The Regional Dimension of Sino-African development cooperation
Hybrid Interregionalism and actorness gap
Functions of Interregionalism in an asymmetrical Setting

- Agenda setting
- Balancing
- Rationalizing
- Externally focused / globally active
- Internally focused / capacity building
- Institution-building: interregional
- Institution-building: intraregional
- Collective identity-building
- Peace & Security
- Diversification & Development

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Functions of peripheral Interregionalism

- Balancing
- (intra-regional) Institution-building
- Rationalizing
- Agenda setting
- Diversification
- Development
- Peace & security
- Collective-identity-building
Towards Regionalism (China)

- Policy shift from suspicion to uncertainty to cooperation
- New transnational economy- and security threats
- Enhanced engagement with regional multilateral institutions (ASEAN, SCO)
- Strategic partnership with the EU
Towards Regionalism (Africa)

- Emergence of a regional and sub-regional structure in Africa
- From the OAU‘s defensive posture to AU‘s „non-indifference“.

“China appreciates the significant role of the AU in safeguarding peace and stability in the region and promoting African solidarity and development. China values its friendly cooperation with the AU in all fields, supports its positive role in regional and international affairs and stands ready to provide the AU assistance to the best of its capacity. “ (China’s African Policy 2006)
FOCAC and the African Union

FOCAC I 2000
“We welcome efforts made by the African continent to enhance sub-regional cooperation and further consolidate African unity by establishing the African Union”

FOCAC II 2003
“The Chinese side, encouraged by the progress of the NEPAD implementation and African regional cooperation, will support and assist African countries in realizing their objectives for peace and development of the continent.”

FOCAC III 2006
“The Chinese Government will continue to strengthen its cooperation with the AU and sub-regional organizations and institutions in Africa, support the AU’s leading role in resolving African issues, and take an active part in UN peace-keeping operations in Africa.”

FOCAC IV 2009
“The two sides noted with satisfaction that China and the AU have set up and launched the Strategic Dialogue Mechanism and agreed to exchange views on China-Africa relations and other major issues through this mechanism. They support the AU in playing a bigger role in regional and international affairs.”

FOCAC V 2012
“Appreciating the comprehensive development of relations between China and the African Union, the two sides agreed to maintain the momentum of high-level exchanges, enhance strategic mutual trust and practical cooperation and increase coordination and cooperation in international and regional affairs to take the relations to higher levels.”
“We welcome China’s stronger cooperation with the AU, its agencies and African regional economic organizations, and support the AUC in playing a constructive role in promoting China-Africa transnational and trans-regional cooperation.” (FOCAC 2018)

“[…relations between China and the African Union (AU) are now in the best shape ever.” (Wang Yi 2019)
China’s Motivation

- The AU as a catalyst for African interests
- Reducing reputational costs
- Shaping international norms (eg. AU as a conflict resolution model with respect to national sovereignty)
- Economic development (also NEPAD)
- Development:
  ‘China values and supports the AU's leadership in building a united and strong Africa and promoting African integration, its central role in safeguarding peace and security in Africa, as well as a bigger role for the organization in regional and international affairs’
Regional Development

- Economic Development in Africa in China's national Interest
- AU development goals partially align with Beijing’s priorities
- Bilateral cooperation is dominant

**Industrial capacity cooperation**

‘**strategic complementarity**’
Development Cooperation

- Regional projects with NEPAD and the AU

- Agriculture
- Health
- Infrastructure
China has regionalized some aspects of its formerly strictly bilateral development assistance, which in some areas, has increased the cooperation between the national and regional actors in Africa but has had little impact on the capacity of supranational structures.

China’s contribution to regional development is limited to sporadic support for individual projects and the rhetoric appraisal of NEPAD in its strategic documents and the FOCAC declarations.

Parallel to NEPAD, the AUC has become the second regional development partner for China, challenging the already weak position of NEPAD.