

AN ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTS OF CHINESE AND AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT
ASSISTANCE ON SOFT POWER

by
Chris Durrence

A research study submitted to Johns Hopkins University in conformity with the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in Global Security Studies

Baltimore, Maryland.
May 2020

© 2020 Chris Durrence
All Rights Reserved

Abstract

In the current geopolitical atmosphere, China and the United States are often involved in conversations regarding spheres of influence. This power can be referred to as a country's level of soft power, and it is becoming increasingly beneficial to invest in elements that increase it. The following research explores the connection between the level of development assistance that a donor country provides and shifts in public opinion. In this case, public opinion is being used as an abridged measure of soft power and the objective is to quantitatively demonstrate that more official development assistance equates to stronger soft power. In the twenty-first century, China has used much of its capital to invest in various development projects throughout Europe, Asia, and Latin America. Just as well, the United States has provided its own aid in the same regions, and recently reorganized the entire structure of its development aid agencies with the passing of the bipartisan bill known as the Build Act of 2018. The subsequent research focuses on two of these regions, the most of which is directed at Latin America and a following section on Africa. Latin America affords us excellent data and its geographic proximity makes it a critical area of study. Africa on the other hand, has been a huge area of interest for China and the raw materials contained within it make it a crucial investment. With these two superpowers fighting for global influence, policymakers need indicators that can provide them with a snapshot of how effective aid programs are. If a relationship can be proved, then perhaps such a marker can promote more effective aid and diplomacy, thereby increasing the soft power of the nation. This research found that there is no observable positive or negative relationship between our variables, even when accounting for time lag.

Reviewed by: Sarah Clark, John A. Gans, Jr., Ph.D., Christina Lai, Sarah O'Byrne, Ph.D., Ph.D.
Mark Stout, Ph.D.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Introduction.....	1
Literature Review.....	3
Soft Power: Its Current State, Future Considerations, and its Calculation.....	3
Why Does China’s Investment in Infrastructure Boost Its Soft Power Capacity.....	6
Foreign Aid: A Diplomatic and Development Tool.....	8
China’s History of Development Aid in Africa and How Socialism Affected It.....	10
Hypothesis and Methods.....	13
Data.....	17
Discussion.....	27
Conclusion.....	32
Bibliography.....	35
CV.....	38

Introduction

It is no secret that China has invested a large number of its financial resources into various aid projects abroad, and it has captured the interest of international relations experts and policymakers alike. Just as well, the United States of America has recently ramped up its own efforts by creating a new aid agency at the head of its international development projects. Therefore, if two world superpower rivals are spending so much money on projects abroad and competing for influence, an analysis of the effects that these investments have would benefit international relations academia. This paper speculates that a positive shift in public opinion represents an increase in soft power and that such a change would specifically occur when a donor country supports development assistance projects in a recipient country because of their public benefit. A relationship between these variables could represent a path towards a simpler metric through which policymakers could evaluate the effectiveness of development assistance. In focusing on both Chinese and American official development assistance, this research hopes to answer the question: does an increase in the amount of development assistance offered by China or the United States correlate to a positive change in the recipient nation's public opinion regarding the respective donor (as an expression of soft power)? To test this question, I looked at the period beginning in 2008, when Chinese outward direct investment (ODI) doubled and signaled an aggressive initiative considering it was in the wake of a financial crisis.¹ Using various datasets, I cross-referenced Chinese and American development commitments with corresponding public opinion surveys.

¹ USCC Staff Report. "Going Out: An Overview of China's Outward Foreign Direct Investment." U.S.-China Economic & Security Review Commission. Retrieved at <https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Research/GoingOut.pdf>. P.1.

I began with collecting as much information as possible regarding projects from China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the United States newly formed International Development Finance Corporation (USIDFC) and USAID data as well. Each institution contained its hurdles for acquiring accurate information. For China, the country does not publish an official record of the exact amounts it is giving away in aid. Therefore, the data regarding these projects had to be tracked down individually and triangulated from multiple sources. Fortunately, various research groups have taken to documenting these development assistance projects in as much detail as possible. As for the efforts of the United States, it must catch up because USIDFC was created only in 2018, and only recently announced the commencement of operations. Even though it absorbed its predecessor OPIC, the United States is almost a decade behind China when it comes to improving its vehicles for international development assistance. These issues were not insurmountable, but the research featured in this paper will be greatly enhanced as more documentation becomes available on both institutions. On the dependent variable side, I used a collection of surveys taken throughout the period to note changes in how the public viewed these countries. The challenges experienced in this variable mostly consisted of trying to paint an accurate picture of public opinion across surveys asking slightly different questions. As we will see in the literature review section, there exists a myriad of articles on different countries' shifting attitudes towards China. However, these studies too, would be benefitted from a set series of repeated survey questions across a decade. Ultimately, this research wants to inform policymakers about the importance of development assistance, especially within the realm of expanding soft power. Everything, from trade, diplomacy, and defense, is subject to the local populace's attitudes towards their allies.

The significance of discovering such a relationship would illuminate just how secure the connection is between dollars spent on helping develop another country and the local's willingness to change their opinion on that donor. By testing shifts in public opinion towards donor countries, this data tracks the potential influence on public officials and policymakers for their regions. Knowing the positive and negative correlations with policies and the public applies to any government official trying to make an informed decision.

Literature Review

Soft Power: Its Current State, Future Considerations, and its Calculation

Perhaps one of the most comprehensive annual reports on global soft power is “The Soft Power 30”, a publication that does its best to measure and capture the current international political temperature. The Soft Power 30 series seeks “to provide useful insights and practical guidance to identify and measure the sources of soft power,” with the even more useful goals of “bringing structure to the complexity of soft power’s diverse and numerous sources.”² The author posits that as the world becomes more multipolar and interdependent, the machinations of power are shifting outwards toward the growing list of non-state actors affecting global affairs. Elements like globalization, technology, and climate change strain global governance structures and are interrupting nations’ ability to “cooperate and manage conflict.” The mood of the report is that the geopolitical climate is as tumultuous as ever, stating that “international affairs seem trapped in a period of confusion, disruption, and uncertainty” with multilateralism stalling amongst “zero-sum, nationalist-driven policies.”³ Despite such a bleak outlook, strategies to respond to this calcification of foreign policy have emerged, and they will need soft power.

² Jonathan Mcclory, “Introduction- Soft Power 30: A Global Ranking of Soft Power 2019,” Portland-facebook-USC Center on Public Diplomacy, accessed on February 27, 2020, p. 9

³ Mcclory, “Introduction-Soft Power 30: A Global Ranking of Soft Power 2019, ”p: 16

The foreign policy response strategies to the current state of the global order can be put into three categories, according to the Soft Power 30 2019, and we will focus on two of them. The first response detailed is one of retrenchment, in which a country like the United States would “return to its historical norm of a grand strategy of defensive realism and off-shore balancing.”⁴ So rather than remaining a global hegemon, the U.S. would drawback its forces and refocus its efforts to be more on the homeland than trying to solve the problems of others. Stephen M. Walt, the foreign policy scholar whose work influenced this section of the report, noted that this should not equate to the “total disengagement” of the U.S. because the off-shore balancing piece of the strategy would require highly active diplomats.⁵ Concerning this paper, if one were to play out this strategy in practical terms, it would mean “a massive reduction in international commitments and development aid terms.” However, this would force the U.S. to use more “noncoercive” means in soft power. While proponents of this strategy might like the fact that it encourages other regions to be more self-sufficient and regionally cooperative, such an approach would be in retrograde with recent bipartisan foreign policy efforts like the BUILD Act of 2018, which established the United States International Development Finance Corporation (USIDFC).

In short, the BUILD Act sought to revitalize America’s ability to transparently engage with local businesses in countries abroad by allotting even more money for development assistance and encouraging private investment. President Trump explained in the Reorganization Plan for the BUILD Act that the DFC will enhance the United States’ foreign policy toolkit by

⁴ Mcclory, “Introduction-Soft Power 30- A Global Ranking of Soft Power 2019, ”p: 17

⁵ Stephen M. Walt, “The End of Hubris And the New Age of American Restraint,” Foreign Affairs, May 1, 2019, p: 26, accessed at <http://web.b.ebscohost.com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=0f919544-6321-4450-b452-88dc9ed3d69a%40pdc-v-sessmgr06>

empowering disenfranchised groups in developing countries to cultivate healthy multilateral relationships.⁶ In the same document, it is also worth noting that he explicitly states that the DFC is a “robust alternative” to China’s more predatory model, and such a tone signals at least some attempts to expand foreign policy rather than retrench. Should the latter happen, perhaps the most optimistic outcome of this period would see smaller countries forming regional alliances to challenge China’s expansion because they can no longer solely depend on the U.S. Then, perhaps, when combined with America's judicious use of diplomacy, there could emerge a new avenue for influence with a newly formed regional alliance. The other strategy, which the author sees as "the most ambitious," involves an opposite approach that still.

It is unfortunate that this final strategy offered, which is coined "expansive reinforcement," is idealistic. It would involve members of the international order to "double-down on efforts to reinforce and promote liberalism and multilateralism" and combine "domestic and international efforts from leading nations."⁷ This would see nations investing in efforts “to encourage tolerance, media literacy, critical thinking, and respect for human rights.” This strategy could be seen as one that promotes the employment of soft power through the advocacy of things like "a stronger human rights agenda" and aiding "transitioning states to bring them in line with liberal principles." The inclusion of these strategies in this literature review is intended to give an idea of how soft power experts see its current status and potential problems affecting it in the future. While this research product is an excellent piece on soft power in the world, the most practical section explains their methodology for calculating a country's soft power capacity.

⁶ President Trump, “USIDFC Reorganization Plan,” March 8, 2018, p. 1, https://www.dfc.gov/sites/default/files/2019-08/Shelby_Letter_USIDFC_Reorg_Plan_08032019.pdf

⁷ Mcclory, “Introduction-Soft Power 30- A Global Ranking of Soft Power 2019, "p: 19

The Soft Power 30 methodology for measuring soft power draws from the works of the esteemed and prolific soft power scholar Joseph S. Nye Jr., who created a framework he called the “soft power conversion process.”⁸ In this process exists what Nye deemed as the three primary sources of a country’s soft power: culture, political values, and foreign policy. From these three, the Soft Power 30 builds off of to create an index that “asses the resources of countries by combining both objective and subjective data.”⁹ The objective data consists of six categories, themselves sub-indices, which are: culture, education, engagement, digital, enterprise, and government. The other component, the subjective data, consists of polling data, which was acquired through a survey that tested “international perceptions of countries assessed according to the most common ‘touch points’ through which people interface with foreign countries.”¹⁰ This way of quantifying a country’s soft power is undoubtedly a tremendous asset to the general scholarship concerning international relations. Specific to the interests of this paper, however, is if the BUILD Act empowers U.S. foreign policy (with China as a foil) to the point that it affects public opinion abroad.

Why Does China’s Investment in Infrastructure Boost Its Soft Power Capacity

China has focused on a unique aspect of investment by putting its resources into infrastructure elements that connect countries. Back in 2013, China announced the plan for a trans-continental passage linking China with Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, Russia, and Europe by land – and a 21st century Maritime Silk Road, a sea route connecting China’s coastal regions with southeast and south Asia, the South Pacific, the Middle East, and Eastern

⁸ Joseph S. Nye Jr., “The Future of Power,” 2011, New York: Public Affairs

⁹ Mcclory, “Soft Power 30- Methodology,” p: 26

¹⁰ Mcclory, “Soft Power 30- Methodology,” p: 28

Africa, all the way to Europe.¹¹ The ensuing research carried out by groups like AIDDATA, focused on what the results of these development projects would be both economically and diplomatically for China, the United States, and the rest of the world. If we treat this investment as one that intends to cultivate soft power, then we should consider the evidence on why it might work.

Given the implications of China's projects, it immediately drew the attention of various research institutions. The AIDDATA Research Lab at William & Mary has put out detailed analyses throughout the BRI's evolution aimed at its effects on diplomacy, economics, and security. In 2018, in Working Paper 64, the group investigated the concept of connective financing about Chinese infrastructure projects in developing countries and did a fantastic job of synthesizing existing research. They note in the beginning of their paper that "Western politicians and public intellectuals" are highly critical of China's "speed over quality" approach and their propensity to fund "white elephant projects."¹² Despite such criticism, developing countries are still drawn to China's offers, even with the risk, because they still have "unmet infrastructure financing needs" and cannot work with Western lenders who are reluctant to fund "roads, bridges, railways, and ports."¹³ The main concern with their research though, was to answer something yet determined, and that was "whether and to what extent Chinese development projects widen or narrow inequalities within low-income and middle-income countries."¹⁴ For those critical of China's efforts and suspicious of their real intent, it might be

¹¹ European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). "Belt and Road Initiative." Retrieved at: <https://www.ebrd.com/what-we-do/belt-and-road/overview.html>

¹² Richard Bluhm, Axel Dreher, Andreas Fuchs, Bradley Parks, Austin Strange, Michael Tierney, "Working Paper 64-Connective Financing: Chinese Infrastructure Projects and the Diffusion of Economic Activity in Developing Countries," September 2018, AIDDATA, p. 5

¹³ Bluhm, p. 5

¹⁴ Bluhm, p. 5

concerning that they actually have some positive effects by diffusing economic benefits into the surrounding areas and consequently giving China more soft power leverage.

This working paper draws from other research to explain that "economists and scientists have found that international development organizations do a poor job of targeting economically disadvantaged regions within countries" and that they even have a tendency only to put these projects in more affluent areas.¹⁵ What makes China unique, however, is that its projects focus on "connective infrastructure," and this has the effect of "increasing the mobility of goods, people, and capital," with the possibility of helping developing nations spread their economic growth to more locations than just city centers. To test "the effects of these projects on the spatial distribution of economic activity," the group created "an original dataset of geo-located Chinese Government-financed projects situated in 138 countries between 2000 and 2014." The results of their test were very positive in favor of China. Mainly, they were able to conclude that "Chinese-financed connective infrastructure reduces spatial inequalities and accelerates the diffusion of economic activity across geographic space" and that this finding was "robust to a variety of sensitivity checks and perturbations."¹⁶

Foreign Aid: A Diplomatic and Development Tool

Carol Lancaster's book *Foreign Aid: Diplomacy, Development, and Domestic Politics* explores the nature, history, and application of foreign aid before concluding with a comparative analysis of five countries and their utilization of it in diplomacy. She breaks down the essential question of "why is aid given?" into questions of purpose that get at the heart of how various countries have employed foreign assistance. The section on the U.S. is especially

¹⁵ Bluhm et al. p. 6

¹⁶ Bluhm et al. p. 7

helpful for understanding how our country has historically used aid as a diplomatic tool in the fight against communism and later in the war on terrorism.

For the time that her study focused on, aid was used for four purposes: diplomatic, developmental, humanitarian relief, and commercial purposes. With the United States, aid has been used to achieve diplomatic goals based on international security like, for example, to curb the spread of communism in the Cold War or even using foreign aid as encouragement for stability in the Middle East.¹⁷ When it came to using aid for developmental purposes, this too overlapped with diplomacy in that it propped up societies enough to prevent sliding towards communism or allowing terrorists to leverage social unrest in their favor. These are all concepts that fall into increasing a nation's soft power because they reflect social values that are attractive to economically disadvantaged countries. In this case, by providing foreign aid, the United States is signaling that these programs are worth the investment because the recipients have value. Perhaps it is the more socially focused development aid that will give the United States an edge over China's efforts.

Another interesting angle that the author forwards is that of the reasoning behind the U.S. reinvigorated foreign aid programs in the twenty-first century, many of which had been cut in the 1990s for budget reasons. Lancaster hoped that it indicated a return to the "dualism of diplomacy and development" which was a Cold War paradigm that had aid for allies fighting terrorists balanced against development aid, both serving diplomatic purposes.¹⁸ She believed that the rise of Christian right was having dramatic effects on policymakers willingness to allocate foreign aid. More and more attention was being paid to developing nations in poverty which was leading

¹⁷ Carol Lancaster. "Foreign Aid: Diplomacy, Development, and Domestic Policy." (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), chap. 1, "Second, Defining Aid's 'Purposes'", ebook

¹⁸ Lancaster, chap. 3, "The New Century: Has Anything Changed?"

to constituents expressing more desire for foreign aid to those in need. Such values were (and still are not) at odds with those on the left, and foreign aid looked to be a bipartisan element of diplomacy. At the time, Lancaster believed that these political shifts were on the precipice of a fundamental change to U.S. politics, with development assistance as a central platform.

Lancaster's investigation and case study of foreign aid does a wonderful job of presenting the history and application of it in the various realms of statecraft. Her work shows that indeed foreign aid has pieces that fit into improving a country's soft power by attracting them to the donor country.

China's History of Development Aid in Africa and How Socialism Affected It

Most of the current literature focuses on China's twenty-first century development aid in Africa, but the nation has actually been providing assistance to the region for six decades.¹⁹ In *Ideology and Relationality: Chinese Aid in Africa Revisited*, the author considers the other side of Chinese development and explains that there is more to the story. Right from the beginning, the paper dislodges the notion that China is being predatory in Africa by pointing out that China has historical relationships there with longstanding aid commitments. The paper leans into the concept of relationality, which supports the idea that states' social relationships define their rational actions.²⁰ The main question the paper seeks to ask is: why did China give development assistance to Africa, even when it was very impoverished during the Mao era, and it hints at a deeper relationship despite western concerns.

This paper outright dismisses the notion that China is involved in sending "rogue aid" which is something that many policymakers and researchers believe true. In October of 2019, the

¹⁹ Pippa Morgan. 2018. "Ideology and Relationality: Chinese Aid in Africa Revisited." *Asian Perspective* 42, 207-238. Retrieved at <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/713819/pdf>

²⁰ Morgan page 207

U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross spoke directly about China's predatory lending to the IMF, saying "Their state-owned enterprises use Chinese materials and Chinese nationals to build projects with very little local content, and if defaults occur, they foreclose on those assets rather than renegotiating the loans."²¹ Still though, the author claims that the quantitative and qualitative research shows that China does not disproportionately invest in land grabbing schemes, resources, or authoritarian regimes.²² Instead, he argues that the relationship between China and Africa can be expressed through relationality, which centers on achieving rational material gains using preexisting relationships.

This international relationship dynamic can be observed after the People's Republic of China (PRC) was formed in 1949. Despite being very feeble in its young age, the PRC recognized the power of forming relationships with other developing countries in Africa. Guided by ideology, Mao purposely sought out nations with similar ideals to provide assistance to. Furthermore, with relationalism in mind, these decades old relationships, like the ones with Zambia and Tanzania, actually affect China's foreign aid allotments today. These state relationships were conditioned by the preexisting shared socialistic ideologies. Zambia and Tanzania are two of China's oldest allies and actually contain a Mao era railway project known as the TAZARA railway.²³ Even today, these two countries remain two of the largest ODA recipients from China, getting help in many crucial areas of health, education, transport, water supply, and agriculture. However, in the conclusion, the qualitative data featured in this analysis shows that the responses do not always positively correlate to traditional friendships, evidenced

²¹ PK Semler, "Trump takes aim at China's Belt and Road lending," October 22, 2019, The Asia Times, <https://asiatimes.com/2019/10/trump-takes-aim-at-chinas-belt-and-road-lending/>

²² Morgan page 210

²³ Morgan page 226-227

by those a Zambian president running on anti-China platforms.²⁴ While the countries may not always receive the aid well, the author was able to empirically prove that those countries with historic ideological ties to China continue to receive a disproportionate amount of aid compared to their other African neighbors.

This analysis has some interesting applications to our larger exploration of soft power and its ties to development assistance. On one hand, China continues to maintain strong influence over its historic allies in Africa and this supports the authors proposed focus on relationality as a framework for explaining real political maneuvers. It also admits that these traditional friendships do not always circumvent the political complexities of developing nations. Therefore, while the idea of framing international relations around traditional ties is not necessarily wrong, it does not always predict that a country will be shielded from other soft power influences solely because of differences in ideology. An analysis of these complexities would help to enhance this study because it is likely that corruption has caused disparities between elites and working classes, especially when China gives so generously. A 2018 study investigated local-level Chinese aid projects in Africa and it consistently found a correlation between these projects and increased corruption.²⁵ However, the researchers found that it was not because of increased economic activity, but rather that the Chinese presence alone had influenced the local norms in a negative way.²⁶ When using the same sort of calculations and data for World Bank aid projects, they did not find the same levels of increased corruption in Africa. Such research only helps to paint a clearer picture of what aid does on a local level, yet,

²⁴ Morgan page 230

²⁵ Ann-Sofie Isaksson & Andreas Kotsadam, "Chinese aid and local corruption," *Journal of Public Economics* 159, 146-159, Retrieved at <https://www.sciencedirect-com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/science/article/pii/S0047272718300021#s0055>

²⁶ Isaksson & Kotsadam page 157

when considered alongside the research presented in this paper, it only further highlights the need for consistent local surveys on public opinion. Just as well, it exemplifies an area of further study as local-level intricacies that could affect public opinion of China or the United States, even though such variables were not included in this study.

Hypothesis and Methods

In this research, we can expect to see a positive shift in a country's public opinion toward China or the United States that correlates to its level of official development assistance. This research hopes to test the real power of development assistance and its ability to influence public opinion as a measurement of soft power. The previous literature review section expressed that a crucial part of soft power is foreign policy, which in the case of this research is actualized through development assistance and aid. While cultural concepts are typically the most prominent pieces of soft power, the hypothesis featured here focused on development assistance with a country's foreign policy as a vehicle for soft power. To test this hypothesis, I used a combination of data gathered from the USIDFC, USAID, AIDDATA, Latinobarometro, and Afrobarometer.

The use of public opinion as a measurement of soft power was predicated on the belief that large flows of foreign investment into a country's economy would have some effect on the locals attitudes towards the donor country. The conceptual connection would be that development aid would be hailed as a success by government officials and its products would help elevate local economies. The success or failure of these investments would then consequently be indicated by changes in public opinion. In China, African Union leaders constantly praise deals that the two have achieved together, as seen in the 2018 Forum on China-

Africa Cooperation. At the forum, almost fifty African presidents traveled to Beijing and spoke on the benefits of their partnerships with China, using a variety of descriptors, all of which were positive.²⁷ However, China also has a tendency to send in its own workers, and even when it does hire locals, they are only in the lowest paid positions and placed under Chinese managers, with very few protected rights and often have to work in unsafe conditions.²⁸ One potentially interesting outcome of this could be that a negative correlation exists between African's public opinion of China and foreign development aid from them. As for China and Latin America, the actions of the Trump administration have encouraged many of them to give China more consideration. In the middle of 2019, President Trump finally actualized his threats to cut foreign aid to El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras citing shortcomings in their efforts to curb illegal immigration over the past years.²⁹ These threats had encouraged leaders in the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) to see China as very constructive in their region.³⁰ These high level, state actions and statements could reasonably be expected to influence how the public views another country. Therefore, this research feels that the flux and flow of billions of dollars in foreign aid assistance would affect its recipients' opinions of the donors and be captured in public opinion polls.

The methodology of testing this hypothesis involved sifting through the available public opinion polls concerning the two nations and looking closely at the overlapping periods where

²⁷ Abdi Latif Dahir, " 'Satisfied' and 'Inspired': All the Ways African Leaders Praised their Alliance with China," September 5, 2018, Quartz Africa, <https://qz.com/africa/1379457/china-africa-summit-african-leaders-praise-relations-with-beijing/>

²⁸ Socrates Mbamalu, "Plight of African Workers Under Chinese Employers," September 27, 2018, African Liberty, <https://www.africanliberty.org/2018/09/27/plight-of-african-workers-under-chinese-employers/>

²⁹ Lesley Wroughton and Patricia Zenegerle, "As Promised, Trump Slashes Aid to Central America over Migrants," June 17, 2019, Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-immigration-trump/as-promised-trump-slashes-aid-to-central-america-over-migrants-idUSKCN1TI2C7>

³⁰ Felipe Iturrieta, "Chile praises China's 'constructive role' at Latin American forum," January 21, 2018, Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-chile-china/chile-praises-chinas-constructive-role-at-latin-americanforum-idUSKBN1FA185>

China and the U.S. committed official development assistance (ODA). This research chose to focus more attention on Latin America because the quality of data in that region will allow for a better test of our hypothesis, as Latinobarometro performed consistent annual public opinion polls. Additionally, the data will include a slightly lesser exploration of Africa because China and the United States have invested in significant projects there. In Africa, the public assessments taken in previous years were much more limited and the questions were not repeated in subsequent surveys. The data will still be included though because there has been so much ODA activity in this region, but one can expect a much more accurate test of the hypothesis to be found in South America.

Operationalizing public opinion and evaluating it allows us to quantify the outcomes of policy. Economic variables like imports, exports, GDP, and median household income would undoubtedly be useful measures of the impact of funding aid projects. However, by studying the data regarding public opinions, perhaps it represents a higher-level metanarrative to the effects of important policy in the 21st century. To reflect this element of soft power, the data was combined to give a country an “Opinion Score.” This metric is simply the total percentage of positive responses which were “very good” or “good” minus the total percentage of negative responses like “bad” or “very bad.” Such a score gives us an informative snapshot of increases or decreases in public opinion. With this information, we can quickly observe local opinions on how beneficial they believe these programs to be and possibly even more. Alongside the surveys, it is necessary to collect the information from the respective aid agencies in charge of delegating funds.

For the United States, the methodology is looking at projects being funded by USAID, OPIC, and on through its evolution into the USIDFC (or just DFC). It should be noted that we

should expect to see a large amount of ODA projects on the U.S. side because of the level of detailed reporting, especially the data gathered through USAID. For China, tracking ODA is unfortunately not so easy, as they do not release any official record on this kind of assistance. Still though, the research intends to prove that countries willing to accept ODA would rationally develop an improved opinion of the donor countries willing to provide it. Therefore, with public opinion as the dependent variable, our dataset would ideally use the dollar amount of Chinese investment as the independent variable. The problem, as mentioned before, is that China does not release a country-by-country breakdown of this information. The solution to this problem lies in the datasets painstakingly developed by research groups like the College of William and Mary's AIDDATA and Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies' China-Africa Research Initiative (CARI).

In the current situation, there exists a primary source gap in reporting exactly how much China is spending on development assistance projects and where that money is going.

AIDDATA explains that "(China and other emerging donors) do not participate in existing global reporting systems" like the OECD's Creditor Reporting System and the International Aid Transparency Initiative.³¹ To remediate this, the research lab has developed a system to track underreported financial flows, what they call their TUFF methodology. Although it is time-consuming, TUFF "synthesizes and standardizes vast amounts of unstructured, project-level information from governments, international organizations, civil society groups, the private sector, journalists, and researchers." The data they obtain helps them track actors operating outside of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Furthermore, for added context as to the scope of AIDDATA's research, these non-DAC donors are estimated to be

³¹ "Tracking Underreported Financial Flows," AIDDATA, accessed February 26, 2020, <https://www.aiddata.org/methods/tracking-underreported-financial-flows>

typically offering between \$11 billion to \$41.7 billion in development assistance per year.

Another similar research group is CARI at Johns Hopkins that focuses on China-Africa lending data since 2007 and utilizes many of the same exhaustive investigation methods as AIDDATA to arrive at a comprehensive dataset. For Africa alone, the total amount that “Chinese government, banks, and contractors extended was US \$143 billion in loans to African governments and their state-owned enterprises (SOEs).”³² These high levels of spending in regions of interest warrant a closer look at its effects on China’s soft power in the region. In Africa, there exist many under-utilized natural resources in countries that simply lack the means to capitalize on them. While in South America, any outside attempts to draw neighboring countries away from the U.S. necessitates serious evaluation because of economic and security concerns.

This study opens up the door for connecting it to even more pointed, local studies how policymakers in countries receiving financial assistance responded to praise or criticism as the deals went into motion. Some exciting scenarios could arise from this exploration. Do countries that shift to a more positive view of China also become less intimidated by its military spending? Have some countries responded inversely because they see Chinese or American funded projects as invasive? Does the fact that the American model emphasizes a nation's sovereignty and supports the private industry with local workers have more of an impact? These are just some questions that could be pursued further than the scope of this current project. Going forward, we will consider the data in various case studies where there were significant changes to a nation's attitudes towards China or the United States.

Data

Data-South America-China ODA-like-flows

³² “CARI Loan Data Overview,” CARI, accessed February 26, 2020, <http://www.sais-cari.org/data>

To test our hypothesis linking public opinion to the amount of money invested by China, we can track some of the survey results put out by Latinbarometro. Starting in 2008, we can begin by tracking the survey question: "I would like to know your opinion about the following countries that I am going to read. Do you have a very good, good, bad, or very bad opinion of China?" The results of the 2008 to 2018 surveys can be seen below:

Public Opinion Scores-South Americans on China											
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Bolivia	48.6	63.3	56.6	59.4		42.5		43	43	49.4	32
Brazil	33.7	30.8	50.5	37		39.6		39.5	44.7	48	52.7
Colombia	56.2	63.6	62.6	50.8		19		31.3	50	70.5	57.6
Chile	51.7	49.4	51.3	57.5		28.7		17.6	30.1	31.2	32.9
Ecuador	44.8	39.4	67	53.4		44.3		28.4	53.4	35.1	40.6
Peru	62.2	74.7	66.1	66.5		40.9		44.3	55.8	52.6	45.6
Uruguay	49.1	47	55.8	41		49		30	45.8	54.7	62.9
Venezuela	60	67.3	75	67		52.9		33.6	38.5	52	40.5

When we cross-reference this data with that of the AIDDATA, we can see that in 2008, only Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru received official development assistance (ODA) like flows from China.³³ Some project highlights are the \$300,000 in flood relief to Colombia, \$100,000 to help fund de-mining efforts in the Ecuador-Peru border region, and a cultural center that China built in Peru. The following year, here are the results of a survey asking the same question for those three countries:

2009		Very good	Good	Bad	Very bad
[%68%] Bolivia	900	11.7	70	15.8	2.6
[%170%] Colombia	850	14.6	60.1	21.7	3.6

³³ AIDDATA-China ODA Like Flows

[%604%] Perú	917	14.1	73.3	10.5	2.2
(N)	2.667	13.4	68	15.8	2.7

In trying to account for time lag, we can even look at the following year, 2010, for these three countries to see if the soft power increase was only delayed:

2010		Very good	Good	Bad	Very bad
[%68%] Bolivia	797	11.8	66.5	17.3	4.4
[%170%] Colombia	838	12.4	63.3	20.8	3.6
[%604%] Perú	920	12.4	70.7	14.6	2.4
(N)	2.555	12.2	66.9	17.5	3.4

The results for 2009 show that both Bolivia and Peru's populations responded positively, while Colombia actually became slightly more polarized towards China, with respondents moving away from the middle options. However, there is a gap that needs to be accounted for, and that is the dollar amount of projects, like the cultural center built by China for Peru, that do not have a dollar amount associated with them. To calculate this here, we will just look at the number of projects in a country and see if it corresponds to shifts in public opinion. The table for China's ODA projects in South America from 2008 to 2014 can be observed below:

Chinese ODA Projects in South American Countries							
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Bolivia	1	4		1	2		
Brazil				1			
Colombia	1	1	6	8		2	1
Chile			2				
Ecuador		3				1	
Peru	5						1
Uruguay		2	1	2			1
Venezuela							1

Each number represents the number of projects that China committed to the corresponding country in the form of official development assistance. The next step is to build a similar table that reflects the percentage point change for the same years. To accomplish this, the survey data was compiled and the participants who gave an "I don't know" answer to the question were removed leaving us with four categories that are very good, good, bad, and very bad. It should be noted that the exclusion of “I don’t know” responses is not because it is insignificant, but rather because if there was a shift in soft power, the participant would move from this neutral category and on into a positive or negative group. Next, to consolidate the number even further, a score was created for each country's opinion that was simply the positive views minus the negative views. It should be noted that there is a gap in the survey data for 2012 and 2014, so 2015 was included to show the attitudes at the end of the period being studied. One can see the countries' China opinion scores below:

South American Public Opinion Score on China (Positive views - Negative views = Score)								
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Bolivia	48.6	63.3	56.6	59.4		42.5		43
Brazil	33.7	30.8	50.5	37		39.6		39.5
Colombia	56.2	63.6	62.6	50.8		19		31.3
Chile	51.7	49.4	51.3	57.5		28.7		17.6
Ecuador	44.8	39.4	67	53.4		44.3		28.4
Peru	62.2	74.7	66.1	66.5		40.9		44.3
Uruguay	49.1	47	55.8	41		49		30
Venezuela	60	67.3	75	67		52.9		33.6

As we will discuss further in the following section of this paper, there does not seem to be a strong correlation between the number of development projects China begins and the South American public opinion of China.

Data-Africa-China ODA-like-flows

As referenced before, according to CARI, China has pumped at least \$143 billion dollars into African projects alone since 2007. Given the high volume of countries in Africa, this research would ideally focus on the top ten African countries that China invests in. According to the Brookings Institute, they are: Nigeria, Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, Zambia, South Africa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Congo, Cameroon, and Mozambique.³⁴ The problem is that the group seems to have run the surveys somewhat sporadically and excluded a few key countries necessary for our research. For the sake of consistency, we will try to structure the data the same for both sections. For the survey data, we will use information gathered by the research group at Afrobarometer, which is a “non-partisan, pan-African research institution conducting public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, the economy and society in 30+ countries repeated on a regular cycle.”³⁵

As mentioned before, the data expressed here would have significantly benefitted from surveys with more systematic and consistent questions. For example, back in 2008, Afrobarometer sent out a public opinion survey that asked, "In your opinion, how much do each of the following do to help your country, or have not you heard enough to say? China." Their questions reached six of the ten countries that China invests the most in, and they were: Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia. Here the answer data needs to be adjusted into positive and negative categories. Given that the choices were "do nothing, no help," "help a little bit," "help somewhat," and "help a lot," we are going to assume that the first two would fall on the negative side and the last two as positives. If we perform the same kind of scoring as we did with the South America data, it comes out as below:

³⁴ Mariama Sow, "Figures of the Week: Chinese Investment in Africa," The Brookings Institute: Africa in Focus, September 6, 2018, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2018/09/06/figures-of-the-week-chinese-investment-in-africa/#:~:text=>

³⁵ "About Afrobarometer," Afrobarometer, accessed February 26, 2020, <https://www.afrobarometer.org/about>

African Public Opinion Scores on China				
	2008-2009	2010-2011	2012-2013	2014-2015
Nigeria	10			
Kenya	28			
Zambia	52			
South Africa	-13			
Mozambique	42			
Tanzania	18			

Further research revealed that the Pew Research center put out a survey in 2013 that contained eight African countries, three of which (South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria) are within our scope. The question asked is one that would have been profoundly helpful to this research if it had been consistently polled. It asked, "It is most important to have strong ties with China or the U.S. (or both)?"³⁶ If we were to score opinions in favor of strong ties with China as a positive and those in line with the U.S. as a negative, and counting those who said both as neutral, then we could arrive at the following scores for China in 2013:

African Public Opinion Scores on China				
	2008-2009	2010-2011	2012-2013	2014-2015
Nigeria	10		20	
Kenya	28		-5	
Zambia	52			
South Africa	-13		-10	
Mozambique	42			

Finally, the survey data from the 2014-2015 is the most pertinent to testing our hypothesis because the question was "In general, do you think that China's economic influence

³⁶ "Despite Challenges, Africans Are Optimistic About the Future," Pew Research Center, accessed at <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2013/11/08/despite-challenges-africans-are-optimistic-about-the-future/#views-of-the-u-s-and-china>

on [country question was asked in] is mostly positive, or mostly negative, or haven't you heard enough to say?" By accounting for the positives and negatives, as well as disregarding the "don't know" and "neutral" answers, we arrive at our scores.

African Public Opinion Scores on China				
	2008-2009	2010-2011	2012-2013	2014-2015
Nigeria	10		20	60
Kenya	28		-5	68
Zambia	52			62
South Africa	-13		-10	31
Mozambique	42			56
Tanzania	18			55

It is evident that these survey comparison conditions are not ideal, but they do show a significant shift in the local sentiment towards China. Now, if we compare this with the AIDDATA (shown below), we can see how many ODA projects were implemented and how it correlates to our data.

Chinese ODA Projects in African Countries (By Year)							
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Nigeria		1		1	15	3	2
Kenya	16	12	23	11	6	14	6
Zambia		10	12	5	4	1	34
South Africa		1				1	
Mozambique		3	5	2	4	8	1
Tanzania	94	8	68	10	11	15	6

So while we will discuss it in more detail in a subsequent section, it does not appear that official development assistance alone can be used as an indicator of how public opinion will change. Now, we will look at what the data says about the United States, and its ODA flows abroad.

Data-South America-United States ODA-like-flows through USAID and the USIDFC

When we looked at China in the previous section concerning its development assistance in South America, we had no primary sources to indicate how much ODA was being given out and to whom it was going. However, with the United States, we have access to a wealth of data from USAID, OPIC and the newly formed USIDFC have had any effect on public opinion (as a barometer for regional soft power). For USAID, we will treat each individual line item of ODA as a project, similar to what we did for China. When combined with the information on DFC projects (including those from OPIC), we have the following table shows the number of combined projects implemented in a year for the respective country:

USAID and USIDFC Projects in South America											
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Bolivia	174	132	83	71	63	116	23	14	17	2	4
Brazil	77	89	87	89	54	53	46	40	31	42	39
Colombia	57	94	135	129	182	227	226	206	179	181	243
Chile	0	0	9	4	1	8	4	7	9	5	3
Ecuador	112	116	98	103	55	90	82	54	40	16	16
Peru	180	136	172	145	92	154	154	196	175	166	189
Uruguay	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Venezuela	23	18	20	15	26	45	29	45	28	30	49

It should be noted here that the data range was extended in an attempt to capture any recent development assistance programs that might have been started to counter China directly. However, as we will discuss later, this table compares the same list of countries that China has invested in, and the lack of programs in recent years could be in line with policy shifts. Just as well, we should look at what the public opinion scores of the United States was during these years.

Public Opinion Scores-South Americans on the United States
--

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Bolivia	2.5	41.1	36.4	41.4		13.6		13.1	34.3	5.6	4.7
Brazil	25.4	59.1	61.6	59		66.2		59.9	71.2	58.9	56.2
Colombia	32.4	72.7	68.7	50.6		41.6		31	61.2	63.3	50.9
Chile	53.6	69	71.7	68.8		59.7		56.8	65.6	64.5	55.9
Ecuador	45.5	63.7	81.8	67.2		64.6		66.4	72.3	72.3	66.8
Peru	40.8	64.2	67.1	65.5		57.8		60.5	75.2	51.2	28.4
Uruguay	-0.6	64	53.2	22.4		42.9		46.3	52.3	22	19.6
Venezuela	-10	40.6	35.8	20.8		23.6		13.7	36.4	25	30.4

Again and unfortunately, if we use the previous table as a signal for where public opinions should be shifting, there does not seem to be any consistent correlation. However, as noted before, it might be a part of the grander strategy not to begin ODA projects where China already has a strong foothold.

Data-Africa-US ODA Like Flows

As was similar to the data in the China section, acquiring consistent African public opinion data for the United States was challenging. The surveys for the United States were inconsistent and suffered from poor coverage on some of the countries this research would prefer to focus on. If we follow the structure of our opinion scores that Africans gave China, our table can only be completed as follows:

African Public Opinion Scores on US				
	2008-2009	2010-2011	2012-2013	2014-2015
Nigeria	26			
Kenya	65			
Zambia	48			
South Africa	-4			
Mozambique	46			
Tanzania	55			

These public opinion scores will require supplemental information in order to gauge the local public's perception of the United States. We will use the same survey question from 2012-2013 that we did for China previously, but this time we have to subtract those in favor of stronger ties with China from those who prefer the United States. The table now looks like this:

African Public Opinion Scores on US				
	2008-2009	2010-2011	2012-2013	2014-2015
Nigeria	26		-20	
Kenya	65		5	
Zambia	48			
South Africa	-4		10	
Mozambique	46			
Tanzania	55			

Additionally, for the 2014 and 2015 year, a survey polled countries in Africa on the question, "In your opinion, which of the following countries if any would be the best model for the future development of our country?" Again, if we treat votes in favor of the United States as a positive, and those for China as a negative, then our table will look like this:

African Public Opinion Scores on US				
	2008-2009	2010-2011	2012-2013	2014-2015
Nigeria	26		-20	19
Kenya	65		5	25
Zambia	48			-8
South Africa	-4		10	10
Mozambique	46			-21
Tanzania	55			-5

Although it is not a very high-resolution study on public opinion, despite the gaps, this does give us a number to at least compare against China's scores. For our final piece of data, we can use the USAID and DFC's database of ODA projects in Africa to acquire the number of projects taking place.³⁷ The table below shows the number of projects listed from the year 2008 and on until 2016.

USAID and USIDFC Projects in Africa											
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Nigeria	234	262	275	148	234	206	265	282	288	303	313
Kenya	247	224	301	286	290	386	424	327	349	351	236
Zambia	135	195	110	127	218	185	188	186	183	148	154
South Africa	142	177	152	113	134	174	176	158	170	185	155
Mozambique	212	184	131	173	162	180	211	171	193	217	168
Tanzania	206	204	177	230	220	216	297	234	191	213	173

With this last piece of data organized, now we can discuss and interpret it.

Discussion

In collecting this data, the research forwarded here hoped to find a clear and significant demonstration of increased development assistance producing an increase in either the United States' or China's soft power. In this case, the data measured soft power as the public opinion of the countries receiving official development assistance. Public opinion surveys were given a score, which consisted of positive views minus the negative views.

The most reliable data came from the countries in South America because they have a much more normalized polling structure. Public opinion data for the United States and China was easy

³⁷ "All Active Projects," Development Finance Corporation, accessed at <https://www.dfc.gov/our-impact/all-active-projects>

to acquire and document, as was the data for ODA flowing into these countries. We will begin our evaluation with South America because of the data consistency and availability.

Starting with an analysis of the information on China, we have a pretty good snapshot of public opinions of the country in South America alongside the ODA projects being implemented.

South American Public Opinion Score on China (Positive views - Negative views = Score)								
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Bolivia	48.6	63.3	56.6	59.4		42.5		43
Brazil	33.7	30.8	50.5	37		39.6		39.5
Colombia	56.2	63.6	62.6	50.8		19		31.3
Chile	51.7	49.4	51.3	57.5		28.7		17.6
Ecuador	44.8	39.4	67	53.4		44.3		28.4
Peru	62.2	74.7	66.1	66.5		40.9		44.3
Uruguay	49.1	47	55.8	41		49		30
Venezuela	60	67.3	75	67		52.9		33.6

China ODA Projects in South American Countries							
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Bolivia	1	4		1	2		
Brazil				1			
Colombia	1	1	6	8		2	1
Chile			2				
Ecuador		3				1	
Peru	5						1
Uruguay		2	1	2			1
Venezuela							1

Starting with Bolivia, we can see that in 2009, with a score of 63.3, China committed four specific projects to the country for development. With such a large influx, we should expect to see a positive change in the following year. However, this was not the case, and public opinion fell 6.7 points in 2010. It could be possible that because of the delayed benefits of aid projects, then there might also be a delay in positive increases to public opinion. Still, per the data, it does

not appear to be the case here. The most striking example from our sample countries here would be from Colombia. China gave them the most consistent amount of attention, and public opinion still plummeted. While there were some positive relationships like in Brazil, Chile, and Ecuador, the expectation with development projects would be that the increase in soft power would be more stable and long-lasting. This was not the case with China, so maybe it will be different for America.

South American Public Opinion Scores on the United States											
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Bolivia	2.5	41.1	36.4	41.4		13.6		13.1	34.3	5.6	4.7
Brazil	25.4	59.1	61.6	59		66.2		59.9	71.2	58.9	56.2
Colombia	32.4	72.7	68.7	50.6		41.6		31	61.2	63.3	50.9
Chile	53.6	69	71.7	68.8		59.7		56.8	65.6	64.5	55.9
Ecuador	45.5	63.7	81.8	67.2		64.6		66.4	72.3	72.3	66.8
Peru	40.8	64.2	67.1	65.5		57.8		60.5	75.2	51.2	28.4
Uruguay	-0.6	64	53.2	22.4		42.9		46.3	52.3	22	19.6
Venezuela	-10	40.6	35.8	20.8		23.6		13.7	36.4	25	30.4

USAID and USIDFC Projects in South America											
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Bolivia	174	132	83	71	63	116	23	14	17	2	4
Brazil	77	89	87	89	54	53	46	40	31	42	39
Colombia	57	94	135	129	182	227	226	206	179	181	243
Chile	0	0	9	4	1	8	4	7	9	5	3
Ecuador	112	116	98	103	55	90	82	54	40	16	16
Peru	180	136	172	145	92	154	154	196	175	166	189
Uruguay	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Venezuela	23	18	20	15	26	45	29	45	28	30	49

The number of projects started by the United States in South America is far greater than China's commitments and that offers us some good data to analyze. For Brazil during this period, 2008 through 2011 had a steady rise, but then in 2012, the aid starts to decline. In Colombia, there is a steady increase that still continues today and when compared to the surveys,

does not appear to have affected it significantly. The same can be said for the country of Peru, which saw consistent investment and hardly any relationship between our two variables, even declining to by half from 2017-2018. Now, let us look at the data regarding soft power in Africa.

African Public Opinion Scores on China				
	2008-2009	2010-2011	2012-2013	2014-2015
Nigeria	10		20	60
Kenya	28		-5	68
Zambia	52			62
South Africa	-13		-10	31
Mozambique	42			56
Tanzania	18			55

Chinese ODA Projects in African Countries (By Year)							
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Nigeria		1		1	15	3	2
Kenya	16	12	23	11	6	14	6
Zambia		10	12	5	4	1	34
South Africa		1				1	
Mozambique		3	5	2	4	8	1
Tanzania	94	8	68	10	11	15	6

For this discussion, it should be emphasized that the survey data here is not very consistent. For each set of years that were used to determine China's public opinion score, the survey question was different. In an attempt to provide a similar scoring system across the scope of years observed, essentially, all votes in the negative for China were then subtracted from the total positive votes. Still, we can draw some similar conclusions to the South American study in

that there is no strong correlation with public opinion and the number of ODA projects being started. In Kenya, which saw annually high amounts of projects still had their public opinion score of China drop over a few years. Even in Zambia, which had thirty-four new ODA items from China in 2014 alone, it only saw an increase of ten points in six years. Then if we look at the United States, we will find similar inconsistencies.

African Public Opinion Scores on US				
	2008-2009	2010-2011	2012-2013	2014-2015
Nigeria	26		-20	19
Kenya	65		5	25
Zambia	48			-8
South Africa	-4		10	10
Mozambique	46			-21
Tanzania	55			-5

USAID and USIDFC Projects in Africa											
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Nigeria	234	262	275	148	234	206	265	282	288	303	313
Kenya	247	224	301	286	290	386	424	327	349	351	236
Zambia	135	195	110	127	218	185	188	186	183	148	154
South Africa	142	177	152	113	134	174	176	158	170	185	155
Mozambique	212	184	131	173	162	180	211	171	193	217	168
Tanzania	206	204	177	230	220	216	297	234	191	213	173

Unfortunately, here again, there does not seem to be any reliable evidence that the number of projects sanctioned by the United States will affect increases or decreases in favorable public opinion. This conclusion is unfortunate because foreign aid has been effectively used for development and diplomacy, as demonstrated in Carol Lancaster's work. Just as well,

policymakers would universally benefit from having a scoring system that captures the effectiveness of certain types of aid. If it were so easily conveyed, they would be able to have a more unified vision of how to direct foreign aid policy. The research makes it clear that investments in aid projects, like those in the infrastructure sector, have positive effects on even rural communities as it allows them to participate in the economy more. However, you need good data to get the most conclusive results possible.

The survey data on this continent is the weakest between the two, and this is problematic because policymakers would benefit from knowledge on the shifting influence dynamic happening in Africa, where China is investing a large number of its efforts into projects that overshadow those of the United States. The evidence of China's deep African historical alliances and the benefits of its projects there, shown earlier in the literature review section, highlight the need for a structured annual survey of the countries on the African continent. Acquiring this information would help to better correlate soft power with the efforts of donor countries because the gaps in the available data do not rule out a relationship. Although, the results did not prove the hypothesis, they do represent a basic framework for explaining to policymakers how more aid dollars spent does not equal support for the United States.

Despite not proving a correlation, this study is useful to policymakers for proving that prior to making generous aid donations abroad, there are more variables to consider for the optimum foreign policy outcome. Should the research presented in this study be combined or built into one that has more local level data, United States foreign policy stands to benefit tremendously. This data would allow the research with higher resolution which could illuminate important public opinion differences like elite versus working class.

Conclusion

The conclusion with this research in its current state is that even with consistent surveys and ODA data, there is no significant correlation between shifts in public opinion (as a measure of soft power) and the amount of development assistance they receive. This paper attempted to demonstrate a simple metric for policymakers to use as an indicator for areas of additional interest when considering future foreign development assistance projects. The problem is not with public opinion as a measurement of soft power. Publications like the Soft Power 30 have consistently shown that the global balance of soft power moves in line with public opinion, alongside other factors like events and policies.³⁸ However, the simple act of committing development assistance to another country does not cleanly show that the citizens of the recipient countries see this as a net benefit. Even when assuming that projects would take time, there is not any significant indication of a soft power increase lag concerning aid projects. Still, though, the research could be modified some changes to increase the overall accuracy and resolution of the data points.

If China would provide the dollar amounts of its commitments to the development projects abroad, then perhaps one could arrive at much more insightful conclusions about the market and soft power. Public opinion still seems to be a good indicator of soft power, but cross-referencing it with shifts and changes in the dollar amount is imperative. It is highly unfortunate that the public opinion surveys out of Africa are poorly employed, especially since most of the emerging economies being invested in by the United States and China would benefit from better analysis. Ideally, this research would have reached conclusions that made gauging project effectiveness more concise.

³⁸ Mcclory, "Conclusion and Look Ahead-Soft Power 30: A Global Ranking of Soft Power 2019, "p: 115

Given that the United States and China are competing superpowers with very different ideologies, one of the expected outcomes was that an increase in the public opinion score of one might lead to decreases in the score of the other. That was not the case, and often a drop in the public opinion score of one would also be seen in the other. The hypothesis for this research was predicated on the belief that if two world superpowers were giving so much attention to foreign development assistance, one could expect to see the public respond accordingly. Such a change in influence would then also represent a good measure of the effective increase or decrease of a country's soft power.

The USIDFC, USAID and Chinese foreign development institutions seek to fund projects that should better the livelihoods of locals in that area. Even if China intends to put poorer countries into a debt trap, the locals should see benefits, and one would expect this to be expressed through positive changes in public perception. If America funds projects that will be completed by local workforces and benefit members of that area, then one would expect people might have a positive association with them.

Bibliography

Afrobarometer, “About Afrobarometer,” accessed February 26, 2020,

<https://www.afrobarometer.org/about>

AIDDATA, “AidData’s Geocoded Global Chinese Official Finance, Version 1.1.1,” Geocoded

China Data, <https://www.aiddata.org/data/geocoded-chinese-global-official-finance-dataset>

AIDDATA, “Tracking Underreported Financial Flows,” accessed February 26, 2020,

<https://www.aiddata.org/methods/tracking-underreported-financial-flows>

Bluhm, Richard, Axel Dreher, Andreas Fuchs, Bradley Parks, Austin Strange, Michael Tierney.

“Working Paper 64-Connective Financing: Chinese Infrastructure Projects and the Diffusion of Economic Activity in Developing Countries,” September 2018, AIDDATA

Dahir, Abdi Latif “ ‘Satisfied’ and ‘Inspired’: All the Ways African Leaders Praised their

Alliance with China,” September 5, 2018, Quartz Africa,

<https://qz.com/africa/1379457/china-africa-summit-african-leaders-praise-relations-with-beijing/>

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (ERBD). “Belt and Road Initiative,”

<https://www.ebrd.com/what-we-do/belt-and-road/overview.html>

Isaksson, Ann-Sofie & Kotsadam, Andreas, “Chinese aid and local corruption,” *Journal of*

Public Economics 159, 146-159, Retrieved at [https://www.sciencedirect-](https://www.sciencedirect-com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/science/article/pii/S0047272718300021#s0055)

[com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/science/article/pii/S0047272718300021#s0055](https://www.sciencedirect-com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/science/article/pii/S0047272718300021#s0055)

Iturrieta, Felipe, “Chile praises China’s ‘constructive role’ at Latin American forum,” January

21, 2018, Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-chile-china/chile-praises-chinas-constructive-role-at-latin-americanforum-idUSKBN1FA185>

- Lancaster, Carol. *Foreign Aid: Diplomacy, Development, and Domestic Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. Ebook
- Mbamalu, Socrates, “Plight of African Workers Under Chinese Employers,” September 27, 2018, African Liberty, <https://www.africanliberty.org/2018/09/27/plight-of-african-workers-under-chinese-employers/>
- Mcclory, Jonathan. *Soft Power 30: A Global Ranking of Soft Power 2019*. Portland-facebook-USC Center on Public Diplomacy, 2019, <https://softpower30.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/The-Soft-Power-30-Report-2019-1.pdf>
- Morgan, Pippa. 2018. “Ideology and Relationality: Chinese Aid in Africa Revisited.” *Asian Perspective* 42, 207-238. Retrieved at <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/713819/pdf>
- Nye, Joseph. *The Future of Power*. New York: Public Affairs, 2011.
- Pew Research Center, “Despite Challenges, Africans are Optimistic About the Future,” accessed at <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2013/11/08/despite-challenges-africans-are-optimistic-about-the-future/#views-of-the-u-s-and-china>
- Semler, PK, “Trump takes aim at China’s Belt and Road lending,” October 22, 2019, The Asia Times, <https://asiatimes.com/2019/10/trump-takes-aim-at-chinas-belt-and-road-lending/>
- Sow, Mariama. “Figures of the Week: Chinese Investment in Africa,” The Brookings Institute: Africa in Focus, September 6, 2018, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2018/09/06/figures-of-the-week-chinese-investment-in-africa/#:~:text=>
- USIDFC, “All Active Projects,” Development Finance Corporation, accessed at <https://www.dfc.gov/our-impact/all-active-projects>
- Walt, Stephen M. “The End of Hubris And the New Age of American Restraint.” *Foreign Affairs*, May 1, 2019.

<http://web.b.ebscohost.com.proxy1.library.jhu.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=1&sid=0f919544-6321-4450-b452-88dc9ed3d69a%40pdv-v-sessmgr06>

Win, Thida and Yoon C. Cho. "Exploring the Effectiveness of Official Development Assistance: Comparison Analysis of Developing Countries." *Journal of Marketing Thought*, vol.5, no. 3, pp: 22-32

Wroughton, Lesley and Patricia Zenegerle, "As Promised, Trump Slashes Aid to Central America over Migrants," June 17, 2019, Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-immigration-trump/as-promised-trump-slashes-aid-to-central-america-over-migrants-idUSKCN1TI2C7>

Curriculum Vita

Thomas Christopher Durrence was born on November 21, 1989 in Atlanta, Georgia. After graduating from the University of Georgia with a BA, History in 2012, he moved to South Korea to support English programs in rural public schools. After moving back home in 2017, he began attending Johns Hopkins University later that year. In May of 2020, he will have earned a Master of Arts in Global Security Studies from the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences with a Certificate of Intelligence.