

# US Africa Policy and the Changing Global System: the EU-China-US “Triangle” of Relations and Hungary

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In our era of global anxieties there is a tendency in Europe to see the rise of emerging powers (among which China gets first and foremost mention) as something that challenges the geopolitical, geo-strategic positions of the technologically and economically more developed North (West). In today's world of transnational IR and cobweb-like interdependent and interconnected interactions, North-South relations are seemingly being overarched and “superseded by South-East, even, Africa-East, alliances” (Shaw, 2010).

Africa is undoubtedly on the rise, offering numerous opportunities, but African states still struggle with managing themselves, and the question is ever so important: can development be driven from within, and can the involvement of external forces/stakeholders reach the level of the individuals and their communities so that there will be lasting “society-wide repercussions” (Hyden, 1989)?



In my research, from an IR point of view, I look at the rise of “new,” emerging powers and the dynamics of the “interpolar” global scene, in particular, when I think of the competition and cooperation among China, India, Japan, the USA, the European Union and others on African soil. Since 2009 my research interest has been centered on Afro-Asian relations in world politics. I have looked at this closely in Tanzania, Kenya and the DRC, as well as Japan and China - and written on Sino-African and Japanese-African relations. During my Fulbright year at the UF Center for African Studies I am investigating the implications these intensifying relations have for the US, and how these new dynamics will affect US-African relationships, both in general terms, as well as on bilateral grounds, and even in a triangular framework of European Union-US-China linkages in a pursuit for African “friendships.”

The research project I foster concentrates on the US administrations and their refined (redefined) foreign policies towards Africa since 1993, with a close eye on the EU-US Trans-Atlantic alliance, and how the EU-China-Africa trilateral scheme (encouraged by the EU) is evaluated from the US, in particular, as Chinese engagement in Africa “presents a potential alternative to the existing Western (Northern) developmental model in Africa” (Liu, 2011). This is a relevant and growingly important foreign policy consideration for Hungary and in a broader context, for Central and Eastern European countries.

As for my home country, evident consequences are already traced in foreign policy decisions. After the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2011, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs published a new foreign policy strategy devoting chapters on countries and regions of the Global South, including ideas for involvement in Northern

Africa, and separately, across sub-Saharan Africa. Naturally, as a member state, the first system of reference for Hungary is that of the EU, but as far as the big(ger) powers are concerned, on the level of world politics, the other major point of reference is still the United States (Magyarics, 2004). As a consequence, it is important for Hungary, too, to learn about and understand the policy considerations of the US for Africa and the changing global order, too. My research can also be useful for articulating the proper Hungarian response.



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