

## China “Developmental Peace” Doctrine in South Sudan (2017-2022)

Puot Nyang Both]

A thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the degree of Master of Arts in Transnational Governance from the European University Institute.

Florence, 15<sup>th</sup> May 2022

**European University Institute**

School of Transnational Governance

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## **ABSTRACT**

China's progressive peace strategy is influencing the architecture of world peace and security as it emerges as a new paradigm for preserving world peace and security. This study assessed how China's developmental peace doctrine is applied in its relations to South Sudan (2017-2022) by assessing China's developmental peace, China's relationship with South Sudan, China's peacebuilding approach, and China's interest in South Sudan. To understand how China's applied its developmental peace doctrine in relation to South Sudan, I gather qualitative data from academics and grey literature and interviews. With these approaches, the research identifies three major approaches to China's developmental peace doctrine in South Sudan. First, China provided developmental-reconstruction aid in exchange for natural resources and investment such as oil and the construction of major infrastructure in the country. Second, China's peacebuilding approach is more of engaging government without engaging local communities and civil society actors. Third, China's relationships with South Sudan and its interest in peace and security are more on what benefits China will get from this relationship and work as a global power that can contribute to peace at the same time. Despite all these multifaced approaches, China's developmental peace approach in South Sudan improves the social welfare in some parts of the country although the security situation in the country hasn't changed so much.

## Abbreviations

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| AU                   | Africa Union   |
| CNPC                 | China National Petroleum Corporation                                     |
| CPA                  | Comprehensive Peace Agreement  |
| CPC                  | Communist Party China  |
| CTSAMVM<br>Mechanism | Ceasefire Transitional Security Arrangement, Monitoring and Verification |
| EPC                  | Exim Bank of China   |
| GOSS                 | Government of South Sudan  |
| HLRF                 | High-Level Revitalized Forum   |
| IGAD                 | Intergovernmental Authority on Development                               |
| OPP                  | Other Political Parties  |
| R-ARCISS             | Revitalized Agreement on Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan           |
| SPLM/A-IO            | Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition                    |
| SPLM                 | Sudan People's Liberation Movement                                       |
| SSOA                 | South Sudan Opposition Alliance  |
| TGONU<br>Sudan       | The Transitional Government of National Unity of the Republic of South   |
| UNMISS               | United Nations Mission in South Sudan                                    |
| UNSC                 | United Nations Security Council  |

## Table Content

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>1. Introduction</b> .....                                   | 1  |
| <b>2. literature review</b> .....                              | 2  |
| 2.1 Developmental Peace Doctrine.....                          | 2  |
| 2.2 China’s Developmental Peace Doctrine in Africa.....        | 3  |
| <b>3. Methodology</b> .....                                    | 5  |
| 3.1 General approach.....                                      | 5  |
| 3.2 Data Collection Approach.....                              | 5  |
| 3.3 Ethical Considerations.....                                | 6  |
| <b>4. Analysis</b> .....                                       | 6  |
| 4.1 China’s Interest in South Sudan.....                       | 6  |
| 4.2 China's Relations with South Sudan.....                    | 9  |
| 4.3 China’s Role in the South Sudan Peace Process.....         | 12 |
| 4.4 China’s “Developmental Peace” Doctrine in South Sudan..... | 14 |
| 4.5 China’s peacebuilding approach in South Sudan.....         | 17 |
| <b>5. Conclusion</b> .....                                     | 18 |
| <b>6. References</b> .....                                     | 20 |

## 1. Introduction

China's "developmental peace" doctrine recently attracted many scholars and at the same time brought more debate on its application to international peace and security compared to the existing peace and security approach that is more of institutions building to attain lasting peace in the fragile states around the world. This development peace approach led by China focused more on social development and socio-economic development and it incorporates peace, security, and economic development (The State Council, The People's Republic of China, 2011). This idea of prioritizing economic development to attain lasting peace in countries affected by war and conflict is new and its application remains debatable as to what extent an economic development can bring about peace (The State Council, The People's Republic of China, 2011). South Sudan got her independence from Sudan on July 9, 2011. However, before celebrating its 4<sup>th</sup> anniversary fighting broke out between a force loyal to President Salva Kiir and its former deputy Riek Machar on 15 December 2013. Fighting between these two politicians was attributed to the power struggle between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar within Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) the ruling party in the Country. The conflict displaced millions of people and thousands seek refuge in neighbouring countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda. After the outbreak of war, countries in the region called the warring parties to come to the negotiation table and immediately agree to a cessation of hostilities (Kasaija Phillip Apuuli, 2015). The negotiation process was facilitated by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Head of State manages to persuade the warring parties to come to the negotiation table and participate in the mediation process (Ibid). The Intergovernmental Authority on Development peace mediation led initiative resulted in the Agreement on Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) that was signed by warring parties in 2015 (Klem Ryan 2019). However, such a deal doesn't hold and eventually collapsed in 2016 when opposition leaders fled the country. With this development, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development plus other international community renew the call for the warring parties to negotiate the stalled peace accord of 2015. To negotiate the stalled 2015 peace accord, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development form the High-Level Revitalized Forum (HLRF) to revise the 2015 peace accord and engage the warring parties to reaffirm their commitment to revise and reexamine the 2015 peace accord (Ibid). The Intergovernmental Authority on Development with the help of the other international community broke another deal again in 2018 that resulted in the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) on 12 December 2018 (Ibid). Throughout the peace process, China has been active in working with regional organization and other international communities, for example, US, UK, and EU to persuade the warring parties to negotiate the 2015 and 2018 peace accords respectively. This study will aim to assess how China's developmental peace doctrine is applied in relation to South Sudan (2017-2022). To answer this broader question. This study will be organized into three chapters. The first chapter will discuss China's developmental peace doctrine. This chapter will be looking into the background of China's developmental peace doctrine in broader ways from global perspectives and Africa in the existing literature and identify the gaps. The chapter defines developmental peace doctrine and its application in Africa. The second chapter discusses the methodology and approach



used to assess how China's developmental peace doctrine is applied in its relation to South Sudan. The third chapter discusses the finding of the study on China's developmental peace doctrine in South Sudan. This chapter discusses China's interest in South Sudan in a broader way that includes political and economic, China-South Sudan relations, China's role in the South Sudan peace process, China's developmental peace doctrine in South Sudan, and China's peacebuilding approach in South Sudan. The chapter gives some insight into how China's developmental peace doctrine is applied to its relations with South Sudan. The conclusion part will summarize the finding, argument, and some observations from the findings. However, to answer these chapters. This study asked the following questions.

What is China's developmental peace doctrine?

What is China's overall policy vis-a-vis South Sudan?

To what extent is China exercising its developmental peace doctrine in South Sudan?

## **2. literature review.**

The China led Developmental peace approach is new in its application to global peace and security. However, even though it's new in the academic arena it's also important to explore more to understand its application at a regional and international level. To understand the genesis this peace model, the available literature on China's "developmental peace" doctrines and its application in Africa is reviewed in this chapter.

### **2.1 Developmental Peace Doctrine**

As mentioned above, the term "developmental peace" has been championed by (He Yin) a Chinese scholar. He Yin (2014) notes that China's "Developmental peace" breaks the monopoly of "free peace" and engages in normative competition, which helps to improve the effectiveness of peacebuilding and promote the establishment of lasting peace". To understand Developmental Peace, He Yin highlights two pillars of developmental peace. The first pillar of developmental peace is economic growth, which is started by a powerful central government, as its name suggests (He 2014). Second, He (2014) identifies aid without conditions as the second pillar for developmental peace. As scholars explored developmental peace most recently, Cedric de Coning and Kari M. Osland (2020) stated that stability and "development-led" peace are considered as necessary conditions for socioeconomic development and therefore come first. In turn, socioeconomic growth is a requirement for and comes before self-sustainable peace. According to Cedric de Coning and Kari M. Osland (2020), the foundation of China's "Peaceful development" philosophy is the idea that humanity has a shared future and a common interest. Cedric de Coning & Kari M. Osland (2020) argue that China's new approach (Developmental peace) used a

complementary approach to the existence multilateral approach and China present itself as a “responsible, peaceful, and non-threatening actor in the global arena”.

To examine the application of developmental peace, Kwok Chung Wong (2021) argues that China’s “developmental peace” doctrine is applicable in the “developing countries of Asia and Africa”. It prioritizes economic growth without affecting local government in any way to bring about lasting peace in post-conflict settings. According to Kwok Chung Wong (2021), China approaches peacebuilding by putting a strong emphasis on economic development, with "Chinese" traits reflecting the antiquated idea of tianxia (all under heaven) (Ibid p.524). Indeed, Sun Degang and Zhang Jieying (2021) argue that the fundamental reason for conflict is the "development deficit", China provides the target nations with developmental aid and human resource training to boost their capabilities and critical infrastructure and livelihood projects as the focal point. In contrast to alliance politics and collective security, "peace via development" has theoretical and practical significance for how to resolve regional disputes, achieving lasting peace, and promoting shared development, (Sun Degang and Zhang Jieying 2021 p.388) point out that Conflicts in China’s perspective are generally brought on by a lack of material wealth, or what is known as a "development deficit."

## 2.2 China’s Developmental Peace Doctrine in Africa

To examine China’s developmental peace doctrine in Africa on existing literature. W. XUEJUN (2018) notes China’s policy toward Africa in peace and security is very different from the West’s policy. W. XUEJUN (2018 p. 75) China’s developmental peace doctrine in Africa emphasized the “sovereignty plus development” model which mainly focuses on the impact of autonomy and social-economic development on conflict settlement and post-war reconstruction. China's progressive peace policy in Africa, according to W. XUEJUN (2018), is governed by four principles. First, China opposed the principles of intervention in its participation in the peacekeeping mission in Africa and therefore emphasized "sovereignty and ownership" in post-conflict rehabilitation on the continent. Second, China's developmental peace strategy is centered on institution-building, where democratization is given less priority than national growth. Thus, in order to maintain internal peace and security, China bases its strategy on collaboration for African development. Third, China insists that a forceful approach to conflict settlement could damage the chance to achieve permanent peace and that conflict resolution should take national unity and territorial integrity into account. Fourth, China considers that the peace and security of Africa are greatly aided by cooperation with the host nation's government and regional organizations like the Africa Union (AU). By allowing nations and multilateral organizations on the continent to take the lead in conflict resolution, this approach is motivated by working with powerful governments to develop better options. Steven C. Y. Kuo (2015) also notes that Chinese peace in Africa manifests in three characteristics namely sovereignty, stability, and economic development. Hagan Sibiri (2021) concurred with W. XUEJUN’s (2018) assessment and highlight that China’s peace and security engagement in Africa principally occurs on two levels: binational and multilateral. The three main platforms for conducting multilateral engagement are international (the UN), regional and sub-regional (the AU and other local entities), and the FOCAC framework. On the other hand, the bilateral levels of involvement, involve alliances and agreements between China and specific African nations, such as defense infrastructure, security support, arms deals, intelligence and technology sharing, and bilateral collaboration on training. Hagan Sibiri (2021)

points out that China's participation in the African peace and security strategy emphasizes the right of troubled governments to determine their own peace and reconstruction process. The agreement of the parties to a conflict, the impartiality or neutrality of third parties, and the avoidance of the use of force save for self-defense and the defense of a UN mission. Respect for the concerned state's sovereignty is the first requirement. For instance, only after Sudan had agreed to the hybrid AU-UN mission in Darfur was China's involvement in Sudan predicated on the ratification of UNSC Resolution 1679 (2006). China also intervened in South Sudan at the government's request and in accordance with UNSC Resolution 1996 (2011).

However, Lina Benabdallah & Daniel Large (2022) argues that the Chinese government consistently emphasizes economic development as essential to eliminating the underlying causes of armed conflict and achieving a kind of constructive peace that includes elements of prosperity and contentment in addition to the cessation of hostilities in Africa. But X. Lei (2018) note that a development-oriented strategy best describes China's aim in Africa. With its security agenda firmly enmeshed within such an economic and social vision, China sees its primary responsibility as fostering development in Africa and preserving favourable trade and investment relations with African nations.

In South Sudan, Chun Zhang (2020 p.156) identified three characteristics of China's emerging Developmental Peace approach in South Sudan. First, China is sticking to non-interfering principles by engaging with the warring parties on a regional forum like IGAD. Second, China upholds the values of equity. China contends that there is no distinction in diplomatic practice between so-called conflict-affected nations and peaceful nations. Third, China approaches every situation in the peace and security sectors with a development-first mindset. It insists on keeping up development assistance and security measures for the nation.

The articles reviewed in this section show that China's developmental peace doctrine priority economic model, sovereignty, and no condition attached to aid than to bring about lasting peace in countries affected by war at the international level. The evidence shows that China's developmental peace doctrine in Africa applied the economic growth in the countries affected by war and engaged with the continental and regional bodies in peace and security while engaged with countries bilaterally. Though research has not found strong evidence of developmental peace as a tool for lasting peace in the continent such engagement continues in China-Africa relations.

However, China's developmental peace doctrine in Africa and in particular South Sudan hasn't been researched by many scholars. Although Chun Zhang (2020) wrote about the emerging China developmental peace approach in South Sudan, Chun Zhang approached China's developmental peace in his study by looking into China's shifting role from a passive role in the Sudan crisis to an active role in South Sudan. This study explores China's developmental peace doctrine in South Sudan in a broader way by looking at China's interest, China-South Sudan relations, and China's role in the peace process to understand how China's developmental peace doctrine is applied in its relations to South Sudan from 2017-2022.

### 3. Methodology

This chapter explains the general approach applied throughout the study and explains the chosen methodology, data collection techniques, and ethical approach.

#### 3.1 General approach.

The study aims to assess how China's "Development Peace" doctrine has been applied to its relations with South Sudan. However, to understand how China's developmental peace doctrine has been applied in relation to South Sudan. I employed a qualitative method to have a general picture of China's "developmental peace" doctrine in South Sudan. Qualitative approaches are meant to gather in-depth information about the "phenomena"(Hossain et al., 2022). This is to assess how individuals interpreted and understand the phenomena depending on how they assigned the terms and the event in their environment (Ibid). The phenomena are described depending on the participants' responses to better understand how the events manifest. It's used to collect non-numerical information from the participants to explore the cause and effect of the phenomena (Ibid).

In recent years qualitative approaches have been commonly applicable in social science to understand people's "thoughts, processes, meanings, and experiences; in a given environment" (Given, L. 2016). Social scientists examine the human condition in a range of settings and across various populations (Ibid). The nature of human relationships, including the ways that people engage with organizations, social structures, and each other, are rich areas for analysis by qualitative researchers in these disciplines (Ibid).

#### 3.2 Data Collection Approach.

To understand China's "Developmental peace" doctrine in South Sudan. The data used for this study combines secondary and primary data. Secondary sources were collected from academic articles and grey literature. This includes academic journals, books, and reports from the government, non-governmental organizations, and international institutions. For the collection of primary sources, I formulated interview guides to better investigate the people's thoughts on China's "Developmental Peace" doctrine in South Sudan. Online interviews have become one of the most reliable interview techniques in "social science" recently due to advances in technology and at the same "eliminated interviewer bias"(Halperin & Heath, n.d. 2020). It's also best suited for a topic that is "sensitive" and not understood by many people (Ibid, p.311). In this case, I used online interviews to make it easy to reach anyone who might know about a given phenomenon in the area. The type of online interview used during data collection was "synchronous and email interviews". Synchronous is an online interview like a traditional research interview takes place in "real-time". Due to advances in technology both interviewer and interviewees interact virtually in real-time in which the interviewer asks the questions, and the interviewee will be able to answer the questions (Ibid p.320). This makes it easy to interact with respondents. On the other hand, an email interview was basically used to gather information from participants who have no time to interact with them online and administered questions to them. In this case, the questions were sent to them through email to be able to answer the questionnaire either through the body of the email or documents containing the questions (Ibid p.321).

### 3.3 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are core principles in research as they guide the researcher on how to approach the participants and at the same time protect them from the danger they might encounter during the cost of the study. The study was guided by “consent” and “confidentiality”. Confidentiality refers to keeping the privacy of your participants and only when needed while consent illustrates the participant’s willingness to take part in the interview (Mauthner et al., 2002). To do so, first I share the participants’ information form that explains the purpose of the study, how the data provided will be used and my affiliation (Ibid). This is to give a participant some ideas about the purpose of the study and how the information will be used before sharing the questions and then later sharing the consent form for participants to sign and fully express their willingness to participate in the interview. Because some of the participants can’t share back the consent form due to internet problems, before the interview started, I normally asked them to give verbal consent and then proceed with the interview.

## 4. Analysis

This part will analyze the findings of the study by looking into four areas. The first part discussed China’s interest in South Sudan by looking into political and economic aspects. The second part will discuss China-South Sudan relations which range from the regional and international arena. The third part will discuss China’s role in the South Sudan peace process. The Fourth part will discuss China’s developmental peace doctrine in South Sudan. The final part will discuss China’s role in peacebuilding in South Sudan.

### 4.1 China’s Interest in South Sudan

On 12th December 2018, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) brokered the deal for warring parties to sign the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCISS) to implement the stalled 2015 accord which collapsed in 2016. The transitional Government of National Unity of the Republic of South Sudan (TGONU), The Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), the South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA), Former Detainees (FDs), Other Political Parties (OPP) sign a new deal to implement (R-ARCISS) (Reviving Peace in South Sudan Through the Revitalised Peace Agreement &Ndash; ACCORD, 2019).

After the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCISS), China was too optimistic about the smooth implementation of the agreement and willing to support the warring parties to implement the peace accord as one of the partners supporting IGAD-led peace talks, and a member of the Special Reconstruction Fund and Ceasefire Transitional Security Arrangement, Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (CTSAMVM) that oversee the implementation of security arrangements among others in the 2018 peace deal (Xinhua, 2018). During the signing Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan document by international community witnesses and peace guarantors, the Chinese Ambassador to South Sudan stated.

"I hope and would say that I am confident with the support of the international community, regional countries and with the support of South Sudanese, the peace process will move forward and implementation of the R-ARCSS will be a very successful one," "I would like to say that China's government and people will continue to do our best to support the peace process along with IGAD countries, African leaders, African countries and the international community" (Xinhua, 2018).

But there are many unanswered concerns regarding China's involvement in South Sudan's peace, China's role in peace mediation and its participation in the UN mission in South Sudan. In fact, China's involvement in South Sudan peace is multifaceted that can't be ignored and make it difficult to sum up China's participation in the country in a single statement that may not be accurate. China is the leading nation among UNSC permanent member states, sending almost 1,000 soldiers to South Sudan to serve as UN troops (Eric Olander and Cobus van Staden, 2016). On the other side, China made enormous investments in South Sudan's oil industry, aid for development, and other investment endeavors (Ibid).

However, to understand China interest in South Sudan peace and security. First, China stands to suffer the most if the crisis in South Sudan continues because it is the biggest consumer of the country's oil (nearly 66 per cent of the entire output). South Sudan's oil production has decreased by 20% as a result of the civil war between the rebels and the government since December 2013, which also contributed to the surge in oil prices to above \$99/barrel in January 2014 (Broga, 2014). The situation in South Sudan has implications for global oil markets because of the low levels of Libyan oil production (Ibid). A disturbing trend for China's significant investments in African energy markets is the closure of transnational energy corridors throughout Central and East Africa as a result of helping South Sudan to return to normalcy is a top priority for China (Ibid).

As South Sudan warring parties close to signing the 2018 peace deal to cease the hostilities, in August 2018 China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) which owns a major percentage of oil production in South Sudan signed another deal with the minister of petroleum to increase the production of oil and explore other options to form a consortium with other companies in the country (Tsvetana Paraskova, 2018). The same China National Petroleum Corporation that was eyeing 3.5 billion reserve oil in South Sudan since 2011 (ANI, 2021). Looking into China's desperate need for oil to meet its national production interest, there is no other place in East Africa than South Sudan that China considers to be a crude oil-producing country in exchange for its developmental aid (Hongbo Xu, 2017). For China to return to full access to the oil fields after slowing down oil production due to war in the country, there is a need to work with the government of South Sudan to address some underlying causes of conflict to maintain peace in the country so Chinese companies operate without fear. This can't be achieved without China's engagement with the South Sudan government in providing developmental assistance as a means of peacebuilding to gain trust (Ibid).

Second, Broga (2014) note that the largest foreign investment in South Sudanese infrastructure is still China. China has made significant (approximately \$20 billion) investments in the oil infrastructure of United Sudan since the 1990s. After South Sudan independent in 2011, China also promised a further \$8 billion for South Sudan's infrastructure improvements. South Sudan, the youngest country in the world, possesses more than 75% of Sudan's oil reserves. It also supplies twice as much oil imports to China as Nigeria does each year. Given that China lost nearly \$20

billion in infrastructure projects in the turmoil in Libya, it appears that China has learned the cost of playing a passive international role in its investments. And therefore, in South Sudan, China hasn't used the same strategies as it did in Libya. This time China hasn't thought of leaving its infrastructure behind as it did in Libya instead engaged with the warring parties to protect its critical infrastructure in the oil field (Crisis Group Asia Report, 2017). Beijing steps up to provide financial and other support to grant the safety and security of its oil infrastructure from warring parties to the conflicts (Ibid). Beijing's message to the government of South Sudan and the opposition through the diplomatic channel was to ensure the safety of the oil field in the country while helping them to resolve their differences through political dialogues (Ibid).

For China, the Diplomatic channel was the better way to engage with international actors and the warring parties. This led to China joining the international community in supporting UN Security Council Resolutions 2135 and 2155 because resolution 2155 makes two references to protecting foreigners and oil sites. China did not abstain this time, unlike in previous resolutions. 'Protecting its citizens and assets as the conflict grew worse and showed little indication of a quick resolution was undoubtedly a major justification for getting politically involved in conflict mediation' (Malte Brosig, 2020). All in all, the main idea or justification was to protect oil installations in the country (South Sudan) that they invested more in (Ibid). On the other, South Sudan is the youngest nation in the world with less interaction with many countries and has a lot of opportunities. So, China wanted to exploit the opportunities before other countries get to know about South Sudan and make sure it established a strong relationship with South Sudan which shall promote mutual interest and economic ties at present and in the future and be able to influence young nations politically<sup>1</sup>

Third, China has seen itself as a global actor in terms of influence on the international community and therefore acts as a global power that has the responsibility to carry out such as peace mediation, economic development, security, and other aspects that aimed to bring about peace and stability in the country affected by war. As such its active involvement in South Sudan show its position as a global actor that can help South Sudan to return to normalcy. This narrative as a global actor has been seen in China's involvement in United Nation Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and its role in peace mediation.

"China's decision to participate more vigorously in UN peacekeeping operations stems from its interest in building an identity as "peacebuilder" that understands connections between underdevelopment and insecurity". (Marc Lanteigne, 2018)

Although Beijing had been criticized for priority the safety of oil fields and its economic interest in South Sudan (Kang-Chun Cheng, 2022) stated; "I may be biased, but my general impression is that China doesn't care about South Sudan's political process or stability". This message echoed Shin, according to Shinn, China wants to keep its sizeable petroleum investment in South Sudan because it wants to benefit from the country's existing oil production and because it believes better times are ahead. "When that occurs, Chinese businesses will be in a good position to develop additional oil fields in the nation. Even if it means accepting short-term losses, this is a component of China's long-term strategy" (Austin Bodetti, 2019).

But still, it's undeniable that China is working harder to play the part of a "responsible world power" by increasing its involvement as a mediator between the various factions participating in the South Sudan war and the deployment of the peacekeeping force in South Sudan (Shannon Tiezzi, 2015). It's also to note that regardless of how "responsible" a nation is, the government still has to make decisions on where to spend its time and money, a decision that is inevitably greatly impacted by what matters most to the country. China would significantly gain if a long-elusive peace could be reached for this region because Beijing has undeniable interests linked to South Sudan. China is operating in this regard not only as a "responsible world power," but also as a useful great power (Ibid).

#### 4.2 China's Relations with South Sudan

After gaining independence, South Sudan's relations with China have improved as well. China's prior support for Khartoum might be unsettling for Juba, but the upward trend should continue. South Sudan felt less worried about China-Sudan relations by stating that the Chinese will be welcomed to help the new country flourish, Juba has chosen the proper course (Nadia Sarwar, 2012 p.178). China has responded by 'stating that it is eager to increase its involvement in South Sudan's oil industry as well as other sectors like developing infrastructure' (Ibid). With this positive attitude toward each country, China offered South Sudan an economic package in January 2012 that included grants for development and a potential billion-dollar loan for infrastructure (Ibid). Before the economic and development package, China and South Sudan have already begun to strengthen their bilateral relationship and signed trade, economic and technical agreements and at the same time established the joint economic and trade committee in 2011 (Embassy of People's Republic of China in South Sudan, 2023). In 2012, the South Sudan government registered 60 Chinese enterprises to work in various sectors in the country. These enterprises mainly worked in construction, petroleum, roads, bridges, and communications service in South Sudan. These projects were all aimed to improve service delivery and see South Sudan develop (Ibid). However, China and Southern Sudan's historical relations began in the 1970s after the Chinese agricultural technical expert embarked on the Southern part of Sudan. This Chinese technical expertise was under Sudan government supervision as the government feared contact between China and rebel groups in the South fighting the Khartoum regimes (Ibid).

On the other hand, China is also maintaining its principles that are guided by the non-interference policy (Hodzi, O., 2019 p.176). China feared its engagement with the South might jeopardize its relationship with the Sudan government (Ibid). But after signing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Khartoum regimes and the Sudan People Liberation Movement/Army to end the longest Civil war in Sudan's history in 2005, China began to have contact with the Government of South Sudan (GOSS) in Juba. The CPA gives the Governments of South Sudan and Sudan a right to share the oil revenues and China sees this as an opportunity to strengthen its relations with South Sudan (Machakos Protocol, 2002). On the other side, there is also hope for secession as CPA gives Southern Sudanese the right to vote for a referendum after the end of the transitional period. With this information in mind, China began to further engage with the Government of South Sudan (GOSS) and in 2008 China opened its general consulate office in Juba, the headquarter of the Government of South Sudan (GOSS). After the referendum was held in January 2011, China was among the first countries to recognize the referendum result and officially recognized South Sudan as an independent nation on 9th July 2011 (Xinhua, 2011).



Since then, China-South Sudan relations continue as it has been in the best interest of the Chinese and South Sudanese governments.

But going back, the “turning point” of what South Sudan and China called a bilateral relationship between the two countries started in 2007 when Salva Kiir visited Beijing. Kiir by then doubled as President of the government of South Sudan and vice president of Sudan. Kiir was accompanied by a national government official who stood on either side of Kiir (Crisis Group, 2012). The main message to Beijing was sent throughout the lengthy discussions, but one person with knowledge of the trip summarized it as follows: "Kiir and company brought a copy of the oil map and a copy of the CPA's Machakos protocol affirming the South's right to secede. He laid them the two documents and told them to "figure it out" (Ibid). This visit, along with the message conveyed, signalled a shift in Chinese policy toward Sudan (Ibid). With Kiir's visit to Beijing, ties between the Government of Southern Sudan (GOSS) and Beijing begin to flourish as China step up to offer Southern Sudan aid subsidies and increased investment, as well as its expansion to include other political actors. But Communist Party of China and Sudan's People Liberation Movement (CPC-SPLM) party-party cooperation has been a less developed but expanding area of political involvement that started afterwards (Daniel Large, 2009a). However, in recent years, China and South Sudan started to engage the ruling parties of the two countries, Communist Party China (CPC) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). This year the Sudan People's Liberation Movement delegates led by Secretary General, Peter Lam Both travelled to China with an invitation from the Communist Party of China where they exchange some views and signed a memorandum of understanding on inter-party interaction between the two countries. Speaking with CGTN, Peter Lam Both stated that, “the purpose of Sudan's People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) delegates' visit to Beijing and meeting with the Communist Party of China (CPC) leaders is for South People Liberation Movement (SPLM) delegation, especially governors, who are the chairpersons of South People Liberation Movement (SPLM) party, in various states of South Sudan, to come and learn for themselves how poverty is alleviated in some of the areas and how China deal with poverty. We need to have those skills and those experiences for us to go back home and try to apply them. Our hope is that as we signed a new memorandum of Understanding, we will have to scale up more cooperation among ourselves because we have become strategic partners at this level” (CTGN, 2023).

China is aware that building a relationship with South Sudan is significant to be able to access many oil fields located in South Sudan. During the Sudanese civil war, many South Sudanese accused oil firms, particularly Chinese ones, of giving the government of Sudan the funds necessary to put down South Sudan's rebellion and destroy villages and at the same polluted the areas (Moawia Ali Musa Ali, 2018). After the signing of the comprehensive peace agreement things look different and South Sudanese wanted Chinese companies to take full responsibility for their operations which isn't the case in the previous operations. Many complaints from the community show general dissatisfaction with oil firms and demand payment from the former for the effects of oil production on civilians during times of war. At this point, Beijing has no choice but to boost its relationship with the Southern Sudan government (Ibid).

However, the China-South Sudan relationship was driven by China's interest in the oil sector and South Sudan's interest in development projects. South Sudan's government welcomes China's 'socioeconomic development' approach (Akok Manyuat Madut, 2020). This is true after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the Sudan's People Liberation Movement (SPLM) leader sent a delegate to meet Chinese leaders and the key message was on development projects as said by Nhial Deng Nhial; "We discussed with the Chinese their role in bolstering the peaceful coexistence between Sudan and Southern Sudan and we also discussed with them economic development assistance as well as investment by China in Southern Sudan" (Ibid). The truth is that the development of China's relations with the Government of South Sudan (GOSS) was influenced by a number of factors, including a shared desire to engage, interest in the possibility of Chinese support for Southern Sudan, and an apparent growing realization by Beijing that it would need to respond to the new political reality in Juba (Daniel Large, 2008b). This is what makes China-South Sudan's relationship initial in economic and social development as has been in the best interest of both countries.

As the relationship evolved over time China and South Sudan begin to back each other at international institutions on matters of each country's concern that need other's support such as the United Nations. China and South Sudan backed each other on some occasions when it comes to geopolitical activities at an international institution such as the United Nations. In 2020 South Sudan was among 53 countries that support "China's national security law for Hong Kong" which was criticized by Human rights bodies and other 27 countries. Equally, China has been lobbying to lift the arms embargo and economic sanctions imposed on the South Sudan government by United Nations Security Council members. In May 2022, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2633 (2022) to renew the arms embargo, travel ban and financial measures. However, China and the other four members of the United Nations Security Council abstain (United Nations, 2022). China claimed that "The United States forced a vote on a text that does not enjoy consensus, adding that the Council should adopt measures to gradually ease the sanctions" ...and the Chinese representative continues by mentioning China's proposals to have the training and non-lethal equipment free from the restrictions" (United Nations, 2022). Findings also show that even though the China-South Sudan relationship incorporated different aspects of a bilateral relationship that include economics, peace, and security. China and South Sudan's relationship is more centered on economic opportunity and on the oil sector as South Sudan relies heavily on oil and China needs oil for its national interest. Although the relationship between the countries seems to be in both country's best interests, there is doubt of balance in cooperation as each country expects the other to do more than the others do. The "China-South Sudan relations represent a typical unequal relationship structured by an outstanding capacity asymmetry between the two sides" (David Ceasar Wan, 2018). One of the interviewees mentioned that after South Sudan in 2011, "the China-South Sudan relationship has been centered on oil, infrastructure, and marketing opportunities that only benefited China"<sup>2</sup>

### 4.3 China's Role in the South Sudan Peace Process

Like other actors, findings show that China has been active in the South Sudan peace process through regional forums and occasionally contact with South Sudanese warring parties. Observing 'China's active role in South Sudan peace and its reluctance' in the Darfur conflict in western Sudan shows that China's new approach to African peace and security is shaping its policy toward the continent. South Sudan became independent in July 2011 after its secession from Sudan but after independence, it went through subnational violence, and two years after celebrating its second anniversary as an independent Nation, another civil war broke out again in December 2013 (Center for Strategic Studies, 2019). After the outbreak of war in South Sudan, on 15 December 2013, findings show that China had been seen as one of the actors engaging South Sudan warring parties to come to the table and seek a peaceful solution to the conflict. Although China is known for its non-interference policy in its engagement with many countries around the world. China seems to be flexible in its engagement in the South Sudan conflict.

Findings show that since late December 2013 when the conflict broke out, China remained fully committed to end the conflict between the warring parties under the mediation led by Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD). To understand China's role in the South Sudan peace process, first, let us look at Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) peace-led mediation phases. Phase I, which started in December 2013, was mainly preparatory and concentrated on establishing the agenda for discussions, creating procedures and rules of process, achieving a cessation of hostilities agreement, and negotiating the release of the imprisoned SPLM leaders. Phase II, which started in February 2014 and extended through November of that year, concentrated on a more comprehensive substantive agenda. Phase III, which worked to address the issues left unresolved at the conclusion of Phase II, started in December 2014, and ran through March 2015 (United State Institute of Peace, 2023). After negotiations came to a standstill in March 2015, the IGAD mediation was reorganized as IGAD Plus in June 2015 (Ibid). After the 2015 deal collapsed in 2016, IGAD's 'high-level Revitalization forum' was convened again in 2017 which resulted in the signing of Revitalize Agreement on Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan on December 12<sup>th</sup>. 2018 (Ibid).

Throughout the Agreement on Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) 2015, the (short-lived agreement) and Revitalized Agreement on Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCISS) 2018, China has been seen actively engaging the regional body to end the conflict in South Sudan. According to (ALY VERJEE, 2016a), China has been active in working with IGAD to facilitate the following. First, China Support the IGAD, an East African regional organization that oversaw peace negotiations in Ethiopia between 2014 and 2015 with the goal of putting an end to the civil conflict. To do so, China established close coordination and communication are maintained with the other Western special envoys involved in the South Sudan peace process, particularly those from the US and the EU. Second, China transferred its military personnel from China to the IGAD Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM), which is in charge of monitoring the status of the cease-fire and sending its special envoy for African affairs, to Juba in an effort to push the administration to exercise restraint and pursue dialogue. At the same time, China gave the UN peacekeeping operation in South Sudan its deputy force commander, the second-highest military position. Third, China's constructed the boreholes and fed opposition

forces stationed in Juba to participate in the transitional security arrangements for the new transitional administration established in April 2016 that collapsed on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2016. And the deployment of its combat troop under the command of the United Nations mission in South Sudan (Karen Allen, 2015). After the 2015 peace agreement collapsed on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2016, China and other United Nations Security Council members condemned the renewal of fighting in Juba and called for warring parties to return to the negotiation table (United Nations, 2016).

On 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017, the IGAD created a “High-Level Revitalization forum” to revive the stalled 2015 peace accord the ARCSS. The High-Level Revitalized Forum (HLRF) was created to again engage the warring parties to cease hostilities and reschedule the agreement’s lifespan. The stalled 2015 peace accord state the need for South Sudan to conduct an election in 2018 after the end of the transitional period but that didn't work due to the eruption of war again in 2016 (Aly Verjee, 2017b). On their part, China continues to support the High-Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF) to revive the 2015 peace accord which paved the way for the signing of R-ARCSS on December 12, 2018 (Jerry Omondi, 2018). In 2019, China sent contingent troops to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to support the South Sudan government in the peace process and pledged to provide “in-kind support” to unified forces in the cantonment sites across the country to complete the security arrangement chapter (Xinhua,2019). While other international guarantors of the peace agreement were frustrated by the lack of political will among the warring parties in the country to implement some matrix in the peace accord (Chang, 2022). China continues to express its support for the implementation of a Revitalized Peace Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) (Ibid). In last year’s statement through its representative (Chinese Embassy to South Sudan), China pledges to provide funding to support a revitalized peace agreement including a monitoring and evaluation mechanism that oversees the implementation of the security arrangement. This comes after the US withdrew its funding to revitalize the peace agreement citing a lack of political progress in the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement (Ibid).

At some point, Beijing doesn’t only provide financial assistance and its involvement in the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) but also engages directly with warring parties to the conflict in South Sudan. Before the warring parties signed the revitalized peace agreement, China engaged with both opposition parties and the government which give China a new role in its foreign policy (Laura Barber, 2014). However, China’s involvement in the South Sudan peace process seems to be in a constructed way that respects South Sudan’s warring parties’ decisions in the peace process (Ibid). This means China fears jeopardizing its relationship with the government of South Sudan and the opposition as it’s not clear who going to win in the power struggle between the parties to the conflict. On the other hand, China respects the sovereignty of South Sudan and its declared policy of non-interference although the policy of non-interference seems to be at stake because of its economic interest in the country.

The first sign that shows China respected South Sudan's sovereignty was when Special Envoy Zhang reiterated China's adherence to a principle of respect for South Sudanese sovereignty by saying that he would only engage with the rebels "at the request of all parties," including the South Sudanese government (Ibid). In short China’s role in the peace effort in South Sudan is undeniable

since the signing of the revitalized peace agreement up to date. However, although China is having interest in South Sudan peace, it acts proactively only when the conflict reaches or draws closer to their sites and facilitates their interests in the country but not willing to take the leading role. This is to maintain its declared policy of non-interference<sup>3</sup>

#### 4.4 China's "Developmental Peace" Doctrine in South Sudan

Findings show that throughout the history of maintaining peace and security in a fragile state or state highly affected by war, there have been two primary approaches used by the United Nations either "coercive or supportive intervention" (Cheng Zilong, 2018 p.123) The coercive approach involves the use of economic, political, and military pressure while on the other hand "mediation, peacekeeping, and negotiation" are widely regarded as supportive interventions (Ibid). The two main approaches complement each other depending on the situation as the main objective is to achieve lasting peace but since the United Nations started its mission of peace and security around the world, there has been a debate about effective approaches to be implemented for peace and security to prevail in different parts of the world. However, such a debate hasn't yet been resolved as the two approaches have their cons and pros. In recent years, China has been involved in different areas in shaping Africa's peace and security. These include China's deployment of the peacekeeping force under the United Nations command, diplomatic ties, mediation efforts, and launching of a China-African partnership for peace and security cooperation (Alden and Zheng Yixiao, 2018:39). In 2018, China accounted for five peacekeeping operations in Africa namely, Mali, Sudan, Central African Republic, Congo, and South Sudan compared to any other United Nations Security Council member states (Christoph Zürcher, 2019:4). Looking into China's role in the United Nations peace mission shows that China's approach to global peace and security favours "supportive interventions", an example of its active role in the United Nations operations in Africa. Although China has taken an active role in the United Nations mission peacebuilding mainstreaming. Still, China uses its own models, in its engagement with African countries based on its own understanding of African security even though it believes the multilateral approach is the best model for global peace and security. China's understanding of peacekeeping operations is more on helping the local community and settle their differences in a meaningful way than imposing sanctions. This approach has been China's core principle in its engagement with developing countries as well as advocated for it in the international arena as stated by China Ambassador Dai Bing at the general debate of the special committee on peacekeeping operations.

The "PKO mandates must first focus on political settlement and avoid excessive intervention in areas where the countries concerned should bear primary responsibilities. Meanwhile, it is imperative to fully respect the views of the countries concerned, fully understand the considerations of regional countries, and refrain from imposing ideas based on political considerations, ideology, and preconceptions"<sup>4</sup>

For China, poverty reduction and state-direct infrastructure, and economic development are priorities as some of the root causes of the conflicts are driven by food insecurity, economic decline, and unequal access to resources in the continent (Madlala-Routledge & Liebenberg, 2010), such an approach has been heard from many Chinese diplomats including president Xi Jinping's speech in 2015 while addressing African head-states and governments in the opening remark of the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), in his fourth pillar on the China-Africa Partnership note, President Xi Jinping stated that;

"Poverty is the root cause of chaos while peace is the guarantee for development. Development holds the key to solving all problems. China supports the settlement of African issues by Africans in the African way. We are of the view that in resolving security issues, both the symptoms and the root causes must be addressed in a holistic way. China stands ready to take an active part in Africa's capacity-building efforts to maintain and strengthen peace and security and support Africa in its endeavours to speed up development, eradicate poverty and realize durable peace"<sup>5</sup>.

Xi Jinping echoed the same message conveyed by Ambassador Shen Guofang, Deputy permanent representative of China to the UN at the security council meeting in 2001 on the topic of "Peacebuilding: toward a comprehensive approach" when stated that.

"Poverty leads to social instability, which will, in turn, be a threat to peace and security at the national and even regional levels.... In order to uproot the causes of conflicts, we must help developing countries, especially the least-developed countries, to seek economic development, eradicate poverty, curb diseases, improve the environment, and fight against social injustices"<sup>6</sup>.

The declared "developmental peace" doctrine has been China's model in its relationship with many countries in Africa and South Sudan isn't exceptional in China's declared doctrine. After signing the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflicts in South Sudan, China made it very clear to support South Sudan in peacebuilding and follow the same declared doctrine in Africa. China assures the international community to coordinate with regional and continental body example IGAD and AU to effectively help South Sudan to return to normalcy.

"The international community should intensify coordination with IGAD and the African Union, support their mediation efforts, and help all parties in South Sudan to build greater mutual trust and show greater flexibility and goodwill, so consensus can be reached as soon as possible on all the outstanding issues. At present, the focus should be on helping South Sudan tackle its development problems, assisting the return and resettlement of IDPs, and expanding investment in such areas as agriculture, energy, infrastructure, education, and medical service to help the people of South Sudan build greater capacity to rebuild their homes and resume development"<sup>7</sup>.

After the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) between the warring parties, China immediately started the developmental project as a part of the reconstruction and social development process for South Sudan. These developmental projects aim to bring about peace in the country as it has been the core principle in its engagement with developing countries. The first developmental project implemented by China after the signing of the 2018 peace accord was the Exim Bank funding 392 km Juba-Terekeka-Yiror-Rumbek Road project, the 539 km Nadapal (Kenya Border)-Torit-Juba-Bor Highway Project, the 219 km Kaya-Yei Road Project, and the 451km Western Equatoria-Raja Road (Aid Data Organization, 2019). Exim Bank agrees to fund these projects in exchange for crude oil. The agreed loan is worth 1.3 billion USD with a portion of the revenues going toward the construction of this road. With money from the daily sale of 30,000 barrels of oil, the debt would be paid back. The proceeds from the sale of the crude oil would be placed in a bank account under the management of the Exim Bank of China. The engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) contractor would subsequently get payment from Exim Bank from that account. The Crude oil shipments began in May 2019 and road construction got underway in October 2019 (Ibid). However, not only did Exim Bank make payment for all the construction but also some Chinese Companies got contracts to construct some roads, example Juba-Terekeka-Rumbek Road was constructed by Shandong Hi-Speed Group Co.Ltd (SDHSG) (Xinhua 2021)

The second developmental project was an agreement signed by China and South Sudan to construct “Jur River Bridge”. In 2020, South Sudan struck an agreement with the Chinese government to build a bridge over the Jur River connecting Juba to the Bahr El Ghazal region and its northern regions. The deal to construct the “Jur River Bridge” was viewed as an important step toward development (Xinhua, 2020) even though the R-ARCSS matrix hasn’t yet been fully implemented because it doesn’t only link the country but also to the border between South Sudan and Sudan.

“Today, I am very pleased to join the signing ceremony of the Jur River Bridge Project, which demonstrates the Chinese government's firm commitment to the future development of our cooperation, friendship, and our support for the long-term development of South Sudan” (Hua Ning, Chinese Ambassador to South Sudan, 2020)

The third developmental project implemented by China in South Sudan was the construction Juba health facility. In 2021 after an eighth ministerial conference of the Forum on China-Africa cooperations, China pledges to reap the development benefits for South Sudan and announced the plan to start the second phase of Juba-Teaching hospital construction that covers all the medical equipment and different ward that includes infectious disease control rooms, inpatient rooms, outpatient rooms, and other medical wards ( Xinhua, 2022). This proves that China’s peace doctrine is based on a development-first approach, improving the welfare of the majority is more important to China (Y Kuo, 2020), and hence developmental projects are more applicable to its involvement in peacebuilding in South Sudan.

All in all, China's role in South Sudan's development reconstruction after the war is proven to be visible given the role played by these developmental projects in the country in terms of improving social development welfare, socio-economic and movement of basic goods and services. The Juba-terekeka Road and Juba-Bor roads prove the effectiveness of these developmental projects in the country although there is no improvement in the security situation in the country at large example the subnational violence continues that threaten the lives of civil populations around the nation.

#### 4.5 China's peacebuilding approach in South Sudan

Findings show that China's "developmental peace" doctrine favours self-sustaining peace and China's peacebuilding approaches follow the same concept. "The origin of the sustaining peace concept can be traced to Johan Galtung's idea of positive peace, which highlights the attitudes, institutions, and structures that need to be present to create and sustain peaceful societies, as opposed to negative peace, which sees peace merely as the absence of violence"(Galtung, 2011) However, peacebuilding has not yet been discussed in China's policy debate. China does not either have a department or a policy specifically for nations that are involved in conflicts (Yuan, 2022) But recently, China has increased its involvement in peacebuilding, which is referred to as a variety of actions taken by outside parties in areas impacted by violent conflict with the goal of 'preventing the resumption or intensification of violent conflict and establishing a permanent and self-sustaining peace (Ibid). 'The manifestation of this can be seen in China's expanding participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions (UNPKOs)' (Ibid). Even though there is not much discourse on China's peacebuilding in South Sudan, Hirono, M., (2023) recently noticed that China used two different peacebuilding approaches in South Sudan: local "context-specific" and "adaptive peacebuilding". The two approaches are well-used in China's peacebuilding in South Sudan. According to Hirono, to understand China's peacebuilding approaches, it's important to note that China's approaches to peacebuilding aren't aiming to change the government nor force the warring parties to mediation but "deferring to 'African solutions' or leaving the tough talking to African or Western mediators" and engage softly with the government of that country affected by war.

First, the Chinese government's peacebuilding strategies provide them with the potential to be locally context-specific, but they are exclusively applied to the South Sudanese government. But many argue that China's peacebuilding efforts in South Sudan continue to be largely "deterministic" with regard to the country's vulnerable population according to (Hirono, M., 2023). However, Hirono argues "China has a history of not making a distinction between the government and the vulnerable populace. It makes the erroneous assumption that the other government it interacts with, like the South Sudanese government, reflects the legitimate interests of its citizens". The Confucian ideal is the foundation for this statement, which reads, "The state-centric nature of China's approach acknowledges the principle of unity between a state and its people—strengthening the state by successfully assisting in disaster areas will inevitably enhance



the degree of harmony between the state and its people” (Hirono, M., 2023). This is what is happening in South Sudan. China’s peacebuilding approach is more toward the government of South Sudan. for example, in 2014 the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ask 1.8 billion as part of the OCHA-led Crisis Response Plan for South Sudan to carry out critical humanitarian measures, but the OCHA-Led request hasn’t received any funding from China (Zhou Hang, 2014). Instead, China sent emergency aid to the South Sudan government and the government of South Sudan welcomed China's emergency aid, not only because it helps to alleviate the dire humanitarian situation but also because of its "no-political-strings-attached" attitude (Ibid).

Second, China’s understanding of the local context per its engagement with the South Sudan government led China to apply an adaptive peacebuilding approach. However, in order to engage in adaptive peacebuilding, peacebuilders must change their perspective from seeing society's problems as their own responsibility to realizing that only society itself can solve its own issues (de Coning, 2023, de Coning, C., Saraiva, et al, 2023). At best, “peacebuilders can assist in facilitating and supporting this process. Since adaptive peacebuilding is a goal-oriented or problem-solving strategy, it is crucial to examine and identify the problems and the objectives of activities aimed at sustaining peace with the individuals affected by the conflict” (Ibid). Initiatives can refer to acts, “interventions, campaigns, and programs at the operational level” (Ibid). However, evidence shows that China has been seen applying an adaptive peacebuilding approach as it has been China’s approach to peace and security by giving the parties to conflict and the people of the country responsibility for what peace they want while at the same time engaging with other actors, example regional and international level as indicated in South Sudan peace process (Ibid). In fact, China does, it believes in non-interference and South Sudan's sovereignty and emphasizes its support for the idea that African problems should be solved by Africans (Meng Wenting, 2019). China chooses to support the regional body Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD's) mediation process, which is crucial to the peace talks between the South Sudanese sides (Ibid). China does not enforce its beliefs through the use of force or penalties; instead, it considers them—or the prospect of them—as a tool for influencing future behaviours rather than a means of punishing past behaviours (Ibid).

## **5. Conclusion**

In conclusion, as discussed in the discussion part of the thesis section, it is clear that China’s developmental peace doctrine in South Sudan is multifaced and difficult to measure at this early stage although South Sudan remains to be “testing ground” for China’s peacebuilding and peacekeeping in the region (East Africa). China’s role in South Sudan’s peace process from the initial stage of Agreement on Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCISS) to revitalized peace agreement shows that China has a role to play in peacebuilding and social development in South Sudan. China’s developmental peace doctrine appeared to be applied based on the findings. China’s combined role in all areas in South Sudan shows that China’s “developmental peace” doctrine is relevant to the South Sudan situation. However, one of the most driving factors in

China's engagement with South Sudan whether in the developmental arena, peace and security remains to be China's interest in South Sudan's oil sectors and investment although there is evidence that China plays a role as responsible "great power" around the world, for example its active role at United Nation mission in South Sudan. From the look of the developmental aid and loan agreement between the government of South Sudan and China. All agreements are centered on crude oil whether it's road construction or other government expenditures agreement in the country (South Sudan). With this interest, China's developmental peace policy will advance faster than expected as a result of its interest in the country because of its natural resources and advantageous location in the middle of the regions that can easily allow China to continue with its influence in East Africa. China-South Sudan relations will remain the same and will get strong as time goes although the power dynamic between the two countries will continue in long run. For China, South Sudan will remain the hunting ground for crude oil and other natural resources. Developmental aid will continue to flow to South Sudan no matter what because China has nothing to lose in this relationship. In the end, it's all about economic opportunity in South Sudan for China to satisfy its national interest and become more influential in South Sudan politics and in the region as well.

In contexts of peacebuilding, China peacebuilding in South Sudan remain to be less successful. This is because China's Peacebuilding approach is used in the notion of relying on the flimsy South Sudanese government to serve as the project's leader. Instead of community leaders at the grassroots who may be contacted through humanitarian agencies and civil society organizations that offer more value to the peacebuilding strategy than the central government in the country that has little authority to carry out such actions. Therefore, the adaptive peacebuilding and local context approach applied by China in South Sudan needs to be decentralized to add value to make the change in the country and change the attitude of the people from violence to a more constructive way from the grassroots level.

## Note

1-3. Interview with 2 government officials and 1 civil society activism, 2023.

4. Remarks by Ambassador Dai Bing at the General Debate of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations 2023-02-21.

5. Statement by Chinese President Xi Jinping during the opening ceremony of the Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in Johannesburg, South Africa, Dec 4, 2015.

6. Statement by Ambassador Shen Guofang, Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations and the Head of the Chinese Delegation, at the Second Preparatory Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, 2002-02-01.

## 7. Statement by Ambassador Wu Haitao at the Security Council Meeting on the Situation in South Sudan 2020-03-04.

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