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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE WORLD – CHINA'S ROLE IN AFRICA

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ABSTRACT – The economic globalization is a comprehensive process which has almost fully re-arranged the map of our world's economy by the 21st century. China successfully took this opportunity as in the course of the recent three decades, since the beginning of its opening policy, its economy has gone through incredible changes. The relationship between China and the sub-Saharan African countries - based principally on mutual economic benefits - can be considered perhaps as one of the most peculiar nowadays. Therefore, the authors have examined the characteristics of this relationship in depth.

Keywords: Africa, China, economic cooperation, social development, strategy, trade

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, China's relationship with Africa has reached a globally significant level. From China's viewpoint, with their recent economic boom, the need for resources is enormous which, on supply-demand bases, leads them to the African lands, rich in raw materials. African nations desperately need capital and foreign investment to help the development in infrastructure, bring the continent on the path to industrialization and to achieve long-term economic growth. At first sight, their cooperation looks reasonable, balanced and fair. However, criticism from countries is not absent.

METHODS

This study is based mostly on secondary research founded on the descriptive-analytical exploration of concrete economic, social, political, and technological factors, which could be found in the background of this complex relationship. The examinations are based on the available international bibliography and databases in this field. Mention should be made about the fact that the authors not only visited the region in person, but one of them even used to work several years in African countries. Therefore, the on-site personal contacts, experience and the formerly published studies of the authors also contributed to the results of this paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The development of the friendly relationship between China and Africa

The Sino-African relations look back to a long history as in 114 B.C. a worldwide trading road was established by Han dynasty starting from Xi'an with the view of facilitating the East-West relations and with a special focus on the Eastern endeavours to extend to the West. The first direct meeting between East Africa and China can be dated to 1418 as Admiral Zheng He reached the Swahili coast, during his explorative trip from 1405 to 1433.

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During the 1950's the bipolar world order gave an opportunity to the economically and technically less developed regions, the so-called Third World including China and Africa as well. In 1955, leaders of 29, mostly Asian and African independent countries met each other in Bandung, Indonesia. The majority of these countries had not identified their interests [neither] to the Socialist bloc, they wanted to benefit from the rivalry of the Eastern bloc and the Western world (Fischer, 2005). The "Ten Principles" of Bandung Conference have still importance and relevance in the Sino-African relationship as the Principles set such considerations like: declaring the equality of all bigger and smaller nations (3), refraining from the interference to other nations' internal affairs (4) or the facilitation of the mutual interests and co-operation (9) (Kende, 1973).

In 1967, China launched one of the biggest development projects of the century in Africa by agreeing with Tanzania and Zambia to construct the TanZam railroad. It was not surprising that the Third World's biggest Chinese development aid project had targeted Tanzania as the East African country used to be the "closest friend" of China (Bailey, 1975) in Africa.

The "Cultural Revolution" that emerged in China in 1966 almost fully froze the African relations (with the exception of the projects having been in progress, e.g. the railroad construction). The turning point of the Chinese political life can be considered the 3rd Seat of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party held in December 1978. This Forum adopted the so-called realistic policy direction of Deng Xiaoping (Polonyi, 1994).

In parallel with this, the opening process towards the international community restarted. According to Larkin (1975), the Africa-policy of China used to have five main characteristics as follows:

1) Remarkable increase in the establishment of formal diplomatic relations;
2) In 1971, China (P.R.) became permanent member of the Security Council of the United Nations. This was welcomed by a number of African countries;
3) African states loyal to China could join development support programmes;
4) China gave a continued support to the nationalist and independence movements;
5) China urged for a new international dichotomy among the super-powers and the less developed nations of the world with the view of the latter's survival and for the improvement of their positions.

The years of the 1980's decade further strengthened the Sino-African endeavours. The new Chinese policy became known as "Four Principles of the Sino-African co-operation". The fundamental points of this were as follows:

1) Equality and mutual benefits;
2) Focusing on the practical results;
3) The variety of the forms of co-operation;
4) The economic development.

As Van de Looy (2006) pointed out: *"These principles set a new era of the Sino-African relationships. China had not already want to give support unconditionally to the development of the African countries, and in fact China could not even undertake the burden of providing expensive aid programs for its African partners."*

The system and the development of the Sino-African relations and also the continuously accumulating experiences provide an opportunity for Africa to understand and to optimally plan its own way of development. The international political and economic processes of the 21st century will offer their possible answers partially on the basis of this issue (Tarrósy, 2008).

The economic globalization

The relationship between China and Africa is a global process. To understand the motivations behind this co-operation, it is inevitable to look upon globalization, its impacts and related processes. It is perhaps the most often used expression of the 20th century and also the one which generated most debates.

One of the best-known definitions of globalization derives from Anthony Giddens (1990): "*The globalization is the growth of intensity of worldwide social relationships by which distant* *locations may be connected to each other in such way the events happening in one place can be influenced by processes many kilometres far away from them and the other way around*".

Globalization is not a single process, but a series of them, which simultaneously, but not equally, works in the affected regions and dimensions. The huge capital investments and the technological development encouraged the trade of goods and services. By now, the different markets have extended to the whole world and, therefore, new relationships have been created among the national economies. No need to say that the economic globalization has peculiar positive and negative impacts, and its emergence brought remarkable benefits in a number of fields for the world's societies.

The developing countries

During the recent decades those countries could show remarkable economic growth and social development which successfully got integrated into the world economic processes generated by the globalization. Nevertheless, what precisely do we mean under the notion of developing countries?

The World Bank classifies countries into incomes-categories, the basis of which is the per capita gross national income (GNP) in USD. The countries can be classified as low, medium and high-income countries. In general, countries of low and medium incomes belong to the developing countries. However, the level of their development can be very different.

2017	→	***Equatorial Guinea, Vanuatu***
2014	→	**Samoa**
2012	←	South Sudan
2011	→	**Maldives**
2007	→	**Cabo Verde**
2003	←	Timor-Leste
2000	←	Senegal
1994	→ ←	**Botswana** Angola, Eritrea
1991	←	Cambodia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Solomon Islands, Zambia
1990	←	Liberia
1988	←	Mozambique
1987	←	Myanmar
1986	←	Kiribati, Mauritania, Tuvalu
1985	←	Vanuatu
1982	←	Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe
1977	←	**Cabo Verde**, Comoros
1975	←	Bangladesh, Central African Republic, Gambia
1971	←	Afghanistan, Benin, Bhutan, **Bostwana**, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Ethiopia, Guinea, Haiti, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Malawi, **Maldives**, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Rwanda, **Samoa**, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen

Figure 1. *The situation of the Least Developed Countries (1971-2015)*
Source: CDP Handbook, 2015

The United Nations uses two additional indicators to define which countries belong to the group of the least developed countries. One of these indicators is the *Human Assets Index* (HAI), which includes the following factors (United Nations, 2014):

- The percentage of the undernourished population;
- The rate of infant mortality among children aged up to five years;
- The ratio of students enrolled to secondary school;
- The rate of literacy within the adult population.

The other indicator is the *Economic Vulnerability Index* (EVI), which measures the economic vulnerability of a country. A country may belong to the least developed group if its national economy meets three criteria as follows:

- The national income is low, the per capita GNP remains under 1,005 USD;
- The human infrastructure is at low standards;
- The economy is highly vulnerable (United Nations, 2014).

Figure 1 shows which countries belong to the LDC category. Since the introduction of this category in 1971, only four countries have succeeded to "break out" from the group of the least developed countries: The Maldives, Cape Verde, Botswana, and Samoa.

Africa

The shrinking of the sub-Saharan African countries into the background can be illustrated most easily by their role played in the international flows of factors. One of them is the role played in the international trade. The Structural Transformation Programmes of the IMF and the World Bank, as well as various trade agreements, made these countries open to the world economy and also to actively liberalize their economies. Between 2002 and 2007, an average economic growth of 6.5% was typical for this region.

The countries of the sub-Saharan region could not always benefit from their potential (assumed) market access possibilities (Table 1). It is mainly because of the deficiencies of the infrastructure, and due to the low quality of their products.

Table 1. *The share of LDC in the world exports and imports (%)*

	1980	**1990**	**2000**	**2005**	**2010**	**2013**
World	100	100	100	100	100	100
Developed economies	66.181	72.496	65.768	60.377	53.949	50.903
Developing Economies	29.648	24.118	31.913	36.253	42.070	44.814
Developing economies: Africa	5.923	3.002	2.292	2.963	3.408	3.202
Sub-Saharan Africa (without Rep. of South Africa)	2.528	1.272	0.973	1.358	1.649	1.72

Data source: United Nations, 2014

The next field in which Africa faces constraints is the international flow of direct capital investments. *"While between 1982 and 1987 an annual 1 billion USD FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) flew into the sub-Saharan region of Africa (the 5.4% of the total FDI inflow to developing countries), then in 2000 it was 5.8 billion USD, the 2.3% of the total FDI inflow to developing countries, which was only 0.4% (!) of the world's total capital-exports"* (Kiss, 2006, p. 6). The following table shows us that the situation still has not improved by now.

Table 2. *The distribution of the world's FDI-flow by regions (%)*

	FDI inflow				FDI outflow			
	2010	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**
Developed countries	49.46	51.79	38.84	38.96	67.37	71.02	63.32	60.79
Developing countries/Africa	3.31	2.77	4.15	3.94	0.45	0.4	0.89	0.88
Countries in transition	4.96	5.580	6.33	7.44	3.94	4.29	3.99	7.03

Data source: United Nations, 2014

The problem looks even bigger by the fact that the majority of the FDI inflow to the region appears not in growth and export-oriented investments, but much rather in speculative investments or in the privatization of the state-owned assets.

It can be another problem that the amount of FDI inflow is divided unequally among the countries in the region. *"In 2001, 48% (!) of the FDI arrived in to sub-Sahara was invested in the Republic of South Africa while 7.8% flew into Nigeria"* (Kiss, 2006, p. 7). The low ratio can be explained by the high political and economic risks of the investments.

Between 1970 and 1996, a total 193 billion USD capital flew out of Africa. Due to the massive capital rescuing, Africa became a net capital exporter, or in other words, a net creditor. In the case of many countries, the capital outflow was higher than the amount of their total debts (Boyce and Ndikumana, 2001).

The next major field is the movement of the labour forces. This may favourably influence the economic development of a country, unless the domestic situation of labour deteriorates and the workers' remittances improve the balance of payments.

In the case of Africa, the ways of the employment abroad involve extreme attributes. One of these extremities is that in majority unskilled and even unemployed people leave their countries, and in the majority of cases, they cannot find legal job opportunities. The other extreme is the emigration of highly qualified people.

A brief overview on the economic performance of China

The growing economic power of China at global level can be proven by the quick but long-term economic growth, the rapidly increasing share in the international trade, the record-breaking level of FDI inflows. The Chinese economy used to be a typical example for the centralized plan-economy; however, it has been continuously transforming into a market-oriented economy where market plays the leading role in the distribution of resources.

The per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of China grew twenty-fold from 1980 to 2012. The average rate of this long-term economic growth was around 9% which means that China was one of the most rapidly developing country in the world (Table 3).

Table 3. *The economic expansion of China (1980-2012)*

China	1980-1982	1993-1997	2008-2012
Per capita annual GDP (billion USD)	196.33	584.80	4,648.20
Annual growth of GDP	7.36	11.46	9.26

Data source: World Bank, 2013a

China became the second biggest economy in terms of GDP, but there are analysts who consider that due to the massive growth and development China may take over the No 1 position from the United States within two decades (World Bank, 2013b).

The foreign trade turnover of China grew even in bigger extent than its national economy, which generated a remarkable development in the foreign economic openness of the country. While China had had a 0.6% share in the world trade, it grew to nearly six-fold, 3.7% by 2000. The value of the Chinese exports grew to 1.898 billion USD by 2011, equal to a 10.4% share in the global trade, which enabled China to be the world's leading exporter. Table 4 shows that China stands at the second place behind the USA with 3,641 billion USD world trade balance.

Table 4. *The main exporters and importers if the world trade 2013 (billion USD)*

Exporter	Value	Share (%)		Importer	Value	Share (%)
China	2209	11,7		USA	2329	12.3
USA	1580	8.4		China	1950	10,3
Germany	1453	7,7		Germany	1189	6,3

Data source: https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/its2014_e/its14_world_trade_dev_e.pdf, 2014

However, there are a number of views arguing that the figures about the economic growth of China might be exaggerated and even the outstanding economic performance of the recent two decades cannot guarantee the success for the future.

Even though the Chinese economy faces several constraints, these hampering factors may only slow down but definitely not halt the economic growth of China, according to analysts.

The motivations of China for turning to Africa

The changes in the world economy have considerably re-adjusted the global economic map. China has grown to be one of the leading producers of the world and also became one of its economic hubs. Definitely, the impacts of this metamorphosis can be seen not only in the domestic economic situation of each country, but also in the newly established economic relationships.

The Sino-African relations have not just emerged for the recent few years. Diplomatic interests (from the 1960's) grew and turned into close economic and political relationships between the two regions, however under the dominant role of China, which used to have much stronger economic potentials and negotiation position. The strengthened world economic position of China offers new possibilities and goals both politically and economically (Kiss-Tétény, 2008). In the frames of this study, we wish to examine China's potentials in the African continent from an economic perspective.

Due to the growth of its huge population, and to its unhindered economic growth, China had to face a new challenge: the growing demand for energy that looks to be unappeasable.

But what can be the reason why China chose the African continent?

10% of the crude oil reserves of the world can be found in the African continent and, besides this, Africa is extraordinarily rich in other raw materials, like copper, natural gas, iron ore. Africa is one of those very few places in the world where all these raw materials can be found in one location, and it is also very important that these are easily accessible for China.

If we examine the locations of rich raw material reserves in the developed countries, it can be seen that the volume of the energy reserves is not the only important point for China to choose a region.

The access to the world's raw material reserves needs a carefully planned and elaborated strategy. The Central Asian region stands traditionally under the economic influence of Russia while Latin America classically remained under the influence of the USA. If China appeared in these regions, it would generate alternative demands for the target-countries, while in many cases conflicts of interests of the great powers may limit the Chinese ambitions. The Middle East is the most crowded region of the world where oil-importer countries are "standing in queue" for the reserves. Hence, on the target-map of the Chinese investments remained simply Africa, especially its sub-Saharan part, which is the richest region in mineral resources, but also politically the less stable area. In several countries of this region political instability means such a high economic risk that Western companies rarely undertake. Even if the African ground offers tremendous amount of treasures, the market is still far from saturated. And China looks brave to take up these risks (Szentesi, 2009, p. 22).

The increasing energy prices and the growing difficulties concerning the security of the continuous supply in several regions may serve further reasons to China to intensively strengthen its economic relationship to Africa. "*In 2008 China covers one third of its demands from African sources and participated in many projects in the oil and gas industry, mainly in Nigeria, Sudan, Angola, Congo and also the Chinese investments increased in Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Zambia, Algeria, South Africa and Chad. The majority of the oil-export of Sudan is forwarded to China. The extent of the mutual dependence can be seen even more from the African side as almost three quarters of the African export to China consists of crude oil"* (Engelberth, 2013).

China tries to cover its demands of energy and raw materials at the least possible costs, safely and from highly diversified sources and the African continent can perfectly meet these criteria. Even though, China has two kinds of motivations within the energy sector. While covering the domestic demands for energy and raw materials, China has its long-term goals as well. China does not keep in secret that she wants to fulfil a central role with higher influence and more rights to interfere. This would further increase its dominant role in the world economy (Mező, 2012).

In Figure 2, it can be seen that between 1998 and 2006 the African raw material export to China increased to more than twenty-fold, while it also grew to Europe and to the United States, but at a much lesser pace.

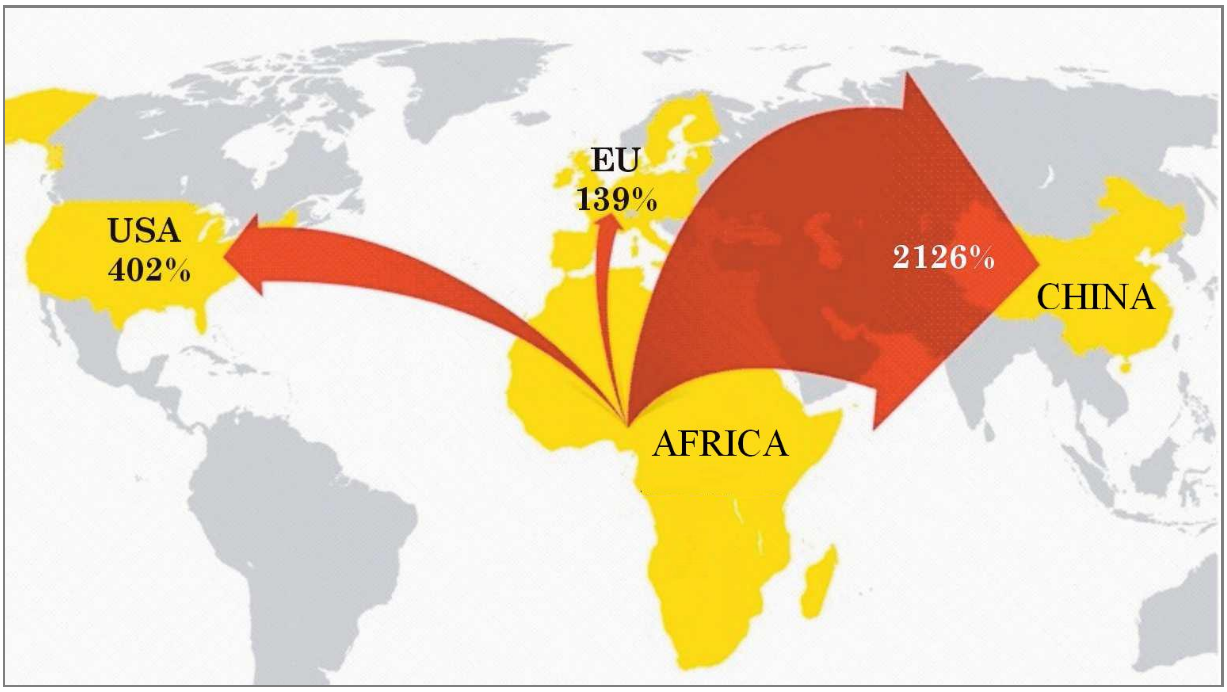

Figure 2. *Exports of raw materials from Africa between 1998 and 2006*
Source: Engelberth, 2009

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and its impacts on the investments between the two regions

In the age of globalization, one can see well those interests which attracted the attention of China towards the African continent. However, in order to turn the cooperation between the two regions into an official framework there was a need to establish a kind of co-operation forum. It was implemented in 2000 under the name of Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). The FOCAC was established with the view of strengthening the formerly existing Sino-African relations and all kinds of co-operation in the political, diplomatic and economic fields. It can be said that FOCAC means the fundamental stone in the relationship between China and the African countries, which created a new political and economic system.

The first FOCAC summit's basic idea was to carry out the negotiations based on the principle of equal treatment. During this meeting in 2000, the Parties agreed in the implementation of a 3-year long programme which aimed to give an impetus to the Sino-African investments and trade. The summit was successful as China agreed to abolish the debts of 31 African countries. In addition, a new fund was established for human resources development by which around 7,000 African specialists have been trained.

The second FOCAC summit was organized in 2003 and already 44 African countries participated. The main topic of the summit was the practical realization of the co-operation as well as the implementation of concrete measures. Within this framework, the focus was on the issues of political co-operation and on the social and economic development.

The summit of 2006 in Beijing can be considered as a turning point for both parties, at least in terms of the attention paid to the meeting as it celebrated the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. The Chinese officials signed declarations that were central and very important parts of the programme for the following 3 years, such as:

- The establishment of the Sino-African Development Fund;
- Granting 3 billion USD preferential loan for African countries;
- The abolishment of the debts of 31 African countries;
- Construction of hospitals and schools in Africa;
- The doubling of aids to the African countries by 2009.

The fourth FOCAC summit was organized in 2009, in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh. By that time, the growth of the Sino-African trade turnover was impressive, exceeding 100 billion USD. The meeting reviewed the manner in which the agreements of the Beijing Summit have been implemented. It also adopted a Sharm el-Sheikh declaration and an action plan for 2010–2012 to chart the path for further China–Africa cooperation.

Chinese officials proposed eight new measures that the Chinese government would take to strengthen China-Africa cooperation in the next three years, such as:

- The customs tariff-free preferential treatment to African partners;
- USD 10 billion low cost loan;
- 1 billion U.S. dollar special loan for small and medium-sized African businesses;
- China pledges to work within its ability to further scale up aid to Africa, cut and cancel debt owed by African countries, expand investment in Africa, further open China's market and strengthen practical cooperation with Africa;
- China would undertake 100 joint demonstration projects on scientific and technological research, receive 100 African postdoctoral fellows to conduct scientific research in China and assist them in going back and serving their home countries;
- 20 agricultural technology demonstration centres would be built by China in Africa, 50 agricultural technology teams would be sent to Africa and 2000 agricultural technology personnel would be trained for Africa.

The fifth ministerial meeting of the FOCAC was held in 2012 in Beijing. The sides agreed to release two documents - the Beijing declaration and Beijing Action Plan - to lay out a roadmap for political and economic cooperation for 2013-2015. The Beijing Action Plan has highlighted more cooperation in new fields such as people to people exchanges and African integration. Chinese officials announced a number of new measures to assist Africa, including 20 billion USD in loans to boost investment, personal exchanges and peace and security. At the end of the 1990's and the early 2000's, a never experienced growth started in the Sino-African trade. Since then, China has built up strong trade relationships with all African countries so intensively that up to 2011 the turnover exceeded 1 billion USD with twenty African countries (FOCAC, 2011).

The two regions build on each other' strengths and strive to maximize the advantages from the trade relations which are based on the mutual benefits. While during the 1990's the value of trade between the two regions was only 2 billion USD, in 2012, the total volume of China-Africa trade reached USD 198.49 billion. Of this, USD 85.319 billion consisted of China's exports to Africa and

USD 113.171 billion represented the China's imports from Africa, and this made China to be the most important trading partner for Africa (Figure 3).

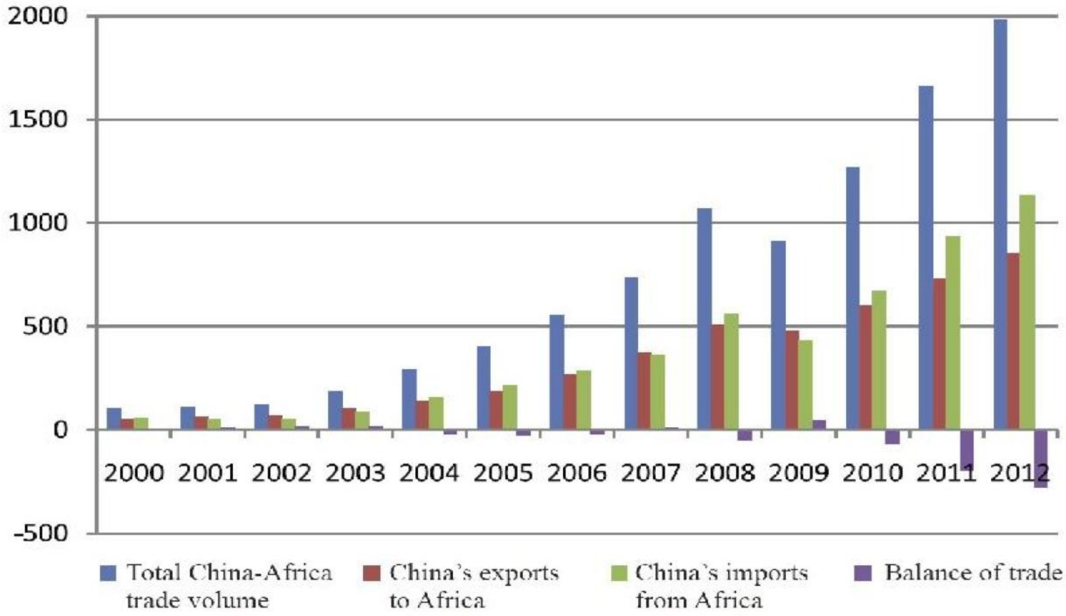

Figure 3. *China-Africa trade volume (2000-2012) in 100 million USD*
Source: China - Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation, 2013

Table 5 presents those countries that had the most intensive trade relationships with China at the beginning of the 2010s.

Table 5. *The shares of China's six most important African trade partners their most important export and import items*

Countries	Share in China-Africa trade (in %)	Exports to China	Imports from China
Angola	21	Crude oil, diamonds, refined petroleum, refined natural gas	Mechanical and electrical products, machinery, construction material
South Africa	18	Diamonds, iron ore and concentrates, copper, platinum	Cotton, fabrics, woven, footwear, travel goods
Sudan	7	Crude oil, petroleum gases	Outer garments and clothing, tubes and pipes, steel, electronic equipment
Nigeria	6	Crude oil, ore, petroleum gases, nonferrous base metals	Footwear, motorcycles, batteries and accumulators, electronic components, lighting fixtures and fittings
Egypt	6	Oil, cotton, chemicals, metal products	Food, equipment, construction material, electronic components, electric generators
Algeria	5	Mineral fuels, plastic and products, copper, cork	Construction material, mechanical appliances, machinery, electronic products, vehicles and parts, ceramic

Data source: Daouda, 2012

Since 2000, with the establishment of FOCAC, the economic and diplomatic contacts between the two regions gradually became closer. Thanks to this, Africa became not only an important trading partner, but also an attractive target region for China: Chinese direct investments to Africa increased from USD 317 million in 2004 to USD 2.52 billion in 2012 (Leung – Zhou, 2014).

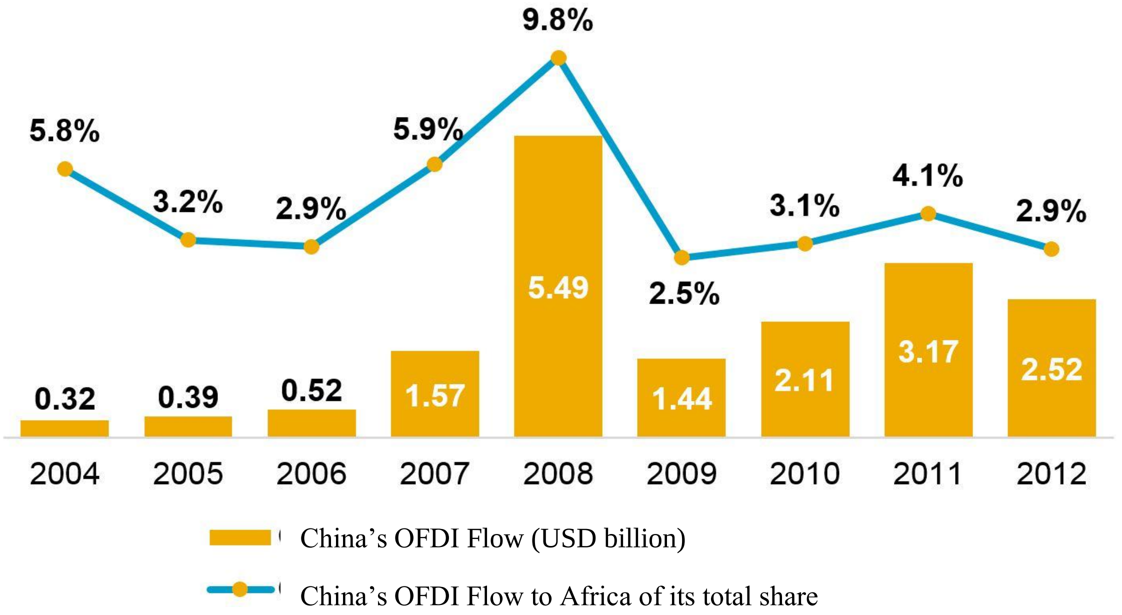

Figure 4. *China's OFDI Flow to Africa, 2004-2012*
Source: Leung – Zhou, 2014

The China-Africa Development Fund, established as one of the eight pledges China made at the FOCAC Beijing Summit, had by the end of 2012 agreed to invest USD 2.385 billion in 61 projects in 30 African countries and had already invested USD 1.806 billion for 53 projects in more than 30 different fields. In the main trading and economic areas (e.g. Mauritius, Nigeria, Egypt, and Ethiopia), the development was impressive thanks to the large investments (190 million USD) to the infrastructure. Chinese companies involved in these areas altogether spent 920 million USD for investments.

As a result of the wave of Chinese investments during the recent three decades, more than 2000 companies were established in the African continent. The accumulative Chinese FDI reached 21.23 billion USD in 2012. These investments went to 49 countries and regions, but mainly to the Republic of South Africa, Nigeria, Zambia, Sudan, Algeria, and Egypt.

In addition, not only China has investments in Africa, but it is also going in the other way around. During the 1990's, the African countries – altogether – invested into 524 projects in China with an amount of 530 million USD. The Republic of South Africa, Nigeria, Tanzania, Mauritius, and the Seychelles were the first countries that invested in the Asian country.

Since 2000, the African investments in China have also been continuously growing. They grew so fast that, in 2005, they exceeded 1 billion USD at an annual growth of 38%, and since FOCAC summit in 2006 it has further accelerated. Between 2009 and 2012, the African countries' direct investment totalled 14.242 billion USD in China, increasing by 44% over 2009 levels. Just from Mauritius – whose economy is based on tourism, textile industry and services – besides the sugarcane dominated agriculture tourism (Neszmélyi and Villányi, 2013), at the end of the 2000's decade 8.44 billion USD were invested to China, so the tiny country became the biggest African investor in China.

The international development co-operation (economic aids) of China

The international development co-operation activity of China (in other words, the economic aid-policy) also contributed notably to the success of the Sino-African economic relations. China pursued 884 projects in Africa by the end of 2009, sent 17,000 healthcare employees and 312 young volunteers to Africa, provided trainings for 26,488 local residents, and, furthermore, offered basic resources and humanitarian assistance. Besides all these, China abolished the debts of the 35 least developed countries. The economic assistance of China was extended to 53 African countries and comprises fields like infrastructure, housing, transportation, agriculture, public healthcare, education, human resource development, energy and environmental protection (FOCAC, 2011).

Since the summit of 2006, supports have grown even higher. The sum of unconditional supports and interest-free loans from China doubled between 2006 and 2009. China provides tailor-made supports, interest-free and preferential loans according to the demands of the African countries. China makes benefits from its strengths but still maintains development activities but at lower prices. From 2010 to May 2012, China approved concessional loans worth a total of USD 11.3 billion for 92 African projects, such as the Addis Ababa-Adama Expressway of Ethiopia and the Kribi Deep-water Port of Cameroon. Some of China's main commercial banks have also started buyer's credit businesses in Africa, supporting the power grid in Ghana, hydropower stations in Ethiopia, a west-east expressway in Algeria, and other projects.

The official website of FOCAC lists four fields that received remarkable contribution from China. The first of these fields is the infrastructure, where China contributed to the accomplishment of more than 500 infrastructural projects which resulted in 2,233 km railway network, 3,391 km highways, 11 bridges, sports complexes for even up to 780,000 spectators, 104 public buildings and a number of cinemas.

The second field is the agriculture where China established farms and furnished them with irrigation capacities. In addition, China sent professionals and agricultural equipment in order to advance the agricultural development and the self-supply of foodstuffs. In the land of Mali, Tanzania, Guinea, Somalia, and Mauritania, pilot farms were established, where technological experiments were carried out and workshops for knowledge transfer were organized. The knowledge has a decisive impact on the success of the companies (Nagy, 2013; Vágány and Kárpáti-Daróczi, 2013). In addition, presentation centres of agricultural technology were set up in 14 countries where local farmers were provided with expertise and knowledge.

The third field is the healthcare, in which China gave contribution to the establishment of 54 hospitals and 30 anti-malaria centres. In addition, China sent teams of medical doctors to 40 countries where more than 200 million patients were treated.

The fourth field is the human resource, in which China provided professional education and training for business managers, researchers and other specialists in more than 20 disciplines (e.g. economy, diplomacy, public administration, agriculture, animal husbandry, fishery, medical supply and public health).

The programmes agreed at the FOCAC summits created a solid basis and even notably contributed to the continuous enlargement of the Chinese development co-operation activity. The assistance of China remarkably facilitated the substantive development of the African continent and played an important role in the improvement of the socio-economic situation there. These efforts and results could merely enhance the friendly ties of the two regions (FOCAC, 2011).

CONCLUSIONS

This paper tries to find an answer for the question whether China is a blessing or a curse for Africa.

The countries of the world do not benefit equally from the advantages of globalization. There are countries - like the least developed ones in Africa - which suffered considerably from the disadvantages of globalization. These vulnerable and exposed countries were "taken up" by China whose robust economy is hungry for crude oil and other raw materials.

The same can be said about the African countries in terms of the foreign capital inflow aids. The two regions have found each other and started to live in a kind of symbiosis. However, a number of questions may rise about the motivations of the Asian continent and the views are different from the African side as well.

Since the establishment of FOCAC, development speeded up in the African continent in terms of economy and society. Further to the fact that it is an active trade partner and the main investor, China gives additional support for the African countries in the form of development co-operation programmes.

But in the age of globalization, no event in the world economy may happen without ulterior motives. The question is whether these motives are followed by benevolence and responsibility towards the surrounding society and the world.

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