


Chapter 15

China's “Grand Strategy” Interests in Africa

Nika Chitadze

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2806-6426>

International Black Sea University, Georgia

ABSTRACT

China, a newly empowered state that aspires to regional and ultimately global hegemony, is interested in strengthening the extremely backward and underdeveloped Africa. We believe that the reason for this policy can be traced back to China's “grand strategy.” To confirm this, the study aims to examine China-Africa relations in the context of the “Grand Strategy”, analyze the reasons for China's interest in this region, and investigate how the Asian giant uses “soft power” on the African continent to achieve its goals. To this end, the study formulates the following research question: What role does Africa play in implementing the goals of China's fourth “Grand Strategy”? As a result of the study, we will try to show that China's interest in African states is related to the implementation of the goals of China's “Grand Strategy” (the fourth – the rising phase) and serves to increase the latter's political, economic, institutional, and cultural influence.

INTRODUCTION

*“China is a sleeping Goliath, and when it wakes up, the world will tremble”
Napoleon Bonaparte.*

Since 2003, the main driving force of Chinese policy, the so-called “Grand Strategy”, has entered its fourth, renewal, resurgence phase, the goal of which is to establish China as a “world-class power”. In turn, on the way to achieving this goal, China is interested in the African continent and is trying to bring it into its sphere

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of influence. This strategy has been evident since the 2000s when China actively began to invest in Africa and increase its export-import and ideological, economic, and political influence (Nantulya et al, 2018). An important mechanism of China's "Grand Strategy" is the "Go Global" policy, which implies the spread of its influence on an international scale. In turn, the main tool of the fourth "grand strategy" is "soft power", with which it tries to increase political, economic, and ideological influence in different regions of the world.

The African continent is one of the first target regions of China's "grand strategy". Sino-African relations are one of the most important modern global events that deserve more interest at the international level. The urgency of the issue is determined by the unprecedented economic growth rates of China. Based on the BBC forecast, China's GDP will surpass that of the world's first economy, the United States, by 2028 (BBC, 2020). This fact alone is enough to understand how big a role China plays on the world stage. In turn, the interest in Africa in the "resurgence phase" of the "Grand Strategy" has a great impact on China's political influence and its positions in important international organizations (the UN) and the international system in general. The relevance of the topic is also confirmed by the fact that China's export value to Africa, as a result of the implementation of the goals of the "Grand Strategy", increased from US\$5 billion to US\$113 billion between 2000 and 2019 (Statista, 2019). These numbers directly indicate the intensity of Sino-African relations. Therefore, it is particularly interesting to explore - what role does Africa play in the implementation of China's fourth "Grand Strategy"? The study aims to examine Sino-African relations through the prism of China's fourth "grand strategy" and to reveal, on the one hand, what causes China's interest in the region and, on the other hand, what is manifested in its active involvement in the processes taking place on the African continent.

To this end, the study examines Sino-African relations in the context of the "grand strategy" and the theoretical framework of "soft power", the analysis of which well explains China's real motives and aspirations. On the other hand, given that China-Africa relations span a fairly long period, to make the study more specific, we took the first two decades of the twenty-first century for consideration, because we believe that it is during this period that the influences of China "grand strategy" and "soft power" on the African continent are most clearly manifested. Methodology The paper uses qualitative research methods, namely narrative literature review, through which the information surrounding the research topic is processed and analyzed in depth. In addition, the study uses documentary analysis, for which it applies the qualitative content analysis method and carries out textual analysis of primary and secondary sources, several documents, speeches of leaders, media, and statements and reports of governmental and non-governmental organizations.

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