Journal of Political Science Research (2025)
Clausius Scientific Press, Canada

DOI: 10.23977/polsr.2025.060106
ISSN 2616-230X Vol. 6 Num. 1

Comments on Building a New Type of International Relations from the Perspective of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind: Take China-Africa Cooperative Relations as an Example

Zongxue Zhang

Zhejiang Normal University, Jinhua, Zhejiang, 321000, China

Keywords: Community of shared future for mankind; A new type of international relations; China-Africa cooperation

Abstract: Today's world is in a stage of great development, great change and great adjustment, and the development of the pattern of international relations is faced with many challenges and opportunities. In the context of globalization, how to seize the opportunity in the turbulent and changing international situation and build a sound external environment for realizing the dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is the top priority of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics. The community of shared future for mankind is a new concept proposed by China based on the development trend of mankind and the world. In terms of its code of conduct and value-oriented dimension, it has become the guiding ideology for the construction and layout of major-country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics. The new type of international relations is China's plan put forward in the face of the dramatic changes in the world pattern, and it is also a major achievement of China's diplomatic theory and practice innovation since the 18th CPC National Congress. The building of a community with a shared future for mankind and a new type of international relations complement each other and serve as the premise and goal of each other. As a major issue of China's diplomacy in the new era, China-Africa cooperation is also a model of a new type of international relations from the perspective of a community with a shared future for mankind. It has implemented the concept of "harmonious world" advocated by the Chinese government, promoted the comprehensive and in-depth development of China-Africa relations, deconstructed the "balance of power system", balanced the "liberal world order", and promoted the diversity of human civilizations. It is an important force for maintaining world peace and stability of international order. However, in the context of turbulent changes in global governance, opportunities and challenges coexist in China-Africa cooperation. Political, economic and cultural opportunities are conducive to the deepening of the new type of strategic partnership between China and Africa, while the public opinion incitement of Western countries and the negative impact of economic globalization also make the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation face certain risks. But looking at the overall situation, in the new era, with the joint efforts of China and Africa, FOCAC has broad prospects and huge potential.

1. Introduction

The world today is in a complex period of interwoven opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, the rising international status of non-Western countries has intensified the "rise in the east and fall in the west" of the global power pattern, bringing many unprecedented changes to the current international environment. Driven by the tide of globalization, the uncertainties faced by countries in the process of seeking development have increased significantly. In this context, it is particularly urgent to build a more equitable and reasonable global governance system to cope with this series of complex and changeable challenges. At the same time, with the continuous progress of the community of shared future for mankind, the relations between China and its neighbors have undergone great changes and taken on new characteristics. To promote the building of a new type of international relations featuring mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation is proposed on the basis of an accurate judgment of the theme of the current era and the general trend of historical development. China-africa cooperation is an important part of China's diplomacy in the new era. After decades of close coordination, FOCAC came into being in November 2000, marking a new and unprecedented stage of development in China-Africa relations. As an important cooperation mechanism between China and Africa, FOCAC plays a key role in promoting the practice of a new type of international relations, and serves as a key model for the international community to address many challenges in global governance. China provides solutions to promote the peaceful and sustainable development of human society provides China's solution.

2. The core connotation of the new type of international relations from the perspective of a community with a shared future for mankind

(1) Mutual respect is an important prerequisite for building a new type of international relations

The construction of international relations is based on the relations between sovereign states. Since the Westphalian system, although important principles such as equality and sovereignty have been established, and world peace has been maintained for a period of time, the essence is still the old international system dominated by Western mainstream values, and power and hegemony are rampant. In recent years, as the power gap between developed and developing countries has gradually narrowed, traditional international relations have been unable to meet the challenges faced by all countries, and building a new type of international relations has become the core measure to solve the current problems.

The "new" in the new type of international relations is compared with the traditional mode of international relations. One of its characteristics is the deepening understanding of the principle of sovereignty, especially the highlighting of the core value of mutual respect. This kind of mutual respect is rooted in the diversity of systems, religions and civilizations among countries. All countries, regardless of their strength, military strength or level of economic development, should be treated as equals, recognize the equal status of all countries on the international stage, and respect each other's history, culture, national characteristics and living habits formed over generations by their governments and peoples. Respect each other's political systems and interests and concerns. Mutual respect is the deepening and concrete principle of sovereign equality [1], the prerequisite and basis for building a new type of international relations, and an important principle for promoting democracy in international relations and maintaining stability of the international order.

(2) Equity and justice are the rules of conduct for building a new type of international relations

Equity and justice is considered the "normative force" of the European model, a "force that uses shared institutions and activities to overcome religious, regional, and cultural differences" [2]. The law of the jungle in traditional international relations no longer meets the needs of the current world

and the development of The Times. The unfair and unjust traditional model of international relations characterized by hegemonism and power politics in the international community should be completely abandoned. The essence of the justice advocated by the new type of international relations is to transcend the power and hegemonism in the traditional international relations and emphasize the legitimate rights and interests of all countries in the world and the equal status of each other, that is, to participate in international affairs on an equal footing, abandoning the supremacy of competition and the orientation of simple materialism. Based on the development goal of equity and justice, China has further put forward the concept of "amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness" in its neighborhood diplomacy to build a community with a shared future in its neighborhood and make important contributions to the stability of the international order.

(3) Win-win cooperation is the value orientation of building a new type of international relations

International cooperation in traditional international relations often reflects the zero-sum mentality that you lose and I win. Under this concept, the sum of gains and losses of all parties in international cooperation with competition as the main theme is always zero. Such zero-sum game leads to the gradual widening of the gap between the rich and the poor in the world, which is not conducive to the long-term development of the world. In contrast, the new type of international relations, with mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation at its core, has rich scientific connotations and distinct features of The Times, with "win-win cooperation" as its most important theoretical basis and central principle. Win-win cooperation refers to the new concept of win-win, all-win and win-win. It means that all countries in the world, big or small, should accommodate the legitimate concerns of other countries while pursuing their own interests, so that the two or more parties can benefit and complement each other in cooperation, and all cooperation parties can play their respective roles. Win-win cooperation is based on equality, takes cooperation as the path and aims at win-win. It is the premise and foundation of mutual respect, fairness and justice, and the road map for a new type of international relations.

3. Research status at home and abroad

(1) Research on the new type of international relations at home and abroad

The theory of self-constructing new type of international relations is put forward, and the scholars at home and abroad have carried on the theoretical explanation of this theory. Some scholars believe that building a new type of international relations is the common crystallization of Chinese traditional culture, the trend of The Times and diplomatic work practice [3], and building a new type of international relations is an important content of diplomatic thought in the new era [4], emphasizing that international relations should follow its construction principles and pay attention to the common values of mankind in the new type of international relations [5]. On the status quo of the construction of the new type of international relations, most of them are carried out from the level of global partnership. Since the 18th CPC National Congress, through continuous theoretical elaboration and diplomatic practice, the new type of international relations has gradually manifested itself [6]. The relations between China and Russia, China and the United States, and China and Africa have been progressing smoothly in specific areas, and many important consensuses have been reached with neighboring countries and developing countries. However, the transition of the world to China's development has made the domestic and international situations increasingly close. We are faced with international challenges in building a new type of international relations [7]. Therefore, some scholars believe that it is an urgent need for the international community to rebuild a more just and reasonable new international relations system and international order [8]. Domestically, the building of a community with a shared future for mankind needs to take the building of a new type of international relations as an important path. Internationally, the awareness

of the shared future of mankind has never been stronger, and a new type of international relations has gradually become the demand of most countries. Foreign scholars believe that the relationship between China and neighboring countries is becoming more and more important in the current international environment, and small and medium-sized neighboring countries will become an important place for China to achieve its national development goals [9]. China does not want to overthrow the existing international order, but to carry out appropriate reforms to better adapt to the current status quo of international relations [10]. In recent years, most researches on the new type of international relations at home and abroad focus on international cooperation and peaceful development with global partnership and multilateralism as the path, and most of them are discussed from a macro perspective, and few research results are discussed in combination with specific diplomatic practice.

(2) Research on China-Africa cooperation at home and abroad

Research on China-Africa cooperation has increased with the growing influence of FOCAC. With the title of "China-Africa Cooperation Forum Discusses China-Africa Relations under the New Situation and Promotes the new development of China-Africa Cooperation with New Ideas", He Wenping analyzed the influence of the Cold War on China-Africa relations based on the discussion of the content of China-Africa cooperation [11]. Wang Qinmei clarified the background of the establishment of the Forum in her article "A Grand Event of China-Africa Cooperation focusing on Action -- Congratulation on the successful holding of the Second Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation", but the article mainly focused on the implementation of follow-up actions [12]. At the same time, domestic scholars analyzed four trends in the development of China-Africa relations: political trend to promote international democratic cooperation, economic trend to equal and mutually beneficial economic and trade cooperation, cultural increase in human and educational resources cooperation, and diversification of economic cooperation forms and means of communication [13]. There are no monographs on FOCAC at home and abroad, and some scholars only introduce FOCAC in their achievements. Foreign countries have overemphasized China's political aspirations for FOCAC. Some scholars believe that the purpose of FOCAC is as follows: China advocates to change the existing world political and economic order and opposes the hegemony of the United States. They believe that the purpose of FOCAC held by China is to demonstrate the achievements of China's reform and opening up and encourage African countries to carry out African reforms based on the "Chinese model" [14]; Most foreign scholars' analysis of FOCAC is based on Western values and distorts the true purpose of FOCAC. Not enough attention has been paid to the contributions, operational mechanisms and strategic significance of FOCAC.

(3) The author comments

On the basis of summarizing the research status of the new type of international relations and China-Africa cooperation, this paper holds that the construction of the new type of international relations from the perspective of the community with a shared future for mankind should be based on the complex and diverse diplomatic relations between China and other countries. The building process should focus on the new type of relations between major countries, neighboring countries, developing countries and multilateral diplomacy, and take the FOCAC as an empirical case to deeply explore the specific strategies and practical paths for building a new type of international relations under the guidance of the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind.

4. Logical analysis of the new type of international relations from the perspective of the Community of Shared Future for mankind

The ultimate goal of a community with a shared future for mankind is that all countries in the

world share weal and woe. The realization of this goal depends on whether the international community can gradually build a stable and sustainable pattern of international relations in the protracted exchanges. It can be seen that the community of human destiny can be regarded as a new mode of international relations in the field of diplomacy, and has formed a complete and systematic theoretical framework of international politics. Specifically, the Community of Human Destiny mainly answers the question of what kind of world pattern China strives to shape in its diplomatic practice, while the Community of International Relations focuses on what type of international relations China wants to build in the entire world system. Despite their differences in emphasis, both of them carry the same value orientation, with goal consistency, principle commonality and value fit.

(1) High consistency in goal setting

A community of shared future for mankind is a profound grasp of the theme of The Times, world peace and development, and a solution to the question "What is wrong with the world and what should we do?" The profound answer to this question of The Times [15] is of great significance to solving the problems of confrontation and polarization in today's world and promoting the common long-term development of all mankind. This goal is closely combined with the concepts of mutual respect, fairness and justice, and win-win cooperation pursued by the new type of international relations, which also emphasizes equal cooperation between countries. We oppose power politics and zero-sum games and are committed to building a more just and equitable international system, which also provides a solid international environment for the realization of a community with a shared future for mankind.

(2) Common principles to follow

The essence of international relations is the power struggle between countries. From the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union to the competition between China and the United States, the adversarial thinking of international relations represented by the zero-sum game has affected the international order for a long time. However, the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind breaks through the traditional model and advocates transcending power politics. It advocates a new paradigm of international relations that transcends power politics and abandons unjust, unequal and predatory partnerships. It emphasizes the importance of win-win cooperation, respect for the sovereign equality of all countries and joint response to global challenges. The concept of the new type of international relations further enricfies the connotation of the community. On the basis of inheriting the elements of win-win cooperation, it emphasizes the peaceful, inclusive and sustainable nature of international relations, advocates equal participation of all countries in international affairs, and builds a world of lasting peace.

(3) Compatibility of core value connotation

The vision of a community with a shared future for mankind is a Chinese solution to the problem of anti-globalization and unbalanced development in today's world. It is based on the overall interests of mankind and takes win-win cooperation as its purpose. It offers a new model of modern development for the development of all countries. This correct value is an important principle that should be followed when building a new type of international relations. It goes beyond the traditional beggar-thy-neighbor thinking, and integrates its own development with the development of all mankind. In terms of value, it is highly consistent with the concept of a new type of international relations.

5. Practical analysis of China-Africa cooperation in building a new type of international relations

Since its inception in 2000, FOCAC has gone through more than two decades of development.

China and Africa have increasingly become a community of shared future that is closely linked and shares weal and woe. This relationship, which is essentially a community of cooperation, deconstructs the Western "balance of power system", balances the "liberal world order" and promotes the diversity of human civilizations. It is a new paradigm for China to build a new type of international relations.

(1) China-africa Cooperation Community deconstructs the "balance of power system"

Since modern times, the Western-led international order has been closely linked to the so-called "balance of power system", and both China and Africa have been victims of Western power politics. The power political system seems to be the restriction and balance between the powers, but in fact it is the division and domination of the sphere of influence by the powers. In essence, the Westphalian system, the Vienna system, and the Versailles - Washington system are all order arrangements for Western powers to redraw their spheres of influence, distribute international power, and maintain the balance of power after large-scale international wars. The "balance of power system" that takes sovereign equality as the norm actually hides the global colonial system that takes the law of the jungle as the norm. During the long colonial period, Africa was forced to look to Western civilization as the main, if not the only, cognitive reference. After the end of World War II, China and African countries rose successively and supported each other. Under the influence of China, Africa has a new development reference in the international pattern, and its value and status as an independent subject of international relations have been demonstrated. China also broke through the Western blockade with the support of African countries. The emergence of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation has provided a powerful weapon for breaking the Western "balance of power system".

(2) China-africa cooperation provides a new model for the development of international relations for African countries

Western capitalist countries in their historical exchanges with Africa tend to plunder resources and control the market for the purpose of ignoring the real development needs and potential of African countries. The establishment of FOCAC is a demonstration of solidarity, cooperation and mutual support between China and African countries in the historical practice of opposing colonialism and hegemonism, which has enhanced the voice of both sides in the international arena, accelerated the collapse of the power system, and will certainly accelerate the decline of the Western theory of international relations matching the power system. In essence, the realistic theory of international relations corresponds to the "balance of power system". Morgenthau claimed that the "balance of power" works like the "law of gravity". [16] The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in the 21st century has made an unprecedented breakthrough in the breadth and depth of China-Africa relations, surpassing the narrow utilitarian cognitive logic of Western countries' foreign relations, such as "only eternal interests, no eternal friends", and promoting the process of democratization of international relations. The model of friendly exchanges between China and Africa formed at the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation also provides a good model for the development of international relations among other developing countries, thus promoting the process of world multi-polarization.

(3) Ccac Counterbalances the "Liberal World Order"

The "liberal world order" advertised by the United States is in fact a stealthing substitute for the post-war international system and order. It often emphasizes the dominance of Western values, takes capital as the core, and pursues the maximization of interests, thus promoting hegemonism and power politics in international affairs, ignoring the interests and demands of developing countries to a certain extent. In the process of economic globalization led by capital, transnational corporations connect the separated territories and break through various existing political norms and cultural customs. As Richard Barnat and John Kavanagh said, sovereign states are gradually losing their

control over the former territories, resulting in uneven and unjust global development.

Since the end of the Cold War, China has vigorously promoted its own political, economic and social reform and development, actively explored an independent development path suited to its national conditions, and always adhered to the concept of "sincerity, affinity, good faith" and the correct concept of justice and interests in its cooperation with Africa, which is an antidote to the legacy of neoliberalism in Africa. It hedges and deconstructs the "liberal world order" effectively controlled by transnational monopoly capital. China's strategy for Africa in the new era is an antidote to the legacy of neoliberalism in Africa. In September 2016, the G20 Hangzhou Summit for the first time raised the issue of supporting the industrialization of Africa and the least developed countries to the political level of global governance and sustainable development, and formulated an action plan to jointly implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, so as to contribute to the construction of Africa, benefit the Chinese and African people, and realize the common development of mankind. In September 2018, the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) further made an epoch-making major plan for China-Africa relations and Africa's development, in essence, putting forward a blueprint for Africa's development that is different from the logic of "transnational capital" and focuses on strengthening independent industrialization.

(4) The China-Africa Cooperation Community has promoted the diversity of human civilizations

Throughout history, the development of China-Africa relations is a vivid demonstration of "dialogue among civilizations", and also constitutes a fundamental resolution of Western discourse such as "clash of civilizations".

Since the 16th century, the new Western powers, relying on their state violence, have extended their will to rule beyond their borders, breaking or ignoring ethnic, cultural, and ecological boundaries, and imposing the distribution of resources and products according to their own rules, dominating not only land and population, but also the memory and consciousness of people everywhere. Making the people of other regions "barbarians without history" [17]. In the theoretical field, various "civilization hierarchy theory" and constructivism international relations theory are the two sides of the unity of Western centrism. In fact, the soft power or assimilative power associated with norm-building remains hegemonic. The key sources of American state power are the universalization of its national culture and the rules and institutions it has established in international affairs. However, there is no concept of "universal value" in Chinese philosophy. Chinese tradition has always respected each other's differences in reality and never believed that its own values or ideas should be imposed on others.

Focac has always attached importance to cultural integration and respected differences, injecting vitality into the building of a China-Africa community with a shared future. China's policy toward Africa follows the principle of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs, and does not attach any political strings to its assistance and economic and technological cooperation with Africa, nor does it seek special privileges. This is undoubtedly a legacy of the ancient Chinese philosophy of "do not do to others what you do not want others to do to you". Focac is not only conducive to promoting win-win cooperation and common prosperity between China and Africa, but also demonstrates the brilliance of humanity and the high level of civilization in the pursuit of self-serving interests of mankind. Over the past 22 years since FOCAC was founded, more and more African countries have joined the Forum and become China's quality partners, working with China to pursue high-quality development and create a better future.

6. Exploring China-Africa cooperation in the Era from the perspective of a community with a shared future for Mankind

Under the new circumstances, the world economy is developing rapidly, the interests of countries are intertwined, and science and technology are being upgraded rapidly. However, the complex world situation and the global economic downturn have also brought many tests. All these factors have presented the Forum with both opportunities and challenges.

(1) Opportunities for the development of China-Africa cooperative relations

First, the profound changes unseen in the world in a century are in line with the development strategies of China and Africa. The rise of emerging countries and the trend of "rising in the east and falling in the west" in the world landscape have injected new impetus to China-Africa relations, which are based on cooperation. In 2010, China's total economic aggregate surpassed Japan and became the second largest economy. Africa has also become the continent with the largest number of developing countries. China and Africa have taken FOCAC as a platform to deepen cooperation, safeguard multilateralism and the common interests of developing countries, work closely together to create a brighter future and inject vitality into South-South cooperation.

Second, with the further integration of the global industrial chain and supply chain, the complementarity between China and Africa in the field of trade and investment has become increasingly prominent. As a global manufacturing power with advanced production technology and a complete industrial system, China is able to provide African countries with high-quality and low-cost infrastructure construction equipment and various industrial products. Africa's rich natural resources, such as minerals and energy, are an important strategic resource supplement for China's sustainable economic development. Such complementarity in economic structure has led to the continuous expansion of trade scale and investment fields between China and Africa, and gradually diversified from the traditional energy and mineral fields to manufacturing, agriculture and service industries, forming closer economic ties.

Finally, the wave of global scientific and technological revolution has injected new momentum into China-Africa cooperation. As a "new bright spot" of global economic growth, the digital economy has huge development potential and a wide range of radiation, and is becoming an important factor in the distribution of global resource allocation and global competition. As a leading country in the priority development of the digital economy, China has helped African countries build and develop their own e-commerce platforms, build mobile payment, train e-commerce personnel, jointly explore scientific and technological innovation models suitable for Africa's development, train local scientific and technological talents, and enhance African countries' independent scientific and technological innovation capacity.

(2) Challenges to the development of China-Africa cooperative relations

First of all, the rise of global trade protectionism, some Western countries frequently set up trade barriers, which has had an impact on China-Africa trade. The tariffs imposed by Western countries on Chinese exports have indirectly affected the cost and supply stability of some African countries' imports from China. The fragility of African countries' internal economic structures also poses risks to China-Africa economic cooperation.

Second, economic globalization also poses challenges to the mechanism and efficiency of FOCAC. The majority of African countries hope that the mechanism of FOCAC will be more sound, ensure the development of the international economic order in the direction of justice, security and sustainability, and pay more attention to the majority of developing countries in difficulties. However, expectations exceed reality, despite the rapid rise of China's economy, FOCAC is still limited to the system and framework of China-Africa cooperation. Its operational mechanism and efficiency need to be improved, and FOCAC cannot meet the requirements of all African countries.

Finally, some Western countries have maliciously smears and interferes with China-Africa relations, which is a challenge that cannot be ignored. Out of their own geopolitical interests and hegemonic thinking, these Western countries have distorted interpretations of China-Africa friendship and cooperation, and stigmized China's normal investment and construction activities in Africa as "neocolonialism". The aim is to plunder Africa's natural resources. The "conspiracy theory", "credit trap" and "environmental destruction theory" are gimmicks to smear China's concept of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness towards Africa [18], which is a major challenge affecting FOCAC.

References

[1] Zhao Kejin, Theory and Practice of Building a New Type of International Relations, American Studies, No.3, 2018

[2]Zielonka J. Europe as a global actor: empire by example? [J]. International affairs, 2008, 84(3): 471-484.

[3] LING Shengli. Building a neighborhood security community: Challenges and Countermeasures. International Studies, 2017,(05):33-48.

[4] LING Shengli. Building a new type of international relations: Origin, connotation and path. Contemporary World, 2018,(10):39-42.

[5] Xu Bu, Ed. Blue Book on International Situation and China's Diplomacy 2020-2021[M]. Beijing: World Knowledge Publishing House.2021.

[6] Yu Hongjun. Human society must walk the road of shared destiny [J]. Frontline, 2022,(01):26-31.

[7] Men Honghua. Building a new type of international relations: China's responsibility and responsibility. World Economics and Politics, 2016,(03):4-25+155-156.

[8] WU, Z., & LIU, P. (2022). On the new vision of international relations in Xi Jinping's diplomatic thought. Northeast Asia Forum, 31(2), 3–18, 127.

[9] Smith S N. Harmonizing the periphery: China's neighborhood strategy under [J]. The Pacific Review, 2021, 34(1): 56-84.

[10] Benabdallah L. Spanning thousands of miles and years: political nostalgia and China's revival of the silk road[J]. International Studies Quarterly, 2021, 65(2): 294-305.

[11] The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) discusses China-Africa relations under the new situation: Promoting the new development of China-Africa Cooperation with new ideas [J]. Outlook News Weekly, 2000, (42):56-57.

[12] Wang Qinmei. The grand event of "China-Africa Cooperation focuses on Action" -- Congratulating the successful holding of the 2nd Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation [J]. West Asia and Africa, 2004,(01):42-45.

[13] Tian Peiliang. The developing Forum on China-Africa Cooperation [J]. Contemporary World, 2004,(01):30-32.

[14] Shaji Sen. A new milestone in the history of China-Africa relations [J]. West Asia and Africa, 2007,(02):5-9+79.

[15]Xi Jinping. Xi Jinping: The Governance of China, Volume III [M]. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2020: 537.

[16] Clark J F. Realism, neo-realism and Africas international relations in the post-cold war era[M]//Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2001: 85-102.

[17] YAO Yao. The historical significance and Theoretical Value of China-Africa Community with a Shared Future [J]. Journal of China and Africa, 2021,2(01):3-23+154.

[18] Zhao, Suisheng. "A neo-colonialist predator or development partner? China's engagement and rebalance in Africa." Journal of Contemporary China 23.90 (2018): 1033-1052.