



RESPONSIBLE POWER AND CHINA'S INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE IN SOUTH SUDAN

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Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki gagasan tentang Tiongkok sebagai sebuah kekuatan yang bertanggung jawab dalam politik internasional. Peranan pemerintah Tiongkok dan pasukan perdamaian Tiongkok dalam membangun perdamaian di Sudan Selatan dianalisis dengan menggunakan konsep bantuan internasional dalam spektrum Responsible Power untuk memahami kebijakan dan praktik luar negeri Tiongkok. Berangkat dari konsep bantuan luar negeri dari pemikiran Hubungan Internasional Tiongkok dan Hubungan Internasional Barat, argumen dibangun bahwa para aktor luar negeri Tiongkok memiliki respons yang tidak seragam dalam menghadapi perubahan situasi di Sudan Selatan. Tindakan pemerintah Tiongkok menjadi lebih pragmatis dan fleksibel di negara tersebut. Sementara itu, pasukan perdamaian Tiongkok tetap menjalankan praktik sesuai prinsip non-intervensinya. Kontribusi dari artikel ini adalah memberikan pendekatan alternatif dalam memahami Tiongkok sebagai suatu kekuatan yang bertanggung jawab.

Kata Kunci: *bantuan internasional, responsible power, Sudan Selatan, Tiongkok*

Abstract

This article aims to investigate the idea of China as a responsible power in international politics. The role of the Chinese government and the Chinese peacekeeping force in building peace in South Sudan is analyzed using the concept of international assistance in the Responsible Power spectrum to understand China's foreign policy and practice. Departing from the concept of foreign aid from the thinking of China's International Relations and Western International Relations, the argument is built that Chinese foreign actors have a non-uniform response to the changing situation in South Sudan. The Chinese government's actions are becoming more pragmatic and flexible in the country. Meanwhile, the Chinese peacekeeping force continued to practice according to its non-intervention principle. The contribution of this article is to provide an alternative approach to understanding China as a responsible power.

Keywords: China, international assistance, responsible power, South Sudan

Introduction

The mainstream International Relations (IRs) theories have discussed the notion of responsibility. The English School of International Relations theory argues that states have rights and responsibilities due to their membership in international society. It explains that there are two principles of responsibility, equality, and differentiation. The principle of equality stresses that all states enjoy the same responsibilities in international order. Meanwhile, the principle of differentiation articulates that responsibility falls on the shoulder of the strongest parties (Bukovansky et al., 2012: 6). The Structural Realism also discusses about power and responsibilities. It acknowledges the hierarchy in the international realm, and there are inequalities of power capabilities of states. Waltz, in his book, outlined that the distribution of material capabilities determines a state's international responsibilities, 'those of greatest capability takes on special responsibilities' (Waltz, 1979: 198). Nowadays, there are concern over the behavior of the rising great powers in the current international order and how they exercise their special responsibilities in the dynamics of global politics.

China's rise is one of the significant events in contemporary international politics. As one of the prominent powers in the international structure, the internal and external dynamics of China affect others. Thus, the international community regards the foreign policy of the People's Republic of China (PRC). As one of the rising powers, PRC is expected to contribute much more than others. However, some have criticized China for being irresponsible due to the different beliefs of China with Western power, and China is dissatisfied with the status quo. Therefore, it may complicate international politics (Patrick, 2010). Meanwhile, others argue that China acts more responsible in international affairs, as proved by its contribution to international public goods (Gill, 2007). Indeed, there have been growing talks about China's responsibilities as a rising great power.

There are two gaps in the existing literature about 'Responsible Power.' First, despite the concept of 'Responsible Power' has widely discussed, it remains underexplored in International Relations theories (Chen, 2009; Loke, 2016). Second, the ideology is a primary source of the dichotomy between the Chinese and the Western concept of 'Responsible Power'. The ideology of the PRC and the West have a role in constructing their foreign policy. Therefore, the Western aspiration does not stand on the Chinese idea of responsible power (Hachigian & Peng, 2010: 82).

During the Bush administration, one of the notorious messages regarding a call on China to act as a 'responsible stakeholder' was Robert Zoellick, US Deputy Secretary of State. The speech encouraged China to join other great powers in carrying more responsibilities in responding to global issues such as poverty, humanitarian crisis, and terrorism (Zoellick, 2005). Also, as a responsible stakeholder, China needs to cooperate with the West to sustain 'liberal' international rules and institutions.

Besides policymakers, scholars have discussed the concept of responsible power regarding the Western perspective. Gill (2007) explains that China needs to converge its foreign policy with the current international system. Also, he suggests that China cooperate in the delivery of global public goods. Gill points some areas where China needs to act according to the Western expectation of a responsible power. Those are arms control, global climate change, international assistance to least developed and developing countries, contribution towards UN missions, and the international trading system (Gill, 2007). Etzioni (2011) investigates China's position as a 'responsible stakeholder' by applying a sociological approach. The article suggests that China makes more generous and substantial contributions to least developed and developing countries amid crisis (Etzioni, 2011:548). Also, China needs to abide by international institutions and laws (Etzioni, 2011:549). Changes in China's conduct will gradually increase its portrait of a responsible power.

In summary, these studies demonstrate the Western criteria of China to behave as a responsible power. These criteria are (1) to engage and contribute to international institutions (Etzioni, 2011; Gill, 2007) and (2) to assist the developing world in solving their problems (Gill, 2007; Zoellick, 2005).

An extensive body of academic literature in China as a Responsible Power has also been discussed by Chinese scholars. There are two dimensions of China's responsibility, national responsibility, and international responsibility (Boon, 2018: 18; Xia, 2001: 70). In terms of China's international responsibility, Xia Liping suggests that China must take responsibility in the global system to benefit its country and international peace, stability, development, and prosperity. Also, China should take genuine action to demonstrate its international responsibility and formulate global systems and rules (Xia, 2001: 70). Another Chinese specialist that examines a Chinese concept of responsible power is Susan Shirk. She explains that China's recipe to be a responsible power includes

cultivating friendly relations with other countries, fostering friendship trade agreements, and providing foreign assistance (Shirk, 2007: 131).

Breslin (2009) explained that for China, a Responsible Power means that China is not threatening other's interests, not confronting the existing international order, and providing the opportunity to advance regional and world economic prosperity. Furthermore, as a Responsible Power, China respects others' sovereignty and does not inflict its values and policies on other countries (Breslin, 2009). Another scholar, Yeophantong, examines the political thought of China's international responsibility. She suggests China's global responsibility is to maintain international order through joint development. To actualize its international responsibility, China constructs a 'harmonious world' through international cooperation. In recent years, China has increasingly emphasized cooperation and assistance with international society (Yeophantong, 2013). A Similar argument from Honghua Men (2020: 187) explains that China's responsibilities are to maintain peace and development and foster international cooperation. Moreover, Men (2020) explains that promoting peaceful reformation and "Chinese Wisdom" in global governance are China's international responsibilities. Besides upholding global peace and development, China acts as an active player in the international community and pays equal attention to the problem in developed and developing countries. China also will carry out its international cooperation that benefits all. In short, the criteria of responsible power based on the Chinese perspective are (1) to act as a constructive player in global governance, (2) to promote international cooperation as an approach to address global challenges (Men, 2020; Shirk, 2007; Xia, 2001; Yeophantong, 2013) and, (3) to engage with other countries proactively (Breslin, 2009; Men, 2020; Shirk, 2007; Xia, 2001).

In the literature, the author finds that both the West and China have an identical understanding that the task of responsible great powers is to participate in and contribute to international cooperation in a context to resolve global problems that occur in both developed and developing countries. Therefore, this paper offers a responsible power theme based on Western and Chinese perspectives. This theme is international assistance. This article aims to assess China as a Responsible Power. Therefore, it will use the international assistance theme as a focal point of analysis.

This research aims to discuss China's responsible power in international politics by focusing on China's foreign policy practices in a conflict-affected state, particularly China's role in South Sudan. It is interesting to take a closer examination of China's behaviors in South Sudan, a newly independent country that once was part of Sudan. It examines China's practices of its international assistance in South Sudan between 2011 and 2016. Since South Sudan gained its independence from Sudan, China has been taking a role in peace, stability, and development. China has been an important player in assisting South Sudan to build its nation and meet the needs of South Sudanese in economic and social needs (Interview, Beijing, 9 March 2017). Therefore, South Sudan was chosen as a case study to unpack a broader dynamic of China's notion as a Responsible Power.

The foreign policy and practices of the PRC do not reflect the assumption of a monolithic 'Chinese position' (Butler & Wheeler, 2012: 7-9). Instead, it involves multiple actors beyond the central state elite, including multiple government agencies and the Chinese business. Therefore, to accurately capture China's praxis on international assistance in South Sudan, this paper focuses on plural actors of China in South Sudan. In the governmental agency, there are two major actors: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Ministry of Commerce (Mofcom). While personnel from the department of foreign affairs takes official responsibility to carry out China's diplomatic relations, Mofcom holds the role to manage economic relations, draft aid policies, and distribute development assistance (Butler & Wheeler, 2012: 9; Zhang & Smith, 2017: 4). In the UN peacekeeping operation, the Chinese military under the Ministry of National Defense (MOD) takes an important role in coordination with Mofcom and MFA (Sun, 2014).

Analytical Framework: International Assistance and Responsible Power Spectrum

This paper proposes an analytical framework, which is the international assistance theme of the Responsible Power concept. This section will sketch the broad outline of this theme from China and the Western perspective. By doing so, it will help one to explore in-depth how China practices its international responsibility.

China and the West have different approaches regarding their international assistance. The White Paper of China's Foreign Aid 2011 specifies concessional loans, grants, and interest-free loans as the financial resources of PRC's international assistance (Information Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, 2014). Zhao

Lei (2012) explains that international assistance, such as aid in goods, finances, human and technical assistance, is one of China's means to support a peaceful international environment through strengthening the social and economic development of least developed and developing countries. Moreover, in their paper, Morgan and Zheng (2019) explain that China's contemporary assistance is different from conventional western donors because China's official development assistance links to commercial-oriented capital. There is an intertwining of commercial activities when the government of PRC provides aid to the beneficiary country. Further, China's peacekeeping mission is also counted as one of China's international assistance programs, as stated by Yang Jiechi, Director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Communist Party of China Central Committee (Regilme, & Hodzi, 2021: 122-123). While China calculates military aid as an integral part of its foreign assistance, traditional donors exclude it.

For China, the conceptualization of international assistance is state-driven. The aid recipient is not focused on non-governmental organizations or civil society, but mainly through the state. Besides, China's international assistance programs aim to support multilateralism via African Union and the United Nations. Meanwhile, the western donor distributes assistance through state, private companies, nonprofits, non-governmental entities, and inter-governmental bodies such as the United Nations. It does not exclusively recognize the state as the sole beneficiary of international assistance. The West emphasizes the multi-stakeholder approach (Regilme & Hodzi, 2021: 120). Indeed, China's approach to international assistance needs complex understanding and differs from the Western approach.

China's official document on Foreign Aid 2011 stated that 'non-interference' is the main principle of China's aid allocation (Information Office of the State Council the People's Republic of China, 2011). As argued by Banik (2013), China's aid model emphasizes the principle of non-interference, mutual interests, and no-political strings attached. Meanwhile, Western donors have track records on promoting development and applying the conditionality of aid. By using foreign assistance, the West also advocates universal adoption of democratic forms of government, liberal economic systems, and protection of human rights in developing and least-developed regions (Kim et al., 2009: 56; Li et al., 2014: 28)

Incompatible praxis between China and the West in international assistance themes occur from their distinct understanding of sovereignty. Some scholars distinguish the Chinese understanding of sovereignty as 'Eastphalian' sovereignty (Coleman & Maogoto, 2013). The distinct principle of China and the West on sovereignty has influenced how both sides behave towards their foreign assistance.

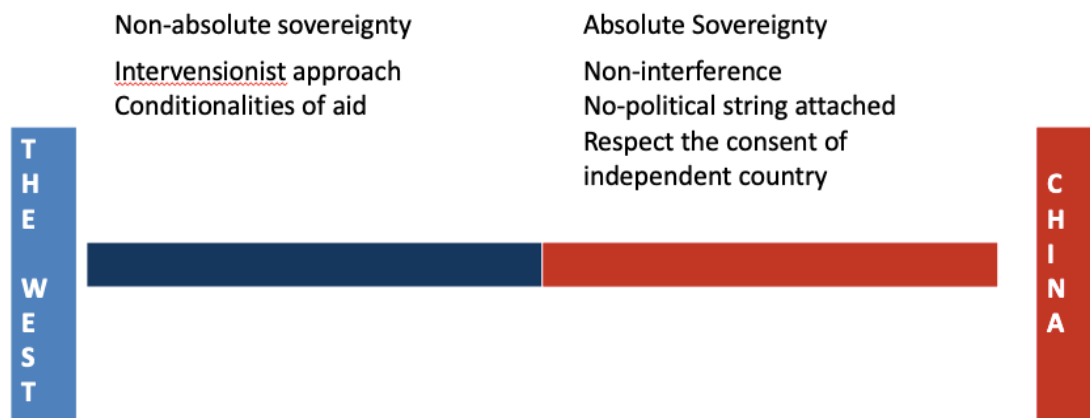
The root of China's understanding of sovereignty is founded in the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence: mutual respect of each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity; mutual non-interference in domestic affairs; mutual non-aggression; mutual equality and benefit; and peaceful co-existence. The set of principles has guided China's aid policy. China's claim of sovereignty adheres to the absolute supremacy of a state. The government has absolute jurisdiction over the territory and individuals who reside within the territory. Based on mutual respect of sovereignty, a state should not enforce its political system or ideology to another state (Zhang, 2016: 450). China is willing to offer other states foreign aid without political liberalization or human rights (Kim et al., 2009). Thus, the characteristic of PRC's international assistance is no political strings attached (Chu, 2002). As China is offering unconditional aid, many countries, including African, prefers China's uncritical friendship (Shirk, 2007: 153)

Also, China perceives an act of international intervention in response to a humanitarian crisis without the government's consent as illegitimate and violates the principle of Westphalian sovereignty. For China, the principle of non-intervention is an approach to maintain peace and stability in international affairs (Coleman & Maogoto, 2013: 32-33). Indeed, China's concept of sovereignty is on a traditional side. Thus, China's international assistance is according to the principle of the consent of the recipient state, non-interference, and no political string attached.

The West perceives that sovereignty is non-absolute and only restrained by natural law and the rule of God (Coleman & Maogoto, 2013: 245). There is a certain degree of political induction from the western donors for human rights protection or democracy promotion. When the government is incompetent or unwilling to protect citizens from the adversity of war, then in some cases, the West takes an interventionist approach. While providing foreign assistance towards the recipient state, Western donors also have an agenda to promote democracy and establish good governance (Coleman & Maogoto, 2013). It indicates that the West is applying conditionalities in its foreign aid. David

Williams (2003) explained that the practice of conditionality when assisting recipient countries is an indication of intervention, and it has threatened the sovereignty of the recipient. The Western donor has required certain economic, political, and human rights conditions upon giving foreign assistance to least developed and developing countries (Kim et al., 2009; Morgenthau, 1962).

Figure 1 - Responsible Power Spectrum of International Assistance



Source: Illustrated by authors

The international assistance theme of Responsible Power is an analytical framework of this research. Inside the international assistance theme, China and the Western spectrum are on each end of the Responsible Power. It is a set of alternative tools to investigate the practice of China's actors in South Sudan.

Research Method: Discourse Analysis

This article employs discourse analysis as its methodology. Abdelal et al. (2006: 702) describe discourse analysis as a qualitative approach that investigates actors' statements and deeds to explain a particular circumstance. Through using discourse analysis, this research interprets texts and practices of China's activities in South Sudan from 2011 to 2016. The primary sources of this paper are from the Chinese official documents and the United Nations document. Also, the data was gathered via discussions and interviews with scholars who focused on China-Africa relations and a South Sudanese diplomat. The secondary sources include academic literature, news reports from China, Africa, Western sources, and NGOs' report.

China's Foreign Policy Actors and International Assistance theme: The Practices of Chinese Government in South Sudan

To assess the notion of China as a Responsible Power, a fundamental question is posed. It is, how does China practice its international assistance in South Sudan regarding its claim as a Responsible Power? This article proposes an international assistance theme as an alternative approach to understand the notion of 'China as a Responsible Power.' It consists of two different ends, China's perspective, and the Western perspective of international assistance.

This paper evaluates two of China's foreign policy actors in South Sudan, the Chinese government, and the Chinese peacekeepers. The result indicates that the Chinese government has switched its practices and aligned with the Western approach. When the Chinese government provides developmental assistance to South Sudan, it applies stability and security conditionalities. Previously, Western donors have applied this practice, conditionalities of aids (Dandashly, 2018). Meanwhile, this research finds that the Chinese peacekeepers have not shifted their approach, despite the changing situation in South Sudan. The principle of non-interference remains to adhere.

There are two segments in this discussion section. First, it assesses the practices of the Chinese government in the international assistances theme of Responsible Power. Second, it analyzes the practices of Chinese peacekeepers in South Sudan concerning the international assistance's theme of Responsible Power.

This section is about the Chinese government activities in South Sudan in the international assistance theme of Responsible Power. It finds that the practices of the Chinese government in the international assistance theme have shifted due to South Sudan's circumstances. Since South Sudan enjoyed its freedom between 2011 until the end of 2013, China's non-interference policy underlies China's assistance to South Sudan, which puts non-interference, no political strings attached, and respect for sovereignty. However, after the outbreak of internal war in South Sudan, a shift was indicated in the development assistance of the Chinese government to South Sudan. The result suggests that the changing reality in South Sudan has triggered the Chinese government to apply stability and security conditionality.

As the newest independent state globally, China saw opportunities in South Sudan for infrastructure and the oil source. Also, it prioritized its assistance in promoting

economic and social development in South Sudan. Those assistances have aimed to develop friendly relations with South Sudan and safeguard resources access (Butler & Wheeler, 2012). The practices of the Chinese government's developmental assistance in South Sudan before the outbreak of conflict in 2013 were based on the idea of respect for state sovereignty, no political strings attached, and compliance with the consent of independent South Sudan.

China is well-known for its no political strings attached as a mechanism in its foreign assistance, in contrast to the Western aid regime imposing the condition for aid and demanding the government accountability (Watkins, 2016:2). The Beijing Declaration of the Forum on China-Africa 2000 mentioned the rejection of conditionalities regarding economic assistance (Ministry of Foreign Affairs the PRC, 2000). Before the outbreak of conflict in South Sudan, the Chinese government applied that principle. The Chinese government gave economic and developmental assistance to South Sudan, and it did not impose conditionality on South Sudan's government. The table below provides a list of China's assistances to South Sudan during 2011-2013.

Table 1 - Announcement of China's Assistances to South Sudan: 2011-2013¹

Date	Type of Assistances	Amount	Detail
October 2011	Grant	US\$ 31.5 million	Assistances for agriculture, education, health and water supply
October 2011	Grant	Unknown	Donation for media development, particularly for radio station
November 2011	Grant	Unknown	Providing anti-malaria medicines
August 2012	Loan	US\$ 1.2 billion	Infrastructure projects
August 2012	Loan	US\$ 300 million	Financial assistance for the project of power line from Ethiopia to the Eastern part of the Nile (covering Upper Nile, Jonglei, and Central Equatoria)
March 2013	Capacity Building		Diplomacy training workshop
June 2013	Humanitarian Assistance	Estimated 200.000	US\$ Providing humanitarian relief items
July 2013	Loan	US\$ 27 million	Financial assistance for infrastructure project, which is the construction of a 5-megawatt hydro dam on <u>Kinoti</u> River.
September 2013	Loan	Between US\$1 billion and US\$2 billion	Infrastructure projects, the mining industry, and agricultural projects
September 2013	Loan	US\$ 43 million	Mining sector
September 2013	Grant and Capacity Building	Estimated US\$500.000	at Providing anti malaria medicine and training for medical personnel for <u>Rumbek</u> Hospital.
2013	Grant	US\$ 50.000	Humanitarian flood relief.

Sources: Author, compiled from Xinhua, Chinese Embassy to South Sudan, and ChinaAidData.org.

The table above explains that during 2011-2013, China's international assistance in South Sudan was dominated by grants and loans that had a purpose for the nation's

¹ Although the PRC has begun to be transparent on its international assistance, Beijing does not detail its aid to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Therefore, the sources of information were from media reports and publications by the website of China's Embassy in South Sudan.

economic and social development. The Chinese government has provided more grant aid to South Sudan than most other African countries (Saferworld, 2013). Although it received a considerable number of grants, South Sudan also received loans from the Chinese government. The foreign assistance from the Chinese government also included concessional loans. It financed several infrastructure projects in South Sudan. China Export-Import Bank (Exim Bank) provides loans. Loans from Exim Bank are conditional on the guarantee of repayment, which is based on assets or future revenue. In South Sudan, loans may be repaid from future oil revenues (Saferworld, 2013). The occurrence of internal war in South Sudan has changed the practices of the Chinese government in its international assistance. The situation in South Sudan is forcing China to be more flexible in practicing non-interference, and it applies strings attached in its foreign assistance.

The Chinese government practices non-interference more flexibly. It engages in South Sudan's political situation through a multilateral approach. It assists South Sudan to reach peace and a security solution by participating in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). China's diplomats pressured Salva Kiir, the president of South Sudan, and the rebel leader/former vice-president of South Sudan, Riek Machar, to agree on a ceasefire in 2015 under the IGAD's mechanism. Besides, the Chinese government is also involved in monitoring ceasefire arrangements, which is one of the products of the IGAD-led peace process and the maintenance of political pressure on all conflicting parties in South Sudan (Verhoeven, 2014). China has exercised the flexible practices of the non-interference principle through a multilateral approach. The Chinese government also did not hesitate to use its leverage to influence the South Sudanese government for humanitarian purposes. The ambassador of China to South Sudan, Ma Qiang, has convinced the South Sudanese government to give the UN permission to relocate the civilian camp in Juba because the wet season would bring flood in the camp. Initially, the government of South Sudan opposed this proposal to relocate and intended to flatten the camp, where the Nuer people had sought shelter. In the end, the government of South Sudan changed its position after it had talks with the Chinese ambassador to South Sudan and the Chinese oil company agreed to contribute almost \$2 million to set up a new camp (Jorgic, 2014).

No political strings attached is one of China's aid characters. It is contrasted with the Western characteristic of foreign aid, which often comes with conditionality, such as democratic reforms, especially good governance, and human rights (Matthews, et al., 2016). However, in the context of South Sudan, it is shown that China adopts a form of conditionality (Wheeler, 2012). Dreher et al. (2018) suggest that the political system of the recipient country is not China's concern. However, in South Sudan's case, the Chinese government pays more attention to the domestic politics of South Sudan. This research suggests that a prerequisite for Chinese future development assistance is a peace commitment by South Sudan's leadership. Without a commitment from South Sudan's government, China is less generous in providing development assistance to South Sudan. As Large (2016) reported that internal conflict in December 2013 had obstructed a process of loan negotiations between China and South Sudan. Also, China delayed signing an airport construction contract in South Sudan.

The Chinese MOFA and Mofcom are leading actors in managing China's foreign assistance. However, those actors have conflicting priorities for the PRC foreign aid policy. As Gill & Reilly (2007) suggest the MOFA perceives China's aid program as a diplomatic means to boost China's bilateral relations. Meanwhile, the Mofcom put the economic benefits of China in a first place when executing aid projects. Further, Corkin (2011) suggests that the Chinese Mofcom plays a critical role in managing concessional loans. While the Mofcom coordinates the loan, the MOFA acts as a facilitator in the political process.

While the armed conflict continues deteriorating security and stability, the government of China has become more cautious about extending loan packages to South Sudan (Large, 2016; Yugu, 2016). Therefore, Barber & Yuhua (2012) suggest that the deal of development projects between China and South Sudan will depend on the internal security situation. As the Chinese ambassador to South Sudan, Ma Qiang expressed the promise of the Chinese government to resume its infrastructure projects, investment, and humanitarian aid when peace and stability have been restored (Embassy of the People's Republic of China in South Sudan, 2015). This statement indicates that the Mofcom might be increasingly cautious about allocating loans to South Sudan. It shows that the Chinese government applies security conditionality for its development assistance in South Sudan.

Table 2 - Announcement of China's Assistances to South Sudan, 2014-2016

Date	Type of Assistance	Amount	Detail
February 2014	Economic grant and Humanitarian assistance	US\$ 24 million	Agro-infrastructure project, cash assistance, humanitarian aid.
March 2014	Humanitarian Assistance	US\$ 1.6 million	Construction of shelter for IDPs.
April 2014	Humanitarian Assistance	50 million RMB	Emergency response.
August 2014	Grant	400.000 RMB	Providing medicine and medical equipment.
September 2014	Grant	150 million RMB	Aid for economic and technical cooperation.
June 2015	Grant	US\$ 33 million	Modernizing Juba teaching hospital and upgrading Kiir Mayardit Hospital.
July 2015	Humanitarian assistance	50 million RMB	Emergency humanitarian aid.
October 2015	Humanitarian assistance	US\$ 300.000	Anti-cholera aid.
November 2015	Humanitarian assistance	US\$ 5 million	Providing food for South Sudanese people. The World Food Program received the fund.
March 2016	Medical team		Dispatching China's medical team to Juba.
April 2016	Grant	Cash US\$550.000 and office equipment worth US\$150.000	Donation to support peace process in South Sudan.
April 2016	Humanitarian assistance		1,700 tonnes of rice.
May 2016	Humanitarian assistance	US\$ 2 million	Humanitarian assistance for IDPs. The aids include 2,050 tents, 8,000 mosquito nets, 16,000 blankets, and two sports utility vehicles (SUVs)
May 2016	Grant	US\$ 3 million	24 container of medical supplies for Boma medical team.
August 2016	Humanitarian assistance	US\$ 10 million	Humanitarian aid
October 2016	Grant	5 million RMB	Anti-malaria medicine.

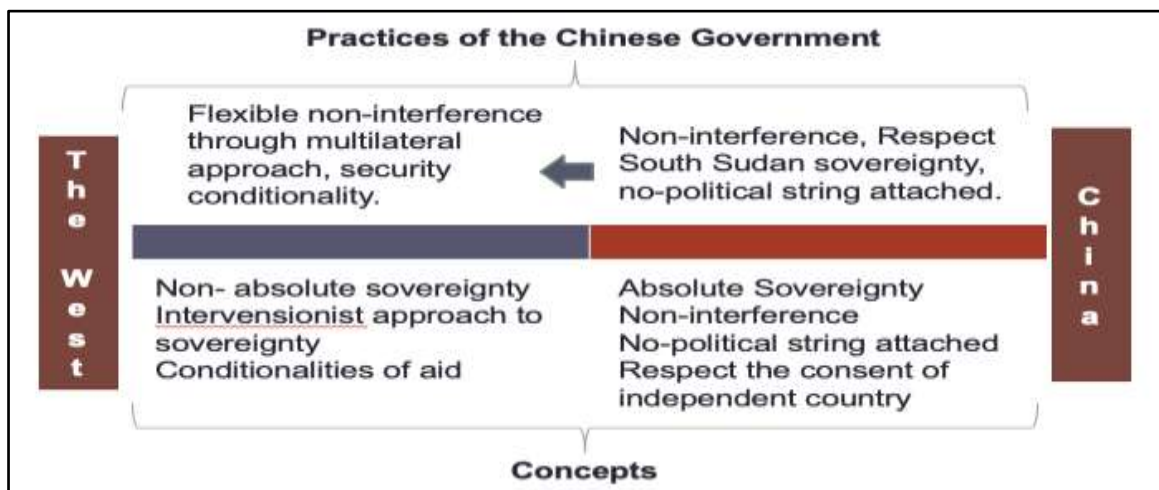
Sources: Author, compiled from Xinhua, Chinese Embassy to South Sudan, and ChinaAidData.org.

This table provides a picture that international assistance from the Chinese government reflects its response to instability in South Sudan. Since the civil war began, the humanitarian situation in South Sudan has been deteriorating. The implication of instability in South Sudan for Chinese development projects is that there has been a decline in Chinese assistance for economic development. Even though China is less generous about providing more development assistance to South Sudan, the Chinese government is increasingly providing short-term assistance to South Sudan through humanitarian aid. Indeed, to respond to the new situation in South Sudan, the Chinese government is shifting its assistance to humanitarian aid.

The domestic/local situation in South Sudan influences China's practice of its direct contribution. China applies two different strategies in practicing its direct contribution. First, in development assistance, China has shifted its practice. The Chinese government is shifting to the Western side of the international assistance spectrum of Responsible Power. This shift is due to the local situation in South Sudan. The outbreak

of South Sudan internal conflict has forced China to be more flexible in practising its development assistance. Second, the Chinese government has decreased its economic assistance and added assistance for humanitarian means. Albeit the number of humanitarian assistance was not significant.

Figure 2 - The spectrum of Responsible Power: Concept and Practices in the International Assistances theme



Sources: illustrated by authors

China's Foreign Policy Actors and International Assistance theme: The Practices of Chinese Peacekeepers in South Sudan

It is significant to assess the practices of Chinese peacekeepers in South Sudan. The PRC categorizes its participation in the UN PKO in Africa as part of its 'aid package' (Eisenman et al., 2007:50). China's official document stated operations in peacekeeping and the settlement of conflict as well as cooperation in the military are part of China-Africa policy (White Paper on China's African Policy, 2007: 383). This section will analyze Chinese peacekeepers' activities in South Sudan in relations to the international assistances theme of Responsible Power. This section argues that the behavior of Chinese peacekeepers in South Sudan is guided by the principle of non-interference and respect for South Sudan's sovereignty. Chinese peacekeepers' behavior remains in China's end-side of the international assistance theme of the Responsible Power spectrum.

Before moving on to the discussion of Chinese peacekeepers in the international assistance theme in South Sudan, an explanation of China's changing position in UN PKO is required. In the beginning, the government of PRC turned down the invitation to

provide any contributions on money or troops regarding peacekeeping missions. For decades, China was a cynic to UN peacekeeping operations. It is believed that those operations violated the sovereignty of the affected countries (Huang, 2012). However, since the 1980s, China has become more flexible on its non-interference policy in the peacekeeping arena and started expanding its contribution to peacekeeping activities (Huang, 2012: 16-17; Stähle, 2008: 639). Some scholars have illustrated Chinese government guidelines for legitimate peacekeeping operations. First, respecting a state's sovereignty needs to be considered by the intervening bodies. Second, the authorization of peacekeeping operations should come from United Nations Security Council. Third, there should be consent from relevant parties. Lastly, the use of force in United Nations Peacekeeping Operation (UNPKO) is permitted only for protecting the lives of peacekeepers, their freedom of movement and civilians under imminent threat, and when other alternatives are not sufficient (Carlson, 2004; Stähle, 2008).

The Chinese contribution to United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) provides a picture of expanding behavior of Chinese peacekeepers. After the establishment of the UNMISS, China deployed 362 peacekeepers to South Sudan. In its initial involvement, the Chinese peacekeepers comprised of engineering corps and medical units. Their tasks were mainly responsible for constructing or upgrading key infrastructures, educational facilities, health service facilities, and medical assistance. Those were vital for meeting the needs of civilians in South Sudan (Embassy of the People's Republic of China in South Sudan, 2012; Saferworld, 2011: 3). However, after the UN Security Council reached Resolution 2155 (2014), the PRC Defense Ministry announced in 2014 to deploy a 700-peacekeepers infantry battalion to South Sudan (China Daily, 2014). In January 2015, a 700 Chinese peacekeepers infantry battalion was deployed to the UNMISS peacekeeping headquarters at Juba, South Sudan.

This decision has changed the picture of Chinese peacekeepers' contribution to South Sudan as well as the global picture of Chinese peacekeepers' contribution. The Chinese peacekeeping infantry battalions in UNMISS have the main task to protect local populations, UN officers and aid workers. Also, it conducts patrolling and escort convoys (Zhang, 2016). Nowadays, the task of Chinese peacekeepers is not only for the provision of engineering and medical supports but also for the protection of civilians. As of December 2016, 1.055 Chinese peacekeepers were serving in UNMISS, and it comprised

combat troops and non-combat troops (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2016). China dispatches its peacekeepers to Juba and Wau, South Sudan. Indeed, Chinese peacekeepers provide significant numbers of troops to UNMISS. This mission has become the biggest recipient of Chinese peacekeepers, compared to other UN peacekeeping missions.

Figure 3 - China's Peacekeeping Deployments



Sources: United Nations Peacekeeping (2016) https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/dec16_5.pdf

Chinese peacekeepers have sent a full infantry battalion to South Sudan. The principles of non-interference and respect for others' sovereignty have remained significant in guiding China's peacekeeping policy. Today, China is becoming more flexible in practicing its non-interference policy. Originally, China was reluctant to participate in UN Peacekeeping operations because China regarded the dispatchment of troops as a policy that violates a state's sovereignty (Stähle, 2008). Chinese peacekeepers have been dispatched, and a 700-member Chinese infantry battalion has the ability to use force in UNMISS. Despite those decisions, it does not indicate that China has abandoned its principles. Instead, it shows that China's principle of non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual respect for a state's sovereignty is becoming more flexible. A spokesperson from the Ministry of National Defense explained at a news conference in September 2014 that:

“The United Nations’ Security Council resolution authorizes the United Nations Mission in South Sudan to take the protection of civilians, UN employees and humanitarian workers as one of its main tasks. The Chinese peacekeeping troops will strictly abide by the international law and stick to their mandate. They will

provide protection to the local people and other countries' personnel engaged in such peaceful activities as peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and economic development in the area to the best of their ability. And their actions will be taken as required by the situation, or upon the instruction from the headquarters of the mission, and they will also follow the rule of engagement" (Ministry of National Defense, 2014)

In addition, the Ministry of National Defense emphasized that the Chinese peacekeeping infantry battalion in South Sudan will not carry out traditional combat tasks. Instead, its task has been to implement security and protection (Ministry of National Defense, 2014). The statement from the Ministry of National Defense and the deployment of China's infantry battalion to South Sudan showed that the understanding of China regarding the principle of non-interference has expanded. Wherein the Ministry of National Defense is willing to perform the protection of civilians under the framework of multilateral cooperation.

The consent of a host country and concerned parties are prominent to allow Chinese peacekeepers to be deployed and exercise their responsibilities. In response to the deployment of a full Chinese infantry battalion, South Sudan's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Barnaba Marial Benjamin, stated during the FOCAC summit 2015 that its country did not have any issues with China's decision to dispatch the combat troops (Louw-Vaudran, 2015). This statement indicates that the deployment of Chinese peacekeeping troops to South Sudan receives the consent of concerned parties.

In conclusion, the Chinese peacekeepers have become one of the significant players in the African security arena. The Chinese peacekeepers are providing a significant contribution towards security and stability in South Sudan. The practice of PRC peacekeepers remains guided by the principle of non-interference, no political string attached, and the consent of a recipient state. A Chinese scholar mentions that the practice of Chinese peacekeepers continues to stand within the line of the principle of non-interference but does not abide by it completely (Interview, Beijing, 7 March 2017). According to the different cases and situations, Chinese peacekeepers demonstrate the flexibility of using the principle of non-interference.

Conclusion

Both China and the West have a similar perspective that a Responsible Power needs to provide international assistance to other countries. However, there is a discrepancy

between the Western and Chinese perspectives on the principle of international assistance, mainly driven by their ideologies. This article has analyzed the practices of the Chinese government and Chinese peacekeepers in the international assistance theme of Responsible Power. Assessing China in building peace in South Sudan is significant because it shows that China is taking its 'Responsible Power' role more seriously.

It shows that in the Chinese government's practices of Responsible Power in the international assistance theme, it shifts its practices from the Chinese spectrum of Responsible Power to the Western spectrum of Responsible Power. Initially, the principle of non-interference, no strings attached, and adherence to other countries' consent guided the Chinese government's behavior in its provision of international assistance to South Sudan. Due to South Sudan's circumstances, the Chinese government applies security conditionality as a prerequisite to South Sudan. After the outbreak of conflict in 2013, most of China's assistance to South Sudan was to respond humanitarian situation. Meanwhile, the Chinese government decreases its concessional loans. The Chinese government also takes a more flexible interpretation of the non-interference policy in South Sudan.

The Chinese peacekeepers have remained adherent to the principle of non-interference in internal politics and respect for South Sudan's sovereignty, and no political string attached. However, this research suggests that their understanding of China's policy of non-interference is becoming more flexible. Indeed, as China's interest in the international community is growing bigger, China's actors have become more flexible in applying China's principles. Thus, as this research has shown, the practices of China's actors in the Responsible Power spectrum have not only become more flexible in interpreting the principles. The practices of China's foreign policy actors can also shift to the Western spectrum of Responsible Power to respond to the situation in South Sudan. This research suggests that China is not opposing the liberal international order. Instead, it practices some elements of the liberal international order.

This research suggests several avenues for further research. First, to understand more about the behavior of China concerning the notion of 'China as a Responsible Power', there is a need to analyze China's behavior in other issues. For instance, climate change and nuclear non-proliferation. Second, as China's actors are growing diverse in the international area, there is a need for continuing work in the field of other Chinese

actors, such as China's State-Owned Enterprises, China's private businesses or China's private security companies. Therefore, it will reveal a bigger picture to understand the notion of 'China as a Responsible Power' and China's foreign policy in the contemporary world.

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