

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE
Fakulta sociálních věd
Institut mezinárodních studií

PROTOKOL O HODNOCENÍ DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE
(Posudek vedoucího)

Práci předložil(a) student(ka): Lukáš Kindl

Název práce: The Impact of China's Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa on U.S. Political and Economic Interest on the Continent (2000-2010)

Vedoucí práce (u externích vedoucích uveďte též adresu a funkci v rámci instituce):

Jana Sehnálková

1. OBSAH A CÍL PRÁCE (stručná informace o práci, formulace cíle):

The thesis aims to assess the impact of China's engagement in Africa on U.S. interests on the continent. The author is looking at three different aspects:

- Whether China is trying to push the US out of Africa in political and economic terms
- How China influences U.S. interests on the continent, in other words, is China's behavior a threat for the US interests or are there many areas where interests are shared?

The author presumes (p. 17) that unlike many concerns, China is not interested in pushing the US out of Africa. In fact, an analysis of the interests of both countries offers a mixed picture: in economic and governance spheres, the interests of both countries may be competitive, in the sphere of security and stability, their interests in fact converge. I am persuaded that the author proves his hypothesis throughout his thesis.

2. VĚCNÉ ZPRACOVÁNÍ (náročnost, tvůrčí přístup, argumentace, logická struktura, teoretické a metodologické ukotvení, práce s prameny a literaturou, vhodnost příloh apod.):

The author focuses on a specific time period – 2000-2010. The beginning of the studied period coincides with the first Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, which can be seen as the first concrete evidence of China's increased interest in Africa. Geographically, the author focuses on Sub-Saharan Africa and selects three case studies – Nigeria, Angola, and Sudan where both Washington and Beijing have been visibly present. Both the time frame as well geographical definition of the topic make sense and help the author narrow down the scope of research.

The author provides a comprehensive analysis of U.S. and China's policies in Nigeria, Angola, and Sudan, based on a substantial amount of primary sources. The author tried to find data on both the US and China in order to suit a comparative analysis. He works with policy statements by both governments, with statistics, etc. As far as secondary sources are concerned, the author selects works by highly recognized scholars on Sino-African and US-African relations. Ian Taylor and Deborah Brautigam belong among the most recognized experts with broad experience in US and China policies to Africa. Similarly, Bates Gill is a highly-recognized expert on US-China relations.

The author looks in detail at policy framework of the US and China for Africa. In the first chapter, he in detail analyses China's strategy and objectives in Africa (i.e. securing economic growth through gaining access to energy, mineral resources and local markets, building political alliances to ensure China's role as global power, and, in some instances, limiting Taiwan's international space). The author then lists the major players in China's policy on Africa and the different tools Beijing implements, such as high-profile diplomacy,

package deals, foreign aid etc. He also underscores Beijing's willingness to go into risky places in pursuit of natural resources, which are in high demand in rising China.

Second chapter presents an analysis of the U.S. policy of Africa. The author underscores the lack of comprehensive, long-term policy as well as the gap between policy statements and the real implementation. He then goes on to define the basic strategies and goals of U.S. policy, which include promotion of democracy and good governance, support for development and stability, conflict prevention, access to energy resources and export markets. When analyzing the U.S. actors in Africa policy, the author notes that unlike in case of China, there is a clear distinction between the state and private sphere in case of the U.S. engagement in Africa (p. 43), which is an important distinction between the two countries. Also, the author correctly points out that the U.S. strategy towards Africa is greatly challenged by the fragmentation of institutions that deal with Africa policy, as the President, the Congress, the Department of State, the Department of Defense etc. each have their specific point of view, which is not necessarily aligned with the others.

The third chapter then deals with the individual case studies of Nigeria, Angola and Sudan. In these case studies, the author analyses both China's and U.S. interests and policies towards these countries in order to set the stage for comparison in chapter 4. He looks in detail at China's and U.S. roles in these countries' oil sectors, their access to markets, FDI, and support for democratization, rule of law, and good governance.

The author concludes on p. 103 that the U.S. and China's activities in sub-Saharan Africa are far from being a zero-sum game. Beijing and Washington share some common interests in respect to sub-Saharan Africa and may find a number of areas of cooperation (such as security and stability) while in some areas, they may compete. The major difference between their approaches towards sub-Saharan Africa can be found in tools they implement. China's policy is focused on its own economic development and more centralized as well as coordinated due to the state's support for the state-owned enterprises that in fact fulfill demands raised by the Chinese leadership (i.e. the Chinese Communist Party). The United States is active in areas where China still lags behind, such as in spheres of technology (such as deep-water drilling) or long-term support for both civil and military capacity building. Also, the author rightly points out that it is a mistake to perceive the states of sub-Saharan Africa as mere passive objects of Washington's and Beijing's interests. In fact, all the states studied are finding ways to balance their relationship with the U.S. and China, as they want to avoid falling into the trap of being dependent on a single power. In the case study of Angola, the author has shown that such careful balancing can actually reap benefits for the African state, e.g. by increasing oil revenue.

China's engagement in Africa however challenges some of U.S. goals, as the author demonstrates through the case studies. China's presence often undermines the U.S. programs on democratization and good governance, as Beijing does not tie assistance to progress in these spheres. Similarly, China, due to its state support of companies venturing into Africa, cheaper cost of labor and thus of exported products competes with U.S. exports to African markets (p. 104). Resources-thirsty China also does not shy away from maintaining relations with abusive, authoritarian regimes in Africa that have already been abandoned by Western states, including the U.S. – Sudan being a case in point.

3. FORMÁLNÍ A JAZYKOVÉ ZPRACOVÁNÍ (jazykový projev, správnost citace a odkazů na literaturu, grafická úprava, formální náležitosti práce apod.):

The thesis is well-written and well-annotated. The author should be commended for high standard of academic English. The thesis is logically organized and comprehensive. The author provides different graphs, tables and maps to illustrate his claims.

4. STRUČNÝ KOMENTÁŘ HODNOTITELE (celkový dojem z bakalářské práce, silné a slabé stránky, originalita myšlenek, naplnění cíle apod.):

The thesis is well researched, its structure is carefully and logically developed. The author implements critical thinking and offers the reader a complex overview of the U.S. and China's engagement in sub-Saharan Africa. His analysis presents different points of view, the pros and cons to provide a complex analysis of China's and U.S. policies.

A minor criticism concerns the author's description of the actors in China's Africa policy where the author does not emphasize enough the central role played by the state/Party leadership (Politburo) that sets the general direction of Chinese foreign policy.

5. SPOLUPRÁCE S VEDOUCÍM PRÁCE (komunikace s vedoucím práce, schopnost reflektovat připomínky, posun od původního záměru apod.)

The author worked closely with the advisor and met over the thesis regularly. The author was able to conceptualize the problem from the very beginning and needed only minor adjustment recommendations.

6. OTÁZKY A PŘIPOMÍNKY DOPORUČENÉ K BLIŽŠÍMU VYSVĚTLENÍ PŘI OBHAJOBĚ (jedna až tři):

- Were you able to see any shift in China's policy towards Africa during the 2000 to 2010? For example, the financial crisis of 2008 substantially influenced China's perception of the United States and the international system – has this been reflected in China's approach towards Africa?
- Has the United States discussed the "China threat" with respect to China's engagement in Africa?
- Do you think your conclusion will stand that in the long-term perspective – say when China will become the no. 1 world economy with power-projection capabilities, such as blue-water navy?
- On p. 43, you mention that „the comparison of the U.S. actors responsible for Africa policy with those on the Chinese side is to a certain extent asymmetric“. Can you clarify what „asymmetric“ means in this context?

7. DOPORUČENÍ / NEDOPORUČENÍ K OBHAJOBĚ A NAVRHOVANÁ ZNÁMKA

(výborně, velmi dobře, dobře, nevyhověl):

Lukáš Kindl's thesis fullfills all the requirements for Master's thesis. I recommend the thesis to be defended and propose **EXCELLENT** grade.

Datum: August 22, 2013

Podpis: Jana Sehnálková

Pozn.: Hodnocení píše k jednotlivým bodům, pokud nepíšete v textovém editoru, použijte při nedostatku místa zadní stranu nebo příložený list. V hodnocení práce se pokuste oddělit ty její nedostatky, které jsou, podle vašeho mínění, obhajobou neodstranitelné (např. chybí kritické zhodnocení pramenů a literatury), od těch věcí, které student může dobrou obhajobou napravit; poměr těchto dvou položek berte prosím v úvahu při stanovení konečné známky.