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**VIEW OF CHINA IN SOUTH AFRICA**  
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## INTRODUCTION

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Nowadays, the world is keeping a close eye on China. The Asian country has already surprised the global audience in many ways: the “Chinese-style socialism”, the Chinese development model have been seen as viable alternatives to the Western development model. Today’s hottest China related topic is its involvement in Africa, especially Sub-Saharan Africa. An unprecedented economic cooperation began a few years ago between PRC and the African countries.

The cooperation is characterized by a growing trade between PRC and the continent. This cooperation is also accompanied by a growing influence of the Asian country. Their presence is at the same time beneficial and detrimental to African countries. For instance, Chinese development assistance, commonly seen as infrastructural investments, is helping the developing countries of Africa. On the other hand, the Chinese goods flooding the African markets are destroying African jobs. Thus, the resurging Sino-African relations are a full of issues for scholars to research and given its actuality are a relevant topic in the fields of International Relations.

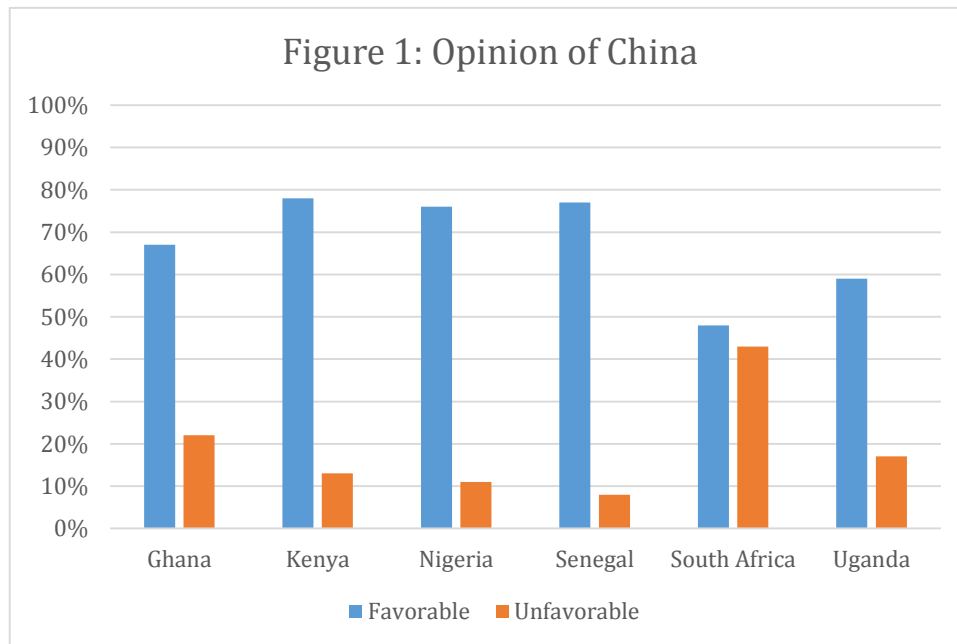
In a recent article, Joseph Nye discussed the issues of Russian and Chinese use of soft power. He argued that for a growing country, like China, the use of soft power is a good strategy, “but for all its efforts, China has earned a limited return on its investment” (Nye, 2013). He also points out that Chinese soft power is successful only in some regions –Africa and Latin America. Driven by curiosity, I put this latter point under closer scrutiny and looked into some public opinion polls.<sup>1</sup>

Pew Global polled some African countries about their view of China. The results clearly show that African countries have a favorable view of China, but one country deviates from the others polled. In South Africa only 48% of the respondents had a favorable view of China. Compared to others countries – for instance, Nigeria, where 78% of the respondents had a favorable view – South Africa clearly outstands (pewglobal.org, 2013). Figure 1 is a good illustration of<sup>2</sup>the South African public opinion being neither favorable nor unfavorable towards the Asian country.

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<sup>1</sup> Public opinion polls are a method used by Nye to measure a country soft power (Nye, 1990 in Paradise, 2009, p. 663).

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix for the used data



*Figure 1: Opinion of China, 2013; Source: own figure based on Pew Global's database, 2013*

To my best knowledge, only a very few opinion polls examining China's relation to Africa exist. Another poll I found is the BBC World Service poll from 2004 (globescan.com, s.a.). According to the poll, in Nigeria 68% of the respondents had a mainly positive view of the Chinese influence. In contrast, only 34% of the respondents in South Africa were mainly positive. Therefore, this paper investigates why the South African public opinion is less favorable towards China. I decided to base my research on the soft power concept. *My hypothesis is that the public opinion is less favorable towards the Asian country, because China is not using its soft power adequately.*

The paper begins with a theoretical part, where I clarify the definition of soft power and I shortly discuss the theoretical framework and its relevance. Then, I will continue with my analysis. The structure of the latter is based on the theoretical framework, which was discussed earlier. After the analysis, I will summarize and draw my conclusions. In the end, I will also point out other interesting areas, where further research needs to be made.

The methodology, although descriptive statistics are used – for instance survey data, in order to examine the South Africans' view of democracy or statistics supporting the raising attractiveness of China – is mainly qualitative: document analysis; hypothesis testing by using a theoretical construct borrowed from mainstream International Relations theory, use of “theoretical lenses”.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

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To analyze this phenomenon, I will use one of the theoretical constructs of mainstream International Relations theory, the soft power concept. This chapter is mainly based on the works of Joseph Nye. The soft power concept deals with power – “the ability to get the outcomes one wants” (Nye, 2004, p. 1). Power can be analyzed by examining the behaviors, which are taken in order to reach one’s goals. After the identification of these behaviors, its resources should be examined. With the adequate resources and behavior, the desired outcomes can be reached in world politics. Joseph Nye identified two forms of power: hard and soft power. (Nye, 2004)

### NEO-LIBERALISM AND THE SOFT POWER CONCEPT

Although the works of Joseph Nye and the soft power concept is rather difficult to categorize and be attached to a single theoretical tradition in IR, most scholars approach them from a neo-liberal perspective. In the next short section, I shortly summarize the basic tenets of Liberalism and Neo-liberalism, since it is easier to make sense of the soft power concept and my understanding thereof, when placed into a broader theoretical context.

Liberalism (also known as Idealism, not to be confused with political liberalism or neo-liberalism) is the most important theoretical tradition in IR beside Realism. Its theorists share an optimistic view of the human nature. They believe that behavior is the result of various social interactions. Rationality in a liberal context has a different meaning, than rationality has in a realist one. For liberalists, rationality means the pursuit of interests and the ability to understand moral principles. Therefore, there is a chance for a harmony of interests between people - therefore, the possibility of cooperation. The main actors in liberalism are thus, states and humans. Liberal theory also adds non-governmental organizations, multinational corporations and institutions to the main actors. Cooperation between the actors originates from the liberalist optimism regarding human nature. The harmony of interests makes states abandon self-help, because they can still achieve their aims and thus, they can cooperate. To the question of power, liberalists answer that governments are needed, but the centralization of power may lead to false outcomes, therefore political pluralism is an option to consider and democracy should be the organizing principle. Liberal IR theory departs from the assumption that just as people are capable of creating a legitimate order through consent (referring to the thoughts of 17th century philosopher John Locke), this should also be the case on the level of states. (Baylis et al., 2001; Burchill et al, 2005)

The neo-neo debate summarizes the main differences between the neoliberal and the neorealist theory. Both theories agree on the anarchic nature of the system. Neo-realists and neo-liberals disagree about the states' perception of their own interests. Neo-realists argue that states are only interested in the relative gains, whereas neo-liberals claim that states want to maximize their absolute gains. Another aspect of the debate is how the two theories see institutions and regimes. Neo-liberals claim that they enhance cooperation, while neo-realists argue that the anarchic constraints on cooperation are not decreased by them. (Baylis et al, 2001)

Neo-liberal institutionalism, formerly known as regime theory is an important strand within neo-liberalism. States are rational actors, seeking to maximize their gains and institutions are the mediators, who try to manage the issues emerging during this cooperation. One crucial process in the focus of the neo-liberal research agenda is globalization. Neo-liberal institutionalists recognize that there are obstacles in the process of cooperation, for instance the question of cheating, which may emerge while states are managing their common concerns which arise through these globalized processes (the most widely cited examples being climate change and terrorism), and they opt for maximizing their relative gains instead of absolute gains. Institutions have a role in securing the fair-play in International Relations, providing incentives against cheating and making supranational cooperation a possibility - turning the zero-sum game into a positive sum one. Robert O. Keohane, one of the main theorists of neo-liberalism, praised institutions since they facilitate the flow of information, reduce transaction costs, help to make credible commitments and make coordination possible. This process of building supranational institutionalized cooperation is also known as regime formation. (Baylis et al., 2001; Burchill et al, 2005)

The complex interdependence theory introduced by Keohane and Nye was another neoliberal approach. The theory suggests that the actors involved in the international interactions became more various and more interdependent. The world presented by the complex interdependence theory has four aspects: first, states and non-state actors become more connected on each other; second, a new set of issues, which are hard to define appear globally; third, the channels of interaction through boundaries are being discovered; four, the loss of importance of the military force as an asset to statecraft. The theory also suggests that globalization increases connections and the ways to interact. (Baylis, et al, 2001)

The concept of soft power can be attached to these basic neo-liberal tenets in various ways. To start with, neo-liberalism examines normative structures beside material ones –

institutions in the neo-liberal understanding do not only refer to arrangements in the strict sense of the word, but also ‘rules of the game’ in a broader sense. Soft power resources – culture, political values – can be interpreted as resources that create normative structures.

In the soft power concept, shared values and norms makes easier to get the desired outcomes. The constitutional bargain described in Nye’s work is strengthening the longevity of cooperation between actors (Nye, 2004). The neo-liberal theories argue the same way, the shared policy agendas constitute institutionalized cooperation between states. The role of globalization and within it the raising importance of information is of key importance in the soft power concept. The latter facilitate communication, making the world more dependent, which is also a focal point in neo-liberalism. Another common starting point is that in recent times, military power has been overshadowed by other means of influence such as economic power, global trade and transnational companies, which have become more important than state and military-centered power politics alone

This neo-liberal theoretical framework has its limits and needs to be carefully interpreted, however: one has to bear in mind also that power itself essentially contains the element of zero-sum games and relative gain maximizing, as seen in the cases of both the United States and China. Since the basic starting point and the main conceptual elements of this theoretical framework is quite useful to conduct such an analysis, I opted for using it throughout my paper.

## **SOFT POWER**

In the common sense, power means economic and military force, but in Nye’s framework, the latter forces are only composing the hard side of power. The behaviors associated with this side are inducement and coercion. These behaviors rely on force, payments, bribes or sanctions. A typical example of hard power is military force, and threatening other countries by military power is an example of coercion. (Nye, 2004)

Nye defines soft power as the other side of power. The behavior associated with it is attraction. The ability to attract –“getting others to want the outcomes that you want”– is soft power (Nye, 2004, p. 5). This behavior can be characterized by a rather co-optive nature – “the ability to shape what others want” (Nye, 2004, p. 7). In contrast, hard power is characterized by commanding behaviors, which is rather the ability to affect what others want. Culture, values, policies and institutions are identified as the resources of the power of attraction. Political values, as the respect of human rights, are a good example to illustrate the power of

attraction. If these values are attractive, other countries would want to follow them – what others want are now shaped. It is worth mentioning that soft power is very volatile. To stay at the previous example, human rights can be attractive to one country, but not to another. Thus, the context always matters.

In the field of International Relations, soft power is now widely used. In 2007, Hu Jintao – the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China – used this term in a speech at the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (Xinhua, 2007 in Paradise, 2009). In his speech, he called for increasing China's soft power. Since then, China had increased its soft power –according to Nye (Nye, 2013). Soft power is a way to “make China look less frightening” (Nye, 2013). Thus, China is definitely using soft power in countries of its interest. As South Africa is China's main trading partner in Africa (tralac.org, 2013), it is relevant to analyze the Chinese soft power in our case.

As a theoretical framework, I based my research on Joseph Nye's work (Nye, 2004, pp. 11-15). In his book *“Soft power: The means to success in world politics”*, he identified three resources of country's soft power: its culture, its political values and its foreign policy. “Culture is the set of values and practices that create meaning for a society” –he argues (Nye, 2004, p. 11). He explains that spreading of a country's culture is a key source of soft power. It is done, for instance, by education, cultural exchanges, etc... The cultural source of soft power is also the most difficult resource to wield for a country. Governments can affect more directly the two other resources. It does not mean that policies aiming the spread of a country's culture have no effect, it just has a more indirect and unpredictable effect. Nye brings the example of Hollywood, which did not have spreading the American culture as an original goal, but become one of the most important resources of the American soft power. Culture can be examined at different levels (for example, high culture and popular culture). (Nye, 2004)

The political values of a state are represented domestically (for instance, democracy), on an international level, in its foreign policies (for example, the role in spreading democracy, fighting for human rights). These values are easier to wield than culture. Governments can aim their values, can create policies that support them. Nye also highlights the importance of acting accordingly to these values. Not being consequent in a country's values and actions can undermine its soft power. Finally, foreign policy towards foreign countries needs to be seen as legitimate and needs to be accepted by these countries to work as a source of soft power. This resource is easier to wield. Once again, Nye point out the importance of being consequent

regarding one's claimed values and policies. Another highlighted issue with foreign policies is that countries often forget to clarify their target group – the context. (Nye, 2004)

I choose this concept, because with its framework differences in public opinions regarding different countries can be examined. In his previously mentioned book, Nye measured how the soft power of the United States changed through time by public opinion polls and what caused the changes. With the help of this framework, several potential causes for a less favorable opinion toward a country can be identified. As it was mentioned before, China is using soft power in South Africa, therefore this concept gives ideal tools for the analysis of the case. The next section of the paper briefly overviews the literature of soft power. I also examined whether the Chinese understand differently the term of “soft power”.

The soft power concept was firstly introduced by Joseph Nye in his book, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* in 1990. Soft power was defined as the ability to attract, rather than coerce, use force or bribe in order to get the outcomes one's want. The concept was developed in his book, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* in 2004. Scholars studying the nature of power are still divided: capabilities are the main factors for some (Singer, 1963), for others power is a behavior outcome (Nye, 2004). Nye built up his concept on the behavior outcome view, he argues that power different faces – hard and soft. The soft power concept was also researched and developed by others scholars, for instance Giulio M. Gallarotti (Gallarotti, 2011; Gallarotti, 2013). The concept is evolving in the direction of “smart power” – the combination of hard and soft power in order to get the best outcomes. Several academic debates are engaged about soft power. The usefulness of the concept, the interactions between hard and soft power, the manipulative nature of soft power and several other issues are debated among scholars.

The Chinese scholars have a different understanding of the term soft power than the Western scholars. Chinese scholars use it as cultural diplomacy. According to Liu, it is transmitting a nation's culture and ideals for a better understanding of the latter by other countries, in order to gain the other countries' support in other political and economic goals (Liu, 2008, in Bodomo, 2009). Mingjiang highlights several unclear points in the Chinese discourse about soft power (Mingjiang, 2008). For instance, the Chinese culture is often treated as the most valuable resource of Chinese soft power, although scholars couldn't answer why it seems to be inefficient. Another example is the “harmonious” worldview China is projecting: Chinese analysts still haven't developed any strategy to implement this “harmonious” view.

This section of the paper discussed the soft power concept. With the help of the framework introduced, I will analyze the Chinese soft power in South Africa. The resources of soft power – culture, political values and foreign policy – will be examined. As the importance of the context came up several times, a brief overview of Chinese-South African relations will precede the analysis of the case.

## **SINO-AFRICAN RELATIONS**

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For a better understanding of the current processes in Africa and the context, I propose to overview the historical linkages of China and the continent. The Sino-African relations will be examined at two different levels: the China-Africa and the China-South Africa relations.

The intergovernmental relations only started in 1956 with the establishment of diplomatic relations between Egypt and the People's Republic of China. In the next decades, the Sino-African relations were volatile mainly due to the ideological differences and changes in Chinese policies. Li Anshan brings the example of Cultural Revolution to illustrate how the Chinese policies affected the Sino-African relations. This policy, which was characterized by the slogan “exporting revolution”, undermined the relations of African countries with China, because it contradicted to the previous Chinese policies (non-interference). Only a few groups, like the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party, kept contact with the PRC. The end of this policy in the end of the 60's and the new strategy of free and easy-to-get aids provided by the Chinese recovered the Sino-African relations in a way that by the end of 1978, China had diplomatic relations with 43 African countries. The period of 1979 to 1982 these relations can be described as a rather volatile due to internal changes in China. After 12<sup>th</sup> Communist Party of China National Assembly in 1982 marked a shift in China's policies – peace and development became the primary aim of Chinese policies. Cooperation increased and by 2002, the Communist Party of China had connections with more than 60 political parties – including ruling and non-ruling parties – in 40 Sub-Saharan countries. (Anshan, 2007)

Regarding the Sino-South African relations, it is only relevant to examine China in its current form, as the People's Republic of China. The PRC was proclaimed by Mao se Tung in 1949. The Chiang Kai Chek escaped to Taiwan and established the Republic of China, a parallel government. At the time, an apartheid government ruled over South Africa, which had fears for the PRC's anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist attitude. Despite the latter, South Africa kept contact with China, rather than Taiwan. The PRC's involvement in the Bandung Conference I

1955 reinforced the South African fears. Finally, the two countries ended their official relation in July 1960. Later, Pretoria established diplomatic relations with Taipei. Even though, the official ties ended between the PRC and South Africa, the two countries maintained clandestine economic relations, according to several sources (Larkin, 1971 in Naidu, 2006; Hutchison, 1975 in Naidu, 2006). After the abolishment of apartheid, Pretoria faced the Two-China dilemma – PRC and Taiwan – and in 1997 took the One-China position with the signature of a Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations. In 1998, diplomatic relations were formally installed, giving way to a bilateral cooperation since then. In 2000, with the signing of Pretoria declaration a formal partnership was established in order to promote cooperation in economic, political and other fields. (Naidu, 2006)

In January 2006, the Chinese government released a white paper, *China's African Policy*, which is the first in its kind in the history of Sino-African relations. The paper is a comprehensive and long-term engagement on the cooperation between China and Africa. Several areas – the political field, the economic field, social fields, security, etc. – are defined in the document as fields to improve in terms of cooperation (focac.org, s.a.). Thus, the paper marks the beginning of deepening relations. During this same year, several Chinese officials, for instance Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing, visited African countries. Another important event was the Third Ministerial Meeting and First Heads of State Summit of the Forum on China-African Co-operation (FOCAC). At this meeting in November of 2006, more than 40 African heads of state met in Beijing – the largest collection of heads of state after the United Nations. This event ended the “Year of Africa”, as it is often called by the Chinese leadership. Economic indicators show the success of the “Year of Africa”: the trade between China and Africa rose by US\$ 10 billion in 2006. The inward FDI in Africa also increased by US\$ 1.9 billion investments and businesses signed at the FOCAC in 2006 (Naidu, 2007)

These recently intensifying relations are often criticized. Critics argue that China's intensifying engagement in Africa is highly asymmetrical and is aimed to satisfy its growing demand in natural resources. China is exploiting Africa's oil and raw materials and is flooding the African markets with cheap goods just as a colonizer would do (Tull, 2006). Critics point out that the *China's African Policy*, the visits of Chinese officials and the FOCAC meetings are all Chinese efforts to get the these resources. Some fear “Africa's further underdevelopment and marginalization from the processes of globalization” (Naidu, 2007, p. 41). Chinese argue with the historical friendship of China and the continent or by highlighting the several aids China is providing to African countries poor in natural resources (Wenping, 2007).

## ANALYSIS

As it was mentioned before, this part is dedicated to the analysis of the Chinese soft power in the Republic of South Africa. The analysis is divided in three parts. The first examines the Chinese soft power from a cultural point of view. The second discusses China's political values as a resource of soft power. The last part deals with the Chinese foreign policy in Africa and its issues regarding Africa. I mainly use document analysis as a method to conduct my research.

### CULTURE

In Nye's definition, one resource of soft power is culture (Nye, 2004). "Culture is the set of values and practices that create meaning for a society" –he argues (Nye, 2004, p. 11). A country's culture should be attractive to other countries to produce soft power. The attractiveness of China's culture can be captured by its position in the ranking of tourist destinations, according to Sheng Ding and Robert A. Saunders (Ding and Saunders, 2006). In the top tourist destination ranking, China currently holds the third place, with a total of 57.7 million international tourist arrivals in 2012 (Bloomberg.com, 2013). PRC in less than two decades gained on the United States. Figure 2 is a good illustration of the raising attraction of China as a tourist destination. To examine the cultural resource, Nye divided culture in two levels: popular culture and high culture.

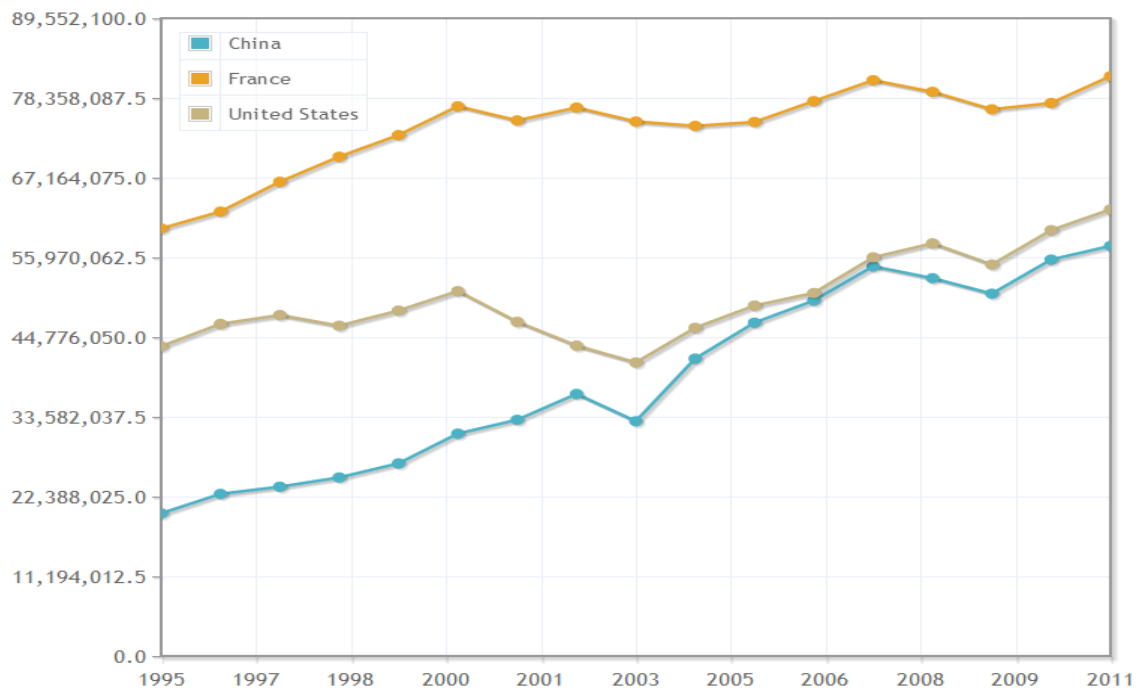


Figure 2: Historical overview of the number of arrivals in China, France and the United States; Source: *indexmundi.com* based on World Bank's database [2013]

To illustrate the popular level of culture, Nye brings the example of Hollywood. The latter's film industry produces a lot of soft power to the United States by attaining the masses (Nye, 2004). Regarding China, one might think of the Chinese food, which is clearly more and more widespread in the world, as a successful resource of the Chinese popular culture. Another example brought by Nye is the radio: China Radio International recently increased its broadcasting time to 24 hours a day, while Voice of America cut its Chinese broadcasts from 19 to 14 hours a day (Nye, 2008). It is clearly a sign of PRC's efforts to transmit their culture to the grand audience. Sports are another typical tool to attain the masses. In his comments about the Olympics, Nye identified the Games as an important part of the Chinese strategy to increase soft power (Nye, 2008). He formulates some critics about the event: it brought out the limitations of the Chinese freedom, which undercut their efforts. To summarize, PRC is making efforts to transmit its culture to the masses. These efforts appear to be successful at some levels, but are often undermined.

Education, sciences, literature, arts, etc. can be interpreted as the high culture – culture of the elites. Nye brings the example of the Russian Bolshoi ballet, which created soft power to the Soviet Union. High culture is mostly transmitted by personal contacts, visits and exchanges. Nye stresses the importance of academic and scientific exchanges. To illustrate the latter, he brings the example of academic exchanges during the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, which, according to him, played a key role in the undertaking of the Soviet Union (Nye, 2004). The importance of such exchanges is also stressed by the statement of Secretary of State Colin Powell: "I can think of no more valuable asset to our country than the friendship of future world leaders who have been educated here." (Powell, 2001 in Nye, 2004, p. 44). In their paper, Ding and Saunders also point out the increasing number of international students in China as an indicator of China's cultural ascension (Ding and Saunders, 2006).

Confucius Institutes are another form of cultural exchanges in the case of Africa. Confucius Institutes are non-profit educational organizations. Their main objective is to provide the world with the opportunity to learn about the Chinese language and culture (hanban.org, s.a.). They are mainly established at universities outside of PRC. As their mission is to spread the Chinese culture, they can be interpreted as sources of soft power (Liu, 2007 in Hartig, 2011). This idea is also supported by James F. Paradise. In his paper, he claims that the Confucius Institute project can be perceived as a "broader soft power projection in which China is attempting to win hearts and minds for political purposes" (Paradise, 2009, pp. 648-649). Thus, Confucius Institutes are a form of soft power.

In Africa, there are 22 Confucius Institutes in total, of which four are operating in South Africa. This is the biggest number of Confucius Institutes within an African country (hanban.org, s.a.). It seems that PRC is using, or even pushing its soft power in South Africa. However, the way China uses Confucius Institutes does not fit in Nye's soft power definition: Hanban (the Confucius Institute program is part of it) is providing the establishing universities with start-up money. According to Paradise, this is not coercion, but payments (Paradise, 2009). Therefore, whether these institutes are enhancing the Chinese soft power or not remain questionable.

Although other cultural resources should be analyzed to draw definite conclusions, from this point of view, the high cultural source of Chinese soft power is not on a solid ground in South Africa.

## **POLITICAL VALUES**

In this part of the paper, I analyze the political values represented by China. Political values are values that are attractive, values that countries want to follow. These are represented by the government. Nye brings the example of democracy, or the respect of human rights to illustrate some political values, which are attractive on a global level. He also points out that a lot depends on the context. Democracy might be attractive to democratic countries, but to non-democratic countries, it might not be. Another factor stressed by Nye is the importance of communicating and acting consequently. If a country claims values and do not act accordingly to these values, the country's reputation and image could be undermined, which seriously damages its attractiveness to others, its soft power. (Nye, 2004)

China's main political value is its economic development model. Referring to the Washington Consensus, Joshua Cooper Ramo introduced in 2004 the term Beijing Consensus to describe the Chinese development model. The model is composed of three theorems: firstly, the development model is based on innovation; secondly, sustainability and equality are of highest priority in the model; thirdly, China is seeking for self-determination in foreign policy. Ramo, 2004 in Nam and Jeong, 2008). According to Ramo, the model is an alternative to the Washington Consensus: rather than implementing the neo-liberal development policies, the Chinese development model is more effective and practical to system-transition and third world countries. In their paper, Young Nam Cho and Jong Ho Jeong also highlight the attractiveness of the model to underdeveloped countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa. Thus, the term

quickly became popular and the model is now widely used to describe a development model viable to the Third World's countries. (Cho and Jeong, 2008)

The Beijing Consensus, just as the Washington Consensus, goes beyond economic policies and includes political and social issues. It also gives a real alternative to the Western model in terms of values. Asian values – importance of the family, collectivism, etc. – suggested by the model are mainly based on China's history (Cho and Jeong, 2008). PRC has the opportunity to create common values and identities, but another issue is whether these Asian values are viable in the case of Africa, but the assessment of the latter is deviating from the focus of this section, therefore I won't examine this aspect in detail.

The core issue with the Beijing Consensus is that it is the "Chinese-style socialism" in a new form. Although it is clear that the developing model projected by China might be appealing to the developing countries of Africa, PRC remains an authoritarian country. As Cho and Jeong point out, the fact that an authoritarian country can achieve economic successes as China does, might even be more appealing to other authoritarian countries (Cho and Jeong, 2008). But, in the case of South Africa – a democratic country – the latter point is irrelevant. The question is how South Africans view democracy and autocracy. My hypothesis is that South Africans – a nation, which had been struggling long for democracy – stand upon democracy and democratic values.

To address the latter question, I consulted Hennie Kotzé and Cindy Lee Steenekamp's work, *Values and democracy in South Africa: Comparing elite and public values*. In their study, they analyzed how the elite and the public relates to the democracy. They examined how South Africans related to different alternative political systems to democracy, for instance having the army to rule or having a government of experts. The results are that both the elite and the public are in favor of democracy, with 98.4% of the elite and 85.7% of the public seeing democracy as a good political system. In contrast, 96.1 % of the elite and 60.4% of the public see the alternative of having the army rule as bad. Figure 3 illustrates all the results about the relation of the South Africans to the different political systems. (Kotzé and Steenekamp, 2009)

| Type of political system                                                                            | % Good      |             | % Bad       |             | % Don't know |        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------|
|                                                                                                     | Elite       | Public      | Elite       | Public      | Elite        | Public |
| Having a strong leader who doesn't have to bother with parliament and elections                     | 14.2 (4.0)  | 39.0 (16.9) | 85.4 (71.3) | 50.4 (33.5) | 0.7          | 10.5   |
| Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country | 29.4 (7.6)  | 52.9 (18.4) | 69.3 (41.6) | 35.5 (16.9) | 1.3          | 11.6   |
| Having the army rule                                                                                | 2.0 (0.7)   | 28.9 (8.7)  | 96.1 (92.1) | 60.4 (36.3) | 2.0          | 10.6   |
| Having a democratic political system                                                                | 98.4 (83.5) | 85.7 (49.0) | 1.0 (0.0)   | 9.3 (2.4)   | 0.7          | 4.9    |
| Having strong opposition parties                                                                    | 98.7 (79.9) | 74.7 (30.3) | 0.6 (0.3)   | 15.7 (4.9)  | 0.7          | 9.5    |

Figure 3: African views of different political systems Source: Kotzé, Hennie; Steenekamp, Cindy Lee, 2009, *Values and democracy in South Africa: Comparing elite and public values*, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Johannesburg, p. 66

The support for democracy important in South Africa is generally, as the latter point it out. For instance, to the question “How important is it for you to live in a country that is governed democratically”, on a ten-point scale the elite gave 9.46 and the public 8.7. South Africans determine democracy in terms of human rights and civil liberties. Factors as the voting equality, people choosing their leaders, gender equality and right to human dignity are important in South Africa's view of democracy (Kotzé and Steenekamp, 2009). These findings suggest that South Africa highly appreciate democracy and the democratic values and I propose that it makes South Africa more “resistant” to the Beijing Consensus.

To illustrate the latter, I consulted democracy indexes. According to Polity IV Project's data, South Africa receives 9 on the eleven-point scale of the Democracy indicator in 2012, while China receives 0 on the same indicator (Marshall, et al., 2012). The latter highlights the basic difference between the two countries. As it was discussed previously, democracy is clearly important in the eyes of South Africans, thus, China's authoritarian arrangement might not be attractive to them.

Intuitively, the latter point suggests that there is some kind of correlation between the level of democracy in a country and the public opinion it has about another, non-democratic country –China. Thus, I suggest to analyze the Pew Global's public opinion data (pewglobal.org, 2013) with the Polity IV Project's democracy data on all the countries in the poll (Marshall, et al., 2012). The following snapshot is a good illustration of my results.

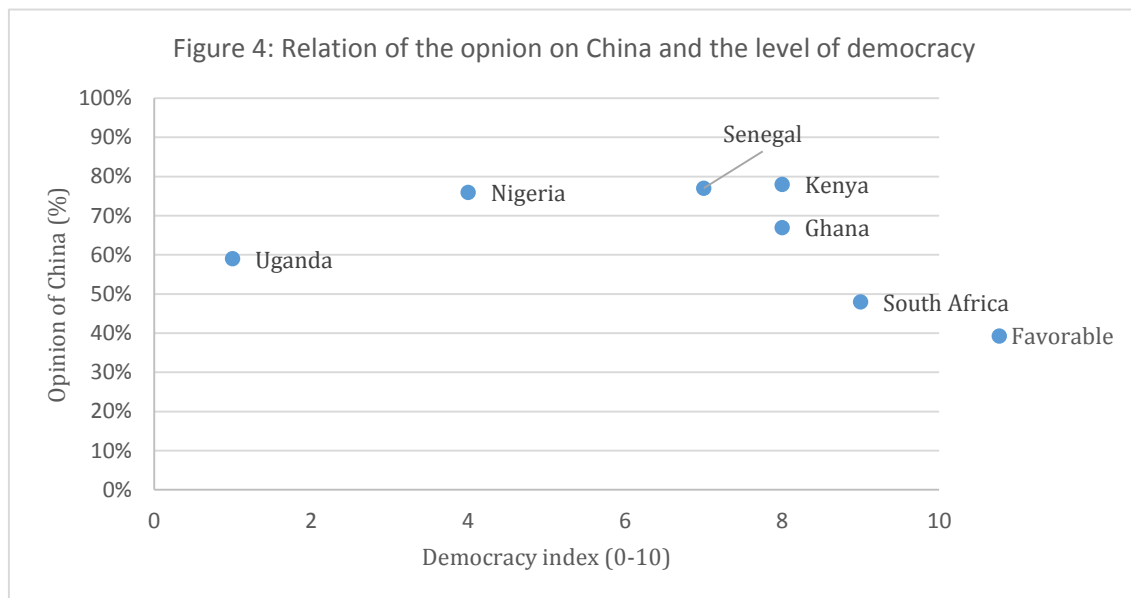


Figure 4: Relation of the opinion on China and the level of democracy, 2013; Source: own figure based on Pew Global's database (2013) and on Polity IV Project's database (2012)

On the figure<sup>3</sup>, we cannot see any kind of decisive relation between the democracy score a country has and its view of China<sup>4</sup>. In the next figure, I tested whether the country's GDP per capita (World Bank, 2013) and the public opinion are in correlation.

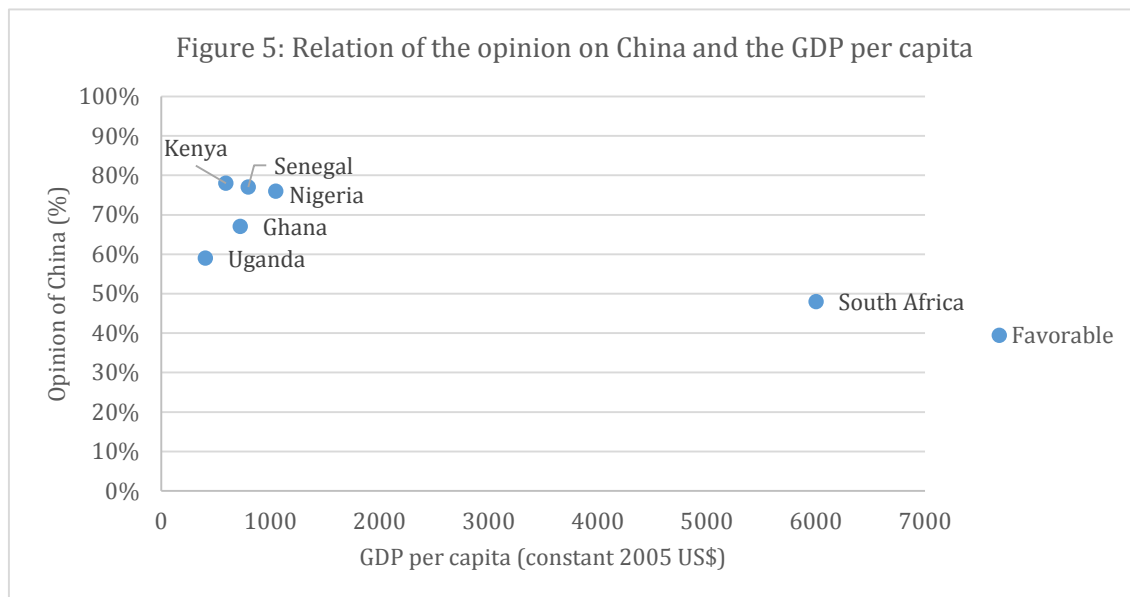


Figure 5: Relation of the opinion on China and the GDP per capita, 2013; Source: own figure based on Pew Global's database (2013) and World Bank's database (2013)

Figure 5<sup>5</sup> illustrates well that there is probably a relation between the GDP per capita and the public opinion of different countries about China<sup>6</sup>.

These tables show that there is no clear relation between the level of democracy and the public opinion being less favorable, on the other hand, there could be some kind of relation between the level of development of different countries and their public opinion on China. This suggests another possible interpretation of the question, why the South African view of China is less favorable than in other countries. If a country is more developed, than it is less dependent on the economic support of other countries. In contrast, if a country is less developed, than it might need more economic support and thus, might appreciate more the help of foreigners, like China. In our case, being one of the most developed countries in Africa, South Africa might appreciate less China's presence on the continent. Although the analysis of the development level could give another answer to our question, this paper focuses on analyzing the case of

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix for the used data and the figure's alternative form with the unfavorable opinions.

<sup>4</sup> This is not meant to be a valid statistical analysis, the small size of the sample excluded the possibility of the latter. The purpose of this analysis is to demonstrate the idea and to estimate the possibility of any kind of relationship.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix for the used data and the figure's alternative form with the unfavorable opinions.

<sup>6</sup> This is not meant to be a valid statistical analysis, the small size of the sample excluded the possibility of the latter. The purpose of this analysis is to demonstrate the idea and to estimate the possibility of any kind of relationship.

South Africa through “soft power lenses”, therefore I’m not going to delve into further discussions regarding it.

Apart from the previously suggested ideas, another aspect of the Chinese democratic values needs to be examined. In his work, Nye highlights the importance of acting accordingly the political values communicated by a country. If a country’s acts accordingly to them, than it will gain recognition at the international fora and produce soft power. In the other case, acting contrary to the claimed values of a country can undermine its image and reputation and thus, it can undermine its soft power. (Nye, 2004)

As it was discussed earlier, China tries to construct itself a benign image: the Beijing Consensus, the alternative development model to the West. In reality, China’s efforts are ruined by its scandals. For example, in 2010, Chinese response to the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Liu Xiaobo wrecked Chinese image once again. Regarding human rights, China’s support of regimes, like Myanmar and Sudan, changed the country’s image as hostile to human rights (Blanchard and Guo, 2008 in Hartig, 2011). Therefore, Chinese political values are undermined by the contradictions in its claimed values and its actions.

To summarize, there are two main issues with the Chinese political values. One is that there is a difference between the view of political systems between China and South Africa, which hardens the transmission of this form of soft power. Secondly, the contradictions of PRC’s claimed values and actions wrecks its image and reputation and thus, its soft power.

The next section deals with foreign policies as the third resource of soft power identified by Nye. He points out that besides the importance of communicating and acting accordingly, adequate foreign policies, which support the claimed political values, have a strong effect on a country’s soft power (Nye, 2004). Thus, in the upcoming, Chinese foreign policies will be examined if they fit in the soft power framework.

## **FOREIGN POLICY**

This part of the paper is dedicated to the third source of soft power in Nye’s interpretation (Nye, 2004). In terms of wielding soft power, foreign policy is the resource over which governments have the biggest control. In the case of an adequate use of soft power, foreign policy of countries needs to be seen as legitimate and needs to be accepted to work as a resource of soft power. Nye in his work stresses that the political values and the foreign policy resources are strongly related: the values are broader, while foreign policy is the implementation

of these values through policies. Therefore, foreign policies that supports the political values of the states are crucial to produce soft power. (Nye, 2004)

Another important aspect of foreign policies is that it strongly relies on the context. If the policy's substance is based on common values, it is easier to get desired outcomes. When determining policies, it is also important to clearly define the targets of the policy. What countries often forget during policy-making is to consult these targets. According to Nye, the latter might take the form of multilateralism, which is crucial during the creation of an attractive policy. He also points out the importance of humility and style: the way a country make policies affect the perception of these policies. Even if a policy is beneficial, if it is put in arrogant manner that might undermine the policy's reception by those affected. (Nye, 2004)

The previous section dealt with the so-called Beijing Consensus, which describes the Chinese political values. After the birth of the term, another tem appeared, the one of peaceful rise. In 2003, Zheng Bijian introduced the term "peaceful rise" on the Boao Forum for Asia. The peaceful rise theory deals with the transformation of the Chinese foreign policy, a change from an internal to an external focus. The main arguments are: first, China's rise is not a threat, because its development is so low that the country will have to focus on internal issues for the next three generations; second, PRC's development strategy is favoring the participation in the globalization processes and is not trying to detach from them; third, China is following development strategies, which does not harm others; fourth, the Chinese development is serving the economic development of the world (Bijian, 2005, in Cho and Jeong, 2008). The Chinese government introduced the "peaceful development", which replaced "peaceful rise", because the word might be seen as offending. The change in names did not affect the content – the content is reformulated, but the meaning is the same, according to Cho and Jeong (Cho and Jeong, 2008). The peaceful rise or development theory supports the Beijing Consensus, as it tries to implement the latter. The theory is now widely used to describe Chinese foreign policies in general.

As it was discussed in the section dealing with the Sino-African relations, PRC's African policy was introduced in 2006 with the release of a white paper, *China's African Policy*. The paper discusses the comprehensive and long-term cooperation of China and Africa. The document is unprecedented in the history of Sino-African relations. Another aspect of the reinforcing cooperation between PRC and the continent is multilateralism. As Nye points out, multilateralism is a useful tool to legitimize a country's actions and power (Nye, 2004). By using the principle of multilateralism, China is legitimizing its actions. At the same time, the

Chinese also fulfill Nye's recommendation on consulting the targets of the foreign policy (Nye, 2004). A good illustration of Chinese multilateralism is the establishment of the Forum of China-Africa Cooperation. The existence of such institutes strengthens the ties between China and Africa and, reinforces the cooperation.

Besides this resolution towards a deeper cooperation, two aspects of the Chinese foreign policy should be examined. Firstly, China is using the "non-interference" foreign policy in the case of Africa. Denis M. Tull argues in his paper that sovereignty is really important to China, therefore it is resolved not to intervene in any domestic affair of a foreign country, and this is an attractive policy to the developing countries of the world. The term non-interference can be examined from different aspects. From one side, non-interference can be captured at the level of development aids. Western aids are often accompanied with different constraints, for instance, the implementation of several reforms. In contrast, Chinese aids are almost unconditional, which makes them more attractive to countries on the way of development. Chinese aids are easier to get, easier to apply, thus it is a really attractive policy to authoritarian and hybrid regimes. (Tull, 2006)

From another side, non-interference also means not interfering in domestic affairs. By sticking to the respect of other's sovereignty, China dodges the ambiguities it could face when supporting autocracies. Internationally, spreading democracy and democratic values – respect of human rights, freedom of speech, etc. – have gained importance in Africa. With its policy, China avoids the pressure of spreading the latter and still can benefit from the trade with autocratic countries. As He Wenping points it out, China is using quiet diplomacy (respect of others' sovereignty, principle of noninterference), because the Chinese prefer economic cooperation over spreading democracy (Wenping, 2007). The latter brings us to the economic reformulation of China's foreign policy. (Tull, 2006)

China had very smartly reformulated its foreign policy in economic terms. The Chinese foreign policy is communicated in an attractive way, a "win-win situation" to both PRC and Africa. With the strengthening of their relation, African countries get economic benefits, for instance the previously mentioned unconditional aids or recent African debt cancelling by China, and the support of China in diplomatic terms. Africa also enjoys Chinese goodwill projects – mostly infrastructural projects, which are not profitable on the short term – making PRC more attractive. On the other side, China also benefits from the strengthening ties, mainly in economic terms. Chinese get access to natural resources of Africa, especially the African oil reserves. Another Chinese benefit is the African diplomatic support. For instance, in the United

Nations Commission on Human Rights, African countries frequently disrupted the Western efforts to condemn China's human rights record (Tull, 2006).

The “win-win situation” projected by PRC appears to be false. China's policies toward Africa are mainly composed of economic incentives, which have the ultimate goal of locking up African resources, with a highlight on oil. Another important critic of the “win-win situation” is that the relation of China and the continent is strongly asymmetrical in reality. The exports to China are mainly composed capital-intensive commodities, for instance, raw materials. On the other hand, China is exporting labor-intensive and export-oriented manufacturing, for instance, textile and clothing. This imbalance resulted in job creation in China due to Africa, while the job markets were undermined in Africa. The local retailers struggle in the increasing competition, because they cannot decrease production costs and prices compared to Chinese companies. (Tull, 2006)

Thus, Chinese non-interference policy is an attractive policy to developing countries due to the unconditional nature of the aids provided by China, but the attractiveness of the other side of this policy – the non-interference in domestic affairs – remains questionable. From the latter aspect, China could be criticized for its support of autocracies, but PRC is tackling this issue by putting economic development on the front of its policy. The economic development is reformulated in a communication of a “win-win situation” to African countries. China is certainly providing African countries with economic benefits, but it is important to see the other side of the “win-win situation”. The relationship of PRC to the continent is strongly asymmetrical as it aims the exploit of African natural resources and has destructive effects on African job markets. From a soft power concept, China is using adequately this resource of soft power, because its foreign policies support Chinese political values and the practice of its foreign policy (for instance, the use of multilateralism) also fits Nye's framework. Therefore, Chinese foreign policies towards Africa might seem attractive at first glance, but are in reality questionable from different aspects, like the previously mentioned one-sided nature of the Sino-African relations.

## CONCLUSION

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I analyzed China's soft power in South Africa by Joseph Nye's three sources of soft power: culture, political values and foreign policy. At a cultural level, two levels were examined – popular and high culture. Chinese popular culture appears to be successful, but still lags

behind the popular culture of the West. From the high cultural aspect, a special form of cultural exchanges were examined, those of Confucius Institutes. Whether the latter is enhancing Chinese soft power remains questionable, because these institutes rely on payments. At the level of political values, PRC's projected development model, the Beijing Consensus was discussed. As the model is the reformulation of the "Chinese-style socialism", it might not fit the highly respected democratic values of South Africa. From another aspect, it was highlighted that the reappearing scandals regarding China undermine its political values, thus its soft power. Finally, China's peaceful rise or development theory supports its political values, but the foreign policies towards Africa, even though attractive at first glance, remain questionable from several aspects. Thus, through the soft power lenses, the hypothesis –China is not using soft power adequately– might be true. As Nye argued in his article, China's soft power is in an early stage (Nye, 2013), therefore it seems to be too weak to affect a democratic and a more developed country.

This analysis illuminated the question –why is the South African public opinion less favorable towards China– from the soft power aspect. This question might be approached from several different aspects too. To stay at the soft power concept, other countries' soft power in South Africa should be investigated. Soft power is a very volatile form of power, thus it changes much over the time. Some scholars argue that the Western countries lost interest in Africa, which gave the opportunity to the strengthening of Sino-African relations. From the soft power point of view, Western soft power might have decreased in Africa, which let the Chinese soft power to develop. To address the differences in the opinion polls, other countries' view – for instance the United States – should also be consulted.

As suggested in the second part of the analysis, a deeper research on the relation of the level of development or democracy of a country, and its public opinion toward a non-democratic country, could also provide an answer to the discussed question. Another interesting area for further developing is the issue of compatibility of the Asian values and the history of Africa. One might ask, values suggesting obedience, collectivism, etc. are deeply rejected by post-colonial countries. In the case of South Africa, as being oppressed for a long time, the rejection of these values might be another interpretation of the less favorable view of China.

When assessing China's involvement in Africa, some critics often argue that what China does in Africa is simply recolonizing the continent. The issue of Sino-African relations can be addressed with a critical theory in IR – the post-colonialist theory.

## APPENDIX

Figure 1: table 1

| Country      | Favorable | Unfavorable |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|
| Ghana        | 67%       | 22%         |
| Kenya        | 78%       | 13%         |
| Nigeria      | 76%       | 11%         |
| Senegal      | 77%       | 8%          |
| South Africa | 48%       | 43%         |
| Uganda       | 59%       | 17%         |

Source: pewglobal.org, 2013, Database of Pew Global, 2013

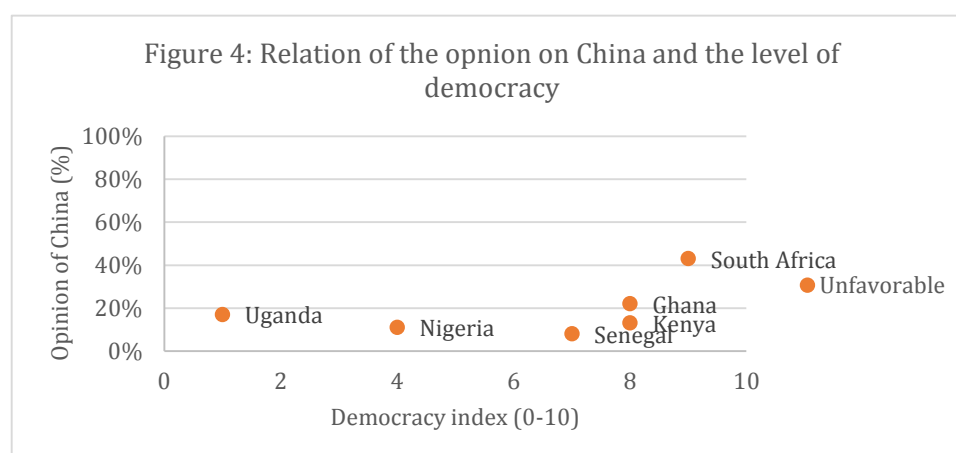
Figure 4: table 4

| Country      | Democracy index | Favorable | Unfavorable |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------|
| Ghana        | 8               | 67%       | 22%         |
| Kenya        | 8               | 78%       | 13%         |
| Nigeria      | 4               | 76%       | 11%         |
| Senegal      | 7               | 77%       | 8%          |
| South Africa | 9               | 48%       | 43%         |
| Uganda       | 1               | 59%       | 17%         |

Source: Democracy index: Marshall, Monty G., Gurr, Ted R., Jaggers Keith, 2013, Polity IV Project, Database of Integrated Network for Social Conflict Research, 2012

Opinion: pewglobal.org, 2013, Database of Pew Global, 2013

Figure 4: alternative form



Source: Democracy index: Marshall, Monty G., Gurr, Ted R., Jaggers Keith, 2013, Polity IV Project, Database of Integrated Network for Social Conflict Research, 2012

Opinion: pewglobal.org, 2013, Database of Pew Global, 2013

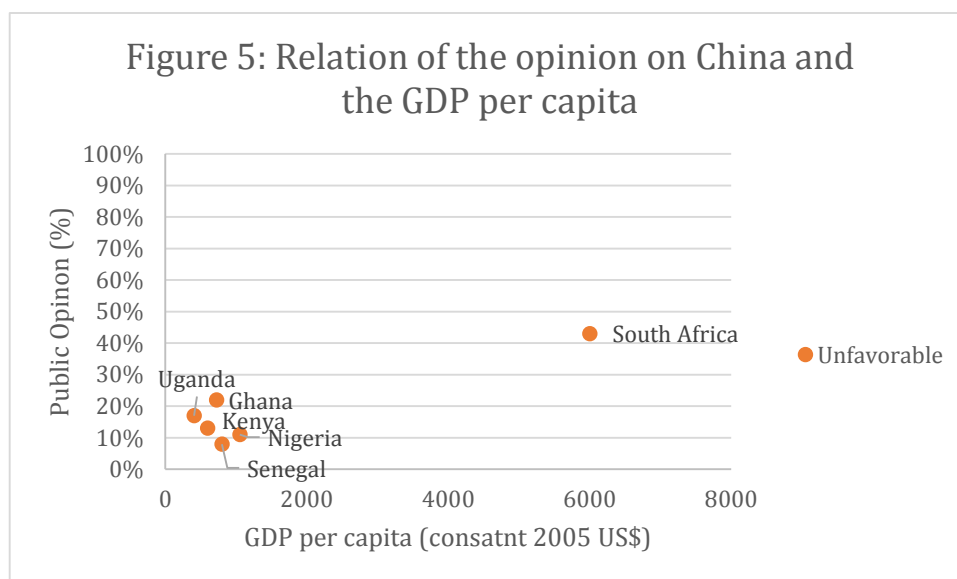
Figure 5: table 5

| Country      | GDP per capita<br>(constant 2005 US\$) | Favorable | Unfavorable |
|--------------|----------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Ghana        | 724,3496502                            | 67%       | 22%         |
| Kenya        | 594,6178877                            | 78%       | 13%         |
| Nigeria      | 1052,336882                            | 76%       | 11%         |
| Senegal      | 799,3901626                            | 77%       | 8%          |
| South Africa | 6003,45699                             | 48%       | 43%         |
| Uganda       | 405,4013378                            | 59%       | 17%         |

Source: GDP per capita (constant 2005 US\$) World Bank, 2013, GDP per capita (constant 2005 US\$), Database of World Bank, 2013

Opinion: pewglobal.org, 2013, Database of Pew Global, 2013

Figure 5: alternative form



Source: GDP per capita (constant 2005 US\$) World Bank, 2013, GDP per capita (constant 2005 US\$), Database of World Bank, 2013

Opinion: pewglobal.org, 2013, Database of Pew Global, 2013

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