

# **China's post-conflict development model and its soft power in Africa**

**“Liberia after 2003”**

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Submitted to

Central European University

School of Public Policy

*In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Public*

*Policy*

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*Budapest, Hungary*

2019

I, the undersigned **Raed Al khayrat** hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted as part of the requirements of any other academic degree or non-degree program, in English or in any other language.

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# ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes and studies the Chinese development model of aid assistance with special focus on the Chinese experience with post-conflict countries and also examines the impact of China's activities on expanding Chinese soft power on the African continent.

The case which was selected to be examined is Liberia because it suffered from a long devastating civil war and at the same time is one of the poorest countries on the African continent. It should therefore draw some attention from certain circles to study the reasons behind China's interest in engaging with this particular country and to assess the impact of this engagement. The purpose is to explore the role of China in the post-conflict stage of the 'Liberian case after 2003' and to analyze the effectiveness of the Chinese development model effectiveness by focusing on two main areas of influence: post-conflict development including peacebuilding and infrastructure, and Chinese soft power in Africa, particularly by examining how the Chinese development model affects its soft power in Africa in general and in Liberia in particular. These questions were addressed through a qualitative case analysis of the existing literature so far, due to the lack of sufficient published statistics and databases on Chinese activities in foreign aid.

This thesis has concluded that China has been offering an attractive, promising and more sustainable alternative to the traditional development model, especially in the Liberian case so far. This engagement and investment have clearly expanded Chinese soft power on the African continent.

**Keywords:** China, China model, Africa, Post-conflict, the Chinese model of development, soft power, Liberia, investments

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my thesis supervisor and my professor Daniel Large of the School of Public Policy at the Central European University. The door to Prof. Large office was always open whenever I ran into a trouble spot or had a question about my research or writing. He consistently allowed this paper to be my own work, by steered me in the right direction whenever he thought I needed it. His classes, comments, and ideas have given me the best opportunity to explore and work on many interesting and important topics and this thesis is a result of these researches.

I must express my very profound gratitude to my lovely wife Alma and my little hero Aram for providing me with their unfailing support and continuous encouragement throughout my study. This accomplishment would not have been possible without them.

Thank you.

Raed

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# List of Abbreviations

<b>BRI</b>	Belt and Road Initiative
<b>CPDM</b>	Chinese peace development model
<b>FDI</b>	Foreign direct investment
<b>FOCAC</b>	The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
<b>LIBSUCO</b>	Liberia Sugar Corporation
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UN</b>	United Nation
<b>UNMIL</b>	United Nation mission to Liberia
<b>USA</b>	The United States of America

# Introduction

In 2003 and after two bloody civil wars, Liberia was in a post-conflict situation and in need of aid in many domains and in different sectors. Many organizations and governments contributed and engaged at that time such as the UN agencies, the USA and China, through a massive influx of foreign aid and support which entered one of the poorest countries in the world. During that period, China had the resources needed and the willingness to invest and support Liberia, especially after the transformation in its aid policy and with its very flexible system towards development aid in comparison with the traditional players in the aid sector <sup>1</sup>.

In the world of the development sector, there are many models of foreign aid development assistance for countries in a post-conflict reconstruction situation. These include Bilateral Aid, through assistance which is provided by a government directly to the government of another country, Multilateral Aid, which is almost like the former but with less of a political involvement. There is also a larger number of donors and benefactors on a wider scale as well as Tied Aid with strict rules for the use of this aid in specific areas and in a specific way. Besides that, there are many other models such as Project Aid, Military Aid, and the Voluntary Aid models<sup>2</sup>.

All the previous models are traditional models of foreign aid. However, China has invented a unique system where its vision and practices towards foreign aid and development sector are different, with different standards compared to other players such as the USA, UK, France, and Japan. This distinction comes from the fact that China works via two channels at the same time. The first channel is the traditional model of development aid assistance such as its remarkable

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<sup>1</sup> Zheng, Yu. "Chinas Aid and Investment in Africa: A Viable Solution to International Development." In *Conference on Development, Trade and Investment*. 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Brech, Viktor, and Niklas Potrafke. "Donor ideology and types of foreign aid." *Journal of Comparative Economics* 42, no. 1 (2014): 61-75.

participation in the UN peacekeeping force, the "blue helmets," active in many countries of the African continent including Liberia, Sudan, and Mali.

On the other hand, the second channel or model which China is applying in Africa is through Chinese investment. China has increased investment and development aid in African countries in the last two decades, which has brought much-needed jobs and infrastructure projects to the continent. One recent activity regarding Chinese initiatives is the One Belt One Road initiative, which attempts to improve African transport infrastructures <sup>3</sup>.

For years, many scholars such as Ann-Sofie Isaksson, Andreas Kotsadam, Alex E. Fernandez and Barbara Hogenboom have had numerous debates, pondering on how much the Chinese development model could achieve, and its effectiveness. Some of them such as Ross Garnaut, Cai Fang and Ligang Some argue considering directly and in consequence of the fears that China will dominate the world in the near future through its development model, although the current Chinese leadership does not claim that the Chinese developmental model should be the alternative to other models, the proof of that being the enormous support and engagement in the traditional channel of development aid. Others see the Chinese model as a solution for the inertia, bureaucracy, and lack of sustainability in the long run of the traditional model, as Elsje Fourie from Maastricht University has claimed.

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<sup>3</sup> Chen, Huiping. "China's 'One Belt, One Road' initiative and its implications for Sino-African investment relations." *Transnational Corporations Review* 8, no. 3 (2016): 178-182.



## Chinese engagement in Africa

China engagement in Africa has different faces and operates in different ways. Developmental aid has been one of the most important packages it can offer. It focuses on agricultural development, infrastructure, human resources training and medical and health cooperation<sup>4</sup>. Another Channel of engagement is through the UN peace missions. From the 1980s China has engaged in a more active foreign policy agenda and by the 1990s has also been contributing personnel to UN Peacekeeping missions and the reconstruction of post-conflict countries. China is not only the second-largest financial contributor to UN peacekeeping after the United States, but also has roughly 2,500 personnel deployed in ongoing missions, far more than any other permanent member of the UN Security Council<sup>5</sup>.

There are many reasons why China is motivated to invest in the development aid, firstly, to protect China's assets and Chinese diaspora across the African continent and secondly, to give the Chinese troops combat experience because they did not have any previous military experience outside their territory<sup>6</sup>, in addition to increasing its soft power. China is also trying to expand its international role as a responsible great power through its foreign policy and through its attempts to reduce fears that it will challenge Western dominance of the current system of global governance. That is why it so often works on establishing partnerships with other global powers on the African continent.

A more detailed and nuanced understanding of Chinese motivations regarding its African engagement is necessary as well. One aspect of China's rise and its challenge to the global order is its contribution to post-conflict peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and peace-making in Africa,

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<sup>4</sup> Falola, Toyin, and Jessica Achberger, eds. *The political economy of development and underdevelopment in Africa*. Routledge, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Lanteigne, Marc. *Chinese foreign policy: an introduction*. Routledge, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Gill, Bates, and Chin-Hao Huang. *China's expanding role in peacekeeping: Prospects and policy implications*. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), 2009.

areas that have been dominated by the West. This is in addition to its unconditional economical support, non-interference and non-influence policies. The purpose of this thesis to bring together aspects of coverage that do not usually speak to one another, using Liberia's case after 2003 as a case study by analyzing the situation of Liberia.

### **The particularity of Liberia**

According to the UN (2010), all countries that have suffered from conflict situations are usually torn by social unrest, reduced productive capacity, severe shortage in revenues, serious damage to the infrastructure, a huge need for human resources and a diminishing of safety and security, in addition to a lack of liquidity. Post-conflict governments struggle to ensure security and peace and to face the challenges of fostering social reconciliation and promoting development. Although recovery after long internal conflicts is possible, it usually requires international support and solidarity, in addition to a political and public administration that can earn the trust of the citizens of a post-conflict country to start with the effective rebuilding of the country (World Public Sector Report 2010). All the above mentioned could somehow characterize the status of the Republic of Liberia after the civil war, namely in the year of 2003.

To have a better understanding of the factors that made Liberia one of the poorest among the 195 countries around the globe as well as to identify what kind of help they had needed after their civil wars and to see if the international aid powers in general, and China in particular, have fulfilled these needs since 2003 or not, then we need to have a look at the history of this country.

## **Liberia at glance**

The main reason for founding Liberia was to establish it as an outpost for the returning freed slaves from the Americas in the 19th Century, specifically in 1822. This country grew as a colony and achieved independence in 1847 with the help of the American Colonization Society, known as America-Liberians. This organization remained in social and political control of the country until 1980. During these years Liberia's social structure was characterized by unequal distribution of power and wealth, resulting in most of the conflicts in Liberian modern history, where 3% of the population maintained economic, social, and political control of the country until a coup d'état in 1980<sup>7</sup>.

Liberia began to change in between the 1970s and 1980s. The government economic policy has brought a great deal of foreign investment at a heavy price, and the divide has widened between the prospering Americo Liberians (benefiting from such investment) and the rest of the population. Everything from cabinet appointments to economic policies was tainted with allegations of nepotism, which was the main feature of that period<sup>8</sup>.

Poverty, high prices, lack of resources, migration, military coups and the dictatorship of the government lead to the first civil war in 1989.

The conflict continued in the years between 1989 and 2003, with massive destruction of the infrastructure and many civilians killed. The real reason behind it was a by-product of the Cold War and the new world order. International efforts continued during those years without any success in reaching peace until the work of peacekeepers in August 2003, after which the president agreed to exile in Nigeria. The various warring factions then signed the

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<sup>7</sup> Dennis, Peter. "A brief history of Liberia." *The Center for Applied Linguistics* (2005).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Accra in September 2003, bringing the civil war to a close. Since then, Liberia has entered the new millennium with new challenges<sup>9</sup>.

This thesis will focus on Chinese development cooperation after the end of the Liberian civil war in 2003. The purpose is to explore and study the role of China in the post-conflict stage "Liberian case after 2003" and to analyze the Chinese development model effectiveness through focusing on two main areas of influence: post-conflict development including peacebuilding and infrastructure., and Chinese soft power in Africa. Particularly by examining how the Chinese development model affects its soft power in Africa in general and in Liberia in particular.

I had two hypotheses at the beginning of the research: firstly, that Chinese support in the development sector has contributed to the recovery of Liberia in the post-conflict phase and secondly, that China has gained significant soft power in African countries through investing in the promotion of its special model of development. Then, it will be necessary to answer the question on how the Chinese development model has had an effect on Liberia's post-conflict situation and to what extent it has contributed to the growth of the Chinese soft power mainly in the area of education and media.

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<sup>9</sup> Moumouni, Guillaume. "China and Liberia: Engagement in a Post-Conflict Country (2003–2013)." In *China and Africa*, pp. 225-251. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018.

# Methodology

The methodology which this thesis follows is the qualitative case study analysis, due to the lack of statistics and databases which measure and show the Chinese engagement and activities in foreign aid development assistance, according to Kitano & Harada, it has been inferred that the Chinese foreign aid figures "were based on committed amounts and that disbursed amounts were therefore still unpublished"<sup>10</sup>. Another reason for choosing this method is the lack of transparency in China's aid statistics, Grimm highlighted in his research that the Chinese government publishes less data than any traditional donor <sup>11</sup>. Because of the above, this thesis examines secondary sources only and that is why the quantitative methodology of research has been excluded.

This thesis focuses on Chinese post-conflict engagement and its soft power, using Liberia as a case study from 2003. Liberia was selected to be examined as a case for many reasons. First, because it is a country which has suffered from two civil wars between 1989 and 2003. Many global powers were involved in this conflict. Liberia has been the biggest UN peacekeeping mission. In addition to that, Liberia is one of the poorest countries in the world, almost 85% of its inhabitants live under the poverty threshold<sup>12</sup>, and its economy is totally dependent on international aid, relying heavily on foreign investments and remittance from the diaspora. The analysis of this thesis and study rely on various literature resources, academic articles, books, policy papers on Post-conflict and soft power, UN documents, Chinese governmental official documents, reports, case studies, official websites, quotes, and interviews. However, despite the importance of the Liberia case as a great example of Chinese post-conflict development

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<sup>10</sup> Kitano, Naohiro, and Yukinori Harada. "Estimating China's foreign aid 2001–2013." *Journal of International Development* 28, no. 7 (2016): 1050-1074.

<sup>11</sup> Grimm, Sven, Rachel Rank, Elizabeth Schickerling, and Matthew McDonald. "Transparency of Chinese aid: An analysis of the published information on Chinese external financial flows." (2011).

<sup>12</sup> Prospects, Global Economic. "The Turning of the Tide." *The World Bank website*. URL: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/global-economic-prospects> (дата обращения: 29.08. 2018) (2018).

model and China's soft power in Africa, it is also important and essential to mention that it is just one case study covering the years from 2003 onwards, in addition to there being quite large numbers of foreign powers working on Liberian territory with different goals and mechanisms. The results and analysis may therefore not be the same with different cases in Africa, nor be applicable in different countries, alongside a multitude of other reasons that are out of the researcher's hands. This is in addition to other factors, such as whether or not the reader of the thesis is a pro or against Chinese policies, politics, and practices. Liberia as a case study constitutes a great example in which to study Chinese engagement and the post-conflict Chinese model in aid and soft power. As such, it adds great value to the literature of post-conflict, soft power, and peacebuilding. It is also important to undertake other case studies within the African continent in order to make still better comparisons and to foster greater understanding.

# Chapter 1: Literature review

China's policy and its involvement in the development sector and in Africa specifically are one of the most contentious and barbed topics in the academic world among different disciplines, because of the way China is handling its development aid programs regarding African countries in alignment with its new foreign policy from the beginning of this century<sup>13</sup>.

This is in spite of the increasing importance of studying, analyzing and tackling the question of Chinese development aid assistance in Africa. This phenomenon still has not yet been totally covered and it needs researchers and academic bodies to keep studying it in order to better understand China's new role in the global map of international development and its engagement in the development and aid sector, as in the case of Liberia for example. In addition to its role in improving many African economies such as Kenya and Djibouti, this has attracted many academic and researchers to analyze and study this phenomenon.

Here, in this Chapter of literature review, the thesis will present the main findings of many studies and research, in addition to various arguments of many scholars who have spent their academic lives working, studying and analyzing development and aid, such as Chris Alden from London School of Economics, Prof. Josephus Gray, Assistant Professor of the University of Liberia Graduate Program Of International Studies and Yu Zheng, Professor from Shanghai University and many others who have covered the case from different perspectives. The role of China, the development model, the post-conflict development model will be studied in depth and in particular, in the light of Chinese new foreign policy, as previously mentioned.

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<sup>13</sup> Hogwe, Fortune, and Handson Banda. "The nature of China's role in development of Africa: the case of Zimbabwe." *Problems and Perspectives in Management* 15, no. 1 (2017): 237-247.

Many of the studies that have examined the Chinese model of development and its engagement in Africa have focused on many areas and aspects, such as the traditional model of development aid and the role of China as well as economic effects, security and peacebuilding, trade, infrastructure, education and soft power. Through the literature review of this thesis, all of these areas and arguments will be touched upon. The most controversial topic in the last decade was, and still is, the various aspects of Chinese aid towards the African continent and how China could create and strike a balance between traditional ways of aid assistance and its investment within African countries in general, in the case of post-conflict in particular. There is then the question of how it uses this to increase its soft power in that region of the world, and if we could count these efforts as a special Chinese model of development or not, again for the previously mentioned reasons. China is among a number of emerging new world powers such as India and Russia, which are also, currently deepening relations with Africa<sup>14</sup>.

Development in Chinese terms means to have a stable country at peace, where security is the basis and after that, a strong economy that is the result of a good investment in the right atmosphere. Where such previous norms existed in the case of post-conflict countries, it gave a good indicator that the country could start investing in trade in reconstruction and infrastructure, building and could start with peacebuilding<sup>15</sup>. In the last two decades China has had remarkable engagement with the development of norms of security in Africa in different countries such as South Sudan and Liberia, with particular attention to its changing post-conflict engagement, as Daniel Large and Chris Alden have argued in their paper under the title of "On Becoming a Norms Maker Chinese Foreign Policy, Norms Evolution and the Challenges of Security in Africa". This paper mentioned that China is applying the gradualism

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<sup>14</sup> Kragelund, Peter. "The return of non-DAC donors to Africa: New prospects for African development?" *Development policy review* 26, no. 5 (2008): 555-584.

<sup>15</sup> Ayodele, Thompson Oke. "What are the Prospects of China Signing FTAs in Africa?" PhD diss., UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA, 2017.



characteristic of its approach to policy formulation and implementation, where according to the paper, China believes that peacekeeping and security are important but at the same time should be maintained in certain ways because it is important that peace be sustained in places where China has invested and where there is a Chinese diaspora. On the other hand, Chinese principles and constraints of non-interference in domestic affairs should not be compromised although the Chinese in the last few years have started to be more flexible with these cases and they have also tried to build a set of practices that allow China to play a more substantive role in security on the continent<sup>16</sup>.

China has a very special approach towards development and peacebuilding, through reducing poverty in post-conflict countries such as through their foundation for keeping sustainable peace, in turn leading to sustainable development and helping the country enter the post-conflict reconstruction phase. The China of today has changed the structure of development aid and has broken the monopoly of the western countries' dominance of the aid sector through its practices. China, according to Steven Chiun-Yi Kuo, does not believe in interference in the internal affairs of any country and it refuses any kind of external imposition of the political structure of the country to which it is offering aid, classifying this as a neo-colonialism for countries in need<sup>17</sup>. However, China's model of development in general and in peacebuilding, security and soft power, in particular, is not clear and there is no set model. The Chinese model does not have an exact example or template which could be categorized as a traditional model of development. Each case in Africa meets with a different reaction, followed by methods and implementation on its own merits: it is the model of a lack of templates. The core practice is to try out what works best, repeating best practices and going with the flow and being flexible

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<sup>16</sup> Alden, Chris, and Daniel Large. "On becoming a norms maker: Chinese foreign policy, norms evolution and the challenges of security in Africa." *The China Quarterly* 221 (2015): 123-142.

<sup>17</sup> Kuo, Steven Chiun-Yi. "Enter the dragon: the emerging Chinese approach to peacebuilding in Liberia." PhD diss., University of St Andrews, 2013.

without following any set protocols. But for many scholars, and above all, Steven Chiun-Yi Kuo, this approach is questionable. They argue that this model cannot replace the liberal peace process initiated via "the traditional way", which African countries might also follow. All of this because the Chinese model relies on trial and error to find the way forward<sup>18</sup>.

Yanbing Zhang, Jing Gu, and Yunnan Chen have claimed that Chinese foreign policy towards Africa has shifted because of many reasons, starting with the realization of the importance of having African support in many political and economic forums through voting and lobbies. Secondly, the desire of China to ensure growth and stability where energy and natural resources are being imported and where Africa is relatively the best place market for that<sup>19</sup>.

Many researchers such as Zhang Weiwei<sup>20</sup> and He Li<sup>21</sup> have argued that China has a special model of development, others such as Busse and Matthias have argued instead that the Chinese model is just about Chinese investment in Africa<sup>22</sup>. But so far, the majority believe that that led China to follow a special model in its foreign policy, as is known in the academic world "the Chinese development model" which include the traditional model of development as well as different norms and criteria at the same time. These factors do make its model special, such as the investment part and the hands-off, non-interventionalist policy into the domestic issues of the recipients or partner countries<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Kuo, Steven Chiun-Yi. "Enter the dragon: the emerging Chinese approach to peacebuilding in Liberia." PhD diss., University of St Andrews, 2013.

<sup>19</sup> Gu, Jing, Yunnan Chen, and Yanbing Zhang. "Understanding China's approaches to international development." (2014).

<sup>20</sup> Zhang, Wei-Wei. *The China wave: Rise of a civilizational state*. World Scientific, 2012.

<sup>21</sup> Li, He. "The Chinese model of development and its implications." *World Journal of Social Science Research* 2, no. 2 (2015): 128.

<sup>22</sup> Busse, Matthias, Ceren Erdogan, and Henning Mühlen. "China's impact on Africa—The role of trade, FDI and aid." *Kyklos* 69, no. 2 (2016): 228-262.

<sup>23</sup> Bräutigam, Deborah. "Aid 'with Chinese characteristics': Chinese foreign aid and development finance meet the OECD-DAC aid regime." *Journal of international development* 23, no. 5 (2011): 752-764.

The Chinese model in literature has many limitations and critiques, over which many scholars and researchers have argued and analyzed. One of the key criticisms against China's aid policy toward Africa is to do with the vested political and economic interests that lie at the core of its aid programs, over and above the benefits of the recipients. This was the main argument of Adisu, Kinfu, Thomas Sharkey, and Sam C. Okoroafo in their research paper titled 'The Impact of Chinese Investment in Africa'<sup>24</sup>. Therefore, as might be expected, some academics have called and characterized it as "rogue aid", Moisés Naím being among these critics.<sup>25</sup>

However, this exaggeration and claim cannot be justified<sup>26</sup>. The characterizing of the Chinese development model and its cooperation strategies is not an easy task, and we always have the question of whether this model will be a viable alternative to the existing traditional model<sup>27</sup>. Another issue has faced China in the last decade, where its achievement and successes have been tempered due to a series of significant setbacks because of the fragility of the structure of African states. For example, Sudan's renewed conflict case has directly affected China's attempts to protect its established economic interests in that region, another example is the Liberian case involving governmental corruption and the arbitrary application of local laws. Finally, Many Chinese companies have engaged in dubious practices in post-conflict countries causing damage to the reputation of China in this domain and to its carefully crafted African policy<sup>28</sup>. Much of the academic literature on the Sino-African partnership unjustifiably perpetuates the narrative of how bad Chinese investment in Africa with China as the new colonizer in Africa, is. Suisheng Zhao has claimed that the Western and African media, also

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<sup>24</sup> Adisu, Kinfu, Thomas Sharkey, and Sam C. Okoroafo. "The impact of Chinese investment in Africa." *International Journal of Business and Management* 5, no. 9 (2010): 3.

<sup>25</sup> Naim, Moisés. "Rogue aid." *Foreign policy* 159 (2007): 96.

<sup>26</sup> Dreher, Axel, and Andreas Fuchs. "Rogue aid? An empirical analysis of China's aid allocation." *Canadian Journal of Economics/Revue canadienne d'économie* 48, no. 3 (2015): 988-1023.

<sup>27</sup> Zheng, Yu. "Chinas Aid and Investment in Africa: A Viable Solution to International Development." In *Conference on Development, Trade and Investment*. 2016.

<sup>28</sup> Alden, Chris, and Daniel Large. "On becoming a norms maker: Chinese foreign policy, norms evolution and the challenges of security in Africa." *The China Quarterly* 221 (2015): 123-142.

wrongly portray China as a predatory power in Africa. As an example, while it is widely reported that China invests more in the extractive industry than in other sectors, the total of Chinese investments in this industry do not make up more than one-third of the total investments in the African continent<sup>29</sup>. The other two-thirds of China's investment in Africa are in infrastructure, construction, electricity production, manufacturing, and finance. Pigato pointed out in her working paper that Chinese investments in such sectors account for less compared with those of the US and other developed countries. China's share in extractive investments in Africa, in the form of mining, for example, is lower, according to the statistics of the world bank<sup>30</sup>.

From the beginning of this century, China has been involved in peacekeeping and peacebuilding particularly in Africa. It has financed post-conflict reconstruction in many countries, From Darfur to Zimbabwe, the DRC to Liberia. Many researchers have argued that China has offered an alternative to the traditional aid style of peacebuilding.<sup>31</sup> Other scholars such as Alden and Large believe that China is a norm maker in the world of security and peace,<sup>32</sup> where China has still applied partially the traditional liberal peace development model, especially with UN involvement missions, by providing aid and participating in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. This intervention aims mainly at protecting its national interests and its image globally, and this fact, alongside other activities, leads us directly to the Chinese soft power strategies in the African continent, which this thesis will highlight later.

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<sup>29</sup> Zhao, Suisheng, ed. *China in Africa: Strategic motives and economic interests*. Routledge, 2017.

<sup>30</sup> Pigato, Miria, and Wenxia Tang. "China and Africa." (2015).

<sup>31</sup> Kragelund, Peter. "Towards convergence and cooperation in the global development finance regime: closing Africa's policy space?." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 28, no. 2 (2015): 246-262.

<sup>32</sup> Alden, Chris, and Daniel Large. "On becoming a norms maker: Chinese foreign policy, norms evolution and the challenges of security in Africa." *The China Quarterly* 221 (2015): 123-142.

In the late 1980s, Prof. Nye coined the term “soft power”. According to him, soft power is "the ability of a country to persuade others to do what it wants without force or coercion"<sup>33</sup>. This concept is now being widely invoked in foreign policy debates. However, this current definition has changed due to changes in the world politically, economically and socially, after almost thirty years. According to Ousmane Sall, the concept of soft power, and especially in case of China, including many factors such as economic and political attraction, education, culture, music, traditional medicine, Confucianism and especially mass media.<sup>34</sup>

China has an increasingly positive image in Africa according to Helge Rønning, when he was to answer the question of his research paper 'How Much Soft Power Does China Have in Africa?' He claimed that this is linked to China's recent economic success around the globe in general and in Africa in particular. What helps as well is the existence of China as a real partner in different domains and sectors such as trade and agriculture, and on different scales. Whereas according to Rønning, Europeans saw Africa as the hopeless continent, Jennifer G.Cooke, in her paper under the title of 'China's soft power in Africa'<sup>35</sup> mentioned that a growing number of Africans believe that the Chinese have created jobs, transferred skills, and spent money in local economies. In addition to the different forms of Chinese development assistance provided to Africa such through loans and direct economic subsidies, health, agriculture, education, training, academic cooperation, infrastructure construction, culture, and media — these together make up an important element of Chinese soft engagement with Africa and which have a great impact, thereby increasing Chinese soft power within the continent<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Nye Jr, Joseph S. *Soft power: The means to success in world politics*. Public affairs, 2004.

<sup>34</sup> Sall, Ousmane. "Chinese Soft Power in Africa: Case of Senegal." *Open Journal of Social Science* 4 (2016): 133-142.

<sup>35</sup> McGiffert, Carola, ed. *Chinese soft power and its implications for the United States: competition and cooperation in the developing world: a report of the CSIS smart power initiative*. Csis, 2009.

<sup>36</sup> Rønning, Helge. "How Much Soft Power Does China Have in Africa?." In *China's Media and Soft Power in Africa*, pp. 65-78. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2016.

Prof Herman Wasserman from the Centre for Film & Media Studies at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, has argued that China has noticeably increased its influence on African media space in the last several years and has started to invest in this domain, where many Chinese media platforms have started to open offices around the continent and to actively operate. Through these platforms China has started to use these tools to gain a better understanding of the African continent and of the needs of the African people, in addition to working on the depth of the relationship between China and Africa and finally to use the media as a vehicle to the empower soft power of China within Africa<sup>37</sup>.

There are many reasons why China is a great partner for African countries. The Chinese model has special features according to Tao Zhangin in his article 'Would China provide a new model for developing world?'<sup>38</sup> According to him as well, there are five special features. Firstly, there is the stability China represents, encapsulated by the old Chinese saying goes 'crossing the river by feeling the stones', where the Chinese system has provided a stable environment for development within and outside China. China's model is highly innovative, where reform is implemented on the basis of constant experimentation. Secondly, this innovation, this feature of the China Model, is derived from the emphasis that China has placed on innovation in its own development since the 1978 reforms. China is always working on strong and effective policies in order to follow best practices and is always trying to make its policies rely heavily on surveys. As Mao said in 1943: 'From the masses and back to the masses...for the people and depending on the people'. Thirdly, regarding independence and self-determination, 'China does not seek to impose its own priorities on partner countries, for good or ill,' as Turin wrote<sup>39</sup>. It is one important feature of the China model and also emphasized on the 'Beijing Consensus'

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<sup>37</sup> Zhang, Xiaoling, Herman Wasserman, and Winston Mano. "China's expanding influence in Africa: projection, perception and prospects in Southern African countries." *Communicatio* 42, no. 1 (2016): 1-22.

<sup>38</sup> ZHANG, Tao. "Would China provide a new model for developing world?" (2016).

<sup>39</sup> Turin, Dustin R. "The Beijing Consensus: China's Alternative Development Model." *Inquiries Journal* 2, no. 01 (2010).

that developing countries need to actively seek independence from the outside world. China always refuses to submit to foreign pressures, neither does it like to put any pressure on its aid or services recipients and because of this feature, it is too easy to find supporters for this model. Moreover, it is particularly attractive to other developing nations, especially for third world countries with a long history of incursion and exploitation from western countries and in Africa in particular, because the support usually comes with no conditions related to governance, fiscal probity or other of the concerns that now drive western donors. This is the conclusion which Princeton Lyman reached through his research<sup>40</sup>. Fourthly, from an argument of Garcia Oropeza where he claimed that the longer-term development planning, where China always works according to strategic development planning. This thing helps China to have a long horizon of development rather than the short-sighted policy, and as a result, China enjoyed the annual growth rate of 10% in 2009 as an example<sup>41</sup>. Finally, ZHANG, T. concluded that China has moved from unbalanced development to balanced development, the new China and from this new millennium changed its development policy to be more balanced inside and outside. China has shifted its development policy to balanced development, through focusing equally of the sectors which it is investing in.) with emphasizing on China does not dictate any specific policy that followers and recipients must undertake, and every country that it works with, China will shape a specific and particular policy to follow with it<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> Lyman, Princeton N. *China's rising role in Africa*. Council on Foreign Relations, 2005.

<sup>41</sup> García, Arturo Oropeza. "China and its development model: a broad outline from a Mexican perspective." *Mexican Law Review* 2, no. 1 (2009): 109-150.

<sup>42</sup> ZHANG, Tao. "Would China provide a new model for developing world?." (2016).

## Chapter 2 - Chinese development aid model in post-conflict countries.

This chapter discusses and analyzes the Chinese model of development and aid assistance policy in light of the Chinese foreign policy that started to be implemented two decades ago. The focus will be on the Liberian case after 2003, examining it as a case study, by analyzing the situation since then to measure the effectiveness of this model and its influence on Liberia's post-conflict situation in different sectors such as security and peacebuilding and economic engagement through development and infrastructure.

The Chinese model of development is unique, due to that fact is this model marks a kind of special combination between the traditional model of development with its large number of constraints and rules, with a new model where China tries to find an alternative to the traditional approach of aid assistance, working more on win-win cooperation relation between China and its partners' 'recipients' to expand its investments in the African continent. Since the end of the last millennium, China has challenged the traditional models of development through an equal partnership with the recipients of its services and by focusing on the aid that is mutually beneficial. China has also, always insisted on protecting the sovereignty and non-interference in the domestic affairs of its partners. Although again we need not forget that it has participated significantly with the traditional development aid agencies and is also one of the key players in the international development aid sector.

The uniqueness of the Chinese model also comes from the fact that the Chinese model doesn't seem to have any specific or fixed features or a recurring template so far.



## 2.1 Chinese Model and peacebuilding

For years now, China has maintained a well-recognized presence in the most fragile and in the most conflict-ridden countries in the African continent. It has provided massive support, as mentioned previously, in different domains and through different channels, Liberia being one such example.<sup>43</sup> The peacekeeping and peacebuilding engagement through UN peacekeeping troops was a remarkable engagement, with notable results.

That being said, it is notable that the Chinese, in general, prefer to work with low-profile standards, this being made obvious by the way the Chinese present their foreign aid assistance. Although it is one of the main players and donors in the UN peacekeeping forces, China has not until now pushed for any senior peacekeeping posts, either at the UN headquarters or in the field. In line with the Chinese low diplomatic profile, no Chinese national has ever to date headed a peacekeeping operation. Chinese generals have commanded forces in many places around Europe, but these are low-profile missions. Moreover, China's highest position at headquarters so far has been a recent appointment to a deputy police adviser post<sup>44</sup>.

The former general secretary of the communist party of China, Jintao, has expressed the official Chinese new policy and renewed expectations through the advocacy of a harmonious world, 'To enjoy together the opportunities of development, advance the noble task of human peace and development' and he added, 'Hand in hand, the people from each state should push forward peace, common prosperity, and a harmonic world. Henceforth, we should respect the aims and principles of the UN Charter, abide by international law and universally acknowledged norms

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<sup>43</sup> Alden, Chris, and Daniel Large. "On becoming a norms maker: Chinese foreign policy, norms evolution and the challenges of security in Africa." *The China Quarterly* 221 (2015): 123-142.

<sup>44</sup> Duchâtel, Mathieu, Richard Gowan, and Manuel Lafont Rapnouil. *Into Africa: China's global security shift*. European Council on Foreign Relations, 2016.

of international relations, and propagate democracy, friendship, co-operation, and win-win spirit in international affairs"

According to Reuters, in 2018 and after 15 years, The United Nations closed its peacekeeping mission to Liberia. UN peacekeeping troops were deployed in the aftermath of two civil wars in 2003. China was one of the biggest contributors to this mission throughout this period. President George Weah said that "This mission contributed to the restoration of peace and stability in Liberia"<sup>45</sup>. Peacekeeping, according to UN terminology, is one among a range of activities undertaken by the United Nations to maintain international peace and security throughout the world. The other activities include conflict prevention and mediation, peacemaking, peace enforcement, and peacebuilding <sup>46</sup>.

According to the UN as well, peacebuilding is a complex, long-term process of creating the necessary conditions for sustainable peace. It aims to reduce the risk of the recipient country's falling back to a conflict situation by strengthening national capacities at all levels and to sustain peace by reaching sustainable development and restoring legitimacy, thereby enhancing the capacity of the State to effectively carry out its core functions. However, the Chinese definition of peacekeeping and peacebuilding has needed further redefining to be more accurate because China has its own three requirements to be a part of any mission or intervention in any country, all of them having to be in place before any Chinese involvement or any kind of any international intervention in UN missions. These include UN authorization, respect of sovereignty and the invitation of the target state<sup>47</sup>.

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45 U.S. (2019). U.N. closes up Liberia peacekeeping mission after 15 years. [online] Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-liberia-peacekeepers/u-n-closes-up-liberia-peacekeeping-mission-after-15-years-idUSKBN1GY2FX> [Accessed 1 Jul. 2019].

46 United Nations Peacekeeping. (2019). Terminology. [online] Available at: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/terminology> [Accessed 1 Jul. 2019].

<sup>47</sup> Chau, Donovan C., and Thomas M. Kane, eds. *China and International Security: History, Strategy, and 21st-Century Policy [3 volumes]: History, Strategy, and 21st-Century Policy*. ABC-CLIO, 2014.

The western countries led by the United States of America have adopted 'liberal peace'<sup>48</sup> as an important concept for peace and development. This camp believes that to have stability in any country, a political system should be built according to Western standards, which is obviously at odds with the Chinese way of thinking about a system of governance. China believes instead that any kind of stability should come through the following: any kind of aid or investment by any external actor should be provided without any strings attached if these will affect the country politically. The stability of the government and the power it has are both more important for the stability in the country than any rules or constraints that will come from an outsider. Economic stability is more important than political stability<sup>49</sup>. Although peacebuilding often requires deep engagement with political powers at all level as well as active involvement, to create alternative sources of authority in the post-conflict country.

The situation was not always like this. For many decades, China has eschewed any kind of participation in any UN peacekeeping missions, only changing its policy since the 90s of the previous centuries when it became one of the main contributors and most enthusiastic supporter of many different types of UN missions. China now supplies the largest number of UN peace forces out of all of the permanent Security Council members<sup>50</sup>. As well, China has the particular advantage of being a country without any history as a colonist or imperialist.

## **2.2. China's engagement in a Post-conflict Liberia**

One of the essential global players in the post-conflict stage was China, with its remarkable engagement and efforts to rebuild the new Liberia. The first step that China took for Sino-

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<sup>48</sup> Oneal, John R., Frances H. Oneal, Zeev Maoz, and Bruce Russett. "The liberal peace: Interdependence, democracy, and international conflict, 1950-85." *Journal of Peace Research* 33, no. 1 (1996): 11-28.

<sup>49</sup> Asia Dialogue. (2019). China's emergence as a peacebuilding actor: From 'peaceful development' to 'developmental peace'?. [online] Available at: <https://theasiadialogue.com/2018/12/24/chinas-emergence-as-a-peacebuilding-actor-from-peaceful-development-to-developmental-peace/> [Accessed 3 Jul. 2019].

<sup>50</sup> Hirono, Miwa, and Marc Lanteigne. "Introduction: China and UN Peacekeeping." *International Peacekeeping* 18, no. 3 (June 1, 2011): 243-56. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2011.563070>.

Liberian relations was to demonstrate its desire to help and to participate in peace-keeping operations in Liberia. This was announced in the first forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000, which actually happened later in 2003 when China had participated in the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)<sup>51</sup>. The second step was in the same year 2003, after the ending of the civil war in Liberia. China and Liberia had renewed their diplomatic relations. Since then, China has played a great role in the revival of the fragile country through massive support as an important development partner.

It needs to be kept in mind that Liberia had already had very long and special relations with the west although the country was not occupied or subordinate to any European/ colonist country before, but the new and changing global political environment and the emergence of China as a new world power with a new role in Africa have encouraged countries such as Liberia to develop closer ties and relations with China. China from its part has likewise shown the importance of Sino-Liberian relations through building an embassy in the Liberian capital's Monrovia in 2009, and which has played a great role in the country's reconstruction, because the countries became closer to each other than ever before.

China's main role in the UNMIL was to focus on providing transportation and logistical support to it. In addition to that, it worked on the rehabilitation of infrastructure, which has made a positive contribution to the life of Liberians<sup>52</sup>. China's involvement is wide-ranging, from participation in the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to the social, productive and commercial role in a poor country like Liberia, through massive support for the fragile socio-economic structures of the country. All of that within the framework of the UNMIL and at a bilateral

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<sup>51</sup> Moumouni, Guillaume. "China and Liberia: Engagement in a Post-Conflict Country (2003–2013)." In *China and Africa*, pp. 225-251. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018.

<sup>52</sup> Kuo, Steven Chiun-Yi. "Enter the dragon: the emerging Chinese approach to peacebuilding in Liberia." PhD diss., University of St Andrews, 2013.

level, China has shown itself to be an important development partner and stakeholder in Liberia, as in most national post-conflict situations on the African continent<sup>53</sup>.

Although China has for many decades avoided any type of involvement in any UN peacekeeping missions, it has changed its policy since the 90s of the last centuries and has now become a major contributor as well as one of the most enthusiastic supporters of different types of UN missions. China now supplies the largest number of UN peace force soldiers compared to all of the other permanent five Security Council members. China to the present day is still playing the role of a middle power in its preferences for multilateralism and 'norm-taking'. In other word, China would like to keep its support and its engagement in UN peacekeeping missions within its established norms for the near future <sup>54</sup>.

### **2.3. From Peacekeeping to Peacebuilding.**

The Chinese mission started in November 2003 when the UN Security Council unanimously voted a resolution for the deployment of a peacekeeping mission in war-torn Liberia for one year. China dispatched peacekeeping police to Africa. The Chinese troops were in charge of engineering, medical services, and transportation. But at the same time, they had a great role in supervising the enforcement of the cease-fire agreement established by the country's various parties, protecting the security of the civilians and UN staff, maintaining basic human rights, assisting in the police reforming to ensure the security and offering training to local police. China sent its troops to make sure that the new government would function well, and this action

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<sup>53</sup> Moumouni, Guillaume. "China and Liberia: Engagement in a Post-Conflict Country (2003–2013)." In *China and Africa*, pp. 225-251. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018.

<sup>54</sup> Hirono, Miwa, and Marc Lanteigne. "Introduction: China and UN Peacekeeping." In *China's Evolving Approach to Peacekeeping*, pp. 9-22. Routledge, 2013.

would bring peace to Liberia at a time most western countries were wary of sending their soldiers to Africa.<sup>55</sup>

Through its mission in Liberia, China worked on three levels. Firstly, it worked on the peacekeeping process in Liberia to rebuild peace as well as the country. Secondly, it was a great means by which to extend its influence in the continent and in Liberia in particular, which really helped it to extend its soft power. Finally, it boosted its global reputation and regained its position globally. All the services of the Chinese troops were provided for free, medical support through the provision of free treatments to local communities, post-war reconstruction, helping locals build and renovate some public facilities such as bridges, roads, etc. and keeping security and building peace <sup>56</sup>.

## **2.4. Chinese investment in post-conflict-Africa**

China has become the strongest ally in recent years in the sector of infrastructure, where it has pumped millions of dollars in major projects around the African continent. As a result of the 2018 China-Africa Forum for Cooperation (FOCAC) summit which was held in China, the world's second-largest economy announced that China will spend 60 billion dollars in Africa's development, in part to forge a tighter relationship with African countries as well as to lead the world indirectly in the interests of the Chinese soft power strategy<sup>57</sup>. China's assistance for infrastructure like any other domain typically comes to Africa in the form of export credits and loans, most often with little or no interest, with quickly accessible and flexible access and usually, with no strings attached. According to the statistics of the IMF as of 2012, China

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<sup>55</sup> Ayenagbo, Kossi, Tommie Njobvu, James V. Sossou, and Biossey K. Tozoun. "China's peacekeeping operations in Africa: From unwilling participation to responsible contribution." *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 6, no. 2 (2012): 22-32.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid

<sup>57</sup> Businessinsider.co.za. (2019). 10 massive projects the Chinese are funding in Africa - including railways and a brand-new city. [online] Available at: <https://www.businessinsider.co.za/here-are-150-million-rand-projects-in-africa-funded-by-china-2018-9> [Accessed 3 Jul. 2019].

owned almost about fifteen percent of sub-Saharan Africa's external debt, which increased by 2015 to reach nearly two-thirds of new debt taken on by African countries, and which was from Chinese loans<sup>58</sup>. The main reasons behind such investments in this domain are the lack of proper infrastructure in most African countries, the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative also being a very important factor, where China has a dream to connect the world with its corridor, thereby again increasing its soft power in the continent.

Part of this budget goes to post-conflict countries. In the case of Liberia, China has executed a number of social and economic infrastructure projects in Liberia, including a sugar factory, founding the Liberia Sugar Corporation (Libsuco). In addition to that, it provided the maintenance needed for hospital and medical assistance. The Gbedin rice development project in Saniquellie was also one of its most important projects. China has also built a sports complex and has renovated a further one, the Samuel Kanyon Doe multi-purpose sports stadium in Monrovia, at a total cost of \$7.6 million. There has finally been the construction of the Tubman cantonment, a military installation in Bong; and assisting in the establishment of nationwide network coverage for radio and television<sup>59</sup>.

Nowadays, it is most likely that many African countries are happy to have such a generous corporate partner as China but there may be dangerous consequences. Wherever China offers its support to African countries it is looking for benefits to itself as well: it is a win-win situation, as the Chinese like to call it. But Africa may still in the long run, run the real risk of falling into a new debt cycle, getting stuck in a new dependence pattern on China, fatally damaging the environment, or not taking advantage of Chinese investments in the extractive

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<sup>58</sup> Pham, Bello, Barry, Johnson, Groll, Landry, Brautigam, Traub, Walt and Zenko (2019). Chinese Aid and Investment Are Good for Africa. [online] Foreign Policy. Available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/08/31/chinese-aid-and-investment-are-good-for-africa/> [Accessed 3 Jul. 2019].

<sup>59</sup> Moumouni, Guillaume. "China and Liberia: Engagement in a Post-Conflict Country (2003–2013)." In *China and Africa*, pp. 225-251. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018.

sector for promoting structural reforms, if the public policies of African governments do not pursue the latter path. Nevertheless, most of these countries should have good governance and China has not so far intervened in the domestic affairs of its recipients. In the end, Africa should always remember that China in Africa is an opportunity, but Africa should also recognize how to make the best use of these advantages and to develop itself.

This remains the conclusion reached in this chapter: the Chinese development model is different from the bilateral traditional model and the main reasons for that are that China has always followed the strategy of non-influence or interference in the domestic affairs of its partner. China likes to make new allies and partners and is always working on that. Peacekeeping and peacebuilding are the core activities of Chinese bilateral aid provision but with very important differences as discussed, including UN authorization, respect of sovereignty and the invitation of the target state.

All other engagements of China on the continent could be considered as investments or as the other side of the coin of the Chinese model. In the case of Liberia, the Chinese involvement in the post-conflict reconstruction phase and engagement has been a success so far and the indicators are that in 15 years the peacekeeping forces will already have moved out of the country. Liberia has had two presidents so far and has had a very stable recovery process, though China still remains as a presence, giving needed support to Liberia. As noted earlier, there are some problems inherent in the Chinese model such as the risk of a new debt cycle being created, getting stuck in a new dependence pattern on China, fatally damaging the environment, or not taking advantage of the Chinese investments in the extractive sector for promoting structural change, but the advantages should still considerably outweigh these, as discussed.



## Chapter 3- Chinese development aid and soft power

This Chapter outlines and analyzes the nature of Chinese soft power and how Chinese efforts towards Africa have had a direct effect on the augmentation of its soft power, which is a very important tool of Chinese foreign policy. This is because China's main target is to be a leader on the world stage and to hold a special position in the club of those countries with the greatest influence. Over the last several years China has expanded its investment, infrastructure projects and humanitarian aid assistance. All of that has made for an optimistic view of the future of Africa and given the Chinese more opportunities to expand their soft power at the same time.

### 3.1. Soft power and Afro-Chinese relations

Soft power tools have changed a lot since the political theorist Nye first coined this term, and it has started to play an essential role in the foreign policy of any state that would like to have some global influence. All of this is because of the continuous change in the world order, most states tending to use soft power to achieve their goals due to the heavy price of using hard power. Hence, the soft power instrument started to be more effective and assume a central position in the modern foreign policy of countries. Nye has described soft power as the ability to attract and co-opt rather than coerce<sup>60</sup>. "In order to create favorable conditions for long-term socio-economic development, many states aim to strengthen their position and prestige in the international arena"<sup>61</sup>. 'On the one hand, 'People often conflate soft power with investment and economic development, but I define it as culture, education, and diplomacy,"<sup>62</sup> says Elizabeth

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60 Nye, Joseph S. "Soft power." *Foreign policy* 80 (1990): 153-171.

61 Ibid

62 "China's Soft Power Initiative". 2019. Council On Foreign Relations. <https://www.cfr.org/background/chinas-soft-power-initiative>.

Economy, CFR senior fellow, and director of Asia studies. Another argument comes from Bruce Gilley, an expert on contemporary Chinese politics and adjunct professor of international affairs at the New School University. He maintains that China exercises its soft power alongside hard power because it is a UN Security Council member with a veto, and so able to affect the fate of a lot of states<sup>63</sup>.

Both of them make very valid arguments but at the same time, the economic effect always has a great impact, as Prof. Pippa Morgan argued, stating that “China’s growing economic linkages are welcomed by Africans as an important alternative to traditional partners”.

Sino-African history clearly demonstrates China’s approach to its African relations as equal parties, in contrast to Western countries where their main concern was either conquest or occupation. Where each of them has struggled against the dominant powers in the last two centuries, they have both, as the cradle of civilization, been the victims of colonialism as developing countries<sup>64</sup>. This is, in fact, the core argument which China uses whenever it wishes to expand its investments within Africa.

Nobody doubts the huge economic power which China has in Africa. According to Ousmane Sall<sup>65</sup>, almost 54 African countries are looking for a partner to help them to support their economies, while China seeks to have a share of the African massive natural resources. The most important factor and source of the Chinese soft power in Africa is its economy and its engagement in different sectors in Africa as a real partner.

In modern times, China has actively pursued a development agenda in Africa through its assistance and its investments, which have been increasing steadily. Since the first Forum on

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63 Ibid

64 Alden, Chris, Dan Large, and Ricardo Soares de Oliveira. "China returns to Africa: Anatomy of an expansive engagement." *Elcano Newsletter* 51 (2008): 20.

65 Sall, Ousmane. "Chinese Soft Power in Africa: Case of Senegal." *Open Journal of Social Science* 4 (2016): 133-142.

Sino-African Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000, China has made a systematic effort to expand its soft-power policies in Africa, driven by its strong economy and its economic engagement, where it has invested and engaged in many sectors and in various countries to support the African continent such as in the health sector and through humanitarian aid academic, professional, and cultural exchange. In this way, China has sought through the last two decades to continue to portray itself as a non-threatening and responsible global power. However, some theorists have argued against this, adopting the opposing view that China is the new colonialism, as Nick Mead tried to convince his readers <sup>66</sup>.

## **3.2. Chinese contributions towards Soft Power**

Although there are many factors which affect the applications of soft power, this thesis analyzes three factors: peacebuilding and security, education, culture and training, and finally, infrastructure. This last factor, in particular, typifies the new Chinese initiative, which aims to turn the world into a global village.

### **3.2.1. The Blue helmets and Soft power**

According to the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), the ways China has aided and partnered Africa through solidarity with Africa on many international forums on trade and human rights issues, training for more than 100,000 Africans in Chinese universities and military institutes, sending more than 900 doctors to work across Africa and erasing almost one billion dollars

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<sup>66</sup> Van Mead, Nick. "China in Africa: Win-win development, or a new colonialism?" *The Guardian* 31 (2018).

from the debt of the African Countries, in addition to making major investments in infrastructure, agriculture, and energy <sup>67</sup>.

As mentioned previously as well, China has a strategy for increasing its soft power in the African continent. Firstly, influence, which it gained when it started to participate in the UN peacekeeping, of which Liberia has been a clear example since 2003. For 15 years, China has also been one of the main players in Liberia in both peacebuilding and peacekeeping. In different countries and missions as well, such as in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Mali, China is by far one of the biggest contributors, having made massive investments after ensuring peace and stability through the UN missions where it invested in infrastructure, the health sector, trade, culture, and education. All of these investments went to expand to its economic interests and to increase its soft power.

### **3.2.2. Education and soft power**

Secondly, culture and education have a huge value for Chinese heritage, which is why China is working hard in this sector. China has almost 35 Confucius Institutes teaching the Mandarin language and Chinese culture in many countries around Africa. China claims to have been involved for 60 years in South-South cooperation, this being of mutual benefit to both China and Africa. Although China has a dramatic economic and trade impact globally, particularly in Africa, which has caught global attention, little focus has yet been given to its role as an education donor<sup>68</sup>. In the case of Liberia however, China and Liberia have had an agreement for cultural cooperation since 1982. Like many African countries, Liberia has since then, also

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67 Shelton, Garth, and Farhana Paruk. "The Forum on China-Africa cooperation: a strategic opportunity." *Institute for Security Studies Monographs* 2008, no. 156 (2008): 222.

68 King, Kenneth. "China's aid and soft power in Africa." *The Case of Education and Training*. Woodbridge: James Currey(2013).

had a very limited scope of educational cooperation with China <sup>69</sup>. However, things started to change a little bit in the period between 2008 and 2013, where about 108 Liberians received training on regular programs in China, 500 Liberian students received a formal education in China, and almost 2000 civil servants and journalists have also since then had some training from Chinese agencies<sup>70</sup>. Within Liberia, in July 2010 China built, then handed over 'Fendell Campus', one of the branches of the University of Liberia which covers 124 800 m<sup>2</sup> of floor space at a cost of 23 million USD, in addition to three rural schools<sup>71</sup>. In light of this evidence, China and Liberia have a promising relationship within the training and education sector, while China is using this tool in an effective way to spread its ideas and culture.

### **3.2.3. BRI and soft power**

Since 2013, China has invested massively in infrastructure projects to enhance connectivity among neighboring countries, and one of the most recent initiatives in which it has is the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). This is to enhance connectivity through infrastructure construction, exploring new driving forces for world economic growth, and building a new platform for world economic cooperation. The fact that China convinced 152 countries to sign and support such an initiative gives us an indication of how what China has achieved. It works hard by embracing a liberal economic vision for the future, promising win-win economic development cooperation without policy conditionality and filling the infrastructure gap in the developing

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69 Omoruyi, E. M. M., O. C. Emmanuel, B. D. C. Deng, M. Keita, and M. Joseph. "The Dragon's Deal: Educational Development and Knowledge Sharing in China-Africa Cooperation." *J Hotel Bus Manage* 7, no. 189 (2018): 2169-0286.

70 Moumouni, Guillaume. "China and Liberia: Engagement in a Post-Conflict Country (2003–2013)." In *China and Africa*, pp. 225-251. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018.

71 Chinese Ambassador Zhou Yuxiao, 'Remarks at the Handover Ceremony of the China-aided Fendell Campus of the University of Liberia', <http://lr.china-embassy.org/chn/dszc/jianghua/t718566.htm>.

world. Liberia is among 152 countries which signed the agreement with China on cooperation with the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2019.

After analyzing and studying the concept of soft power as well as Chinese soft power through analyzing Sino-African relations, and what China has been doing in the last two decades, given the information, and in light of evidence and examples. It seems that China plays a significant role in Africa and its soft power is increasing massively. These contributions, with success in peacekeeping, peacebuilding, security, education, and infrastructures are confirmed evidence of this.

# Conclusion

Twenty-six centuries ago, the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu encapsulated accurately the Chinese mentality through the proverb, 'Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime'.

This thesis has argued that the Chinese development aid model and the effectiveness of this model in the post-conflict phase and the reflection of this model on its soft power is one of the most important tools that China is using nowadays in its foreign policy in the African continent.

The thesis findings support the hypotheses that Chinese support in the aid sector have contributed to the recovery of Liberia in the post-conflict phase through its development model, which combined the traditional way of development aid (through implementing numerous social and infrastructure-related projects) and the investment model, which China uses with the African countries in general and with the countries in the post-conflict phase in particular. Secondly, China has gained significant soft power in African countries through investing in the promotion of its special model of development.

China has engaged through the special development model in a very effective way through its invaluable participation in the UN missions in the last two decades in different countries, especially in the Liberian case where the Chinese contribution has helped one of the poorest countries in the world to enter the phase of reconstruction and to maintain security and stable peace since 2003. This thesis has highlighted the importance of a topic such as the Chinese development model for aid assistance and investment in Africa in general and in Liberia in particular. According to the research results, China has succeeded in implementing this innovative aid model thanks to many reasons, but mainly because of the history of China as

the country without any history of acts of aggression towards other countries. Neither does it interfere in the domestic affairs of any countries with which it has a partnership.

In light of the evidence, China's engagement in the development of Africa has had a significant developmental impact in the last three decades within different sectors such as trade, infrastructure, agriculture, training, security, and peacebuilding. This finding is supported by Aid Data's publications, which show that Chinese official development assistance (ODA) increases economic growth in recipient countries. On average, each implemented Project was estimated to increase economic growth by 0.7 points after 2 years of its closure.<sup>72</sup>

This thesis has shown close evidence on why China has such massive soft power within the African countries. It achieves this through investing in various educational, cultural and enhanced connectivity initiatives. The study also analyzes how China, in light of its foreign policy, could increase its soft power even further.

The literature suggests that China has also established and formed many lobbies and forums, as well as having signed many cooperation agreements which have helped it move forward to become one of the main players in international development and in the global economy. In 2019, it is safe to say that China, due to its foreign policies in Africa, has won the lion's share of mutually beneficial relations compared with other foreign powers involved in most other African countries, especially those suffering from conflicts.

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72 "Aiddata | Aid, China, And Growth: Evidence From A New Global Development Finance Dataset". 2019. Aiddata.Org. <https://www.aiddata.org/publications/aid-china-and-growth-evidence-from-a-new-global-development-finance-dataset>.



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