

ROUTLEDGE

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Edited by Alpaslan Özerdem, Sinem Akgül-Açıkmeşe,
and Ian Liebenberg

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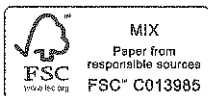
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THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN AFRICA

Haluk Karadağ

Introduction

More than 35,000 Chinese nationals were evacuated from Libya at the beginning of the civil war. They were doing business in this relatively small African country in 2011 (Zerba, 2014, p. 1). That substantial number exposes the increasing level of Sino-African trade and helps in understanding the strategic relationship between parties. However, the interest of the People's Republic of China (hereafter China) in Africa started with the founding leader Mao Zedong. He initiated the openness policy towards Africa and began to sign bilateral agreements with Africa's newly independent states in the late 1950s. After Mao, the leaders of China followed the same path and tried to increase cooperation.

Africa is critical for China in terms of economic benefits, and Chinese companies are pervasive across the continent. China became the largest trading partner of Africa and superseded its trade rivals, including the United States, during the last two decades. With the economic rise of China, a fierce economic competition between the great powers has started. As John Mearsheimer argues, great powers are always seeking power (political, military, economic) over their rivals in the international system. According to what is described as offensive realism, a highly competitive global market compels great powers to view one another as potential rivals. In this perspective, the tools of the international system, such as anarchy and distribution of power, shape states' behaviour, and the ultimate goal is to exert hegemony in the system. According to Mearsheimer, China as a rising power is eager to transform itself from a continental power to a global one in the world's economic system, and during this process, China's foreign policy behaviour is compatible with the offensive realist paradigm (Mearsheimer, 2001, pp. 4–21). Graham Allison also defines China's rise as a potential threat to the United States' supremacy by using an analogy of the inspiring Peloponnesian War and calls it the Thucydides's Trap which shifted power from Athens to Sparta, the two most powerful city states in ancient Greece (Allison, 2017, p. 12).

On the other hand, some other analysts argue that China's foreign policy diplomacy reflects the defensive realist paradigm, which defines the final goal of any state as preserving power, not increasing it, and China, even though its current status as 'aspiring global hegemon', is not posing a threat to any other state (Mearsheimer, 2001, p. 21; Liebenberg and Merwe, 2020, p. 189; Dye, 2008; D'Anieri, 2012, pp. 71–72). For example, unlike Mearsheimer, Ikenberry

implies that all power transitions do not cause offensive foreign policy behaviour, and the rise of China will not necessarily result in war (Ikenberry, 2008, p. 27). It seeks cooperation instead of competition, and the final goal of China is just integrating itself into the global economic order (Shiping, 2008, p. 151). In this context, China, who recently emerged as a powerful player in the international arena, uses its soft power (Nye, 2010, p. 26; Helms, 2012, p. 6), which is deeply embedded in its history and culture (Ding, 2010, p. 262) both regionally and elsewhere in the world.

While Africa is the new ground for economic and political competition among great powers, as an emerging leader, China requires economic integration for its survival and has been expanding its economic influence in Africa. This chapter explores China's leadership in Africa and the relationship between China and Africa in the historical, economic, educational, cultural, and military contexts. It also explores how China applies its current soft power doctrine in this region.

Political leadership and soft power

A common definition of leadership is "the attempt of one or more persons to influence the behaviour of a group of actors to realize a particular set of goals" (Parry and Bryman, 2006, p. 449). According to Winston and Paterson, "a leader is one or more people who select, equip, train, and influence one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organization's mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives" (Winston and Patterson, 2006, p. 7). In that sense, effective leadership requires having insights about the complexities and differences in followers' characters and motivations and concern for their long-term growth (Prentice, 1961, p. 104). The knowledge and technical adequacy of followers are also vital for a leader to be effective; thus building a team with individuals who possess self-efficacy and filling the detected skill gaps with education, training, and other means of support is integral for reaching the predetermined outcomes (Winston and Patterson, 2006, p. 8). Scholars who have long been discussing the differences between managers and leaders have noted that managers conduct routine managerial jobs such as planning, overseeing, and controlling. In contrast, leadership is about inspiring and motivating people towards a common vision set out by the leader (Kotter, 2001, p. 30).

Leadership in a private company or politics have both similarities and variances. In the political context of leadership, the goals and objectives are the political goals of a state or society. They thus are significantly different from those of a for-profit organization or an NGO. The exercise of power concerning the taking of forceful decisions and utilizing public resources when pursuing these political goals is closely related to political leadership. However, political leadership is not only about hegemony, dominance, and hard power. As introduced by Nye (2010, p. 7) and Helms (2012, p. 6), political leaders also benefit significantly from different forms of soft power, which involve cooperation instead of coercion and respecting the wishes of others while at the same time finding out common goals and objectives. According to Nye (1990, p. 10), the state's power sources have shifted from the population, location, and natural resources to education, technology, ideology, culture, and institutions. This is an important common point between individual-level leadership in a firm and leadership in a political context, as in both arenas, the leaders who do not enter into collaborative acts, such as in areas of technology, R&D, and education, are not regarded as positive and constructive, which makes it hard for others to follow them and look to them. In this respect, many states initiate projects involving developmental finance, technical cooperation, and humanitarian assistance, which are usually a part of a broader

diplomatic, trade, and investment agenda, as indicators of strong political leadership (Mawdsley and Marcondes, 2017, p. 2171).

Another substantial similarity is that both private and public sector leadership requires innovative and creative thinking. According to Tucker (1995, p. 17), political leadership covers the understanding of societal issues and problems and, in that respect, formulates unique solutions that can be more effective than the current ones and that gather the political and popular support for the realizations of these solutions. Finding these novel solutions to complex political challenges is recently investigated under the collaborative governance dimension of political leadership, where scholars have been discussing the creative and pragmatic uses of innovative policies for strengthening global political leadership (Torfing and Ansell, 2017, p. 51). Finally, both in private and in public sector leadership, conflict resolution is a critical common skill (Jiang et al., 2016, p. 607), to such extent that some scholars have argued that conflict resolution is a separate political system itself (Burton, 1990, p. 26).

In the Chinese context, scholars agree that China has ancient roots that support the use of soft power over hard power (Ding, 2010, p. 262). This can be traced back to the works of Sun Tzu, who advocated the use of diplomacy over war whenever possible. In the Chinese culture, the strategic defence approach, together with extensive diplomatic relations and collaboration and the choice of limited war or use of force, are two important antecedents of the current definition of soft power (Johnston, 1998, p. 25). In line with these historical antecedents, the current Chinese soft power doctrine involves avoiding conflict and seeking peaceful ascendance through cultural, economic, and political influences (Ramo, 2004, p. 37). Therefore, it is clear that soft power is both an integral and practical tool for China on its way to becoming a political leader in the global arena. Thus its applications can be noticed evidently in the international relations of this country, particularly with Africa.

Historical context

Colonial powers had been increasingly active in Africa since the 18th century. Due to Western colonialism, most African states gained their independence after the Second World War. In the period following the War, China emerged as a reasonable alternative to the West and a credible partner for the African states, particularly after the 1960s.

The first encounter between China and Africa had occurred in the 15th century during the period of Admiral Zheng He, the commander of the marine expedition unit of China (Tamura, 1997, p. 70). He mounted seven naval expeditions to the eastern coast of Africa from mainland China through Calicut (India) in around 1422 (Menzies, 2003, p. 118). Since then, no official contact was established between the regions until the Bandung Asian–African Conference was organized in 1955. However unrecognized by the United Nations member states, the policy-makers of Communist China decided to integrate into Third World countries, which they considered as a rational choice. The conference's main topics were anticolonialism, human rights, and South–South economic and cultural cooperation (Phillips, 2016, p. 329). Following the first encounter with African states, China frequently appeared in Africa after 1960 as a decisive financial donor. While being politically isolated from the rest of the world, Maoist China developed a foreign aid/public diplomacy strategy. Providing financial aid and technical support to the railroad known as the TAZARA Railway, constructed between Tanzania and Zambia, was one of China's first moves (Mwase, 1982, p. 2). Military involvement was limited to a once-off attempt to support one of the Angolese rebel groups, FNLA of Holden Roberto, until the Chinese government discovered that the FNLA was also funded by the CIA (Liebenberg and Merwe, 2020, p. 193). Friendly relationships initiated by Mao between China and African countries started to develop after the first China–Africa Cooperation forum in 2000.

Political significance

Following the Qing Dynasty rule, a new state called the Republic of China was established in 1911. Shortly after that, Soviet communism began to spread in China, culminating in establishing the Chinese Communist Party in 1921. Then violent armed conflict began between the Communists and Nationalists due to the power struggle in government control. The war between the two sides resulted in the loss of the mainland to the Chinese Communist Party and the Republic of China's government to Formosa, also known as the "great retreat to Taiwan". On the other side, the People's Republic of China (Communist China) was established on the mainland under Mao Zedong's leadership in 1949.

Politically, one of China's major foreign policy issues to solve is the recognition of the Republic of China (Taiwan) in the international environment based on its official policy that there is only one China and that Taiwan is the province of it. So, in the African context, China started to convince African countries to cut their ties with Taiwan due to its One China Policy. As a result of this persuasion policy, Burkina Faso, São Tomé, and Príncipe announced the termination of their official relationship with Taiwan. Within 54 African countries, only one country of Eswatini, previously known as Swaziland, still recognizes Taiwan, as of 2019 (Madowo 2019). Thus China persuaded 53 African states to cut its diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

In 2006, the Chinese government announced the document on *China's African Policy* for the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Africa. In that document, China stated its commitment to "establish and develop a new type of strategic partnership with Africa, featuring political equality and mutual trust, economic 'win-win cooperation' and cultural exchanges" (Cheng and Shi, 2009, p. 93). Implications of these strategies were later reflected in all political, economic, and cultural aspects of Chinese relations with African countries.

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China seeks to establish good relationships with African states in order to benefit both sides. From the perspective of African governments, these states have a reliable partner in the Council, which would prevent them from facing unintended consequences of any political decisions. This also means that China's veto power is providing them safety against any hostile decisions, as can be seen in the case of the UN Security Council meeting for Zimbabwe in 2008. China (along with Russia) vetoed the decisions on arms embargo and other sanctions against the government of Zimbabwe (UN Security Council Meeting No.5933, 2008, S/PV.5933). China is careful at being diplomatically neutral on the internal conflicts between the African states (Brooks, 2012, p. 112).

In contrast, China took part in several peacekeeping operations in Africa under the UN forces, including Congo (Kinshasa), Liberia, and Darfur in Sudan (Cheng and Shi, 2009, p. 92). African support is important for China because some unresolved foreign policy issues are still waiting for solutions, and during these processes, China might need support from African partners. For instance, the internationalized Uighur and Tibet problems are serious disputes for China, and they have the potential to cause trouble in the global context. Africa's diplomatic support is likewise hugely important when China faces severe criticisms from the international community for human rights violations and its Taiwan policy (Cheng and Shi, 2009). In the case of punitive political/economic measures in the UN General Assembly and any other organizations, African states potentially vote on China's side. These examples show that the relations between African states and China are not as asymmetrical as claimed by some scholars (Asongu and Aminkeng, 2013, p. 267), as in many other cases, Africa has counterbalanced the power relations for making favourable decisions towards China in the international arena, indicating a "largely symbiotic and mutually beneficial" relationship (Bodomo, 2009, p. 176).

Economic relations

The 'peaceful rise' rhetoric is crucial in China's transformational process, based on the economic decisions taken during the Chinese Communist Party Congress in 1978 (Zheng, 2005, p. 19; Jinghao, 2010, p. 4). The four modernizations that China embarked on during the 1980s (economic, agricultural, technology, and defence) strengthened China's position as a potential international actor (Wenming, 1984, p. 19). Then Chinese President Hu Jintao introduced China's new political change with this term to the world (Radtko, 2003, p. 9), which has frequently been used by the Chinese authorities afterwards. However, China started its coordination and cooperation diplomacy (so-called public diplomacy) during the Cold War years as a direct tool of soft power exertion and execution of political leadership in the region. The first economic encounter of China with African states took place in Zhou En-Lai's visit in 1964. En-Lai declared Eight Principles on Economic and Technical Assistance of China to African states in his visit. This declaration was among the first signals of China's specific foreign policy objectives towards the continent. According to these principles, the Chinese government guarantees that (Cohen, 1973, p. 75):

- 1 Foreign aid policy will always be based on the equality principle.
- 2 No intervention will be conducted in the internal problems of African states.
- 3 Financial aid will be provided with no or the lowest interest rates, and in case of failure of reimbursement, there will be an extension for the time to pay back.
- 4 The purpose of the aid is not to create dependent states for China but to support them for being self-sufficient.
- 5 The target is to provide aid for quick response projects for African states.
- 6 Poor-quality equipment and material will not be used during the projects, and in the case of any malfunction, the defective commodity will be replaced.
- 7 During technical assistance, the technical personnel of the recipient country will be supported by Chinese counterparts to fully master their works.
- 8 Aid workers, technicians, and engineers dispatched by the Chinese government will be served the same as their counterparts and will have the same standard of living as recipient countries' experts during the projects in Africa.

After these eight principles, which provide a degree of superiority, China follows a no-strings-attached investment, financial, and technical assistance model in Africa, combining economic growth and foreign policy objectives, which are regarded as more favourable compared to the Western counterparts by the host countries (Zafar, 2007, p. 106). This is in direct alignment with The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence of China, which can be listed as "mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence" (Ding, 2010, p. 267) and entail the major elements of its soft power doctrine. China's economic activities in Africa are led by foreign direct investment (FDI) and international trade. Concerning FDI, China's FDI inflows to Africa jumped from US\$200 million to USD\$2.9 billion in 2011 (Busse et al., 2016, p. 234) to USD\$8.7 billion in 2017 and USD\$12 billion USD in 2018 (Herrero and Jianwei, 2019), making China the fastest growing investor country in Africa. While the primary motivation of China's FDI inflows has been criticized as targeting its rich natural resources (Ayodele and Sotola, 2014, p. 6), the results of the empirical study by Shan et al. (2018) showed that the main attraction for Chinese FDI in Africa is the market size of the host country, instead of natural resources. The analysis by Asongu and Aminkeng (2013) similarly concluded that

no significant evidence suggested support for the “neo-colonialism” claims against China in its investment and trade associations with African countries, whereas the study conducted by Gu (2009) indicated that Chinese companies target African markets mainly for the market opportunities and intense domestic competition.

The Chinese investments have some significant differences concerning Western FDI projects. Firstly, the Chinese government imposed no political or economic requirements on host countries when making agreements. Secondly, Chinese investments were made in the areas where Western countries were reluctant to do so, such as agriculture and manufacturing (Ayodele and Sotola, 2014, p. 2). Studies show that while the majority (75%) of the Western FDI in Africa has been in oil, 64% of Chinese FDI in Africa between 1979 and 2000 was in manufacturing (Sautman and Hairong, 2007, p. 81). As a result, the success of Chinese investments in the Third World economies, particularly in Africa, started a new discussion on whether democracy was a prerequisite for economic development and can only be pioneered by private sector institutions (Gu, 2009, p. 571; Sautman and Hairong, 2007, p. 81).

At the economic level, China became the largest trading partner and biggest aid donor of African countries. As previously mentioned, the Tanzania–Zambia Railway project (TAZARA) was China's first penetration into Africa. This project is important not only for showing China's financial and technical support, but it also proved that it is one of the trustable partners of African states. Before China's aid, Tanzania and Zambia had applied for the financial support of the World Bank. However, their application had been turned down by the organization (Mwase, 1982, p. 2). Rejection paved the way for China to be a partner of African states. The successful completion of the project in five years increased China's credibility for the continent to a greater extent. With this project, China's African episode started with a success story, which increasingly continues today. South Africa, Nigeria, and Zambia are the countries taking the lead in trade, and other countries are getting high levels of support from China. Foreign direct investment and finance, construction, and manufacturing are among significant investments by sector. The Chinese Government also provided financial support to African countries through the public and private banks, combining aid, trade, and cooperation, particularly in manufacturing and factory assembly, agriculture, and minerals and forests (Zezeza, 2014, p. 153). For instance, the China Development Bank (CDB) invested in 92 projects in 36 African countries, with a total of over US\$4.6 billion until 2018 (Li, 2020, p. 3). The development projects that were selected for the loans generated income and were based on making the host country self-reliant, which is hugely different from the loans from international financial institutions (Ayodele and Sotola, 2014, p. 6). Financial promotions were also made available to private Chinese companies under the Going Out Strategy of the Chinese government, including zero- or low-interest loans and tax incentives to increase the volume of overseas investment, which resulted in a considerable increase in Chinese private companies starting operations in Africa (Gu, 2009, p. 584).

In terms of international trade, bilateral trade relations between China and Africa have been rising in the last two decades. While China's export to Africa was US\$7 billion in 2002, it increased to US\$105 billion in 2018. Also, Chinese imports from African countries were US\$4.6 billion in 2002 and rose to US\$99 billion in 2018. As shown in Figure 13.1, China's exports are always higher than its imports. However, there was a massive gap between its export (US\$156 billion) and import (US\$47.5 billion) in 2015. According to the export rates, South Africa (US\$16.2 billion) was taking the lead, and Nigeria (US\$13.4 billion) was the second, and Egypt (US\$12 billion) was the third among the 54 African states in 2018. As Bodomo (2009) stated, South Africa, Nigeria, and Egypt are the three African countries that achieved a more symmetrical power position with China, as not all the African countries have strong economies. From the perspectives of imports, South Africa (US\$27.3 billion) was the first, Angola (US\$25.8 billion) was the second,

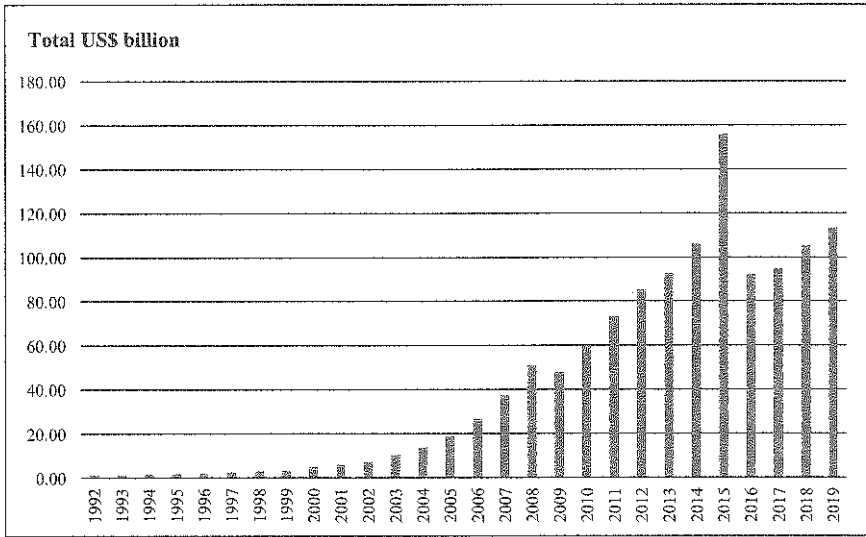


Figure 13.1 China–Africa Research Initiative

Source: John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. Retrieved from www.sais-cari.org/data-china-africa-trade. Data FY 2019 retrieved from (Nyabiage, 2020)

and Congo (US\$6.8 billion) was the third country in the continent in recent years (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, retrieved from <https://comtrade.un.org/data/>).

Forums on China–Africa Cooperation are essential components of the economic relationship. Since the first one held in 2000 as a ministerial conference, forums have been one of the significant leverages between China and African states and play an essential role in developing a multifaceted relationship between the parties. Forums also play a vital role in relationship building via political, economic, educational, scientific, cultural, social, technical, and security mechanisms. After the first meeting, which was held in China in 2000, others were organized in Ethiopia (2003), China (2006), Egypt (2009), China (2012), South Africa (2015), China (2018) consecutively (FOCAC, 2019). Except for Eswatini, 53 African states, which have established diplomatic relations with China, are members of the FOCAC Forum (FOCAC, 2020). Forums have been established on the economic issues initially; however, they were later extended to other areas. The summit of 2006 (Beijing), which was attended by the highest level of government representatives from 48 African countries, was one of the best examples of public diplomacy activities conducted by the Chinese government, indicating that China can use its strong financial, political, and cultural resources for having a more soft power–focused approach (Wang, 2008, p. 264). Forums turned out to be a kind of China’s public diplomacy business in Africa. In the 2018 summit of FOCAC in Beijing, Xi Jinping pointed out eight initiatives for the partner states: industrial promotion, infrastructure connectivity, trade, green development, capacity building, health care, exchange programs, and peace and security concerns (Tiezzi, 2018). It seems cooperation between China and African states will go much further in the future.

As one of the world’s leading countries of the fourth industrial revolution, China became Africa’s biggest trade partner and trustable donor. Especially in the infrastructure business, China dominates in comparison with its European and American rivals and can always undercut them on price. According to Daan Roggeveen, the MORE architecture company founder,

any construction project in Africa higher than three floors or longer than three kilometres is most likely going to be built by Chinese companies (Shephard, 2019). Indeed infrastructure is what African states need, and China is the most important service provider both financially and physically.

Other than the construction business, Chinese firms are taking the lead in the telecommunication sector. During the 2018 FOCAC summit, an action plan for 2019–2021 was signed between sides, including one for telecommunication infrastructure. The plan, named “Forum on China–Africa Cooperation Beijing Action Plan”, includes China’s support for Chinese tech companies, which (will) work in African telecommunication infrastructure in addition to its export credit and export credit insurance to key projects in that field (FOCAC Action Plan, 2019). The advantageous side of Chinese tech companies is that the loans provided by China’s Exim Bank for the countries which do not have the capital to finance these vast projects. With China’s financial support, Chinese firms have the priority in the technological investments of African states. Huawei Technologies and Zhongxing Telecom Ltd. (ZTE) are two best known Chinese flagship telecommunications companies in Africa. Huawei, entering the market in Africa in 1998 with its first office in Pretoria, South Africa, has played a significant role with ZTE in the continent. In addition to Huawei and ZTE, many Chinese tech companies are doing business in Africa today. These firms are operating with the Chinese style of combining aid with business, so it is a request-based aid system (Brautigam, 2009, pp. 140–141).

Educational and cultural cooperation

Education is one of the main instruments of public diplomacy and an important tool of soft power that has a long-term impact on societies. Scholarships provided to students, people-to-people exchanges, or teaching international students foreign languages are powerful tools used in public diplomacy. Leadership in the political sphere requires public diplomacy applications that can be used in the global environment, so it links soft power to conflict resolution. Familiarity with culture and language increases mutual understandings and facilitates the problematic issues in regional politics. China is using these instruments in Africa successfully, especially through the FOCAC mechanism. The FOCAC summit action plan (2019–2021) provides detailed information about educational and cultural issues that will be implemented in this context. China established a “South–South Cooperation and Development Institute” under the body of Peking University to enhance cooperation and collaboration between China and Africa in 2015. This Institute provides master’s and PhD programs to African students with 14 academic faculty to share China’s governance experiences (ISSCAD Institute, 2020). China has opened the floor for 1,000 high-calibre African governmental personnel in addition to 50,000 government scholarships and 50,000 training opportunities for seminars and workshops for professionals from several disciplines (FOCAC, Action Plan).

Confucius Institutes and Classrooms are also crucial for China’s public diplomacy in the continent. Since the first one opened in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2005, there are 54 Confucius Institutes in 33 African countries and 27 Classrooms as of 2018. While in most cases, these Institutes are based on university campuses, Confucius Classrooms can be based in high schools and colleges. The Institutes and Classrooms’ primary focus is teaching Mandarin and introducing Chinese culture to the African students, scholars, and the public. Institutes also organize events and exchanges among the students. One of the pros of being a student in the Institute or Classroom is having the chance of a two-week visit to China in coordination with a partner school or university (Chen, 2018). In the 2019–2020 Action Plan, China restates that the Chinese language would be part of its national curriculum as a second language in Africa. Thus the Chinese

government is taking the responsibility of sending language teachers to Africa and allocating funding for them (FOCAC Action Plan, 2019).

In the same FOCAC Action Plan, China expresses support to some academic exchange programs on science and technology initiated by China itself, such as the International Outstanding Young Scientists Exchange Program, Cirrus Project (Innovative Talent Exchange Project), and African Young Scientists in China Program. In addition to these programs, China will support the China–Africa Joint Research Center. For the Center’s requirements, it is going to provide scholarships to 150 African students for master’s and PhD education at Chinese universities in China. As part of its technological aid programme, China will establish Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs) in some African states to improve research and production capability. On the think tank level, Action Plan requires increasing coordination between institutions. For this purpose, China proposes to invite 200 African scholars from several African think tanks to visit China each year. Furthermore, the Chinese government plans to send young volunteers in general support of Africa (FOCAC Action Plan, 2019).

Teaching Chinese culture to Africans and learning their culture from them are also among the Chinese Government’s priorities. China is volunteering to establish cooperation mechanisms, according to the 2019–2021 Action Plan. Mechanisms involve opening cultural centres, supporting national and sub-national exchanges, nurturing sister city approaches, and, in the final stage, understanding their bilateral art, culture, sports, and tourism activities (FOCAC Action Plan, 2019).

Peace and security concerns

As mentioned in political leadership literature, conflict resolution is a major dimension of soft power exertion. According to the 2019–2021 FOCAC Action Plan Article 6 (peace and security cooperation), China will assist African states and organizations in establishing African peace and security architecture, consisting of security assistance programs, peacekeeping, and military exchange programs, anti-piracy operations, and combating terrorism. Under these categories, the implementation of fifty security assistance programs was planned by Chinese authorities for their African counterparts. In the academic field, efforts to develop the Sino–African peace and security action plan, initiated and executed by China, are named ‘military public diplomacy’. China’s return to the global scene and its willingness to participate in peace operations are examples of soft power and defence diplomacy. These tools are common in public diplomacy and demonstrate the impact of military power on public diplomacy. Public diplomacy and soft power, in a broader sense, are concerned with affecting the ideas, decisions, and preferences of the policy-makers of other countries. Military forces, hierarchical and sophisticated by nature, function as the significant public diplomatic agencies. This part analyses a representative number of public diplomatic actions involving the military. It evaluates specific cases to explain how military operations, cooperation, and coordination positively contribute to China’s image abroad (Karadağ, 2017, p. 75). For instance, the Chinese Navy’s hospital ship “Peace Ark” has visited countries in need of medical assistance, all under the name of “Harmonious Mission” since 2011. During the 88-days long “Harmonious Mission-2010”, it visited Djibouti, Kenya, Tanzania, and Seychelles and spent some time to cure and help to the African people (Xiaokun, 2010).

Peacekeeping operations deserve specific importance, according to the FOCAC 2019 Action Plan. In its plan, China restates that it will continue sending peacekeeping troops upon request of the United Nations in Africa. Figure 13.2 indicates the troop contributions of China to the United Nations peacekeeping operations. Except for the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) and the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP),

Table 13.1 Peacekeeping operations contribution of China in 2019

Mission	Description	Male	Female	Total
UNIFIL	Contingent	392	18	410
UNFICYP	Police	4	0	4
MINURSO	Experts	10	0	10
MINUSMA	Contingent	399	14	413
MINUSMA	Staff	12	1	13
MONUSCO	Contingent	207	11	218
MONUSCO	Experts	7	1	8
MONUSCO	Staff	5	0	5
UNAMID	Contingent	365	0	365
UNAMID	Staff	4	2	6
UNIFIL	Staff	8	1	9
UNMISS	Experts	5	0	5
UNMISS	Staff	21	1	22
UNMISS	Contingent	1000	31	1031
UNTSO	Experts	3	1	4
UNMISS	Police	19	3	22
Total		2,461	84	2,545

Source: Retrieved from UN Peacekeeping, Troop and Police Contributions (https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/3_country_and_mission_15.pdf)

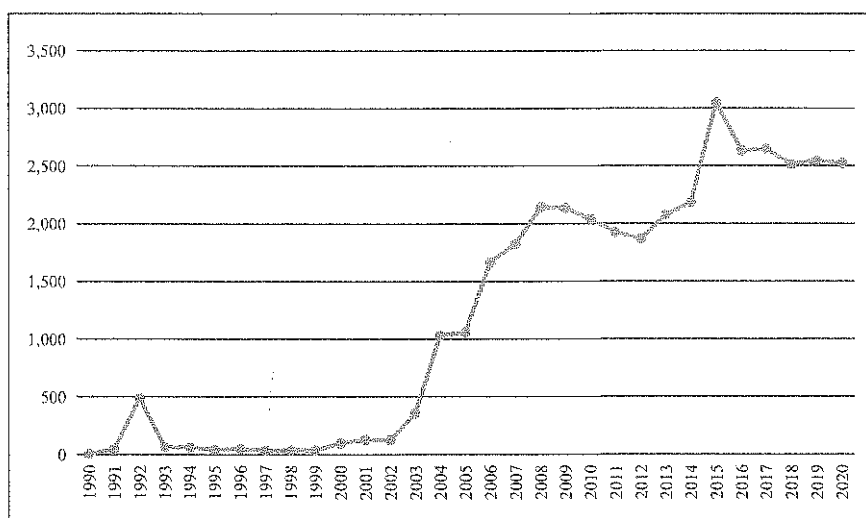


Figure 13.2 Troop contribution of China to UN peacekeeping missions

Source: Retrieved from UN Peacekeeping, Troop and Police Contributions (<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/troop-and-police-contributors>)

all missions are in Africa. Among all service members in the peacekeeping operations, China has just eight people serving in UNTSO and UNFICYP in 2019.

China started to send personnel to the United Nations peacekeeping operations in 1990. In the beginning, there were only five service members of China in 1990; however, that number

increased to 2,545 by 2019. In the troop contributions of China to the UN Peacekeeping Operations in Africa (Figure 13.2), there seemed to be five critical jumps in troop numbers in history. In 1992, 2003, 2004, 2006, and 2015, personnel numbers increased substantially (UN Peacekeeping, 2020). These increases mostly occurred after 2003, indicating that China decided to be more open and be part of the world as a member of the World Trade Organization at the end of 2001.

China allocated US\$100 million to African states' peace and security agenda, which aims at two security initiatives: the African Standby Force (ASF) and the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis (Chun, 2018, p. 127). In addition to direct financial aid, China established a new forum under the name of 'peace and security' with FOCAC member states in Beijing on 14 July 2019. Ambassador Smail Chergui, African Union (AU) Commissioner for Peace and Security, expressed his gratitude to China for its valuable support to AU in his opening remarks of the forum. He mentioned China's yearly funding support of US\$1.2 million to AMISOM since 2011 and additional US\$80 million financial support for critical security priorities such as terrorist groups in the Horn of Africa, Lake Chad Basin, and Sahel region (Chergui, 2019). China's focus on Africa has increased by organizing mutual senior-level visits of defence and military personnel. China will continue to support African states' military academies and research institutes and deepen military and academic personnel exchange programs (FOCAC Action Plan, 2019).

China sends the highest number of peacekeepers to Africa among the UN Security Council's permanent members, playing a supportive role in its leadership in the continent. China's friendly attitude toward Africa exposes a reality: it has become an indispensable player for the African states.

Conclusion

Communist China has been an active player in the international system since the 1970s, and Africa has significant importance on China's economic development. For some academics, China's ambitious motivation could be understood through the offensive realist paradigm, whereas some argue that the defensive realist paradigm is the tool for understanding this stance. Regardless of political logic, Africa is the new ground for economic and political competition among the great powers. As a status quo power with an enormous population, China requires economic integration for its survival and has been expanding its economic influence in Africa. While establishing relations with African states, China has used an unorthodox foreign policy mechanism of public diplomacy. The role of public diplomacy in the rise of China can be stated as exchanging the old propaganda tools for new instruments of public policy for forging a more positive environment of international relations, reflecting the sympathetic and warm aspects of Chinese culture for creating a softer image of China as finally weighing values and norms in building long-term and beneficial relationships with African countries (Wang, 2008). It can be said that China's public diplomacy activities play a vital role in its leadership position in Africa.

The leadership was once more highlighted when China turned the COVID-19 crisis into an advantage and implemented an online meeting with the head of states of Africa in mid-June 2020. During the Extraordinary China–Africa Summit on Solidarity Against COVID-19 meeting, China declared for helping African states combat the pandemic and providing financial aid to the worst-hit African countries. In addition, China announced a campaign to silence the guns for the period and lift the sanctions on the republics of Zimbabwe and Sudan. It also restated China's stance on Taiwan and Hong Kong. While China was under significant pressure from the very beginning of the pandemic, she succeeded in gaining popularity among African states

only a few months later. Consequently, China used COVID-19 as an opportunity to support its regional leadership (MOFA PRC, 2020).

China's integration into Africa has been under the core categories of politics, economics, education, peace, and security. Forums on China–Africa cooperation (FOCAC) provide China political legitimacy to interfere with African business and trade. In this respect, the FOCAC summits' decisions are paving the way for the increase in cooperation. For instance, in the political realm, China got international support for its vital One China Policy, and close cooperation and coordination mechanisms provided by FOCAC facilitated the cutting some of African states' relations with Taiwan. At the educational level, close coordination helped to open more Confucius Institutes and Classrooms. In the economic context, relations are tighter when compared to other realms. With the positive impact of FOCAC meetings, coordination on peace and security issues is on the rise between the parties. Consequently, with the support of the preceding mechanisms, mutual interdependence, cooperation, and coordination between China and African states will likely increase in the future, as China continues to impose its soft power as a strong political/economic leader in the region.

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