

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA V PRAZE
Fakulta sociálních věd
Institut mezinárodních studií
PROTOKOL O HODNOCENÍ RIGOROZNÍ 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 (2000-2012)

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 two different aspects:

- Whether China is trying to push the US out of Africa in political and economic terms
- How China influences the 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. The author believes that China's ventures into Africa are primarily based on economic considerations related to China's rapid economic growth. The author rejects zero-sum perspective on U.S. and China's ventures into 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. The author proves his hypotheses 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 extended his master's thesis, in which he analyzed the impact of China's engagement in Africa on U.S. interests in between 2000 and 2010; the work now covers the period till 2012. 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. Extending the analysis till 2012 means that the author can look more comprehensively at Obama's policy towards Africa and can illustrate more tangible evidence of implementation of Obama's policies. 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 analyses in detail 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 during Bush administration, a major shortcoming that the Obama administration attempted to fix by working on a more effective and comprehensive policy described in the U.S. Strategy toward Sub-Saharan Africa announced in 2012. However, even Obama's effort failed, as the author (and most sources he cites) observes a gap between policy statements and the real implementation. The author 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 separation between the state and private sphere in case of the U.S. engagement in Africa, 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. 111 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 (especially in areas of security, counter-terrorism, and political 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 primarily focused on its own economic development and its foreign policy is more centralized as well as coordinated due to the state's heavy influence in 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 (e.g. 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, both Nigeria and Angola are actively searching for 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.

The two years added to the analysis for the purpose of this work did not bring any evidence of major political shifts in U.S. or China's policy towards Africa. As the author points out, until 2012, the administration lacked clear and comprehensive strategy - then, Obama administration announced new U.S. Strategy toward Sub-Saharan Africa. However, that did not particularly change the dynamics in U.S. relations towards studied countries. While the

leadership changed in China at the end of 2012, given the prominent role of the CCP, emphasis on stability and continuity, there was not major shift in policy either. The most tangible change that became clearly visible in 2012 and is repeatedly underscored by the author is the decline of U.S. dependency on energy imports, which has been the result of the shale revolution, actively supported by the Obama administration. While the proportion of oil imports from Africa to the U.S. had generally been low, as the U.S. relied more on other oil-rich regions, it has decreased imports from studied African countries of Angola and Nigeria. The author claims that less dependency on Nigerian oil increased U.S. leverage towards Nigerian government (p. 69). However, he does not provide any evidence for this claim.

The author also notes the creation of South Sudan in 2011 and the subsequent tensions between the South, which controls most of the Sudan's oil resources, and the North, which controls pipelines and refineries (p. 84). This situation created potentially dangerous security situation for China, the only major foreign actor in Sudan, as other countries left Sudan in result of sanctions. China's interests in Sudan were threatened by the outburst of violence, which in result created an opening for more cooperation with the U.S. in creating a more favorable security environment there.

According to the author, China's engagement in Africa presents challenge to some U.S. goals, as he demonstrates in selected 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 compete with U.S. exports to African markets (p. 111). Resources-thirsty China also does not shy away from maintaining relations with abusive, authoritarian regimes in Africa that have been abandoned by Western states, including the U.S. – Sudan being a case in point.

However, the United States is not a passive observer of China's assertive approach to Africa, as the author points out in his concluding remarks on p. 112 – Washington takes steps to counterbalance China's impact on African states. Via emphasis on education, civil society capacity-building, support for entrepreneurship, training of governance, it seeks longer-term changes that may impact the studied African societies. The author also concludes that the U.S. also should learn from China and pay more diplomatic attention to African countries because via personal diplomacy and support for more exchanges, it can build successful relations with African countries and, to some extent, counterbalance China's influence in competitive areas. However, particularly in security realm, the author sees potential for U.S.-China cooperation.

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 from different scholars and experts on the subject matter as well as the pros and cons of different policies, approaches, and strategies to provide a complex analysis of China's and U.S. policies.

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

- How has the U.S. and China's engagement in Africa been reflected in the African states' perceptions of the so-called „Washington concensus“ and „Beijing concensus“?
- You mention that President Obama created the U.S. Strategy Towards Sub-Saharan Africa. While you describe some of its goals, how was it implemented in practice? Were there any tangible changes that resulted from the implementation of the strategy or was it rather political statement only?

7. DOPORUČENÍ / NEDOPORUČENÍ K OBHAJOBĚ A NAVRHOVANÁ ZNÁMKA

(výborně, velmi dobře, dobře, nevyhověl):

I recommend the thesis to be defended and propose **EXCELLENT** grade.

Datum: October 6, 2014

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.