

ABSTRACT

This thesis covers a historical comparison analysis between the Ancient Chinese, British and American Empires in order to compare what activities that China is currently taking in the 21st century that resemble the behaviour of the United Kingdom and United States while they were building their empires.

The thesis, using the theoretical concepts of Alfred Mahan and John Mearsheimer and the supporting arguments of Paul Kennedy, focuses on soft power tools including free trade agreements and social networks as well as tangible assets such as infrastructure development, expansion through annexation and/or colonialism and naval capacity. I have included Mahan's theory of sea power as a necessity to achieve supremacy as it corresponds closely with the development of the British and American Empires. I have also used Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism as it helps explain the US' rise to hegemony and can help provide guidance on China's future strategy.

This comparison is then used, along with the opinions of some of the most well-respected geopolitical analysts and historians of the 21st century, in the final chapter of this thesis to address the geopolitical issues associated with China's rise including the United States' response.