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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SOFT POWER POLICIES OF CHINA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION IN AFRICA

MASTER'S THESIS

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ÖZ

Tarihsel olarak güç mücadelelerinin merkezinde olan Afrika kıtası, son yıllarda geleneksel güçler ve yükselen güçler arasındaki rekabetin net bir şekilde görülebildiği bir sürece girmiştir. Kıtadaki dikkat çeken yeni aktörlerin başında Çin gelmektedir.

Hızla gelişen ekonomisine ham madde ve pazar arayışında olan Çin, Afrika kıtası ile ilişkilerinde bu ihtiyaçlarını karşılamayı amaçlamaktadır. Çin'in Afrika kıtasına yönelik amaçları ve kıtadaki artan etkinliği, onun kıta için bir tehdit mi yoksa bir fırsat mı olduğu tartışmalarını alevlendirmektedir. Amaçlarına bakıldığı zaman neo-kolonyal endişeleri uyandıran Çin, kıta ile ilişkilerine bakıldığında, Batı merkezli bir kavram olan yumuşak gücü kendi politikasına uyarlamaya çalışmaktadır. Öteki taraftan, geleneksel güçler olarak tanımladığımız Avrupalı devletler, yeni aktörlerin kıtadaki aktivitesini arttırmasıyla, kıta ile kurduğu ilişkileri gözden geçirmeye başlamıştır. Bu sebeple kıtadaki var olan yumuşak gücünü pekiştiren ve alternatifler sunan bir yaklaşım benimsemektedir.

Bu çalışmada yumuşak güç konseptinin Çin ve Avrupa Birliği'nin Afrika kıtası ile olan ilişkilerini inşa ederken nasıl anlaşıldığı ve uygulandığı karşılaştırmalı olarak analiz edilmektedir. Bu çerçevede uluslararası ilişkilerde güç kavramı ve özelde 1990 yılında J.S. Nye Jr. tarafından geliştirilen yumuşak güç kavramına odaklanılmıştır. Sırasıyla Çin ve Avrupa Birliği'nin yumuşak güç kapasiteleri, Nye'ın yumuşak güç kaynakları olarak tanımladığı kültür, politik değerler ve dış politikanın yanında ekonomi üzerinden dört kategoride tartışılmıştır. Ardından, bu iki aktörün Afrika kıtası ile ilişkilerinin tarihi arka planı; Afrika kıtasındaki yumuşak güç kapasitelerinin kültür, politik değerler, dış politika ve ekonomi üzerinden değerlendirmesi yapılmıştır. Son olarak Çin ve Avrupa Birliği'nin Afrika kıtasında uyguladığı yumuşak güç politikasının benzerlikleri ve farklılıkları belirtilerek, Afrika kıtası için avantajları ve dezavantajları ortaya konulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yumuşak Güç, Çin, Afrika, Avrupa Birliği.

ABSTRACT

Historically the African continent has been at the center of power struggles. It has been entering in a period which competition between traditional powers and rising powers can be seen clearly. The most striking one of these new actors is China.

The main aim of China in Africa is to find resources and markets for its ever-expanding economy. This aim with its relations in Africa and increasing activities in the continent has raised concerns about whether it is a chance or a threat to the peoples and governments of Africa. What first come to mind when we look at the aims of China in Africa are neo-colonial concerns. However; when we look at its relations with the African states and peoples, we see China trying to implement the concept of soft power in its policies in Africa. Although soft power is originally a Western concept, China tries to re-formulate it into its policies. On the other hand, the European states which we call the traditional powers have started to review their relations with Africa since the arrival of new actors. Therefore, traditional powers have adopted an approach to reinforce their already existing soft power and to put alternatives for their policies in the African continent.

In this study, the soft power understandings and implementations of China and the European Union in Africa will be comparatively analyzed. In this context, this study will focus on the concept of power in international relations and in particular the concept of soft power developed by Joseph S. Nye in 1990. Respectively, the soft power capacities of China and the European Union will be discussed over four categories: Culture, political values, foreign policy, and economy. J. S. Nye presents these four categories as sources of soft power. Subsequently, the historical relations of these two actors, China and the European Union will be analyzed. Their soft power capacities in Africa will be discussed again over the four aforementioned resources. Finally, the similarities and differences of the soft power policy implemented by China and the European Union in the African continent will be revealed, and the advantages and disadvantages for the African continent will be specified.

Key Words: Soft Power, China, Africa, European Union.

LIST OF ABBREVETIONS

ACP – African, Carabian and Pacific Countries

AfCFTA - The African Continental Free Trade Area

AfDB - African Development Bank

AIIB - Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

ASEAN - Association of Southeast Asian Nations

AU - African Union

BRI- Belt Road Initiative

BRICS - Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

CCP - China Communist Party

CCTV - China Central Television

CFSP – Common Foreign and Security Policy

CI - Confucius Institute

CSDP - The Common Security and Defence Policy

CTT - China Threat Theory

DCI – Development Cooperation Instruments

DR Congo - Democratic Republic of Congo

EC - European Community

ECSC - The European Coal and Steel Community

EEAS - European External action Service

EIDHR - the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights

ENP - European Neighbourhood Policy

EP - European Parliament

EU - European Union

FDI - Foreign Direct Investment

FOCAC - Forum on China-Africa Cooperation

GDP - Gross domestic product

GNI - Gross National Index

HSK - Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi

IR - International Relations

MoU - Memorandum of Understanding

NBI - Nation Brands Index

NEPAD - New Partnership for Africa's Development

NGO - Non-Governmental Organisations

OAU - The Organization of African Unity (OAU)

OBOR - One Belt One Road

ODA - Official Development Assistance

OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PRC - People's Republic of China

RCEP - Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership

SSC - South-South Cooperation

UK - United Kingdom

UN - United Nation

USA - United States of America

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNSC - United Nations Security Council

WTO - World Trade Organisation

ZTE - Zhong Xing Telecommunication Equipment Company Limited

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Problem and the Subject of the Thesis

In the discipline of International Relations (IR), there is a widely recognized assumption that world politics is carried out in an anarchist environment. Anarchy is the absence of an institution and a set of rules above the states. It is a structure that requires the states to ensure their security and continuity. Since the states have taken such responsibility, concepts such as 'a strong state' and 'being strong' found a wide place in the discussions (Özdemir, 2008:114). The place and importance of the concept of power in the discipline have been repeatedly mentioned by numerous political scientists [(Dahl, 1957), (Lukes, 2004), (Baldwin, 2016)].

Despite being a concept of such central importance, a definition of power adopted by everyone has not been made so far. Joseph Nye, one of the leading neo-liberal international relations theorist, likens the concept of power to the weather and continues as follows:

Everyone depends on it and talks about it, but few understand it. Just as farmers and meteorologists try to forecast the weather, political leaders and analysts try to describe and predict changes in power relationships (Nye, 2004, p. 1).

While defining the concept, it would be appropriate to start with the dictionary meaning. In the Oxford Dictionary (n.d), the first definition of power is "the ability to control people or things". The diversity in the definition of the concept of power and the changes in the global system have led to the emergence of different power classifications. The concept of soft power, which is created by J. Nye in 1990, is the most striking among these power classifications. According to Nye (2004, p. x), soft power is the "ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments".

Since international politics entered a different era with the end of the Cold War, as well as the increasing use of the internet and communication technologies, the term soft power has entered the agenda of countries regardless of their size. Although the

concept of soft power is a concept produced for American foreign policy, over the years it has begun to take an important place in the foreign policies of other countries as well.

Africa is known as a continent with a long history of exploitation. It has recently emerged as a rising continent both in the economy and international politics. It has increased its self-confidence with these improvements and search for reliable partners. Regarding this, African states are experiencing diversification of alternatives in international aid and foreign policy with the entrance of new actors. There are smaller actors such as Turkey, Iran, and Brazil which seek a sphere of influence and strategic relations with African states and global players like the European Union, USA, China, and Russia. All these actors have different interests and policy approaches towards Africa. Soft power policies are very popular among these new and traditional actors in the continent. In this study, China and the European Union, which are the two most important actors in terms of soft power policies in the African continent, will be examined.

China is one of the countries that is frequently mentioned in soft power discussions. The reason behind these discussions is China's astonishing economic growth over the past few decades. This growth rises concerns about the aim of China in world politics.

Chinese policy makers also well noticed the concerns about their rise and influence in the international arena. Accordingly, Beijing came up with the term "peaceful development". A white paper which is prepared by the Embassy of the Peoples Republic of China in the Republic of India, explains the peaceful development as;

"The central goal of China's diplomacy is to create a peaceful and stable international environment for its development. In the meantime, China strives to make its due contribution to world peace and development. It never engages in aggression or expansion, never seeks hegemony, and remains a staunch force for upholding regional and world peace and stability" (White Paper: China's Peaceful Development, n.d).

China with its giant population and growing economy is one of the most important actors in international relations. It gives great importance to the African continent because it saw this continent as a source of raw materials, a market for goods, and a political upper hand in international politics. Chinese leaders understood the importance of the soft

power policy and made the concept compatible with Chinese political culture. China with the concept of "peaceful development", has increased its activities in the African continent, and leaders and academicians have adapted the soft power policy tools in China's foreign policy in Africa.

In international politics, the European Union (EU) is one of the most striking actors with its unique structure and big economy. The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), founded in 1951, was the first step of the European integration process, what we know as the EU today. The basic aim of this process is to end bloody wars in the European continent. The European Union is a "peace project" (European Union, n.d) and has reached 27 members. The EU has founded on the principles of democracy, human rights, and good governance within its borders and promotes multilateralism in international relations. Given this norm-based structure of the European Union with its lack of military force, the EU is defined as "normative power" and "civilian power". The EU does not have a military so its hard power capacity is very limited. The Union uses soft power tools to close this gap in international relations.

Although the European Union cannot fully use its soft power capacity because of its lack of policy harmony among member states in some regions, the African continent lies an opportunity in front of the EU policies. European and African relations have had historical roots since the colonial period and geographical proximity causes close relations. The promotion of peace, human rights, and democracy were the main values in relations between the European Union and Africa. However, changes in international policy bring issues of security and stability to the policy agenda between the two parties. Increasing competition with the arrival of the new actors to the African continent causes revision of the EU policies with Africa. They used more soft power policy tools in relations.

In this framework, this paper will try to compare the soft power policies of China and the European Union (EU) in Africa and examine various questions.

Although these two actors, China and the EU, are completely different in terms of history, geography, economy, policy, and ideology; why are they using soft power policy tools, and how are they using their soft power capacity in Africa? What are the differences and the similarities between soft power policies and capacities of China and the EU? Is

increasing competitiveness in Africa between the traditional powers and the rising powers an advantage or disadvantage for the African countries? How do these two actors perceive Africa and their image in Africa?

The Objective of the Study

The competition for Africa is not a new phenomenon in international relations. The term 'scramble for Africa' is used to define this race. The first scramble started in 1884 with the Berlin Conference. In this conference, the European countries divided the African continent among themselves for colonial purposes. The second scramble was between the East and the West to gain the support of newly independent African states during the Cold War. The last one is now. The so-called new scramble of Africa started with the entrance of China to the African continent. Countries from all around the world have increased their diplomatic ties by opening up new embassies and increasing commercial relations. Military cooperation is also another way to develop ties with the African countries.

The arrival of China turns the eyes on the African continent. The last scramble is humbler in terms of power resources. All actors trying to increase their image and they try to make themselves appealing to the African governments and its people. This competition in the continent is an advantage if it can be used wisely by the African leaders. Here, we will testify to four soft power resources which are culture, domestic politics and values, foreign policy, and lastly economy of two actors, China and the European Union, to show you the inherence of this scramble.

In this thesis, four hypotheses are suggested:

1. The depth of historical relations determines the soft power potentials of the actors.

2. Actors' welfare level is a determinant of their soft power potential and their image in Africa.

3. The foreign policy principles of the actors determine the effectiveness of soft power policies in Africa.

4. As the economic activities of the actors in the African continent increase, their positive image increases as well.

Methodology

In political science today, a wide variety of methods exist which offer different approaches to understanding the complex world (Ohnesorge, 2020: 229). What is important at this point is the main purpose of the researcher in his work. After this purpose is determined, the theoretical framework is created and the content helps to explain the past practices and the processes experienced today. Looking at the basic question of this research study, it can be said that an ontological question has been put forward. In this thesis, the theoretical and the soft power potentials of two observable actors are explained. In this study, which deals with the soft power applications of the two actors in Africa, how the developments took place and their similar and different aspects are tried to be revealed.

Social scientists collect data from divergent sources, even from experiments. Researchers could benefit from surveys, official records, historical archives, statistical data, and observations (Lewis-Beck, 2004: 234). From this point, official documents, reports, and budgets; articles, speeches, and statements published by decision-makers on both sides of the soft power equation; surveys and interviews, the secondary literature on the relations between the relevant actors can reveal the general and especially the soft power dimension (Ohnesorge, 2020: 283). When we look at the types of research, qualitative and quantitative research, it will be determined according to the purpose, target, and size of the study and provide the opportunity to use the methodology that the research needs. Ohnesorge (2020) stated in his book "Soft Power the Forces of Attraction in International Relations" that qualitative research on soft power studies is an appropriate approach to understanding soft power and examining power functioning. Of course, studies on soft power indexes can provide a starting point that can shed light on the evaluations at the beginning of the research. This thesis study was designed as qualitative research. The data required by the research is mostly based on secondary data sources (using document analysis techniques). Secondary data was used based on existing literature of books, journal articles, news about power and soft power, China's rise, and African and European studies.

In the theoretical part of this thesis, the definition of the concept of power is discussed. In addition, resources on power types, including the concept of power and soft power on the main axis, have been collected and the definitions of related concepts and the differences between them have been tried to be understood. At this point, Joseph Nye's works who used the concept of soft power in the late 1980s work have also been among the main sources.

In this study, there is an attempt to examine the soft power policies of China and the European Union which are respectively samples of increasing powers and traditional powers in Africa. The historical backgrounds of these two actors were given to the readers to better understand the topic. The soft power policies of actors were examined according to four soft power resources: Culture, domestic policy values, foreign policy, and economy. China and the European Union's soft power policies are compared by these four independent variables. While addressing Africa, it has been observed that the practices of countries that want to create a sphere of influence in that geography through soft power, by changing the old understanding of colonialism and interdependence on a global scale, are remarkable.

This thesis is mostly based on the method of comparative case study. Comparative case studies arose out of the need to better understand political systems and social structures by comparing them with each other. Case selection is important for an accurate determination of the path to the dependent variable. Additionally, this thesis is designed on the method of agreement. According to this method, the aim is to focus on the cases in which the independent variables differ and the dependent variable is similar when choosing two or more cases to compare. In this type of comparison, the researcher's goal is to examine the different cases in which that dependent variable occurs to understand the cause of the dependent variable. The strategy adopted in this method is that the selected cases produce the same result, although very different from each other. The result, cannot be explained by these differences, but by a single or few similarities in different cases (Süleymanoğlu-Kürüm, 202: 159). In our case, although China and the European Union are different in political, sociological, and economical aspects, they use soft power policy tools in their relations with Africa. These two actors' soft power capacities and their soft power policies in Africa was examined through four independent

variables which are culture, political values, foreign policy and the economy. Below table explains the method which is used in this thesis.

Table 1

Method of agreement

Cases	Scope	Independent variables	Dependent variable (result)
China	Africa	Culture-Political Values-Foreign Policy-Economy	Soft Power Policy
European Union	Africa	Culture-Political Values-Foreign Policy-Economy	Soft Power Policy

Finally, state-level analysis was chosen for the conduct of this study. In this study, the European Union is evaluated as a single actor in Africa. Of course, the existence of the policies of individual states in the continent is also accepted, and evaluations have been made in this respect where necessary. Similarly, 54 countries and thousands of cultures in Africa had to be ignored and the continent had to be evaluated single.

Literature Review

The literature on the concept of soft power has been broadened recently. Joseph Nye Jr. coined the term soft power in his article titled *Soft Power* in the journal *Foreign Policy* in 1990. When this article was published, it caused huge discussions among the academic intelligentsia. He published a new book in 2004 to clarify controversies about the concept. The book is Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics. Lastly, he published The Future of Power in 2011 and tried to explain how power will evolve in the 21st century. When it comes to soft power, soft power indexes are also important starting points for researchers. In this thesis, BrandFinance's 2020 and 2021 Global Soft Power Index were used. In addition to this Softpower30 by Portland is also an eye-catching Index

for researchers. What we see in these indexes is that most European countries ranked top 10 and China's soft power increases year by year.

Increasing links between China and Africa led to an increase in the literature written in this field. Political scientist Deborah Brautigam's books *The Dragon's Gift* (2009), *Will Africa Feed China* (2015), and *Chinese Aid and African Development* (1998) are about the rise of China in the African continent. Historian Paul Tiyambe Zeleza's article *The Africa-China relationship: challenges and opportunities* (2014) are also one of the most referenced articles about this issue. When the topic is China, David Shambaugh is one of the leading China experts. His books *Power Shift* (2005) and *China Goes Global* (2016) are very helpful for a better understanding of China in world politics. *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World* published in 2007 by Joshua Kurlantzick is one of the highly referenced books about Chinese Soft Power. In this book with the term 'charm offensive', the writer tries to point out blurring lines between soft power and the economic power of China. Professor Kenneth King is in his seminal book *China's Aid and Soft Power in Africa. The Case of Education and Training* (2013) examines China's role as an educational donor and trainer for Africa.

The soft power of the European Union is another hotly-debated topic in the field of international relations. The European Union with its exceptional structure displays power in the economic field rather than the military. This unique structure of the European Union created a zone of peace. Other countries are attracted and the image of the European Union is increasing in their eyes. Jan Melissen is one of the leading scholars on issues of soft power and public diplomacy. His edited book in collaboration with Mai'a K. Davis Cross *European Public Diplomacy Soft Power at Work* (2013) is a detailed work on European soft power and public diplomacy. This book brings together analysts and gives us an insight into the issue. Zaki Laïdi's edited book *EU Foreign Policy in a Globalized World Normative Power and Social Preferences* (2008) is also another resource that covers well the issue of European soft power and "normative power". The concept of normative power was created by Ian Manners in his article *Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?* (2002). According to this concept, the European Union's external relations do not just perceive its interest, rather it pursues what it should be. Lastly, official documents of the European Union are primary resources for soft power

understanding of the European Union and Sigita Kavaliūnaite (2011) works on discourse analysis of the European Union legislations.

There is a huge literature on colonialism and neo-colonialism debates in international relations. Relations between Europe and Africa have deep historical roots and mostly it is a history of domination. Although African nations won their freedom from western colonizers, their interdependence did not last too long because westerners came to the continent with a mask of economy and policy. However, recent developments in the international environment have caused a change between parties in relation. The European Union and Africa set table as equal partners. The European Union and Africa relations are governed by the Cotonou Agreement and the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. The European Union also works with the African Union to develop relations between both sides. Additionally, the European Union is the most successful example of the African Union.

However, literature on the soft power of the European Union in Africa is more limited. Prof. Dr. Siegmar Schmidt's article titled *Soft Power or Neo-colonialist Power? - African Perceptions of the EU* (2012) presents a very effective starting for this issue. Because of the limited literature on the European Union's soft power in Africa, this thesis searches each soft power resource separately in the context of the European Union and Africa relations.

In the context of comparing the soft power capacities of actors on the African continent economic reports of the *World Bank* and statistics from the *Afrobarometer* are very helpful.

Contribution

This thesis hopes to contribute to the literature on soft power by making a comparative study of two actors who are well known in the soft power studies. China and the European Union are essential partners for the past and future of the African continent, however during the process of literature review, the lack of comparative studies about soft power policies on the African continent has been spotted. In addition, a study that reveals the similarities and differences between the policies of the two actors has not been encountered in the master's theses in Turkey.

Additionally, it tries to create an awareness of the threats and the opportunities for the African continent.

The Structure of the Thesis

Power and the concepts related to power are examined in the second section of this thesis. The place of power discussions in international relations theories, concepts of hard power and soft power as well as nation branding concepts which are related to soft power, are evaluated. The first section aims to give theoretical background. In this manner, the soft power policy implementation of the actors can be understood well.

The third section is about China. In this context, the section starts with China's soft power capacity, then it is followed by the history of China-Africa relations and ends with China's soft power policy implementations in Africa.

The fifth section is about the European Union. The same structure with the second section is implemented. It explains the soft power capacity of the European Union, the historical relations between the European Union and Africa are touched upon and lastly the soft power policies of the European Union in Africa are examined.

The seventh section is where the comparison of the two actors' soft power policies in Africa is made. Policy similarities and differences are discussed. Lastly, possible advantages and disadvantages of the ongoing competition in Africa are examined.

2. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Concept of Power in International Relations

The only tool of a state's policy in international relations is power. It is one of the aims of a state to have this tool. If a talent is not used as a tool for politics or is not shown to be usable, than it does not have the quality of power. In short, power is 'power' only if it is usable (Yılmaz, 2008).

When defining the concept of power, it is important whose power is mentioned. Hannah Arendth attributed the power to a group and claimed that power is not only the ability of a person to act, but corresponds to the ability to act in harmony. Power is not a property of a single individual, but it rather belongs to a group and exists as long as the group exists (Arendth, 1970/1997: 50). On the other hand, Dahl defined the concept as

"A has power over B, to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do." (Dahl, 1957: 203). Referring to actors in his power definition means not just individuals or groups, rather it can be nations, governments, or organizations (Dahl, 1957: 203). However, one of the most referenced power definitions was made by Max Weber. According to his power definition, it is the possibility of an actor in a social structure to do what he wants against the possibility of encountering resistance. Talcott Parson defined power in terms of institutionalized power. According to this, "power is a capacity to secure the performance of binding obligations by units in a system of the collective organization when obligations are legitimized concerning the collective goals, and where in case of recalcitrance, there is a presumption of negative sanctions" (Parson, 1963: 237). According to Nye, power is "the capacity to do things and in social situations to affect others to get the outcomes we want" (Nye, 2011: 6). As one can clearly understand from these different definitions of power by different scholars that there is no consensus about the exact definition and inherence of power.

Although the field of international relations includes different schools of thought, the issue of power is predominantly read through realist theories. Hans Morgenthau (1954: 25) refers to international politics as a struggle for power. For all realists, calculations on power are about how the states perceive their environment (Mearsheimer, 2001: 12). Although there is an agreement on the importance of the concept of power, there are significant differences. Classical realists believe that power struggle stems from human nature (Morgenthau, 1954). On the contrary, the international system causes power struggle and force them to maximize power. (Mearsheimer, 2001; Dunne et all., 2013).

There are two main traditions among the international relations scholars in the discussions about the measurement and the understanding of power. The first one is the national power approach which sees power as a property of a state and the second one is the relational power approach which pictures power as a relationship (Baldwin, 2012: 2). In other words; the concept of power in international relations has been tried to be defined by looking at the results of the policies followed, and definitions have been made in terms of the resources owned. In the first approach, the relational power approach, when determining whether an actor has power or not, it should be known what he has the power to do. In addition, it should be known who is involved in this power relationship.

However, power statements which were made by looking at the results are not practical for policymakers because the main purpose of the explanation is to make an estimation of the power of the opposing actor and to develop a policy and strategy against it. For this reason, policy makers prefer to make power assessments by looking at the resources they have. According to this explanation, a country is strong if it has a relatively large population, land, natural resources, economic capability, military capacity, and social stability. By this definition, power has become tangible, observable, and measurable. National power elements of nations with common characteristics were determined by Morgenthau (1954: 80-105) as a total of nine categories, considering the conditions of the period. He listed them as geography, industrial capacity, military readiness, population, national character, natural resources, moral values, quality of diplomacy, and quality of government.   On the other hand, there are some other points that this definition leaves out. Power convergence is a significant issue at this point that is "the capacity to convert potential power, as measured by resources, to realized power, as measured by the changed behavior of others" (Nye, 1990b: 178). We see that those who have the best opportunities in terms of resources do not always get the results they want (Nye, 2011: 8). Lastly, the national power approach disregards the role of non-state actors in the issue of power.

Remaining in realist traditions limits the potential definitions and scope of the concept of power. For this reason, Barnett and Duval (2004) created a 'taxonomy of four types of power' to break the dominance of the realist interpretations of the concept. Taxonomy divides power definitions as Compulsory, Institutional, Structural, and Productive. It aims to encourage researchers to view alternative forms. The concept of power will continue to be an important topic of discussion in the future as it has been in the past (Baldwin, 2012: 18).

In the book Power: A Radical View, published by Steven Lukes in 1974, the concept of power is classified into three dimensions. The first dimension is to influence the behavior of another state in the desired direction. This dimension of power is described by starting from the definition of power put forward by R. Dahl. "A has power over B, to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do." (Dahl, 1957: 203). The first dimension of power is a directly observable dimension.

The second dimension is that the strong side sets the agendas. It is applied unobtrusively. It is a more passive version of power. The second dimension of power is based on the article "Two Faces of Power" written by Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz in 1962. Here the authors make an important contribution to Dahl's definition. According to the authors, the participation of actor A in any decision-making process affecting B and the capacity to influence the decision indicates that power is applied, which indicates that they approve of Dahl's definition. However, in addition to this definition; if actor A puts his energies into creating an institutional system and political values that will not go against his interests, and where decisions cannot be taken against his interests, then he will have used power over actor B without using direct force or persuasion. In one way, by setting the agenda of actor B in advance, he can keep him at a distance from which he cannot harm himself, and focus him on the subject he wants. (Bachrach & Baratz, 1962: 948). This dimension of power is more difficult to discern from the outside. The belief of those in the target audiences in the legitimacy of the agenda transforms this aspect of power into the form of "co-option power", which forms the basis of soft power; that is, getting what you want under the guise of cooperation by framing the agenda, persuading and creating positive attraction (Nye, 2011: 21).

The third dimension of power is structural power. Structural power builds incentives and limitations. It creates conditionality between the parties. The third dimension of power was introduced by Steven Lukes in his book Power: A Radical View (2005). This dimension of power does not confine it to relational or consequential explanations. It defines power structurally. Actor A, who is strong in this dimension, determines the preferences, perceptions, and beliefs of actor B and draws him into a power relationship that he is not aware of (Lukes, 2005: 25-19). The superior minded discussions that we often hear in the media can be given as an example of this dimension of power. If a young person buys a t-shirt because it looks "cool", or if you think that you have prestige in the environment with a phone brand, the third dimension of power can be mentioned. Here, the choice that the young person thinks his own choice is a marketing success. There is no such thing as the first choice of young people who are convinced that a t-shirt is "cool" here. The choice of the young is the choice of the brand (Nye, 2011: 13).

Vuving (2009: 17) mention Kenneth Boulding's triple classification as an alternative power classification in 1989. Boulding's classification is destructive power, productive power, and integrative power and he analyzes these with Lukes's power classification. Accordingly, the similarities with Lukes's power classification draws attention. Destructive power coincides with the first dimension of power, and integrative power can be matched with the third dimension of power.

As a result, none of these three dimensions that explain the concept of power, deny each other. All are complementary to one another. International relations theories also use at least one of these different dimensions of power in their studies. In short, power is the ability to prevail by force or persuasion and is the most basic element of the power struggle. To be strong, it is important to understand the power and know how it can be used.

The diversity in the definition of the concept of power and the changes in the global system have led to the emergence of different power classifications. According to Nye, power is divided into two according to the resources (Nye, 2011: 20).

- Hard power,

- Soft Power

2.1. HARD POWER

Hard power, also known as a military power, is the oldest definition used for power in the literature. We have seen the concept of hard power and its definitions since classical realist works. The famous classical realist thinker Machiavelli, in his work The Prince, written in 1532, actually recommended the use of hard power when the ruler had to choose between being loved or feared, by saying "to be feared is safer than to be loved" (Machiavelli, 1527: 106). The threat or use of military intervention, economic sanctions, or diplomatic moves in the international arena can be used as hard power methods to bring the opposing state's preferences to the desired area (Dumankaya, 2019: 7).

The military and economy are two elements of hard power. When we say hard power, military power is the first that comes to mind. National armed forces are one of

the tools for the hard power of a country. Strong armies provide security and deterrence in peacetime and provide survival and continuity of a country in war times.

The military capacity of a country cannot be limited to the number of soldiers. Rather, it depends on the possession of nuclear weapons, oversea military bases in other countries, and communicational and logistical capabilities. All of these and more are important determinants of a country's hard power capacity (Yılmaz, 2008: 35).

Table 2

2022 Military Strength Ranking

2022 Military Strength Ranking		
Rank	**Country**	**Score**
1	United States	0,0453
2	Russia	0,0501
3	China	0,0511
4	India	0,0979
5	Japan	0,1195
6	South Korea	0,1261
7	France	0,1283
8	United Kingdom	0,1382
9	Pakistan	0,1572
10	Brazil	0,1695

The results in Table 2 have provided an analytical index including the military power of 140 countries. It analyses manpower, equipment, natural resources, finances, and geography of countries. It shows results for 2022. We can conclude by looking at this table that the countries with good soft power policies such as the USA, China, and the European countries are still giving great importance to hard power tools.

Military capacity is not the only tool for hard power. The economy is also a resource. Embargo and economic threats are examples of using economic capacities as hard power tools. Diplomatic means are also used as hard power tools by repressive maneuvers.

Table 3

Top 10 countries by Nominal GDP

Top Ten Countries by Nominal GDP at Current U.S. Dollar Exchange Rates				
Country	Nominal GDP (in trillions)	PPP Adjusted GDP (in trillions)	Annual Growth (%)	GDP Per Capita
United States	$20.89	$20.89	-3.6%	$63,413.5
China	$14.72	$24.27	2.3%	$10,434.8
Japan	$5.06	$5.25	-4.6%	$40,193.3
Germany	$3.85	$4.52	-4.6%	$46,208.4
United Kingdom	$2.76	$3.08	-9.7%	$41,124.5
India	$2.66	$8.97	-7.3%	$1,927.7

France	$2.63	$3.15	-7.9%	$39,030.4
Italy	$1.89	$2.49	-8.9%	$31,714.2
Canada	$1.64	$1.83	-5.3%	$43,258.2
South Korea	$1.64	$2.24	-0.9%	$31,631.5

Note. Adapted from The Top 25 Economies in the World, by C. Silver, 2021 (https://www.investopedia.com/insights/worlds-top-economies/). Copyright 2021 by Investopedia.

Table 3 shows the world's biggest economies as of 2021. What we can say here is that the economic power affects hard power capacity and it directly affects the soft power capacity of a country. As you can see, most of the top 10 countries in the table are also in the top 10 in the hard power and soft power index.

Military solutions have become more costly for countries. They tend to use military force. Joseph Nye (2011) proposed some reasons for this decreasing efficacy in the 21st century. Nuclear deterrence, increasing cost of foreign rules, domestic constraints, and increasing anti-militarism, and lastly, economic interdependence cause decreasing use of military solutions.

2.2. SOFT POWER

Strict interpretations of power have changed as international relations evolved. Joseph Nye (1990: 167), claims that non-physical forms of power such as culture, ideology, and institution will become more of an issue. With the increasing social mobility, issues such as technology, education, and economic growth have become as important as geography, population, and resources. Respectively, Baldwin (2012: 15) affirms that while the military power tools were exaggerated, the importance of the civilian power tools were underestimated.

The concept of soft power was introduced by Joseph Nye in his book *Bound to Lead* (1990), and its use in the literature has increased rapidly since then. The frequent

use of the concept and the lack of complete clarity have caused politicians to misuse it. To clarify this concept, Nye published another book, *Soft Power: Means to Success in World Politics* (2004). Here, soft power is defined as the "ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments" (Nye, 2004: x). The use of power in the second and third dimensions according to Lukes (2005), which we mentioned in the previous section, can be evaluated in the concept of soft power. E. H. Carr (1946: 108), split power into military power, economic power, and power over opinion. In this case, military and economic power fall into two hard power categories of Nye, and power over opinion is correlated with Nye's soft power. Gramscian concept of hegemony is also similar to the concept of soft power. According to this, "the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally without force predominating excessively over consent" (Gramsci, 1971: 80). Regarding these similarities, Nye claims that soft power is not a theory, rather it is an analytical concept that can be fitted into all IR theories (Nye, 2010: 219).

According to Nye (2004: 11), this power derives from a country's culture, political values, and foreign policy. What is important here is that the policies of the country in question are legitimate in the eyes of other countries and actors. If a country/actor can get others to admire his ideals and get them to want theirs, then no effort is wasted on the more expensive carrot-stick (punishment-reward). Attraction is a more effective method than a threat. A country can get the results that it wants from world politics because other countries want to follow it, admire its values, envy the example it sets, and desire to reach its level of prosperity and openness. Because of all these, soft power is "co-option power". In this age where global communication networks are so developed and information is power, winning minds and hearts is more important than ever.

Power is conducted by resources. Power resources can be material and non-material. Having the best resources does not mean acquiring the results you want. Nye likens this case to "having the highest cards in a poker game" (Nye, 2021:3). However, it does not guarantee winning the game.

Table 4

Spectrum of Power

	Hard	Soft
Spectrum of Behaviours	Command Coercion inducement	Agenda setting attraction Co-opt
Most Likely Resources	Force/Sanctions Payments/Bribes	Institutions values/culture/policies

Note. Adapted from *Soft Power: The means to success in World Politics* (p. 8), by J. Nye, 2004, PublicAffairs.

The table 3 shows the behavioral and resource spectrum of hard and soft power. This spectrum lies between command and co-option. Economic power is in the middle of the spectrum because economic capability can be a resource for both hard and soft power. States are using this spectrum in their foreign policies. Coercive diplomacy, wars, coalitions, and bribes are hard power tools for states. Public diplomacy, bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, and aids are means of soft power policy for states (Yılmaz, 2008, p. 37).

It is important to specify what is meant by foreign aid here. "Foreign aid, the international transfer of capital, goods, or services from a country or international organization for the benefit of the recipient country or its population" (Williams, 2021). This aid aims to combat poverty and support development in the recipient country. ODA mostly has been done through financial tools such as loans or financial grants. It is implemented by bilateral agreements or non-governmental organizations (Williams, 2021).

J. Nye (2004: 11) emphasizes that for a country to have soft power, it must first use three resources effectively:

1- Culture: Areas where it is attractive to others

2- Political Values: Values that are lived inside and outside

3- Foreign Policy: Seen by others as a legitimate and moral authority

In addition to these, the economy and military can be used as soft power resources.

Culture is the set of values and traditions that create meaning for society. It is divided into high culture and popular culture. High culture is a country's areas such as literature, art, and education. Popular culture focuses on mass entertainment. If a country's culture includes universal values and its policies support these values, the attractiveness of the country in the eyes of others will increase. The fact that popular culture often produces soft power cannot be denied, but we cannot say that it will always be effective in getting the desired results. Just as tanks are not effective in swamps or rainforests, the influence of popular culture on results varies by context. If we take American popular culture Mcdonald's, American flag t-shirts, and Hollywood movies can be given as examples. These brands do not create the same effect all over the world. In some places, it has a very positive effect, while in others it has a more negative connotation. Trade, personal relationships, visits, and student exchange programs are also effective tools for transferring the culture of one country to another. When students return to their home country, they take back the ideas and values of the country they visited with themselves. Entrepreneurs are more advantageous in reaching the management class after a successful business deal.

Political values and domestic politics affect the effectiveness of a country's soft power. For example, while racist practices in the USA in the 1950s affected its soft power in Africa, today the death penalty affects its soft power in Europe. Two-faced, arrogant, indifferent to the opinions of others, narrow-minded policies at home and abroad undermine the soft power of countries. The most obvious example of this happened after the 2003 Iraq War.

Foreign policy is another soft power resource. The values that countries lead, for example, the development of democracy at home, the ability to work with others in international organizations, the ability to compromise, the desire to maintain peace and security in foreign policy increase the soft power of a country, but unfortunately soft

power is not only under government control. Non-governmental actors are also influential in the impact and spread of soft power.

The last aspect is the economy. As Nye (201: 85) put in his words, the economy can be a source of soft power as well as hard power. Bayles (2020) asks how these two can be differentiated into two and give her a solution. According to this, soft results from material economic relations should be evaluated.

There are critics of the soft power concept. Criticism comes from the ambiguity of the concept and changing global environment. Today's international system is based on competition, in contrast with cooperation in the post-cold war era (Manor & Golan, 2020). Yiang Fan (2007), criticized the concept in terms of actors, sources, and relevance. According to him, actors who possess soft power in a country are not clear. It can be government, NGO, or individuals. Sources are not well defined and everything might be a source of soft power. Regarding relevance, it is not stable because there are different actors in target countries and all of them do not affect to the same degree by soft power policies (Fan, 2007: 150-154).

In international relations, countries turn to soft power tools, which are less costly, to achieve their goals instead of hard power tools. Although conceptualized by Joseph Nye, soft power practices have existed in various forms for centuries as a mean by which countries conduct their foreign policies. However, it is still not as effective as hard power elements in the national security strategies and budgets of countries. There are various reasons for this situation arising from the concept itself.

First of all, the human being at the target of soft power has a very complex structure. In the use of hard power, precise and clear targets and tools are set for policy makers and practitioners, and predictable results emerge from their use. On the other hand, this is not the case in the use of soft power tools. A soft power tool that gives a positive result in one place may encounter a different reaction in another.

Measurement of the success of soft power is difficult. Since soft power does not consist of sources that can be counted, it cannot be measured. Hard power tools include more measurable resources such as the number of soldiers, amount of military equipment, and budget. On the contrary, since the currency of soft power is attractive, it is also very

difficult to measure. This causes hardships in selling the success of soft power policies because the success of soft power manifests itself in the long run. (Seymour, 2020).

The effectiveness of soft power agencies is limited by budget issues or bureaucratic limitations. Soft power agencies are far behind in prestige in comparison with their hard power counterparts. Soft power initiatives create pressure on agencies with a high scope and limited time. Soft power should be supported in institutional and political frameworks and must be given time to create successful outcomes (Wilson, 2008: 117).

Last but not least, a fundamental problem of soft power is the uncertainty in its sources. As it is mentioned above, hard power resources are clear, concrete, and simple. Hard power resources are measurable by looking at population, geography, underground and surface resources, combatting force, and social stability (Nye and Armitage, 2007: 6). From a behavioral point of view, soft power is attractive power. In terms of resources, soft power sources are assets that create this kind of attraction (Nye, 2008: 95). To clarify this issue, the authors continue to work on the concept. Mcclory (2011: 10) divided soft power resources into five categories. In addition to Joseph Nye's triple (culture, values, foreign policy), he put business/innovation and culture as different categories of soft power resources.

Raimzhanova (2015: 9), offered a pyramid of soft power resources. The pyramid consists of three categories. At the top of the pyramid there are agents. Agents are persons/organizations that create and/or implement soft power enterprises such as states, multinational corporations, and NGOs. Pillars are the sphere of influence of soft power policies. For instance, foreign policy, culture, history, technology, tourism, and more areas can be pillars of soft power. It stands in the middle of the pyramid. At the bottom of the pyramid are instruments of soft power. Instruments as vehicles of soft power that activate soft power in the target audience. Various instruments can be used from international agreements to programs like a foreign student-technical exchange, nation branding campaigns, and cultural diplomacy efforts. Conferences, exhibitions, sports competitions. Any activity which aims to attract foreign audiences from both governments and citizens. The pyramid is two-sided which means it can be read from top to bottom and vice versa. Raimzhanova (2015), explains this pyramid with an example.

American full bright program is a state initiative program (an agent), in the pillar of education with the instrument of student exchanges.

The understanding of diplomacy during the Cold War era evolved from relations between states to relations between societies. Actors such as the media, public opinion, NGOs, and international institutions have the potential to influence the decision-makers of the states. In today's world, no state can be indifferent to public opinion so it is crucial to understand the role of public diplomacy, strategies to enhance public opinion, and the issue of nation branding (Kalın, 2011: 6).

Despite the fact that globalization, the increase in internet facilities, and developments in transportation exist, there are still gaps between countries. Developing countries have the resource for soft power but they are far behind power-convergence capacity.

Simon Anholt is accepted as the creator of the term 'nation branding' in the literature and he first used the term in 1996 (Anholt, 2011). The term nation branding refers to how a region, country, or city put itself as a visiting destination, investment place, or shows the quality of goods, services, and people (Soni, 2019). Namely, countries already have certain images without the need for any branding initiative. Nation branding, at this point, is expressed as the sum of strategies used to strengthen the images of countries (Fan, 2007: 154).

The boundaries of nation branding, which emerged from the concepts of nation and brand, do not constitute a fully definite work area. While a nation defines a group of people with linguistic, religious, or cultural ties among themselves, a country describes a piece of land which its borders and management are recognized by the United Nations. Nation branding is the sum of all perceptions in the minds of international stakeholders, consisting of items such as people, place, culture, language, history, food, fashion, famous people, and global brands (Fan, 2010: 98). The nation's brand is a blend of unique, multifaceted elements that create the distinctiveness on which the nation is based for its target audience (Dinnie, 2008: 15). Anholt states that nation branding should be understood in a way similar to the reputation of companies or products (Anholt,201: 6). Nation branding provides the country's differentiation from the previously existing economic and political system; elimination of negative prejudices about the country and

its citizens; the country becomes a member of the international community. It provides benefits such as providing support and legitimacy in front of the international community and increasing the self-confidence and pride of the society in times of transformation (Szondi,2007: 10-11).

Marketing, public relations, and public diplomacy are three sources that can explain nation branding. The nation branding, which is based on the marketing approach, focuses on the relationship between the emotional qualities of national brands and national identity and therefore nation branding. And the nation branding, which is based on the international public relations approach, emphasizes that promotional activities and political, cultural, and economic actors are important in the nation branding process. Finally, the nation branding, which is based on the public diplomacy approach, evaluates nation branding as a sub-title of public diplomacy and deals with nation branding as a new presentation form of national identity in today's global-capitalist world system (Cheregi, 2018: 86).

Nation branding is mainly fed by four areas: country of origin studies, place marketing, public diplomacy, and national identity studies. The concept of country of origin is met with the term "made in…" in the literature, and it means the homeland of a business, product, or service in the mind of the consumer (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 1993: 80). One of the most important findings of the country of origin effect studies is that the country of origin effect is stronger among developed, developing, and underdeveloped countries, creating a remarkable gap between different levels of development. Accordingly, consumers prefer the products of developed countries rather than the products of less developed countries, based on the positive image of developed countries. This shows that the country of origin effect, which is a fundamental and inimitable competitive advantage, is in favor of developed countries depending on many components that make up the country's image, and that developing and underdeveloped countries can positively affect their image if these countries want to increase their export rates and have a say in the international arena. It shows that they need to make an effort to strengthen it. (Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999: 536).

Place branding started with the promotion of regions, cities, and regions through the use of public relations tools in mid-19th century (Go & Govers, 2010: xxii). It can be

said that the main goals of place branding are to increase the export of a place and the competitiveness of local sectors, to provide development, and to provide an economic, political, and social competitive advantage to the branded place (Papadopoulos, 2004: 36-37).

Public diplomacy, with its usual definition, is the communication process carried out by a country to provide an understanding of the ideas and ideals, institutions and culture, goals, and current policies of a country to the public in other countries (Tuch, 1990: 3). The distinguishing aspect of public diplomacy from international relations is that while international relations deals with the relations between states and state bodies, the target audience of public diplomacy is non-state structures such as non-governmental organizations, cultural centers, and business circles that form public opinion in other countries in general. Although public diplomacy has many aspects that overlap with nation branding, public diplomacy generally deals with the public outside the country and forms a branch of international relations. Nation branding, on the other hand, implies introverted nation-building and an extroverted nation image production or reproduction; therefore, it requires activating all the forces that can benefit the promotion of the nation abroad (Melissen, 2005: 19). In addition, while nation branding is considered a concept derived from marketing studies, public diplomacy stands at the intersection of international relations and intercultural communication (Szondi, 2008).

Nation branding indicates an outward-looking process towards other countries and citizens of these countries in the international arena, and an inward-looking process towards the country's people on the other hand. At this point, the relationship between national identity, country image, and country reputation needs to be clarified. In the nation branding process, national identity is how the nation perceives itself. While the country image is about how the country is perceived and wanted to be perceived in the international arena, country reputation is defined as the feedback that the country receives from the rest of the world regarding its national identity features and its image (Fan, 2010: 101).

While countries continue their efforts to brand their nations by using various elements, there is another side to this activity. Countries have images in the international

public opinion, while identity is the element by which a country defines itself. When the image is mentioned, it is expressed how that country is perceived.

Anholt stated that nation branding was misunderstood and suggested the concept of 'Competitive Identity' instead. The components it proposes for branding are also valid for Competitive Identity but evaluates that countries cannot be marketed as a company or product. The author emphasizes that the national identities of the countries consist of political and economic elements that are competitive in the national system (Anholt, 2011: 21-22).

The most important reference source in the field of nation branding is the *Nation Brands Index (NBI)*. It was designed and started by Simon Anholt in 2005. The NBI reviews nearly 50 nations each year, through online interviews with 20,000 adults aged 18 and over. NBI looks at each country's reputation and image through six dimensions of national competence: Export, Governance, Culture, People, Tourism, Immigration, and Investment. Together, they provide an overall indication of a nation's reputation (Scottish Government, n.d.). According to this Index in 2021 Germany ranks first out of 60 countries in the National Brands Index for the seventh time overall and the fifth consecutive year. (McGrath & Frankel, 2021). Canada, Japan, Italy, the UK, and France come after Germany in the 2021 rankings. The United States in this index is in 8th position. However, China is 31st in 2021, increasing its position from the previous year, which was 35th.

3. THE SOFT POWER OF CHINA

While it was thought that there would be a unipolar world order after the cold war period, the changes experienced in the historical process also altered the structure of the international system and started to evolve into a multipolar world. Although the USA still maintains its leading position in the global order, an actor approaching it in many fields does not escape attention. It is known that the People's Republic of China (PRC) has a political regime unlike western liberal democracies. On the one hand, the PRC, which has largely completed its integration into the global capitalist system with its membership in the World Trade Organization in 2001, on the other hand, maintains the communist regime in official discourses where the Communist Party continues to dominate in all areas (Bilener, 2019: 246).

In the last few years, the Chinese economy has achieved an astonishing growth rate and continued its growth trend in 2019-2020, placing it in second place after the USA in the list of the world's ten largest economies. The chart and the table below show the world's largest economies and their images around the world, prepared with data from the World Bank. As you can see, China is the second-largest economy after the USA both in terms of GDP and global economic share.

Table 5

Top 25 Economies 2021

Country	Nominal GDP (in trillions)	PPP Adjusted GDP (in trillions)	Annual Growth (%)	GDP Per Capita
United States	$20.89	$20.89	-3.6%	$63,413.5
China	$14.72	$24.27	2.3%	$10,434.8
Japan	$5.06	$5.25	-4.6%	$40,193.3
Germany	$3.85	$4.52	-4.6%	$46,208.4
United Kingdom	$2.76	$3.08	-9.7%	$41,124.5
India	$2.66	$8.97	-7.3%	$1,927.7
France	$2.63	$3.15	-7.9%	$39,030.4
Italy	$1.89	$2.49	-8.9%	$31,714.2
Canada	$1.64	$1.83	-5.3%	$43,258.2
South Korea	$1.64	$2.24	-0.9%	$31,631.5

Figure 1

Share of the Global Economy

% Share of the Global Economy %

- US
- China
- Japan
- Germany
- India
- Countries 6-10
- Countries 11-15
- Countries 16-25
- 168 Rest

After its phenomenal economic growth over the past few decades, much of China's appeal lies in this successful story, especially in the eyes of developing countries. More generally, it is fair to say that China's soft power is largely based on its economic capability (Carminati, 2020: 1). The belief which has become widespread in these countries is that liberal democracies are inherently unstable and China's economy and political management style are the most ideal alternative (Bilener, 2019: 247). However, the process is still under construction. Although tens of millions of citizens have been lifted out of poverty, concerns remain over fears of falling into the middle-income trap, domestic problems such as an aging population, and a sustainable pace of innovation (Carminati, 2020: 1).

Today, China is a capitalist, modern and global country. The economic reforms initiated by Deng Xiaoping in 1978 have made China one of the world's largest destinations for foreign direct investment and a vital link in global supply chains. Beijing's Go-global strategy - an incentive-driven program that encourages Chinese firms to invest heavily abroad - is an example of China's transformation. The prosperity of years of double-digit economic growth has not only made China attractive to foreign investors, but has also made it a major consumer in the world market (McGiffert, 2009 :1).

After 25 years of remarkable economic growth, there is growing concern that Beijing has significantly increased its capacity to influence world affairs and will use this newly acquired power by force. Some experts believe that China was the first serious challenge for the United States since the existence of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Aware of the anxiety surrounding its rise, and worried that such concerns could hinder continued economic growth, Beijing came up with the slogan of 'peaceful development' to reassure others that its power was harmless. Compared to the Mao years, China looks much more 'attractive' today. It can be said that this transformation is due to soft power, which China accepts as the most valuable foreign policy instrument (McGiffert, 2009:1).

China's soft power is as often discussed as it is misunderstood. The subject will be understood more clearly when we read from the perspective of Joseph Nye's trilogy-culture, values, politics, and economy.

3.1. CULTURE

Joseph Nye, in his speech at the University of Beijing, mentioned that when a country's hard power grows rapidly, like China, it is likely to scare its neighbors, but if it develops its soft power at the same rate, it will prevent others from forming a coalition against it (Nye, 2012: 154). Chinese leaders also seem to have accepted the importance of soft power to have a comprehensive national power and its most important pillar is culture (McGiffert, 2009: 16). China, which is in a very advantageous position in this regard, has attracted the attention of many merchants, academics, and clergy in search of wealth and meaning in the world for more than 3000 years with its splendor. During the Tang Dynasty, Chinese civilization developed to include Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. In the fifteenth century, the naval expeditions of Admiral Zheng He increased the power of

Chinese civilization and helped to establish important relations between China and other nations (Bayram & Emiroğlu, 2016: 503). In his book, Kurtlanzick made the following quote from Chinese Vice Minister of Communications Xu Zu-yuan. "Zheng He treated other countries with friendship and respect instead of occupying a single piece of land, establishing a fortress, or seizing any treasure" (Kurlantzick, 2007: 62).

Chinese theorists focused on the use of the soft power concept more beneficially and systematically. Two main groups stand out during these studies. The first of these is "Cultural or Shanghai School". Shanghai School scholars view China's deep historical and cultural roots as a key component of its appeal (Fliegel & Krız, 2020: 8).

Wang Hunning was the author of the first article on soft power in the Chinese context. The article was published in 1993 and emphasized the importance of culture in Chinese soft power. Chinese scholars see the culture as one the most powerful source of Chinese soft power because of its uninterrupted long history, the wide array of traditions, symbols, records, and values. These values come from Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism and shape Chinese foreign policy too. Values such as respect for virtue, benevolent governments, harmony, and respect for differences also affect Chinese foreign policy origin (Li, 2008: 26).

In the modern period, the traditional power of China has formed an important basis for China. (Gill & Huang, 2006: 18). Confucianism, which has a deep-rooted history, has increased the Chinese influence in the Far East with its values such as social harmony, respect for family, and humanitarian management (Nye, 2012: 154). In the Five-Year Plan for Cultural Development program (2016-2020) published in 2006, the Chinese government announced the outlines, guiding principles, main objectives, keys, as well as policy support for projects and future cultural reforms (China issues five-year reform plan on cultural industry, 2017).

After opening up the Chinese economy to the world economic system in the Post-Mao period, the interest in Chinese culture and language has increased around the world. For example, the rate of participation in the HSK exam so-called "Chinese TOEFL" shows a significant increase annually. The Chinese government understands the importance of language for cultural attraction. In this context, the number of foreign students studying in China has quadrupled (Gill & Huang, 2006: 18).

Quickly adapting to the information age, China has established the Confucius Institutes around the world. The Confucius Institutes, which was established in Uzbekistan for the first time in 2004, continues its activities with 548 institutes in 154 countries, up until 2020 (Kavas, 2020). The Chinese Foreign Language Education Bureau – Hanban - is directly involved in the organization of the Confucius Institutes. Its purpose is explained on its website as "providing quality services for people from all over the world to learn Chinese and understand China. It also intends to build a platform for friendly collaboration on language education and cross-cultural learning" (About us, n.d.). Like the British Council, the Goethe Institute, or the Maison Institute, the Confucius Institute has a political purpose; to portray a more kind and tolerant China. In addition to all this, unlike the more introverted and homogeneous countries such as Japan, China tends to interpret its own culture as a world culture (Gill & Huang, 2006: 19). The purpose of the institutes is not only to teach languages but also to create a positive image of China (Hubbert, 2019: 1).

In parallel with these statements, China hosted high-budget cultural festivals in many parts of the world (China Year in France in 2003, China Year in Russia in 2007) and hosted international events such as the 2008 Beijing Olympics and 2010 Shanghai Expo.

The 2010 Expo provided an excellent instance of nation branding. Shanghai, on this occasion, had the opportunity to brand itself as the center of global finance. Here, the organizers aimed to break down the negative stereotypes about China and establish a rapport by reinforcing positive perceptions. It reaffirmed cultural symbols such as the Chinese imperial era and cultural architectural methods. Organizers tried to change the image of China as a global polluter by creating a slogan as 'Better City, Better Life'. It stressed China's commitment to sustainable development (Barr, 2011: 85).

Because of their powerful roles in Southeast Asia, ethnic Chinese business executives and politicians are an indispensable asset to China's soft power policy in the area. Pro-China organizations believe that China is not aggressive on the world stage, deny anti-China discourse from the West, and favor Taiwan's integration with the rest of the country. As a reward, China gives these ethnic Chinese leaders prestige as well as

socioeconomic networks in China. Its ambassadors occasionally express care for ethnic Chinese issues by donating to Chinese schools (Chee-Beng, 2022: 7).

The Chinese government has defined the issue of culture as the 'pillar industry'. This definition includes various cultural products such as historical artifacts, books, films, newspapers, magazines, maps, brochures, designs, audio and video media, and different branches of art. Regarding the subject; Liu Yunshan (CCP Politburo Standing Committee member and Propaganda Department Director) indicated in 2009, "It has become an urgent strategic task for us to make our communication capability match our international status. In this modern era, those who gain advanced communication skills, powerful communication capabilities, and whose culture and values are more widely spread, is [sic] able to effectively influence the world." (Shambaugh, 2013: 166). In this regard, the Chinese news network Xinhua was developed, the international edition of the People's Daily newspaper was prepared, and an official briefing system was created under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, thus making it easier for the press members to follow the conferences. In addition, CCTV's broadcasts were opened to international broadcasting and started to broadcast in different languages. Also, the Chinese government sends voluntary teams for projects in developing countries (Kurlantzick, 2007: 63).

Although China has all the sources for cultural soft power, according to some analysts, it is still far behind the USA or the other European soft power centers. Though Chinese economic growth received attention from the developing world, its music, movies, and television do not take that much attention from developing regions such as Africa and Latin America. According to 2013 Pew research, just %25 of Latin America and %34 of Africa have a positive image about the cultural image (Pew Research, 2013). The reason is not because of Chinese artists' lack of creativity or artistic taste but because of government censors on cultural products, the generation gap between older and younger Chinese as well as stereotypes of older China from foreign audiences (Gao, 2017).

3.2. POLITICAL VALUES AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

Great powers use their culture and stories which are built on culture to increase their soft power for their interests. However, this is not 'easy to sell' because if it is not the same as the realities in domestic politics, its effect is questioned (Nye, 2012: 155).

The 'political school' is referred to as the second school in China's soft power studies which was mentioned in the previous section. It focuses on soft power in domestic and foreign policy. The most important representative of this group is Yan Xuetong. He emphasizes the necessity of a good legal system, ideology, and moral system in domestic politics. He says that China's soft power depends on the harmony of its society and with the economic development, the country should take action by catching new realities.

When income inequality, unequal development between regions, bribery and ecological problems are resolved, both the social development of the country and its external image will be strengthened (Fliegel & Krız, 2020: 9).

China has a deep cultural and political tradition that advises respect for authority and morality with a three-thousand-year-old state tradition. Confucian morality advises respect for authority and promotes education and merit. Current Chinese foreign policy and domestic policy rest on harmony and development.

The Chinese civilization is the largest in Asia, along with India, and is an important pillar of China's soft power. Among the many features of Chinese civilization, Confucianism is a key factor in presenting Chinese values and vision as distinct from the West. Of the many attributes of Chinese civilization, the key element is Confucianism, which presents Chinese values and visions that differ from those of the West. Asian countries, especially East Asia, are familiar with Confucianism and values. In the early 1990s, the debate over values arose from Asian politicians and the scholars who argued that the Asian values and identities could take precedence over the Western values and identities. However, due to the 1997/98 Asian financial crisis and the accompanying criticisms of Asian values, these arguments quickly became unrelated. However, the rise of China has made it possible to continue the discussion again. The rise of China helped to remember Confucian values, at least for Asian countries. The importance of the family as the center of social fabrication, virtue, and ethical concerns; group superiority over individuals, emphasize on unity, harmony and order are examples of Confucian values. China's Asian values are based on the rapid expansion of the Chinese economy and follow the model of the early struggle for Asian values that defended the miracle of the East Asian economy. In addition, China's civilization and historical heritage emphasize China's commitment to Asian values (Cho & Jeong,2008: 470).

Chinese soft power is not restricted to only international image building. Rather, its implementation is just as important at home as it is abroad. A large number of Chinese scholars emphasize domestic cultural revitalization as a key component of the concept in their comprehensive review of different strands of Chinese soft power. The importance of soft power for a developing country like China is as much about domestic development and well-being as it is about improving its international image. Domestically, a recurring topic is a necessity for soft power to assist the government in maintaining its legitimacy and acceptance among China's many ethnic minority groups. The purpose here is not only to promote minority culture but, more importantly for the government, to provide cultural tools for minorities to identify as Chinese. Given the discontent of Tibetans and Uyghurs, the success of this approach must be questioned (Barr, 201: 82).

China's transmission of its cultural values to its people is done through many channels. Especially in this area, the media is used effectively. Students are taught core values at all levels of the education system. Values are reminded to the public through advertisements and posters on the big streets and on public transport. In addition to all these, definite policy steps are being taken toward eliminating income inequality and interregional development inequalities. The Hukou System, which currently limits access to social and health services for the agricultural sector, is being gradually loosened. Another important step is the OBOR project. With this project, China will be able to connect with Euroasia and African markets, and it will increase the economic development of the country's west coast by changing the trading density within the country. Since taking office in 2012, Xi Jinping has given serious messages that improper practices such as corruption and bribery will not be tolerated. Inspections have also been increased by the state on environmental protection, and compliance with standards is encouraged (Fliegel & Krız, 2020: 9).

China's extraordinary growth rate especially increases the admiration of developing countries and offers them a new recipe: The Beijing Consensus. The creator of the concept, former journalist Joshua Ramo, argues that the Beijing Consensus is an antithesis of the Washington Consensus. The Beijing consensus does not believe that there is a single solution for every problem, or the "one big shock therapy leap", but instead offers a development model suitable for each society's characteristics. Despite no official use by Beijing, China's development model has changed the development patterns

we thought we knew before. It has caused countries to rethink the relationship between economy and politics (Gill & Huang, 2006: 21).

Chinese commentators mostly identify the Chinese growth model as a source of soft power for the country. China's gradualist approach to reform and opening up has presented a fresh option for developing nations to the old modernization theory and 'the Washington Consensus'. The Chinese development experience is occasionally mentioned in numerous venues, indicating that it is taken into account when evaluating China's soft power (Mingjiang, 2008: 7).

China has been trying to multiply its soft power resources with its increasing economic development. It becomes an effective actor in world politics. Although it follows a different path from the West, stable governments and a state-supported dynamic economy lies behind this success of China. China declares its triumph over extreme poverty with a statement in 2021. The campaign to end extreme poverty launched in 2013 and ended with success according to Chinese officials (Akçay, 2021). This story presents an impressive model for developing countries which suffers from poverty and income gap in their societies.

Nye (2021: 10) notes in his statement on China that "China should realize that most of a country's soft power comes from its civil society rather than from its government". In contrast to the Communist Party's perceived need to control everything, China should learn from the British Council and the Goethe Institute's soft power strategy. A gentle approach, rather than an obvious one, is more successful in accomplishing soft power goals.

Political values can increase soft power resources as long as it was consistent with the domestic realities of a country. Violations of human rights, the authoritarian identity of the regime, its policies towards minorities, and its negative attitude towards democracy movements in different parts of the world cause heavy criticism of China. Instead of taking these criticisms into account, the belief that the democratization movements that have gained ground in the recent period pose an increasing threat to its regime security, especially in recent years, is a matter that weakens the soft power policies of China. According to research conducted by Pew Research Center (2021) which asks respondents whether China respects or does not respect the personal freedoms of its people, the

majority of the people around the world do not think there is a respect for personal freedoms in China.

3.3. FOREIGN POLICY

All states define and carry out their foreign policies based on national interests. But while these policies are being carried out, a choice should be made about whether the definition of national interests will be broaden or narrow and which tools will be used in pursuing these interests. Since soft power is about mobilizing the cooperation of others without threats or rewards, the "exchange" of soft power is attraction. When national interests are defined inclusively, they become more attractive in the eyes of other countries than national interests that are defined as more "myopic" (Nye, 2004: 61).

During the Mao era, Chinese foreign policy was often described in controversial and unpleasant terms. The setting on fire of the British Embassy in the 1960s, the humiliation of the Soviet diplomats, and internal turmoil in China's neighbors in Asia caused China to portray an extremist foreign policy image and made China an ideological threat in the eyes of other countries (Gill & Huang, 2006: 21). The aggressive policies of the Chinese administration, especially in its region, both brought its neighbors closer to the USA and caused them to form alliances.

Nye's concentration on foreign affairs and institutions is shared by a lot of Chinese experts. Soft power, according to Su Changhe, is demonstrated by a state's capacity to construct international institutions, define agendas, mobilize coalitions, and keep promises. According to another research, China's soft power may be divided into three categories: Cultural diplomacy, multilateral diplomacy, and international aid programs. As a source of Chinese soft power, these observers prefer to highlight the flexibility of Chinese foreign policy (Mingjiang, 2008: 8).

Realizing that hard power policies were unsuccessful, the administration feels the necessity of a new policy. Thus, China's 'Charm Offensive' began in the early 2000s. Since this period, Chinese leaders have given importance to the necessity of establishing good relations with all countries, especially with their neighbors. For this reason, Chinese academics and diplomats have developed the concept of 'helping jueqi' or 'Peaceful rise'. The concept, which was used for the first time by Zheng Bijian one of the powerful

advisers of the administration, later formed the basic concept of Chinese foreign policy. Moreover, because the word 'rise' sounded threatening, the concept was later revised to 'peaceful development'. The concept was explained by Zeng that even if China is a global power, it will not be like the rising powers in the past and that China's power will not pose a threat to any country (Kurlantzick, 2007: 37).

The contents of the peaceful rising theory are straightforward. The following are the arguments presented by its creator, Zheng Bijian. First of all, though China's economy grew in a short time, its growth cannot be seen as a threat because its economic development is very low in the beginning, and the government is facing an accommodation problem of 1.3 billion people. Because of these local boundaries, China will have to concentrate all its energies on its development for at least the next three generations. Second of all, China is pursuing a development strategy that aims to engage with globalization rather than resist it. Thirdly, as China enters globalization, it follows separate growth plans that do not affect other countries. And fourth, China's economic growth helps Asia's overall economic growth, prosperity, and stability (Cho & Jeong, 2008: 468).

Another foreign policy value is a "harmonious society and the harmonious world". In this concept, "equality and justice" are prioritized and are seen as an alternative to the western understanding, which sees the most powerful actors in the international arena as more likely to interfere in the internal affairs of other weaker players (Fliegel & Krız, 2020: 10). We can say that the principle of "non-interference" and "win-win policy", which China mostly applies in its bilateral relations with economic concerns, is the product of this concept.

It is believed that keeping the peace will have serious benefits for Beijing in the long run. First of all, the Chinese economy will continue to grow, helping it to hold the strong cards in the bargain between the domestic intelligentsia and the regime, thus breaking the resistance that may occur at home. Moreover, maintaining peace will open overseas markets for Chinese companies and improve access to natural resources, making it easier for China to focus on its technological infrastructure. Most importantly, after its aggressive policies in the 1990s, China defines itself as a peaceful and mild power and aims to destroy the perception of the "China threat". In addition to all these, it aims to

maintain its closeness by continuing its relations with authoritarian states. It strives to impose China's territorial integrity by narrowing Taiwan's room for maneuver internationally (Kurlantzick, 2007: 42).

The Chinese government is trying to increase its influence in the diplomatic field by arranging meetings with the top managers of other states and increasing the quality of its diplomats. Bilateral relations are tried to be strengthened both by showing the hospitality of China during the visits by the leaders of other countries and by making high-level visits to other countries by the Chinese officials. Today, Chinese diplomats are more educated, knowledgeable about the local peoples and cultures of the countries they interact with and are much more successful in communicating with the international media.

China has increased its effectiveness in international institutions to increase its legitimacy in the international community and to draw a more active and responsible image to the international community. It participated in the organizations existing in Asia, Africa, the Pacific, and Latin America (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, ASEAN Regional Forum, the Forum for East Asia and Latin America Cooperation, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Organization of American States), and by establishing many multilateral organizations, it increased its area of influence and support from other countries, and also limited the USA influence by establishing these new platforms (Olson & Prestowitz, 2011: 4). Since the late 1990s, China has participated in the UN Peacekeeping Missions more than the other permanent members, even NATO members. As of 2005, it participated in 14 UN peacekeeping operations with more than 4000 soldiers and police (Gill & Huang, 2006: 22).

In addition to all these, China strengthens its image as a responsible actor both at home and abroad by increasing international humanitarian and development aid. More than 2,000 Chinese doctors have assisted with increased health and medical needs due to the turmoil in Yemen (McGiffert, 2009: 4). The Chinese government offered foreign aid to Afghanistan for restructuring after the internal turmoil, in the Tsunami that took place in the Indian Ocean in 2004, and in the Hurricane Katrina that hit the United States (Gill & Huang, 2006: 23).

After the Covid-19 breakout, we witnessed deadlock even in the healthcare systems of the developed countries. China used the health diplomacy for its soft power in this global crisis. Although most of the developed countries were in lockdown, China send medical aid to vulnerable countries. The so-called mask diplomacy and vaccine diplomacy was used for Chinese soft power. Reactions to this health diplomacy were mixed. As you can see from the below chart, people mostly think that China was not good at handling the Covid-19 pandemic.

Figure 2

Dealing with the Coronavirus Outbreak

% Who say each has done a ---- job dealing with the coronivirus outbreak
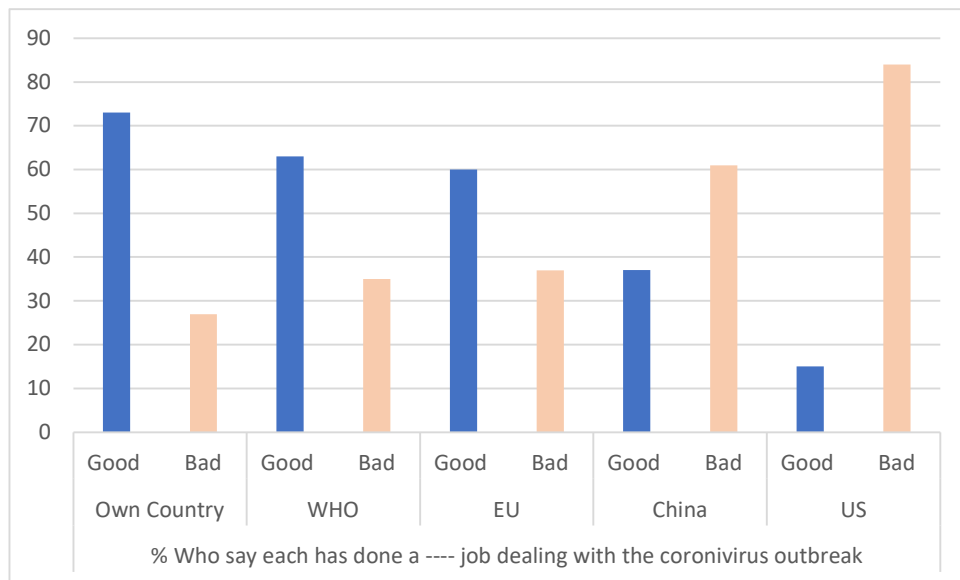
Note. Adapted from Large Majorities Say China Does Not Respect the Personal Freedoms of Its People, by C. Silver, K. Devlin & C. Huang 2021

(https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2021/06/30/large-majorities-say-china-does-not-respect-the-personal-freedoms-of-its-people/).

3.4. ECONOMY

After dividing the soft power resources into three categories as 'culture, values, and policies', Joseph Nye stated that soft power is not limited to these, but that the

economy can be used as a hard power source as well as a soft power source. However, in the real world, it is not always easy to distinguish between the two. They are often found intertwined with each other (Nye, 2012: 153).

With international aid and economic support, the Chinese state is blurring the lines between soft power and economic power (Carminati, 2020: 1). We can say that China's investment power is the most effective soft power source. With serious growth figures, China is expected to become the world's largest economic power shortly.

The main motive behind China's investments is to provide a healthy and balanced flow of raw materials and energy resources to feed its developing economy. China's increasing need for energy and resources causes it to increase its economic gestures in other regions. Since Chinese investors do not put a 'conditionality' in their investments unlike the West, it increases its appeal in the eyes of the developing countries. Only the acceptance of 'the one China' condition is sufficient for Chinese investments. We can see Chinese investments on a wide scale such as energy, raw materials, infrastructure, and advanced technology. Since there is no clear distinction between state and non-state actors, Chinese investments and aid cannot be separated from each other. For this reason, investments can be profitable not only economically, but also politically. (McGiffert, 2009: 3).

There are opinions stating that China's soft power is largely based on its economic power. The pandemic period, which continued throughout 2020 and which its effects we still feel deeply, can be cited as an example of China's 'soft-economic diplomacy'. Although the pandemic broke out in its own country, China, which proved its maturity in this field with its rapid intervention, provided masks and mask aid to other countries, and shared it with the world when the vaccine was found. All this has been achieved thanks to China's economic power. Likewise, opening the Confucius Institutes around the world and grand projects like Belt Road Initiative (BRI) are activities that require substantial funding. It can be seen that China's soft power is, above all, in close contact with its economic power (Carminati, 2020: 2).

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a plan which aims to link Asia with Africa and Europe through land and sea networks to improve regional cooperation, increase commerce, and promote economic growth. The name of the initiative was invented in

2013 by China's President Xi Jinping, who was inspired by the notion of the Silk Road, which was constructed during the Han Dynasty 2,000 years ago and served as a centuries-long commerce route connecting China to the Mediterranean across Eurasia. BRI has also been called 'One Belt One Road' in the past. BRI describes both the Silk Road Economic Belt, a transcontinental gateway connecting China to Southeast Asia, Southern Asia, Central Asia, Russia, and Europe by land, and the 21st century Sea Route that connects China's coastal regions by sea. It connects south east and south Asia, South Pacific, the Middle East, and East Africa, all the way to Europe with Chinese ports. Policy coordination, infrastructural connection, barrier-free commerce, financial integration, and linking people are the five primary targets identified by the project. BRI is a multibillion-dollar investment initiative which aims to build ports, roads, railroads, and airports, as well as power plants and telecommunication networks. The BRI is now prioritizing "high-quality investment," which includes project finance, risk mitigation techniques, and more use of green finance. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is becoming a significant tool for China's bilateral trade. As of 2020,138 nations have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China (European Bank, n.d.).

Tourists, both outside of China and going abroad from China, create an image of a wealthier, more confident China and Chinese elites (Gill & Huang, 2006: 20).

China is trying to build an alternative economic model against the Western model with great projects such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

The increasing economic development of China is evaluated together with its political aims. The Belt and Road Initiative and investments in Africa and Latin America created suspicions about Chinese political aims. These investments cause huge debts and these debts increase dependency (Esen, 2020: 163). This issue increases discussion on the "debt trap". The allegation is that China lends to other countries and seizes key assets when countries are unable to repay their debts. An example often repeated by critics of China is Sri Lanka, which started a huge port project in the city of Hambantota years ago with Chinese investment. The project, for which China provided billion-dollar loans and sent its contractors, could not progress due to discussions. The project, which its viability became questionable, left Sri Lanka with increasing debts. Finally, in 2017 Sri Lanka

agreed to borrow more from China by leasing 70% of the port to a Chinese state-owned group for 99 years (Wang, 2022). Uganda may be attended to the list of victims of the Chinese debt trap for its Entebbe Airport finances. However, China has opposed this "debt trap" discourse and claims that these discussions are counter-mobilization by the USA against the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative which sees the project as challenging (Sautman & Hairong, 2020: 1).

China has taken some steps to improve its national image and dispel stereotypes about the country. Some of these projects include advertisements and campaigns promoting the country. China tries to alter views formed by the notion of "made in China" in a commercial film. The film ends with a message "When you say 'Made in China,' it truly means 'Made in China, made in the globe". It targeted audiences who are concerned about the quality and safety of Chinese-made goods. In late 2010 and early 2011, the second advertising campaign was released. The video focused on the transformations and problems that Chinese society has faced since the country's late 1970s economic reform policies (Barr, 2012: 87).

Conclusion and Criticisms on Chinese Soft Power

The rapid rise in China's soft power has alarmed other states, but whether this will have positive or negative consequences will depend on how it will use this power. If it comes face to face with traditional soft power centers such as the USA and Europe, this policy will cause conflicts in the regions. However, if it cooperates with other powers with its soft power and acts as a stakeholder, aware of its responsibilities in international problems, it can impose a more moderate atmosphere (Nye, 2012: 155).

Although it has free-market elements, the fact that China is still ruled by communism weakens the country's soft power in the West. It is difficult to balance the hard and rules-based illiberal system against pluralism at home and soft power in foreign policy. Wang (2008: 262) argues that there is a serious prejudice in both China's self-image perception and the Westerners' perception of China. Some examples of this perception by the Westerns are such as the Western public opinion prefers to hear the word "China" instead of hearing the name "the People's Republic of China" because it connotates communism; they like to take tourist trips to China rather than living in China;

and they like to learn about the traditional culture of China. While westerners love the Chinese, it cannot be said that they love the communist party regime in China.

Despite the progress with soft power in China, the problems of human rights violations in the country damage the country's image. For China to increase its international legitimacy in foreign policy, it needs to produce a policy that takes human rights issues into account. Because the understanding of soft power is considered together with the global norms for states with the understanding of democracy, liberalism, and pluralism. The link between economic freedoms and political freedoms is not strong enough in China. China's authoritarian yet economically successful performance sets a bad example for the world from the viewpoint of the United States. Because the economic power and success of a country, which is far from liberal democracy principles and limited in terms of pluralism and freedoms, weaken the effectiveness of the principles advocated by the USA. With this structure, China ideologically encourages other developing countries to challenge the Western liberal democracy understanding. China's relationship with regimes and dictatorships that do not care about human rights limits its soft power in foreign policy. For example, China does not bind its economic aid to Africa on human rights conditions like the Western states do (Nye, 2012).

Although China's soft power is growing, it has certain limits. Soft power in China needs to move away from the only state-based approach. The Chinese government sees public diplomacy as any infrastructure project. China's view of public diplomacy expects to see improvement immediately after investing on it as if it is a construction project. However, the concept of soft power policies and public diplomacy is far from this approach. Soft power cannot be bought, but must be earned (Shambough, 2015). The absence of Chinese non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the international scene hampered China's public diplomacy, weakened the legitimacy of the messages abroad, and reduced the amount of positive feedback (Zhao, 2009: 251). Media professionals and listeners in South Korea and Japan prefer Hong Kong and Taiwanese productions over Chinese ones because they are more attractive and stunning. This highlights a problem with China's soft power once again. China's influence will be limited in the future due to the favorable effect that will occur in favor of Taiwan and Hong Kong. The most important reason for this situation stems from the fact that the Chinese side acts centrally while forming soft power policies and does not allow space for other actors. As this study

demonstrates, China may face challenges projecting its soft power as a centralized sole stakeholder. China may benefit from the more active participation of many stakeholders, such as those from non-state institutions and the general public, in projecting its soft power (Lee, 2018: 178).

Despite the advantages of the Confucian Institutes towards the soft power mission of China, their growing presence has raised concerns about these institutes and skepticism of their pedagogical impact. While the government reduces costs by locating programs in existing institutions, students are concerned to get credit for their participation (as opposed to those enrolled in non-credit, non-graded, and all-voluntary European language programs). Some critics and parents believe that students' capacity or desire to criticize China or investigate study topics that differ from those accepted by the CI officials may be hampered. Similarly, critics have characterized Hanban's curricular and extra-curricular programming and materials as potentially covert government propaganda that portrays a distorted image of China because they focus heavily on traditional Chinese civilization rather than contemporary Chinese culture, ideologies, and practices. They warned that this condition might jeopardize Western academic and philosophical research, as well as freedom of expression, individual rights, and democracy. Furthermore, because the CIs are partly managed by Hanban supervisors, there are concerns that the host universities will become reliant on funding that must be reapplied each year to support Chinese language offerings and they will avoid pedagogical programming on issues that are critical of CCP policy. To safeguard finances, indirect self-censorship is used. Finally, the educators working in these institutes first start their duties by receiving an education in China. This situation is interpreted as the teachers' aim is not only to educate, but they want to spread Chinese policies and even spy on school campuses (Hubbert, 2019: 18).

China's soft power needs to balance its rising military and economic power and eliminate the perception of a Chinese threat abroad. China resolutely defends the importance of respecting cultural, social, political, and ideological diversity in the world. China's domestically repressive political system is not compatible with the global political system in which it is idealized. China's traditional foreign policy of non-intervention and high emphasis on sovereignty caused the country to stay away from international issues, especially human rights violations (Esen, 2020: 176).

Chinese infrastructural investment such as dams, ports, railways, and other types of infrastructure in many countries has increased as part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), but it has faced accusations of putting these countries in debt and corruption. China must cultivate a positive image among residents, not only ethnic Chinese, in the nations where it invests. It can do so by establishing centers and organizations that supply them with services. In China, for example, the current policy of offering scholarships for higher study can be increased (Chee-Beng, 2022: 8).

The rise of China has added a different dimension to the existing problems in its region. While China's long-standing increasing investment in military technology and armament has been watched with concern by neighboring countries, China has insisted that these investments should be seen as part of its peaceful rise. However, in parallel with the problem of islands in the East China Sea with its neighbors in 2012, China did not hesitate to show its strength with new warplanes, attack helicopters, and a modernized warship. This causes more difficulties in managing the image of China as a peacefully growing country (Demirtepe & Özertem, 2013: 106).

China seeks to establish cultural hegemony over the media of developing countries, especially in South Asia, Latin America, and Africa. It offers instruments such as financial support for radio transmitters and satellite systems needed for national broadcasting, providing technology and content, news sharing, and training programs for media workers in countries in these regions. On the other hand, this effort often causes authoritarian regimes to monopolize the news flow and prevent access to local media and alternative news sources (Farah & Mosher 2010: 4).

4. THE SOFT POWER OF CHINA IN AFRICA
4.1. HISTORICAL DIMENSION OF CHINA – AFRICA RELATIONS

The most serious contact between China and the African continent is the fact that China carried out 7 sea voyages between 1405 and 1433 under the command of Admiral Zeng He to show the world its power. As it can be seen, even though the relations between China and Africa date back to ancient times, these encounters are isolated and the foundation of the first political and economic relations was laid during the Cold War period (Bayram & Emiroğlu, 2016: 503). Since the beginning of the Cold War, we can evaluate the relations between China and Africa in three stages:

The first stage is the period from 1950 to 1970. In this period, the Chinese-African relations were shaped by the conflicts in the de-colonization process, the cold war between the USA and the Soviets, and the 1955 Bandung Conference processes. During this period, while China maintained an ideological rivalry with both the West and the Soviets in Africa, it also supported the independence movements in Africa to gain superiority in its conflict with Taiwan. African countries, on the other hand, were aware of the importance of the support from China to end colonialism on the continent. The engine of this period was anti-imperialism and non-aligned movement and Third Worldism (Zeleza, 2014: 147). In this first period of relations, although China's situation was not good, it financed the 1860 km railway project between Tanzania and Zambia. However, this aid and investment of China did not go unrequited, in 1971 the Communist China became one of the five permanent members of the UNSC instead of Taiwan, with the effect of the votes of 26 African countries. Subsequently, diplomatic relations with African countries began (Bayram & Emiroğlu, 2016: 503).

The second period of the Chinise-African relations continued from 1970 to 1990 with relatively limited dialogue. In this stagnation era, the two regions experienced serious economic transformations. While the African continent was busy with the structural economic reforms imposed by the international financial institutions and the general stagnation in the countries, China was trying to get rid of the effects of Mao's Cultural Revolution and the first steps of economic reforms and capitalist economy have been taken under Deng Xiaoping's administration. Relations in this period were more economic and pragmatic (Zeleza, 2014: 148). In this period when relations were stagnant, the Tiananmen events took place in China in 1989 and the harsh interventions against the demonstrators drew the reaction of the West. Therefore, China had to reevaluate its alternatives in its foreign policy (Arslan, 2018: 129). Since the African countries were also accused of being anti-democrats by the West, they saw discourse of democracy and human rights as a new form of imperialist intervention and this attitude brought the two sides closer together. (Bayram & Emiroğlu, 2016: 504).

Starting from the 1990s until today, some developments determined the foundations of the last period of relations. First of all, since the Cold War ended, the conflicts of the great powers, which had a devastating effect on the African continent, reduced their impact and the continent focused on both its democratization struggles and

economic developments. This situation caused the continent to give opportunities to non-Western actors, which paved the way for China. The wave of democratization also felt its effect in Asia and democratic Taiwan increased its diplomatic relations with the African countries and many of them recognized Taiwan in response to the Communist China, which drew the reaction of the West after the Tiananmen events. With this event, the People's Republic of China focused its work on the African countries which tried to benefit from this tension between China and Taiwan, or on countries that were overwhelmed by the human rights preaching of the West. During this period, there was an intense traffic of visits between Chinese high-level diplomats and African statesmen. Finally, with the rapidly globalizing world, the competition between multinational companies and states had also increased. Africa, which was previously labeled as a "hopeless continent", has become a "rising continent" in time and China was aware of this transformation in the continent. It believed that the rapidly increasing energy and market need in parallel with its changing economic policies would be met by the African continent. On the other side, Africans saw it as an advantage to enter Western alternative products into their markets (Zeleza, 2014: 149).

The Eighth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (euro) was held in Dakar on 29-30 November in 2021. Comments about the meeting were made regarding decreasing the economic activities between China and Africa. Financial commitments, promised projects and fewer action items show a significant change in Chinise-African relations. There were several causes for this change. First of all, Chinese loans are met with suspicions because of the increasing debate about the debt trap. The liability of these loans is under question. Another claim is about changing the focus of China from infrastructure to trade. The key to this plan is to increase African exports to China. Also, the Covid-19 pandemic and travel restrictions to China may cause decreasing financial and intradural investment in the African continent by China (Sun,2021). There are also comments about a future intensification of relations between China and Africa after the Eighth FOCAC meeting. Because China will be the largest vaccine donor to Africa, the largest export destination. China aims to put $10 billion FDI to the African continent by the year 2024 (Lynch et all., 2021).

4.2. THE SOFT POWER OF CHINA IN AFRICA

Under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, China which was able to recover from the social and economic negativities left behind by the Cultural Revolution and the Great Leap Forward and started its economic reforms in 1979 (Li & Rønning, 2013: 266). Since then, China has liberalized and opened up its economy. On the other hand, by modernizing its army, it tried to show the world that it was not just a developing third-world country. This rise, which was met with concern in the Western academic and political circles, is interpreted as a threat to Western lifestyles and the political system. This conceptual definition, which is called the "China Threat Theory (CTT)", argues that this burgeoning economic rise will threaten regional security and undermine the dominance of the West in the African continent (Broomfield, 2003: 266). CTT is being discussed not only by the West, but also in other regions where China is increasing its influence. In Africa, the CTT is discussed because of the concern of Chinese neo-colonialism It has tried to establish a moral foundation in its relations with Africa and to further support this, it positions itself as a developing country, not a superpower unlike the West (Li & Rønning, 2013: 3).

In this part of our research, the soft power policy of China in the continent will be evaluated through the four main sources of culture, values, foreign policy, and economy, as stated in the previous sections.

4.2.1. Culture

Since 2005, China has been using cultural diplomacy as a strategic soft power tool in its foreign policy. China frequently uses cultural exchange programs in its relations with Africa. China's African relations are designed mostly by triennial forums, alternate between China and Africa. (Thomas, 2021).

In the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), Beijing Action plan outlined China's cultural diplomacy in the African continent. According to this; China and Africa have aimed exchange programs in the fields of culture, education, academia, and sports. In the first FOCAC meeting held in 2012, "2012 Africa Focus" programs were held in 9 cities in China as a multi-faceted cultural event together with the Cultural Minister's Forum. In this program, many events were organized to increase the communication between the two cultures, from painting to music, from interviews with important diplomats and celebrities to seminars. In this program, many events were

organized to increase the communication between the two cultures, from painting to music, from interviews with important diplomats and celebrities to seminars. Here, plans for "culture in focus" events were also made. Accordingly, African culture promotion events in China in even numbered years and Chinese culture promotion events in Africa in odd numbered years were planned. Increasing mutual high-level and cultural visits were among the topics discussed (McGiffert, 2009: 34).

China has been putting a serious effort into activities in the field of education in Africa. The first Confucius Institute in Africa was established in Nairobi in 2005. Today, there are 54 Confucius Institutes and 27 Confucius Classrooms in Africa (Fredua-Kwarteng, 2020). These institutes are funded by the Chinese government. They are busy with the promotion of Chinese language education and culture in their home countries. Students celebrate traditional Chinese festivals and attend exhibitions and hobby courses. Public lectures are also often offered at these institutes. Thus, it is tried to break the prejudices of the local people in the countries they live in into the Chinese culture and language. Since 2000, China has been collaborating in the field of human resources across the continent. (McGiffert, 2009: 58).

In 2006, China increased the number of scholarships awarded to African students wishing to study in China, from 2000 per year to 4000 per year in 2009 and 5500 per year in 2012. By increasing its PR work in Africa, China both reinforces its increasing influence in the continent and helps the society to benefit by sharing its experiences with African media outlets. Universities in China and Africa cooperate and establish a China Research Center within their structure. In addition, China also cooperates with and assists African states in infrastructure and construction services for education and training activities. (Li & Rønning, 2013).

The 5th Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was held in 19-20 July 2012 in Beijing, China. It is a mechanism for consultation and dialogue between China and Africa. The forum was concluded with the Beijing Action Plan which re-assured Chinise-African relations, strengthening interactions with the African Union, and steps for sustainable developments between 2013 and 2015 (SDG, 2012). According to this plan, the following decisions were taken about cultural cooperation (Li & Rønning, 2013: 3):

- Coordination of broadcasting organizations between the two sides in the exchange of publications and information on China-Africa relations with each other.

- Establishment of the China-Africa Press Exchange Center and increasing mutual visits between the parties, exchange programs between journalists and members of the press

- Establishment of "China-Africa Radio and Television Cooperation Forum" and ensuring cooperation in this field

- Providing technology and professional personnel training in the field of TV and Radio between the parties

- Increasing cooperation in film and TV products

With the above decisions taken, the first Africa-China Media Cooperation Forum was hosted by China in 2012 with high participation from government officials responsible for media and representatives from TV and Radio. The theme of this forum was exchange, cooperation, and development. According to this, media will increase mutual understanding between two parties (China-Africa), and with journalist and media staff exchange programs, China will give professional assistance to African journalists and media personnel (AU, 2012).

China's visibility in the African media, which has increased noticeably in recent years, is one of the important soft power areas. Xinhua News Agency continues to add to its 18 existing headquarters and branches, serving more English and French publications than its competitors on the continent, and contributing to the continent's overall news network by publishing a picture and video news. Xinhua, which also includes news content in different media, has set up mobile newspapers in Kenya, news notifications via SMS in the DR Congo, and outdoor screens in Harare and Johannesburg. Not only with journalism, but also the photo journalist workshops in countries such as Kenya, Congo, Zimbabwe and Mali support campaigns on environmental issues. The relationships that Xinhua seeks to increase with African governments and NGOs also facilitate the sale of its news content to local media, and the established relationships make it a reliable source for African-related news in China. The Daily Chine, largest Chinese newspaper in English in 2012, has decided to launch a weekly African edition in Johannesburg and Nairobi.

The purpose of this decision was touted as the two sides getting to know each other better and introducing them to the world. Another cultural soft power area is radio broadcasts. China Radio International (CRI) has established its first overseas broadcasting station in Nairobi. The 19-hour broadcast is in English, Swahili, and Chinese. The vast majority of its publications are about China's economic, cultural and social development. The Chinese film and TV series industry is also one of the important tools of cultural influence in Africa. Chinese series of CRIs were translated into Swahili and published by Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation in 2011. As part of the Beijing Action plan mentioned above, the presence in this area is expected to increase over time (Li & Rønning, 2013: 3).

Equally effective as the cultural soft power tools mentioned above are small business operators moving from China to Africa. These entrepreneurs, who open businesses not only in big cities of Africa but also in small towns, are changing people to people exchanges and popular perception. While language is still a problem, communication between these entrepreneurs and local people will have pros and cons for the Chinese government in the future (McGiffert, 2009: 34).

With the inclusion of Africa in the Maritime Silk Road within the scope of the BRI, the interaction of the countries involved in this initiative will not only increase in the economic field but there will be a cultural fusion as well.

4.2.2. Political Values and Domestic Politics

Chinese public diplomacy often references the concepts of solidarity and "South-south cooperation" in its relations with the African continent (McGiffert, 2009: 31). The biggest advantage of China on the African continent is that it does not have any colonial past on the continent. This situation is often emphasized in Chinese relations with the continent (Arslan, 2018: 131). The technical collaboration between developing nations in the Global South is referred to as South-South cooperation. It's a platform that nations, international organizations, academia, civil society, and the corporate sector utilize to interact and exchange information, skills, and successful projects in areas including agricultural development, human rights, urbanization, health, and climate change (UN DESA, 2019). The BRICS countries are Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. The BRICS abbreviation consists of the English abbreviations of the respective countries. The abbreviation BRIC was first used in 2001 in the 'Building Better Global Economic

BRICs' report prepared by Goldman Sachs chairman Jim O'Neill (O'Neill, 2001: 1). The BRICS countries present themselves as champions for the Global South's impoverished and developing countries. South-South Cooperation (SSC) is the word used to describe the partnerships and exchanges between nations in the Global South. SSC is based on the idea that cooperation among developing nations may be promoted by these countries themselves, without the intervention of industrialized countries to the north (Diko & Sempija, 2021: 1).

In official speeches, concerning Admiral Zeng He's expeditions to the East African coasts, it is said that China never had a goal of conquest, enslavement, or colonization on the continent. They stated that this situation continues with the support they give to the liberation movements of Africa. In addition to these, China is trying to establish a common ground with Africa by defining itself as a "developing country". On this basis, the necessity of creating a new global economic order and the importance of creating common interests are emphasized. In parallel, in international forums and organizations, China saw itself as the defender of developing countries and emphasized that the spirit of solidarity should be mutual (McGiffert, 2009: 32).

Also called the "Beijing Consensus", China's economic growth and strong government model have won the admiration of African authoritarian regimes and even democratic regimes at many points. Therefore, it is not surprising that China has established close relations with very different political regimes. Non-interference and the firmly accepted notion of sovereignty are very important for the Chinese foreign policy. These two principles bring African elites and politicians, who do not have very good and transparent governance, closer to the Chinese side. Related to this, the Chinese government does not use moral values such as democracy and human rights as a tool in its foreign policy, especially in Africa (Tella, 2016: 5). However, proponents of the non-interference policy of China are those who are opposed to the liberal peace-building efforts in the African continent. According to the proponents of non-interference principle, first of all, concepts such as stability, development, and harmony are much more needed in the African context rather than democracy and human rights, which are related to the market economy. Second of all, resolution for the problems of the African continent should not be imported from other regions. Africans should find their own solutions for peace. Thirdly, rather than political or military interventions, economic

solutions can present more precise solutions for the peace and security of the continent. And fourthly, the principal of sovereignty is in the interest of China and Africa because it will protect their countries and people from external interventions and will help to progress politically (Moradi, 2019: 170).

The non-interference principle does not mean that China is not at all interested in political and economic reforms in Africa. Being aware of the vitality of good governance and long-term development in its relations with Africa, the Chinese government supports NEPAD "New Partnership for Africa's Development", which aims at sustainable development, good governance, poverty reduction, and more effective participation of member countries in the global world economy. Since it is stated that the success of the formation is transparency, democracy, free press, civil society and the rule of law and China does not have a good record in these areas, the Chinese administration specifically states that it monitors African countries in this formation through the China-Africa Cooperation Forum (Thompson, 2005).

The non-interference principle receives criticism. Chinese autocratic domestic politics and economic success gain sympathy from autocratic governments of Africa. China also increases its friendship with those autocratic countries to safeguard its energy resources. However, critics claim that China left people in these countries in danger for the sake of its interests (Alpay, 2009: 14).

To summarize, the principles that form the structure of the Chinise-African relations today and bring the parties closer together were determined by the Chinese President Zou Enlai during his visits to 10 African countries in late 1963 and early 1964. These principles were gathered under the name of "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence". These principles are "pledging China's support for anti-colonial liberation struggles; peace, neutrality and non-alignment; African unity and solidarity; peaceful resolution of disputes; and respect for African sovereignty and non-interference" (Zeleza, 2014: 147).

China attaches importance to a win-win perspective in its relations with Africa. This point of view is welcomed by the countries on the continent. After all, it sees Africa as an equal partner because it is economically based, it is not intended for aid or masonic

activities, more sustainable relations can be established, and Africans can take initiative in the negotiation processes.

China emphasizes south-south cooperation with the continent and a message of solidarity. They insist on the image that there is no Chinese aim to enslave the continent. (Fijałkowski, 2011: 230).

4.2.3. Foreign Policy

Increasing trade relations and investments between China and Africa have brought with it increased diplomatic relations. With these increasing diplomatic relations, China has the opportunity to show its own economic and political structure while keeping in close contact with African governments and also has the opportunity to share its peaceful policies against the China Threat Theory with the world and the African public (McGiffert, 2009).

The most basic and the most important of diplomatic relations between China and Africa is the FOCAC meetings held every three years. The forum is organized alternately between China and African countries and covers topics such as economic development, aid, and political partnerships (McGiffert, 2009: 32). The purpose of this forum, which was started in 2000, is stated on the website as "Equal consultation, enhancing understanding, expanding consensus, strengthening friendship and promoting cooperation." (FOCAC Mechanisms, n.d.).

This forum creates a communication ground between the parties and sets the framework for China's policies toward the continent. In addition, financial aid to Africa in necessary areas is determined. For African countries, while it creates an opportunity for high-level visits to China, it is the second platform after the UN with the highest participation at the level of heads of state among themselves. China maintains its diplomatic relations with the continent not only through FOCAC, but also through other multilateral organizations such as the AfDB and the AU. For example, it participated in some AU summits in 2006-2007 and continues to exist on some platforms with the status of observer. The AU headquarters, built-in Ethiopia in 2007, is financed by China (Tella, 2016: 4). Apart from multilateral international organizations, China has embassies in 44 African countries and general consulates in 8 African countries (Missions Overseas, n.d.).

High-level visits to African states by Chinese officials, most of them at the level of the president, strengthen relations with the continent. These visits are not only major powers on the continent or major countries in terms of energy resources. Small countries of the continent such as Seychelles, Central Africa Republic, and Madagascar are also visited. Of course, this situation changes the perception of China on the continent and facilitates partnership agreements (McGiffert, 2009: 33).

Since its integration with global trade, China prefers more transparent management and reporting, but avoids giving precise information about aid from the country. Only the statistics of very significant aids are shared. This secrecy about foreign aid brings with it speculations such as debt trap and supporting rogue regimes in Africa, but if there is something overlooked, it is that China has created an aid policy by taking advantage of its experience. The fact that it opened its doors to foreign aid after the period of Mao has shown that those who help and those who are helped can also have gain in the economic field. China uses this experience to increase its soft power in the regions which it has relations with, especially in Africa (Brautigam, 2009: 12). Besides the above-mentioned sources of China's soft power on the continent, there is a system of assistance that can be described as "given what it could", that is, to help whatever it can. In this context, it provides financial support, humanitarian aid, and technical support (Thompson, 2005: 2).

At the FOCAC meeting held in Johannesburg in 2015, it was planned to provide assistance and support in the following sample areas:

- Sending 30 teams of agricultural experts from China to the continent

- Implementation of irrigation projects in 100 different African countries

- Opening of 10 agricultural technology exhibition centers

- Sending a team of experts in industrialization from China to Africa

- Establishment of 5 transportation universities

- Giving Chinese government scholarships to 30,000 African students (Bayram, 2018: 176).

The sample decisions above and more are examples of China's aid and support policy that increases its soft power in the continent in the FOCAC 2015 "China-Africa advancing together" action plan. Although it may seem small-scale, these aids fill the gaps in infrastructure and technical education in the continent (McGiffert, 2009: 34). Additionally, debts of countries which were owed China were either written off or restructured with the decisions on debt release/debt relief on the previous FOCAC meetings (Bayram, 2018). It conducts "health diplomacy" by bridging Chinese doctors and millions of African civilians. Thus, it increases the bond between African leaders by directly touching their citizens. With Health Diplomacy, many doctors from China go to the continent to directly treat citizens; exchange programs with doctors from Africa are implemented; health workers are trained; and they provide medicine and medical machinery-materials. In addition, epidemics such as AIDS and malaria are being fought across the continent (Thompson, 2005: 3).

4.2.4. Economy

China is decisively taking serious steps to develop its relations with Africa in the fields of trade and investment (McGiffert, 2009: 29). For this purpose, it has encouraged entrepreneurs and investors in its country to invest and do business in Africa and supports investors by providing preferential loans and buyer's credit. The Chinese government seems to be quite willing to develop its investment and commercial activities in the continent, not limited to these (Kragelund & Dijk, 2009: 84).

"African countries are welcome to make investments in China. The Chinese government will continue to negotiate, conclude and implement the agreements on bilateral facilitation and protection of investment and the agreements on avoidance of double taxation with African countries. The two sides should work together to create a favorable environment for investment and cooperation and protect the legitimate rights and interests of investors from both sides" (China, 2006). At the FOCAC meeting in 2006, China committed to doubling its trade volume with Africa, increasing the number of customs products exported from Africa to Chinese markets from 190 to 440, and $5 billion to encourage investments and businessmen from China to Africa and has allocated a fund called the "China-Africa Development Fund" (McGiffert, 2009: 29). The China-Africa Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry was established and it was hoped to

improve the investment and commercial relations between the partners. It was decided to establish the Economic and Trade Cooperation Zones. It uses grants (in-kind), loans, and debt deferrals as tools to finance these activities. In addition, long-term and low-interest loan support is provided to state economic enterprises that want to invest in Africa (Kragelund & Dijk, 2009: 85). Since the 2008 World Economic Crisis, China has become Africa's largest trading partner (Liang, 2012).

It can be said that Africa is at a more sensitive point on the trade side of the Chinise-African relations. There is more than one reason in the FDI Flows chart, which shows a fluctuating course according to years. The most important reason is that most African economies are very small. Therefore, investment seems to have a very serious impact. Secondly, mergers and acquisitions increase volatility (Kragelund & Dijk, 2009: 88). The largest oil producers on the continent, such as Sudan, Angola, and Nigeria, receive the lion's share of China's commercial and investment activities. Africa accounts for about 30 percent of China's oil imports and is expected to increase further over the years (McGiffert, 2009: 30).

Telecommunications has been an important area of cooperation in strengthening the Chinise-African relations. Africa has become the world's second-largest mobile telecommunications market in terms of registered users. Chinese investors, on the other hand, started to increase their dominance in the market by taking advantage of this opportunity. Huawei surpasses Siemens and Erickson to take the largest market share in North, East, and Central Africa. In Nigeria, Huawei and ZTE (Zhong Xing Telecommunication Equipment Company Limited) are almost monopolies, dominating ninety percent of the market (Li & Rønning, 2013: 3).

One of the main reasons behind the increase in China's activities in the African continent is the bond between the Chinese investors/entrepreneurs and the Chinese government. Chinese foreign policy and investors support each other in the African continent, while one side provides financial gain and helps the other side achieve its foreign policy ambitions. China, which joined the race in Africa long after Europe, offered not only new investments, products, and an alternative growth model, but also a versatile economic participation policy. It achieved this with the principles of non-interference and non-conditionality, which it adopted as its motto in its relations with

Africa. The African continent is very fragile due to its long colonial history, and the increase in China's activities on the continent raises concerns that it will affect the continent as a new imperial power. Due to these concerns, which we call the China Treat Theory, the Chinese side had to take some precautions. China opposes the classic imperial power pattern, which only takes natural resources from the continent and sells finished products. For this reason, it tries to develop its commercial relations not only with the African countries from which it imports energy but also with other countries in the continent. It makes its impact on the continent more palpable with its investments in agriculture, infrastructure, and industry, which western institutions have ignored for many years (Liang, 2012: 678).

Conclusion

Relations with the African continent are important for China in terms of meeting the raw material and food needs of its fast-growing economy and population, creating a market for its final products, providing employment for its population in Africa, and providing diplomatic superiority in the international arena. In addition, it wants to prove that its economic model is an alternative. It has succeeded in marginalizing Taiwan, especially with its relations with Africa.

If there is a risky issue for China on the continent, it is that the non-intervention principle has to be compromised. We have seen examples of this issue in the Zambia elections and the Darfur crisis. In the Zambia elections, if the anti-Chinese candidate won, it was threatened that trade relations would be cut, and then the relations were continued as the anti-Chinese candidate could not win the election. But if he wins, China's immediate use of the trading card will affect the non-intervention principle. In the Sudanese crisis; China, which was accused of being a partner in the massacre by continuing its arms sales and commercial relations, had to convince the Sudanese government to deploy the UN mission when it was criticized by the West during the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Thus, China compromised on the principle of non-intervention, but it developed a different relationship model, not with the stick-carrot method, but by utilizing its close diplomatic ties with Sudan (Bayram & Emiroğlu, 2016: 507).

The African continent, which hosts the richest countries in the world in terms of resources, unfortunately still has the poorest countries in the world due to the systemic

structure created by the inequalities from the colonial period. However, this trend has been in the opposite direction in the last few years, leading to a similar positive transformation in perceptions of the African continent.

Although the African continent grew less than expected due to the global pandemic in 2020, the African continent grew by an average of 5 percent from 2000 to 2019 (Coleman, 2020). The most important source of this growth of the African continent is foreign trade, and its foreign trade with China constitutes the most important pillar of this growth. Exports to China have affected economic growth, but have made it fragile enough to be affected by even minor changes in China. Infrastructure projects necessary for the development of the continent are largely provided by Chinese financing. In parallel with the development of infrastructure, GDP increased in many countries and increased the level of economic welfare. Products such as mobile phones and computers are not considered luxury (Bayram & Emiroğlu, 2016: 508).

There are also areas where the presence of China in the continent has been negatively affected. Critics of China's existence argue that China does not create jobs on the continent, its workers bring them in. They claim that Chinese goods are of poor quality and will not be accepted elsewhere in the world and that they use Africa as a test board. There are also opinions that the cheap Chinese goods in the market put local operators and manufacturers in a difficult situation and drove many of them into bankruptcy. Although China's investments in Africa are welcomed, the Chinese are not enough in matters such as environmental awareness and social responsibility. Corrupt relations are also suspected with the African ruling elite (Arslan, 2018: 137).

In terms of Africa, the most important result of the Chinese presence in the continent is that the negotiation power of the continent has increased in the face of other Western powers. Some African states, which were tried to be excluded from the international community by the West for reasons such as human rights and democracy, found the opportunity to break through this isolation thanks to China (Bayram & Emiroğlu, 2016: 509). Within the South-South solidarity, China's support of the UN resolutions concerning Africa is important. For example, he vetoed the arms embargo on Zimbabwe with Russia at the UNSC (Arslan, 2018: 135).

In summary, we can say that China generally has a positive perception across the continent. It increases its image among African elites, especially with its non-interference policy and economic alternative. On the other hand, the fact that it puts local operators in a difficult position and has a limited effect on unemployment negatively affects the image of China (Tella, 2016: 7).

Figure 3

Perceived Positive Influence of China

Perceived positive influence of China
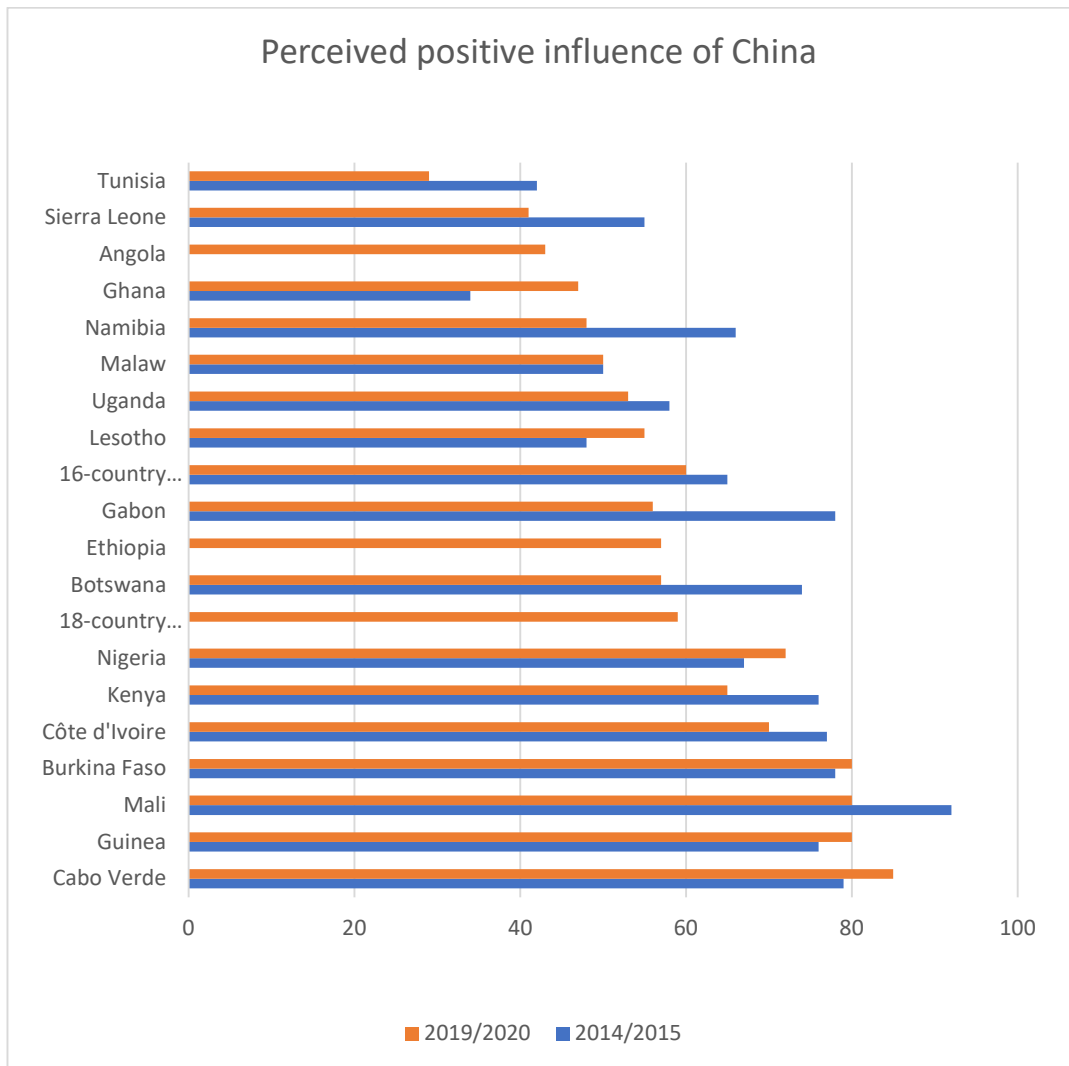
Respondents were asked: Do you think that the economic and political influence of each of the following countries on [your country] is mostly positive, mostly negative, or haven't you heard enough to say: China? (% who say "somewhat positive" or "very positive)

In the chart above, the perception of China in 2014-2015 and 2019-2020 is given comparatively by country. The Afrobarometer, a Ghana-based research network, conducted its first research on Africans' perception of China in 2016. According to the result here, 63 percent of the participants from 36 countries have positive opinions about China. In the research conducted before Covid-19 in 2019-2020, we can see that the perception of China is still positive, but it is concluded that the citizens are worried about the debts taken from China (Selormey & Folashade Soule, 2020).

5. THE SOFT POWER OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The structure which forms the European Union started with the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952. It was established to prevent destructive wars from occurring again. This newly created structure in Europe has continued with the establishment of today's European Union with its 27 member states after the Brexit decision of the UK in 2020. The European Union is an important actor in the world political system with its 447 million inhabitants and $15.6 trillion GDP in 2019 statistics (Hayes, 2021). Although it still has some problems to overcome within itself, the European Union sets an example for other countries and regions (Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu, 2019: 2299).

The EU increases its attractiveness in the eyes of other regions and countries with its progress in the field of human rights, democracy, and law, as well as in the fields of economic development, technological advances, and scientific studies. Contrary to the authoritarian tendencies in the international arena, the EU tries to use norms such as human rights and democracy as universal norms in its foreign policy. It can be said that the biggest effect of this comes from the economic power of the Union. People from many countries of the world believe that their welfare will increase by trying to immigrate to the EU, and they have the impression that living and working in Europe is a privilege. It

constitutes a continent that is followed by millions of people from all over the world, not only in the economic field, but also in its culture, fashion, sports activities such as football and basketball, and music. In addition, within the framework of the enlargement policy, many countries want to join the EU and for this purpose, they are trying to complete the criteria in their own countries. The issue of what kind of actor and power the EU is in international politics brings with it long discussions. The EU has been likened to "an economic giant, a political dwarf, and a military worm" (Akdağ & Ekici, 2017: 34).

With the end of the Cold War, radical changes have occurred in the global system. In this new century, the assumption that nation-states were the only actors of the international system, which was accepted in the past, has been shelved, and the existence of new actors has been accepted. Like nation-states, emerging international organizations, regional entities, and multinational corporations have the potential to influence global politics. In this context, the EU draws the attention of researchers among these new actors with its unique structure (Uğur, 2018: 71). Due to the September 11 attacks and the Madrid terrorist incidents, the issue of security entered the agenda of the EU, never to be separated again. It caused serious politicization of issues such as immigration and border regulations. These developments have sparked debates on the EU's agency and its capacity to meet security risks (Tulmets, 2007: 200).

With the end of the Cold War, the world found itself in the middle of different problems. The emergence of new security problems and threats such as terrorism, smuggling, mass migrations, ethnic tensions, environmental problems, and the control of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, and the fact that these global problems are not solved only by nation-states, necessitated the engagement of non-state actors and international organizations. Thus, military power, which was believed to be especially necessary for the concept of power in the past, and the authority to use it lost their importance, and the importance of having the second and third dimensions of power, namely persuasion and agenda-setting abilities, was understood. Thus, the EU has been recognized as an important factor in the international system. The EU has been an actor in the international system since the day it was founded, with its borders accepted in the international community, a law it has created with the system it has determined, and its capacity to affect the natural and legal persons living in it economically, socially and politically. While the EU gives importance to the economy to achieve its own goals in the

international arena, it also gives importance to cooperation with other actors. While influencing the choices of actors, it uses methods other than military means (Uğur, 2018: 76).

Since its establishment, the EU has made various arrangements in its institutional structure in parallel with the obligations of the time. It wants to increase its role in the international system by increasing the monophony among the member states. In line with this request, we see that the tools used by the EU in its foreign policy have changed and diversified over time. The EU, which has increased the effectiveness of its soft power in its foreign policy with civilian and normative power tools, is more successful in getting the desired results compared to military power tools. Behind this, the reluctance of member states to participate in major military operations and the fact that the EU does not have a separate army of its own are factors that force it to use only soft power. (Aksoy & Uğur, 2016).

In a study on the concept of soft power in the EU legislation, it was found that the concept has been used in the EU documents since 1999 (Kavaliūnaitė, 2011: 231). Soft power is one of the most important tools used by the EU to direct its foreign policy, ensure peace and security around it, and eliminate risks. The effective use of soft power not only provides self-confidence for the EU people, but also gains the admiration of the states outside the Union. Joseph Nye, in his famous book, sees Europe as the closest competitor to the USA in terms of soft power tools (Nye, 2004: 75). When the European Defense Policy was not accepted in 1957, François Duchêne (1973) defined the EU as a "civilian power". Civilian power is an actor's pursuit of his interests in the international system by non-military means, including the economy (Tulmets, 2007: 200). After long and bloody wars on the European continent, it has become a prosperous and stable region of the world. The fact that European countries were in the middle of the US-Soviet tension during the cold war led the EU's foreign policy to become civilian power. Civilian Power resources are economic and humanitarian aid, trade and economic relations with third countries and regions, and diplomatic and cultural tools (Aksoy & Uğur, 2016: 215-216).

Rosecrance named it "trading power" in 1998 because the European Community mostly uses trade in its relations. With the application of the principle of conditionality in the foreign relations of the Union, the EU started to impose the condition of protecting

the principles such as democracy, human rights, and rule of law from third countries in return for providing economic benefits, and thus started to develop norms. For this reason, Ian Manner defined the EU as a "normative power" in 2002 (Tulmets, 2007: 200).

Ian Manners stated that when he used the word 'normative' he meant that he wanted to change something - human behavior and international practice (Manners, 2006a: 117-118). This concept is coined by Ian Manners (2002: 235-258) in his article named "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?". Definitions for the EU's capacity (such as civil power, soft power) have been made since the day it was founded. However, normative power has been one of the most discussed concepts in this context. Within the EU representatives, comments were made in the direction of this concept. For example, Romano Prodi, the President of the Commission at the time, declared in a speech that Europe established a development and continental integration model based on the principles of democracy, freedom, and solidarity (European Commission, 2000). Manners defined normative power as the capacity to shape and change the normal (Manners, 2002: 239). Contrary to state-oriented studies such as civil and military power, Manners, in his study, moved away from state-based features and discussed the intellectual impact of the EU's international identity (Manners, 2002: 238). At the center of normative power were normative actions that included persuasion and discussion, appealing to norms, shaping discourse, showing examples, and prestige or embarrassment, not military and economic means (Aggestam, 2009: 31). Thomas Diez stated that normative power reveals a certain type of actor in international politics and also a relationship quality. Diez stated that this relationship can be seen as a kind of hegemonic power since it shapes the normal of others (Diez, 2005: 616). Manners claimed that universal norms and principles are at the center of shaping the normal (Manners, 2002: 241). He stated that these norms guide the goals and actions of the EU in international politics. (Manners, 2008: 76). The normative basis of the EU is found in its treaties, criteria, policies, declarations, and conditions. Manners stated that there are 5 basic norms in the EU through the mentioned official documents. These are peace, freedom, democracy, rule of law, and human rights. He also stated that the EU has four minor norms. These are the principles of social solidarity, non-discrimination (equality), sustainable development, and good governance (Manners, 2002: 242-244). The basis of

these norms is available in the official documents of the EU. The below charts shows the legal basis of EU normative power:

Table 6

The EU's normative basis

Founding Principles	Tasks and Objectives	Stable Institutions	Fundamental Rights
Liberty	Social solidarity	Guarantee of democracy	Dignity
Democracy	Anti-discrimination	Rule of law	Freedoms
Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms	Sustainable development Human	Human rights	Equality
Rule of law		Protection of minorities	Citizenship
Treaty base – set out in art. 6 of the TEU	Treaty base-set out in art 2 of TEC and TEU, arts. 6 and 13 of TEC	Copenhagen Criteria- set out in the conclusions of the June 1993 EC	Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the EU

Note. Adapted from "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms,?" by I. Manner, 2002, *JCMS*, *40 (2)*, p. 243.

The debate on how to define the EU's power has increased with the adoption of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in 1992 at Maastricht and the adoption of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) in 1999. It has been a matter of curiosity whether there will be a transformation in the EU's use of force after the inclusion of the security pillar in the EU structure. However, the war in the Balkans in the 1990s is cited as evidence of the EU's reluctance to use force. The EU desires to participate in activities such as conflict prevention and peacekeeping rather than harsh military

interventions. Finally, we can see that "soft power" is indicated in the EU official discourses along with enlargement and neighborhood policies. It is believed that soft power will be a legitimate, effective and important instrument for the EU and will be effective in closing the gap in the field of defense (Tulmets, 2007: 198).

Table 7

The EU's Foreign Policy Tools

		The EU's Foreign Policy Tools		
		Civilian Power	**Military Power**	**Normative Power**
The capacity of the EU	**Effective**	Trade, cooperation and partnership agreements, membership perspective, humanitarian aids	Training of military and police forces, Missions for empowering legal system and civilian governments, monitoring missions	Democracy, human rights, minority rights, diplomacy
	Moderate	Development policies and economic aids, economic sanctions	Peacekeeping missions	Sustainable development, environment, energy
	Non-Effective	Military sanctions	Military interventions, military expenses, conflict prevention	

Note. Adapted from "AB nin Aktörlüğüne Etki Eden Güç Unsurları: Sivil Güç, Askeri Güç Ve Normatif Güç," by M. Aksoy & Ö. Uğur, 2016, *Ekonomik ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, *1 (12)*), p. 235 (https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/esad/issue/38968/456141).

In the index report of Brand Finance, a London-based organization, listing the soft power of countries for 2020, the European states take the lead among the countries with the highest soft power, and even Germany, which is called the engine of the EU, ranks first in the soft power index this year (Global Soft Power Index 2021, 2021). Since this report makes a country-based assessment, it falls short in assessing the soft power effect created by the EU as a whole. Despite the missing data provided by the report, when the soft powers of the EU members included in the report are gathered, it can be seen that there is an almost impossible gap between the Union and its other rivals (Akdağ & Ekici, 2017).

Table 8

Global Soft Power Index 2021

Global Soft Power Index 2021	
Place	**Country**
1	Germany
2	Japan
3	UK
4	Canada
5	Switzerland
6	US
7	France
8	China
9	Sweden
10	Australia
11	South Korea
12	Netherlands

13	Russia
14	Norway
15	Denmark
16	New Zealand
17	UAE
18	Finland
19	Italy
20	Singapore
21	Belgium
22	Spain
23	Austria
24	Saudi Arabia
25	Israel

Note. Adapted from Global Soft Power Index 2021, by Brand Finance, 2021 (https://brandirectory.com/globalsoftpower/download/brand-finance-global-soft-power-index-2021.pdf)

As a unique economic and political model in the world, the EU has its soft power resources. In this part of our thesis, the EU soft power tools will be evaluated according to Joseph Nye's distinction in soft power tools, and the enlargement policy, which is its unique tool, will be mentioned.

5.1. CULTURE

According to a worksheet prepared by UNESCO, cultural soft power, also known as cultural diplomacy, is a type of soft power that strives for the exchange of ideas and views, increases knowledge about other cultures, and builds a bridge between communities (UNESCO). In the cultural field, the European continent has long been a

center of attraction, attracting people from other parts of the world with its history, art, music, food, fashion, and designs. For example, European countries such as England, Germany, and France have always been at the top of the Nobel Prizes in literature and science, and the European countries have had a large share in the worldwide sales of albums, cassettes, and books. They are also in the first place in terms of asylum and immigrant requests. Compared to American football, European football is more accepted around the world (Nye, 2004). According to the World Economic Forum report, five European countries are in the top ten of the world's top tourist destinations (Elliott, 2020). Three of the 10 most spoken languages in the world are European languages. English, Spanish and Portuguese keeps the continent in constant contact with other parts of the world. We can say that one of the most important reasons for the spread of these languages to the world is the colonial past of Europe, and we can still see the effects of the colonial period. In addition to English, German and French are among the most used languages in the world as scientific languages and in business life (Rosenberg, 2018).

Joint Communication "Towards an EU Strategy for international cultural relations" jointly prepared by the European Commission and the European External Action Service made its presentation on June 8, 2016. This strategy aims to increase cultural cooperation between the EU member states and the partner countries with the logic of long-term relations, mutual interests, understanding, face-to-face communication, and co-development. In addition, it is stated in the strategy text that cooperation and development in the field of culture will bring development in the economic and political fields (EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations, n.d.). With this awareness, the EU sees cultural cooperation as the engine of sustainable development, develops intercultural dialogue, and aims to develop cultural cooperation with partner countries by supporting the common cultural heritage. It can be predicted that this mutual interaction in the field of culture will increase the soft power of the EU over other countries. With the development of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue within the framework of this strategy, the soft power of the EU will increase and different ways of expression can be found to reduce tensions in society, solve crises when they are at a more manageable level, and prevent radicalization, which is the EU's biggest threat in recent times. The Cultural Strategy will help the EU become a strong global actor at a time when those dealing with the problem of integrating immigrants and refugees into

society, becoming the target of extremist groups, and being skeptical towards the Union begin to increase. The Joint Communication has formed a three-column structure with the EU and partner countries. This structure is aimed to develop cooperation between member countries, national cultural institutions, and public and private sectors. (Moreno et all., 2018: 7).

5.2. POLITICAL VALUES AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

Since its establishment, the EU has been based on human rights, democracy, and peace values and has been a foreign policy actor prioritizing these values in its enlargements. While acting in its foreign policy, the EU has used its political steps and instruments in accordance to protect these values (Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu, 2019: 2303). As the first column of the ICR Strategy (2016), it is stated that values such as human rights, human dignity, equality, and protection of minority rights are used in the determination of standards in the EU's foreign relations. The presence of these founding values in this strategy also shows that the EU has added its touches to its soft power (Moreno et all., 2018: 7).

The EU has succeeded in maintaining the space it has created with its member states as a haven of wealth and high living standards. While the member countries gain benefits and wealth from this situation, it also gives the message to the non-member states that they can benefit from these living standards when they accept and internalize the values and norms adopted by the continent. The most important evidence of this is the membership of the ex-Soviet countries, which have transformed the European continent into an area of peace and wealth, by infusing principles such as democracy and the rule of law into their domestic laws and completing their transformation in this direction.

5.3. FOREIGN POLICY

As the EU constitutes one of the biggest powers of the world economy, the most effective civil power sources are the tools such as commercial partnership and cooperation, humanitarian aid, discounts, and quota increases in which it uses its economic power. Providing financial and technical support, and scientific and environmental support along with these tools provides an advantage for the third countries with which economic relations are established. The EU enlargements are also an

important foreign policy tool and a source of soft power. These enlargement policies both ensure stability in the peripheral countries and radical structural transformations have been realized in the peripheral countries, and the EU's values are accepted without the use of pressure and coercion (Aksoy & Uğur, 2016).

The EU remains a strong role model for the rest of the world. Neighboring countries want to become member states rather than opposing, balancing, or resisting the Union, while other similar organizations take the EU as an example in their structuring. We see the most important example of this attractiveness with Morocco's application to the EU for membership, despite being an African country. Although Morocco was rejected for not meeting geographical standards, it gives a good clue about the extent of the soft power of the EU membership (Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu, 2019: 215-216).

The EU, which demonstrates its goodwill in international politics according to international agreements and international law rules, is ahead of even the USA, where the concept of soft power emerged. Because from time to time, even the USA can bypass international law and neutralize the UN (Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu, 2019: 2304).

Although the European Union does not have a military potential to be capable of using hard power, it makes up for this deficit with strong economic and diplomatic tools. The EU, which has one of the largest development aid budgets in the world, develops relations with third world countries through trade and aid. The EU's development assistance continues within the framework of the principle of conditionality and attention is paid to issues such as human rights and democratic principles and compliance with the EU trade regulations in the countries where assistance is provided. The countries that are found not to comply with these standards are subject to various sanctions (Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu, 2019: 2305). After the Lisbon Treaty (2007), it has given the EU more representation rights by increasing its actorness in the international arena. In addition, it is aimed to give the message that the EU acts more harmoniously and in unity with the international community. In line with all these, the High Representative of Foreign and Security Policy was created and it serves as the head of the European External Action Service. The Service serves as a foreign ministry and diplomatic mission for the EU, in the implementation of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and the EU's external representation in other areas. EEAS has representation in hundreds of countries

and many international organizations such as WTO, UN, OECD, and AU, and participates in many civil and military operations with High Representative. Apart from the activities mentioned above, EEAS and High Rep. as to the clearest indicator of the EU's soft power in foreign policy, it plays the role of mediator as an impartial actor in international studies. In line with this role, the Mediation Support Team was established within the EEAS in 2011 and the EP created the European Parliament Mediation Support Service, and not only that, the European Institute of Peace was established. With all this, the role of a mediator has always been a foreign policy activity that has been talked about in the halls of the EU. Although it has a mediator role, such as the Belgrade-Pristina talks, the effectiveness of the National Dialogue Conference in Yemen has been questioned. However, the activity of a supranational institution such as the EU in peacekeeping and maintenance activities has increased its image in the eyes of the other countries and has drawn the image that the neo-colonialist perspective is not valid (Moreno et all., 2018: 7)

5.4. ECONOMY

With its only market consisting of 27 member countries, the EU is one of the largest commercial powers in the world. The EU economic policy focuses on removing barriers to the economy, creating employment through the wise use of financial resources, and improving transparency and technical assistance for investment projects. The Gross Domestic Product was €16.4 trillion in 2020 before the economic downturn due to the pandemic and before the UK left the Union. The EU holds approximately 15.6% of the world's total imports and exports and operates in international trade as the world's third-largest actor after the USA and China (About the Economy, n.d.).

In the light of the bright data above, the EU has directed one side of its soft power to its activities in the economic field. The European Union uses its soft power in the economic field with trade agreements and trade and development cooperation agreements made by using its economic potential. More than half of the world's development aid is provided by the EU to middle and low-income countries (Moreno, et all., 2018: 3).

While the European Union strengthens its economic and diplomatic presence in these continents by making high-budget investments in regions such as Africa and Latin America, it can be said that sharing know-how and experience with these regions in terms of soft power creates a sense of privilege. In addition to the economic partnership with

these regions, the Official Development Assistance (ODA) built-in infrastructure, drinking water, health system, and similar areas affect the image of the people in the countries where aid is given and move the quadrant in a more positive direction (Moreno, et all., 2018: 4).

According to the OECD data for 2020, the amount of the EU Official Development Assistance was €66.8 billion. With this rate, which corresponds to 0.50% of the GNI, the non-EU countries, which are members of the Development Assistance Committee, with a GNI average of 0.26%, were left behind (Preliminary Figures on 2020 Official Development Assistance, 2021). ENP is a cooperation program that aims to increase stability, security, and wealth in the countries neighboring the EU. The EU, on the other hand, tries to achieve these goals mostly through economic aid. With this program, the EU aims to eliminate the dangers coming from its neighbors with different cultural and historical heritage. From a soft power perspective, although these aids have a positive effect economically, it can still be said that there is a prejudice in the public opinion in these countries since principles such as democracy and the rule of law are considered Western (Moreno et all., 2018: 4).

Conclusion

The European Union is defined as Civilian / Soft Power, and the definition of "economic giant but military dwarf" is a backstage joke. Soft power is not an option for the EU, which is difficult to use hard power elements in its structure, but the most reasonable tool left in its hands. The EU even used its economic power as a soft power tool and forced other countries to follow their own rules (Yılmaz & Kılıçoğlu, 2019: 2306). As its founding philosophy, it already refers to soft power by aiming to establish peace and security in the continent and to establish a structure to prevent destructive wars from happening again (Nye, 2004: 77). In today's multipolar world, the EU is trying to provide its monophony with structural-legal reforms. However, the conflict of national interests of the member states, and the mobility of the union is limited. With the establishment of the CFSP, cooperation between member states in securing the Union's fundamental interests and independence, promoting international cooperation, consolidating democracy/rule of law and respect for human rights, maintaining peace,

and strengthening international security has been reorganized (Aksoy & Uğur, 2016: 224-225).

With this structural change, the EU has developed strategies to become a playmaker/actor at the global level. In a way, this decision is a necessity for the EU to maintain its claim to be an international actor. For example, the EU is criticized by many developing countries for democracy and human rights. In particular, some criticisms are made that the EU, by force of arms, tries to develop or supports democracy in third countries such as Iraq and Libya from time to time, while maintaining good relations with the regimes in Arab countries where it has economic interests while ignoring the human rights violations in these countries. On the one hand, the reluctance of member states to large-scale operations, and on the other hand, the EU's lack of deterrent military forces in its operational capability prevents it from being effective in issues such as conflict prevention and peacekeeping. Although the EU has assumed the leadership position, it sometimes has difficulties in convincing developing countries, sometimes even the developed countries, to take certain obligations on environmental issues. Despite this, the soft power tools mentioned above constitute the foreign policy tools that contribute the most to the Union's actorness in the international system, especially when compared to military power (Aksoy & Uğur, 2016).

6. THE SOFT POWER OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN AFRICA

6.1.HISTORICAL DIMENSION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION - AFRICA RELATIONS

The relations between Europe and Africa are based on a long historical process. This historical past is a network of relations ranging from Phoenicians to Rome and from there to the Byzantines. It is a relationship changing between domination and intruder that lasted for tens of centuries (Kavas,2018).

The African continent first fell victim to the slave trade at the end of the 15th century, and then fell into the hands of the European colonialism, which would see its peak in the 19th century. The difference between the slave trade and colonialism is that the slave trade is done by Arabs and Africans with their European and American counterparts, whereas colonialism is a more complex scheme of the European imperialists. The concept called 'the Scramble for Africa', which expresses the sharing

of the African continent by the colonial states, was shared by England, Belgium, Italy, Spain, and Germany at the Berlin conference in 1885 (Schmidt, 2012: 102).

Before colonialism, Africa was interacting with different cultures economically, politically, socially, and religiously. Arab, Persian, Greek, and Ottoman ancient civilizations were active in North Africa, and although Islam established the first link through Abyssinia, it had the strongest spread from north to south of Africa. On the other hand, Christianity tried to find a place in the continent, starting in North Africa from its earliest days (Fatokun, 2005). Although the Sahara Desert limited Sub-Saharan Africa's interaction with other societies, strong relations with Arabs and Europeans were established by land and sea trade until the 15th century. Many powerful sultanates in Africa show that Africa was included in international politics and economy before colonialism and even played a decisive role in these areas from time to time. The Sultanate of Mali in the 14th century is important to understand the economic power of Africa. Mansa Kankan Musa, who ruled this sultanate between 1312 and 1337 was in an important position in the local and international economy. He was accepted among the richest people in the world. It was also stated that the Sultanate of Mali had half of the gold processed in the Old World during that period (Mohamud, 2019). All this information shows that the African continent was integrated into the international economy and politics before colonialism.

It was one of the first steps of colonialism that the Portuguese established a military headquarters in Ceuta, on the Mediterranean coast of Africa, in 1415. The Portuguese later established many trading posts on the eastern and western coasts of the continent. The Dutch, involved in colonial activities, built the city of Cape Town on the southern tip of Africa in 1652. This city would later pass under the control of the British. Up until the 18th and 19th centuries, European trade centers were established in various parts of Africa, and through these centers, natural resources such as gold and ivory, as well as slaves as labor, were transported to Europe. Christian missionaries also began to gain influence on the continent during this time (Thomson, 2004).

In the second half of the 19th century, events took on a different dimension. The European states that entered the colonial race divided the continent with the 1884-1885 Berlin Conference. This issue has passed into the terminological literature as 'the

Scramble for Africa'. Ethiopia and Liberia are excluded from this sharing. While West, North, and Central Africa are the regions occupied by France, England established colonial rule in parts of West, East, and Central Africa and the southern parts of the continent. Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Angola became Portuguese colonies. Eritrea, Libya, and parts of Somalia came under Italian control; Morocco, Spanish Sahara, and Spanish Guinea became the regions where Spain established colonial rule. King of Belgium Leopold II took the Congo. While Germany dominated the southwestern and eastern parts of the continent, it also occupied Cameroon and Togoland. However, with the defeat of Germany in World War I, the League of Nations divided these regions among other colonial states (Thomson, 2004). The determination of borders, independent of cultural and ethnic reality, brought serious problems to African countries after colonialism. Because the division of tribes-nations to stay within the borders of different countries may resulted in the demand of these nations to gather under a single flag in the future. This could lead to war between countries, which was exactly the reason for the war between Somalia and Ethiopia in the 1970s.

Colonialism, the form of government that dominates the world, completed itself in the third quarter of the 20th century. Decolonization brought the end of overseas colonial states and thus the new world order began. Bipolar world system with the cold war, the establishment of a new structure within Europe, the decolonization process in the newly established states and the proxy wars due to the US-Soviet tension, the increase in the number and influence of institutions such as the international UN were the main dynamics of the new world. With the right of nations to self-determination introduced in 1919, the decolonization process was also settled on an internationally legitimate ground (Sönmez,2014: 49-50).

Since the 1960s, African countries had achieved their independence; however, colonialism continued its effects on African countries even after independence. Among the most important reasons for this was the European states' ignoring the social, economic, and political realities and determining the borders of the states that were given independence. The new borders of African countries were not drawn with the long-term interests of the African peoples in mind. On the contrary, these borders were determined in line with the short-term economic interests of the colonial powers. For example, the reason for the existence of a small country like the Gambia in West Africa is related to

the British reflex to protect the trade center established on the banks of the Gambia River (Tordoff, 2002). The division of the borders, ignoring the local government models that have existed in Africa for centuries, prevented 14 countries from having a coast to the sea or the ocean. In terms of trade, countries have been adversely affected by this situation and have become dependent on their neighbors for import-export. No other continent other than Africa has so many landlocked countries (Thomson, 2004). Colonial governments caused African countries to experience problems in the field of administration and development after independence. The lowest level of infrastructure was provided and minimal investments were made in regions that were not economically important (Michalopoulos & Papaioannou, 2016). It can be said that the assimilation policies were also in effect in these regions. But since South Africa, Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Kenya, South West Africa, and Algeria were considered strategic regions, modern state elements were built and white settlers lived in these regions. The inadequacy of state facilities throughout the continent and the inability to establish state authority-hegemony led to a weak link between the state and civil society in the post-colonial period (Tordoff, 2002).

The period between 1945 and 1960 was a period of political liberation for Africa and Asia, but political independence movements aimed to get rid of the slave trade, imperialism, and racism imposed by the West. The slave trade was already over, but economic independence was required as well as political independence. Unfortunately, the people of the continent could not escape the influence of the economic imperialism. The event that triggered the independence process was the attack on Ethiopia, Africa's only non-colonizable country, by Italy in 1935 (Ataöv, 2018: 71). In 1950 there were only 4 independent states, namely Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, and the Union of South Africa; in 1963 the number of independent states was more than 30.

After the political independence processes, the most important event for the African continent was the establishment of the Organization of African Unity and succeeded by the Africa Union (AU) in 2002. The Organization of African Unity (OAU), which is considered the second stage of the integration process of Africa, was founded by the political leaders of 31 African countries on May 25, 1963, in Addis Ababa. The primary objectives of the OAU were identified as identity, the liberation of the states in the continent, and the integration of the continent. The main interest of the organization

was the liberation of white-ruled Africa, especially South Africa. The establishment of the OAU was an important gain in terms of identity. In this period, as mentioned above, when political emancipation and economic emancipation could not be achieved together, problems such as political instability, military coups, economic crises, and foreign debts came along. For these reasons, Africa has stopped prioritizing the idea of political independence and has focused on economic independence and therefore has made various initiatives. Lagos Plan of Action 1984, Africa's Priority Program for Economic Recovery 1986-1995, African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Program 1989, African (Arusha) Charter for Popular Participation and Development 1996, Abuja Treaty 1997, and Cairo Agenda 1994 drew attention as prominent efforts (Arslan, 2015: 112-113).

The last venture we come across is NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development). It is a strategic framework established to coordinate the socio-economic development of the continent. This initiative, which was officially established by the Africa Union in 2002, is a mechanism that aims to coordinate the development of Africa in the 21st century and the steps to be taken. NEPAD was adopted by the OAU in 2001 and the AU ratified it. This project aims to eradicate poverty, provide sustainable growth and development, and integrate Africa to the world economy and women empowerment (New Partnership For Africa's Development (NEPAD), n.d.).

The worsening social and economic indicators in Africa before 2001 increased the belief that the continent would become even more marginal if effective measures were not taken. In addition to all this, the serious decrease in the EU's development aid to the Sub-Saharan African countries worsened the situation of the continent.

With the arrival of the Millennium, Africa gained unexpected importance in the international arena. Leaving behind the disappointments of the previous century, it has started to take serious steps with its efforts for sustainable development, socio-economic development, democratic recovery and regional integration. Apart from the dynamics within the continent itself, global and emerging powers by increasing their activities and connections in the continent have increased Africa's importance. In parallel with all these developments, Europe continues to affect the continent and be affected by the developments in the continent. Historical ties and geographical proximity bring the two

continents closer together. In addition to the issues of economy and development, issues such as global warming, international migration, and extremism that affect the world are instrumental in increasing the relations between the two continents. (Carbone,2020: 2).

In the early days of the European Community (EC), most of its relations with Africa were related to the end of the colonial period. Not only because of the coexistence of these two developments but also because of this new construction in Europe, it was thought that the past colonial connections would evolve into a mutually beneficial structure (Leroy, 2009: 4).

Europe's relations with the newly independent African countries in the field of development policies (together with the Caribbean and Pacific countries) were regulated by Yaounde Conventions (1963-1975) and Lome Conventions (1975-2000). These contracts resulted in the acceptance of concepts such as negotiations and partnership (Carbone, 2020: 3).

With the Lome Conventions, development cooperation and commercial provisions were arranged with the ACP countries in the field of development, and the products from these countries were allowed to enter the EU duty-free. The Lome treaties were replaced by the Cotonou Treaty signed in 2000. The purpose of this treaty was to try to reduce poverty by integrating the ACP countries more into the world economy. This treaty used the concept of "partnership", which placed the relations on an equal, mutually responsible, and consensus-based basis, giving importance to democracy, human rights, good governance, and political dialogue between the parties. After the Cotonou Agreement was extended until 2020, discussions on how the post-Cotonou process would come to the fore. Studies on the future of relations continue both within the EU and with the ACP countries (Kozelj, 2020).

The inclusive policy regulating the relations between the EU and African countries is regulated by the Joint Africa-EU Strategy adopted at the Lisbon Summit in 2007. It aims to increase cooperation in the fields such as migration, climate, peace, and security. It aims to develop Africa's continental approach to these problems and to increase the participation of African and European citizens in this partnership process (Kozelj, 2020).

Summits between the European Union and the African Union are arranged every three years and alternate between Africa and Europe. At the 5th AU-EU summit, Joint Africa- EU Strategy, was announced on the issues of (i) economic opportunities for youth; (ii) peace and security; (iii) mobility and migration; and (iv) cooperation and governance (5th AU-EU Summit, n.d.).

The African and European leaders agreed on a shared vision for a revitalized relationship in February 2022. Solidarity, security, peace, economic growth, and prosperity for the inhabitants of the African Union and the European Union are the goals of this renewed partnership. It is intended that people, regions, and institutions coexist today and in the future. According to this partnership: €150 billion investment plan aimed between Africa and Europe by mid-2022, Africa will have received 450 million doses of vaccine and partnership targeted increased peace and security cooperation. A stronger relationship between migration and mobility belief in multilateralism (European Council, n.d.).

Giovanni Faleg and Carlo Paleschi (2020: 43) categorized the EU member states into four according to their policies toward the Sub-Saharan Africa. Group 1 consists of countries that mostly have a colonial history with the continent. Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, and Spain belong to this group. The member states have historically or recently prioritized the Sub-Saharan Africa in their strategic papers, and full-fledged relationship in terms of culture, economy, policy, diplomacy, and security. Although the member states in Group 2 do not attach special importance to the region in their official documents, they tend to increase their activities in the field. Austria, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Sweden are the countries in Group 2. The remaining two groups show countries with little or no interest in the sub-Saharan region. Since France and Germany are founding members of the European Union, it would be helpful to take a closer look at their recent situation in the region.

France, which left deep traces on the African continent, sought to maintain its influence in the continent with political, military, commercial, and cultural relations like England after losing its colonies. In this respect, the influence of France, which acted jointly with the USA in Francophone Africa during the Cold War years, can still be felt strongly in the region, thanks to the French media and press activities, as well as the

presence of French companies and soldiers. France, which made 130 military interventions in the African continent between 1945 and 2005, started to have difficulties in maintaining its hegemony in Francophone Africa in the face of the new actors that emerged after the Cold War in parallel with the changes in global politics. Due to this situation, it is noteworthy that the French leaders have sought to put African politics on the new ground by removing it from the colonial context in recent years. As well to the French military presence in African countries, French companies such as Avera, Total, and Elf, which are influential in the energy and oil markets, draw attention to their operations. These companies, which are not limited to the Francophone Africa, invest in strategic mining and energy resources, primarily uranium, oil, and natural gas. The French language, which is widely used in 29 countries, has the status of an official language in 21 African countries. The cultural impact is profound, due to French companies, cultural centers, non-governmental organizations, and around 270,000 citizens of French origin living in African countries and around 2.3 million African-origin immigrants living in France. Macron, who has been on African tours on various occasions since he took office in 2017, frequently visits the Francophone African countries (Orakçı, 2020: 27).

Germany as an actor, who have already lost its colonies during the First World War, adopted a mainly humble stance in its relations with the post-independence Africa. It shows little interest in political influence or direct involvement in security matters. This approach has been adopted to avoid confrontation with other actors in the region, especially with England, France, and the US. Because of its limited strategic interests in the region, most of Germany's activities were driven by development goals. Ethiopia and Tanzania are among the main beneficiaries of official aid, and much of the aid took place within the EU initiatives. Many non-state actors, including anti-apartheid movements, political foundations, and churches, also contributed to building ties between Germany and Africa (Carbone, 2020: 6). The Sahel area is one of Germany's top foreign, security, and development objectives. From humanitarian aid to aiding civilian and military stabilization operations, Germany is deeply committed to the region (Reliefweb, 2021). Angela Merkel, Germany's chancellor, paid 13 official visits to the continent. While economic links were emphasized during her travels to Egypt and South Africa, the topic of limiting migration from Africa to Europe was highlighted during her most recent tour (Hamit, 2021).

The historical background has left a traumatic legacy in the EU-Africa relations and continues to be a phenomenon that shapes the expectations and fears between the parties. In its economic relations with Africa, the European Union's side maintains its paternalistic view with things such as preserving its past privileges and conditionality in aid, while shaping its colonial connections and its related expectations and behaviors. On the African side, the colonial past and the bitter experiences of the liberation period push them to be more cautious in their relations with the EU. It seems that it will take time for the understanding of equal partnership to settle between the parties (Leroy, 2009: 3).

6.2. THE SOFT POWER OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN AFRICA

The power of the European Union in the international arena is based on persuasion and cooperation rather than pressure and coercion. Therefore, the EU is an actor associated with soft power. Its definition as a normative power in the literature is proof of its great soft power capacity. What is meant here is the capacity to inject the EU principles and values into societies and ensure that they are accepted as universal values (Azpíroz, 2015: 6). Although the EU cannot fully use this soft power potential due to the difficulties it has in maintaining its harmony and political-economic discipline, the African continent stands in front of the EU as a great opportunity (Floyd, 2019: 151).

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was established in 2018 under the mediation of the Africa Union. Except for Eritrea, all countries on the continent have signed the treaty, and 34 have ratified it. The African Continental Free Trade Area agreement (AfCFTA) aims to combine 1.3 billion people and a $3.4 trillion economy to create the largest free trade area since the establishment of the World Trade Organization (Afrika'da Yeni best Ticaret düzeni, 2021). With the treaty, common policies on trade, investment, and human mobility in the continent will be established. Africa's integration movement and the interaction of more than 1,500 languages and people from different ethnic groups across the continent will need to be taken into account. For this reason, the continent has lessons to be learned from the European Union, and the large-scale integration movement before it (Floyd, 2019: 151). In addition, the African continent had a hard time finding solutions to its problems after the end of the colonial period, and issues such as the prevention of armed conflicts and sustainable development continued to occupy the continent's agenda. For this reason, the leaders in the continent saw it as a way out to improve their relations with the European Union, including the former colonial
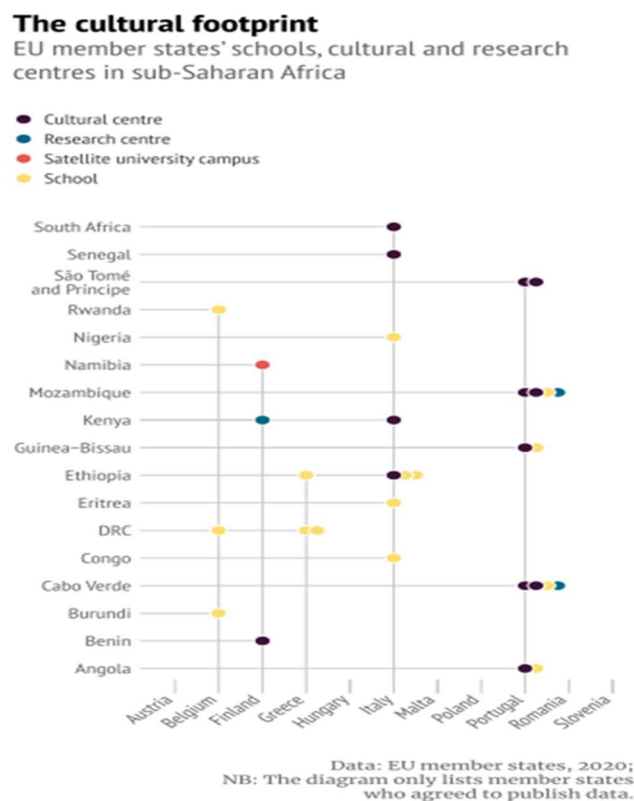
powers, to prevent the further marginalization of Africa in the globalizing world (Arslan, 2015: 109). In addition, countries with a colonial past on the continent, such as France, Germany, and England, still carry the ghost of the colonial period in their relations. Europeans remaining on the African continent continue to influence relations. For this reason, these countries direct the policies of the EU and sometimes follow policies independent of the union in line with their interests (Orakçı, 2020: 22).

6.2.1. Culture

Although economic-based soft power resources are mostly used in the relations of the European Union and its member countries with Africa, the cultural and research centers, schools, and universities of the member countries are effective tools for measuring the soft power in the continent. The existence of cultural centers is mostly compatible with deep historical and linguistic ties. In the graphic below, we can see the cultural assets of the EU member states in the continent (Faleg & Palleschi, 2020)

Figure 4

The cultural footprint of the EU member states

The cultural footprint
EU member states' schools, cultural and research centres in sub-Saharan Africa

- Cultural centre
- Research centre
- Satellite university campus
- School

Data: EU member states, 2020;
NB: The diagram only lists member states
who agreed to publish data.

Note. From "African Strategies: European and Global Approach towards Sub-Saharan Africa.," by G. Faleg & C. Palleschi , 2020, European Union Institute for Security Studies. Chaillot Paper/158. p. 41

For example, during the Cold War, Britain and France adopted similar cultural diplomacy strategies in Africa. These two states have expanded language learning. Cultural centers and programs, libraries, and book donations have demonstrated their cultural heritage and the ideology behind it in the countries where they operate. The British and French carry out almost all their cultural diplomacy activities in their ex-colonies. Until the mid-1970s, only 3 countries, Cameroon, Senegal, and Sudan had both the Alliance French and the British Council (Maack, 2001: 81).

Another source of soft power is the African population migrating to Europe. As stated in the previous sections, the diaspora population carries the education, culture, and values they receive from the host country to their homeland and creates an intercultural fusion. Traditionally, the countries that receive the most immigrants from Africa are France, Germany, Italy, and Portugal. Since the end of the 90s, a significant increase in the African immigrant population has been observed in all the EU member states (Faleg & Palleschi, 2020: 41).

Europe's influence on the continent can also be seen in the field of telecommunications and media. Radio was first established in South Africa in 1924 and in Kenya in 1927. While it was broadcasting only to Europeans at first, it later decided to broadcast to locals, but it was delayed due to the World War II. After this development, publishing in other British territories in Africa increased (Puye, 1998).

The new strategy developed by the European Union for Africa aims to develop cooperation in important areas. One area that is planned to be developed is to increase the digital transformation of the continent (Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa, n.d.).

In the "Analysis of the Perception of the EU and EU Policies Abroad" report published in 2015, it was seen that the South African participants received mostly positive feedback on European culture. Participants gave a positive opinion of the European lifestyle, culinary culture, music, and art (PPMI et all., 2015: 212).

6.2.2. Political Values and Domestic Politics

The normative influence of the EU particularly affects its soft power. What is meant by normative power is to persuade third parties to implement the EU policies or to take their institutions as an example. There is a prevailing view that the EU exports its norms along with its development policies. Therefore, the EU is seen as both developmental and normative power (Chaban et all., 2013: 438). The situation is not different in its relations with the African continent. The Commission of the European Communities published the Green Paper on relations between the European Union and the ACP countries in 1997 (Arslan, 2015: 115). This report stated that principles such as human rights, democracy, and the rule of law are indispensable in the EU-ACP relations (Ercan, 2008: 58).

On top of the above developments, in addition to the economic relations between the EU and Africa, the inclusion of the principle of "conditionality" in the Cotonou Treaty in 1998 added a political dimension to the relations. Accordingly, it was agreed that the focal point of the relations of the two sides should be a democracy, human rights, good governance, market capitalism, and mediation as the first step, and finally exclusion from funds and programs was foreseen for the countries that deviate from these principles (Schmidt, 2012). Although the uncertainty about the definition of good governance frightened African governments, it was stated in the 1999 report that there is no cause for concern if transparency is ensured in the use of resources (Ercan, 2008). In fact, since the EU's most important normative power tool, the membership perspective is not valid for the African countries, the stick (cutting aid) from the carrot-stick mechanism has been useless. For this reason, some incentive programs have been started to be made to countries that are trying to progress with reforms. The EU Governance Initiative allocates additional funding to government reforms. The European Union carries out electoral assistance studies within the scope of democracy promotion. There is less criticism of the EU in this area. The most important reason for this is that it works together with the UNDP and the AU in these studies. In this area, the AU also requests assistance both financially and technically (Schmidt, 2012: 103).

Table 9

Summary of the EU perception in terms of power and leadership

Summary of the EU perception in terms of power and leadership	
Africa	
Degree of recognition	High in Kenya,
	Low in South Africa
Leadership	
Positive	Economy/trade, peacekeeping, conflict mediation and resolution, diplomacy, policy, environment
Negative	Normative and development, Internal divisions, follower of the US
Power	
Most visible dimension	Economic, diplomatic
Somewhat visible dimension	Normative, environmental (in South Africa), Developmental (in Kenya)
Not seen as a power by	%0 Kenya, %20 South Africa

Note. Adapted from "Images of the EU beyond its Borders: Issue-Specific and Regional Perceptions of European Union Power and Leadership," by N. Chaban, O. Elgström, S. Kelly & S.L. Yı, 2013, Journal of Common Market Studies, 51(3), p. 443.

The African Union institutions are very similar to the EU institutions. However, there is still no supranational institution such as the European Commission. Although there is still a clear difference between them, the European Union is an important model for the African continent. The EU is trying to increase its relations with the African Union at every level and develops intercontinental diplomacy. In addition, the African ruling

elites express their sympathy for the EU model and appreciate the contribution of the Union's presence in the continent to maintain peace. There is also general admiration among the Africans for the EU's success in economic integration (Schmidt, 2012: 108). For this reason, the European Union can share its experiences, mistakes and useful practices gained in its integration process with the African Union and especially the AfCFTA. This sharing is also important in terms of strategic dialogue. For example, Africa's share both in world trade and in trade within itself is very low. If the EU undergoes an integration process based on its experiences, the removal of trade barriers in the African continent may lead to the expansion of the market and new commercial opportunities. Leveraging the EU experience could prevent the continent from making costly mistakes (Floyd, 2019: 155).

6.2.3. Foreign Policy

The development of democracy in the relations of the European Union with the sub-Saharan Africa remained on the agenda, but in the 1990s, issues such as conflict management and conflict prevention were added to this priority in the EU-Africa relations (Olsen, 2002: 311). An example of this is the EU's intervention in Operation Artemis in the ethnic conflicts that resulted in the massacre of 4 million people in the DRC in 2003. The EU has funded 300 million Euros for the African Union Peace missions and logistics through the Africa Peace Facility to maintain peace on the African continent. The activities of the EU in the field of peace and security in the continent are seen as legitimate and supported by Africa if mandated by the AU-EU. The EU's military activities in the continent have provided the opportunity to feel responsible for its security due to its geographical proximity and to become a global actor with military capacity as a result of successful operations (Schmidt, 2012: 104). The European Union, in its relations with Africa, prioritizes the needs, challenges, and strategies of the African continent and develops separate collaborations in different policy areas. The understanding of getting rid of the traces of the past and developing long-term programs is trying to settle between the parties. This strategic dialogue should be high-level as well as put into practice and technically supported (Floyd, 2019: 155). In 2020, 'Towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa' was published by the European Commission and VP/HR. Accordingly, supporting renewable energy projects in the African continent; deepening cooperation in this field by concentrating on the regions where the fragility is the weakest in the field of

peace, security, and administration; issues such as adopting more balanced, consistent, and harmonious approaches to migration were determined. It was also added to the strategy that the UN-based the EU-AU should work together following the international rules (Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa, n.d.).

Finally, the EU develops its soft power in the field of foreign policy through personnel exchange programs between the EU-AU institutions. The EU has established the African Union Support Program to strengthen the AU institutions. The program aims to increase the institutional and administrative capacity of the AU and to ensure the effective implementation of JAES. The total budget of the program is 52.8 million EUR, of which 45.15 million EUR is covered by the European Union (African Union Support Programme III, n.d.).

6.2.4. Economy

After the end of the Cold War, interregional cooperation has become an increasingly important tool of the EU foreign policy. The relations of the EU with the ACP countries give us the biggest clue about the quality of these interregional cooperation policies. Historically, the relations between these two regions are based on commercial relations and humanitarian issues. With the Cotonou Agreement, the relations became more symmetrical and evolved into a partnership (Hettne & Söderbaum, 2005: 11). The EU remains the largest donor in Africa. Development collaborations are carried out by the EU with different instruments, but the most basic instrument for the African continent is the European Development Fund, created with the Cotonou Agreement (Kozelj, 2021: 3).

To support the sustainable development of the developing countries and to reduce poverty in the long term, the EU established the European Development Fund, which includes the ACP countries, with the Treaty of Rome in 1957, but on January 1, 2021, it was stated that no new budget would be transferred to this program (Jochheim, 2020: 1).

The European Union appears to be Africa's second-largest ODA donor after the USA in the OECD report published in 2019. The data for 2017 is displayed in the report prepared in the table 6 below:

Table 10

Top Ten ODA Donors

TOP 10 ODA DONORS		
Rank	Country	%
1	United States	18
2	Germany	12
3	EU Institutions	10
4	United Kingdom	7
5	IDA	6
6	Japan	5
7	Turkey	5
8	France	4
9	Global Fund	3
10	United Arab Emirates	2
11	Other donors	28

Note. Adapted from "Development Aid at a Glance Statistic by Region," by OECD, 2019, p. 2 (https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/World-Development-Aid-at-a-Glance-2019.pdf).

Official development assistance (ODA) is defined by the OECD as "government aid that promotes and specifically targets the economic development and welfare of developing countries. The DAC adopted ODA as the 'gold standard of foreign aid in 1969 and it remains the main source of financing for development aid." (Official Development Assistance (ODA), n.d.). The European Development Fund covers all African countries that are party to the Cotonou Agreement, except South Africa. South Africa receives cooperation funds through the EU's Development Cooperation Instrument. 854 million

Euros were transferred to the DCI Pan-African Program for 2014-2020. In addition, the thematic programs under the DCI ('global public goods and challenges' and 'civil society and local authorities') and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, are other financial instruments (Kozelj, 2021: 4).

The European Union has good relations with the African continent in the field of trade and development. In addition to this economic power, diversifying its soft power tools and transferring its experiences in its integration process may bring harmony to global issues in the African continent with the Union. The mental legacy from the past and the distrust of African countries in the former colonial states will change with the increase of these soft power tools (Floyd, 2019: 15).

7. CONCLUSION

One of the places where the narrowing gap between the East-West axis in global politics, which can be seen most clearly, is the African continent. The continent, where we have seen the influence of the former colonial powers intensely until recently, today creates a different atmosphere on the continent with the emergence of different global actors such as China, Russia, and India. This new actors also changed the perception of the continent in a more positive way. The best example of the changing perception of Africa is the cover title of The Economist magazine, which changed 180 degrees from 2000 to 2011.

Figure 5

The Economist Cover Page (2000)

Note: [The Economist Cover Page].

(2000).https://www.economist.com/weeklyedition/2000-05-13

Figure 6

The Economist Cover Page (2011)

Note: [The Economist Cover Page]. (2011).

https://www.economist.com/leaders/2011/12/03/africa-rising

In this part of the study, the concept of soft power will be evaluated by centering Africa . The similarities and differences of the practices of China and the European Union in the African continent and the advantages of this conflict for African countries will be discussed.

Differences

The first and most important factor affecting the soft powers of China and the European Union in the African continent is their historical relations with the continent. While the ghost of the colonial period and the traumatic events in its relations with the European Union cause the sincerity of relations to be questioned, China does not have any colonial past on the continent. It tries to establish common points with the African continent by emphasizing its history as a colony.

Another differences in the soft power relationship with the African continent is that China and Europe have different approaches to the continent. The European Union and the former colonial states within it continue their paternalist approaches from the past (Leroy, 2009: 3). On the other hand, China is trying to maintain its relations with the African continent on a more egalitarian basis. There is no effort to transform the peoples of the continent, such as the "White man's Burden" from the colonial period of the European continent. In China, there are 5 principles that Zhou Enlai put forwards during his visits to African countries in 1964. These principles were "-peace, neutrality and non-alignment -African unity and solidarity -peaceful resolution of disputes -respect for African sovereignty -non-interference" (Zeleza, 2014: 147). Related with this issue, in his article, Steven J. Y. Kuo (2020) claims that the Chinese Peacekeeping operations provide an alternative to the West. While the Western peace model prioritizes democracy and a free-market economy, China draws on traditional political philosophy and the experience of its economic progress. The Chinese model peace has three legs. 1-Respect for sovereignty 2-Political stability and national interest 3-State directed infrastructure economic development.

These two actors have diverse interests in the region. China is driven not just by financial objectives, but also by certain political aspirations as long as they help Beijing

to expand its international influence. The situation is blurrier in the case of the European Union. The EU's interest in the continent might be seen as both generous and greedy. It's also worth noting that even though the EU and the AU have some shared interests, they also differ in some areas. While security and stability issues are the main concerns of the European Union and its member states, the African Union is more concerned with trade and economic growth. It is also worth noting that the EU has been prepared to send soldiers to the ground to ensure peace and security until the UN can take charge. It's also worth noting that China has steadily been more eager to participate in African conflict resolution, particularly by supplying soldiers to the UN missions. This shows that China is gradually conforming to the 'Western' standards and values as a result of the necessity for more international collaboration. (Olsen, 2015).

In foreign aid to the African continent, the European Union provides aid following the principle of "conditionality" by observing the principles of human rights, democracy, and rule of law in the countries to which aid is given. It not only provides aid but also imposes sanctions such as removing countries that do not comply with them from the aid program. China, on the other hand, does not offer any conditions for its aid. Regardless of the form of management, it continues to help.

The European Union and China also differ in the areas of cooperation with the African continent. While China focuses on cooperation and investments on the infrastructure issue, which was ignored during and after the colonial period in the African continent and which is one of the biggest problems of the continent, the European Union focuses on cooperation on issues such as migration and terrorism, which have increased in recent years. The Chinese government participates in prestigious projects, especially with high visibility and costly projects, thus changing the face of the continent. In the figure 9 you can see Chinese aid to the African countries between 2000 and 2013. China has a project in almost all countries of Africa.

Figure 7

*Chinese Aid to African Countries by Sector, 2000-2013*
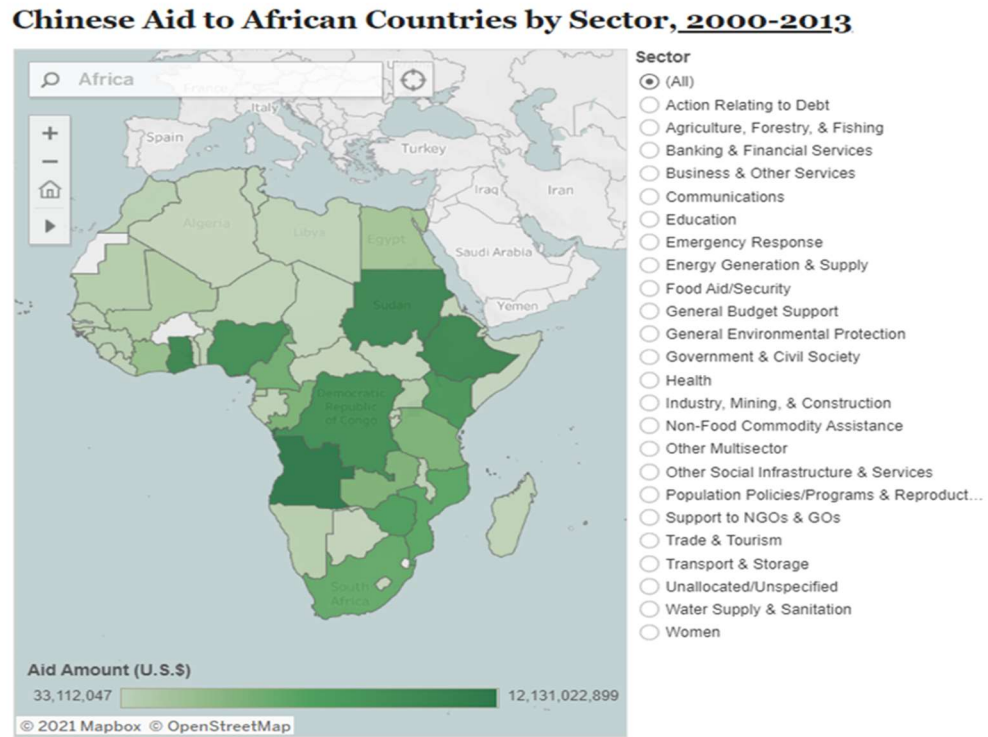
The European Union has focused on Africa in bilateral ODA with USD 7.4 billion (European Union Institutions, 2021). Here in the map below, The European Union's bilateral ODA recipients and their size can be seen. We can conclude that a huge amount of this aid was taken by African countries.

Figure 8

The EU's Biletaral ODA by Recipient Country
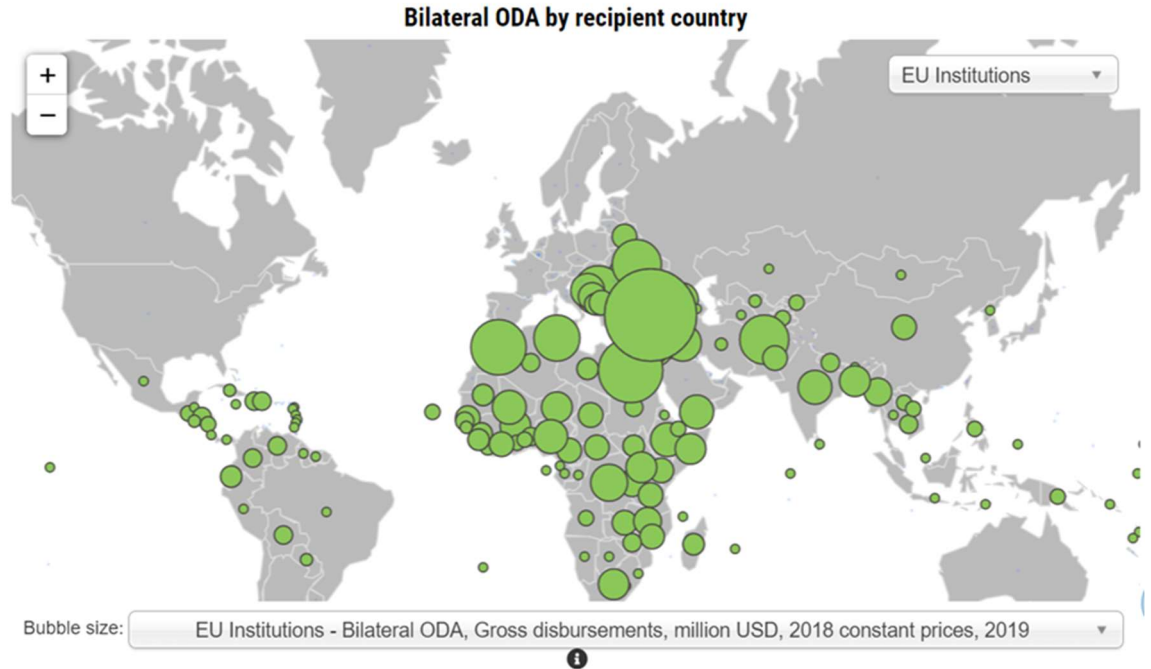
Note: From European Union Institutions, 2021, by OECD (https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/c0ad1f0den/index.html?itemId=/content/component/5e331623en&_csp_=b14d4f60505d057b456dd1730d8fcea3&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=chapter).

In reality, it's difficult to distinguish aid from other economic development tools since Beijing employs a variety of financial mechanisms in concert. Contrary to DAC's standards of transparency, China packages aid and state-subsidized loans into a non-transparent system, (Mohan and Power, 2008) so comparing aid to Africa by the European Union and China presents difficulties because China does not have transparent aid data like the West, but when we apply Western measurement systems to Chinese data we can reach the following conclusion. When we look at the data released by the Chinese side, annual Chinese foreign aid reaches 6 million USD when grants and subsidized loans are included. Considering this data, it can be said that Chinese aid is quite humble compared to Europe. Total aid from the West is around 150 million USD annually. From this point of view, we can say that China is only a medium-sized donor. That's a little more than

Norway, which provides 4 million USD annually. However, it corresponds to half of France's foreign aid budget (Lomøy, 2021).

Both the European Union and China offer different models for the African continent in terms of economic development. The European Union includes developed countries that adopt liberal economic policies in line with western values and presents an economic model called the "Washington Consensus" in the literature. In addition, the European Union inspires economic and political integration initiatives in the African continent with its successful integration process. On the other hand, China offers a completely different economic model, alternatively called the "Beijing Consensus", which shows that economic liberalization can be achieved without political liberalization. It is a source of inspiration for authoritarian regimes, especially on the African continent.

Figure 9

Best Model for Development
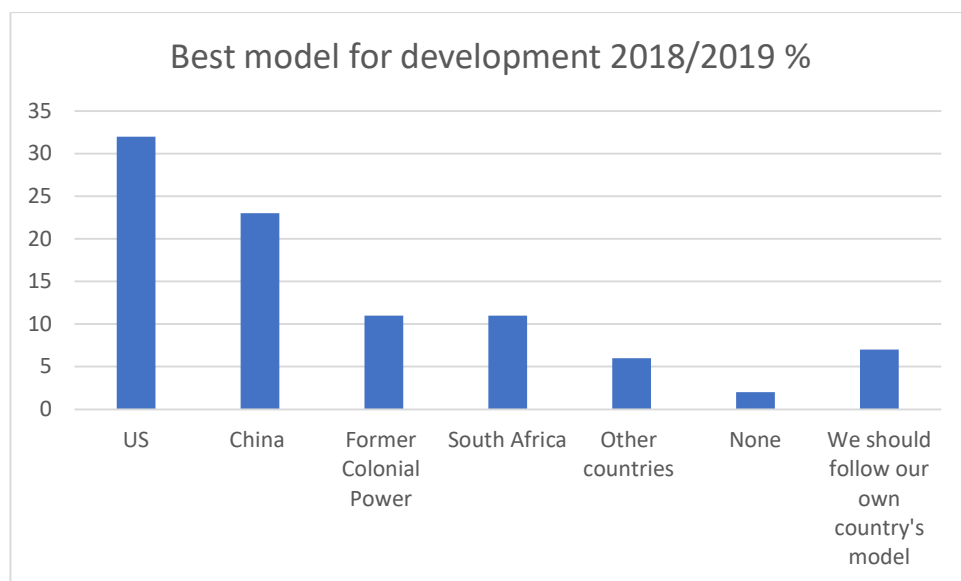
Respondents were asked: In your opinion which of the following countries if any would be the best model for future development of our country or is there some other countries in Africa or elsewhere that should be our model?

Note. Adapted from Africans' perceptions about China: A sneak peek from 18 countries, by E. Selormey, 2020 (https://www.afrobarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/migrated/files/africa-china_relations-3sept20.pdf). Afrobarometer.

When we look at the cultural, as well as the political and economic effects on the African continent, we can say that the influence of the European Union in the cultural field is mostly limited to the activities of the former colonial states in their sphere of influence. For instance, examples such as speaking the language of each former colonial state in their dominant areas, opening cultural centers mostly in their fields of activity can be multiplied, but China has not limited it to any country and region in its cultural, political, and economic activities in the continent.

China has adopted the principle of not interfering in its internal affairs in its relations with other countries. For this reason, it continues on its way with the countries it has relations with, regardless of the type of regime. On the other hand, the European Union both applies the conditionality principle and intervenes in the internal affairs of the states.

Similarities

We see similarities in terms of contacts with the continent. Both actors maintain relations with the continent through high-level meetings. Summits, which are formed with the participation of the heads of state and government of the European Union and the African Union, are held every 3 years. Summits go back and forth between Africa and Europe. At these summits, the roadmap of the relations is determined and the implementations are checked (Institutional Dialogue, n.d.). On the other hand, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), which was launched by China in 2000 between China and 50 African states, prepares the political dialogue between the parties, economic cooperation, and the roadmap to be followed for the coming periods.

In the UN-supported peacekeeping operations, the presence of both sides in the African continent is in question. According to figures, China gives 15.22% of the global peacekeeping budget with $7 billion in 2019. 7 out of 14 UN peacekeeping missions are in Africa (Kuo, 2020). Even though the lack of emphasis on human rights has caused criticism from the West, China shows its own poverty alleviations records and claims that increasing social welfare is more important than the civil and minority rights.Africa is one of the basic regions where the EU carries out peacekeeping operations. Having participated in dozens of operations after its first mission to the DRC in 2003, the EU carries out not only national missions, but also civilian missions such as police training,

anti-piracy, and border surveillance (Tor, 2017: 1). Around 5000 staff has been deployed to CSDP operations across the world and the last mission was in the Central African Republic to support security (EU CSDP missions and operations, TA2020).

China is often assumed to be in Africa primarily for economic motives. China's rapid industrial expansion is strongly connected to the rising demand for raw materials and natural resources. Africa is playing a pivotal role in meeting this demand. Not just oil but other raw materials such as iron ore, copper, cobalt, and platinum are also imported in substantial amounts. The Chinese government is promoting investment in African agriculture and fisheries as food security becomes a rising priority for Beijing. Africa is notably tempting to Chinese businesses as they search for better economic opportunities, but the Chinese government has encouraged a 'going global' policy to make Chinese businesses more competitive in the world economy and to profit from global commercial learning. There is also a political motive to consider: the conventional Chinese attitude to cooperation – emphasizing reciprocal advantages and state-to-state exchanges – provides Beijing enormous leverage over African countries. The overarching goal is to gain new friends. By doing so, Beijing would increase the African bloc inside the UN and create a group of nations that will challenge the US and the West's global supremacy (Olsen, 2015). Similarly, relations between the European Union and Africa mostly based on economic means. The European Union still remains the largest donor of the Africa and historically relations with two region based on commercial relations and humanitarian issues. To some degree, the EU's primary development aid program demonstrates the EU's commitment to economic and social progress. However, the new global situation sets these old goals in a new framework which is the security dimension. One of the key goals of the EU in Africa is to play a larger role on the world stage, relying on the consciousness of being a unique international player. This actorness might be explained due to the European Commission's efforts, which have major responsibility for crucial policy areas including trade and (partially) foreign aid. Simultaneously, the Council secretariat has acquired a great interest in Africa, as seen by its promotion of several ESDP missions. Finally, the individual EU member states play a complicated role in the issue of African policies. Some member states, particularly France, may want to Europeanize their bilateral Africa policy, using the EU as a "tool" to advance their national objectives (Bagoyoko & Gibert, 2009). Despite the strategic purpose of the EU

member states to shift away from donor-recipient ties and toward more comprehensive cooperation, development aid remains a crucial component in the Sub-Saharan Africa. Germany and France were among the top ten EU member states in terms of ODA, and the EU place second after the US in 2019. (OECD, n.d.).

African Perceptions about China and The European Union

To evaluate the soft power of the actors in the African continent, there are some figures from different studies.

Figure 10

Repondents according to most positive and most negative to the EU/ China

| Country	"does nothing, no help"			"helps a lot"		
	EU	China	Difference	EU	China	Difference
Uganda	9.8	28.3	- 18.5	32.8	10.3	+ 22.5
Kenya	12.7	17.4	- 4.7	39.8	23.6	+ 16.2
Tanzania	7.4	13.6	- 6.2	34.1	22.4	+ 11.7
Malawi	14	13.4	+ 0.6	62.3	52.4	+ 9.9
Madagascar	1.4	3.9	- 2.5	27.6	18.2	+ 9.4
Namibia	10.3	12.9	- 2.6	31.7	26.3	+ 5.4
South Africa	35.3	28.9	+ 6.4	18	14.3	+ 3.7
Nigeria	15.7	14.4	+ 1.3	21.3	20.2	+ 1.1
Lesotho	11.4	14.3	- 2.9	73.4	72.8	+ 0.6
Zimbabwe	18.9	18.1	+ 0.8	28.9	28.4	+ 0.5
Liberia	4.9	4.7	+ 0.2	54.5	54.1	+ 0.4
Mozambique	10.3	9.9	+ 0.4	47.3	47.3	0.0
Cape Verde	0.8	0.6	+ 0.2	31.1	34.1	-3
Zambia	10.8	8.1	+ 2.7	45.4	49.8	- 4.4
Botswana	4.4	4.4	0.0	49.1	54.4	- 5.3
Burkina Faso	4.4	3.5	+ 0.9	56.7	62.7	-6
Senegal	15.4	11.1	+ 4.3	40	49.4	- 9.4
Benin	8.1	5	+ 3.1	36.2	46	- 9.8
Mali	8.9	7	+ 1.9	37.6	57.3	- 19.7
Average	11.3	12.5	- 1.2	37.8	36.8	+ 1.0

Note. From *Public Opinion Indicates The EU Is Not Seen As A Better Development Partner Than China In Most African Countries*, by F. Keuleers, 2015.

(https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/files/2015/04/floortable2.png). BlogLSE.

Here in the above figure, respondents from the African continent prove that there is no great difference between the image of China and the European Union in the African continent. There is a slight difference between the negative perceptions and positive perceptions of the two actors.

Figure 11

Perceptions of China
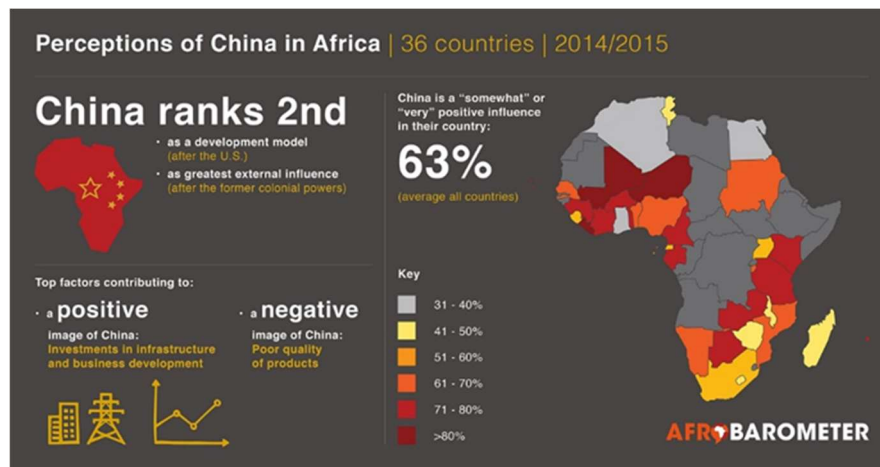
Note. From *World Development Information Day: China's growing presence in Africa wins positive popular reviews (Afrobarometer findings),* by Afrobarometer, 2016

(https://afrobarometer.org/press/world-development-information-day-chinas-growing-presence-africa-wins-positive-popular-reviews).

The above info graphic shows a summary of Chinese effectiveness in the African continent in 2014-2015. According to this, China's overall image in the African continent is increasing. Chinese left a good impression with its infrastructure projects.

In addition to the former colonial powers in the African continent, the increase in the activities of actors such as China has brought advantages such as faster growth than the average in the economies of the continental countries, development of infrastructure, and increased job opportunities. With the breaking of the monopoly of the Western institutions, the alternatives for African states in terms of investment and borrowing have also increased, and this situation has also strengthened Africa's bargaining ability to get what it wants. For African leaders, this power struggle occupies a very important place. Since these new investments are within their period, they are written to the plus digit in their own countries.

However, the African continent has seen many invasions in its history. The rise and increasing effectiveness of China on the continent brings to mind the question of whether these actors have neo-colonial ambitions as a result of the former colonial

powers' policies under the roof of the European Union and individual Africa-oriented policies. The biggest soft power resources of these actors in the African continent, which constitute the subject of our thesis, come from the economy.

China's inclusion of Africa in the One Belt and One Road project is considered important by the African leaders in terms of realizing the potential of the continent.

As a result of China's developing relations with African countries, which are conceptualized as "debt-trap", the debt burden of countries such as Angola, Ethiopia, Sudan, and Kenya has increased. The claim that China has implemented a strategy of obtaining various concessions from these countries by trapping them in debt still poses a question mark in mind (Orakçı, 2018: 31).

Another argument that supports the suspicion of China's activities in the continent is the claim that China does not create employment in the continent, and that it brings Chinese labor for its investments in the African continent. In addition, the poor quality of Chinese goods creates the idea that China sees the African continent as the consumption area of its commodities that are not accepted elsewhere in the world. Of course, cheap goods entering the continent also cause local producers to be unable to compete and the market to collapse. It is claimed that by ignoring good governance, China has ecological dangers in its investments, and the Chinese and African elites are involved in corruption to cover these environmental damages. In addition to these, China continues South-South cooperation by preventing the decisions of the UNSC that will be against the African continent. For example, while continuing to support Zimbabwe economically, it also prevented the UNSC's decision to stop arms sales to Zimbabwe. In addition, China has opened the Confucius Institutes across the continent to increase its soft power in the cultural field and has tried to develop the perception of China and Chinese with the peoples of the continent with various TV and radio channels, but there is still limited integration between the Chinese population and the natives in the continent. There are claims that there are economically closed areas which are dominated by Chinese and socio-economically differentiated (Arslan, 2018: 135).

Considering how the EU and European former colonial powers are perceived by Africans and the effect of soft power policies, it can be said that relations between the parties are carried out with mixed feelings. The EU is seen as the "normative power"

focusing on peace and security throughout the African continent, it is an actor that prioritizes values such as democratic principles, the rule of law, and human rights in its relations with the continent. Under the conditionality principle of international aid, it can be understood by Africa that it is given by looking at compliance with these values. The more Africa understands the EU's role in values, the more it is criticized in the field of trade and economic policies. In these areas, the EU is considered to be protectionist and paternalist. It has been criticized for not being accessible in its relations with the continent and not considering African interests (Schmidt, 2012: 104).

In the new strategy that was tried to be developed after the Cotonou Treaty, it is seen that the relations between the parties should be on a more egalitarian basis, and the concept of "partner" is used in the discourses.

With the end of the Cold War, it has shifted from the policies of promoting economic and social development, which has been declining, to discourses on the security and peace of the African continent. In the 21st century, the distinction between north and south has become blurred in the increasingly integrated world order, and it has been understood that the north must continue to develop in the south to continue its prosperity.

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