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**THE IMPLICATIONS OF FORUM ON CHINA-AFRICA
COOPERATION (FOCAC) ON AFRICA'S REGIONAL
INTEGRATION: PROGRESS OR RETROGRESS?**

BY

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**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY
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INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS

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DECLARATION

I, **Dorcias Owusu Obikyere**, do hereby declare that this dissertation is the end product of my research under the supervision of Dr. Juliana Appiah of the Legon Center of International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), at the University of Ghana towards the award of a Master of Arts (MA) in International Affairs, and that, to the best of my knowledge, it neither contains materials previously published by another person nor materials which have been accepted for the award of any other degree by this or any other university except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Jehovah God Almighty, who has guided, protected, and kept me healthy throughout my MA program. It is also dedicated to my beloved grandmother, Mary Agyapong, who has always been a source of strength and inspiration in my life.



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AEC	-	African Economic Community
AfCFTA	-	African Continental Free Trade Area
AGOA	-	African Growth Opportunity Act
AMU	-	Arab Maghreb Union
ASA	-	Africa-South America
AU	-	African Union
BRI	-	Belt and Road Initiative
CFTA	-	Continental Free Trade Area
COMESA	-	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
DSSI	-	G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative
EAC	-	East African Community
ECCAS	-	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	-	Economic Community of West African States
EU	-	European Union
FOCAC	-	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
FTA	-	Free Trade Area
IAD	-	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IMF	-	International Monetary Fund
LECIAD	-	Legon Center for International Affairs and Diplomacy
OAU	-	Organization of African Unity
PRC	-	People's Republic of China
RECs	-	Regional Economic Communities
RTAA	-	Reciprocal Trade Agreement Act

- SADC - South African Development Community
- UNCTAD - United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
- UNECA - United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
- UN - United Nations



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ABSTRACT

Established in 2000, the Forum on China Africa Relations (FOCAC) has been the major platform driving China's international relations in Africa. FOCAC is designed to promote commerce, cultural exchanges, development, peace and security, the eradication of poverty, the building of green infrastructure, the improvement of public health, and investment engagements between China and the African Continent. The growing relationship between China and Africa has given rise to the unsettling idea that this collaboration would impede Africa's integration goal. Situated within the analytical tools of supranationalism, the study combines primary data (interviews) with secondary sources: books, book chapters, journal articles, reports and online sources in analysing the implications of FOCAC on Africa's regional integration drive. The study found that FOCAC makes considerable investment in Africa in the areas of infrastructure and economic cooperation. While there are visible threats because of the Chinese government's foreign policy of raw material exploitation in Africa and a stronger economic option away from the AU, the study recommends establishment, imposition, and enforcement of monetary and criminal sanctions against Chinese Officials, MNCs, citizens and other actors who do not comply with acceptable standards of operations within the scope of FOCAC and other laws guiding trade and investment within the African continent. Additionally, the Africa Union must take advantage of its admission to FOCAC to demonstrate leadership by charting the African states must follow while negotiating their bilateral accords with China, directed toward achieving the more general, far-reaching objective of a regionally integrated Africa.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

The economic scramble of China into the African continent is hinged on the mercantilist approach. Chinese companies backed by their government seek to invest in the Nation States with high political risks mainly to have access to natural resources and energy, secure a new consumer market for their finished products and change the political economy of the international space by challenging the concept of Western hegemony and reshaping international institutions to suit their interest (Shoham and Rosenboim, 2009). The rapid expansion of the Chinese industrial sector placed a high demand on China to source more natural resources and export markets. Thus, Africa was identified as a strategic spot to provide raw materials for China's industrial drive to address its long- and short-term demands. The Chinese economy imports more than 20% of global fuel and mineral resources. The procurement of oil is regarded as a matter of national security in the Chinese dispensation (Wu et al., 2017). Hence, the government deploy all levels of diplomacy and state resources to meet the state's demand for energy. The establishment of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) is to drive diplomatic and political relations to give legitimacy to the acquisition of energy and natural resources by Chinese companies. This further insulates and protects their importation of energy and other resources from the target export country to their country.

As captured by Zweig & Jianhai (2005), China's foreign policy directives mirror its domestic policy, which aims at guaranteeing a continual flow of raw materials to shore up its surging industrial and economic development process. To further sustain the flow of these raw materials,

China re-strategized its “Go-Out” policy to lock in resources by establishing long-term supply agreements with African states.

FOCAC is a Chinese policy set to advance diplomatic relations, trade, people-to-people exchanges, development, peace and security, poverty reduction, green and infrastructure development, public health and investment engagements between China and the African Continent. The FOCAC process mirrors the five principal tenets of peaceful co-existence which establishes China’s foreign policy.

The year 2000 saw the inception of the FOCAC. Since its inception, trade between both the Chinese and African economies have witnessed a surge with both economies complementing each other through the spectrum of African countries exchanging their raw materials with manufactured goods, debt relief, aid, security package etc. from china with little or no conditionalities as compared to the West (Alden et al., 2011; Alden, 2017). This trade spectrum has begged several questions in the development space. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development warns of a possible natural resource trap in cognizance of the relative phases of development. The FOCAC has set the stage for advancing relations between China and Africa and for promoting south-south relations (Aiping & Zhan, 2018). The FOCAC process is hinged on improved cooperation in the agricultural space, facilitating access to a wider market, soft loans and credit linked with infrastructure development, debt relief, exploration and effective utilization of natural resources, transportation, medical care, investment, banking, and development assistance. This has made China one of Africa’s key trading partners after the United States and France.

The reduction of, and gradual withdrawal of the traditional donors in financing medium-to-long-term infrastructure projects created a yawning gap which China has filled since the early 2000s. As a result, Africa becomes China's strategic location to exert its influence on a global scale. China has demonstrated this through its foreign policy initiative of strong diplomacy. On the back of its One China policy which aims at isolating Taiwan and declining its influence in the African continent; all nation-states in the African Union recognize China except Eswatini which still recognizes Taiwan (Hoffman, 2022). Also, to exert its influence in the international space, China seeks to challenge the concept of Western hegemony and thus has built strong diplomatic ties with resource-endowed states of which the African Continent is a key player. It also appeals to developing countries through a paradigm of development where democratic values are not a prerequisite to development but gives them the room to develop their models and approaches to economic growth. This poses a big threat to the hegemonic dictates of the West in the global economic dispensation.

This new political paradigm is reflected in China's engagement with Africa through FOCAC. With China's principle of non-interference in its interactions with developing countries, it has room to engage with undemocratic regimes to seek its national interest of resource exploitation without any pressure for regime change. A case in point is the Democratic Republic of Congo. Again, China's Belt and Road Initiative demonstrates its use of soft power to strengthen itself economically and reshape the global balance of power (Bush, 2021).

Highly indebted and least developed African countries have been relieved of debts which are government interest-free loans. The premier FOCAC conference saw the cancellation of 1.5 billion

US dollars worth of debts owed by African countries (Tan-Mullins et al., 2010; Ubi, 2014). In 2006, 2009, 2015 and 2018 summits and conferences also saw some African States being relieved of their outstanding debts to lessen the financial burden on these countries. The African Union Conference Centre and office space were established by China under the FOCAC 2006 summit process. This has contributed to deepening the integration process of African States. China is of key relevance to the social and economic development of Africa. This is evident in Chinese assistance in the human resource development of some Africans, the improvement in educational infrastructure and agriculture, knowledge transfer, improvement in the healthcare sector, and social and economic infrastructural growth among others. Africa, as a vast continent, is home to various regional integration initiatives, including those led by the African Union (AU) as well as regional blocs such as the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN–SAD), the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (European Commission, 2023). These regional integration efforts aim to promote economic cooperation, political stability, and social development within their respective regions. However, it is essential to acknowledge that Africa's path to seamless continental integration remains a complex and ongoing process. The study will primarily focus on the implication of FOCAC on the broader continental integration efforts spearheaded by the AU.



1.2 Statement of Research Problem

China-Africa relations have provided benefits to both actors but have also raised concerns about their impact on the political and economic cohesion of African states. Despite the existence of strategic channels for African Union (AU) engagement as a collective entity under the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), such as the China-AU Strategic Dialogue, it is evident that several economic projects are primarily negotiated and implemented on a bilateral level, rather than at the continental level of the AU.

The AU has, over the years, sought to negotiate African-China cooperation at the sub-regional level to enhance the economic benefits of the continent and deepen its regional integration agenda. However, progress in this regard has been limited. While FOCAC has contributed to Africa's economic and social development, it has also posed challenges to the continent's integration agenda. Intra-regional trade remains below 20%, with South Africa dominating trade in the region (Hartzenberg 2011). This implies that approximately 80% of Africa's trade is with external regions or states of which China's total import and export volume with Africa is 113.5 billion U.S. dollars (FOCAC, 2023).. This situation can be attributed to the high production of primary goods in Africa with limited value addition, trade barriers, low manufacturing capacity, and poor implementation of trade agreements, among other factors (OECD Economic Surveys: 2017).

However, several studies (Ademola et al. 2016; Miao et al. 2020; Yalew 2019) have revealed mixed results in Sino-Africa engagements over the years. With a significant Chinese presence in the region and Africa's predominant trade pattern of exporting primary goods, Africa has increasingly imported Chinese manufactured products. This has deepened its reliance on

manufactured Chinese goods and hindered intra-regional trade and integration within Africa (Ndzendze & Hoeymissen, 2018). Consequently, China's bilateral engagements with individual African nations pose a significant challenge to the continent's economic integration efforts and undermine Africa's collective industrialization aspirations. The agenda for Africa's economic integration, which should be achieved through enhanced trade and closer ties, now faces uncertainty, with China representing a formidable obstacle to Africa's regional integration. Given the challenges posed to continental integration, this study seeks to examine the implications of FOCAC within the context of Africa's regional integration by conducting a single-case analysis of FOCAC and how it potentially hampers Africa's economic integration.

1.3 Research Questions

- How does the FOCAC agreement contribute to Africa's regional integration goal?
- How have the integration principles of the AU been incorporated and implemented into the FOCAC agreement?
- How are African states engaging China to meet their continental integration objectives?
- What threat does FOCAC pose to African integration?

1.4 Research Objectives

The general objective is to see how relevant FOCAC has been in Africa's regional integration and specifically to:

- Review the FOCAC agreements and analyse their contribution to Africa's regional integration goal

- Analyze Africa's regional integration principles and how they have been incorporated and implemented in the FOCAC agreement.
- Examine how the African States are engaging China to meet their continental integration objectives.
- Analyze FOCAC's threat to Africa's economic integration agenda.

1.5 Scope

This study covers the economic engagements of China and Africa since 2005 - 2021. The subjects of analysis in this study encompass the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) agreement, various policies of the African Union (AU), and other relevant economic engagements and agreements that shape the dynamics between China and Africa (Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), African Union's Agenda 2063, African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), China-Africa Development Fund (CADFund), China-Africa Industrial Capacity Cooperation Fund).

1.6 The rationale of the Study

The African Union has played a laudable role in the continent's economic integration drive. However, a clear structural problem exists in the low commitment of African States to transfer some degree of their sovereignty which they jealously cherish to supranational bodies (Zartman,1995) though this has the power to effectively enhance their ability to negotiate, coordinate and evaluate the implementation of mutual projects and agreements for the *continent's* collective gain. Thus, the results of the study of the implication of FOCAC on Africa's regional integration may aid governments, the African Union, Regional Economic blocs or cooperation and African statesmen to address issues of African collective interest and economic co-operations.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This work uses the theory of supranationalism as its theoretical framework. The theory evolved from the theories of integration. Supranationalism gained prominence in Europe after the second world war. Supranationalism refers to a governance arrangement where the Nation States of an international community cede some of their sovereignty to a decision-making body which wields more power over the individual States. In the paradigm of supranationalism, national states are bound by the decision of most cooperating States thus losing their rights to Veto.

As captured by Nugent (2003), “supranationalism takes inter-state relations beyond cooperation into integration and involves some loss of national sovereignty.” Supranationalism requires a pool of sovereignty from nation-states in each community to enhance the increased agency of the given body to act on behalf of member states. Thus, supranational communities have the agency to establish international laws or normative principles to regulate the affairs of member states with the end goal of conflict prevention and economic cooperation.

Inferring from this line of thought, the AU’s structure and the process involve national governments of all 55 Nation States which cede some of their sovereignty to the regional body as stipulated in its Constitutive Act. The confirmation of supranational powers by the heads of states of member states in the AU can be seen from the preamble of the AU’s Constitutive Act which says: “We, Heads of States and Government of the member states . . . [are] determined to take all necessary measures to strengthen our common institutions and provide them with the necessary

powers and resources to enable them to discharge their respective mandates effectively.” (African Union, 2000/01).

The common institutions of the AU include the Pan-African Parliament, the Assembly, the Executive council, the Commission, the Peace and Security Council, the African Justice Court, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, and the African Peer Review Mechanism are established with supranational autonomy to address security, right-based, economic and governance concerns on the continent (ibid). For example, Article 4(h) of the AU’s charter, accords the AU the supranational autonomy to intervene in situations of crimes against humanity, genocides, war crimes etc. in member states.

Weiler (1981) makes a distinction between two facets of supranationalism in the context of normative and decisional supranationalism in his analytical work on supranationalism in the European community. These two facets of supranationalism confer the supranational status on an international community (Fagbayibo,2008). Weiler argues that normative supranationalism constitutes “the relationships and hierarchy which exists between the EU policies and legal measures on one hand, and competing policies and legal measures of member states on the other”. In this light, the AU as an institution and on the back of its normative stipulations in its constitutive act intervened in the internal affairs of its members which had impaired sovereignty. A nation-state’s sovereignty is said to be impaired when rights-based crimes such as crimes against humanity, genocides etc. are committed (Goldman, 1994).

He refers to decisional supranationalism as “relates to the institutional framework and decision-making processes by which Community policies and measures are, in the first place, initiated,

debated and formulated, then promulgated and finally executed” (Weiler, 1981). Article 7 of the African Union’s Constitutive Act represents the regional body’s decisional supranationalism. The article mandates the Assembly to ratify agreements by “consensus or failing which, two-thirds majority of the member states of the Union, apart from procedural matters which require a simple majority.”

Pescatore (1974) also brings to bear the three main criteria of supranationalism. These include the presence of common interests and valuation-state sales, the establishment of common power and the sovereignty of these powers. These three main criteria of supranationalism are reflective of the ideals of the AU. It is however worth noting that though the AU’s Constitutive Act has elements of normative and decisional supranationalism, the elements of normative supranationalism are yet to take shape as nonmember states have not been intentional about the actual transfer of sovereignty.

Most of the criticisms levelled against supra-nationalism come from the realist school. Kenneth Waltz, Hans Morgenthau Robert Gilpin, and other realists maintain that cooperation of any kind is a fluke and cannot deliver equal and even benefits to members. The central argument realists make is that nation-states are self-seeking and would prioritize their interests over any other. Particularly the bigger states within the union, use the supra-national institutions to push forward their interests, to the detriment of the smaller states. This is a phenomenon that has been described as interest sub-contracting. Besides there is evidence in several international organisations, like the EU evidence of Britain's dismemberment, the EAC, ECOWAS and even the AU indicate the issues of polarization and backwash, which is indicative of gains and losses that is existent in

international cooperative arrangements. This further buttresses the realists' notion that big states only use these organisations for self-interest, impoverishing the poorer states more (Tadjbakhsh,, 2013).

Nevertheless, the theory of Supranationalism challenges the Westphalian notion of States Sovereignty in which the Nation States were answerable to no one. It further challenges the realist's notion of anarchy. The principal objective of the AU is to promote peace and security in the African Continent, intensify intra-Africa economic activities, and solidify regional and enhance the process of regional integration and self-reliant development and cooperation among others. This is to enable the region to play a significant role in the global economy while addressing other continental social, political, and economic developmental concerns. Recognizing the AU's supranational mandate gives it the autonomy to drive the continent's regional integration agenda through the FOCAC to make Sino-Africa relations more mutually beneficial through collective continental negotiation and improve the Continent's industrial base.

1.8 Literature Review

This literature review is organised under four topics: China's foreign policy; China-Africa Relations; AU-Global Relations; and the Status of Regional Economic Integration in Africa.

1.8.1 China's Foreign Policy

The post-World War II global system witnessed the fast spread of nation-state independence and the development of international organizations like the United Nations (UN), which created avenues for state engagement, and led to the introduction of foreign policy within the international

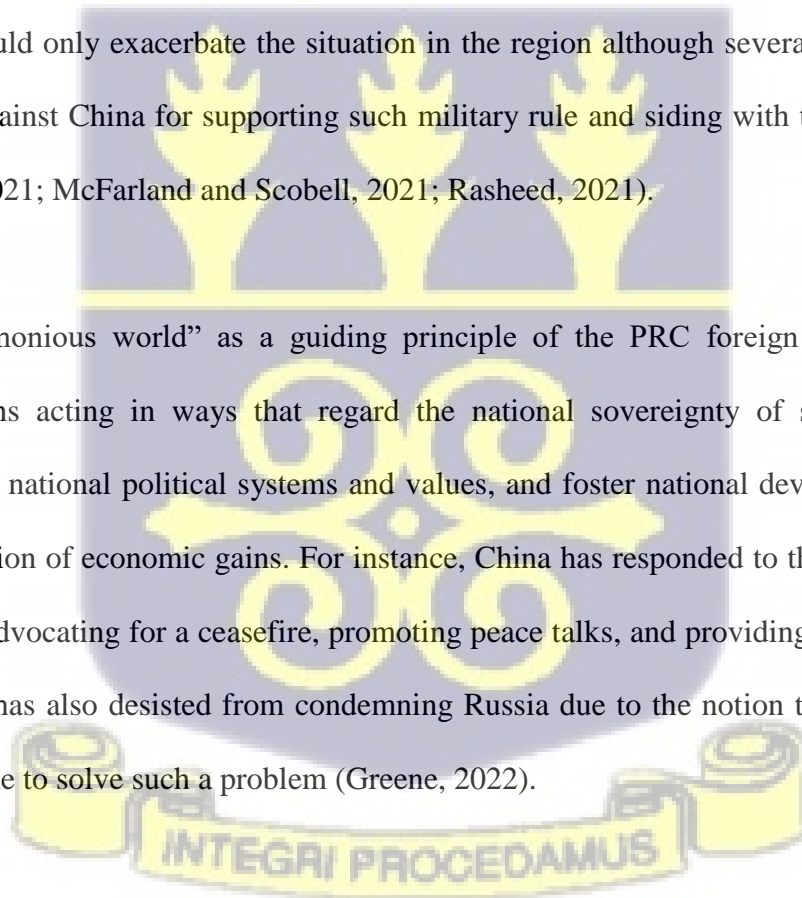
system (Bojang, 2018). Globalization has further increased the rates of state interaction and made the formation of foreign policy a necessity for each state (Bojang, 2018). Foreign policy scholars such as Feliks Gross, Charles Hermann, George Modelski, Joseph Frankel, Padelford and Lincoln, Huge Gibson, and Deborah Gerner have described foreign policy as the decisions of a state or an actor outside its territorial boundaries toward another state(s) or actor(s) with an expected goal in mind. That includes all the decisions of a state to act, or not to act in the global system (Bojang 2018). China's foreign policy is influenced by its rapid economic growth and its desire to become a global power which has heightened its dependence on energy resources, most especially, oil (Zeigler, 2006). Consequently, China's foreign policy has five primary objectives that it seeks to achieve, and they include promoting economic development, providing security, addressing obstacles, diversifying access to natural resources, and reducing Taiwan's international space (Medeiros, 2022). The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is responsible for making China's foreign policy based on three principles which are "All-round diplomacy", "Peace and Development", and a "Harmonious World" (Medeiros, 2022).

The "All-round diplomacy" principle of China's current foreign policy presents a major shift from its "lean-on-one-side" foreign policy practised by the People's Republic of China (PRC) right from its inception in 1949 to 1954 and the "semi-isolation" foreign policy from 1958 to 1970 (Dreyer, 2007). In the "all-around diplomacy" aspect of China's foreign policy, the PRC in a quest to protect its national interest in the form of sovereignty, development, and respect, strives to adopt all modes of international relations (bilateral, multilateral, and regional) across several spheres including economics in all developed and developing nations in regions (Medeiros, 2022). China's "One-Belt-One-Road" (BRI) initiative launched by PRC President, Xi Jinping in 2013 is a clear

indication of this. The main aim of the BRI is to economically integrate Asia, Europe, and Africa through infrastructure, trade, and investment (Hofman, 2015).

In terms of “peace and development”, PRC’s foreign economic policy is guided by the principle that limiting threats such as counterterrorism, transnational disputes, and transnational challenges to China’s neighbouring countries such as Russia, East Asia, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia that would cause China to divert national resources away from economic development is key (Medeiros, 2022:51). For instance, China protected Myanmar which is China’s largest neighbour from international sanctions from the UN sanctions following its military coup in 2021 as China thought that would only exacerbate the situation in the region although several backlashes have been levelled against China for supporting such military rule and siding with the coup initiators (McLaughlin, 2021; McFarland and Scobell, 2021; Rasheed, 2021).

Finally, a “harmonious world” as a guiding principle of the PRC foreign economic policy envisages nations acting in ways that regard the national sovereignty of states, permit the heterogeneity of national political systems and values, and foster national development through the fair distribution of economic gains. For instance, China has responded to the Russian attacks on Ukraine by advocating for a ceasefire, promoting peace talks, and providing humanitarian aid to Ukraine and has also desisted from condemning Russia due to the notion that condemnation would not be able to solve such a problem (Greene, 2022).



1.8.2 China-Africa Relations

The post-Cold War period, which witnessed the U.S., France, and the UK as the only foreign powers to have significant interests in Sub-Saharan Africa ended following China's increasing interactions with Africa since the early 1990s leading to significant economic, political, and domestic outcomes. Pan (2018) asserts that China's involvement with developing countries was to build an alliance strong enough to withstand Western intimidations (thereby preventing the U.S.A from becoming a global hegemon) which was a result of the sanctions imposed on China by the European Union (EU) and the US after the Tiananmen protests in June 1989 in Beijing coupled with the Western's constant opposition to China's human right report.

Africa contributed massively toward China's foreign policy transformation because of the domestic and external pressures on Africa to democratize especially after China assured Africa that, Western demands for democracy and human rights compliance were disguised imperialistic strategies intended to meddle in the domestic affairs of developing governments and undermine their stability and overall progress (Pan, 2018). Subsequently, China increased its investments in Africa from USD 210 million in 2000 to 3.17 billion in 2011, which further increased recently under the BRI initiative, making Africa a top recipient of its foreign aid (Cheng, 2019; Herbert, 2022). China undertook developmental projects in Africa with an estimated amount of \$3 billion to address its health, water, and sanitation challenges, an instance being assisting Africa in to fight against the Ebola outbreak in 2014 in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea (Embassy news, 2014; Lin, et al. 2016).



The economic/diplomatic relationship between Africa and China has been noticed in the debt relief and cancellation offers by China over the years ranging from the total cancellation of debt to the extension of debt payment and a reduction of debts. Following the outbreak of COVID-19, China has provided two different types of debt relief measures to 31 African countries, and they were the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), and debt cancellation under the Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) (CARI, 2022). Moreover, increasing trade relation between China and Africa is the most significant feature of the China-Africa relationship considering China is Africa's largest partner (Mureithi, 2022). The trade volume between China and Africa grew from \$24 billion in 2004 to \$32.17 billion in 2005 and finally to \$254 billion in 2021 (Tull, 2009; Mureithi, 2022). This has led to the creation of institutions such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in 2000 and the Chinese African Chamber of commerce in Beijing. The main characteristic of this bilateral trade is the trade deficit caused by increasing Chinese exports to Africa and decreasing African exports to Asia. Nonetheless, some African countries including Rwanda, Ethiopia, and Kenya are attempting to counter the situation through innovative digital measures (Mureithi, 2022).

China has increased its military relations with Africa. For instance, China opened a military hub in Djibouti in 2017 where China financed and built Africa's largest port, a railway to Ethiopia, and the country's first overseas naval (overseas strategic strongpoint) (Bearak, 2019). A further indication of China's dedication to preserving stability in African nations is the roughly 20 years it has spent taking part in multinational peacekeeping operations on the continent (Herbert, 2021). For instance, in 2003 the Chinese military sent engineering, transportation, and medical troops to

support the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. China dispatched its first army to the U.N. mission in Sudan in 2012 and Mali in 2013 (Herbert, 2022).

Overall, China's strategic engagement with Africa is noted by a lack of political conditionalities associated with China's aid unlike that of the West which makes Chinese aid more beneficial to Africa than Western aid as the latter tends to focus on poverty reduction and improvement of human rights. As a result of their non-interference policy, Chinese firms are substantially risk-tolerant in giving large loans to Africa than the West. China focuses on specific sectors in Africa's economy, particularly roads and this enables them to win tenders for oil and mining concessions (Tull, 2009; Bearak, 2019). There has been a wide range of criticism levelled against China-Africa relations as being a negative-sum game (where China is the only benefactor) and a form of exploitation of African countries by China (Hanauer and Morris, 2022; Gumede, 2021).

1.8.3 AU-Global Relations

The African Union (AU), originally known as the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was officially launched in July 2002 in Durban, South Africa, after the member states decided to reorient the focus of the OAU towards increased cooperation and integration of African states to boost Africa's growth and economic development. Currently, the AU is made up of 55 member states (AU 2022). In addition to the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa, the African Union (AU) interacts with other regional integration bodies across the globe (Saad 2018).

Pinfari (2019) observes that the Afro-Arab cooperation, which encompasses significant dimensions of political, economic, social, and cultural interactions is one of the AU's oldest global

relations. The first Africa-Arab Summit, held in Cairo, Egypt, in March 1977, marked the beginning of formal relations between Africa and the Arab World. In the estimation of Nwaezeigi (2021), the second summit held in Libya in 2010 was a remarkable one as it resulted in the adoption of the Africa–Arab Partnership Strategy, Joint Africa–Arab Action Plan 2011–2016, and a declaration summarising common positions on major regional and international issues. Hitherto, five Africa-Arab summits have been held so far with the most recent one held in 2019, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Owing to this Africa-League of Arab States (LAS) relationship, Arab bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, like the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), provide economic, financial, and technical assistance to African countries (Ocweija 2019).

Kotsopoulos and Mattheis (2018) write that the Africa-EU (European Union) Partnership was officially launched in 2000 at the maiden Africa-EU Summit in Cairo. It is facilitated by the Joint Africa-EU strategy, adopted in 2007 at the Lisbon, Portugal summit. The EU and AU schedule periodic meetings (usually every three years) to address global challenges as well as discuss political preeminence. The partnership seeks to enhance Africa and Europe integration by bolstering economic cooperation and ensuring sustainable development, with both continents co-existing in peace, security, democracy, prosperity, solidarity, and human dignity (Haastrup et al 2021). Staeger and Gwatiwa, (20 reviews this partnership functions across myriad echelons including Heads of State summits, ministerial meetings, Commission-to-Commission meetings, and other forums for civil society, the private sector, and parliamentarians are acknowledged in the work of Madu (2020).

The first Africa-South America (ASA) Summit that took place in Abuja (Nigeria) from November 26 to 29, 2006 established the Africa-South America Cooperation Forum (ASACOF). The third and most recent summit of the ASACOF was held in February 2013 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. Cancilleria de Colombia, (2022) provide details on the significance of the Forum, which seeks to enhance mutual security and economic, socio-cultural, trade, political, and development across the two continents. Its fundamental structures include a coordination group, ad hoc committee, senior and high officials, ministerial meetings, and the Assembly. Cancilleria de Colombia, (2022).

Similarly, The African Union Commission-United States of America High-level Dialog was established in 2013, the Tokyo International Conference on African Development was inaugurated in 1993, the African-Turkey partnership was formalized in 2008, the China-Africa Cooperation Forum (FOCAC), the Africa-India partnership formed in 2008, and the Africa-Korea Forum launched in 2006 all constitute AU-Global relations that seek to achieve political, socio-cultural, economic, military, and economic development in the respective regions. As a particular instance, the African Union Commission-United States of America High-level Dialog led to the adoption of the African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA) which is a trade initiative that allows African countries to export duty-free goods to the U.S.A (AU, 2022).

1.8.4 Status of Regional Economic Integration in Africa

Regional integration involves neighbouring sovereign states within a specific geographical location that have put measures in place to create regional blocs to enhance their rate of interaction across several spheres including economic, security, political, social, and cultural issues (Vickers, 2017). To promote regional integration in Africa, the member states in the AU have been sub-

divided into five main regions namely Central, East, North, Southern, and West Africa and within each of these regions, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) or blocs have been created to coordinate their affairs (Vickers, 2017). Amidst these efforts, African regional integration is often characterized as wavering.

Hailu (2014) asserts that the numerous RECs (such as the Southern African Development Community-SADC) formed in Africa, have failed to live up to their expectation of enhancing the economic conditions of the member states and ensuring sustainable growth and development. This is because most of the treaties, protocols, and decisions governing these RECs have not been effectively implemented due to the impractical period stipulated for their execution, as well as poor supervision owing to inadequate resources in terms of roads, rail, ports, air transport, energy, telecommunications, and other infrastructure which has slowed down regional integration. In addition, most African states have multiple group memberships with the RECs in the region which hampers members' compliance to the protocols in one or more of the RECs they are members of due to the financial burdens associated with the fulfilment of their duties in all the RECs (Hailu, 2014).

Analyzing regional integration in Africa based on the five stages of regional integration outlined by the economist, Professor Bela Balassa would indicate that, Africa is gearing towards the third stage of regional integration. According to Bela Balassa (1961), the five stages of regional integration are free-to-exchange area, customs union, common market, economic union, and economic and monetary union respectively (Andrei, 2012). Free Trade Area (FTA) is achieved when tariffs and quotas between the member states are eradicated, although each country maintains its tariffs against non-members (Salter, 2017). The Customs Union which is a build-up of the FTA

ensures that the members impose a common tariff on imports against non-state members (Salter, 2017). A common market is also a build-up of the first two stages and ensures that aside from tariffs and quotas all other barriers to trade such as monopoly and unhealthy competition are removed to ensure the free movement of goods, services, labour, and capital (Salter, 2017).

These are what the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) building on the already existing RECs seek to achieve (Erasmus, 2021). According to the AU, the main objectives of the CFTA are to create a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of business persons and investments, and thus pave the way for accelerating the establishment of the Customs Union. The AfCFTA was adopted in 2012 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and commenced in January 2021 (Pasara, 2021). Studies have however shown that AfCFTA has not yielded significant impacts due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (Pasara, 2021).

The fourth and fifth stages of regional economic integration are attained when the countries in an economic union get a common monetary system and policies (Hailu, 2014). Quadri (2022) among other scholars and researchers has highlighted the unending efforts of Africa to reach these stages even though all their efforts have proven futile. A typical example of this is the failure of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to adopt the “eco” currency it conceived in 2003 (Quadri, 2022).

1.9 Summary of Literature

The lessons learnt from reviewing lie in the abundance of scholarly materials on China’s foreign policy; China-Africa Relations; AU-Global Relations; and the Status of Regional Economic

Integration in Africa. There exists a methodological gap in delimiting the relationship between China and Africa at the level of the Africa Union. This also raises several issues and gaps such as the AU's integration drive, development mechanism, the endogenous approach to development and the political economy of Africa's development. The identified gaps form the basis of this research, which is to examine, the implication of FOCAC in Africa's regional Integration context by conducting a single case analysis of FOCAC and how it poses a threat to Africa's economic integration.

1.10 Methodology

Per the objectives of the study, the study adopted a qualitative methodology. Contrary to quantitative, qualitative studies are theoretical and interpretive in approach (Brennen 2017; Creswell 2007). Qualitative studies lead to the deconstruction of complex phenomena based on human experiences and experiences (Brennen 2017). As emphasised by one author, qualitative research is not "objective data to be quantified, but meaningful relations to be interpreted." (Kvale, 1996 Pp: 11). To complement the position of Kvale (1996), Creswell (2013) contends that qualitative studies are mainly concerned with examining, describing, and exploring meanings attached to social phenomenon other than pre-determined yardsticks that becomes the basis of measurement (Creswell 2013).

1.10.1 Research Design

Research designs are the master plans within which the entire research and its methodologies are situated (Zikmund & Babin, 2007). According to Creswell (2013), research designs are crafted to suit the philosophies of the researchers, the research questions, the objectives, the problem

statement and the overall rationale of the study. The suitable research design is a case study. A case study is a special and intensive study of a single group, incident, and community (Harrison & Callen, 2013). The case study fits very well in understanding FOCAC and African integration because it engages multiple data sources that explore and explains the phenomenon under study.

1.10.2 Sampling Technique and Size

According to Boateng (2014), the sampling methodology encompasses the methodologies employed to effectively choose a sample from the population being studied. Lindelof and Taylor (2017) claim that employing a sampling method aids academics and researchers in ascertaining the appropriate sample size for a study and in justifying the selection of participants under investigation. Lindlof and Taylor (2017) assert that researchers can benefit significantly from employing a sample strategy, as it effectively minimises the probability of losing valuable time and resources.

Considering the nature of the inquiry, the methodology of purposive sampling will be employed. Green and Thorogood (2014) argue that the utilisation of purposive sampling allows researchers to selectively choose respondents or participants that exhibit a diverse array of behaviours, knowledge, or experiences that are pertinent to gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation. In contrast to convenience sampling, which allows for the selection of respondents based on their availability, purposive sampling involves intentionally selecting respondents who possess specific characteristics or expert knowledge relevant to the study's objective (Kumekpor, 2002; Wimmer & Dominick, 2006).

A sample refers to a subset of individuals within the population being investigated (Banerjee et al., 2007; Sekeran, 2000). In the qualitative study conducted by Smith et al. (2009), participants were selected from a range of three to sixteen individuals. In contrast, a more recent study conducted by Mason (2010) revealed that achieving saturation can be accomplished with a sample size ranging from 5 to 50. In accordance with the specified criteria, a total of four individuals were selected as respondents or participants for the present research. The utilisation of a sample size within a specific range facilitated the formation of cross-case generalisations, preventing the researcher from being overwhelmed by excessive data. Moreover, this approach enabled the identification of individual participants within the sample, rather than treating them as indistinguishable entities within a larger collective (Robinson & Smith, 2010). The study selected 4 participants from three distinct groups: individuals affiliated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (MFA&RI), and 2 lecturers from the University of Ghana.

1.10.4 Sources of data

The sources of data for this research are two – primary and secondary data sources. Primary data are that information collected from the field which happens to be in its original character. Kothari mentions that there are several methods of collecting primary data and these include the observation method, interview method and questionnaires, among others (Kothari, 2004). Experts on the subject of FOCAC and integration on the African continent from Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (MFA&RI), and lecturers at the University of Ghana were contacted to collect primary data.

Secondary data were also employed in this study which involved already existing literature sourced from books, journal, articles, official reports of the FOCAC, China and Africa (Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), African Union's Agenda 2063, African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), China-Africa Development Fund (CADFund), China-Africa Industrial Capacity Cooperation Fund). and other publications by scholars in the field of politics and integration were retrieved from the internet as well as the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD) library and the Balme Library.

1.10.5 Data Collection Techniques

The researchers utilised semi-structured interviews as a means of gathering data from the chosen participants. Semi-structured interviews involve the researcher providing a general framework of subject areas to be addressed but allowing the participants' responses to shape the trajectory of the interview. The utilisation of a semi-structured interview methodology offers a framework that enables the acquisition of precise and comparable qualitative data, which may then be subjected to analysis (Stuckey, 2013). The data collection process involved utilising an interview guide that consisted of a series of structured open-ended questions. The duration of each interview ranged from 30 to 45 minutes.

1.10.6 Data Analysis

In this study, thematic analysis was employed as a tool for analysing data. Thematic analysis is “an interpretive process where data is systematically searched to identify patterns within the data to provide an illuminating description of the phenomenon” (Firth 2011, pg.3) For the interview, the audio was transcribed into text to make the identification of themes and codes easier. The

researcher then read through the transcribed text thoroughly and took note of key issues raised by the interview participants. Reoccurring themes and patterns were identified.

1.10.6 Ethical Considerations

According to Wallace and Sheldon (2015), ethics is argued to be procedural elements regarding merits and integrity, justice, beneficence, and respect with an emphasis on truly informed consent to mitigate against any form of risk in doing research. This ethical consideration was implemented through the consent of the respondents who noted the purpose of the study and the option to remain anonymous to mitigate against risk throughout the research. Moreso, information from participants were duly protected confidentially.

1.11 Arrangement of Chapters

This study is structured into four main chapters. Chapter one: constitutes the Introduction Chapter two: is a discussion on China-African Relations; Chapter three: An analysis of FOCAC's place in Africa's Regional Integration drive; Chapter four is: a summary of findings, conclusion, and recommendations.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE RISE OF CHINA TO GLOBAL ACCLAIM

2.0 Introduction

This chapter recounts the rise of China immediately after the severities of the Cold War to global acclaim, becoming the chosen international development partner to the developing world. The chapter begins with the major events such as World War II, the establishment of the Bretton Woods institutions and the heralding of US global hegemony, the Chinese emergence, and its foreign and economic policies. The chapter concludes with China's international cooperation with the developing world.

2.1 Before China, How was it?

Before the outbreak of World War II, that is, in the late 19th century and early 20th century, international monetary affairs were poorly coordinated. As the world's financial centre, London was crucial to the servicing of international debts due to the widespread use of the gold standard in international commerce. The "gold standard" was temporarily abandoned as World War II loomed, but it was revised and returned to the international economic system about mid-decade of the 1920s. It ultimately failed in the early 1930s (Sargent, 2013).

The Great Depression, an economic crisis that lasted from 1929 to 1941 and is now remembered as the biggest and longest economic crisis ever faced worldwide because of its effects on international commerce, was primarily to blame for the demise of the gold standard (Segal, 2022).

In part, the presence of high tariffs within the global economic system contributed to the large drop in global commerce. In 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt of the United States passed the

Reciprocal Trade Agreement Act (RTAA), which gave the President the legal basis to negotiate reciprocal, bilateral trade agreements with other countries and liberalize American trade policy around the world, leading to the reduction of the problem of unnecessary tariffs across the global economic community (Hiscox, 1999).

The further decline of international trade because of the start of the second World War, as well as the growing need for sustainable international regimes to expedite and coordinate economic stability and growth, prevent competitive devaluations and advance exchange rate stability, cut short this bold quest initiated by the United States of America as a solution in revitalizing the global economy at the time (Federal Reserve History, 2013).

From 1942 to 1944, several multilateral and bilateral meetings of "allied financial professionals" took place to settle on a unified plan to improve and enhance the global economy (U.S. Department of State Archive, 2009). The leaders of the "Allies" released the "Joint Statement by Experts on the Establishment of an International Monetary Fund" on April 21, 1944, which served as the foundation for the Bretton Woods agreement on July 1, 1944. (U.S. Department of State Archive, 2009). The Bretton Woods agreement was reached at a summit in 1944 in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, attended by representatives from all 44 countries that had fought on the Allies' side during World War 2. (Amadeo, 2022). The popular gold standard of the period was replaced with the U.S. dollar as the worldwide currency. By granting the United States the only authority to create new dollars, the new international monetary system helped cement the United States' position as the world's preeminent power.

The 730 delegates from the 44 allied nations decided to establish two new organizations collectively referred to as the "Bretton Woods Institutions" after crucial talks and several significant ideas, notably by the central planners such as John Maynard Keynes and Harry Dexter White (Federal Reserve History, 2013). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (formerly known as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, or IBRD) were two of the Bretton Woods Institutions (Federal Reserve History, 2013).

In 1948, the United States enacted the Marshall Plan, a four-year strategy developed by then-Secretary of State George C. Marshall to rebuild cities and infrastructure severely damaged during World War II, increase international trade, eliminate trade barriers, and stop the spread of communism in Europe as an extension of the Bretton Woods Institutions. The Soviet Union saw these U.S. initiatives as threatening because of the harm they did to the Soviet Union's efforts to expand communism across Eastern and Central Europe (Nau, 2011).

The United States of America, as the world's preeminent superpower, and its allies launched an ideological war with the Soviet Union to stop its European expansionist ideology and the spread of dictatorship and communism across Europe to promote global political stability through capitalism and democracy (Asare, 2018). Ultimately, it was this effort that sparked the onset of the Cold War. With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent end of the Cold War in 1991, Soviet influence over Eastern Europe waned substantially.

Consequently, the Cold War had a significant effect on the global economy. The Washington Consensus of 1989, which reflected the influence of the U.S. Treasury, the World Bank, and the

International Monetary Fund, was embraced by a large majority of most western allies of the USA to preempt the economic crisis, and this further solidified and influenced global economic and political developments in favour of the United States considering that these organizations were created under the leadership of the United States (Eichengreen, 2002). The fact that these institutions were also adopted by many emerging economies, particularly those in Africa and Latin America to the point of being forced upon these emerging states as a prerequisite for debt relief and financial support, further solidified the United States' position as the global hegemon (Williamson, 1989). Furthermore, the United States of America's donations and assistance to underdeveloped countries through organizations like USAID have solidified the country's status as a worldwide hegemon (Schmelzer, 2014).

2.2 The Changing Landscape

Changes in global development financing have been prompted by the cyclic character of international development (Ayers 2013). African government leadership has a wide range of modalities, conditions, and possibilities, including US-Africa, UK-Africa, Russia-Africa, Japan-Africa, China-Africa, Korea-Africa, and India-Africa. Other than the conventional donors, these alternatives are open to African countries. The labour markets in East and South Asia, whose affordable production methods have turned East Asia into an industrial powerhouse and caused a seismic change in its fundamental economic set-up, can be said to have disturbed the centres of world production. the beneficial industry, automotive, agricultural, and technological disruptions. Many people have referred to the transformation in East Asia as the most violent in modern economic governance (Scoones et al 2016).

High expectations emerged in the post-Cold War era, which positioned the US as a global hegemon responsible for providing public goods. Many academics did hold out great hope, identifying capitalism as the perfect system. These forecasts were made under the auspices of US “superpowers” and unipolarity after communism was shown as an antiquated theory.

Several hypotheses have evolved after the end of the Cold War to deify American unipolarity. International relations in the second half of the 20th century were dominated by the five decades (1948–1990) that preceded the end of the global ideological split, where the globe melted into a paroxysm of ideological violence pitting capitalism against socialism/Marxism. According to many academics, the Cold War put an end to international ideological conflicts. Francis Fukuyama (1989), whose authoritative thesis has been disturbed by the advent of new world powers or emerging powers, is frequently cited:

“What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War or the passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the endpoint of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government. This is not to say that there will no longer be events to fill the pages of Foreign Affairs' yearly summaries of international relations, for the victory of liberalism, has occurred primarily in the realm of ideas or consciousness and is as yet incomplete in the real or material world. But there are powerful reasons for believing that it is the ideal that will govern the material world in the long”. (Fukuyama, 1989)

The 1990s was an era of liberalism, ‘Americanization’, and the export and diffusion of American culture in distant lands. Backed by its security policies through its military commands and Bretton Woods institutions as its financial backbone, the American empire was on the rise (see Hall, 2003; Mabee, 2004). In addition to the hard power of security (offensive and defensive) as deployed in Afghanistan and Iraq in the 1990s and early 2000s and the backlash it received, it went on a public relations campaign to repair its image and position itself as a global hegemony in early days of the new millennium (see Nye, 2004).

These nations, which are quickly industrializing and aiming for more influence on the global stage, pose a threat to traditional donors. These countries not only provide new sources of funding for developing nations, but they also put old donors under "competitive pressure," according to Woods (2008).

Ayers (2013) described it as the "new scramble for Africa."

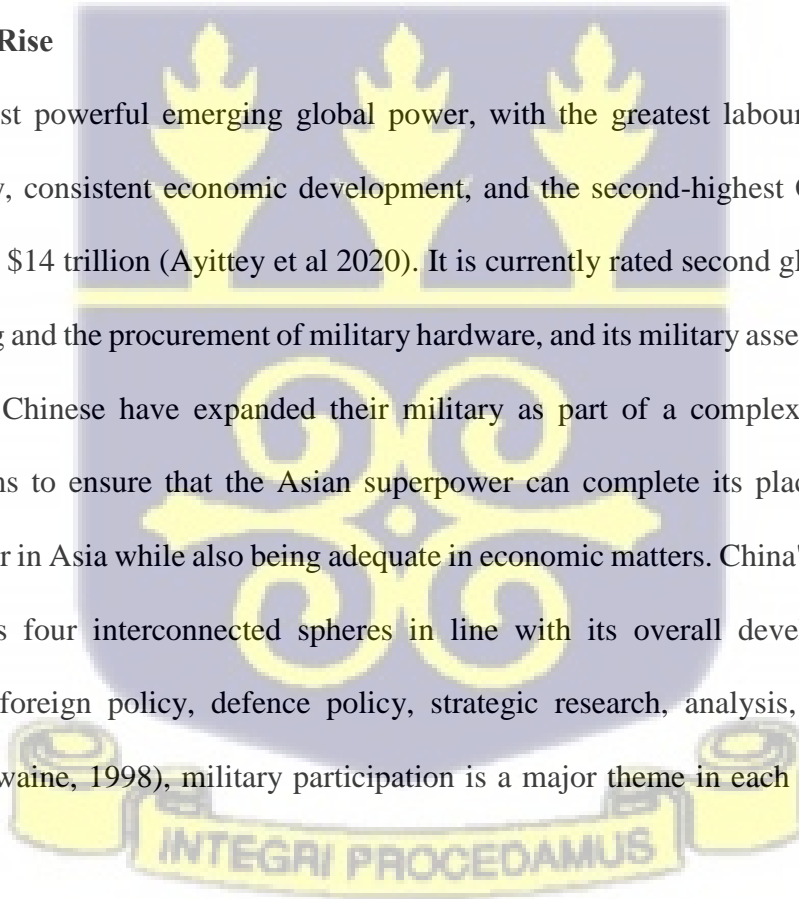
“This ‘new scramble’ marks the latest chapter of imperialist engagement, with not only Western states and corporations but also those of ‘emerging economies seeking to consolidate their access to African resources and markets. The ‘new scramble for Africa’ involves therefore significant transformations related to shifts in global politico-economic power (Pp. 2).”

The rise of non-Western powers and the expansion of economic and security interdependence, according to one distinct perspective on the evolving international order, are generating new pressures and constituencies in favour of liberal international order, regardless of whether the

United States is in decline or not (Acharya, 2017). Changes in the global financial architecture have provided developing nations with a better policy environment in which to grow their economies. This change symbolizes the passing of the Washington Consensus and the beginning of the Beijing Consensus in many developing nations. China's continued support and contributions to developing economies around the world through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative in Africa, the provision of loans through the Exim Bank of China to developing or emerging economies, and the FOCAC (Focus on China-Africa Cooperation) initiative have all contributed to China's rise to global hegemony.

2.3 China's Rise

China is the most powerful emerging global power, with the greatest labour force in modern industrial history, consistent economic development, and the second-highest GDP in the world behind the US at \$14 trillion (Ayttey et al 2020). It is currently rated second globally in terms of defence spending and the procurement of military hardware, and its military assets are significantly expanding. The Chinese have expanded their military as part of a complex national defence strategy that aims to ensure that the Asian superpower can complete its place as the regional hegemonic power in Asia while also being adequate in economic matters. China's national security strategy includes four interconnected spheres in line with its overall development: national strategic goals, foreign policy, defence policy, strategic research, analysis, and intelligence. According to (Swaine, 1998), military participation is a major theme in each of the four policy sub-arenas.



China has reason to increase its influence across the Asian peninsula as a regional power. The US has taken notice of this overstretch. Due to the presence of natural gas and oil reserves in the area, the South China Sea has become a point of contention between China and other Asian nations. According to various historical accounts, China views the region as a strategic national area and an extension of its sovereignty. Geographically separated from the region, the United States asserts that its interest in the region is to uphold international peace and security. By deploying air and naval ships, the military has already demonstrated some audacity and power. It is not out of the question to refer to the South China Sea as another theatre of a conflict between two superpowers, with oil and natural gas as the common denominator.

Because China was a middle power, like any other state that was doing economically well, not much attention had been paid to it in its early stages of economic development. Few people in academia and the world of policy anticipated this all-encompassing economic eruption.

When Den Xiaoping initiated the country's progressive opening up and tempered the nation's cherished corporate principles with neoliberal concepts, the reconstruction process got underway in the early 1970s. In what David Harvey refers to as "Neoliberalism with Chinese elements," corporatism's values converged with state capitalism (Harvey, 2007).

To argue that the West had spearheaded capitalist expansionism in Asia and that China had greatly benefited from Western innovative management approaches in industrialisation and technology is accurate. The expansion of international commerce, Chinese protectionism, and discontent with globalization (Stiglitz, 2002) have propelled China into an economic powerhouse and a clear

contender for the title of global economic hegemon, challenging the dominance of the US and other superpowers. China's economic ideology of utilizing its national and international resources for development found declared expression in its foreign policy of peaceful ascent and development, led by its Prime Minister Jiang Zemin.

The Belt and Road programs and loose development finance are the cornerstones of China's growth strategy. China uses the belt and road as a means of supplying durable infrastructures, such as roads, ports, and factories, to emerging regions. For the most part, China has found success with this strategy in various African nations.

To provide and assist projects in Africa, the Chinese Investment Bank is challenging the Bretton Woods, which has long enjoyed a monopoly in this area. Instead of using the IMF, many African nations have looked for alternatives to this financial organization. Additionally, the Bretton Woods has stopped providing medium-to long-term finance to African countries that have repeatedly shown a lack of ability to manage donor funding.

China's "hide and bide" era is over, and its growing ambition to become a global hegemon is on full display in the foreign policy goals and priorities laid forth at the 19th Party Congress. According to Xi Jinping's report to Congress, China has entered a "new epoch" and will be a cooperative, crucial participant that serves as a model for other emerging nations and is a big economic power (Swaine, 2018).

In the early 2000s, China shifted its perspective from treating economic diplomacy as separate from foreign policy (Medeiros 2009). As stated by the World Bank, Chinese economic diplomacy "focuses on securing resources, developing export prospects, and reinforcing China's soft power to accomplish China's economic growth through trade, investment, and finance policies" (Wang, 2004 as cited in Chaziza, 2019).

Asongu and Aminkeng (2018) argue that the economic rewards of exchanging ideas and cooperating have become the primary motivation for modern diplomacy. Consequently, every emerging power that wants to compete in the worldwide market must work with the governments of foreign nations to guarantee the safety of its enterprises in the future. The acquisition of natural resources and new markets for local businesses is presently dominating Chinese diplomacy. Energy security is a priority for China in its foreign policy. As a result, China has actively pursued trade opportunities abroad in both large and small countries.

Cooperation in China covers a wide range of activities, from trading partners to shared financial resources. It also includes state and military diplomacy and any other policy that helps China acquire access to resources, markets, funding, technology, and skilled labour (Heath, 2016). To put China's economic diplomacy in context, President Xi Jinping has made reclaiming Beijing's purportedly lost national dignity a top priority (China Daily, 2017 as cited in Chaziza, 2019). According to this theory, diplomatic and economic goals and objectives can be mutually supportive of one another. To that end, economic diplomacy is flexible in its goals and tools, so it can be adapted to China's specific conditions (Heath, 2016).

2.4 The Beijing Consensus

China's development model provided the push for the creation of the Beijing consensus. While the Washington agreement has the backing of the principles that nations seeking loans and assistance from the Bretton Woods Institutions are required to adhere to, the Beijing consensus does not. In contrast to the Washington Consensus, the Beijing Consensus does not promote globally applicable norms and standards. China is committed to the peaceful coexistence of different viewpoints because of its multipolarity. The most apparent result of acknowledging this is to cast doubt on the universality of one's policy, especially in interactions with emerging nations (Robel, 2010). Instead of copying what appears to have succeeded in another country, China requires that all nations create their unique approaches, policies, and institutions.

The phrase "Beijing consensus" was first used by Joshua Cooper Ramo, who wrote, "The Beijing Consensus" in 2004 with the "ambitious objective to undermine the famed notion of the Washington Consensus" (Huang, 2011). His book offered an alternative to the Washington Consensus, an economic policy for post-World War II America that prioritized free markets, economic openness, and a reformed financial system to promote growth at home and abroad (Huang, 2011). Because of the expanding energy crisis and debt problems in emerging nations, the United States followed these economic principles throughout the Cold War with dismay.

China's Beijing Consensus emphasizes non-interference in domestic affairs and promotes sovereign integrity, in contrast to the United States Washington Consensus, which urges African nations to rein in their macroeconomic policy and public spending and pledges to transparency,

accountability, and the holding of democratic and competitive elections (Shelton, 2012).

According to Abdoulaye Wade (2008) asserts,

“Africa can learn much from the Chinese model for rapid economic development. For the first time in history, China has provided direct aid, credit lines and acceptable contracts to African countries to help them build a wide range of infrastructure projects quickly. Economic progress in many African countries, including Senegal, has benefited from infrastructure improvements. I don't know how to put this nicely... As if Africa were naive enough to think it could simply offload its precious resources at discount prices to obtain a commitment for yet another stadium or state house, some donor organisations in the west dismiss trade deals between Chinese banks and African states, which produce these crucial improvements. With the World Bank, I've discovered that an arrangement that would take five years to discuss, negotiate, and to sign can be completed in three months with Chinese officials. You can count on my support as a fervent believer in the rule of law and sound governance. If we can't act quickly because of bureaucracy and unnecessary red tape, then African leaders are responsible for looking for more expeditious alternatives.” (Condon, 2012 quoted in Jarso, 2018:5)

The "civilizing mission" and traditional partners represented by the "Washington Consensus" were rejected by many Africans because they were seen as an imposition. The Washington Consensus is characterized by conditionality, protracted loan negotiations, and bureaucratic nature, all of which have forced certain African governments to explain their tilt away from old friends toward

China. China's readiness to supply African countries with alternative loans is a contributing factor to the continent's rising standard of living. The rising volume of trade between Africa and China is an excellent indicator of the shift in economic connections that have taken place between several African countries in recent decades.

The value of trade between China and Africa increased by 700 per cent between 1995 and 2007, from \$32 billion to \$55 billion. Rapid expansion like this pointed to the establishment of extensive commercial ties between China and African countries (Roy, 2014 cited in Jarso, 2018). In terms of trade volume, China is now Africa's most significant partner, surpassing the United States in 2009. Over the past decade, Chinese exports to Africa have increased dramatically.

In 2012, US\$198.49 billion was exchanged between China and Africa, rising 19.3 per cent over 2011. New highs were reached in China's exports to Africa, China's imports from Africa, and the overall quantity of trade between China and Africa (China African Policy white paper, 2012 as cited in Jarso, 2018). China-African commerce was worth US\$192 billion in 2019 but declined to US\$176 billion in 2020 due to supply chain disruption caused by COVID-19. In 2020, South Africa, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be China's top three import sources. Many Chinese goods were sent to Nigeria, South Africa, and Egypt (China Africa Research Initiative, 2022).

As was said before, the economic relationship between China and Africa has blossomed since the 1990s. For example, the value of trade between China and Africa is projected to rise to \$176 billion in 2020, from just \$10 billion in 2000. (2020; China-Africa Research Initiative). By 2020, Chinese

businesses will have poured an additional \$43 billion into the African continent. Over 3,500 businesses of all shapes and sizes can be found in China. More than 80% of the staff in privately owned African enterprises is made up of locals. They have a hand in the production of millions of employees both directly and indirectly (China African Policy white paper, 2021, as cited in XinhuaNet, 2021).

At the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), African and Chinese leaders may have an open and fruitful dialogue on their strategic partnership across several industries. In contrast to the "Washington Consensus," which was built on the concepts of the Bretton Woods organization, the FOCAC gives African and Chinese governments a forum to discuss mutual agreements and collaboration.

As stated by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2006, the following concepts and objectives govern China's foreign policy toward Africa. Genuine friendship, equality, collaboration, mutual benefit, reciprocity, shared prosperity; mutual aid; and tight coordination are some of these (the social and cultural aspects). China thinks this is the best way to strengthen connections with African countries. This agreement suggests a departure from the standard practice of training African governments to embrace western orthodox principles in economics, social policy, culture, and politics, all the while oblivious to the specifics of African society and politics.



The development of commercial linkages, political relations, and cultural exchanges between China and Africa is supported by China's long-standing ideas of friendliness and solidarity in the

fight against colonialism, as well as mutual benefit and reciprocity. Non-interference in internal affairs, mutual respect, non-interference in the affairs of other nations, equal treatment, and safeguarding of mutual interests on a regional and global scale are all part of China's foreign policy (Aydin and Tekin, 2015). Aside from low-interest, long-term loans, China also provides free education and training in a range of sectors for those who need it. The West, and the United States, in particular, have treated China with humiliation and conditionality of aid, whereas China's relations with Africa have been distinguished by mutual respect and cooperation rather than the former (Schiere et al. 2011).

2.5 China-Africa Relations

China is becoming more influential internationally because of the country's growing economy and liberalization policies. China is home to about 20% of the global population. Every year since 1990, economic growth has averaged above 10%. Jenkins and Edwards demonstrated this (2006). According to Jenkins & Edwards, China's commerce grew by more than two-thirds of the country's GDP between 1990 and 2002. Despite its rapid growth, the region's share of the global population and its relative insignificance in terms of GDP and commerce have remained relatively unchanged. Both wealthy and developing countries are worried about this burgeoning superpower.

The impact China has on countries in Asia and Latin America has been the subject of much discussion (Lall et al., 2005; Wei and Wang, 2009; Wang and Zheng, 2010; Ortmann, 2012). Despite China's emergence as a major source of FDI and the country's meteoric rise in trade with Africa throughout the 1990s, research on Africa has been mostly ignored (Jenkins and Edwards, 2006; Diaw and Lessoua, 2013).

Media and public attention have recently been focused on China's growing influence in Africa (Carmody 2008). China's advance into the African continent has been met with greater support from African critics than from their Western counterparts (Mawdsley 2008). An ever-expanding body of scholarly work examines China and Asia's rising interest in Africa (Asongu and Aminkeng, 2018; Alden et al., 2008; Guerrero and Manji, 2008). Key conceptual frameworks have also been used to examine the impact of the 'Asian driver' industries in China and India on sub-Saharan Africa through trade, investment, and governance (Carmody, 2008; Kaplinsky and Messner, 2008).

The growth of trade between Africa and China slowed down in the middle of the 1990s. Development, however, picked up dramatically in the second half of the decade (especially in 1998) (Jenkins and Edwards 2006). Trade between China and Africa has expanded dramatically since the late 1990s, according to Asche and Schüller (2008), while it remains modest in comparison to that between China and Western developed nations. According to data compiled by De Grauwe et al., China's exports and imports of commodities to Africa's overall commerce surged rapidly from less than 1 per cent in the 1980s to 11 and 13 per cent in 2009. (2012). In addition, it is said that China has surpassed Europe as Africa's most important commercial partner.

China's development in Africa has been studied from a variety of scholarly perspectives. Tull (2008) thinks that China's increased interest in Africa is a positive trend since it fits within a multipolar and non-interventionist approach. The following result is reached by Biggeri and Sanfilippo (2009) after doing their analysis of the relationship: The strategic interaction between China's foreign direct investment (FDI), trade, and economic cooperation with Africa is the engine

that drives China's expansion into Africa (natural resources and market potential). This favourable link was established by Naidu et al. (2010), who also suggested important steps for African governments to adopt if they want to improve the quality of China's and Africa's interactions.

An empirical study by De Grauwe et al. (2012) found that China is more ready to purchase from African nations with lower governance than from the United States or Europe. If this is the case, Africa's future prosperity may depend on its ability to fill the void left by the other major global economies. Even if the benefits have been shared, Renard (2011) argues that expanding institutions is necessary. According to Kolstad and Wiig (2011), the key driver of China's FDI in Africa is the continent's natural resources. They argue that despite Africa's desperate need for foreign direct investment, the continent's poor institutions are the norm (Asongu 2012). To wit: (Tuomi 2011; Darley 2012). According to Diaw and Lessoua, trade between the CEMAC3 and China has enhanced openness and reduced trade's negative effect on regional GDP (2013).

2.6 Conclusion

The chapter provided an overview of China's foreign policies broadly, comparing its development trajectory to the US. The highlight of this chapter is the Beijing Consensus, the global financial framework that serves as the bulwark for China's international cooperation. The next chapter focuses on the FOCAC, which would be via a document analysis of the FOCAC agreements, situating it side-by-side with the AU's integration agenda.



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CHAPTER THREE

AN ANALYSIS OF FOCAC'S PLACE IN AFRICA'S REGIONAL INTEGRATION DRIVE

3.0 Introduction

The chapter discussed the African regional integration process, its challenges, and prospects for the future. The chapter examines FOCAC's vision, declaration, and action plan. It thoroughly examines the FOCAC's role in Africa's regional integration, including win-win ramifications, and challenges. It discussed how FOCAC frustrates or promotes economic integration in Africa the lessons that may be derived from it. The theory of supranationalism has been deployed in this chapter. The analysis in the chapter connects FOCAC, China, and its foreign policies in a discussion that frames the AU as benefiting or losing out on the FOCAC relationship. The theory also provides a good purview in conducting an ideational analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the AU.

3.1 African Regional Integration

For more than six decades, Africa has struggled with concerns about continental integration. Pan-Africanists such as Kwame Nkrumah advocated for Africa to unify as a single political and economic entity to be entirely independent of colonial, neocolonial, and neo-imperialist authority. Many of the continent's early leaders envisioned African regional unity, which spurred the controversial Organization of African Unity (OAU) formation in 1963.

According to an interview with the first lecturer at the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD), Africa's integration has been staggeringly slow due to different ideas of Africa we want as advocated earlier by major regional blocs.

Our integration has been slow, one would think that with the demise of the OAU and the birth of AU, we would have achieved more success than we have now, however it is not too surprising. If we look at how integration is been pursued now, they are all ideals Kwame Nkrumah proposed and was busily championing in the late 1950s and early 1960s, but unfortunately, Africa didn't give him the necessary support to an extent and his insecurities also brought more problems to him... The other one is institutional limitations and political commitments of the leaders at the national level and being able to allow the policies that we subject ourselves to or commit ourselves to as signatories

According to the preceding claim, the inability of member states to relinquish some level of sovereign power to a single supranational authority of unification for the continent jeopardized the whole premise of African integration. The different factions represented their interest.

The Casablanca group, led by Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah, advocated for the expulsion of foreign influence in the form of neocolonial and neo-imperialist measures. The group's attitude was anti-Western and in favour of an African United States. They envisioned a supranational organization of a United African States: that would subsume member states on the continent under a superior central authority; that would collectively oversee the affairs of the newly independent continent (Harshe, 1988).

The Monrovia faction saw a unified Africa differently. According to Adejo (2001), this group's decision was heavily affected by their sympathies with their colonial overlords. These leaders were unable to accept ceding power they toiled for to a supranational authority. As a result, the group chose a regional body to act as a conduit for inter-state cooperation. The Organization of African

Unity was founded in 1963 as an unsatisfactory compromise to these parties' perpetual rift. It was dead at birth and could not impose a clear route that other nations were obligated to follow. The OAU Charter fully recognized each state's sovereignty as a distinct entity.

To bolster this stance, Article III of the OAU Charter made the organization's non-interference in the internal affairs of states definitive. It also postulated respect for each state's sovereignty and geographical integrity and its fundamental right to exist independently (OAU Charter, 1963). Makinda, Okumu & Mickler (2015) contends that the OAU's position allowed for despotic, abusive, and elitist bad governance, undermining the goal and aspiration of the Pan-African ideals. The eventual consequence was a metaphysically unified continent on the surface, but an in-depth reality of a fragmented continent for posterity.

Following the late 1970s and early 1980s, the OAU and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) determined that it was prudent to establish economic communities that would integrate the continent's various areas (North, West, East, Central, and South) and serve as the foundation for the eventual formation of a continental economic community (UNCTAD, 2016).

Africa was reorganized into subregional economic blocs governed by Regional Economic Communities (REC): the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IAD), the East African Community (EAC), and the South African Development Community (SADC).

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) approved the Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa in 1980 to build a regional economic development strategy centred on the construction of an African Common Market. This was a big attempt to unify the economic space, but the execution by the many RECs was abysmal (Mncube, 2020).

Due to the different RECs' enthusiasm to implement the policy statement of the Lagos Plan of Action, the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community was adopted in June 1991 to revive the continental integration project.

With the rebirth of the OAU as the African Union (AU) in 2002, a new energizing spirit and impetus were gathered in support of the implementation of the Abuja Treaty. The newly constituted AU's Constitutive Act called for wider African unity. Articles 3 (c) and (d) focus on furthering the continent's political and socioeconomic integration; promoting and defending African common viewpoints on matters of concern to the continent and its people (The Constitutive Act of AU, 2002). The AU's ambition of becoming a supranational body is reflected in its stance on human security and the principle of non-indifference in member states' affairs. The notion of non-indifference varies from the OAU's non-interference clause of the state-centric security principle (Ani, 2016). Similarly, the AU has put in place mechanisms to preserve peace and stability inside member states, which has significant consequences for the continent's integration. The Ezulwini Framework for Enhancing the Implementation of African Union Measures in Situations of Unconstitutional Changes of Government, as well as the communique [PSC/PR/COMM.1061(2022)] adopted at the 1061st PSC meeting on 27 January 2022, take a zero-tolerance stance toward any unconstitutional change of government and recognize only

governments formed through free and fair elections (AU, 2022). This is to ensure an unimpeded governance system that will ensure peaceful continuous sustainable development.

Although the efficiency of this initiative is debatable, it represents a big step forward in the AU's efforts to unite the continent.

According to the opinions expressed by first official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration in an interview, the AU has made considerable headway toward integration:

In the economic domain, as outlined in the constitutive act of the AU and Agenda 2063, concrete steps are being taken at the level of the AU. A notable example is the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), a significant achievement led by the AU to promote continent-wide integration through trade and commerce. The initiation of actual trading among African countries, which signifies substantial progress, lays the foundation for economic integration through trade. While progress may not be at 100%, it is evident that steps are being taken in the right direction, even though they have been incremental. Some tangible efforts are underway.

Since its inception, the AU has focused heavily on promoting continental economic integration through trade and commerce. In 2012, the African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government overwhelmingly accepted a decision to establish a Continental Free Trade Area (UNCTAD, 2016). During the implementation phase, an Action Plan on Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT) was endorsed, identifying, and focusing on seven major areas of cooperation. Several initiatives have been implemented to achieve some level of political and economic unity.

The AGENDA 2063 lays down the groundwork for the Africa we want, one that is politically and economically integrated under the auspices of the AU (Vickers, 2017).

The African Union (AU) marked a watershed moment when it launched the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in January 2021. The protocol compels member states to cede some level of their sovereign right to levy tariffs and taxes on products and services that cross their borders. The treaty promotes commerce among member states by removing tariff and non-tariff barriers. According to the World Bank, AfCFTA can reduce poverty and create shared prosperity in Africa (The World Bank, 2022). For this to happen, however, Africa would require foreign direct investment and other financial assistance, which may come from international development partners.

3.2 AU engagement with international development partners

Globalization has altered the extent of cooperation by countries and continental organizations of which the AU is no exception. The days of isolationism as a strategy of quick growth and progress have given way to an era of cooperation and partnership. For an integrated, prosperous, equitable, well-governed, and peaceful United States of Africa, effectively managed by its citizens and representing a creative and dynamic force in the international arena, as informed by the AU Constitutive Act (Article 3(e), 3(i) and 3(n)) and the seventh aspiration of Agenda 2063, Africa must cooperate with other actors both within and outside its domain. International development partners are crucial to the growth of the African continent. (Constitutive Act 2000; Agenda 2063). An interview with the second official of Ghana's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration indicated that.

...the AU is also building partnerships with its development partners which come either through FOCAC, TICAD or India-Africa relations. And so, the AU recognises that building partnerships and forging relationships are the cornerstone of its development and that it is open to working with everyone who intends to help to foster the development within the continent of the AU agenda.

This assertion is supported by the African Union's Framework for Strategic Partnership. The Africa Union has led the effort of enhancing Africa's cooperation and orienting it more strategically to react to the continent's aspirations for prosperity and change, as emphasized by Agenda 2063 (African Union, 2015).

The Framework of Africa's Strategic Partnerships conceptualizes four unique ways in which Africa collaborates with other international players. The first is a continent-to-continent partnership, such as Africa-Europe and Africa-Asia. The second focuses on continent-to-country ties, which are often with advanced nations such as Africa-US, Africa-China, Africa-Japan, and Africa-France. As new states or regions want further alliances, the next different type of cooperation is based on gestation and prospects. Afro-Arab and Iran-Africa ties are two examples of such partnerships. The continental body, AU's final mode of partnership is with other international and transnational organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Commonwealth.

Since the First Strategic Plan of Action Horizon 2007, the Africa Union has supported partnerships based on the premise of shared vision, laying the groundwork for cooperation such as FOCAC (Aboderin, & Ferreira, 2008).

3.3 The Vision and Objectives of the FOCAC

The FOCAC is a platform for China and Africa to work together to achieve a common goal. FOCAC was established in October 2000 during the inaugural Ministerial Conference in Beijing. The goal of the formation may be traced back to the 1950s when China's supreme leader Mao Zedong had a vision of promoting solidarity among the third world, subsequently known as South-South Cooperation (Brautigam, 2009). FOCAC plans to foster bilateral discussions between China and Africa to strengthen cooperation between the two groups. The purpose was to increase trade between Africa and China by establishing and expanding economic relations (Ferchen, 2013). Following the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in November 2006, the China-Africa relationship gained significance. During the meeting's proceedings, China declared a strategic alliance with the 48 African delegates present. The goals of the China-Africa partnership include equal consultation, increased understanding, expanded consensus, strengthened friendship, and promoted cooperation (FOCAC, n.d.). The entirety of the vision is made explicit in FOCAC's several declarations and Action Plans.

3.4 FOCAC Dakar Declaration

The 8th Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China Africa Conference held on September 2021 defines the China-Africa engagement process and establishes guidelines for engagement by China and its African counterparts even in a time when the world has been hit by a perilous pandemic. The Dakar Declaration 2021 is a reaffirmation and augmentation of the 2018 Beijing Declaration, which sought to establish a strong China-Africa community based on a shared future that accepts joint responsibility, pursues win-win cooperation, provides happiness for all, enjoys cultural

prosperity, enjoys common security, and promotes harmony between man and nature (FOCAC Dakar Declaration, 2021).

3.5 FOCAC's focal areas of cooperation between China, Africa and the AU

The agreement reached during the Eighth Ministerial Conference in Dakar focused on major areas of importance to both sides. In an interview, with the first respondents from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration official stated:

If you look at the FOCAC summit which was held in 2018 in China and the follow-up Ministerial meeting held in Senegal in 2021, it spells out the focal areas for cooperation with the African Union. And this FOCAC declaration was signed between the AU and the Chinese government. It indicates broadly 8 areas of cooperation between Africa and China.

Within the Dakar Action Plan (2022-2024), which serves as a launching pad for the realization of the FOCAC declaration on the Eight Ministerial Conference, priority areas such as political cooperation, economic cooperation, social development cooperation, cultural and people-to-people exchanges, peace and security cooperation, green development, experience sharing on state governance, and FOCAC institutional development are of great interest (Dakar Action Plan, 2021). In terms of political cooperation, both sides strive to deepen relations through frequent engagements such as visits and dialogues between senior leaders of the Chinese government, the African Union, and member states. The two sides would work vigorously on both bilateral and multilateral levels to develop African states' governance systems.

Bilateral cooperation is fostered between China's National People's Congress and African parliaments to improve mutual understanding and exchange of ideas on good governance and best - practice (Dakar Action Plan, 2021). China aspires to engage with the African Union and its sub-regional organizations to synergize all thoughts and efforts for both sides' transformation. China has maintained a firm posture of non-interference in the internal political affairs of any member state in its political cooperation. China does not seek to use its assistance to define and dictate Africa's development and political trajectory.

Africa has been compelled to choose particular regime types as a condition of receiving loans from Europe, the United States, and international financial institutions such as the IMF. In certain cases, developing nations have been required to elect democratic governments as a condition for receiving bailouts such as the Structural Adjustment Programmes and the HIPC Initiatives (Emeagwali, 2011; Ranis, & Stewart, 2001).

On the international stage, China advocates for the international community's assistance for Africa. Current global difficulties, such as COVID-19 and its aftermath repercussions, have had a severe impact on the world, with Africa bearing the brunt of the brunt. Chapter 2.4.8 of the Action Plan of FOCAC expresses China's appeal to countries and organizations to join and support the Initiative on Partnership for Africa's Development, which was launched by China and Africa (Dakar Action Plan, 2021). In addition, China provides substantial financial aid to Africa to assist it in implementing the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Further, economic cooperation lies at the heart of China-Africa cooperation. China requires African resources to fuel its growing economic ambition. Africa also needs aid in developing important areas of its economy to ensure long-term development and prosperity. The two parties hope to exchange ideas on how to enhance agriculture, food security, and food safety on the African continent (Dakar Action Plan, 2021). According to a UN survey, Africa is most susceptible to the threat of starvation. Hunger affected an estimated 282 million people in 2020. (Fuentes-Nieva, 2022). This is primarily owing to member states' failure to boost production yields due to insufficient investment in that sector, as well as difficult ecological constraints caused by climate change.

Due to the high prices of food supplies, it has resulted to become a security problem in nations such as Somalia and South Sudan, as well as other areas of the continent (Von Grebmer, Bernstein, Hossain, Brown, Prasai, Yohannes, & Foley, 2017). Most African countries cannot rely on domestic produce to feed their populations.

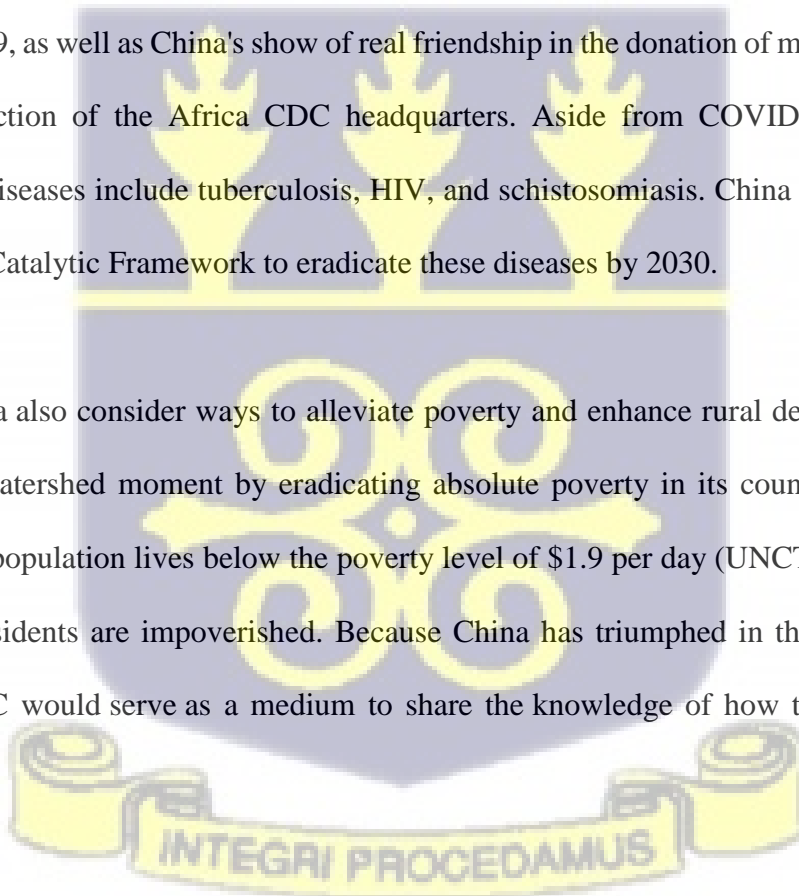
Several initiatives have been launched through China-Africa relations to address this ever-increasing concern. FOCAC provides platforms for structural improvements to be made in the African agriculture sector through the China-Africa agricultural cooperation mechanism and the China-AU Joint Committee on Agricultural Cooperation. China has given \$30 million in aid as part of the Special Program for Food Security. The Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP) also provides technical assistance in the agricultural sector.

Affognon, et al (2015) avers that most agricultural output goes to waste due to a terrible transportation network that connects farmlands to market areas and cities, allowing urban dwellers

to acquire locally produced food. To decrease post-harvest losses, the two sides would increase food security cooperation by putting the China-AU coordination mechanism for Belt and Road cooperation to full use. Connectivity has been focused not only on agriculture but also on important sectors such as transportation, communication, energy, and trans-border water resources (Dakar Action Plan, 2021).

China intends to assist Africa in addressing its myriad social development difficulties. The goal is to collaborate on medical and public health issues, education and human resources, research and technology, and social empowerment initiatives. China and Africa appreciate how each side handled Covid 19, as well as China's show of real friendship in the donation of millions of vaccines and the construction of the Africa CDC headquarters. Aside from COVID-19, other deadly communicable diseases include tuberculosis, HIV, and schistosomiasis. China is assisting Africa in line with the Catalytic Framework to eradicate these diseases by 2030.

China and Africa also consider ways to alleviate poverty and enhance rural development. China has reached a watershed moment by eradicating absolute poverty in its country. Over 34% of Africa's overall population lives below the poverty level of \$1.9 per day (UNCTAD, 2021). Most African rural residents are impoverished. Because China has triumphed in the struggle against poverty, FOCAC would serve as a medium to share the knowledge of how they achieved this milestone.



As previously stated, the Dakar Action Plan (2022-2024) seeks to prioritize the following nine (9) areas: political cooperation, economic cooperation, social development cooperation, cultural and

people-to-people exchanges, peace and security cooperation, green development, experience sharing on state governance, and FOCAC institutional development to promote Africa's mutual development.

3.6 Integration of the Principles of the AU into the FOCAC Agreement

3.6.1 FOCAC and Agenda 2063

Africa's integration agenda and processes may be seen in the policy framework of Agenda 2063. This is a directional technical policy book for the future of Africa which aims to be achieved within the next 50 years. African countries forming partnerships with other entities would want to make inputs that will be in their favour just as equally respecting the views of the other party. The first official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration holds the view that African countries engage with China because they found common grounds to cooperate and that:

Africa already has a plan of integration as brilliantly captured In Agenda 2063 and most of these issues that are found in the FOCAC declaration with China are things that we have agreed to do as a continent. And so, in signing these declarations and action plans we make sure that they are aligned with our priorities.

FOCAC has found ingenious ways to incorporate the African vision in its declarations.

The vision of the AU for *Africa We Want* is grouped into seven aspirations. That is,

- i. A Prosperous Africa, based on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development
- ii. An Integrated Continent, Politically United, based on the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the Vision of Africa's Renaissance.

- iii. An Africa of Good Governance, Democracy, Respect for Human rights, Justice and the Rule of Law.
- iv. A Peaceful and Secure Africa.
- v. Africa with a Strong Cultural Identity, Common Heritage, Values and Ethics
- vi. An Africa whose Development is people-driven, especially relying on the Potential offered by its Women and Youth, and well-cared Children.
- vii. An Africa as a Strong, United and Influential Global Player and Partner.

The primary goal of the FOCAC has been to achieve a prosperous China and the African continent, just as Agenda 2063 envisions a prosperous African continent. Every action undertaken by the AU, or its member states must contribute to the achievement of the Agenda 2063 goals. The FOCAC and the Africa Union have a similar vision. The 15th item of the Dakar Declaration, for example, advocates for more African representatives to run international organisations and agencies, as well as for African nations to play more active roles in global governance and international affairs. This proclamation echoes the seventh aspiration of the AU Agenda 2063 which is a Strong, United and Influential Global Player and Partner (African Union, 2015). FOCAC supports Africa's aspiration to become a prominent global as espoused in the 15th item of the Dakar Declaration (Dakar Declaration, 2022).

Again, the FOCAC Declaration and Action Plan attempt to help Africa silence the gun. Under the fourth aspiration, a peaceful and secure Africa, the continent strives to reduce all types of violence, wars, and conflicts. It promotes a continent-wide cessation and confiscation of the use of illicit weapons, as well as the end of all types of violence that destabilize the continent and its people. The AU aims at achieving the goal of Silencing the gun in 2020. This goal has, however, not been

fully achieved by the deadline. It is worth mentioning that the AfCFTA is one of Agenda 2063's major projects. This initiative exists primarily to strengthen Africa's economic integration through trade and commerce. FOCAC has demonstrated solidarity and recognises Africa's courage in undertaking such measures. It has also actively supported the project through the Silk Road e-commerce collaboration with Africa (FOCAC Dakar Declaration, 2021).

3.7 FOCAC's contribution to Africa's regional integration agenda

3.7.1 China-African Union Investments

Through the FOCAC platform, China has considerably boosted the image of the continental body as a supranational entity. The old continental body, OAU, experienced a struggle in gaining recognition, respect, and validity as a regulatory body from both member states and foreign entities. It lacked the impetus to regulate and implement its principles.

FOCAC was always intended to be a bilateral partnership between China and Africa. China and African countries have engaged on a collective or individual basis, rather than through the continental body. By admitting the African Union to the conference in 2015, FOCAC validated its commitment to Africa's unity and joint progress.

As explained in an interview with the first lecturer at LECIAD:

I think that by the Chinese engagement with the African Union, they are giving recognition to Africa's integration agenda. But for the recognition of Africa's integration agenda, they are just better off in dealing with the individual member state, but their strategic angle and perspective recently indicate that it's important

to have a framework to engage the AU... So, you have one multilateral institution the AU engaging a nation-state and so yes there is a recognition for the integration project, the reason why there is that collaboration between the AU and China.

The incorporation of the AU into the FOCAC provides acknowledgement and external validation to the organisational body. Building institutional capability is a critical component of establishing a regional organization's governing structure. Regional groups have an overarching duty and the potential to address shared problems. The preponderance of the problems facing regional organisations is intrinsic. Member states in Africa have had difficulty relinquishing sovereign power to these organisations since the founding and transition of the OAU to the AU. These organisations are rendered ineffective due to a lack of legitimacy. External validation of both countries and other international actors is one way to obtain the needed legitimacy (Schmidt, 2004).

Parsons (2021) observes that the EU's ascent to prominence was the outcome of wide recognition and cooperation with other foreign players such as the United States. Following suit, China's external approval of the AU on its platforms such as FOCAC will significantly increase its credibility as a regional body.

The AU is given complete credit in Section 2.3 of the FOCAC Dakar Action Plan (2022-2024). Section 2.3.1 declares that the two parties appreciate the Africa Union's critical role in maintaining peace and security and furthering African integration. Section 2.3.2 also agrees with both sides' decision to consolidate and strengthen China's cooperation with the African Union and its affiliated institutions, as well as with Africa's sub-regional organisations, to continue holding the China-

Africa Strategic Dialogue, and to strengthen communication and coordination between China and Africa's sub-regional organisations, for China-Africa transnational and trans-regional cooperation to yield more results.

The inclusion of the AU in the FOCAC structure signals an emerging supra-government on the continent. The Chinese government's bilateral and multilateral agreements with African states can be gradually transferred to the AU. The AU might progressively begin to increase its regulatory and enforcement duties and become the primary negotiator and partner for all international interactions on behalf of the continent's member states. If this inclusion triggers massive recognition and validation within the same space or with other actors, it could be very impactful in giving the AU the coverage its predecessor OAU never had. This is because the Action Plan provides the AU with external validation and recognition as the continent's single acknowledged mouthpiece, which may translate into internal legitimacy.

Howorth (2012) emphasizes that for international and regional institutions to take the character of supranational organisations, they must be able to enforce their regulations, retain control, and maintain peace. Leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah have campaigned from the early days of independence for a politically unified Africa with an African military high command to provide relative peace and control on the continent. Unfortunately, lack of funding and political incoherence by member states have rendered it impossible.

China stated in 2015 that it will provide \$100 million for the training and equipping of the Africa Standby Force (Shinn, 2015). Article 13 of the AU Constitutive Act features the Protocol Relating

to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council, which allows for the establishment of a rapid military standby force to assist in crises that have the potential to destabilize any territory on the continent (The Constitution Act of AU, 2002). This was done to secure long-term peace for Africa to move forward with its continental integration agenda. ASF can become a reality with the commitment of Africa's development partners, such as China, to provide financial assistance. This is a significant win for Africa's integration ambition.

China's massive investment in the AU is wholly sponsoring the construction of the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The AU headquarters structure is the emblem and citadel of Africa's regional integration. It is a meeting place for all member countries to debate issues confronting Africa, as well as the continent's current situation and prospects. It contains the many AU organs that ensure the organization's proper management. China is said to have invested more than \$200 million (BBC News, 2012). This is an important contribution to African integration.

3.7.2 Construction and Infrastructural Development

Infrastructure is a major cause of Africa's delayed pace of integration. Africa requires enormous infrastructure upgrades in critical areas such as electricity, communication, transportation, health, and agriculture. According to a study undertaken by the Africa Economic Outlook and the African Development Bank (AfDB), the continent's infrastructure requirements amount to around \$170 billion each year (de Desenvolvimento, 2018). China and other international development partners have made a concerted effort to improve the continent's infrastructural capacity.

In an interview with the second lecturer at LECIAD, recounted some attempts made by FOCAC to improve the level of infrastructural deficit in Africa:

I think that the infrastructure lead development, the Belt and Road initiative if that is carried through by China can enhance Africa's integration agenda because what Africans are aiming for is connecting developmental infrastructure, such as roads and railways that can connect us from Accra to Ouagadougou to Abidjan and wherever on the continent. So, if China can keep to its Economic Cooperation in the area of regional infrastructure development that can help as well, to unblock the trade potentials for intra-African trade as well.

Infrastructure development is prioritized under Section 3.2 of the Dakar Action Plan. FOCAC has undertaken a significant number of infrastructure projects through initiatives such as the China-AU coordination mechanism for Belt and Road cooperation, the South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund, the China-Africa Digital Innovation Partnership Programs, and the Exim Bank credit facility (Dakar Action Plan, 2021).

China has built several road and railway networks, including city-to-city and country-to-country transportation systems. The Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway project, which cost a total of US\$ 4.5 billion, is one such big project that is classified as a cross-country transportation network. This initiative was intentionally developed to link the economies of these two countries. The 750-kilometre rail link connects Ethiopian production centres to the Red Sea and the port of Djibouti. It enables the fast and free movement of people and products among these countries while also providing long-term economic benefits to the area.

Power is another area in which China has made significant investments. According to the Africa Development Bank, nearly 640 million Africans do not have access to electricity. This has been a significant impediment to industrialisation and the intra-trade of finished products. FOCAC has redirected massive funds to boost the availability and accessibility of power in important areas. The Memve'ele hydroelectric dam, operated by China's state-owned Sinohydro Corporation, was completed in 2019. The Cameroonian government, the African Development Bank, and the Chinese Exim Bank (which paid roughly \$531.6 million) all contributed to the \$832 million Memve'ele dam. Cameroon will get around 211 megawatts of power from this project. The dam will supply reliable power to households, industries, government institutions and individuals in Southern Cameroon (World Bank, 2019).

Similarly, tremendous investment has been made in countries like Nigeria and Kenya. The Chinese government has granted loans to countries for infrastructure projects such as the Lagos-Ibadan railway network, the Mombasa-Nairo Standard Gauge Railway, the Nigerian four airport terminal expansion project (Abuja, Kano, Lagos, and Port Harcourt) in 2013, the Nigerian 40 Parboiled rice processing plants project, the Lamu Port-South Sudan-Ethiopia transport (LAPSSET) corridor regional project, and many others (Calabrese & Tang, 2020; Morgan & Zheng, 2019, pp. 14–15; China Africa Research Initiative & Boston University Global Development Policy Center, 2021). These initiatives may not have projects that directly integrate African countries, but they do have the potential to stimulate economic growth in their countries. In regional integration, the levels of growth and capacity building of member states are reflective of the outlooks of the regional organisation. As a result, if you have a regional organisation that is very unorganised, with bad

and seemingly catastrophic economic metrics, it is important to couple such indicators with the type of membership the regional body has. In other words, the sum of the parts will equal the total. China has made undoubtedly a considerable infrastructural investment in Africa, yet the first lecturer from LECIAD in an interview made some worrying statements:

My worry is that there are some countries that China is paying more attention to than others and that can undermine the collective bargaining power of the African Union. So, when it comes to the very decision-making, a member state will be looking at their relative positions with China to decide rather than the African position they must adhere to.

Foster (2009) has indicated that Chinese infrastructure finance has been heavily concentrated, with over 70% going to Nigeria, Angola, Ethiopia, and Sudan (Foster, 2009). This confirms the worries of the Research fellow. Some countries may have stronger negotiating policies that are more favourable to the Chinese government than others. It is also possible to conclude that the Chinese government provides funding to countries in which they have a significant interest. If this trend of disparity in investment persists, the consequence will be a regional community with great infrastructure restricted to a few select countries on the continent. It would also foster an affinity between these countries and their sponsor China, rather than fidelity to the international organisation. The African Union must take proactive measures to address issues like these.

3.8 FOCAC as a threat to Africa's regional integration drive

Many have expressed concerns about the fact that the intensified cooperation between China and Africa relations may create a diversion from the actual agenda which is African integration (Wang

& Zhu 2020). China has its agenda for the creation of FOCAC, which is to create a friendly partnership for trade with Africa.

Africa on the other hand is in pursuit of a continental agenda of economic integration through the AfCFTA program. The AfCFTA provides the continent with a new directional path in trade and looks at how African countries can make good use of a free continental trade area to boost their trade incomes within and without. Africa's intra-trade has stood at less than 14 per cent of the total African export since colonial times. The continents seek to address this through putting in measures such as the elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers on certain products manufactured on the African continent. The efforts of tariff removal and revamping of local industries according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) are likely to increase intra-trade to about 40 percent (Grynspan, 2021). Will Africa's continuous engagement with China through the FOCAC not rather encourage external trade with China than promote intra-trade and would that not be a threat to Africa's economic integration agenda? The AfCFTA policy framework does not reprimand African countries for trading outside of the continent. It seeks to provide other alternatives to the traditional trading routes and trade partners that have not given Africa the needed growth it ought to gain from its trade. Engagement with FOCAC has no bearing on disintegrating Africa. The challenge arises based on the kind of agreements member states sign with China. Do they have the potential to retard economic and political growth in Africa or are they detrimental to citizens of the member states that engage in bilateral cooperation with China through FOCAC?



Section 5 of the Dakar Action Plan states China's support to African countries in promoting African products at such events as the China International Import Expo and the China Import and Export Fair organized by FOCAC (Dakar Action Plan, 2021).

The second official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration holds that FOCAC is not a threat to regional integration:

...it doesn't pose any threat rather it complements our integration if we handle it well. Coming back to the issue of the Belt and Road initiative, for instance, if you take West Africa as an example, Ghana has the desire to ensure that it expands its rail network in Ghana and Burkina Faso has the same ambition to expand its rail network and we are a port country and the latter is not but we both have the same plan, so what stops us from submitting a joint proposal to the Chinese side to build us a railway that connects Tema port to Ouagadougou from there you ask for an extension to Mali then to Niger all running through the port city of Tema to those countries. if you can do that through the Belt and Road initiative which the Chinese are willing to fund, what you intend to do is that you are integrating the continent in terms of the free movement of goods and services which will foster economic engagement in terms of people-to-people engagement.

In sharing a similar assertion as the respondent from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, the first respondent from the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy, a senior research fellow, expressed that FOCAC creates the need for African countries to work

together more to develop structures that will efficiently facilitate relations with China. To quote the respondent verbatim

I do not think it poses any threat to our integration rather it is a good trend. Now Chinese relations are no longer going to be an ad hoc response to African situations but it also means that China is increasingly accepting that AU is a very important actor and so they must also put structures in place to be able to engage (with China). And so, for me, FOCAC is good news altogether...

In an interview with the second respondent from the Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy, the respondent agreed that although the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, on paper, spells out a promising future for Africa's integration, the respondent questioned the capability of the Forum to stand the test of time considering the national and foreign interests of China as a nation. To quote the respondent verbatim

...The things I can say are threats are the things that if care is not taken are likely to undermine our integration. The question is since its inception what things may have gone well and how can we leverage it? The Chinese don't care much about good governance, but we can say that for where we want to get as African states, good governance is of importance and so we must ensure good governance is included in the agreements... Nevertheless, FOCAC, on paper shows goodwill to our integration process but in reality and looking from 10 years from now would it be the same.

Even though Africa's engagement with China on surface analysis doesn't pose a direct threat to the integration process of Africa, there are very disturbing issues that are affecting member states due to their engagement with China and may in the long-term have dire consequences on achieving the benefit of a regional integrated continent.

FOCAC has allowed the Chinese government and its nationals to invest and transact business in several sectors of the African economy. Some include investment in consumables, construction, agriculture, industrialization, and the extraction sector.

However, a sizable number of Chinese citizens have committed various crimes that are against the FOCAC Action Plan and have a detrimental effect on Africans. In an interview with the second respondent from LECIAD, a lecturer, he unsettlingly revealed that:

...if you take DRC, where China is extracting natural resources, how much of the green projects of FOCAC are reflecting in Chinese operations in DRC. When you talk about Chinese involvement in illegal mining (galamsey) in Ghana, does it reflect FOCAC's focal area on environmental cooperation? So beautifully fashioned in the FOCAC document but then you come to the bilateral relations, and it does not reflect. And so how can the AU help in holding China accountable Should the AU have a stock taking mechanism in addition to the structures that we have created already so that the meetings of the FOCAC will have an element of Stock taken and feedback on the focal areas spearheaded by the AU?

Several headlines and official government statements have supported the above claims, particularly in Ghana where Chinese illicit mining activities are often reported by mainstream media. Aisha Huang, a Chinese national and lead of illicit mining in Ghana, is a well-known name linked to heinous atrocities committed in the gold mining industry. She was detained and charged with inflicting irreparable damage to Ghana's vegetation cover (Africanews, 2022).

Additionally, according to Akwasi Sarpong, more than 120 Chinese nationals have been detained in Ghana in connection with illegal mining (BBC News, 2013). Although FOCAC plays a complementary role in Africa's integration process, the unchecked activities of its citizens could damage China's relationship with Africa, deny Africa the proper financial benefit it is entitled to from its mining industry, and destroy its forestry conservations, which would have an impact on the environment and the climate.

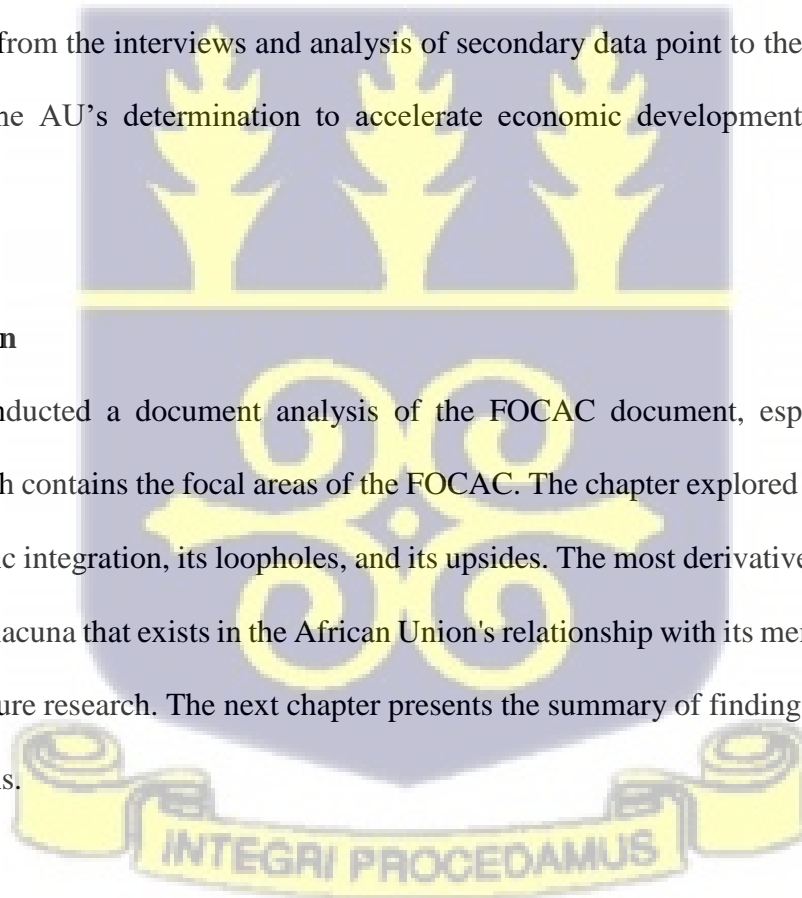
3.9 The Real Challenge

The real challenge that FOCAC poses to African economic integration is the ideational issue, which has lingered since the inception of the OAU. The options, modalities, and alternatives that existed, and continue to exist in African states have always been inertia in Africa's integration drive. The African Union itself is bereft of upholding its norms and standards in a manner that does not inspire confidence in its member states to consider it as the putative transformational regional body that would deliver the economic ideals to African states. The argument this researcher is making is that the economic malaise the African Union finds itself in is self-inflicted. The OAU/AU policy records are disappointing, as much as its economic initiatives from the 1970s to 2022 are concerned. How well has the AU incubated African states into believing the African

dream? The ideational aspect of African integration, which should form the basis of the economy has not been well explored and well-intentioned. The leadership of African governance views the African Union as a body that exists in theory but lacks the actualities to provide real economic development. This is a mindset problem that the African Union must decapitate before any endogenous economic paradigm can sparkle among the African states. The African states do not trust the African Union whose financial capabilities are frail, whose transport infrastructure is wrecked and whose forex remains a fundamental challenge. Noticing these real challenges by China is what is providing the impetus to the former to exploit these cracks in the ideational labyrinth of the African Union which is created by the lack of the AU's ideational cohesion. The deconstructions from the interviews and analysis of secondary data point to the lack of belief and vehemence in the AU's determination to accelerate economic development. This is the real problem.

3.10 Conclusion

The chapter conducted a document analysis of the FOCAC document, especially the Dakar declaration which contains the focal areas of the FOCAC. The chapter explored the vicissitudes of African economic integration, its loopholes, and its upsides. The most derivative from this chapter is the ideational lacuna that exists in the African Union's relationship with its member states, which is an area for future research. The next chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations.



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CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the findings of the research, as well as the conclusions, lessons learned, obstacles faced, and some recommendations for policymakers about the implications of FOCAC within the context of Africa's regional integration. The conclusions of the research are based on the interviews that were conducted, and they include some observations and recommendations made from the research.

4.1 Summary of Findings

This study sought to explore the African integration process, as well as the FOCAC's role and the potentially significant hurdle it poses in the African regional integration process. Although regional integration in Africa has been slower due to ideological differences between the major blocs of Casablanca and Monrovia during the formation of the initial supranational regional organisation, the OAU, the rebirth of the OAU into the AU, and the coming into force of the Constitutive Act have shown significant progress toward integration. On the political front, the Constitutive Act grants the regional organisation supra-oversight jurisdiction (clause of non-indifference) over the internal affairs of member states, particularly in the areas of security, human rights violations, and genocide. Africa has also made significant strides toward unification through regional economic integration. The AfCFTA plan aimed to economically integrate diverse sub-regional economic groupings into a continental free trade zone. It also aims to increase intra-African trade by eliminating tariffs and non-tariff barriers on African commodities.

FOCAC's Contribution to Africa's Regional Integration Goal: The study has shown that FOCAC, despite some challenges, complements Africa's regional integration objectives. It highlights how FOCAC's involvement has enhanced the African Union's capacity for supranational action, particularly in security and economic cooperation. This addresses the question of how the FOCAC agreement contributes to Africa's regional integration goal. The research also discovered that the African Union's interaction with foreign development partners is critical to Africa's economic success. The African Union's Framework of Strategic Partnerships outlines Africa's level of engagement with international development, which includes continent-to-continent partnerships, continent-to-country partnerships, new states' further partnership on gestation and prospects, and continental partnership with other international and transnational organisations. Priority areas such as political cooperation, economic cooperation, social development cooperation, cultural and people-to-people exchanges, peace and security cooperation, green development, experience sharing on state governance, and FOCAC institutional development are of great interest within the Dakar Action Plan (2022-2024), which serves as a launching pad for the realisation of the FOCAC declaration on the Eight Ministerial Conference.

Integration Principles of the AU in FOCAC: The research reveals how the African Union's integration concepts, as outlined in Agenda 2063, have been incorporated into FOCAC agreements. It demonstrates how FOCAC aligns with Africa's integration blueprint. This addresses the question of how the integration principles of the AU have been incorporated and implemented into the FOCAC agreement. The policy framework of Agenda 2063, which includes seven aspirations of the African people for the Africa they want, may be considered Africa's integration

agenda and blueprint and this have been considered in drafting the FOCAC Declaration and Action Plan.

The FOCAC's principal objective has been to build an affluent China and African continent, just like Agenda 2063 envisions a thriving African continent. Several African aspirations have been incorporated into the FOCAC declaration and Action Plan, such as the 15th item of the Dakar Declaration, which advocates for more African representatives to lead international organisations and agencies, as well as for African nations to play more active roles in global governance and international affairs. This declaration mirrors the AU Agenda 2063's seventh aspiration, which is to be a Strong, United, and Influential Global Player and Partner. It demonstrates the actions made by FOCAC to project and promote the continent's interests.

African States' Engagement with China: The study examines China's contributions to Africa's integration agenda through FOCAC and highlights the potential benefits, such as financial commitments to initiatives like the Africa Standby Force and infrastructure projects. This addresses the question of how African states are engaging with China to meet their continental integration objectives. During this research, the contributions made by China through FOCAC to Africa's integration agenda were thoroughly examined. China has significantly improved the continental body's image as a supranational institution through the FOCAC platform. FOCAC was always meant to be a bilateral partnership between China and Africa. China and African countries have participated collectively or individually, rather than through the continental body. FOCAC reaffirmed its commitment to African unity and growth by admitting the African Union to the conference in 2015. The external validation aspect, which China has emphasised through FOCAC, has legitimised the AU's operations and authority among member states. China has also committed to providing a financial package of \$100 million for the Africa Standby Force's training and

equipment. The ability of the AU to impose its decisions militarily will improve public perception of the organization as a supranational one.

Infrastructure deficiency is one element that has slowed Africa's integration process. Therefore, Section 3.2 of the Dakar Action Plan gives priority to infrastructure development. Through programs like the China-AU coordination mechanism for Belt and Road cooperation, the South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund, the China-Africa Digital Innovation Partnership Programs, and the Exim Bank credit facility, FOCAC has taken on a sizable number of infrastructure projects. The Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway project, the Memveele hydropower dam, the Lagos-Ibadan rail network, and the Mombasa-Nairo Standard Gauge Railway are among the major infrastructure initiatives. However, most of these projects are concentrated in Sudan, Ethiopia, Angola, and Nigeria. Furthermore, a lot of people are worried that the close ties between China and Africa may cause a distraction from the real goal, which is Africa's integration.

The study found that, if managed efficiently, FOCAC does not constitute a threat but rather complements Africa's integration project. The indiscriminate and illegal conduct and actions of some Chinese nations in Africa, however, pose a threat to member states. Many have been arrested for gross contempt of key areas of the FOCAC Action Plan, such as development and green cooperation.

Finally, the research shows that the ideational problem, which has persisted since the OAU's founding, is the actual obstacle that FOCAC presents to African economic integration. The options, modalities, and alternatives that were available and are now available in African states may be a drag on the continent's efforts to integrate.

This study set out to explore the African integration process, assess the role of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), and examine potential hurdles it presents to African regional integration. Despite historical challenges stemming from ideological differences, Africa has made significant progress in its integration journey, particularly with the establishment of the African Union (AU) and the Constitutive Act.

On the political front, the AU's Constitutive Act has granted the organization supranational authority, notably in areas such as security, human rights, and genocide prevention. Additionally, Africa has taken substantial steps toward economic integration, exemplified by the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), aimed at creating a continent-wide free trade zone by eliminating tariffs and non-tariff barriers.

FOCAC's Threat to African Integration: The research acknowledges that while FOCAC can complement Africa's integration efforts if effectively managed, it also identifies instances of indiscriminate and illegal actions by certain Chinese entities that could undermine key aspects of the FOCAC Action Plan. This directly addresses the question of the threat posed by FOCAC to African integration. The research also highlighted the crucial role of the African Union's engagement with foreign development partners in achieving economic success. The African Union's Framework of Strategic Partnerships outlines various levels of engagement with international development, which include partnerships with other continents, countries, and international organizations. Priority areas within the Dakar Action Plan (2022-2024) align with the AU's integration goals, covering political, economic, social, cultural, and security cooperation. Furthermore, the study demonstrated how the AU's integration concepts have been integrated into FOCAC agreements, aligning with Africa's own Agenda 2063. The shared objective is to promote

a thriving China and African continent, with many African aspirations mirrored in FOCAC documents.

The research also examined China's contributions to Africa's integration agenda through FOCAC. While FOCAC was initially conceived as a bilateral partnership, its inclusion of the African Union in 2015 underscored its commitment to African unity and growth. External validation through FOCAC has enhanced the AU's credibility and authority. Moreover, China's financial commitments to initiatives such as the Africa Standby Force and various infrastructure projects have the potential to strengthen the AU's capacity for decisive action.

Infrastructure development, a key driver of integration, was identified as a priority in the Dakar Action Plan. FOCAC has been instrumental in numerous infrastructure projects across Africa, addressing infrastructure deficiencies. However, the study noted concerns about whether the close ties between China and Africa might divert attention from the primary goal of African integration. It highlighted that, if effectively managed, FOCAC could complement Africa's integration efforts. Nonetheless, the study also pointed to instances of indiscriminate and illegal actions by certain Chinese entities, which could undermine key aspects of the FOCAC Action Plan, particularly in the areas of development and green cooperation.

The research findings suggest that Africa's engagement with China through FOCAC has significantly influenced and complemented the AU's integration goals. Importantly, China's policy of non-interference has allowed African governments and the AU to choose their own developmental paths. Regional integration remains pivotal, shaping interactions and negotiations as Africa's global role evolves. China's prominence on the international stage underscores the potential benefits of the partnership between Africa and a potential global leader.

4.2 Conclusions

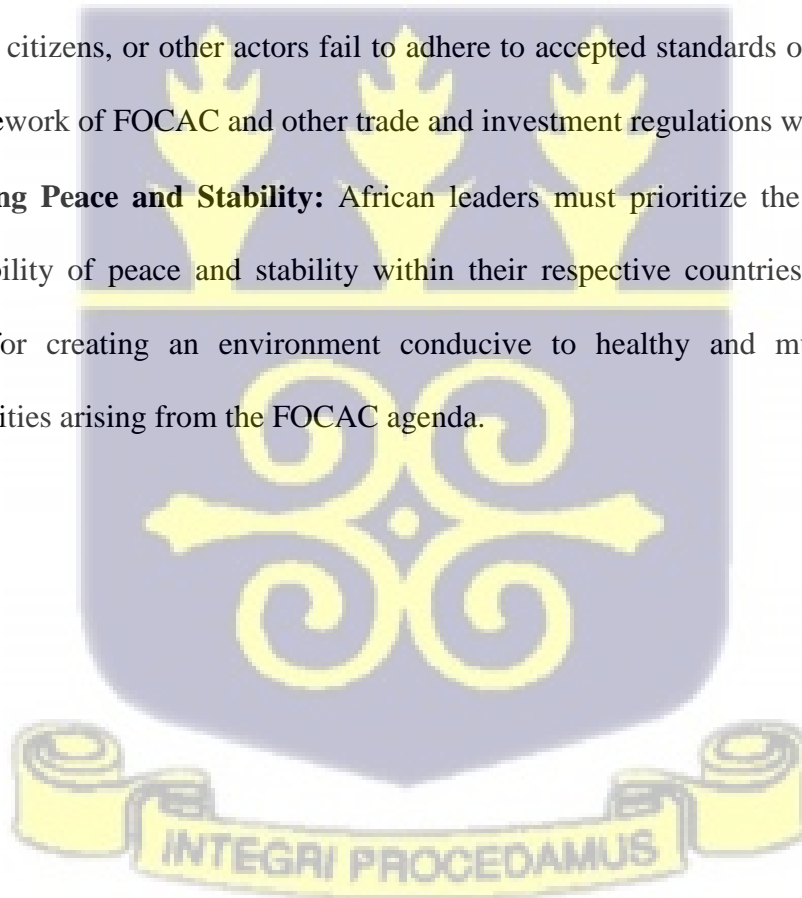
Based on the study's findings, it is possible to infer that Africa's engagement with China through FOCAC has had a substantial influence and complements the AU's goal for the continent's integration process. Due to China's policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of African states, unlike other partnerships, the China-Africa relationship through FOCAC allows African governments and the continental organization to choose their developmental route. Also, the regional integration project must be the driving force behind interaction and negotiation since African integration to alter the continent's worldview. China is a powerful player in current international affairs; thus Africa should make the most of its partnership with a potential global hegemon.

4.3 Recommendations

In light of the real challenges and potential threats some FOCAC engagements bring, I wish to make the following recommendations:

- **Leadership and Alignment in Bilateral Accords:** The African Union (AU) should leverage its membership in FOCAC to assert leadership in shaping the negotiation process of member nations' bilateral agreements with China. This leadership role will ensure that these agreements align with the broader objective of regional integration in Africa.
- **Establishment of a Follow-up Committee:** A Follow-up Committee on FOCAC, comprising the AU, China, and African member states, should be established to oversee and assess the implementation of policy agreements. This committee will play a crucial role in monitoring various aspects, including environmental standards, particularly in industries like mining, to ensure sustainable and green practices.

- **Promotion of Transnational Infrastructure:** Instead of pursuing individual domestic initiatives, African member states should engage in joint negotiations for transnational infrastructure investments that transcend national borders. For example, neighbouring countries like Ghana and Burkina Faso can collaborate on projects that connect their nations through road or rail networks. These interconnected projects will accelerate regional integration by facilitating continental connectivity.
- **Enforcement of Sanctions for Non-compliance:** Robust mechanisms for the establishment, imposition, and enforcement of monetary and criminal sanctions should be put in place to address instances where Chinese officials, multinational corporations (MNCs), citizens, or other actors fail to adhere to accepted standards of operation within the framework of FOCAC and other trade and investment regulations within Africa.
- **Sustaining Peace and Stability:** African leaders must prioritize the maintenance and sustainability of peace and stability within their respective countries. This stability is crucial for creating an environment conducive to healthy and mutually beneficial opportunities arising from the FOCAC agenda.



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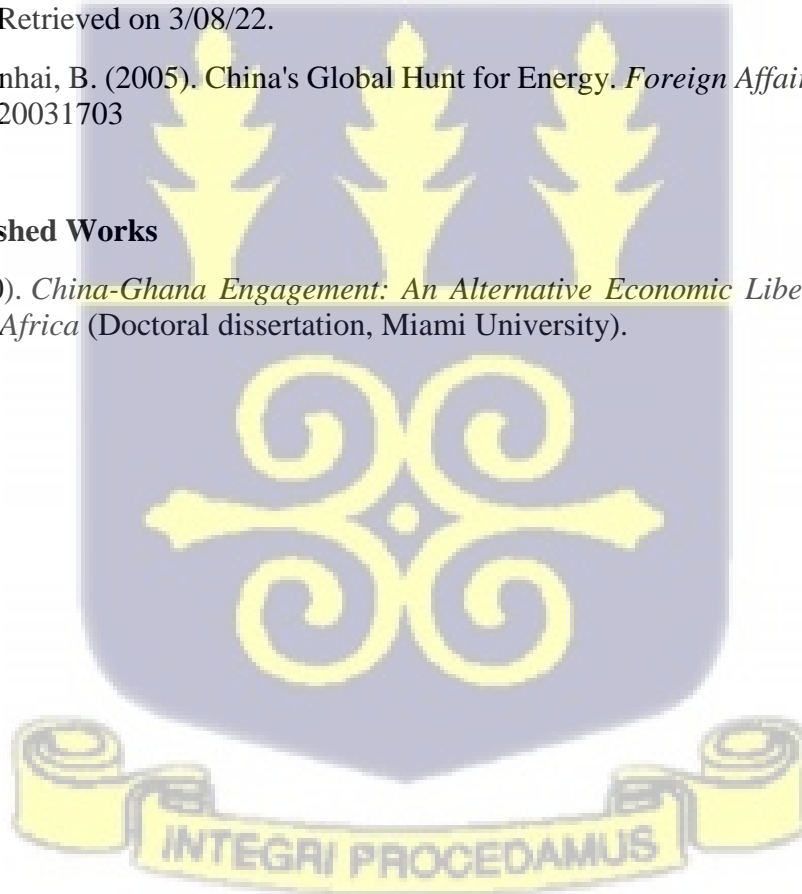
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW GUIDE

University of Ghana
Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy

Topic: Implication of the Forum On China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) On Africa's Regional Integration: Progress Or Retrogress?

1. What are your views on African integration? Are we making progress with respect to political unity? And economic integration?
2. How has the African Union courted and improved its relationship over the years? Especially with international development partners.
3. What is the most fascinating about China's foreign policy, economic, policies and trade policies with Africa?
4. What is FOCAC and where are its focal areas of cooperation with the AU?
5. How does the FOCAC agreement contribute to Africa's regional integration goal?
6. How does the AU ensure that African states engage China to meet their continental integration objectives?
7. How have the integration principles of the AU been incorporated and implemented into the FOCAC agreement?
8. What are the threats FOCAC pose to African integration?
9. Final Comments

APPENDIX II

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Dates	Ministry/Department/Office
1. October 21, 2022	LECIAD
2. October 23, 2022.	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration
3. October 24, 2022	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration
4. October 28, 2022	LECIAD

