

## **Rising to the Occasion: Africa, the Fourth Industrial Revolution and Lessons from China**

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### **Abstract**

With the Fourth Industrial Revolution underway, the question that remains largely unanswered pertains to the extent to which Africa has positioned itself to rise up to the occasion. While opportunities were lost as the First, Second and Third Industrial Revolutions culminated in slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism respectively, it can be argued that history can possibly repeat itself with the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Against this background, the objective of this chapter is to examine the trajectory of Africa's involvement in this twenty-first century phenomenon. The main thesis of this chapter is that African states, collectively or individually, should draw lessons from China in order to benefit from the unfolding revolution. Having encountered marginalisation, resource exploitation and other effects of capitalism in the wake of the First and Second Industrial Revolutions, China was left in economic quagmire. Despite economic challenges, China exploited the opportunities presented by the Third Industrial Revolution whose mainstay were information technology and electronics resulting in the automation of production. Subsequently, mass production, research and development, growth of financial base and strength of the Chinese domestic market made China the fastest-growing economy and a global economic powerhouse. Having said the above, this chapter explores how Africa can draw lessons from China's rise to the occasion of the Third Industrial Revolution to emerge as a global economic giant. It is maintained in the chapter that such lessons will go a long way in Africa's generation of positive results from the Fourth Industrial Revolution.