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# Chinese Soft power, Africa, and the United Nations General Assembly

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CHINESE SOFT POWER, AFRICA, AND THE UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

By

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*Bachelor of Science* in Social Science  
Portland State University  
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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the

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## Abstract

Sino-Africa relations has become a topic of immense interest within the field of international relations. In particular, China's use of "soft power" in order to support its peaceful rise in the international arena. Originally coined by American political scientist Joseph Nye (1990) the term "soft power" is the ability for a state to get what it wants without threat or coercion. The application of a Western theory by the PRC is worthy of further study and analysis. Recent scholarship within Chinese and Western academic circles have looked more closely at China's soft power utility and how it promotes Nye's pillars of soft power (culture, political values, and foreign policies). Specifically, where China's soft power practices are in line with Nye's (1990) original theory and where it deviates. This thesis will look at how China has built its soft power in Africa and how China utilizes that power. Furthermore, this thesis examines the question of whether China receives greater political support in the United Nations General Assembly from Africa governments with which it has close aid, investment, and trade relationships. Using descriptive statistics and correlation models, this study finds that although China's relationship with Africa grows exponentially this does not necessarily produce more soft power efficacy for China.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Globalization has made the world more open to international integration through trade, capital flows, cross-cultural exchange, and the spread of norms. One idea that has become universally discussed is the concept of “soft power.” Joseph S. Nye (1990) identified “three main sources” of soft power to explain the shifting political environment. . These non-exclusive sources are “culture, political values, and foreign policies” (166-167) as an alternative to “hard power” which relies on “coercion and threats...soft power applies attraction in order to get what you want” (Nye, 1990, 166). A state’s soft power stems from the “attractiveness of its specific culture, political values, and foreign policies” to other states that wish to emulate its example (Nye, 2004, 6-7). In addition, soft power will be enhanced if domestic and foreign policies are perceived as legitimate. China, as an emerging power, has been utilizing its soft power resources in Africa. Soft power allows for better cross-cultural relationships between states, and it also enhances the legitimacy of a state’s governing regime. For China, this is an important attribute of soft power because China’s economic policies serve “as an alternative to western models of economic development” (Zhao, 2010, 436).

The concept of soft power with “Chinese characteristics” should be further analyzed due to its growing importance in world politics (Glaser and Murphy, 10, 2009). In particular, Chinese use of broad range of economic incentives to African states. According to Glaser and Murphy (2009), “the Chinese also do not use the same categories of aid or Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) as the OECD” (857).

Therefore, Chinese aid figures are perceived as convoluted due to “secrecy,” lack of transparency, and variations in what “aid” really is results in “miscalculation” (Brautigam, 2009, 167-168). Although soft power is a western concept, there is a growing amount of Chinese scholarship that embraces the theory in order to analyze and explain Chinese foreign policy. Within the past few decades, there has been a shift in soft power sources due to its implementation by non-Western states. In particular, China’s use of soft power has been under more critical review due to its competing interests in Africa with other actors, namely the United States. Consequently, Chinese influence may reduce the ability of outside competition and potential political and economic power of actors such as the United States.

Over several decades, Africa, in particular, has continued to be an important part of Chinese foreign policy. There is a difference of opinions across the political spectrum that believe that the Chinese have only exploitive intentions in Africa or claim that China is trying to challenge U.S. hegemony(Chan, 2013). Other opinions claim that China treats Africa as an equal partner and China only has peaceful intentions (Bodomo: 2009; Mazimhaka: 2013). Regardless of opinions, the Chinese approach to soft power in order to foster and cultivate diplomatic relationships is unique and therefore worthy of closer study. The issue is particularly important because China, in contrast to previous colonial and post-colonial powers, condemns any meddling in a country’s internal affairs. In addition, Chinese aid and development are offered without expectations of domestic political reform. Furthermore, China is perceived as an attractive ally be

Like many of the governments in Africa that China is engaged with, its reputation is burdened with problems such as its human rights record. China works diligently to

promote itself as a non-interventionist state that only aims to rise peacefully. In addition, China solicits Africa's support for its "One China" policy regarding Taiwan. African states exhibit support in multilateral forums such as the United Nations. China has invested enormous energy and financial resources to end African countries' diplomatic recognition of Taipei (Shinn & Eisenman, 2012, 10). China's status as a veto holder on the UN Security Council allows China to exert influence and seek to establish credibility both domestically and internationally. This thesis examines the question of whether China received greater political support in the United Nations General Assembly from Africa governments with which it has close aid, investment, and trade relationships.

Globalization has created a more competitive world where states vie for material gain and access to resources. The thesis aims to provide insight into China's use of soft power in Africa. Specifically, whether the use of aid and investment results in voting alignment with China in the United Nations General Assembly. This thesis will look at how China has built its soft power in Africa and how China utilizes that power. The primary focus is China's foreign policy and how it courts developing states in Africa and what China expects to gain from these diplomatic and economic partnerships.

The basic structure of this thesis is as follows: Chapter Two will discuss in more detail Nye's concept of soft power and how Chinese foreign policy coincides and deviates from its definition. Chinese soft power differs from the Western approach, and this chapter will look more closely at the discussion of soft power within Chinese strategic and academic circles. In particular, the chapter explores how the Chinese interpret "culture, political values, and foreign policy" as soft power resources (Nye, 2004, 6-7). A Chinese perspective on soft power is imperative to understanding how

Beijing sets goals, creates plans, and utilizes its soft power in the United Nations General Assembly.

Chapter Three will provide a qualitative discussion of what China seeks to gain from this engagement. In addition, the chapter will examine how China achieves these goals, observing China's soft power strategies and tools of influence. This chapter will discuss China's relationships with African states and the benefit it provides China economically and politically. Economically, China focuses resources in Africa in order to complement its own growing economy. China bases these relationships on reciprocity, mutual benefit, and respect for state sovereignty. However, there are political expectations to an economic partnership with the PRC. Namely, adherence to its "One China" policy, marginalizing Taiwan, and insulating China from criticism of its human rights. In addition, this chapter will explore how China has strategically utilized Africa as a voting bloc in the United Nations General Assembly.

Against the backdrop of the qualitative analysis of previous chapters, Chapter Four will present descriptive statistics to assess the effects of China's soft power in Africa. Several variables such as trade, foreign aid, gross domestic product, voting alignment in the United Nations General Assembly, and political terrorism scores are included in the data set. In addition, this chapter will provide several graphs in order to showcase the relationship between China and Africa. In addition, this chapter will house the research and methods section in order to explain the graphs and tables in order to present the data collected. The chapter will include a brief summary of previous research around foreign aid and political alignment and the role it plays in the United Nations General Assembly. A discussion of the variables used and why they are significant in

attempting to measure something intangible like soft power. Lastly, the chapter will discuss the challenges to measuring China's soft power.

The final chapter will discuss the entire thesis and its contribution to the study of Sino-African relations. In addition, the conclusion will discuss the importance of the United Nations' reputation, and how its soft power is susceptible to changing political events. It will further discuss how governments should not ignore soft power resources and that China faces challenges with its soft power development; bridging the gap between its foreign and domestic policies. The chapter will conclude with suggestions for future research.

## Chapter 2

### Soft Power Literature Review

Power is a broad concept that is continually analyzed, critiqued, and conceptualized within the study of international relations. In his analysis of “political discourse”, Connolly (1974) expressed the view that the term “power” is an essentially contested concept, and its definition is dependent on the audience. Once there is a mutual understanding between both sides of the debate then political discussions about power can be "enlightened" (40). Heng (2010) comments that soft power with Chinese characteristics has created more confusion than clarity (277). Ogoura (2006) claims that soft power creates "conceptual confusion" and further explains that soft power can be "distorted, misused and in some cases abused" (48-50). Blanchard and Lu (2012) also suggest that "soft power" is a term that is used too "loosely" (566). The aim of this review is to discuss Nye's concept of “soft power” and provide a better understanding of how Chinese scholarship interprets “soft power” as a theory and a tool of international relations.

#### Soft Power Theory

“Cultural soft power has two main purposes: one is to enhance national cohesions and creativity and meet the demands of the people. The other purpose is to strengthen China's competitiveness in the contest for comprehensive national power in the international arena.”

Former Chinese President Hu Jintao (quoted in Li, 2008, 296)

“A country's soft power”, according to Nye (2011), “rests on three resources” (84). First is culture and whether a state is perceived as attractive to other states. Second, a state’s commitment to political values at home and abroad. Lastly, the perception that a state’s foreign policies are legitimate and moral (84-85). China's emphasis and focus on soft power building through culture, political values, foreign policy, and institutions complies to some extent with Nye's analysis (Heng, 2010, 282). Scholarship and debate around Chinese soft power seem to view it as coinciding with Nye's framework. There is evidence of a consensus around the importance of culture, political values, and foreign policy (Heng, 2010; Hackbarth, 2008; Li 2008; Siow, 2010).

Nye (2004) describes that a powerful state can influence the “behavior of others” because they can, "coerce them with threats," "induce them with payments," or “attract or co-opt them” (1). Nye observes, "Military force remains the ultimate form of power in a self-help system, the use of force has become more costly for modern forces than it was before” (Hackbarth, 2008, 21). In order to promote its “peaceful rise”, China seeks to develop its relationships offering attractive incentives such as economic aid, development, and as a non-Western ally. China has focused on alignment and building relationships with the Global South in distinctive ways. In contrast to other soft power wielders such as the United States, China offers a relationship that doesn’t expect political reform. Applying an innovative approach, a relationship with China provides developing countries to the ability to develop economically and still retain their individual sovereignty (Mazimhaka, 2013, 94).

Mingjiang (2008) describes that Chinese soft power plays an intricate part in China's foreign policy. However, it is “insufficiently understood in the outside world”

(287). Blanchard and Lu's (2012) argument is soft power should be considered in terms of "form, target and context" (566). Gill and Huang (2006), Kurlantzick (2006), and Blanchard and Lu (2012) believe that soft power in the form of economic goods or payments can be confusing. The confusion comes from the suspicion that Chinese aid, grants, loans, and debt relief are not funneled through soft power channels. The receiver of such payments may just consider it a bribe. In some cases, China is the only ally to pariah states. The economic relief China offers can be perceived as an enabling mechanism to keep these authoritarian regimes in power.

Siow (2010) describes soft power as a Western concept that has only recently found acceptance within Chinese policy-making circles (1). Broadly speaking Siow (2010) confirms that Chinese analysts agree with Nye's definition of soft power. The importance of Chinese thought in the soft power debate should be included. Changping (2007) finds that Chinese analysts desire to be a part of the discourse and have their voices heard. Chinese conceptions offer a non-western perspective to the debate and can describe China's ideology, culture, and society from non-bias (301). Kang (2008) discusses that Nye's theory of soft power is American-centric but it can be applied to other states and people. For China, this is particularly true because China openly acknowledges soft power as an important component of its domestic and foreign policy objectives.

China has applied its own characteristics to Nye's soft power theory. Kurlantzick (2007) describes Chinese soft power as a "charm offensive" (1). Furthermore, Chinese transcend the original concept of soft power to include "anything outside of the military and security realm" (Kurlantzick, 2007, 6). Heng (2010) explains that the Chinese soft

power definition should add economic development, diplomatic cooperation, and investment agreements that were formerly excluded by Nye (282). Cao describes Chinese soft power as “soft appeal” and deviates from Nye’s (2004) theory of soft power (Chan, 2013, 65). Cao elaborates and describes “soft appeal” as a better term to describe China’s particular relationship with Africa. Soft appeal’s goal is that its strength lies in the “moral argument” and the “right moral standing” in the relationship between states (65).

Mingjiang (2008) explains in order to understand China's utilization of soft power fully then the perspectives of Chinese scholars must be included within the debate (1). For the Chinese, soft power is an essential element of leadership. The power of attraction, framing the issues and agenda setting are considered key elements of influence and diplomacy (Hackbarth, 2008, 117). However, Blanchard and Lu (2012) argue that part of the "attraction" that African states have for China is because, for countries like Sudan, China is the only alternative (569).

Mingjiang (2008) describes that the Chinese interpret and understand the concept of soft power in many ways that coincide with Nye's analysis (288). However, there are distinctive features where China deviates. An important aspect in analyzing soft power with Chinese characteristics is the importance of the mass media (Li, 2008, 294). In an additional departure from Nye's theory, Chinese scholarship emphasizes that hard and soft power are inseparable (Mingjiang, 2008, 9).

Nye (2004) explains, “that a state may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other states will admire its values, emulate its example and aspire to its level of prosperity” (5). Furthermore, “when a state’s culture includes universal values, it increases the probability of it obtaining its desired outcomes through attraction” (Nye,

2004, 31). However, Chan (2013) points out that that in Sino-African case, Western “universal values” such as “liberty, democracy, and human rights have been replaced with Confucian values” (53). Confucian values outlined by Chan include brotherhood, benevolence, harmony, loyalty, and reciprocation (53). Therefore, qualities of Nye’s soft power have integrated with Chinese foreign policy objectives in order to influence states in Africa politically.

Chinese discourse moves beyond Nye's original theory because it attaches great importance to the mass media. Mingjiang (2008) explains that for China, effective mass communications help with soft power cultivation. Within China there is a perception that western media has monopolized mass communications and extends Western "cultural hegemony" to the world (8). China is determined to counter Western dominated media by developing and strengthening its own international communications (20-22). However, Mingjiang (2008) astutely points out that the media may be a tool to cultivate soft power, or the Chinese government could leave itself more vulnerable to international criticism. The Chinese media will be reliant on the PRC government and its media coverage is automatically assumed to be biased. In stark contrast to Western media sources that exercise more independence and have shown to be critical of their governments (22).

Heng (2010) discusses the distinctive soft power strategies that are taken by China, brings both advantages and weaknesses. One disadvantage is that China is always grappling with its image due to vague domestic and foreign policies. Mingjiang (2008) finds that there is a mainstream belief that Chinese soft power is underdeveloped due to various issues surrounding strategic planning (22). Shambaugh (2011) claims that China lacks an international identity (9). In the author's analysis of soft power in Chinese

international relations, there are "seven" unique perspectives that rest on a political spectrum (9). On one side, there are Chinese scholars that advocate for isolationism and on the opposite end those that support full engagement in international affairs and institutions (9). In addition, Mingjiang's (2008) analysis, he finds that the concept of "soft power" is not necessarily embraced by everyone in China. Veteran diplomat Sha Zukang, describes the term soft power "condescending" and "created by western countries," does provide an opposing opinion in whether soft power is embraced by the Chinese (658).

Despite this difference of opinions, Mingjiang (2008) affirms that for the Chinese "soft power is a means to multiple ends" (299). Chinese officials understand that soft power does not grow at the same rate as hard power or with economic progress. Soft power develops only through careful nurturing of relations abroad (Siow, 2010, 2). Ding (2008) writes that Beijing understands the importance of establishing international norms through soft power (193). Consistent with Nye's (1990) framework, China seeks to promote its culture and political values through international institutions and diplomacy to ensure it is less likely to conform to Western expectations (153).

The concept of soft power is a broad concept which therefore allows a lot of room for political maneuvering and interpretation. For the Chinese, soft power rests on "attraction" and developing relationships that are based on mutual benefit and reciprocity. The literature claims that China does not approach relationships with a threat of force or through coercive measures. However, China's use of soft power to cultivate economic relationships could eventually place China in a hard power position and lead it to leverage its military and economic strength over a weaker state.

Research and scholarly discussion on China's utilization of soft power are based on China's larger strategy to ensure its economic and political objectives are met. China has no interest in military conflict because it would hinder its development process. Therefore, soft power is an important tool that will allow China to present a positive image to the world, counter foreign misrepresentations about China, and safeguard the existing regime.

### Culture

"In today's world, culture intertwines with economics and politics, demonstrating a more prominent position and role in the competition for comprehensive national power"

-Former President of the People's Republic of China (1993–2003), Jiang Zemin

Culture matters and is an important component in the discussion of China's soft power (Nye, 2004; Chan, 2013). Critiques given by Chinese academics argue that China cannot compete internationally without building up its soft power resources (Mingjiang, 2008, 290). Wang and Lu (2008) explain that China deviates from Nye's framework that emphasizes modern American popular culture, because alternatively China promotes its traditional culture (431). Chinese scholarship expands Nye's original theory. In particular, the importance of culture and cites domestic conditions to help explain Chinese conceptions of soft power (Li, 2008, 288-296). In the form of soft power, cultures matter in international relations because there are more emerging powers competing for resources and influence.

An important element of Chinese culture is that it possesses a long civilization with a historic past. This history includes victimization from foreign occupations. China and Africa share a history of Western exploitation. China utilizes past mistreatment as a reason for its current foreign and domestic policies (Heng, 2010, 296). Liu (2013) explains that the incorporation of culture into international relations brings “new interpretations of the state’s diplomatic strategies based on cultural norms and values” (Chan, 2013, 58). For China, this is especially true because it sees itself more of a fitting partner with other states in the global South. Despite obvious barriers such as language, China still shares many of the same struggles as African states because it views itself as a developing country.

Ding (2008) points out that when scholarship examines Chinese soft power it often overlooks moral attraction, which is a fundamental element of soft power (28). China emphasizes equality, mutual benefit, and respect for the sovereignty of the host state (Chan, 2013, 23). Chinese soft power is considered attractive to African countries because China claims the moral high ground over previous colonial powers. The Chinese commentary that explains Chinese conceptions of soft power incorporates values that are rooted in Chinese philosophy. Beyond Confucianism, Chinese incorporate soft power features that are found in Taoism and Buddhism. Values include "peace and harmony," "benevolent governance," "respect through virtue," and "harmony without suppressing differences" (Mingjiang, 2008; Liu, 2013). These Chinese cultural values are considered soft power resources because concepts such as "harmony" can transcend national borders and are universally appealing.

Chinese scholarship explains that Western civilization is based on individualism and materialism that helped the West industrialize (Mingjiang, 2008, 291). However, it caused social and ethical problems that later produced conflicts domestically and internationally. Chinese culture and soft power support a "peaceful rise" and an alternative to western emulation (292). However, the Chinese government is hesitant to fully promote a "China model" because it prefers to be considered a developing country.

According to Ding (2008), although Nye developed the term "soft power" the concept of "attraction" pre-existed within traditional Chinese culture and philosophy (195). Ding cites Sun Zi's strategic resources, which are "people's rationality, morality, values and aspirations (197). China promotes its culture, which translates into policy as non-interfering, fair, and moral. For this reason, China is considered attractive to states that have felt ostracized by outside powers, such as the United States.

China bases its cultural diplomacy on history and traditions. However, this could become problematic. Yu Xintian (2007) warns that China should be wary of overemphasizing its traditional culture (35). In addition Mingjiang (2008), claims that placing too much emphasis on Chinese culture in order to promote soft power resources abroad may be "misleading" and do damage to China's image (7). This is due to the revolutionary experience of the Chinese Communist Party under Mao Zedong and the Cultural Revolution (Yu Xintian, 2007, 36). During the Cultural Revolution, there was mass destruction of anything that symbolized customs, culture, habits, and traditional ideas. Presently, the Chinese Communist Party emphasizes cultural traditions that were once considered negative elements of the state. This could be perceived as confusing because an emphasis on the past excluded Chinese ethnic minorities and regarded as

“backward” (Mingjiang, 2008, 7). Therefore, Chinese culture should complement foreign policy objectives of non-interference and respecting state sovereignty.

There is a consensus that the successful increase of soft power abroad will help strengthen existing Chinese cultural identity and enhance domestic, national pride (Siow, 2010, 2). In the world, there exists a widespread interest in Chinese culture. Centuries of Chinese migration have contributed to a global embrace of Chinese cuisine, music, cinema, traditional medicine and martial arts. Furthermore, the amount of people around the world learning Mandarin Chinese continues to grow. However, the growth does not necessarily imply increased Chinese soft power because there is debate over whether people desire to learn the language, sees its benefit for business or both (Paradise, 2009, 644).

Regardless, of the reasons non-Chinese people wish to learn Mandarin, the Chinese government has focused considerable attention in language and culture exchange. This investment has manifested in the establishment of Confucius Institutes all over the world. According to Paradise (2009), Confucius Institutes were established to promote and support China's "good will" agenda (650). Chinese universities, in particular, benefit substantially from academic exchanges and partnerships with foreign universities (Paradise, 2009, 652). In addition, to Confucius Institutes China admits thousands of international students to its universities in order to promote cross-cultural and educational exchange.

Bodomo (2009), shares the Chinese sentiment that cultural exchange through education promotes peace. Bodomo writes that Confucius Institutes provide an opportunity to build stronger relations with Africa. It is unfair to claim that China's only

concern is Africa's natural resources, such as oil. Confucius Institutes have the capacity to help ordinary Africans have educational opportunities and develop their communities. Furthermore, these institutes can foster better cultural understanding between China and African states (173-174). As of 2014, China operates 38 Confucius Institutes in Africa, stretching from Cape Town to Cairo.

Paradise (2009) conducted extensive research on the perception of Confucius Institutes as a tool to increase Chinese soft power. Paradise found that many Chinese academics claimed the notion was the "wrong idea" and "misleading" (657). Paradise also refers to the growing fear and suspicions that Confucius Institutes are a "Trojan Horse" and are a vehicle to support China's growing influence and propaganda. The "Trojan Horse" theory is further perpetuated because the Chinese government funds these institutes, and there may be "strings" attached to accepting funds (Paradise, 2009, 662). However, Chinese scholarship often refutes such doubts and claim that Confucius Institutes are a harmonious component of China's peaceful development and desire to share its culture with the world (Paradise, 2009).

Adding more to the debate around the Confucius Institutes is whether they are used as tool to push particular Chinese policies. Gill and Huang (2006) claim that Confucius Institutes have a "political agenda" because they were established to present China as non-threatening through education (18). There still exists concerns over whether Confucius Institutes are non-political because it is perceived that these institutes further perpetuate the Chinese foreign policy of marginalizing Taiwan. Each Confucius Institute incorporates the unique characteristics of every region. However, these institutes all share a commitment to the promotion of Chinese culture and language (Paradise, 2009, 648).

Therefore, students at Confucius Institutes learn to speak Mandarin Chinese and learn from books and resources that are consistent with Beijing's message (Gill & Huang, 2006, 18). Concerns over direct funding from the Chinese government, intellectual freedom, and censorship prompted Confucius Institutes to close at Stockholm University, the University of Chicago, and Pennsylvania State University in 2014. Whether these concerns are warranted is still a matter of debate.

Confucius Institutes may be targets of unfair criticism because of China's growing influence. However, as Paradise (2009) astutely points out, since Confucius Institutes are a soft power activity, the project is dependent on the attractiveness of Chinese culture abroad (662). The institutes' survival is dependent on China's ability to work with host countries and provide a legitimate educational environment for students. Although, there may be propaganda woven into the curriculum there is an advantage to students who wish to learn Mandarin and understand the Chinese culture.

Beyond state funded Confucius Institutes abroad, the Chinese government invests substantial funds in order to promote Chinese culture. The Chinese government has direct involvement in international cultural exhibitions around the world. Examples of these include the display of terracotta army statues, antiques, and concerts (Paradise, 2009, 649). China projects its soft power through education not only with Confucius Institutes but also establishing, advertising and circulating of English and Chinese scholarly journals (Blanchard & Lu, 2012, 573). Although not all of China's attempts at cultural and educational exchange are embraced by the Western world, their growing influence and presence are impossible to ignore.

## Political Values

Chinese political values are closely linked to its cultural principles. Chinese soft power resources include distinctive cultural and ideological attractiveness, norms and rules (Fijalkowski, 2011, 224). China emphasizes that its diplomatic relationships are based on equality, mutual benefit, and non-interference (Chan, 2013, 23). Chinese discussion surrounding political values incorporates an agenda that supports a domestic purpose (Mingjiang, 2008, 2).

Chinese scholarship develops an alternative to Nye's emphasis on political values. According to Wang and Lu (2008) Chinese discourse favors the "attractiveness" of the Chinese economy and considers economic development as a political value (431). Fijalkowski (2011) explains that a thriving economy is a source of attraction and provides legitimacy to the Chinese government both domestically and internationally (224).

The political value of equality is a source of soft power for China within Africa. China claims to be a developing country, and this helps with the perception that it sees itself as the same or equal to other developing states in the global South. Furthermore, the Chinese believe that the West views Africa as a "patient rather than a partner" (Chan, 2013). In the Chinese perceptible, Western states have been mistaken with how they've approached and developed diplomatic and economic partnerships with Africa. Cao (2013) explains that there exists a Western perception that China, and Africa belong to the same world of cultural "other" (61).

There is an argument that Western states made an ideological mistake in Africa by concentrating solely on political reform instead of the economy. Rotberg (2008) explains that the Chinese believe that Western-style democratic theory does not fit

African conditions and has failed African states, which has kept these states impoverished (12). Failure is attributed to the many political conditions and expectations imposed on Africa in order to receive aid. China is resolute in their belief that democracy does not guarantee prosperity and their economic success is proof of this.

Mutual benefit<sup>1</sup> or reciprocity is an important element that China considers a part of its political values that stems from Confucius doctrine. According to Confucian tradition, raw exploitation is not allowed, and this is important when examining how the Chinese differentiate themselves from colonial and imperial powers in Africa. China promotes itself as non-interfering, fair and moral. According to Chan (2013) when Chinese officials address and communicate with Africa with talk of peace, friendship, and assistance, the PRC “means it” (15). These statements made by Chinese officials are not intended to deceive or be naïve self-deceptions. Expropriation may take place alongside or beneath the rhetoric, but “expropriation is not exploitation” (Chan, 2013, 16-17). A return is expected with expropriation, and African governments look at their relationship with China as both mutually beneficial and one that exhibits equality. Fijalkowski (2011) writes that China aims to build a friendly image targeted to an Africa audience by promoting the “win-win” mutual economic benefits from cooperation (221). For these reasons, China is more attractive to states that may have felt ostracized by the U.S. or other Western states.

Non-interference is an important aspect of Chinese political values. Mingjiang (2008) finds that Chinese political and academic voices highlight the importance of

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<sup>1</sup> Studies of US and Japanese ODA have shown that humanitarianism explained aid disbursement (not all neorealist). See studies by Poe (1990), Cingranelli and Pasquarello (1985) on the U.S.; Tuman, Strand and Emmert (2009) and Tuman and Ayoub (2004) on Japan; and Schraeder, Hook, and Taylor (1998) on Japan.

respect for "culture, social, political and ideological diversity in the world" (22). For China, infringing on a state's sovereignty is unacceptable. Chan (2013) describes the concept of "soft power" as a theory that is instilled in Chinese foreign and domestic policy (12). This approach allows China to establish diplomatic ties with a variety of regimes and safeguard China's sovereignty (Anshan, 75, 2007). There is also a consensus that believes China should strategically build soft power because it offers an alternative route to sustainable growth (Mingjiang, 2008; Anshan, 2007). In addition, it provides legitimacy, promotes political alliances, and allows China to insulate itself from criticism.

Despite fears, China does not wish to remake the world in its image or influence the spread of communism. China's emphasis on non-interference help support its policy objective to "peacefully rise" internationally (Blanchard & Lu, 2012, 570). The Chinese government is focused on projecting a particular "image" to the outside world to show its intentions are benign and "non-threatening" (Paradise, 2009, 647-648). This is another reason China staunchly holds firm to its non-interference policy. However, the reason for non-interference stems from China's colonial past and why China seeks relationships with the global South. China desires to develop its economy independently, but this cannot, be achieved by the sole reliance on the West. China prefers diplomatic relationships with states that respect China's sovereignty and the governing regime.

Although China has developed its soft power resources in Africa, it receives criticism of its political values of non-interference and mutual benefit. Domestically, China has experienced impressive growth and alleviated many citizens out of poverty. The perception of the economic model that China has followed is dependent on the

audience. One opinion could see an efficient and effective government. Or perceive Chinese development is attributed to an authoritarian regime that desires conformity (Paradise, 2009, 577). China's non-interference policy opens them up to criticism from the Western and developed world because it is perceived that China does not care about issues such as human rights, environmental degradation or political freedom.

Paradise (2009) finds that developing or authoritarian regimes that China has diplomatic relations show little concern to China's governance and corruption issues (578). Due to its relationships with states that have poor human rights records such as Sudan, China faces criticism for not acting as a responsible power. Furthermore, the criticism is based and perpetuated due to China's domestic human rights record (Paradise, 2009, 656). China is seen as an ally to these pariah states and ensures that these dictators are kept in power. China is perceived as benefitting economically and not concerned with encouraging any political or social reform (Paradise, 2009, 656).

Beijing's domestic policies are considered a hindrance to its soft power efficacy (Yoshihara & Holmes, 2008, 134). Since political values are a direct link to the state, Chinese soft power suffers from a lack of legitimacy due to its domestic policies in regard to Tibet and Taiwan. On the political front, China faces criticism of its authoritarian system and its relationship with other authoritarian regimes. According to Gill and Huang (2006), there is an "imbalance between soft power, cultural attractiveness, and Beijing's domestic policies and values that are expressed through foreign policy" (29-30).

China struggles from concerns of legitimacy and explains why China is consistently on the defensive. China continues to work hard at building a particular and

favorable image through soft power resources. According to Shambaugh (2011), China should develop its South-South relationship and ensure diplomatic solidarity with African states (16). Solidarity with the global South ensures that China receives support and dodges criticism from the West over “issues such as Tibet, Taiwan, human rights and climate change” (17). Therefore, China sees the participation in international organizations as vital to securing the Chinese Communist Party agenda and foreign policy objectives (Paradise, 2009, 664). One of which is its, "One China" policy. Beijing has funneled numerous resources into Africa in order to be an “integral part of Africa's political and economic success” (Gill & Huang, 2006, 8). A constructive approach within these institutions would further enhance China's peaceful image.

### Foreign Policies

China's foreign policies are based on their political values of equality, mutual benefit, and non-interference. China understands the advantage of participating in multilateral institutions and in order to achieve its foreign policy objectives. Ding (2008) explains that the primary objective of China's foreign policy is to "preserve independence, sovereignty, and territories" and “to create a favorable international environment for China's modernization” (194-195). Siow (2010) finds that Chinese officials identify soft power as a tool to enhance its “comprehensive strength” and building a coalition of like-minded allies in order to further its foreign policy objectives(1). Chinese scholarship considers soft power as an indicator of world status and a mechanism to measure a state's influence (Mingjiang, 2008, 13). Su Changhe (2007) argues that soft power is a part of a “state's international institution building,

agenda setting, mobilization of coalitions and the ability to fulfill commitments” (7). This explanation further emphasizes the importance that China places on enhancing its role in multilateral institutions.

Some Chinese scholars directly challenge Nye's conceptualization of soft power in reference to foreign policy. Xuetong (2006) claims that soft power stems from the “political power that is wielded by political institutions, norms, credibility, rather than culture” (9). Huang and Ding (2006) argue that the rise of China is due to the simultaneous development of both hard and soft power (22). Cho and Jeong (2008) find that soft power works simultaneously for both domestic and international purposes. The authors conclude that while China promotes their “national development strategy” it simultaneously promotes the “harmonious society” objective (458). A double strategy approach is believed to provide legitimacy to the Chinese Communist Party domestically and internationally.

For many Chinese scholars, a great power needs both hard and soft power in order to ensure that it remains in a beneficial position which allows it to compete internationally (Mingjiang, 2008, 299). In their analysis of Chinese soft power, Yoshihara and Holmes (2008) find that Chinese leadership view soft power as "direct competition in great power terms" (134-135). Su Changhe (2007) argues that soft power relies on a state's ability to build and influence international agenda setting, mobilizing coalitions, and fulfilling its commitments (8). A foreign policy that promotes China's preferred image through soft power principles emphasizes that Chinese has domestic stability and international power.

China's foreign policy has shifted to complement its growing influence in the world. China's has increased its participation and membership in international institutions and organizations (Huang & Ding, 2006, 28). Ding (2008) describes soft power foreign policies as economic cooperation, cultural and educational exchange, regular diplomatic visits between China and its allies, participation in multilateral activities and institutions (195). These strategies allow China to promote a friendly and peaceful image to the outside world. Shi Yinhong describes China's foreign policy as "smile diplomacy" (The Economist, 2007). Smile diplomacy or "summit diplomacy" is a term to describe the Chinese leadership's commitment to numerous international visits abroad as both symbolic and out of respect for African states (Anshan, 2007, 79-80). China has ambitious plans for Africa, and these diplomatic visits promote cooperation and reassurance to Africa that China values their relationship.

Gill et al. (2007) determine that Beijing's critique of the international system is that it is "unfair" and "unrepresentative" because it is dominated by the United States (574). According to Anshan (2007), China looked to Africa as an ally to protect their states from imperialism and hegemony (71). Paradise (2009) finds that using soft power measures such as participation and membership in international institutions carries out China's new security diplomacy. Furthermore, being a part of peacekeeping and anti-terrorism activities provides confidence in China's foreign policies and that China is a responsible power (656-657). Therefore, perceptions and suspicions that perpetuate negative attitudes around China's rise are "unwarranted" (Mingjiang, 2008, 308).

Public or cultural diplomacy is the Chinese government's attempt to project a peaceful image, and that its intentions are non-threatening (Paradise, 2009, 647). Siow

(2010) finds in existing scholarship on soft power that China should, "assert its voice" (2). The Chinese "voice" is apparent in the promotion and development of Chinese media (Siow, 2010, 1-2). China wants to reach a global audience to ensure it controls how its image is shaped. Advancing the Chinese mass media in "order to project influence to the international community" is also seen as a way to counter U.S. hegemony (Siow, 2010, 2).

Joshua Cooper Ramo (2004) coined the term, "Beijing Consensus" (28). The "Beijing Consensus" places an emphasis on "innovation, experimentation, and gradualism" (28). Ramo describes that the Beijing Consensus believes in development that incorporates a state's culture and characteristics. However, China shirks away from the "Beijing Consensus" and claims it is still a "developing country" (Paradise, 2009, 664). This perception puts China at an advantage because it claims that international standards of environmental protection and human rights don't apply to their policies.

China does see the need for partnerships in the developing world in order to provide greater regime legitimacy and insulation from western criticism (Gill et al. 2007, 8). If Africa, can improve economically and politically with China as a close ally, it provides China with more of an advantage in implementing its foreign policy objectives. This concept focuses on securing relations with pivotal regions that can safeguard China's peaceful rise and supports China's ambitions to become a regional and international power (Gill et al. 2007, 9). China sits at an advantageous position because of its historical experience, rapid development and influence in global affairs.

According to Ding (2008) there is a perception that following the Cold War, Africa was abandoned as a political and strategic priority to the United States (37).

Therefore, Chinese support and diplomatic relations are valued by African states. Ding further explains that this is why Africa is more than willing to follow and support China's foreign policy preferences (38). China's "non-interference, political stability, economic growth and no strings attached aid" are a contradiction to previous donors like the United States that place expectations like political reform in order to receive aid (Heng, 2010, 288). China has supported its soft power agenda through trade and diplomacy in order to broaden their power and influence (Heng, 277, 2010). Shambaugh (2011) claims that because China's presence in Africa surpasses the United States, soft power in Africa allows China to compete for more significant global influence (22). The Chinese have proven to utilize soft power successfully through trade and diplomacy.

Soft power with Chinese characteristics emphasizes symbolic relationships. In contrast to European and Western colonial powers, China actively cultivates and strengthens its diplomatic relations with African states. Ding (2008) explains that previous foreign aid was diverted and unable to help with infrastructure development in Africa (199). The Chinese are quick to provide and promote generous gestures to their African allies. Gestures include rebuilding of parliament buildings, stadiums, hospitals and schools (Heng, 2010; Anshan, 2007; Ding, 2008). China has been successful in establishing a favorable image in Africa through its international aid and development. The image projected is that Chinese aid benefits rather than exploits Africa.

In the context of international organizations such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, and even the International Olympics Committee, China has emphasized and nurtured its relations with African member states. China has long recognized that as a regional voting bloc, Africa as a continent has the dominance to

influence the outcomes of issues in international affairs. According to Bodomo (2009), soft power provides China and Africa with an opportunity to have a balanced and sustainable relationship through mutual respect, non-interference, diplomatic relations and economic cooperation (173). According to Anshan (2007), China provides respectful and conciliatory discussions instead of intervention and coercion that is attributed to Western states (76).

China's support for international institutions coincides with Nye's (2004) framework that participation in multilateral institutions like the United Nations can provide a soft power platform (65). Furthermore, these institutions give China a place on the world stage in order to promote a friendly and peaceful image through diplomacy (Heng, 2010, 287). Besides working closely with its African allies in the United Nations, China has developed additional diplomatic forums with Africa. Discussions include the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). At its inception in 2006, 43 heads of state and 48 African delegations attended the FOCAC. The FOCAC provides a place for China and African member states to discuss specific issues such as aid, trade, and cultural exchange in order to support Sino-African relations. Since 2006, Beijing has committed various forms of support and commitments to African countries. This includes a cancelation of US \$1.42 billion of African debt (Gill et al. 2007, 5).

For many Chinese strategists, there is a belief that Africa is on a path to exponential economic development. This idea is well received and is part of the basis of why China desires a close diplomatic relationship with Africa (Gill et al. 2007, 8). China continually speaks of its close relationship with Africa and fosters the message that the relationship is built on reciprocity and China's development, and Africa's development is

intertwined. For instance, Chinese Foreign Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Liu Jiancho has stated, "China needs Africa, it needs Africa for resources to fuel China's development goals, for markets to sustain its growing economy and for political alliances to support its aspirations to be a global influence" (quoted in Gill et al. 2007, 9).

China does rely on Africa for resources, namely oil. China is the second largest consumer of oil and works hard to maintain "non-interference" in states such as Nigeria, Angola, and Sudan. There is a high priority for Beijing to have strong ties with resource-rich countries and energy suppliers. Figures estimate that "25 percent of China's oil imports are from Africa" (Ding, 2008, 200). Bodomomo (2009) argues that Africa has sought out new partnerships other than western economies in order to build their own struggling economies (171). Mazimhaka (2013) further describes Africa as a continent that is fragile politically and economically. Therefore, Africa needs a relationship with China because this relationship does provide opportunity for Africa to build its economy (Chan, 2013, 120-121).

According to Gill & Huang (2006) Chinese soft power resources do not guarantee desired policy outcomes (23). In some respects, China stymies its soft power growth because of its focus on rebuking the "China threat thesis" (Mingjiang, 2008, 23). China is very wary to advocate a "China Model" because it believes that this could look like a direct challenge to the West. According to Gill & Huang (2006) there are "three major factors" that challenge Chinese efforts to produce soft power. These hindrances are "imbalances of resources, legitimacy, diplomacy concerns and lack of a coherent agenda" (26). In addition, China is criticized for its lending practices in Africa and other developing countries. This criticism stems from China binding loans to African exports to

China. These practices contradict established loan agreements in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Gill et al. 2007, 11).

In contradiction to its "harmonious world" agenda, China has received backlash for its financial and diplomatic support of corrupt and brutal dictators in Africa (Ding 2008 202). China faces a deficiency in soft power because of these relationships, and it directly affects its legitimacy. Due to its non-interference policy, China receives criticism for supporting authoritarian leaders such as Robert Mugabe (Ding, 2008, 199). However, Bodomo (2009) provides a counter argument and claims that China benefits greatly from African political power (173). Bodomo (2009) refutes the perception that China has only exploitive interests in Africa. The author believes that there is a mutual benefit that relies on China and Africa working together politically. Both China and Africa can wield power in the United Nations because China is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council with the veto power and Africa has a large voting influence (173). African support provides China with greater political flexibility within international institutions such as the IOC and the WTO.

In addition to international politics, there are domestic concerns within Africa. These concerns include the influx of Chinese migrant workers, unfavorable working conditions, racism and China's undercutting local African industries (Ding, 2008, 200). Heng (2010) finds from various sources that there is a growing disdain in Africa for Chinese migrant workers from China (292). It is considered more efficient and economical to Chinese firms and businesses to hire skilled laborers from the mainland instead of train local Africans (Anshan, 2007,81). These concerns within Africa may

prove to hinder the spread of Chinese soft power within Africa due to concerns of Chinese imperialism.

### Conclusion

The scholarship provided in this literature review refers to Chinese soft power in a variety of ways. Kurlantzick (2007) refers to it as China's "charm offensive" while Winton (2013) describes it as China's "economic statecraft" or even "smile diplomacy". Some authors like Chan (2013) directly question China's true intentions in Africa and whether its economic incentives are actually "rogue aid" (Naim, 2007, 95-96). It is safe to say that regardless of its name, Chinese scholars, philosophers, and the PRC leadership have embraced the theory because at the "core of soft power is culture" (Glaser and Murphy, 2009, 11). In addition, this may be why China has difficulty in cultivating soft power because hard and soft power are simultaneously applied. However, China's innovative approach to focus on poverty alleviation is a form of attraction to developing African states.

China needs Africa not just for resources but politically as well. The PRC knows that economic growth is central to ensuring African states carry more political clout in multilateral organizations. With this in mind, China believes Africa's economic success will "raise the profile of Africa at international forums such as the United Nations General Assembly" (Taylor, 2004, 93). Taylor (1998) concludes that even as early as 1998, China had South Africa picked possibly to fill an additional seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) (455). In addition, Nigeria seeks to represent the African continent as a permanent member of UNSC (Amusen, 2006, 184). A potential African permanent place plays a significant diplomatic role between China and Africa

because an additional ally on the UNSC could be perceived as a threat and creates conflict.

China is motivated by a need for non-western allies in the international community in order to support its foreign policy objectives. One of Beijing<sup>2</sup>'s principal foreign policy objectives is its "One China" policy. The constitution reads that the People's Republic of China is the legitimate government of all of China. Therefore, Taiwan and Tibet belong to mainland China. Taylor (1998) explains, that if Taiwan to gained political legitimacy and independence this would result in embarrassment and a "loss of face" for the Chinese Communist Party leadership (Taylor, 1998, 457). This is not a risk China is willing to make and since China's admission to the United Nations General Assembly in 1979, Beijing has worked tirelessly at marginalizing Taiwan's influence and denies Taiwan "international space" (Ding, 2008, 199). Beijing offered aid and financial support in exchange for recognition (Taylor, 1998, 458). Without the African voting bloc, China would not have been successful at transferring the UNSC seat from Taiwan to China. At present, only 4 African countries have diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

Soft power rests on regime legitimacy and China's relationships with some African states provide a platform for critics that believe China is a direct link to stagnating political reform (Huang and Ding, 2006, 38). Furthermore, China opens itself up to criticism over its human rights record and authoritarianism and continually grapples with its transparency. China wishes to be in direct control of its lending practices and not

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<sup>2</sup> Tuman and Shirali (2015) found that Chinese FDI in Latin America/Caribbean and Africa was negatively associated with states that recognized Taiwan. The same study also found that countries that ended their diplomatic recognition of Taiwan during the study period experienced an increased in FDI after ending recognition (this was in Chad, Senegal, and Costa Rica).

criticized by Western financial institutions or governments. There is a belief in China that too much transparency would make the existing regime vulnerable. Therefore, China's emphasis on it being a "developing country" allows it to bypass full transparency with its donor activities. However, to counteract the external pressure of its lending practices, the Chinese Export-Exim Bank signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in 2007 with the World Bank. This MOU set out to provide more collaboration with the two financial institutions in regard to energy and infrastructure projects in Uganda, Ghana, and Mozambique (Gill et al. 2007, 12). Mingjiang (2008) concurs with Huang and Ding (2006) and explains that although China possesses soft and hard power capabilities it still lacks a "national comprehensive power structure" (14). The lack of soft power efficacy is the result of China's gap between its domestic values and foreign policies. . This is why soft power is considered Beijing's "underbelly" and although China is a rising regional and international power, global leadership will take a lot more time (Huang and Ding, 2006, 22-44). Therefore, it is imperative for China to continue to cultivate and foster soft power abroad to ensure legitimacy and trust in their foreign and domestic policy endeavors.

Table 2.1: Confucius Institutes and Classrooms within Africa

<b>Country</b>	<b>Institute</b>	<b>Classroom</b>
<b>Angola</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Benin</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Botswana</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Burundi</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Cameroon</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Comoros</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>Congo</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Egypt</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Eritrea</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Ethiopia</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Gambia</b>		
<b>Ghana</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Kenya</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Liberia</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Libya</b>		
<b>Madagascar</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Malawi</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Mali</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>Mozambique</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Namibia</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Nigeria</b>	<b>2</b>	
<b>Rwanda</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Senegal</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Seychelles</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>South Africa</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Sudan</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Tanzania</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Togo</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Tunis</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>Tunisia</b>		<b>1</b>
<b>Uganda</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Zambia</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	<b>1</b>	

*Information retrieved from the Confucius Institute Headquarters (Hanban) online*

## Chapter 3

### Soft Power Influence within the United Nations General Assembly

A determinant of a state's influence is its ability to establish partnerships with national leaders from the international community. China's thriving economy and emergence as a rising power provides an alternative to Western dominated theories of international organizations and diplomacy. China has a broad interpretation of foreign aid to include "official development assistance, development grants, concessional loans and state-sponsored or subsidized overseas investments" (Lum et al. 2009, 1). However, due to China's lack of transparency in its reporting of foreign direct investment, aid, loans and grants it is a challenge to measure accurately.

According to Nye (2005) the United States has been able to produce soft power by advocating shared values in the world like democracy and human rights (62). Conversely, China provides an alternative to Western democratic theory and considers its political values and foreign policy as universally appealing. These political values are based on non-interference because it claims its only intention is to rise peacefully, and China has no interest in remaking the world in its image. According to Susan Shirk (2007), China's path to peaceful development is based on three foreign policy initiatives; "using economic ties to make friends, being a team player in multilateral organizations and accommodating its neighbors" (109). These objectives are based on Chinese culture and political values of non-interference and respect for a state's sovereignty.

According to Zhang (2011), it is not only political values or foreign policies that control and represent China's soft power. Chinese soft power deviates from Nye's definition because Chinese soft power "integrates economic and diplomatic coercion"

(52). Zhang's analysis claims that China has created a hybrid of both hard and soft power. Therefore, financial incentives and political relationships that China offers are used simultaneously in order to achieve Beijing's goals domestically and internationally.

China does not utilize soft power resources in the same context as the United States. The United States has been able to build its soft power through a variety of ways, which include culture, music, film and political values. However, as Nye (2004) notes U.S. soft power has declined significantly following the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (81). Alternatively, China promotes a peaceful image by its commitment to non-intervention and aversion to the use of hard power. However, with its growing technological capabilities, modernizing weapons and the largest army in the world China can utilize hard power when it sees fit.

China's behavior is more consistent with emphasizing diplomacy over conflict. According to Winton (2013), China uses "economic statecraft" to try and change the existing world system that is dominated by western ideals (19). Most importantly, China encourages other states to embrace China's political values of state sovereignty and non-interference (19). The motivation for China is to play an intricate role within international institutions in order to promote a credible and legitimate image. China aims to exercise more influence in order to create an international environment that supports its foreign and domestic policy preferences. For China, international organizations such as the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) provide platforms to pursue these objectives.

China understands that international organizations are the creation of the states that establish them. In order to fulfill its foreign policy initiatives, China must participate in international institutions and engage with the outside world. Nye (2004) writes that

China should actively utilize its membership in organizations and promote international rules that encourage other member states to alter their behavior to coincide with Chinese preferences. Nye continues that the result would be that China “will not need as many costly carrots and sticks” (10-11). As a permanent United Nations Security Council (UNSC) member China holds a diplomatic advantage that other emerging powers and developing countries, such as those in Africa, do not possess. Therefore, China is considered an attractive ally to non-permanent UNSC members. Taking a closer look at institutions like the UNGA can provide insight into the soft power relationship that China has built with African states.

Deng (2011) writes that for China, soft power is a sustainable tool to use in order to influence other states in world politics. Furthermore, soft power allows a state to obtain great power status and avoid the repercussions of hard power (64). Looking at Western powers such as the U.S., China believes foreign intervention can be averted because interventions by force do not guarantee a solution (Anshan, 2008, 38). From this perspective, China has been able to secure its position as an emerging power while simultaneously appealing to African leadership. China is not particular with its diplomatic and economic relationships. Therefore, China is often criticized for its relations with states that are considered rogue regimes or pariah states by Western standards. However, China can and does dismiss criticism because of its economic strength and diplomatic ties with other developing nations.

This chapter will focus on how Chinese soft power through economic aid and relationships with African states protects China’s foreign policy objectives. Following a brief discussion of the importance of economic ties, this chapter will describe the element

of reciprocity in Sino-African relations. The basis of these diplomatic relationships is common goals of economic growth, non-interference, and national sovereignty.

### Economic Ties

As previously demonstrated, China invests a significant amount of resources in Africa. The ability to measure soft power is challenging. However, since China considers economic aid as a form of soft power, it is an important consideration when looking at how soft power manifests itself in international institutions. China has acquired intangible amounts of soft power through its economic growth and achievements (Pang, 2011, 127). Therefore, following or emulating aspects of China's economic model provides the PRC leadership with legitimacy. To a large extent, economic ties bind states to one another politically and promote alignment and support in international institutions.

A domestic concern for the PRC is to ensure China's economic growth is sustained. China needs African resources as much as Africa depends on Chinese investment. In his research regarding trade between China and Africa, Winton (2013) found China's trade with Africa is concentrated in the natural resources of oil and raw minerals. South Africa, Egypt, Nigeria, Algeria, and Morocco possess the largest economies in the region and China exports textiles, machinery, equipment, and other goods to these states (5). Furthermore, in 1996 "Chinese companies purchased a 40 percent majority share in Sudan's Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company" and "has purchased as much as two-thirds of the country's oil exports" (Kleine-Ahlbrandt & Small, 2008, 41). China's oil investments in the region are incredibly important to Beijing because China must ensure its people's demand for resources are met.

Shinn and Eisenman (2012) found that between 2000 and 2010 “trade increased from US \$10 billion to US \$130 billion” (114-115). However, the U.S. remains China’s number one trade partner with total trade in 2013 at US \$521 billion (report from Chinese National Bureau of Statistics). Furthermore, in 2009 China did surpass the U.S. as Africa’s number one trade partner. According to Dews (2014) in 2012, “China's trade with Africa reached \$198.5 billion while U.S.-African trade in 2012 was \$99.8 billion” (Brookings Online). China’s increasing influence in the region is due to these strong economic ties.

China has demonstrated that economic success is obtainable without being democratic. China understands soft power as a tool that allows the PRC to modify international procedures in order to be consistent with its own interests and values will provide China with increased legitimacy (Nye, 2004, 2)As a rapidly developing state, China understands that economic growth and power is relative to the sway a state has in international affairs. Therefore, China’s commitment of economic and development aid to Africa is an attempt to provide Africa with more influence internationally.

The basis of Chinese financial support includes non-interference, reciprocity, and other principles found in cultural ideology. These political values provide China with an advantage because China appears as a more attractive ally compared to Western states. This attraction is because a Chinese relationship does not require the same diplomatic conditions of economic aid. Most importantly, Chinese financial support does not come with expectations of political or social reform. According to Winton (2013) thirty-five African states have received support in order to develop their infrastructure (12). China has spent considerable amounts of money to build schools, hospitals, roads, stadiums and

railways. Part of this heavy investment in infrastructure is due to ensuring a smooth and consistent flow of trade between China and Africa. Nonetheless, without China's investment there would have been little to no progress made in developing the infrastructure to these states.

China's motives for infrastructure development cause considerable international debate. This debate is not a surprise because China's approach to investment is contradictory to other development and economic aid provided to Africa by western countries and international institutions. Naim (2007) believes that China provides "rogue aid" and enables corruption in places like Nigeria. Citing a particular example, the World Bank had negotiated a \$5 million dollar project with Nigeria to improve its three railways. However, the PRC "offered Nigeria \$9 billion" for a complete overhaul of its rail network. The generous aid package did not come with conditions or expectations to reform, and China won the bid (95-96). There continues to be concern regarding China's economic motives in Africa and whether its policies are exploiting the continent.

#### The United Nations

Within China, there is a belief that, "soft power lies in the political power of political institutions, norms, and credibility" (Li, 2013, 295). The UN provides an opportunistic venue because the West is in the minority and China has developed allies through its soft power resources. China has solicited support from other developing nations in the global South. According to Taylor (1998) this has enabled China to resist Western "hegemonism" (451). Therefore, China's policy in Africa is not completely

based on economic development but because Beijing seeks support in order to reject Western criticism of its domestic policies.

China is fully aware of Africa's value as a regional voting bloc. The sheer number of African states can dominate and influence voting outcomes of relevant issues in international affairs. With this in mind, China has emphasized and nurtured its relations with African member states of international organizations such as the UNGA, WTO, and the International Olympics Committee. In addition, African support through voting alignments enhances the PRC's domestic and international legitimacy.

In their research regarding voting alignments in the UNGA Kim & Russett (1996) illustrated that there are voting patterns of member states in the UNGA. The authors found that following the Cold War there was a "North-South" split due to the differences between rich and poor countries. More specifically, that "voting alignments are likely to be shaped by state preferences along developmental lines, and views of self-determination and economic development" (651). In addition, Kim and Russett (1996) found that "self-determination reflects the South's concern with neocolonialism as well as classic colonialism" (633). These observations have been proven correct because as the Global South develops economically these emerging states will expect to take on a greater role in global governance.

Following the notion that voting alignments are shaped by state preferences Africa as a voting bloc share a desire for self-determination and self-rule that coincides with China's political values. Although the U.S. has supported and financed national independence movements, the U.S. is still considered a neocolonial power by many African states. Although, past colonial exploitation is not the only reason for China and

African states to align their votes, it does however, give China leverage when it emphasizes equality, mutual benefit, and respect for state sovereignty.

China has a unique place internationally because of its intimidating economic strength and politics. Kim and Russett (1996) point out that China is politically distant to the other UNSC members. China has found itself ostracized especially over issues such as human rights and political reform. China can and has utilized its “veto” against resolutions that castes China in an unfavorable light. In addition to its veto power, China can rely on its allies in the UNGA in order to shield it from resolutions that offend it (650). More recently, Voeten (2000) found that China is leading a voting bloc to oppose U.S. hegemony (213). Wenping (2007) further explains that China has utilized support and has rallied Africa's voting strength in the UNGA in order to oppose "hegemonism and power politics" (27).

### Human Rights

An issue area where China relies on Africa’s support is over human rights. China claims that criticism of its behavior is unfairly based on western standards (Anshan, 2008, 37). Brown and Sriram (2008) write that the PRC considers human rights a “western creation” and that economic and cultural rights are the priority (252). Furthermore, China perceives Western attempts of criticism as a way to humiliate and question the PRC’s legitimacy (253). Beijing’s focus on economic and cultural rights coincides with China’s commitment to economic development, enhance diplomatic relationships and ensure China is left alone to rise peacefully.

China is careful not to take a public position that would invite questions over its human rights record. Despite its claims to never infringe on a state's sovereignty, China receives plenty of repercussions over its foreign policies. Zimbabwe, Sudan, and Kenya are examples where China has staunchly stood by its policy of non-interference. Applying cultural relativism to international relations, China has stated that the situation in Sudan is a "humanitarian crisis," not genocide (Huang, 2008, 307). The international outcry was most apparent during the 2008 Beijing Olympics and human rights advocates dubbing it the "Genocide Olympics" (Brown & Sriram, 2008, 266).

Africa as a voting bloc has supported China to defeat the eleven attempts to criticize China's human rights records (Taylor, 2009, 155). Beginning in 1996, Taylor (1998) claims that China wielded its influence in order to sway the African vote. During the proposed condemnation of China's human rights, fourteen African states voted against the sanction (457). Many of these African states have received their own criticisms over their domestic policies. Coinciding with China's political values many African leaders perceive UN motions such as these are unjustified and disrespectful of state sovereignty (459).

China continues to build coalitions in order to shield itself from criticism. In 2004, the US sponsored a resolution at the UN Commission on Human Rights, which aimed for China to yield to U.S. pressure and adopt international norms and transparency regarding human rights. However, China responded with a proposed motion urging "no action" this motion would block a debate that would embarrass the Chinese. With the help of 27 states, including the African voting bloc making up half the votes, the "no-action" resolution passed. China's economic and political partnerships have proven to

pay off. Most of the African states that benefited from aid and targeted investment from China like Sudan, Eritrea, and Zimbabwe provided critical support during the meeting. Furthermore, sanctions imposed on Beijing could potentially hurt these developing countries. Diplomatic support for China within the UNGA and the UNHRC provides an economic and political incentive.

China reciprocates support by not shaming African regimes solely on the basis of Western expectations. China has repeatedly expressed this position and will never publicly denounce a state's ability to govern. As Rotberg (2008) warns otherwise, the world may critique "China's actions in Xinjiang or Tibet and its harsh treatment of cultural and religious minorities" (12). China is continually criticized over its "One China" policy and its tight grasp of Tibet, Taiwan and other territories. Once again in 2008, China was criticized over events in Tibet. China received support from most African countries on the UNHRC and the proposed resolution never passed.

In 2007, China blocked sanctions against Sudan at the United Nations and forced the Security Council to take a moderate approach with the Sudanese government (Alden, 2007, 62-63). China is not the only emerging power with economic interests in Sudan. India and Malaysia have provided substantial investment and assistance to the war-torn region and have aligned with China in blocking sanctions against Sudan. However, the majority of Sudanese oil is purchased by China and China has the most to lose if sanctions passed.

China provided a special envoy to Sudan which was successful in persuading Khartoum to allow UN peacekeepers into Darfur (Brautigam, 2008, 36). However, in 2007 China's chief planning agency "dropped Sudan" from its list of beneficiaries that

are suitable for oil and gas company investment (35). The decision was significant because China has adamantly stood by the Sudanese government. However, China's perceived severance with Sudan was short lived because following the peace settlement, China provided a "US \$3 million preferential loan" (Alden, 2007, 62). The loan aimed at rehabilitating infrastructure and was considered Beijing's "continuing economic commitment" to the Sudanese authoritarian government (Alden, 2007, 62).

China's response to the 2013 Kenyan elections is an example of China's commitment to non-interference and state sovereignty despite concerns from the international community and human rights activists. In 2013, Kenyan voters elected Uhuru Kenyatta as president and William Ruot as the Vice President. In spite of the fact that the two men International concern was warranted since both Kenyatta and Ruot are charged with "allegedly orchestrating the violence that followed Kenya's 2007 presidential elections" (Chen, 2013). However, China stayed silent and maintained its policy of non-interference in another state's domestic affairs. According to Chen (2013), China's silence over the Kenyan elections included an economic opportunity for the regime. The Kenyan government received a commitment of "29 \$US billion" from China (2).

China's ability to protect itself from sanctions over its human rights also extends to its neighbors in Asia. In 2007, China leveraged the African voting bloc in response to a U.S. sponsored resolution to end political repression and human rights violations committed by the Myanmar government and military (Graham, 2013, 104). China has established a critical precedent and has proven that if it has enough allies in the international community that it can repel any resolution proposed by the UNCHR

(Kurlantzick, 2007, 147). In addition, China has proven that its diplomatic strength can shield its allies when necessary.

### One China Policy

China perpetuates its “One China” policy and the UNGA has been utilized as an instrument for China to wield its power and marginalize Taiwan. The “One China” policy is ingrained into the Chinese education system and, therefore, creates a strong sense of national pride. If Taiwan succeeds, it would be a loss of face and humiliate the PRC. Furthermore, there is a belief that national honor is tied to the unity of China, and the PRC would not give up Taiwan without a fight (Shirk, 2007, 186). Therefore, the only consistent stipulation that China requires of states who want to receive aid, trade or have diplomatic relations with China must adhere to its “One China” policy.

The PRC’s state constitution asserts, “that the People’s Republic of China is the legitimate government of all of China, which includes the island of Taiwan” which also includes territories like Tibet (Taylor, 1998, 457). Since the early 1970s, Taiwan has gradually lost diplomatic recognition and allies due to its inability to compete with the PRC. China’s reliance on the African bloc started as early as 1971. Without the African voting bloc, China would not have been successful in its bid to transfer the UNSC seat from Taiwan to China. Deng and Zhang (2011) find that “China has defeated Taiwan's fourteen attempts to re-enter the United Nations over the past twenty years” (155).

Although Beijing won back, its UN seat in 1971, Taiwan did not fully surrender its ambitions of self-rule. Taiwan has continued to seek out diplomatic recognition and has transitioned into a democracy. The majority of African countries recognized Taipei as China at independence; some refrained from recognizing either Taipei or Beijing and

official recognition came with aid. China promised and continues to provide financial support, even where there is no economic return because China understands how critical the African voting bloc is (Taylor, 1998, 458). Furthermore, Africa to some extent has benefited from the competition for recognition between China and Taiwan (458). African state leaders have sold their support to whichever state provides the most attractive incentives.

Taylor (2002) provides several examples of flip-flopping such as Senegalese leadership switched three times from Beijing to Taipei in order to receive aid. In addition, Gambia declared Taiwan as independent in 1995 and received a “US\$35 million aid package from Taiwan” (458). In 1997, “São Tomé and Príncipe negotiated US\$30 million over three years” just for recognizing Taipei. With a GDP of \$45 million this was a significant amount for the country to receive (Taylor, 2002, 458). The aid package has proven to be a good investment because São Tomé and Príncipe currently recognize Taiwan.

Despite the flip-flopping, currently, only 3 African states have full diplomatic relations and acknowledge the Republic of China. These states are Swaziland, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Burkina Faso. For Taipei, recognition by African countries despite their size is necessary because Taiwan desires to achieve diplomatic and economic status but is weary to promote itself as a political entity (Taylor, 2002, 456). Presently, 21 UN member states and the Holy See recognize Taiwan. Taiwan sees such a policy as crucial to maintaining international legitimacy and to projecting its profile abroad to gain “international living space and global identity” (Taylor, 2002, 457). Taipei and Beijing share a similar goal of acquiring individual support from any state that it can. Since that,

“each country has one vote in the United Nations” and even “tiny” states like Swaziland and Seychelles have political and symbolic importance this provides a platform for China and Taiwan to compete for allies (Taylor, 1998, 457).

Shirk's (2007) explains that Taiwan plays “a crucial role” in China’s foreign policy, because it is a matter of “regime security and not national security” (185). Since the PRC believes that international power will strengthen its domestic legitimacy the fear of Taiwan’s independence would cripple the regime’s reputation. The PRC fears it would create a domino effect and Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia will pursue succession (Shirk, 2007, 182). The PRC fears consequences such as the loss of legitimacy; Chinese citizen’s demand for political reforms or a change in leadership.

China has invested significant resources in order to receive official recognition. China advocates such a strong commitment to state sovereignty because China believes that it can govern Taiwan and any of its territories as it deems necessary. In an effort to legally quiet the independence movement, China passed the “Anti-Secession Law” in 2005. It was considered an attempt to warn Taiwan that China would use force if necessary to block independence but not coerce reunification (Shirk, 2007, 205). However, with its exponential economic growth and political clout, Beijing can pursue its aggressive policy against Taipei. In particular, China can wield its veto at the UNSC. The veto provides China’s with the ability to influence Taiwan’s future. In addition, China can utilize its UNSC permanent seat to “dissuade other economically stable or ambitious nations from holding official relations with Taipei” (Taylor, 2002, 28).

## Conclusion

China's influence in the world has grown simultaneously with its economy. China has a deliberate agenda for Africa. China's soft power complements its foreign and economic policies in an effort to strengthen diplomatic ties. Following the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989, African states were the only nations in the UN to support China when it faced international criticism (Taylor, 2006, 939). Following the events, China was considered a pariah state and had to work diligently to repair its international image and develop diplomatic ties with Western countries. Currently, China still claims that it is a developing country and makes a great effort to differentiate itself from Western and European powers. Although China does not claim that its economic policy should replace the Washington Consensus, China's prosperity and growth has given reason to look more closely at the regime and economic alternatives for the developing world.

Obiorah et al. (2008) write that the shift for many African states is due to the commitment of poverty alleviation. The Washington Consensus model emphasizes democracy while the China model places emphasis on "bread" rather than the "vote" (288). China claims to base its aid on mutual benefit and reciprocity. Therefore, China sends a different message to African states and does not cast itself in the role of a "superior" state that provides for an "inferior" state (Wenping, 2007, 33). However, African leaders should be wary to place economic success before human rights and political reform (Obiorah et al., 2008, 292-293). Therefore, the African Union should take a productive role to ensure the continent's resources and economies are protected.

There is reported Chinese backlash in numerous countries within Africa. Cheap merchandise from China has replaced local African textiles and garments which resulted in local businesses and factories to close down because they are unable to compete with

cheaper Chinese made products (Wenping, 2007, 26). Furthermore, factory closures have contributed to high unemployment rates in places like South Africa. In response to public outcry, Wenping (2007) writes that China placed a self-imposed quota of textile and garment products in South Africa (26). This is encouraging because one of China's criticisms is that it needs to be a responsible power and apply sustainable practices to its business dealings in the world market.

China has found on occasion that unwavering support for fragile, unpopular, authoritarian regimes in the long term can damage its reputation and legitimacy (Kleine-Ahlbrandt & Small, 2008, 39). Since 2007, "China has become the largest trading partner of Iran, North Korea, and Sudan and the second largest of Burma and Zimbabwe" which reflects negatively on China (41). With allies such as these, China has learned that sometimes intervention is necessary. Although China's policies in Africa are driven by the need to sustain China's economic development China will play a critical role in the region because of its economic ties to other developing states. There are limits to China's commitment to non-intervention and this was exhibited in 2006 when China took a more decisive role after the peace agreements failed in Sudan. There was worry that the escalated fighting in Sudan would potentially spill over to neighboring Chad and could invite Western military intervention. (Kleine-Ahlbrandt & Small, 2008, 46). Therefore, the conflict in Sudan was threatening Chinese business and economic interests in the region. Since the separation between Sudan and South Sudan, China procured a US \$1 billion in loans and credits from the China-Exim Bank for South Sudan (Hang, 2014, 1). China continues to have exclusive oil rights in the region.

China as an emerging power has economic interests to protect, and there are limits to its unwavering non-interventionist approach. Kleine-Ahlbrandt and Small (2008) explain that China never will fully align with Western policy but will take care not to align itself entirely with the authoritarian and rogue regimes of the world (56). Although, this mindset has shifted slightly in regard to China's relationship with places such as Sudan and the newly independent South Sudan China still maintains "quiet diplomacy" (Shambaugh, 2007, 26). Furthermore, due to China's unwillingness to denounce rogue regimes publicly, China has been an intricate player in negotiations with countries such as Iran, Sudan, and North Korea. Therefore, China's ability to broker negotiations with outlying states with the UN may help it enhance its international and domestic legitimacy.

China's Africa policies deserve attention because China relies on Africa's oil and mineral resources. In addition, Africa is the "largest single regional grouping of states", and African countries have a tendency towards "bloc voting in multilateral institutions" like the UNGA (Alden, 2005, 21-22). Historically, African governments have provided support to China when its policies or behavior is criticized. Therefore, the relationship between China and African states is worthy of closer study and research.

Sun (2014) writes that "Africa is a low priority in China's overall foreign agenda", and the international attention is "disproportionate" (15). However, there is still much to gain from looking more closely at how China cultivates its soft power through economic ties and political alignments. China has created its own definition of soft power that incorporates Chinese characteristics and is considered an example to the developing

world. As states emerge and compete with one another for resources, China will play a significant role in the world economy and international institutions like the UNGA.

## Chapter 4

### Data, Methodology, and Results

Nye (2004) explains that soft power “works indirectly by shaping the environment and may take many years before desired outcomes come to fulfillment” (99). Measurement of Chinese soft power is especially difficult because there is a lack of reported data, particularly in overseas aid, and other “deficiencies” in the literature that explain Chinese perception of soft power (Blanchard & Lu, 2012; Heng 2010). Despite the shortcomings, this thesis attempts to quantify Chinese soft power by studying voting affinity in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

Black (1968) explains that the “long-range goal of foreign aid is political” (18). Also, foreign aid does not necessarily determine voting alignment, the relationship between aid and voting is worthy of consideration (Black, 1968, 19). With the Sino-African relationship based on reciprocity, China has taken numerous measures to shape an international environment that is supportive of its rise. These measures include economic incentives and partnerships through trade, aid, and foreign investment. Financial incentives are a debated form of soft power because it may resemble financial bribes (Blanchard & Lu, 2012). However, China considers economic partnerships and the creation of economically beneficial relationships to be part of its soft power resources; we can test whether there is a relationship between economic incentives and voting affinity. Chinese aid activities include” concessional loans, grants, debt cancelations, financial investments, and infrastructure building” (Lum et al., 2009). This research speculates that the broad range of foreign direct investment and aid manifests itself in the

form of political capital. In particular, it results in greater support for China in the United Nations.

Previous research has shown that Africa is prone to bloc-voting and alignment with other nations in the Global South, such as China (Kim & Russett, 1996; Voeten, 2000). Additional research has found that African countries tend to vote in alignment with China in issue areas such as human rights and state sovereignty (Wenping, 2007; Alden, 2007). In contrast to Russett and Kim (1996), Voeten (2000) finds that the post-Cold War voting is “one dimensional” (186). Furthermore, Voeten found evidence that supports the hypothesis that regime type affects their voting behavior (213).

Other research has found that African states are not the only region to vote in similarity. Burmester and Jankowski (2014) looked more carefully at Pacific Asia’s “voting cohesion” in the United Nations General Assembly (680). The authors concur with prior assertions put forth by Ferdinand (2013), and found other Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members are “much more aligned to China than to Japan” (686). Another assessment of voting affinity in international institutions conducted by Burmester and Jankowski (2014) applies the concept of “voting cohesion” to the European Union (1492). The author’s find that smaller states of the European Union feel inclined to vote “cohesively in a bloc to enhance their individual influence through collective action” (1505).

Earlier research conducted by Wang (1999) found evidence that U.S. foreign aid had been successfully “utilized to induce foreign policy compliance in the United Nations” (199). Dreher, Nunnenkamp and Thiele (2008) found “evidence that US aid buys voting similarity” in the UNGA (139). This research applies the same concept to

African states voting affinity with China in the United Nations General Assembly. Also, Dreher et al.(2008) found that US aid with few restrictions placed on recipient was more efficient in buying political support (141). Since, China applies very little restrictions to receive economic assistance the hypothesis put forth by Dreher et al. (2008) may explain African voting affinity to China.

Voeten's (2011) affinity scores data shows that the 24 African countries in this sample averaged an 85.7% voting alignment with China from 1999 to 2011. The states that averaged 90% or higher voting affinity with China were: Egypt (92%), Algeria (91%), Sudan (91%), Libya (91%), Gambia (90%), and Tunisia (90%). Published Chinese FDI figures during the 1999-2011 time frame show that these specific African states are not the highest recipients of Chinese FDI. However, in the case of Libya and Sudan, Chinese FDI may have been limited due to existing UNSC sanctions (Global Policy Forum). Furthermore, increased trade and aid between China and Africa may have contributed to the similarity in voting. For pariah states like Sudan, China is a powerful ally, and Sudan would be expected to exhibit strong voting similarity because it lacks diplomatic relationships.

Alternatively, Cameroon averaged a 68% voting affinity with China between 1999 and 2011. China's National Bureau of Statistics published “-17.118” of FDI in Cameroon in 2007. The same year, Cameroon's voting affinity was 64% and dropped to 56% the following year. Although, China has reported FDI flows to Cameroon there has been a decline in FDI since 2008. Cameroon received over \$2.1 million in Chinese FDI and in return there was a 56% voting similarity. In 2009, Cameroon received \$1.7 million in FDI, and there was a slight shift upwards to 58% voting similarity. However, in 2010

and 2011 China contributed \$870,000 and \$216,720 of FDI to Cameroon. This resulted in a 58% voting similarity in 2010 and the lowest voting similarity score in 2011 at 52%. In the case of Cameroon, voting affinity since 2007 had never reached the 2002 high of “86%.” This leads to the hypothesis that the economic incentives China provides to developing African states affects their voting alignment.

The UN as a democratic institution gives every state an equal vote. Therefore, every state can use its political support as economic leverage. Dreher et al. (2008) point out that small states may be favored by donors because they can be bought “relatively cheap” (140). Open voting shows other UNGA members where each state stands politically and ideologically on a given issue (Rai, 1972). The Chinese Communist Party can enhance its legitimacy and political capital by getting other countries' support of Chinese interests on the international record.

Besides the symbolic act of voting, there are other avenues by which China can create its sphere of influence by pursuing diplomatic relationships with African states. With 54 member states, Africa is the largest voting bloc. The second largest is the Asia-Pacific group with 53 members. Therefore, a South-South alignment reduces China's isolation in the UN Security Council, despite countervailing efforts by the United States, France, and the United Kingdom (Kim and Russet 1996). Therefore, China works hard to nurture diplomatic and economic relationships with African states. They then seek to parlay the subsequent goodwill into a UN voting coalition that is loyal to Chinese interests.

### Data Collection / Method

The units of analysis for this project are year dyads from 1999-2011. The sample consists of 24 African states between the years of 1999-2011. Wang (2007) describes China's economic influence as "multifaceted" (5). Furthermore, China is perceived as "market, donor, financier, investor, contractor, and builder" to Africa (23). Therefore, since China considers economic incentives a part of its soft power efficacy the variables of aid, trade, gross domestic product (GDP), and foreign direct investment are all considered worthy units of analysis for this study. Chinese FDI figures were retrieved from China's National Bureau of Statistics. FDI was employed as a measure because Chinese aid and other economic investments are broad, may overlap, and lack transparency (Lum et al. 2009; Brautigam 2011).

Although aid is considered an explanatory variable, these yearly amounts are not published by China. However, the data collected for aid is from [China.aidata.org](http://China.aidata.org), a web-based source that gathers information about Chinese development to Africa is still a part of the data set. The sources to compile information on aid and development are taken from a variety of published sources such as news reports, press releases, speeches, and business proposals. Therefore, in lieu of consistent aid figures, Chinese FDI figures may help determine if economic incentives provide China with higher voting affinity.

The 24 African states used in this study are: Algeria, Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Egypt, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zambia.

The dependent variable in this study is operationalized as the trichotomous UNGA affinity score (1=yes, 2=abstain, 3=no) of each African nation *vis-a-vis* China, as elaborated by Voeten (2011). Voeten's (2011) data is organized into the year, country a, country b and affinity score. The scores used for this study are those that China is labeled as "country a" and the other 24 African states are labeled as "country b" from the years 1999-2011. Although Voeten's data set included all African states only 24 are included as this voting bloc consists of countries officially identified as FDI recipients in financial reports issued by the Chinese Bureau of Statistics. Each year is calculated on its own and can provide some explanation of when there was a deviation from one state to the next since not all scores are the same every year for every African country. Also, since it has been proven that African countries are prone to bloc voting Voeten's (2011) data set will be used two ways. One will look at the affinity score of every African state as an individual country. The other will see African states as a voting bloc and combine all their scores together.

Limitations to Voeten's data set is that the data published is to 2011, and the use of this data for this study only provides a short window of 13 years. However, the time span may still shed some light on voting behaviors and alignments. Furthermore, restrictions on the data set are that it does not take into consideration the "behind doors" political agreements or discussions between diplomats that may influence voting. In addition, the affinity scores used in this sample include all issue areas when voting occurred. Therefore, specific issue areas when votes matter more such as "human rights" are not a part of the data results and may affect the outcome since voting similarity may differ across issue area.

The primary explanatory variables are Chinese aid, trade, and FDI. The control variables are state terror and real per capita GDP. The FDI data, obtained from China's National Bureau of Statistics, are reported in US dollars, adjusted for inflation. The source used to deflate Chinese figures was the World Development Indicators published by the World Bank. The trade input is the sum of real imports and exports between China and the aforementioned 24 African states, as reported by the International Monetary Fund. Measures of Chinese aid to Africa can be found at [china.aiddata.org](http://china.aiddata.org), which displays all officially financed Chinese development projects from 2000-2012.

The Political Terrorism Scale (PTS) data is based on annual human rights reports published by Amnesty International and the U.S. State Department. PTS was chosen as a variable because following its inception in the 1980s it has been utilized as a tool to empirically test where U.S. foreign aid was being distributed and if it was sent to states that violated international human rights standards (Political Terror Scale Online). Since, this thesis examines the relationship between economic incentives and African bloc voting there may be a relationship between affinity and PTS.

Terror, in this case, refers to state-sanctioned killings, torture, disappearances, and political imprisonments. The scale of measurement is between 1 (rare reports of political terrorism) and 5 (frequent reports of political terrorism). China's score of four remained consistent from 1999-2013. Only in 2007 did they achieve a rating of three. The improved rating may have been indicative of China's candidacy for the 2008 Olympic Games. Most African states fluctuate between three and four like China. Sudan stayed a consistent five during this time frame. However, there are a few outliers such as

Seychelles that averaged a one ranking between the years of 1999 and 2011. Following Seychelles, Botswana, Mali, Mauritius, and Senegal averaged a score of two.

### Results

As seen in Table 4.1, none of the independent variables exhibits a statistically significant correlation with the affinity scores of the countries in this particular sample. In fact, there are no major relationships among any of the variables, including the interaction terms that are comprised of them. Future versions of this research angle should incorporate a larger sample of countries, or focus on a sample drawn from another region. As previously mentioned, a challenge to this study is that Chinese foreign aid is reported in various years. Therefore, the foreign aid figures that were used in 1999-2013 are sometimes reported as “0” unlike the FDI reported values. This could potentially explain why aid as a variable did not support the hypothesis since there were missing values for various states in sporadic years ranging between 1999 and 2011 skewing the results. A negative correlation may be avoided if the statistical model was limited to a smaller time span and only include African states that receive consistent yearly aid.

Table 4.2 is a Pearson correlation matrix that measures the relationship between voting affinity, FDI, GDP, aid, trade, and PTS. None of the variables provided a strong relationship. In fact, between affinity and the variables of FDI, GDP, aid, trade, and PTS there was either no or negligible relationship. The sample of 24 countries selected was based on the number of FDI recipients, which is not the total number of FDI recipients and is also smaller than the total number of African trade partners with China. In addition, the 24 countries may not represent the full list of African states that receive aid

form China. In addition, the data provided is in total dollars, and not adjusted through a log transformation or GDP. As a result, appropriate caution should be exercised in interpreting the results because of the limitation in how the sample was selected and due to the scale used for the data. Lastly, further research should develop a more elaborate statistical regression model in order to examine the relationship with the appropriate controls applied

Figure 4.1 displays general trends of Chinese FDI funds to African states and how these states voted en bloc. It shows that the amount of Chinese FDI rose steadily from 1999 and only took a slight dip between the years of 2002-2003 and between the years of 2008-2009. Following 2009, it increased steadily back up and above 2008 Chinese FDI figures. Figure 1 also shows that voting affinity in 1999 until 2002 rose between the averages of .78 to an average of .9 for the African voting bloc. However, similarity declined slightly between the years of 2002-2005 from .9 to .88 before dropping to .85 in 2006. Affinity shifted up slightly in 2007 with more funds allocated to FDI to .87. Although FDI rose between 2007 and 2008 African voting affinity dropped to .84. Following the 2008 UNGA Chinese FDI dropped but voting affinity rose to .87. Finally, between 2010 and 2011 Chinese FDI rose to an all-time high while voting affinity dropped to .79. The fluctuation in affinity scores can be attributed to variations in UNGA resolutions or the political climate.

Figure 4.2 displays general trends of Chinese trade (per capita) and voting affinity in the UNGA. Between the years of 1999 to 2011 Chinese trade per capita has climbed substantially only to take a few dips between the years of 2002-2003 and 2008-2009. The trade data presented in Figure 4.2 consists of the 24 African states used in this sample and

treated as a whole unit. Since African states tend to vote in bloc there may have been a trend of affinity similarity growing with trade. However, this is not the case because trade per capita has gone up and voting affinity has dropped to 0.79 in 2011.

Figure 4.3 displays the variation in affinity for separate African states. Two different graphs are displayed, and African states are organized in order of highest to lowest GDP. The first graph shows that states with a higher GDP are more consistent in their voting. Seychelles is the only outlier as its voting similarity to China dropped from 1 in 2005 to .5 in the year 2006. However, voting affinity recovered by the 2007 UNGA session and then continued to waver down to .7 in 2010. Unfortunately, there were no affinity scores published in Voeten's (2011) data set for Seychelles in 2011. There is little evidence that explains the drastic dip in voting affinity between China and Seychelles in 2006. Relations between the two countries seem to be strong as Seychelles has offered China a PLA Naval Base (Singh, 2011).

On the second graph in Figure 4.2 there are more outliers which include Cameroon, Liberia, and Uganda. Between the years of 2002 to 2011 Cameroon's voting affinity declined from .85 to .55. The largest drop of .2 points in voting affinity happened between 2002 and 2004. Cameroonian voting affinity did shift slightly between 2004 and 2006 to almost .1. However, following a slight bump in 2006 it has stayed consistently under .6 between the years of 2008 to 2011. Liberia surfaces as an outlier due to lack of affinity scores between the years of 1999-2003. However, following the 2003 UNGA session Liberia's affinity with China joined the mainstream and has stayed consistent with other African states. Lastly, Uganda as an outlier shows that between the years of 2003-2006 were the lowest affinity scores. The scores ranged from .7 to .65. This drop in

voting similarity may be explained by the lack of FDI invested by China during those years. The Chinese National Bureau of Statistics did not publish any FDI figures to Uganda during 2003 and 2004. However, it did publish an FDI amount of \$1.8 million to Uganda in 2005. Although it was not until 2007, that Ugandan voting affinity with China shifted up to .92. Currently, Uganda and China have strong ties economically. In 2014, the “China National Oil Shore Corporation won the right to develop Uganda's Kingfisher Field for \$2 billion” and has invested heavily in an oil refinery and railroad construction across East Africa (Akumu, 2014).

### Conclusion

The research question proposed for this study was whether Chinese aid, development, loans, debt forgiveness, and investment may explain African voting affinity in the UNGA. It is a challenging endeavor to measure something intangible like soft power. Although African states exhibited an average of 85.7% affinity with China, neither trade, aid, FDI, PTS nor GDP adequately explains voting behavior.

The data are subject to substantial measurement error due to the lack of transparency in PRC reporting of FDI and aid. However, as time passes, China is expected to publish more figures on its economic assistance and development to comply with international standards. The statistical insignificance of the findings within may be indicative of China's successful cultivation of soft power in Africa. However, since China's trade and other economic investments in Africa continue to grow while African affinity has dropped this supports the notion that voting affinity does not accurately capture soft power utility. In addition, this study is limited in its scope because it does not

include other states, such as the United States or countries that have a colonial attachment to Africa. Including these states may produce more findings to compare how Africa responds politically to these other countries.

What, then, motivates African voting affinity with China if not economic inducements? If soft power cannot be explained by voting affinity or other economic incentives that China claims are a part of its soft power resources then future studies must look at African citizens' perceptions of China. A different explanation is that "a country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other countries – admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness – want to follow it" (Nye, 2004, 5). Perhaps China asks very little politically from its relationships with African states? If a country can receive aid and Chinese investment for acknowledging China over Taiwan and China can count on your vote in a time of need then China offers an innovative approach to soft power utility. As time goes on and states compete with one another for resources, perhaps their expectations of a recipient state will become less complicated in order to solidify these economic and political relationships. If this partly accounts for the lack of correlation above, then such soft power mechanisms should be quantified. However, many consequential diplomatic conversations and negotiations are unobservable. Future research should concentrate on compiling more extensive data on China's foreign aid and other international transactions.

**Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics**

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Description
<i><u>Dependent Variable</u></i>					
Affinity Score	0.5	1	0.857	0.077	Possible values range from -1 to +1
<i><u>Independent Variables</u></i>					
Real Chinese FDI	-17.118	147,429	5,226	20,170	Source: Natl Bureau of Statistics of China
Real Aid	14,850	1.33*10 <sup>11</sup>	1.07*10 <sup>9</sup>	1.01*10 <sup>10</sup>	Limited data availability for this variable
Real Trade	0	35,770	1,902	4,373	Total volume of trade: exports + imports
Real GDP	0	5.16*10 <sup>11</sup>	4.29*10 <sup>10</sup>	7.83*10 <sup>10</sup>	Based on World Bank data
Political Terrorism	1	5	3.06	0.86	Higher scores indicate more state terror

Note: All amounts in US dollars

**Table 4.2 Affinity Correlations**

	Affinity
<b>Real FDI</b>	-0.0795 (-0.2205)
<b>Real GDP</b>	0.0688 (-0.2202)
<b>Real Aid</b>	-0.2881 (-0.0001)
<b>Real Trade</b>	0.0152 (-0.7868)
<b>PTS</b>	-0.0681 (-0.2351)

*Correlations are shown with significance in parenthesis*

Figure 4.1: African Bloc Voting Affinity & Chinese FDI

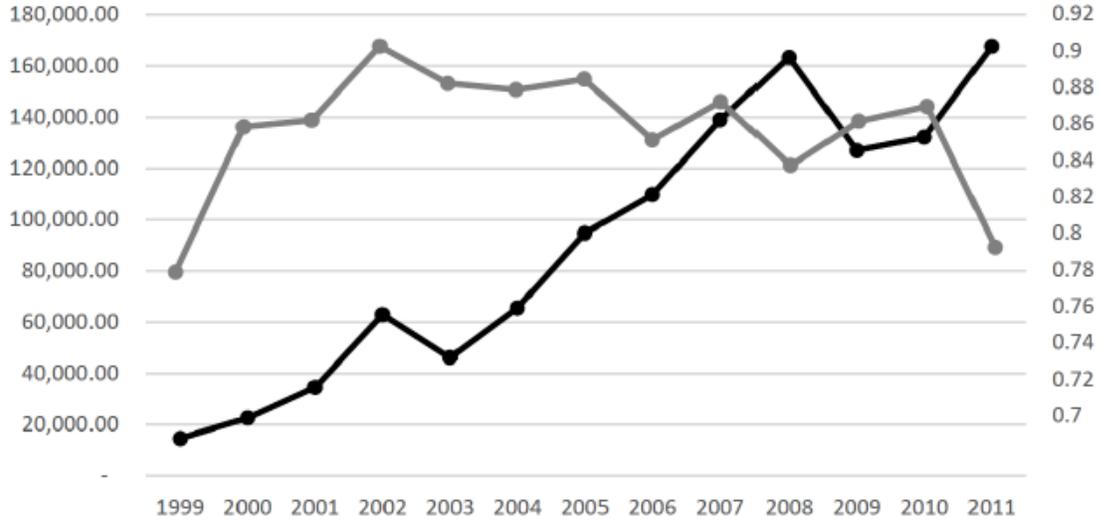


Fig 1. Chinese foreign direct investment and voting affinity rates 1999-2011. Data source: Voeten(2011) "United Nations General Assembly Voting Data" (1999-2011). China's National Bureau of Statistics reported FDI to 24 African states (1999-2011)

Chinese Foreign Direct Investment (\$10,000)  
 African Voting Affinity in the UNGA (.7 to 1)

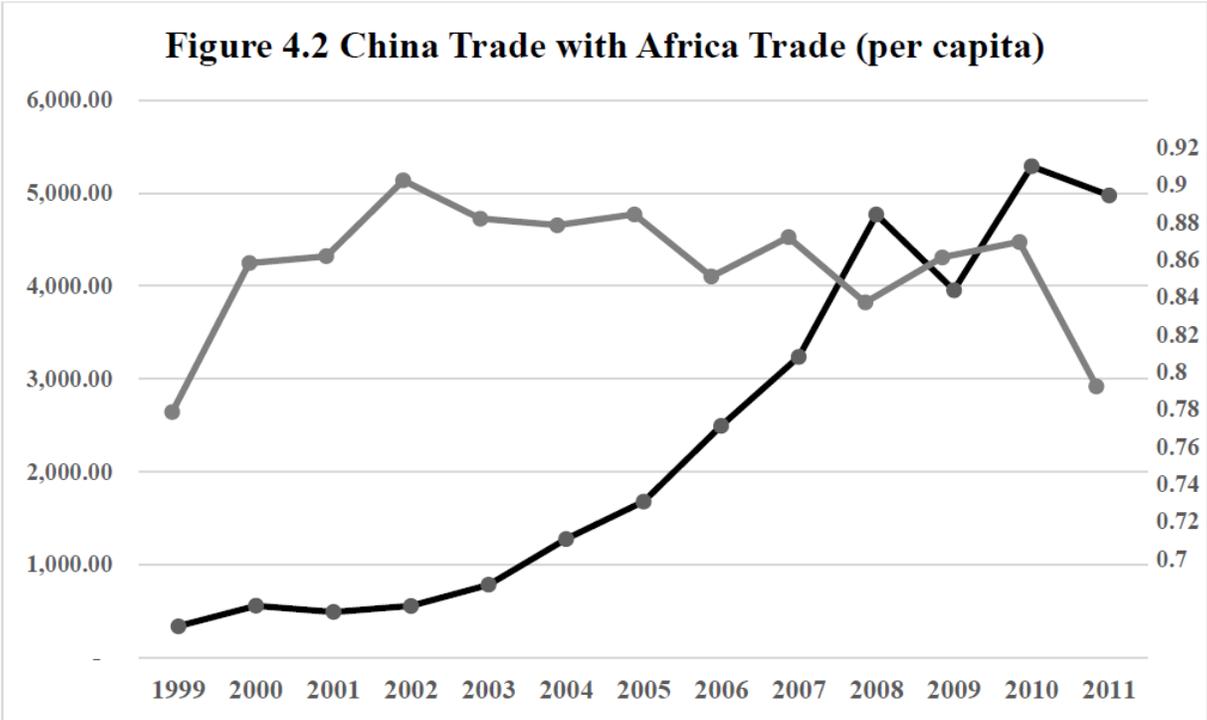
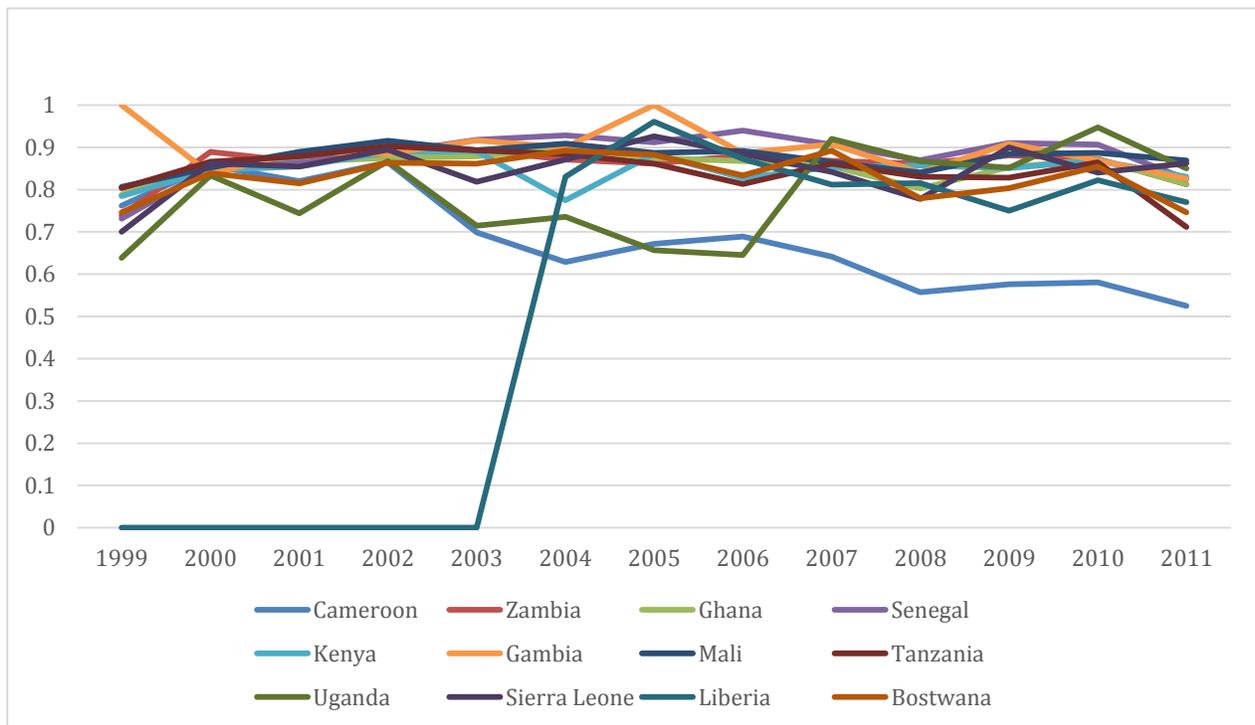
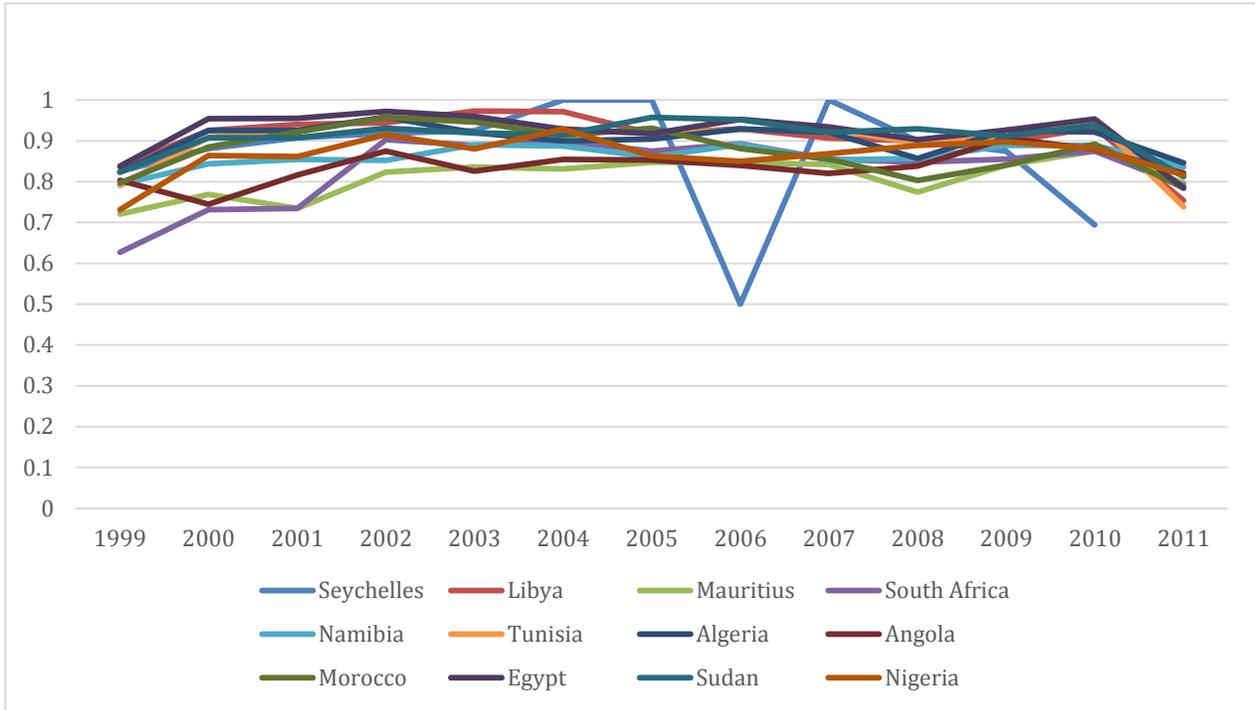


Figure 4.2: Chinese and African trade per capita 1999-2011. *Data Source: Voeten (2011) "United Nations General Assembly Voting Data" (1999-2011). World Bank trade data between China and 24 African states (1999-2011)*

Chinese African Trade (per capita \$USD)  
 African Voting Affinity in the UNGA (.7 to 1)

**Figure 4.3: Affinity of Individual African Countries**



## **Chapter 5:**

### **Conclusion**

This thesis is aimed to examine more carefully the relationship between China and Africa. A variety of both Western and Asian scholarship has been provided to more adequately explain Sino-African relations. In particular, the research reveals that this burgeoning relationship is based on China's successful utilization of its own *style* of "soft power". According to Nye's (1990) original thesis, the term "soft power" is the ability for a state to get what it wants without threat or coercion. A state achieves the compliance of another state because the other country is attracted to the other "state's culture, political values, and foreign policies".

To some extent, China's behavior coincides with Nye's definition. China offers an innovative approach to its relationship with Africa. In contrast to previous powers like the United States, the European Union, and Japan, China does not attach aid with expectations for political reform. China's "no-strings attached" aid is an alternative for developing states that wish to bypass the bureaucracy of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. In fact, China has successfully shut out competition between international institutions because it can promise exorbitant aid and investment packages (Naim, 2007, 95-96). Some research has found that Chinese aid is "tailored" to each individual country China establishes economic and political relations with (Tan-Mullins et al. 2010, 880). Therefore, aid can be in the form of debt-forgiveness, grants, concessional loans, and infrastructure development which is consistent with other findings put forth by Lum et al. (2009) and Brautigam (2011).

China has spent a considerable amount of time fostering better relations with African states by investment in its infrastructure, building schools, hospitals, and government buildings. In addition, China devotes a substantial amount of money to the expansion of its Confucius Institutes all over Africa and scholarships for African students to study in China. China's "attractiveness" can also be attributed to China's foreign policies that forbid interference in another state's affairs. Furthermore, for both struggling and developing African nations China whether it admits it or not is considered an economic model and an alternative model to the United States and European countries.

China's commitment to non-intervention, its growing economy, and political power is a form of attraction and emulation for African states. Also, China's focus on economic development instead of political reform is also a kind of appeal for regimes that do not aspire to become democracies. Therefore, for China its ability to rise peacefully in a Western-dominated international system while the PRC remains in power is a form of attraction. For some African states, China symbolizes the new wave of emerging powers and the shift of power and resources in the age of globalization.

Chinese soft power deviates from Nye's definition in a variety of ways because China's relationships are based on mutual benefit. Although, the concept of "reciprocity" is considered a Chinese cultural attribute and may invoke emulation from African states. Chinese mutual benefit has an economic focus and Nye distinctly explains that payments are not a part of soft power but are more attributed to "hard power". China has simultaneously tried to develop its soft power while building its economic relationships with Africa through trade, foreign direct investment, aid, and loan/debt forgiveness. However, as noted China's domestic and foreign policies are closely interwoven with its

economic development. Therefore, Huang and Ding (2006) explain that there is a “gap” or “imbalance between the pillars of soft power” which are culture, domestic values, and foreign policies (41). Furthermore, China as an emerging power will be challenged also to exhibit that it is a responsible power. International criticism during the Beijing 2008 Olympics eventually caused China to intervene in Sudan. China displayed its diplomatic ability to facilitate a cease-fire but not until it was embarrassed internationally.

China’s primary focus is its development, and it cannot develop without being a part of the international system. China has worked hard to create an international environment that is supportive of its peaceful rise. Nye (2012) describes that “non-state actors such as the United Nations” will become even more important because they distribute power to individual states (152). The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) is an international forum where China can wield its influence. The influence is most apparent when votes on specific issues arise that concern human rights and Taiwanese independence.

Much scholarship has explained that China has relied on the African voting bloc on many occasions and was instrumental for Mainland China’s UNSC permanent seat. On the surface, it appears that there is a South-South voting alignment between China and the African voting bloc included in this study. However, looking at both the individual states and as a group there has been a decline in voting similarity. This may be indicative of African states expecting more from their relationship with China. In 2012, South African President Jacob Zuma referred to Africa’s disproportionate trade relationship with China as “unsustainable” (Hook, 2012). Therefore, the importance of a Sino-African relationship cannot be defined as one based solely on China’s economic

development. China needs Africa politically because the PRC is “domestically fragile” (Pu & Schweller, 2011, 66). Although China has become more open to the world, it will continue to focus inward to ensure regime stability. South-South cooperation and solidarity in the UNGA and China’s UNSC permanent seat ensures that the PRC receives legitimacy (symbolic or not) internationally which is essential for its legitimacy at home.

Chinese engagement in Africa creates both positive and negative consequences. Stories of racism, exploitation and environmental degradation on behalf of China are reported in the media. Also, due to China’s “no strings attached” policies they keep regimes in power that are rated the lowest on the Political Terrorism Scale. Recently, the Guardian reported that China has executed numerous citizens over the years from Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Zambia, and Uganda for drug trafficking (Akumu, 2014). Although, these respective governments intervened and attempted to utilize their diplomatic relationships with China to reduce the sentence to life imprisonment it was useless. However, China is only one player in the game. It is ultimately up to the African leadership to decide when and where to leverage its relationship with China to put its citizens first. If African civil society believe that their leaders and their relationship with China is only beneficial to the African governments, then it may cause more social unrest, which is problematic for Chinese economic interests. The worry over China becoming just another colonial power is yet to be realized because African leaders must decide whether to help themselves or their people. Chinese investment and trade with Africa has helped grow the economy of both continents. Hopefully the funds and investment provided by China will ensure that African states have economic security and provide these countries with a new found independence instead of reliance.

Soft power with Chinese characteristics is a fitting term because China has applied its own interpretation to a Western international relations theory. The fact that the Chinese leadership discusses soft power openly and Chinese academics have written on soft power discourse provides a glimpse that China cares about the way it is perceived in the world. Legitimacy is crucial because for China to ensure domestic soft power it must have strong soft power abroad. China's emphasis on economic development is a part of the PRC's agenda that any political reform be slow and administered by the existing regime. China is challenged to produce soft power because its authoritarian regime, disregard for human rights at home, and its unwavering relationships with pariah states ensure that the PRC are criticized by the western world.

For China, "soft power" is a perfect definition to describe their ambitions with the world because their goal is to rise peacefully, which would imply they do not seek to utilize hard power resources. Although there may be a gap between China's cultural values, domestic, and foreign policies it is too soon to tell whether Chinese soft power explains its global rise. Future research should look more closely at the progress the African Union makes as a political entity. Africa as a regional voting bloc can wield its influence in the UNGA. As African states become more economically and politically stable, expectations of their relationships with global powers may change. In addition, whether an African civil society grows and becomes more wary of the Chinese presence and how this affects the region politically. Furthermore, taking into consideration that soft power builds and takes time to develop fully means that it is too soon to tell if Chinese soft power has influenced voting affinity within the UNGA. Although China claims it is a non-interventionist state this foreign policy may change as Chinese interests

are threatened by terrorism in regions such as Sudan and Chad. However, due to the focus on infrastructure development that China has invested in Africa maybe this will provide more stability in the region. Soft power's pillars of culture, domestic values, and foreign policies are difficult to measure in the Chinese context because China itself is changing. Domestic political and cultural tensions within China and whether the Chinese economy can sustain its rapid economic development will play its part in foreign policies and may change its soft power utility in the world.

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Curriculum Vitae

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