]

<https://rtais.wto.org/UI/PublicMaintainRTAHome.aspx>

In 2020, 61 % of goods were exported from the rest of the world to Africa. Imports constituted mainly of manufactured goods. In 2020, Africa exported 38 percent of the goods. Exports constituted mainly of mineral fuels and raw products (**Fig. 2**).

In concluding on this section of the study, in 2020*, intra-African exports accounted for 62 billion US dollars, which was 16 percent of the continent's overall exports. Within Africa, exports declined by 27 % in 2019 and by 21 % in 2020. Furthermore, approximately 17 percent of intra-African exports are mineral fuels, followed by machinery (5 %), precious stones (5 %), ores (4 %) and copper (4 %) [43]. In terms of world exports of cereals, soap, milling products, explosives and photographic equipment, intra-African exports make up the majority. Suggesting that African exports comprise largely of natural resources, such as raw materials and semi-finished good, with

third party exports to the continent, comprising largely of finished goods. An imbalance in imports therefore affects the economies of African states by affecting GDP, exchange rates, inflation, and interest rates. Local traders, businesses, as well as women and youth are also affected by this. This argument highlights the appetite and rationale for the AfCFTA and its objectives for the African continent and its people.

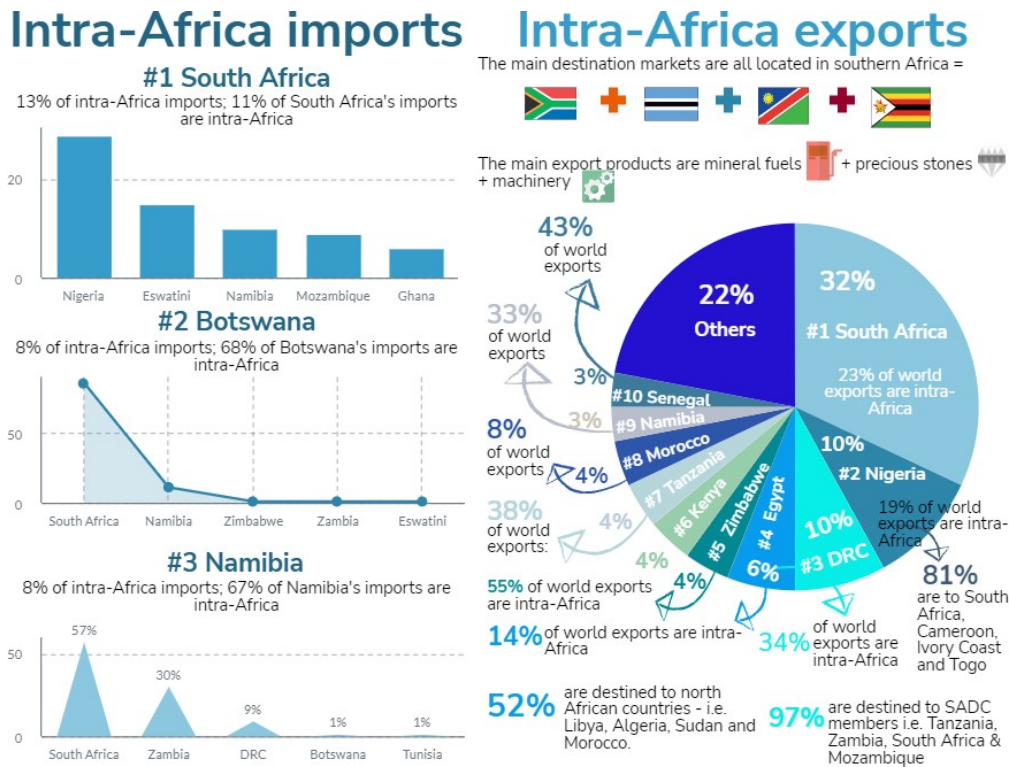


Fig. 2. Intra-Africa imports and exports

Source: ITC TradeMap 2021, tralac calculations [43]

<https://www.tralac.org/documents/resources/booklets/4483-afcfta-a-tralac-guide-8th-edition-march-2022/file.html>

3. 4. The AfCFTA and Third Parties

Currently, AfCFTA State Parties remain responsible for their own choices and decisions about trade with third parties. The AfCFTA Agreement provide for supra-national institutions or bodies with powers to speak on behalf of the collective, such as the AU and RECs, when it comes to such trade agreements. Hence allowing Nations to sign trade agreement, considering that it does not violate Regional Economic Communities treaties [44].

It is critical to establish a framework that will serve as the foundation for future discussions between AfCFTA partner states and third parties. The AfCFTA is primarily a project to promote intra-African trade and also seeks to further the African Union's Agenda 2063 aspirations [35]. Hence the full implementation of the AfCFTA will have implications for the African economy at large. Also, recognizing China, Africa's foremost trade partner, views the AfCFTA as a 'win-win' solution and arguing that free trade and multilateralism are key foundations to the global system [46, 47]. Certain African trade experts and officials recognize the "win-win approach" that builds on AfCFTA integration and simplifies existing trade arrangements between states. Others argue that Africa would benefit from a united approach to trade negotiations with China and other partners [48, 49].

3. 4. 1. Intra regional trade

Developing and maintaining African regional economic communities at the regional level is the primary purpose of trade [4]. By their respective treaties, policies, protocols, and agreements,

most RECs have already taken steps to establish commitment and change and deepening economic integration on the African continent. In addition, we have witnessed collective action (policy, protocol, charters, and agreements), and a conscious institutionalisation of and transformation of (regional economic formation) [50].

3. 4. 2. From external parties

Through the AfCFTA, Africa can engage third parties in formal trading arrangements. The immediate priority regarding the AfCFTA remains its implementation [51] and its application to create continental value chains [52], but policymakers on the continent must also develop a longer-term view towards how it may be optimally used when entering into trade negotiations with third parties (e. g. by offering greater negotiating power, formalizing tariff liberalisation in strategic sectors, or offering incentives to investors) [53–55].

Africa's main trading partner in 2019 was the European Union (EU). A substantial 14 percent of trade was generated with China (**Fig. 3**).

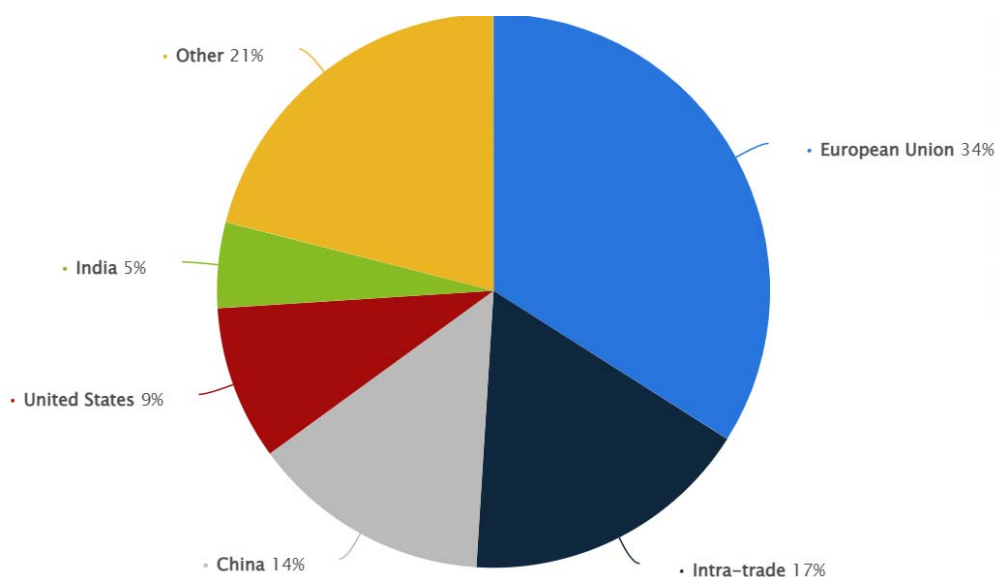


Fig. 3. Africa's leading trade partners

Source: Statista, 2022 [56].

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1234977/main-trade-partners-of-africa/>

The European Union and China are the main imports and exports markets for Africa (**Fig. 4**).

It will be necessary for China and the EU, who remain the largest trade partners of Africa, to adjust their policies in response to the political trajectory of the continent, recognising Nigeria, Egypt, and South Africa and in maturing SADC, ECOWAS, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

Considering the relationship between the U.S. and other superpowers on the African continent, one should not overlook relations with the U.S. In retrospect, the Obama administration prioritized trade over aid in Africa. Under the Obama administration, the U.S. implemented the following initiatives to increase trade between the two countries: Doing Business in Africa (DBIA), Africa Trade initiative and U. S.-Africa Clean Energy Finance (ACEF), and the Expanded Access to U.S. Government Tools that Support Our Trade and Investment with Africa. Trade relations with Africa were renewed as a result of these policies. Further to this, China's move into the African continent as a major trading partner led to a backlash against the Trump administration's Africa policies [58].

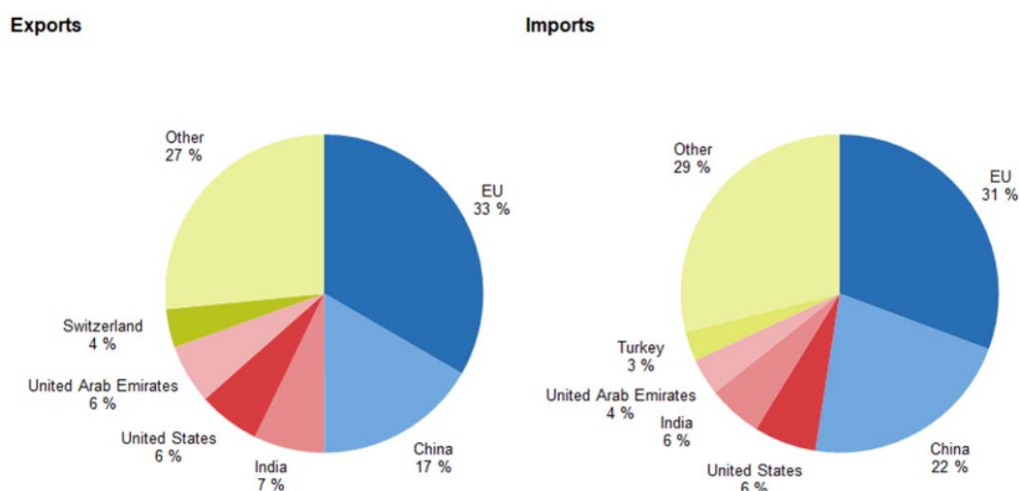


Fig. 4. African export and import shares with main partners, 2020

Source: Statista [57]

The Chinese have increased their investment in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly through supply chains and infrastructure projects. During the period January to July 2021, imports from Africa into China increased by 46.3 %, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [59]. The number of agricultural products, imported into China from Africa, doubled during the first seven months of 2020 to include rubber, cotton, and coffee. Chinese trade with Africa has grown 20-fold in the last 20 years, making China Africa's largest bilateral trading partner [60].

The BRI Beyond 2020 report, published by Economist Corporate Network with support from Baker McKenzie and Silk Road Associates, revealed the benefits Chinese financial incentives to African jurisdictions are contributing to these strengthened trade links. The Economist reports that 33 of Africa's poorest countries export 97 % of their exports to China without tariffs or customs duties. According to the report, China's imports of natural resources from Africa still dominate bilateral trade. In recent years, China has, however, increased its manufacturing imports from nations with more diverse economies, such as South Africa.

3. 5. Africa & China: An introduction

Africa and China have had long-term relationships: Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). Bearing in mind that China-Africa relations in the present are impacted by the histories of Chinese immigrant communities on the continent, such as in South Africa. Problematic misrepresentations, which have resulted in parts of the continent's long history with China being omitted [61–63].

Notably, Afro-Asian networking and solidarity against Western neocolonialism flourished during the Cold War [64].

During this period China became a supporter and ally of African liberation movements and postcolonial states. Diplomatic meetings like the 195 Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, set the stage for these relationships [65–67].

In the latter half of the twentieth century, a long history of transnational interactions, culminated in the tour of ten African countries, led by Premier Zhou Enlai in 1963 and 1964. Maoism, a revolutionary and development ideology, gained traction during this time as a result of Chinese influence. Maoism resonated with African activists and intellectuals due to its emphasis on the peasantry as a vanguard for change. They perceived themselves to be facing similar conditions across the continent [68–70].

Julius Nyerere's Maoist-influenced Tanzanian state and ujamaa program demonstrated how Chinese approaches to development could inspire African economic projects [71–73]. A strong Chinese community has existed on the continent for a long time. Chinese immigration to Southern

and Eastern Africa began over a century ago. These social histories have also largely been absent from discussions of China-Africa relations [28, 74, 75].

3. 6. Bilateral relations between Africa & China: China's interest in Africa

FOCAC laid the foundation for continental, regional and bilateral relations between Africa and China and also for emerging initiatives, such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) [76; 77]. To study the relationship between a country (China) and a whole continent (Africa) is therefore bound to produce varied results. African countries will naturally merge and deviate from each other in their interactions with China. To refer to China's engagement with all 54 African countries may not be entirely helpful, as countries on the continent exist at various levels of development. Furthermore, ascribing the problems of some countries to the whole continent could lead to unsatisfactory generalizations. The idea that China-Africa relations exist implies political and economic homogeneity across the continent, which is far from the truth. Even within a single country, different political parties will have variations in their policy orientation toward China

China has four overarching strategic interests in Africa. Firstly, it wants access to natural resources, especially oil and gas [46]. Chinese oil imports surpassed the United States oil imports by 2020 [78, 79]. In order to guarantee future oil supply, China invests heavily in countries, such as Angola, Nigeria, and Sudan [18].

Additionally, the high labor costs in China may make it more difficult to restructure China's economy away from labor-intensive industries as it invests in Africa, a huge market for Chinese exports [80, 81].

Third, China wants to be recognized as a legitimate power. Sino-African relations, according to the Chinese government, are important for raising China's own international influence. The vast majority of African governments support China's "One China" policy, which is necessary in order to attract Chinese aid and investment [80].

Additionally, China's economic interests are at risk from security-related threats, so the country has sought a more constructive role as a contributor to stability [82, 83].

3. 7. Bilateral relations between Africa & China: African governments interests in China

Through aid, investment, infrastructure development, and trade, African governments look to China for political legitimacy and political recognition [81, 84]. In some ways, African leaders hope that China will engage with them in ways that Western governments don't - by engaging economically without preaching about good governance, for example, or investing in high-risk projects or in remote areas that are not attractive to Western governments or companies. Some Africans aspire to replicate China's rapid economic development and believe that their nations can benefit from China's recent experience in lifting itself out of poverty [17, 85].

3. 8. China's interest in the African Continental Free Trade Agreement

This single market is expected to connect 1.3 billion people across 55 African Union member states with a combined gross domestic product, valued at \$3.4 trillion [39]. It is estimated, that by 2022, intra-Africa trade could rise by 52 %32 through the elimination of import duties and could more than double thanks to the removal of non-tariff barriers [41]. As a result of the AfCFTA, 90 % of tariff offers and 34 service proposals have been approved, contributing to regional trade integration [86, 87].

Approximately 30 million people will be lifted out of poverty by the continental free trade area by 2035, according to a World Bank report. This means that by 2030, African countries will have combined consumer and business spending power of \$6.7 trillion. Having the largest manufacturing hub in the world, China has a vested interest in working with the AfCFTA and selling goods at the lowest possible price into this market [88, 89].

However, consequently, the AfCFTA could be undermined if China makes its presence felt in this way by flooding the market with cheap goods [90, 91]. It is still unknown whether China - under the BRI - plans to shift manufacturing to Africa and improve infrastructure along transport corridors, a move that could bring efficiencies and development gains to Africa [91-93].

4. Discussion

Chinese trade with Africa has grown 20-fold in the last 20 years, making China Africa's largest bilateral trading partner. The Chinese have increased their investment in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly through supply chains and infrastructure projects. During the period January to July 2021; imports from Africa into China increased by 46.3 %, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the number of agricultural products, imported into China from Africa, doubled during the first seven months of 2020 to include rubber, cotton, and coffee [59].

Bearing this in mind, firstly, African officials perceive the role of China in a positive light [94]. Secondly, African leaders perceive China as a fellow developing country [95]. Lastly, African leaders laud China for its contribution to the growth of African nations [96, 97].

However China has also been criticized for poor working conditions. As China has been seen by some to negotiate unfair deals [28, 98]. For some China has been seen to perpetuate the neo-colonial relationships [98] and in some countries, there have been violent protests against China [46].

Interrogating Sino-Africa Relations: The benefits and hinderances

Kenya's rail project is the largest, and China is developing a free trade zone in Djibouti. The Ethiopian rail project is also a way to connect with Djibouti, one of the world's most important trading centers. Thus, Chinese investment in Africa will ensure long-term economic development [75, 99–101].

China officials insist most of Africa's debt is not the result of Beijing-funded projects, which is true. The main issue with Chinese investment in Africa is the debt crisis in Africa. Nevertheless, Chinese investments in Africa are not unwarranted [102–104]. Prior to adding more debt to Africa's stockpile, there are many deficits in other areas that need to be addressed. Chinese exports to Africa nations totaled \$82.6 billion last year, while imports totaled \$54.3 billion. Although China is currently Africa's largest single trading partner (the EU is technically the biggest), the relationship with China leaves Africa with a significant trade deficit.

In discussing Sino-African relations, it is important to examine how China has responded to this reaction. Sino-African relations have been rebalanced after Beijing changed its policies in response to Africa's concerns. In addition to promoting Chinese soft power, culture, and people-to-people exchanges, these modifications will include an increased emphasis on sustainability in the economic and trade relationship. Chinese elites acknowledge that their increasing presence on the continent has negative consequences. If China adjusts its policies, it will benefit its African partners as well as itself. China's cultural ties and aggressive outreach should lead to greater public support [103, 105, 106].

Africa's leading trade partner: China

Sino-African trade has traditionally been about infrastructure and development in exchange for natural resources, but the trends are changing. China's demand for resources should be dampened by the shift in demographics [107, 108].

Chinese labor, exported to Africa, could eventually become more attractive than African labor in China-funded infrastructure projects. As can be seen, there are a number of African companies, expanding in China, especially joint ventures. Africa and China's economic relations are just beginning to change, which presents opportunities for investors who keep an eye on these changes [109, 110].

To effectively and efficiently negotiate a free trade agreement (FTA) with China, three major shifts are required: first, African states must consider the creation of an African customs union with a common external tariff (CET); secondly, African states must aspire to negotiate and conclude a reciprocal FTA with China's trading bloc. In addition, the AU (or another body) would need to receive the formal mandate to represent this African bloc in trade negotiations with China [77, 111–113]. How realistic is it to expect these shifts to occur, even in the long term? *Are these shifts more likely to materialize if the AfCFTA is enacted or will it be enacted? How does this impact those who support continent-to-continent free trade agreements?* Chinese policies must adapt to Africa's political trajectory in order to bring about positive change. Recognizing Nigeria, Egypt, and South Africa, and the maturation of SADC, ECOWAS, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and other Receptions. In retrospect, China prioritized trade over aid or infrastructure in Africa. In addition to Doing Business in Afri-

ca, the Africa Trade initiative and China-Africa Clean Energy Finance, China must also consider the following elements [114]. Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind, that when considering bilateral relations with other countries, such as the U.S., China's move to become a major trading partner on the African continent, led to a backlash against Trump administration's Africa policies [115, 116].

African states considerations

In expounding on the recommendations of this study, it is therefore up to the African countries to make good use of their relations with China. African leaders' ability to use their power for the benefit of their people remains to be seen. Generally, the relationship has been beneficial for African countries as well as the global economy.

An African customs union would need to be established. These changes are likely to be thwarted, however, by various factors of political economy. Creating a continental customs union will be complicated by African states' ambivalence toward deeper integration. In order to support the implementation of the AfCFTA and related African integration processes, supporters of a continent-to-continent FTA should focus their efforts on improving trade relations between the EU and Africa. A future FTA between continents could be made possible by such efforts.

African member states of the AfCFTA would need to revisit how Africa looks at Sino-Africa relations. The topic of China-Africa relations presents an opportunity to rethink the territorial parameters of African studies. In particular, it can help shift attention away from the Atlantic world as the dominant focal point of connections between Africa and the wider world. The problem is that current scholarship and public opinion have often drifted into old frameworks and colonial motifs. To take one example, China's ambitions have frequently been construed as part of a new 'Scramble for Africa' with African countries falling victim once more to an outside global power. Another example is the uncritical use of the Orientalist stereotype of 'dragon' to symbolise China and its perceived aggressiveness. In order to align their national development priorities with the offers of rival partners, African governments should analyze the options that are available. To begin with, "take-it-all" mentalities should be avoided when accepting opportunistic, short-term offers.

Governments in Africa should take a more comprehensive and integrated approach to development. By diversifying partners, states can become less constrained by their more recent relationship with China or their older relationship with other partners, such as France.

In addition, geopolitical rivalry is also taking place in Southeast Asia and Latin America. African governments may find it helpful to learn how some of these governments deal with this phenomenon. The African bureaucracy needs to improve its ability to deal with China, Russia, Turkey, and India if it is to implement a coherent strategy. Develop a pool of experts with knowledge of their culture, dialects, and operating methods. In the short term, African leaders can rely on the language and expertise of former students, trained in these universities. Governments in Africa should pursue a trilateral or quadrilateral partnership between new and traditional partners to benefit from the best of both worlds. China and France have, for example, partnered on infrastructure projects in Africa. Different types of collaboration can help companies access additional pools of funding and avoid duplicating efforts. In addition, African governments should consider the views of their citizens on this subject.

Specific to China and Africa today, is the rethinking of 'Africanness' can provide a way of.

Governments in Africa should adopt a more comprehensive and integrated approach. States can also become less constrained by their old relationship with France or their new relationship with China by diversifying their partners through a strategic and selective approach. In the repositioning of China-African relations, trade rhetoric can be replaced by a focus on the local histories of African-Chinese communities that predate our global present. An updated Afro-Asian ethos could provide a remedy for such problems and foster new forms of community and internationalism. Additionally, including the historic presence of Chinese communities in African identity could promote and sustain more meaningful understandings of transnational connections for a longer period of time. The AfCFTA must rethink how it views Africa's relationship with China beyond historical cliches, which depict African countries as always helping outside powers. Africa and China have a long history of substantive networking and cosmopolitan conviviality that makes this possible.

A qualitative study was conducted. AfCFTA phase-by-phase implementation was not discussed in this study. It mainly focused on AfCFTA and China as a third party, doing business and conducting trade with African states

The prospects for further research. The results of this study may inform future research on how African traders, such as youth, women and disabled individuals, can influence trade agreements, which in turn may affect trade and economic growth across regions and communities. Moreover, a comparative analysis of the AfCFTA with other regional trade agreements could benefit the advancement of Africa's trade agreement prospects.

5. Conclusion

The article discussed and analysed the AfCFTA's geostrategic importance amid insecurity as the results in increased coups in fragile African states. In addition, the study examined the role, played by the RECs in promoting increased trade and security within Africa. According to the study findings, AfCFTA's strategy can have a significant impact on the peace and security of member countries. AfCFTA cannot be successful and advance opportunities unless Africa's RECs are involved. Through these regional bodies, a greater amount of intraregional trade among African states could be enabled, which are lacking at present, while a more secure environment could be created. Africa can draw many lessons from the East Asian model if it is compared to other emerging markets and free trade agreements.

While it may still be early days for the African continent, booming emerging economies like South Africa, Nigeria, and Egypt play a key role in the regions' economic gains and peace and security status. It goes without saying that a lot of work needs to be done to encourage small and medium enterprises, young entrepreneurs, and female entrepreneurs to be more active in intraregional and extraregional trade. In addition, there are many opportunities for extraregional trade, which would quite essentially make the AfCFTA the largest trade agreement that could transform Africa into the epicenter of global trade. This refers to the challenges, surrounding peace and security on the African continent, overdependence on natural resources, and a lack of essential infrastructure, including electricity, water, and sanitation. Expounding more on this, the preparation of Africa for the digital economy and gig economy should also be taken.

In the study, it is concluded, that due to the AfCFTA's geostrategic advantages and potential for economic integration, Africa stands to benefit from the agreement. As the AfCFTA has the potential to increase Africa's economic integration, which could propel African emerging markets to be poised to become China-like in the near future. Suggesting, the AfCFTA could well set Africa on a trajectory that surpasses many other free trade agreements around the world.

For African nations, the biggest concern is that China has both the power and the finances to make them economically dependent on it. They are already doing so to a certain extent, since nobody else is pumping in as much money into African infrastructure projects. In the Western media, it's being portrayed as a ploy, but whether it's truthful is a different story. In an economy on the verge of peaking, Africa appears to be the only major investment opportunity left.

Moreover, it provides China with a solid platform to expand its political and economic influence beyond Asia and into the fast-growing continent of Africa, which is set to surpass China as the world's most populous continent. It remains to be seen how mutually beneficial this relationship will be for both African and Chinese interests.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Acknowledgments

This research has been supported by the NRF SARChI Chair: African Diplomacy and Foreign and the Centre for African Diplomacy and Leadership (CADL) at the University of Johannesburg, Department of Politics.

I am grateful to Dr Bhaso Ndzendze for stimulating discussion. I am also grateful for the insightful comments of the anonymous peer reviewers at Eureka.

The generosity and expertise of each of them improved this study in countless ways.

References

- [1] Onwuka, O. N., Udegbonam, K. C. (2019). The African continental free trade area: Prospects and Challenges. *Conflict Trends*, 3, 3–10.
- [2] Zhongming, Z., Wei, L. (2021). AfCFTA and UNDP announce new partnership towards inclusive growth in Africa. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/press-releases/afcfta-and-undp-announce-new-partnership-towards-inclusive-growth-africa>
- [3] Abrego, M. L., de Zamaroczy, M. M., Gursoy, T., Nicholls, G. P., Perez-Saiz, H., Rosas, J. N. (2020). The African Continental Free Trade Area: Potential Economic Impact and Challenges. *International Monetary Fund*, 41. doi: <http://doi.org/10.5089/9781513542379.006>
- [4] Olayiwola, W. (2020). Governing the Interface between the African Continental Free Trade Area and Regional Economic Communities Free Trade Areas: Issues, Opportunities and Challenges.
- [5] Asche, H. (2021). On the African Continental Free Trade Area. *Regional Integration, Trade and Industry in Africa*. Cham: Springer, 95–117. doi: http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75366-5_6
- [6] Moyo, T. (2020). The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). *Africa Insight*, 50 (1), 54–75.
- [7] Moyo, G. (2021). Navigating African Agency in a Multipolar World System. *African Agency, Finance and Developmental States*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 45–74. doi: http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-72412-2_3
- [8] Moyo, G. (2021). Retracing the Footprint of African Agency. *African Agency, Finance and Developmental States*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 13–44. doi: http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-72412-2_2
- [9] Broadman, H. G. (2008). China and India go to Africa: New deals in the developing world. *Foreign affairs*, 87, 95–109.
- [10] Shinn, D. H., Eisenman, J. (2012). China and Africa. In *China and Africa*. University of Pennsylvania press, 524.
- [11] Elnor, O., Rahamtalla, M. (2022). Prospects for China-Africa Cooperation. *China and the World in a Changing Context*. Singapore: Springer, 55–58. doi: http://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-8086-1_6
- [12] Masiko, T. (2022). Flexible Regional Economic Integration in Africa: Lessons and Implications for the Multilateral Trading System. Bloomsbury Publishing. doi: <http://doi.org/10.5040/9781509944996>
- [13] Böschemeier, J., Teti, F.A., Cernicky, J., Moncayo, G. R. (2022). AfCFTA in a Rut—Can the Pan-African Agreement Regain Momentum? *CESifo Forum*, 23 (2), 46–57.
- [14] Kigwiru, V. K. (2022). Supranational or Confederate? Rethinking the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) Competition Protocol Institutional Design. doi: <http://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4055877>
- [15] Ukponu, M. U., Okaruefe, S. U., Sulayman, Y., Afonne, J. E., Odusola, N. S. (2022). Globalization and the Sovereignty of African States in the Post-Colonial Era: A Contemporary Afrocentric Legal Perspective. *Journal of Law, Policy and Globalization*, 119. doi: <http://doi.org/10.7176/jlpg/119-05>
- [16] Halidu, A., Atnadu, D. F. (2022). Nigeria's Bilateral Trade Relations with China: An Assessment, 2010-2019. *International Journal Of Multidisciplinary Research And Studies*, 5 (2), 1 (12). doi: <http://doi.org/10.33826/ijmras/v05i02.1>
- [17] Hanauer, L., Morris, L. J. (2014). Chinese engagement in Africa: Drivers, reactions, and implications for US policy. Rand Corporation. doi: <http://doi.org/10.7249/rr521>
- [18] An, J., Feng, Y. (2022). Do the “Dragon's Gifts” Improve China's National Image? An Empirical Analysis of the Economic Relations and Public Perceptions of China in Africa. *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, 1–24. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1007/s11366-022-09793-4>
- [19] Nana, I. (2022). Chinese Presence in Africa: A Panel Smooth Threshold Regression Approach. *Transformations in Banking, Finance and Regulation. Institutional Change and China Capitalism: Frontier of Cliometrics and its Application to China*, 217–255. doi: http://doi.org/10.1142/9781800611238_0009
- [20] Gambino, E., Gambino, E. (2022). Political economy of Sino-African infrastructural engagement: the internationalisation of Chinese state-owned companies in Kenya. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7488/era/2028>
- [21] Colom Jaén, A., Mateos Martín, Ó. (2022). China in Africa: Assessing the Consequences for the Continent's Agenda for Economic Regionalism. *Politics and Governance*, 10 (2), 61–70. doi: <http://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v10i2.4945>
- [22] Nyadera, I. N., Agwanda, B., Onder, M., Mukhtar, I. A. (2022). Multilateralism, developmental regionalism, and the African Development Bank. *Politics and Governance*, 10 (2), 82–94. doi: <http://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v10i2.4871>
- [23] Oluwafemi'Femi'Mimiko, N. (2022). Sino-African Relations and Trends for the Post-Covid-19 Global Order. *The Palgrave Handbook of Africa and the Changing Global Order*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 649–671. doi: http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-77481-3_31
- [24] Ofosu, G., Sarpong, D. (2022). China in Africa: On the Competing Perspectives of the Value of Sino-Africa Business Relationships. *Journal of Economic Issues*, 56 (1), 137–157. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/00213624.2022.2020025>
- [25] Mohan, G., Power, M. (2008). New African choices? The politics of Chinese engagement. *Review of African Political Economy*, 35 (115), 23–42. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/03056240802011394>

- [26] Giese, K. (2013). Same-same but different: Chinese traders' perspectives on African labor. *The China Journal*, 69, 134–153. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1086/668841>
- [27] Fung, C. J., Han, E., Quek, K., Strange, A. (2022). Conditioning china's influence: Intentionality, intermediaries, and institutions. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 1–16. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2022.2052436>
- [28] Park, Y. J. (2022). Forever foreign? Is there a future for Chinese people in Africa? *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 48 (4), 894–912. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2021.1983953>
- [29] Sautman, B., Hairong, Y. (2009). African perspectives on China–Africa links. *The China Quarterly*, 199, 728–759. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1017/s030574100999018x>
- [30] Lee, C. K. (2020). *The specter of global China*. The Specter of Global China. University of Chicago Press.
- [31] Hirono, M., Suzuki, S. (2014). Why do we need 'myth-busting' in the study of Sino-African relations? *Journal of Contemporary China*, 23 (87), 443–461. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2013.843889>
- [32] Nwisiyi, K. J., Okonkwo, I. V. (2022). Nigeria's Economy and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement: Issues and Prospects. *Contemporary Journal of Banking and Finance*, 2 (2), 17–35.
- [33] Kouam, H., Sundjo, F. (2022). Trade Liberalization and Economic Development: Lessons for Africa. Available at: <https://nkafu.org/trade-liberalization-and-economic-development-lessons-for-africa/>
- [34] Teagle, A. (2022). Africa's historic free-trade agreement: 'short-term pain for long-term gain'. doi: <http://repository.hsrc.ac.za/handle/20.500.11910/19361>
- [35] Adeboje, O. M., Folawewo, A., Adedokun, A. J. (2022). Trade Integration, Growth and Employment in West Africa: Implications for African Continental Free Trade Area (Afcfta). doi: <http://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-1031534/v1>
- [36] Kira, B. (2022). What to Consider Ahead of the AfCFTA Phase II Negotiations: Focus on Digital Trade Policy Issues in Four Sub-Saharan African Countries. Available at: <https://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/research/publications/what-consider-ahead-af-cfta-phase-ii-negotiations-focus-digital-trade-policy>
- [37] Qobo, M., Le Pere, G. (2018). The role of China in Africa's industrialization: The challenge of building global value chains. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 27 (110), 208–223. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2018.1389016>
- [38] Maliszewska, M., Ruta, M. (2020). *The African continental free trade area: Economic and distributional effects*. Washington: World Bank Group. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1559-1>
- [39] MacLeod, J. (2019). The AfCFTA in a changing trade landscape: Rise of the emerging market economies and the persistence of African export dependency. In *Inclusive Trade in Africa*. Routledge, 134–146. doi: <http://doi.org/10.4324/9780429401121-9>
- [40] Boccara, E., 2020. A revisiting of African integration: economic growth through self-sustainment? Available at: <https://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordId=9020930&fileId=9020944>
- [41] Pietrobelli, C., Rabellotti, R., Van Assche, A. (2021). Making sense of global value chain-oriented policies: The trifecta of tasks, linkages, and firms. *Journal of International Business Policy*, 4 (3), 327–346. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1057/s42214-021-00117-6>
- [42] Ndonga, D., Laryea, E. and Chaponda, M. (2020). Assessing the potential impact of the African continental free trade area on least developed countries: A case study of Malawi. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 46 (4), 773–792. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/03057070.2020.1767888>
- [43] Tralac calculations, ITC Trademap (2020). Available at: <https://www.tralac.org/documents/resources/booklets/4483-afcfta-atralac-guide-8th-edition-march-2022/file.html> Last accessed: 21.02.2022
- [44] Processed and semi-processed goods in exports to each country. UNCTAD
- [45] Fusacchia, I., Balié, J., Salvatici, L. (2022). The AfCFTA impact on agricultural and food trade: a value added perspective. *European Review of Agricultural Economics*, 49 (1), 237–284. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1093/erae/jbab046>
- [46] Amao, O., Olivier, M., Magliveras, K. D. (Eds.) (2021). *The Emergent African Union Law: Conceptualization, Delimitation, and Application*. Oxford University Press. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198862154.001.0001>
- [47] Robinson, B. (2022). China in Africa. In *African Special Economic Zones*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 85–110. doi: http://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-8105-9_4
- [48] Medinilla, A., Sergejeff, K., Domingo, E. (2022). The geopolitics of African renewable energy. Available at: <https://ecdpm.org/wp-content/uploads/Geopolitics-African-renewable-energy-ECDPM-Discussion-Paper-316-2022.pdf>
- [49] Coulibaly, S., Kassa, W., Zeufack, A. G. (Eds.) (2022). *Africa in the new trade environment: Market access in troubled times*. World Bank Publications. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1756-4>
- [50] Yenkey, C. B., Hill, N. R. (2022). Trade and sustainability: Three decades of change across Africa. *Africa Journal of Management*, 8 (1), 109–142. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/23322373.2021.2001290>
- [51] Joseph, J. E. (2022). SADC and ECOWAS'S peace and security architecture preparedness and the COVID-19 pandemic. *EU-REKA: Social and Humanities*, 1, 16–30. doi: <http://doi.org/10.21303/2504-5571.2022.002248>

- [52] Byiers, B., Apiko, P., Karkare, P. (2021). The AfCFTA and industrialization. Available at: <https://ecdpm.org/wp-content/uploads/Afcfta-industrialisation-policy-practice-ECDDPM-Discussion-paper-314-2021.pdf>
- [53] Olaniyan, O. (2021). The African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) in the post COVID-19 era. *Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Studies*, 63 (3).
- [54] Signé, L., Madden, P. (2021). Considerations for rules of origin under the African Continental Free Trade Area. *Journal of African Trade*, 8, 77–87. doi: <https://doi.org/10.2991/jat.k.201205.001>
- [55] Fofack, H. (2020). Making the AfCFTA Work for ‘The Africa We Want. Brookings Africa Growth Initiative Working Paper. Brookings Institution. Available at: https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/20.12.28-AfCFTA_Fofack.pdf
- [56] Songwe, V. (2019). Intra-African trade: A path to economic diversification and inclusion. Available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/research/intra-african-trade-a-path-to-economic-diversification-and-inclusion/>
- [57] Saleh, M. (2022). Africa’s leading trade partners, Statista. Africa’s leading trade partners.
- [58] African export and import shares with main partners (2020). United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:African_export_and_import_shares_with_main_partners,_2020_update.png
- [59] FACT SHEET: U.S.-Africa Cooperation on Trade and Investment Under the Obama Administration. The White House. Available at: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/09/21/fact-sheet-us-africa-cooperation-trade-and-investment-under-obama>
- [60] Subban, V. (2021). Africa: China’s trade with the continent grows to record highs. Baker McKenzie blog. Available at: <https://www.globalcompliancencnews.com/2021/09/26/africa-chinas-trade-with-the-continent-grows-to-record-highs-16092021/>
- [61] Ademola, O. T., Bankole, A. S., Adewuyi, A. O. (2016). China-Africa trade relations: Insights from AERC scoping studies. *The Power of the Chinese Dragon*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 69–97. doi: http://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-57449-7_4
- [62] King, K. (2010). China’s Cooperation with Africa, and Especially South Africa, in Education and Training. A Special Relationship and a Different Approach to Aid? *Journal of International Cooperation in Education*, 13 (2), 73–87.
- [63] Alden, C. (2012). China and Africa: The relationship matures. *Strategic Analysis*, 36 (5), 701–707. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2012.712365>
- [64] Chen, A. Y., Huynh, T. T., Park, Y. J. (2010). Faces of China: new Chinese migrants in South Africa, 1980s to present. *African and Asian Studies*, 9 (3), 286–306. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1163/156921010x515978>
- [65] Lee, C. J., Guma, A. L. (2018). Addressing an Afro-Asian public: Alex La Guma’s report to the 25th anniversary conference of the Afro-Asian Writers Association in 1983. *Safundi*, 19 (3), 269–283. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/17533171.2018.1471190>
- [66] Shimazu, N. (2014). Diplomacy as theatre: staging the Bandung Conference of 1955. *Modern Asian Studies*, 48 (1), 225–252. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1017/s0026749x13000371>
- [67] Lewis, S. L., Stolte, C. (2019). Other Bandungs: Afro-Asian Internationalisms in the Early Cold War. *Journal of World History*, 30 (1), 1–19. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1353/jwh.2019.0011>
- [68] McCann, G. (2019). Where was the Afro in Afro-Asian Solidarity? Africa’s ‘Bandung Moment’ in 1950s Asia. *Journal of World History*, 30 (1), 89–123. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1353/jwh.2019.0014>
- [69] Lee, C. J. (Ed.) (2010). *Making a world after empire: The Bandung moment and its political afterlives*. Vol. 11. Ohio University Press.
- [70] Adem, S., Mazrui, A. A. (2013). *Afrasia: a tale of two Continents*. RowmanLittlefield, 408.
- [71] Laboon, P. M. (2016). *Peaceful Coexistence: Sino-African Relations and the Evolution of Maoist Internationalism*. Santa Barbara: University of California.
- [72] Song, K. (2022). China’s foreign aid architecture in a transitional period, 1964–1976. *Journal of Asian Architecture and Building Engineering*, 21 (2), 234–248. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/13467581.2020.1869012>
- [73] Tetzlaff, R. (2022). *African Socialism. Africa*. Wiesbaden: Springer, 123–132. doi: http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-34982-0_7
- [74] Ikeke, M. O. (2022). Gandhi’s “Sarvodaya” and Nyerere’s “Ujamaa”: An eco-sociopolitical appraisal.
- [75] Kohnert, D. (2022). African migrants plight in China: Afrophobia impedes China’s race.
- [76] Anshan, L. I. (2022). *China and Africa in Global Context: Encounters, Policy, Cooperation and Migration*. Routledge. doi: <http://doi.org/10.4324/9781003220152>
- [77] Dossi, S. (2022). China’s Rise, the Belt and Road Initiative and the Future of the Global Order. *The China Question*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 21–42. doi: http://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-9105-8_2
- [78] Large, D. (2022). China, Africa and the 2021 Dakar Focac. *African Affairs*, 121 (483), 299–319. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adac014>
- [79] Amineh, M. P. (2022). China’s rise and the question of hegemony and world order. *The China-led Belt and Road Initiative and its reflections*. Routledge, 36–69. doi: <http://doi.org/10.4324/9781003256502-3>

- [80] Ehteshami, A. (2022). Geopolitics of change: China, the Belt and Road Initiative, and Asian regions. *The China-led Belt and Road Initiative and its Reflections*. Routledge, 158–176. doi: <http://doi.org/10.4324/9781003256502-8>
- [81] Umeonyirihoa, E. I. (2022). Is Africa Changing Its Strategic Plan Against China's Belt and Road Initiative Because of Covid-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Economic Research & Reviews*, 2 (1), 77–83. doi: <http://doi.org/10.33140/jerr.02.01.03>
- [82] Lewin, A. Y., Witt, M. A. (2022). China's Belt and Road Initiative and International Business: The overlooked centrality of politics. *Journal of International Business Policy*, 5 (2), 266–275. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1057/s42214-022-00135-y>
- [83] Szczepanska, K. (2022). 7 Contesting Japan's International Roles. *National Role Conceptions in a New Millennium: Defining a Place in a Changing World*.
- [84] Walter, T. (2022). Chinese (non-) Interventions: A Comparative Analysis of Chinese Interventions in the Middle East and Africa. Available at: <https://d-nb.info/1251752411/34>
- [85] Boora, R. (2022). Contesting China's Engagement in Africa under Xi Jinping. *International Journal of Political Science*, 8 (1), 36–43.
- [86] Li, Z. (2022). April. Essential Lessons from China's Development. 2022 International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities and Arts (SSHA 2022). Atlantis Press, 144–148. doi: <http://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.220401.030>
- [87] Obida, D. I. (2019). The Quest for Africa's Trade Growth: Intra-African Trade and the Proposed African Continental Free Trade Areas (AfCFTA): A Commodification of Old Practice or Maintenance of New Order. *World Journal of Innovative Research*, 6 (2), 42–49.
- [88] Parshotam, A. (2018). Can the African Continental Free Trade Area offer a new beginning for trade in Africa? Available at: <https://saiia.org.za/research/can-the-african-continental-free-trade-area-offer-a-new-beginning-for-trade-in-africa/>
- [89] Fu, Y., Eguegu, O. (2021). China's BRI and the AfCFTA: Potential Overlaps, Complementarities and Challenges. Available at: <https://saiia.org.za/research/chinas-bri-and-the-afcfta-potential-overlaps-complementarities-and-challenges/>
- [90] Fox, E. M. (2022). Integrating Africa by Competition and Market Policy. *Review of Industrial Organization*, 60 (3), 305–326. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1007/s11151-022-09854-1>
- [91] Quium, A. S. M. (2019). Transport corridors for wider socio-economic development. *Sustainability*, 11 (19), 5248. doi: <http://doi.org/10.3390/su11195248>
- [92] Ezeonu, I. (2021). African Continental Free-Trade Area: Key Challenges. *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology*, 20 (1-2), 57–76. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1163/15691497-12341582>
- [93] Ehizuelen, M. M. O., Abdi, H. O. (2018). Sustaining China-Africa relations: Slotting Africa into China's one belt, one road initiative makes economic sense. *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, 3 (4), 285–310. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1177/2057891117727901>
- [94] Kassa, W., Edjigu, H. T., Zeufack, A. G. (2022). The Promise and Challenge of the African Continental Free Trade Area. *Africa in the New Trade Environment: Market Access in Troubled Times*, 2011.
- [95] Quium, A. S. M. (2019). Transport corridors for wider socio-economic development. *Sustainability*, 11 (19), 5248. doi: <http://doi.org/10.3390/su11195248>
- [96] Murphy, D. C. (2022). *China's Rise in the Global South: The Middle East, Africa, and Beijing's Alternative World Order*. Stanford University Press.
- [97] Colley, T., van Noort, C. (2022). China's Belt and Road Strategic Narratives up to the Second Belt and Road Forum. *Strategic Narratives, Ontological Security and Global Policy*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 47–67. doi: http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-00852-8_3
- [98] Tudoroiu, T. (2022). Normative Power China, Subnational Agency, and Structural Factors in the Global South. *China in the Global South*. Singapore: Springer, 259–288. doi: http://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-1344-0_12
- [99] Wissenbach, U., Wang, Y. (2017). African politics meets Chinese engineers: The Chinese-built Standard Gauge Railway Project in Kenya and East Africa (No. 2017/13). Working Paper.
- [100] Manek, N. (2019). Djibouti needed help, China had money, and now the US and France are worried. Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2019-04-06/djibouti-needed-help-china-had-money-and-now-the-u-s-and-france-are-worried>
- [101] Ayodele, T., Sotola, O. (2014). China in Africa: An evaluation of Chinese investment. *Initiative for Public Policy Analysis*, 1–20.
- [102] Koomson-Abekah, I., Nwaba, E. C. (2018). Africa-China investment and growth link. *Journal of Chinese Economic and Foreign Trade Studies*, 11 (2), 132–150. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1108/jcefts-11-2017-0034>
- [103] Wang, F. L., Elliot, E. A. (2014). China in Africa: presence, perceptions and prospects. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 23 (90), 1012–1032. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2014.898888>
- [104] Zhao, S. (Ed.) (2017). *China in Africa: Strategic motives and economic interests*. Routledge.
- [105] Curtis, J. S. (2021). Springing the 'Tacitus Trap': countering Chinese state-sponsored disinformation. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 32 (2), 229–265. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2021.1870429>

- [106] McGiffert, C. (Ed.) (2009). Chinese soft power and its implications for the United States: competition and cooperation in the developing world: a report of the CSIS smart power initiative. Csis.
- [107] Ochieng, H. K. (2022). China's Public Diplomacy towards Africa: Strategies, Economic Linkages and Implications for Korea's Ambitions in Africa. *East Asian Economic Review*, 26 (1), 49–91. doi: <http://doi.org/10.11644/kiiep.eacr.2022.26.1.405>
- [108] Akpan, N. E., Ogwola, I. R. A Tale of Two Elephants: China's Rise to Global Reckoning, American Hegemony and the Challenges of Sustainable Development in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- [109] Johnston, L. A., Onjala, J. (2022). The Belt and Road Initiative's Eastern Africa Node: Survey of Economic, Demographic and Security Motivations. *Demographic and Security Motivation*. doi: <http://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4000937>
- [110] Zhang, K. H. (2022). Chinese Foreign Direct Investment in Africa: Its Motivations, Determinants, and Impact on the African Economies. *The Palgrave Handbook of Africa's Economic Sectors*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 603–624. doi: http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75556-0_23
- [111] Gao, R., Gao, Q., Zhuang, X., Sun, K. (2022). Extending Uppsala Model with Springboard Perspective in Emerging Multinational's Sequential Internationalisation – Evidence from a Construction Company's Expansion in Africa. *Journal of Risk and Financial Management*, 15 (1), 16. doi: <http://doi.org/10.3390/jrfm15010016>
- [112] Mlambo, V.H., Thusi, X., Zubane, S. and Mlambo, D.N., 2022. The African Continental Free Trade Area:: Challenges and Possible Successes. *Latin American Journal of Trade Policy*, 5(12), pp.75-106. doi: <http://doi.org/10.5354/0719-9368.2022.64897>
- [113] Strengthening regional value chains in the African Continental Free Trade Area 2022. African Union Commission. doi: <http://doi.org/10.1787/d5077890-en>
- [114] Hahn, M. (2022). The framework of bilateral trade agreements. *The Australia-European Union Free Trade Agreement*. Cham: Springer, 41–57. doi: http://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-91448-6_3
- [115] He, W. (2022). The Shared Future of a China-Africa Community: Ideological Implications and Implementation. In *The Changing World and Africa*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 355–379. doi: http://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-4983-7_17
- [116] Szilágyi, J., 2022. Clash of Interests between China and the United States along the Development of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. *Middle-Power Responses to China's BRI and America's Indo-Pacific Strategy*. Emerald Publishing Limited, 39–51.

Received date 15.06.2022

Accepted date 26.07.2022

Published date 29.07.2022

© The Author(s) 2022

This is an open access article under the
Creative Commons CC BY license

How to cite: Joseph, J. E. (2022). *The geostrategy of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AFCFTA) and third parties: a focus on China*. *EUREKA: Social and Humanities*, 4, 43–47. doi: <http://doi.org/10.21303/2504-5571.2022.002460>