

### **Examiner's commentary**

This essay has been selected because even though it is a fine essay it has some flaws that can easily be avoided. The title and research question are excellent. It is obvious the essay is not only on Global Politics but also has a proper theoretical background. Many essays are written on a subject that doesn't fit the Global Politics criteria. Others involve Global Politics issues in the body of the essay, but the research question does not fit the criteria. While the methodology is incomplete, it still works. The chosen methodology hasn't been justified at all, and large parts of the essay are descriptive, which is not positive. Yet other parts show some critical thinking, linking theory and facts. Key concepts (or Global Politics theories) are somehow used, but not always properly defined.

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## **Extended Essay : Global Politics**

### **Title of Essay**

Chinese Soft Power through Financial Aid in Ethiopia and South Sudan

### **Research Question**

To what extent is the purpose of China's engagements in Ethiopia and South Sudan to increase its Soft Power status and image as a peacemaker nation?

**Word Count: 3,997**

## **Table of Contents**

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**Introduction : Page 3 to 5**

**South Sudan: Page 6 to 11**

**Ethiopia: Page 12 to 16**

**Conclusion : Page 17**

**Bibliography: Page 18 to 19**

## **Introduction**

China is a rising superpower and is well aware of the essentiality in increasing its soft power, and it has announced plans to reach that aim.

“We should increase China’s soft power, give a good Chinese narrative, and better communicate China’s messages to the world” (Xi Jinping, 2014).

The primary obstacle China faces is its image. As a human rights violator and realist government, its cultural appeal is declining, hindering its development project such as the “One Belt One Road” project (China is Spending Billions to make the World Love It). The concept of soft power originates from Joseph Nye’s illustration of how governments exercise their influence and power through economic and cultural influence. Nye highlighted a country’s legitimacy, the attractiveness of culture and ideology were key factors in measuring soft power. In comparison to its main competitor (the Western world) China falls behind in its global attractiveness of culture and ideology, and in the legitimacy of its government due to its human rights violations and disobedience of international law (Albert). Ways of obtaining power have adapted since the 20th Century, as according to historian A.J.P Taylor a nation’s power previously rested mostly on its hard power (military power) but has since expanded to include cultural and economic power (soft power). In order to resolve most global issues, it is required to combine these forms of power into smart power. Currently, the United States is the most successful state in exercising smart power, and China is not able to overcome the US yet, due to a lack of significant soft power (Nye).

Beijing’s government, therefore, wishes to counter this power balance and remove the

economic and political threat of the United States and the western world. An example of this is how the United States' dominates the Pacific Ocean with its military buildup in Guam and Hawaii, and close military alliances with Japan, South Korea and the Philippines. As a result, the US navy can enclose China and restrict its trading, and create political and economic insecurity.

However, in recent years, the United State's foreign policy has started reverted to its pre-WW2 isolationist policy, allowing China to step and replace the US's influence in some areas, notably Africa. Africa is convenient, also the centre of its "One Belt and One Road" and is plentiful of rare natural minerals and resources. China's investments are seen as successful and provide a new development model for Africa, which in turns idealises its economic system. However, as with these models of development, there is a fair criticism. Its intentions are regarded as neo-colonialist and harmful to African people. Chinese officials have stated their investments are out of altruism, but this is sceptical.

The essay will, therefore, investigate the development project and therefore (the rise of its soft power) in two case studies of Ethiopia and South Sudan. Currently, in South Sudan, there is an ongoing civil war, and there had been a famine. China has been extremely committed to resolving the conflict and has been praised by The United Nations. However, China has also been economically involved in South Sudan's Oil industry, and since the outbreak of civil war, these interests have been put at stake so China's peacekeeping initiatives in South Sudan could be only to protect them.

In Ethiopia, China is attracted to its potential for substantial energy and infrastructure

projects. These efforts are to bilaterally benefit, as in Ethiopia's development increases and China get access to these resources, while additionally increasing its influence. Recently, Beijing has been instrumental to the construction of a light railway in Addis Ababa, a railway linking Ethiopia and Djibouti and the exchange of cultures through the sharing of university experiences. This research is relevant due to China's rising status as a global power. It is intriguing to see a sudden change in China's foreign policy and understanding the reasons why. This area of research is worthy of investigation as the politics in all three of these nations will most likely have a profound impact on future regional, national and global politics. The usual debate circling is whether China's investments are mutual with the nation as to develop its economy and create cultural bonds with the nation, or is it to merely manipulate and trick African nations into signing agreements and accepting investments which only will benefit China. From this, rises my research question: To what extent the purpose of China's engagements in Ethiopia and South Sudan to increase its Soft Power status and image as a peacemaker nation are is? Sources will be employed from a variety of perspectives and backgrounds such as political scientists, NGO's, and national perspectives such as Chinese, South Sudanese and Ethiopian. Each source will be investigated for bias and to see if there is a conflict of reporting on an event.

## **South Sudan**

South Sudan is China's first Foreign Policy experiment, as it attempts to see if it can successfully use its diplomatic and cultural power (China's Foreign Policy Experiment). Its main plan is to bring warring parties, Western actors and South Sudanese leaders together. China has therefore engaged in peace processes in Ethiopia, arranged secret talks with both sides of the conflict, and has played a significant role in influencing the Security Council's action. From all its multitude of involvements, it seems that China wishes to show the world its ability to negotiate, bring peace and resolve international issues (Vasselier).

### China's Peacekeeping Forces

None better were shown, than the success of its peacekeeping forces. The People's Republic of China (PRC) contributes to protecting South Sudanese citizens as China's peacekeeping forces are the most active in the region, which are currently on their sixth rotation. The forces were awarded medals in 2017 for their efforts, and several Chinese media outlets praised their efforts. China also contributed to the UNMIS by sending 460 engineers, transport experts, and medical personnel to Southern Sudan. In total, China has sent 1,698 peacekeeping forces which outnumbers the combined 1,495 peacekeeping forces of the UK, US and France (Kuo" - "There's at Least One Place in Africa"). XinHua News, however, mentioned a report from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute in 2017 which stated

South Sudanese locals mentioned that Chinese peacekeeping troops occasionally interact with locals such as taking selfies and visiting university students. This again promotes China's image positively domestically, nationally and internationally (Vaisselier). However Chinese reporting on global events are mostly biased and sensationalist, which undermines its credibility. XinHuaNet, for example, stated 307 officers obtained medals from the UN, but the UN Official website states.

“Chinese peacekeeping forces received a medal once, and less than ten officers received them” (Chinese Police Peacekeepers awarded).

However, Chinese peacekeeping troops have alluded to cases where they acted unprofessionally. Such incident on the July 10 of 2016, when a South Sudanese rebel group killed two Chinese peacekeepers, showing disruption of the cordial relations between China and its negotiating party.. Consequently, it leads to another incident on the 8th to 11th of July, when Chinese peacekeeping troops abandoned their posts. This is entirely unprofessional and exposes that when Chinese interests are not at stake, China will do nothing (Under Fire: July 2016 p5-6). China initially rejected these claims, but the UN report later revealed China did indeed abandon their post. The fact that the area protected was a civilian area (without petrol), evidence Chinese aim of the peacekeeping is to protect the oil rigs (China Rejects Allegations). However, this reason is with its faults, as the UN report also noted a disturbance in communication, hence China is not solely to blame.



### China Humanitarian Aid and Development

Besides peacekeeping operations, the PRC is equally interested in the future of South Sudan after the war. As mentioned, South Sudan used to be a significant supplier of China's oil and is in its best interest to see the nation develop. In January 2018, the PRC signed an agreement on economic and technical cooperation, approximately 63 million dollars were given for humanitarian aid and to the development of radio and broadcasting (China and South Sudan Sign Agreement). The agreement will be extremely beneficial to South Sudan, which after the war will need reconstruction to re-boost its economy and increase its development. The effects will, therefore, be long-term, such as a possible eradication of poverty and corruption. Besides, there is a history of terrorist groups emerging after civil wars with foreign intervention such as Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Al-Shabab in Somalia (Amir). As China is one of the nations intervening, this could have repercussions on its national security, as it did for France and the United States (War on Terror). The rise of extremism could then also spill out into neighbouring countries with an unstable government such as Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Sahara Region and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The investment, if executed well, should achieve to move the pathway of peace from Mediation to maintain negative and positive peace and possibly development.

The United States is another major party in the conflict as the US was a significant player in promoting South Sudan's independence. The Obama administration attempted to create a ceasefire but failed as well. The United States, historically, resolves conflict through sanctions and embargoes. The US did this again in South Sudan, in which it placed a

weapons embargo on all factions, and later sanctioned 15 oil operators. China resists sanctions and argues they rarely achieve the intended outcome. When sanctions were announced, China would ease the tensions between the Western powers and the South Sudanese government. This allowed Beijing to act as a “diplomat”, which will increase its soft power. China used this power again successfully in an incident where it persuaded Kiir to release 13 senior members from the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (China’s Foreign Policy Experiment).

Additionally, Beijing in comparison see underdevelopment as the cause for instability and believes its post-Mao model of a state-capitalist economy is better suited to resolve the conflict than those of the Western models. By soft selling this model of development, China hopes to increase the attractiveness of its economic model and shift the opinion to no longer viewing models of Western democracy as the ideal form of development. This will raise China’s cultural and political soft power, and allow it to counter the smart power the United States has in the region (China’s Foreign Policy Experiment).

China’s leverage in the South Sudanese conflict is its trust and economic leverage in the region. As the Chinese National Petroleum Company accounts for most its oil industry and since oil is South Sudan's only source of economic growth, China has a large role to play (At independence, oil accounted for 98 per cent). China additionally has gained the trust of the government and the rebel forces due to its neutrality. South Sudan is more likely to listen to China as it turns a blind eye to human rights violation, which is the main reason the relationship between the US and the South Sudanese government forces have deteriorated. China had disregarded violation of human rights such as when they abandoned their posts

mentioned earlier, and this purpose was to ensure neutrality between the parties possibly. However, this arises other severe global issues, which is the rise of China's dominance in UN peacekeeping operations which is problematic if this nation is equally a human rights violations and lets other violations pass without repercussions, As China would equally enjoy a relaxation of UN accusation over violation human rights. Beijing, therefore, manoeuvres both forms of hard and soft power in which it wants to ensure it continues to have control over its petroleum supplies but simultaneously wants to ensure the conflict is ended and that the international community is aware of China's efforts (Crisis Group interview).

The West, however, has advantages China does not, and therefore the Western power's role in the South Sudanese civil war is still crucial. China is in its early stage of infrastructure construction and establishing its authority on conflict resolution. Britain and France have been in Africa for more than 100 years which provide them with further experience and expertise. China additionally receives a limited amount of information in comparison to the Western powers who have NGOs, and other developed expertise who equally have been stationed in Africa. NGOs are fearful of transmitting information to China due to its close relationship with Juba. China's analysts have only started researching on Africa and South Sudan, which is beneficial for its long-term soft power (China's Foreign Policy Experiment).

As a result, since Chinese experts are expected to rely on the US analysis, and limits their effectiveness. The United States plays a crucial role in the crisis which China needs to admit. The US threatened to cut off aid to South Sudan as the government did not promise to alleviate the situation. If the aid were cut off, it would threaten the legitimacy and stability as a government, and due to this threat, it consequently leads to a supposed final peace

agreement in September 2018, administered by Norway, the US and UK (Reuters). As a result, the answer lies more in that peace is built on powers cooperating. As the world is a multi-polar world, China and the Western world (including the US, EU and UK) are all major stakeholders in the peacekeeping operations of the South Sudanese conflict.

China's reason for investing in South Sudan are therefore for reasons for protecting its oil industries which contribute to 5% of China's crude oil (Ali, pg.122). This is again evidenced by how on October 18, China resigned a document to renew oil production (Okello). Additionally, China want to show the success of its Maoist economic model. China was not expecting the conflict and did not initially plan to invest in South Sudan in means to show its skills of peace-making and diplomacy. From the conflict, China has become a proactive international player with means to increase its soft power, but not replace Western hegemony. However, in the end, China is a realist, and its primary objective is to ensure its oil production continues.

## **Ethiopia**

In recent years, China has paid closer attention to Ethiopia and has continued to fund and aid the development of the nation. China's official statement is that it will

“provide a development project from mutual respect and understanding and the principle of non-interference” (Chinese Foreign Policy Website).

In some aspects, this is valid. China has developed infrastructure which includes but is not roads and railways (Albert). Chinese and Ethiopia diplomats have furthermore reached a relation of alliance and agreeance. China's soft power has been achieved in this way by assessing itself as a nation wishing to promote Chinese ideals and culture (Lifang).

### Investment in the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway

China has constructed the Ethiopian- Djibouti railway. Chinese media have praised these projects as a resolve to Ethiopia's significant issues. Several political analysts have equally shown faith in the railway as it allows Ethiopia access to the sea, which also resolves its issue of being landlocked, a hindrance to its development. In the book, “China's Impact on the African Renaissance: The Baobab Grows” by Jonker Kobus and Robinson Bryan; it equally states the time sent to exchange goods has reduced from two days to twelve hours and allows the international market access to another market of 90 million consumers. The authors both foresee an increase in investment in the region. (Kobus and Jonker, pg 97). Also, the railway system may also increase cooperation between the states in the region. China's tactics are also victorious in the way it shows the success of its development model and illustrates to the

international community, China's good intentions.

However, political scientists have analysed into the success of the railway. The railway is intended to show the success of China's development model, through the Beijing consensus. However, the railway has fallen short and has not reached its intended success. The railway additionally has delays and not enough maintenance is ensured for total success. Chinese investors are equally considering to withdraw from their investments, since Ethiopia in an ordinate amount of debt. This example is exceptionally similar to the case in which Sri Lanka could not pay back the investments of the port, so China took direct control (Maggie and Christian). The loans used to build the Ethiopian-Djibouti railway will have to be paid back, and the success of the railway is currently limited (Tarrosy and Vörös).

If China had direct control, it could facilitate its trading and link its military base in Djibouti strategically placed at the Mouth of the Gulf of Aden between the Suez Canal and Arab Sea (Robinson and Jonker", pg 98). This would allow China to gain more economic influence, similar to what the British Empire tried to achieve by creating a railway from South Africa to Egypt (Fick and Christian). As a result, China may in return take control of the railway as like in Sri Lanka, the port provided it with proximity to India (main rival) (Abi-Habib). This considerable influence would in all means benefit China, and would equally show the realist nature of the economic model.

#### Investments in the Textile Industry

China's secondary investments are in the textile industry. China provided Ethiopia with 11 billion dollars to improve its industry, leading many farms to be transformed into clothing

factories (Lucie and (Originally Wuilbercq). This has resulted in economic growth of an average rate of 6.2% and an increase in employment for local Ethiopians. It models how China successfully transitioned from an under-developed to a developing economy, by transforming its farmland into factories and other industries. As a result, Ethiopia's export of leather rising from \$67 million in 2007 to \$115.4 million in 2017 (Kapchanga).

However, there is a realist intention, China's average wage is now more than \$8000 per month and is, therefore, looking for new sources of cheap labour which Ethiopia has. Therefore, China foresees its future through Ethiopia. The transformation of farmland to factories has led to protests, such as in this occasion where a group of farmers complained against the Chinese government for "land grabs, displacement, and lack of compensation" for Chinese expats. Here there is a case where China is acting similarly to the European colonists, illustrating China's role is closer to one of a Neo-colonialist power.

Sources from the Washington Post disagree and state that China's involvement in Ethiopia is not a form of neo-colonialism, and the statistics enforce this point. State secretary of the United States, Rex Tillerson accused China of using "predatory loans", of undermining economic growth and not increasing employment. But this is not the case, as the exchange goes beyond infrastructure projects, such as an invitation to universities and spreading of China's language and culture. A political science professor who studies Chinese investment in Africa stated (Benabdallah).


"Many Africans are being invited to Chinese universities. China is offering scholarships," she

said. “When Africans are thinking about technology [and] skills, they are thinking of China as a valid option” (Bräutigam and Deborah).

This has allowed for an increase in employment; surveys show that ¾ of the workers were locally employed. Lina Benabdallah used the case study of an Ethiopian factory to prove this example. In the sector of education, China has funded several universities and provides vocational courses and teachers. As a result of this, for example, Ethiopian journalists obtain their training and diplomas from Chinese University, and students equally learn Mandarin at schools. Chinese culture is therefore spread around Ethiopia, which increases its popularity (King).

The Chinese have equally been accused of having predatory loans, but from Hopkins research, this is not the case. It is instead stated that the infrastructure projects have success and, though there is a repayment scheme, the interest rates are low and time to repay is long (Bräutigam and Deborah). However, there has been economic growth for Ethiopia because of the railway. But loans have worked with China in contrast to the use of foreign aid by Europe and USA. Foreign Aid is a liberal form of western development, but it, however, has had the reverse effect. The United States has invested in foreign aid in Ethiopia (to president Meles Zenawi Asres), but its reason was strategic, rather than in purpose of developing. The US invested in Ethiopia in order for the nation to oppose Islamic Extremism. US aid in recent years has had its failures in Africa (including Ethiopia), in which as according to Dambisa F Moyo, has encouraged corrupt and authoritarian leaders (Mayo pg 2-3). The Chinese model of development is instead in the form of loans and active support in infrastructure projects. Also, the executive of the railway, Getachew, said.





Ethiopian leaders, therefore, prefer the Chinese model of economic development, which additionally also increases China's popularity and increases the favorability of the Beijing Consensus (Kuo" -"China's Model of Economic Development is Becoming More Popular). However, as mentioned before with the case of Sri Lanka, the Chinese (with the use of loans), China was able to gain control of the port , which can be criticised as an attempt to manipulate vulnerable democracies and governments (Abi-Habib).

Despite this increase in soft power, China's work in Ethiopia is certainly and most likely in the form of a realist nature as in it invests in Ethiopia, for China to gain benefits. However, there is no such form of colonialism, and China equally shares its culture and language with Ethiopia, as well as share a successful economic model. China's investments have become crucial more than ever before due to increased friction between the United States. From these examples, it is clear that China's motives are more broad and depth than just increasing its soft power. China is investing in Africa, and as a result, there is economic growth and development process in these African nations which allows to perceive China benefited. China's aim is not altruist; it hopes both sides benefit (mostly China) which additionally an increase in soft power and sharing of its culture and ideals.

## **Conclusion**

As a realist nation, China intends to benefit itself and create agreements to increase its economic growth and power. To answer the question: To what extent are the purpose of China's engagements in Ethiopia and South Sudan to increase its Soft Power status and image as a peacemaker nation, my answer would be a bit of both. In order to obtain engagements in both nations, China needs to show these deals will mutually benefit both parties. As with every realist power, each nation is determined to obtain resources and China is no exception. China's engagements in Ethiopia and South Sudan, have only been short-lived, for example at least five years in South Sudan. Soft power takes longer to develop, which is why it is equally difficult to answer a set and clear answer to the question. China signed a deal to re-construct South Sudan after the war, but will this be achieved and to what success? The Addis-Ababa-Djibouti railway was only opened on January 2018, in later years there may well be more reports on its effects, and this will allow investigating China's role even further. The concluding argument is that China is planning to extract resources from both these nations to benefit itself, but it equally wants to increase its soft power and create a closer relationship with South Sudan and Ethiopia, hence improve its image globally.

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Page 1 / 3

Candidate personal code:

## Extended essay - Reflections on planning and progress form

**Candidate:** This form is to be completed by the candidate during the course and completion of their EE. This document records reflections on your planning and progress, and the nature of your discussions with your supervisor. You must undertake three formal reflection sessions with your supervisor: The first formal reflection session should focus on your initial ideas and how you plan to undertake your research; the interim reflection session is once a significant amount of your research has been completed, and the final session will be in the form of a viva voce once you have completed and handed in your EE. This document acts as a record in supporting the authenticity of your work. The three reflections combined must amount to no more than 500 words.

**The completion of this form is a mandatory requirement of the EE for first assessment May 2018. It must be submitted together with the completed EE for assessment under Criterion E.**

**Supervisor:** You must have three reflection sessions with each candidate, one early on in the process, an interim meeting and then the final viva voce. Other check-in sessions are permitted but do not need to be recorded on this sheet. After each reflection session candidates must record their reflections and as the supervisor you must sign and date this form.

### First reflection session

Candidate comments:

Before the process began, I hesitated in between two global political topics: Turkey's change in foreign policy and China's involvement in Africa. After my initial meeting with my supervisor, he mentioned that an extended essay on Turkey would face the non-consistency of Erdogan's policies changing each day. After this session, I researched further about China's investments in Africa and found out that even though it was too extensive for an extended essay research question, the topic was interesting and there were a wide variety of sources. After more discussions with my supervisor, I chose this subject but reduced the spectrum to two countries in Africa: South Sudan and Ethiopia. Since then I have started investigating various perspectives of the Chinese investments in these two countries and my next step is to analyse and concise the information.

Date: April 15, 2018

Supervisor initials

## Interim reflection

Candidate comments:

From further research, I planned to separate my EE main body into two parts: 1. How China's investments in South Sudan promotes its peacekeeping status and 2. How China's investments in Ethiopia mainly improves its cultural appeal? The issue I encountered with my research process was the limited sources on Ethiopia. This became even worse when China announced it would scale back on its investments which I feared it would reverse the analysis I had. I resolved this issue by analysing the motifs behind its scale back and then incorporating it in my EE to see another side of my argument. Also, due to this news, more sources on Ethiopia have popped up. I now find my topic and EE process clearer, and this has been enhanced with discussions with my supervisor. Currently, I have written my introduction and my main body on South Sudan, so my next steps are to write my main body paragraph on Ethiopia and conclude my EE in general.

Date: April 15, 2018

Supervisor initials:

## Final reflection - Viva voce

Candidate comments:

Throughout my EE, the major obstacle I faced was relating my analysis back to relevant political theories. This was because most theories I found were mostly based on Western models of peace-keeping and development. Additionally, China's policies were most of the time a combination of both or did not apply to any theory. To resolve this, I compared the success and flaws of the Chinese model and Western model, and in this way, I could link my theories better. This obstacle was also resolved with meetings with my supervisor, as by discussing each theory in depth, I was able to understand the applicability of each theory. The main benefit, I obtained from my EE was how to research successfully. My research style changed from using mostly articles to using academic sources from political analysts, and my writing as a result also became more academic. From this EE, my view on China's development and peace-keeping in Africa has changed, as I know understand how its investments benefit Africa, which contrasts to what the Western media says. The process of the extended essay developed skills which are to be beneficial for my studies at university.

Date: November 12, 2018

Supervisor initials