Declaration

Declaration

I, (name), declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature...*Bjørnar Sverdrup-Thygeson*

Date...10.08.2012...

Acknowledgments

Abstract

This thesis takes as its objective to explore the use of historical narratives as a tool of foreign policy. In order to undertake research on how such narratives may be utilised by foreign policy actors, and how they may convey an impact on foreign countries' discourses, I develop a theoretical framework based on a post-structuralist theoretical approach. This model features a three-pronged analysis of what I define as the mnemonic means through which historical narratives may convey an impact on present discursive structures, namely those of identity, analogy and historical legitimacy.

Through my thesis I apply this theoretical framework to a single-case study, intended as a plausibility probe to determine the potential salience and scientific validity of this approach, by means of a discourse analysis applied to the case of China's propagation of historical narratives in support of the country's policies in Africa. Through this case, I also intend to throw further light on China's far-ranging engagement on the African continent. Through its application to the case of China's public relations-offensive towards Africa, the analysis ascertained how historical narratives have proven to be a major feature of Chinese rhetoric. Being in widespread and consistent use, politicians, diplomats and media would draw upon three particular historical narratives in addressing the African public. Through propagating the narratives centred on Zheng He, on the colonial experience, and on the TAZARA railroad project, using a varied set of mnemonic techniques, the past was framed in terms that serve to influence African China-discourses in directions legitimising and promoting policies beneficial to China, supporting China's present engagement in Africa by invoking the past.

This impact of the past upon the present is thus, I conclude, a tool that indeed would seem to be utilised by powerful actors on the international arena, seeking to establish a positive discursive environment among politically important actors abroad. Furthermore, as this tool could be saliently analysed through the proposed post-structuralist theoretical framework in the case of China's Africa policy, I propose that this theoretical approach might also prove fruitful as a framework applied to other cases. In this I find my study to contribute to an area currently lacking in academic coverage, an area that might add valuable insights into the discursive processes co-constituting states' foreign policies.

Table of Contents

以史为镜，可以知兴亡。(Using history as the mirror, we know the destiny of all things.)
 Chinese Proverb

What then is, generally speaking, the truth of history? A fable agreed upon.
Napoléon Bonaparte, quoted in Las Cases, 1823:251.

1.0   Introduction

The past is the material we are all made from. Even as we live our lives in the present, the fingerprint of the past permeates our conception, as historical experiences are among the most central factors guiding us in constituting the identity of a society, bestowing meaning onto our collective experiences, and providing behavioural guidelines. As such, the contest over power has often entailed a contest over which version of history should be the one circumscribing a political entity. The importance of making the past serve the present, as Mao Zedong famously wrote, is thus found in how the narratives told of our past may serve to legitimise or delegitimise the current situation, and provide templates for what future state of affairs is regarded as desirable. My argument is that the constitution of history on this basis draws a potential as a political tool a foreign policy actor might utilise to seek political gains, through influencing the configuration of other countries' discursive policy space by propagating particular historical narratives; applying their version of the past in order to serve the present.

This exploratory study intends to research this subject by means of a discourse analysis applied to the case of China's political rhetoric in support of the country's far-ranging engagement in Africa, from the year 2000 to the present. Through my thesis I seek to identify whether historical narratives are utilised as tool in China's Africa policy, and to probe whether a theoretical model based on a post-structuralist theoretical approach that has proved profoundly valuable in exploring similar themes on the domestic level, may prove salient in analysing how such historical narratives may have an impact on foreign actors' discourses. In this, I find this thesis will contribute to an area lacking in academic coverage, and might add

valuable insights into the processes shaping the discursive space of states' foreign policies. Additionally, my investigation will serve to throw further light on China's policies on the African continent, contributing to the understanding of the dynamics of Sino-African relations, an international political trend of substantial regional and global political significance.

1.1 Objective

The aspiration animating my Master's dissertation may in short be described as the wish to explore the nexuses between discursive frameworks and foreign policy. More specifically, I aim to undertake research in order to investigate the role played by historical narratives in conditioning decision-making, and how this mechanic may be utilised by foreign policy actors seeking to further their goals through propagating a specific set of beneficial historic narratives into the wider discourse constituting the terms on which foreign states base their decisions. Although eminent investigations have been undertaken analysing the use of historical narratives as a tool in domestic policies, when it comes to how such narrative structures may be used as a tool on the international level, I find that coherent literature on the field is scarce, and frequently lacking a firm theoretical underpinning. As such I believe this to be an area ripe for further investigation, and also an area that will prove salient in providing new insights into the discursive aspects of international politics.

The purpose of this investigation is to gather in-depth knowledge on a case I find to prove salient in providing a rich amount of data, thereby being suitable for a plausibility probe-case study where I seek to inductively establish my tentative theoretical approach by probing its potential salience and validity. In undertaking this research, then, I seek not only to investigate an important aspect of Chinese foreign policy, an area that I believe will also be of substantial interest for understanding the political dynamics of the ever more important Sino-African relationship. Additionally, I seek to constitute a basis from which one might be able to draw inferences suitable for further development of a post-structuralist theoretical framework for the analysis of the use of historical narratives in foreign policy.

1.2 Rationale

The rationale animating my wish to explore the role played by historical narratives in conditioning foreign policy behaviour, is built on the understanding that discourses are pivotal in mediating our perceptions of the world, constraining how people categorize and think about

the world, and as such providing preconditions for action (Dunn 2008:80-81, Neumann 2008:62). An important part of such discursive frameworks is how we conceive of the past; what narratives of bygone times are dominant in constituting a discourse as meaningful in a temporally consistent manner. The central theme of my thesis will thus be to explore what Campbell (1998:84) dubs the vital political functions of historical narratives, investigating how these may be utilised as resources by states to advance their foreign policy agenda.

The question of what is remembered is not the straightforward process one might intuitively recognize it to be. Instead the collective memory is a result of intellectual and political negotiations, a process very prone to be influenced by those with the power to do so (Müller 2002:21, Dunn 2008:81). "History will be rewritten, and rewritten in different ways, to legitimate competing policies." Gildea (2002:59). As Campbell (1998:34-36) points out further, to this renegotiations of the past, narrative is central, as events acquire a status as real as they are remembered assuming a place in the context of a narrative. And given that, in White's (1987:76) words, any event of the past may sustain a number of equally plausible narratives, the question of which of them will become dominant is a political battle in which the prize is the chance to influence a nations identity and the configuration of the dichotomy between the self and others, entailing far ranging consequences in term of both domestic and foreign policy. It is into this mutually constitutive relationship between history and power that I will seek to investigate whether foreign states, most like any other domestic actor, bring to bear a certain set of historical narratives in order to legitimate and promote policy behaviour compatible to their interests, seeking to shape the ideational policy space of a foreign entity in order to enable certain desired foreign policies to be undertaken at a minimum of political cost.

The reason for selecting China's engagement with Africa as my case, is based partly on China's seemingly explicit use of historical narratives in bolstering their credentials on the continent (see e.g. Strauss 2009), making them a salient case for the application of my theoretical framework. Also, the central importance Africa holds in Chinese foreign policy (see e.g. Lanteigne 2009:134; Pannell 2008:707), will serve to prove the relevance of such ideational tools, showcasing how they are used in core foreign policy areas. In addition, such investigation serves to analyse from a new angle the dynamics of a relationship of considerable geopolitical significance, not to mention the importance held for Africa itself. China's political and economic involvement has been described as the most momentous

development on the African continent in decades (Taylor 2009:1), China being now the continent's largest trade partner, and cultivating ever closer political ties (China Daily 2010). Thus, to investigate what narrative tools are utilised in seeking to secure a discursive political space for Chinese-friendly policies to play out on the African continent, may contribute to the wider understanding of Sino-African politics as a whole. I would like to emphasize that as this dissertation is intended to deal with the propagation of such narratives only as a tool directed against external actors, I will not go into how the promoting of this narratives contributes to the formation of Chinese policies, instead I will for the purpose of this inquiry chose to regard China's interests as given.

As China's involvement in Africa has been of a gradually evolving character, it is hard to designate a concise temporal demarcation for when the Sino-African relationship became extensive enough to be of interest for research. I have, however, chosen to set the starting point of my analysis at the year 2000, mainly because this year marks the creation of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), an organization made up of China and 49 African countries that has become an important platform for strengthening Sino-African political and economic ties, and is also a main arena for Chinese propagation of historical narratives. (FOCAC 2011, FOCAC 2006).

1.3 Research Questions

- How may historical narratives be used as a tool in foreign policy, through what means may they have an impact?
- To which extent is China using historical narratives in their rhetoric towards the African continent, and what purpose do these narratives serve in the wider setting of China's Africa policy?

1.4 Thesis Structure

This thesis is constituted by three main parts; one part giving a presentation of the academic context of my dissertation, one where I establish my theoretical approach as well as presenting my research design, and finally one part where I apply my theoretical approach to the case of China's Africa policy. As such, having presented my research question and provided an essential introduction of the objective and rationale for my dissertation, this thesis will go on to the literature review. In my assessment of the literature on the field, I will first present an outline of the literature that has made a contribution to the development of a post-

structuralist framework of theoretical thinking on the use of history as a tool in domestic politics. Furthermore, the literature review goes on to establish how the use of historical narratives as a tool in *international* politics is a field lacking in academic coverage and wanting of a coherent theoretical framework, defining the stage for my application of a post-structuralist theoretical framework based on the contributions from the field of national memory politics.

In the forthcoming theory section my theoretical approach will be fleshed out in detail, comprehensively contextualizing and defining the main concepts I will be utilizing. From this basis I will develop and define a three-pronged analysis of the mnemonic means through which historical narratives conveys an impact on present discourses, namely those of identity, analogy and historical legitimacy. My research design will throughout the further sections be clarified, taking into account the particularities and limitations of discourse analysis and case study research, as well as providing an overview of the research procedure.

Going on to this thesis's applied segment; the case of China's involvement in Africa will be presented, before going into the analysis of the relevant material. What I identify as the three main historical narratives propagated towards Africa by China; the Zheng He narrative, the colony narrative, and the TAZARA narrative, will be treated in separate sections. I will there proceed to give a presentation of the relevant narrative, before going on to analysing how these historical narratives can draw upon the means of identity, analogy and historical legitimacy in conveying an impact on the present discourse. This impact of the past upon the present is, as will be argued in my conclusion, a tool that indeed would seem to be utilised by powerful actors on the international arena, seeking to establish a positive discursive environment among politically important actors abroad. Furthermore, as this tool could be saliently analysed through the proposed post-structuralis theoretical framework in the case of China's Africa policy, I propose that this three-pronged theoretical approach focusing on the historical narratives' mnemonic means might also prove fruitful as a framework applied to other cases.

2.0 Literature Review

Across the wide range of cultures populating the world, a plethora of proverbs and statements may be found expressing the value of history as a tool for understanding the present, and a guide for future action. It would seem that there is a strain running through human societies, bestowing upon past events a significance transcending that of merely producing the present, looking instead to history for guidance, legitimacy and role models for times that are and times to come. As International Relations rose as a separate subject of the social sciences, a firm consciousness of history was permeating also this field. It might be fair to say that while the liberalist gaze was directed mainly forwards, focusing on the prospects of discontinuity from the past, the realist strand was mainly oriented towards the past, seeking lessons from what they postulated as the essentially continuous nature of international politics. What these two main strands had in common, however, was the sense of the past as an entity more or less given. One of the main benefits of the post-positivist approaches eventually to gain foothold in International Relations academia, was then the raised consciousness of "history" as a field constituted through social practices and subject to the power struggles of the present. Given history's role as an important factor in conditioning present behaviour, and the increased realization that what constitutes history is to a large degree at the mercy of present power relations, a focus was accordingly directed towards how propagation of certain discourses of past events may serve as a tool of power.

Through this literature review I will briefly trace some main lines in the development of the post-structuralist framework I will adhere to in my thesis. The review will be divided into three parts, although the nature of the subjects renders the sections deeply interrelated. Firstly, I will look at works undertaken on how perceptions of the past render its influence on present policies, through the mnemonic means of identity, analogy and legitimacy. Secondly, I will present a selection of investigations into how propagation of certain versions of history have been used as a tool by domestic groups in furthering political agendas. Finally I will turn to what investigations have been undertaken on the application of historical narratives on the international level, analyse their theoretical standpoint and argue in favour of the need for more theoretically coherent investigations to be undertaken.

2.1 Identity, Analogy and Historical Legitimacy

The importance our understanding of the past carries in conditioning present policies, and the mnemonic means through which such impact makes itself felt, has been the subject for a number of investigations. In the following section I will review a number of books I believe representative of the main approaches to this question. Their approaches are focused along three main lines of argument; impact through the mechanics of identity constitution, impact through logic of analogy, and Müller's closely related term of "historical legitimization". These three approaches will form the basis for the theoretical model I will later apply to the case of China's Africa policy.

The Swedish scholar Erik Ringmar (1996) employs the historiographical puzzle of why Sweden went to war in 1630 to launch what he terms a narrative theory of action. He is arguing along the post-positivist lines drawn by e.g. Wendt in stating that people do not only act for reasons of interest, but also for reasons of identity, and, what is more, that the latter factor is more fundamental, as it is our identities that constitute what we regard as our interests. He further develops his theory into a rather thorough analysis of how these identities are constituted as the process of making sense of the world happens through the application of metaphors, linked into sets of narratives. "In this way", Ringmar (1996:73) claims, "story-telling becomes a prerequisite of action: first we attach metaphors to our unfathomable selves, to the situations we are in, and then we go on telling stories about ourselves and our situations thus understood. […] In this way, and this way only, can we come to formulate notions of interest." It is thus only through defining oneself as someone, that one may have interest in something. In this narrative constitution of the self, Ringmar does not treat histories of the time past as a specific variety of narratives, but he is careful to point out the interlinked temporality of our constituting stories. "To create a presence for ourselves in time, first of all, is to locate ourselves in the context of a past and a future. […] We can be someone today since we were someone yesterday and since we will be someone tomorrow." (Ringmar 1996:76-77).

In describing how Gustav II Adolf sought to create a certain narrative of the young Swedish state, and to defend the validity of this narrative with lethal force if necessary, Ringmar (1996) highlights the central nexus of narrative, identity and action. In pointing out in such clear and coherent terms how narratives of who we are effect our actions, he is making a weighty argument against reductionist outlooks on the motives and aims of foreign policy,

7

and contributing clearly to the wider understanding of how narratives translate into actions. However, I regard his argument to be lacking further investigation into the origins of the national narratives. One is also left with important questions regarding how these narratives are implemented into the broader society, as well as who is creating these narratives, and for what reasons. In addition, the lack of treatment given to what distinguishes historical narratives, namely claims of authenticity based on events no longer directly accessible, leaves abundant space for further investigations in the field.

Taking on the same range of questions as Ringmar, Liu & Hilton (2005) addresses the role played by historical narratives specifically, in constituting identity. They analyse through a narrative framework the way management and negotiations of socially shared representations of history stand paramount in creating, maintaining and changing a people's identity. Furthermore, they do also investigate how this historically conditioned identity do frame and guide foreign policy action, exemplified through a set of different cases from the last twenty years. Summarized in layman's terms: "Historic narratives tell us who we are and where we should be going. (Liu & Hilton 2005:537) A central concept to Liu & Hilton's (2005: 538) analysis of these means are the idea of a nation's historically constituted charter, "an account of its origin and historical mission […] they serve the function of a foundational myth for a society, defining rights and obligations for a group and legitimizing its social and political arrangements." These charters thus function as a quasi-legal conveyer of legitimacy through establishing a normative framework of Do's and Don'ts. Such charters are however not a given feature, they demand a view of history that is consensual throughout society, depending, according to Liu & Hilton (2005:542) on "a resonance between historical representations, physical artefacts and mass media, and the current political agenda."

The authors thus denote history as a symbolic reserve, that may be elaborated upon by social processes to create systems of shared meaning; national "lessons" that will structure and condition people's responses to new challenges. This shared social representation of history embodied in a charter are in Liu & Hilton's view constituted both of a concrete aspect; widely recognized people and events, and a temporal aspect; a compelling form of narrative structure. While there is often substantial agreement on what constitutes the major events and figures of history, there is often contestation over their meaning and relevance to current events. Taking heed, unlike Ringmar, of the specific conditions facing historic narratives they point out how literate societies create a new dynamic to this struggle over the past, as the existence of

written records restricts the "historical allowance" of such narratives. Unlike the myths of pre-literate societies, successful historical narratives of the modern age must give an appearance of coherence towards the existing range of sources. This is an important variable to point out, although I will argue that Liu & Hilton underestimates the plasticity with which a certain event may provide grounds for a wide range of equally consistent narratives. A plasticity that is, of which I will argue in my theory section, a central feature of narratives constructed of the past. As will later be demonstrated through my applied case, the events of Sino-African history may indeed give raise to a set of very different, and each very valid, historical narratives.

In an attempt to make an overview of the treatment of the nexuses between memory and power, Jan-Werner Müller (2002) investigates on a broad level how the stories told of the past impacts present policies, and vice versa, underlining again the role narratives of the collective memory plays in shaping the identity and interests of a social entity, "Identity – understood as a relational concept and as sameness over time – is established by what is remembered" (Müller 2002:21). The case is made that states will react to shifts in the balance of power, or other reconfigurations of the international society, in ways shaped by political culture, and then in particular shaped by memory. The question of what is remembered, however, is not the straightforward process one might intuitively recognize it to be. Instead, Müller points out, again, how the collective memory is a result of a series of ongoing intellectual and political negotiations, a process very prone to be influenced by those with the power to do so.

When it comes to identifying the main nexuses for the transformation of historical narratives into political power, Müller points in particular to two mechanisms: The logic of analogy, and the legitimization of certain policies on grounds of historical experience. Müller emphasizes the importance of historical analogies, as a guiding tool for deciding the policies of the present, showing how they serve to reduce the complexity of current issues, short-circuiting critical reflection, and creating what he defines as "instant legitimacy", functioning as a set of archetypical situations that provides rules or guidelines for acting in the present. Turning to the second mechanism, he postulates that policies are legitimated through appeals to the collective or national memory, attempting to construct what could be dubbed a mnemonic legitimation close in terms to the Weberian notion of traditional legitimacy. Implicit to both of these two tightly connected means is the notion of structural power, namely the power to define what is put on the agenda, and in what terms political issues are framed. He thus

complies with Barnett's (1999) main point; that actors act strategically in shaping the discursive environments influencing the range of actions available. Müller's outline of a framework for analysing the interrelated nature of power and the past is in my view of the most comprehensive to date, as it serves to illustrate how historical narratives might draw on a variety of mnemonic means in conveying an influence on contemporary discourse.

A somewhat different take at the importance of history in guiding present policy decisions, can be found in the Oxford-based IR-professor Yuen Foong Khong's (1992) treatment of the role played by analogies in decision-making. Although the importance of analogies in conditioning behaviour have been pointed out by other authors, Müller among them, Khong's decision to do an in-depth analysis of this aspect, aided by the tools of cognitive psychology does much to aid our understanding on the psychological mechanisms involved. He demonstrates how human beings due to their limited capacity to handle large portions of data inevitably will assimilate impressions into simplified pre-existing structures of the mind, these again, being to a large extent shaped by memory and internalized narratives. His book delves into the case of the Johnson administrations policymaking decisions on Vietnam, and he develops through his investigation a framework assessing the different ways in which analogies work their influence, defining analogies as cognitive devices that help policymakers perform six central diagnostic tasks:

> Analogies (1) help define the nature of the situation confronting the policymaker, (2) help assess the stakes, and (3) provide descriptions. They help evaluate alternative options by (4) predicting their chances of success, (5) evaluating their moral rightness, and (6) warning about dangers associated with the options. (Khong 1992:10).

While Khong's treatment of the cognitive mechanisms underlying the effects of analogies on the process of decision-making are both thorough and helpful, my opinion is, however, that through following a too narrow psychological approach to the issue, he has omitted a question of core importance; who affects which analogies are regarded as relevant? What struggle of interest and power ensures whether Normandy or Vietnam is the dominant template for USA's next military adventure? Tackling some of these questions is Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen (2003). In his constructivist critique of what he defines as the "lessons literature", he analyses through a case study of the perhaps most infamous of the lessons from the past, that of the infamous Munich agreement, the praxeological nature of the lessons political

decision makers often will draw from the past. He argues how these analogies from the past are not set entities, but have developed through history in relation to other "lessons" and in concordance with broader historical changes. Thus pointing out the dynamic nature of historical analogies embedded in discourse, he makes a very valid point, but neither he goes on to investigate how certain analogies may go on to occupy a dominant position in the discourse as a result of power struggle in the present.

2.2 Applying the Past at Home

Hayden White's exploration of the inherent connections between literature and historiography, dismantling the idea of historiographical objectivity, has contributed significantly to the understanding of how and through which means the narration of the past might be used by actors to impact the present. In *Historical Discourse and Literary Writing* (2006), he analyses the writings of Primo Levi, whom he describes as a canonical figure of objective, dispassionate historical writing, and shows how the account of his life in Auschwitz is nonetheless loaded with "rhetorical figures and tropes and is never more rhetorical than when he is or purports to be, simply "describing" a place situation or individual he knows." (White 2006:26). He stresses further that one cannot historize without narrativizing, as this is the only way in which one may transform a series of bygone events into a sequence, divide it into periods and represent it as a process, in other words; the only way through which one may make comprehensible what is no longer perceivable.

However, the fact that past events are thus left at the mercy of narrativization "it is by this circumstance alone committed to ideologizing practices, by which I mean the endowment of past events with meanings and values relevant to the promotion of social and political programs in the present for which historians write." (White 2006:30). *In The Content of the Form* (1987), these themes are further developed, as White points to narration as both the way through which a historical interpretation is achieved and the mode of discourse in which an understanding of history is represented. Importantly, White (1987:76-82) elaborates through a discussion around the reality of Holocaust how he holds the view that "any historical object can sustain a number of equally plausible descriptions or narratives of its processes." He does not, however, claim that such events may sustain any number of narratives, thus implicitly keeping in line with Liu & Hiltons concepts of historical allowances, although not elaborating this point further. Nevertheless, in establishing how the reality of the past is constituted through practices of narration, adopting a certain conception of how events are organized,

White contributed greatly to the theoretical groundwork laying the basis for investigations into how the power struggle of competing narratives plays out.

Looking closer into this processes, Michael Barnett (1999) takes on the case of Rabin's struggle to make possible Israel's embrace of the Oslo Accords, going in-depth on how he spearheaded a successful attempt at creating, although temporarily, a cultural space allowing withdrawal from the occupied areas to be regarded as both legitimate and desirable. Acknowledging thus how the normative structures shaped by shared understanding of history and culture conditions political behaviour, Barnett stresses how the actors are aware of these structures, and are conscious agents in shaping them. In doing this, Barnett proclaims to be measuring out a middle ground, combining the constructivist insight that actors are embedded in normative structures, with the institutionalist insight of actors' strategic interaction in institutionalized settings. "The challenge is to recognize that the underlying structure that both constitutes and constrains actors also provides the wellspring for social practices and allow for strategic behaviour." (Barnett 1999:8).

One might argue that Barnett is mainly rediscovering central aspects of the power-knowledge nexus already formulated through writings of the post-structuralist mainstream. However Barnett brings to bear a set of useful conceptual tools to the exploration of this nexus between ideational frameworks and the politics of identity. He employs what he dubs the conceptual trinity of identity, narratives and frames. His conception of identity is closely related to that applied by e.g. Ringmar; as an understanding of oneself in relation to others, an understanding that is constantly negotiated in a process that may be accelerated in times of "identity conflict": Moments where competing definitions of identity call for contradictory behaviour. In regard to foreign policy, then, Barnett quotes two aspects to be of special importance, firstly how the identity is the source of interests, and secondly, how "political actors are likely to have competing interpretations of the meanings associated with that identity, and compete to fix a particular identity because of deeply held convictions and prior interests" (Barnett 1999:10).

An aspect of paramount importance to this struggle over identity is then the competition over which narrative should be the dominant. Narratives of national identity are, according to Barnett, the way of organizing historical time into a coherent story, situating the past and conditioning future acts through providing a collective understanding of the past. "This

narrative of the national identity is not given but rather is a social construct, and actors will reconstruct the past as they debate the future, and as they act towards the future they are likely to (re)remember the past." (Barnett 1999:14). Barnett's third core concept is that of frames; specific metaphors, symbolic representations and cognitive cues that are being strategically deployed to situate and interpret events. Political elites will "draw on 'cultural symbols that are selectively chosen from a cultural tool chest and creatively converted' into frames for actions." (Barnett 1999:15). Through his investigation into Israeli politics in the early 90's Barnett identifies how Rabin as a political entrepreneur managed to recast the historical narrative in a way making the reframing of Israeli-Palestinian politics possible. Through this case Barnett thus demonstrated two important points, that will form a central part of the academic basis underpinning the theoretical approach fleshed out in my theory-section: Firstly, how different narratives constituting identities provides a "grammar of action" that makes certain actions legitimate and possible, and second, how these ideational structures constituting and guiding actors, are at the same time a result of actors' conscious political contestation.

Investigating French foreign policy of the post-war era, the historian Robert Gildea (2002:59) provides a case-study largely applying Müller's framework in his attempt to demonstrate how "memory is a key factor in shaping decisions taken in the pursuit of power, but that conversely policy goals have a decisive influence on how memory is constructed. He then proceeds to demonstrate through a look at the background for French foreign policy decisions, how the question of what constitutes a state's real interests has lead different parties to propagate historic myths, or narratives, both as arguments and eventually as constitutive factors of national interest. Thus, Gildea is exploring mainly the same field as Barnett, through a similar framework, and with similar results. Gildea's main contribution to the theoretical body surrounding the nexus of power and past, however, lays in his distinction between personal memory, what he terms as "the multitudinous and fragmented memories that individuals may have of events […that] have no unmediated effect on policy making" Gildea (2002:59), and the narratives elaborated by political and intellectual elites to give meaning to such individual experiences and circumscribe them into a sense of common national memory.

This is a distinction that Timothy Snyder (2002) elaborates further, pointing to the need to treat as separate conceptions the two aspects of collective memory he respectively terms as

"mass personal memory"; the recollection by large groups of individuals of the events in which they took part, and a "national memory", "that nationally conscious individuals use to organise the national history. [...] It allows us to place events in the national history, whether or not we took part in them." (Snyder 2002:39). As no individual remembers history in the way it will be represented, witnessing merely atomic parts of a process were no one posits perfect information, this leaves leeway for the corrective of memory in shaping the common national historical frame. Snyder demonstrates through the case of how Poland successfully negotiated issues of past conflict with Lithuania and Ukraine after the Second World War, reconciling deep-felt grievances in its population through being conscious of the issue of memory, how the political elite were framing their reconciliatory acts towards the neighbouring countries in terms as to "conspire with the passage of time to divert personal memories from the issues of the day and coopt national memories in the name of the common good." (Snyder 2002:58). In addressing the dynamics between the personally remembered past, and the narrative with which it may be collectively circumscribed, Gildea and Snyder are formulating concepts that are of core importance, particularly when analysing narrative processes rooted in the near history. These aspects also set sharp focus on Liu & Hilton's concept of historical allowances, implicitly pointing out the restrictions as well as the allowances on the plasticity of historical narratives in framing common memories.

2.3 Applying the Past Abroad

The common denominator of the texts covered to this point is that they all address the issue of history as an applied political tool within the sphere of domestic policies only. Touching upon the importance, then, of official rhetoric and the propagation of specific narratives of the past in conditioning the policy behaviour not only of domestic, but also of foreign audiences is the sinologist Julia C. Strauss' (2009) investigation on the official rhetoric wielded by China on its relations with Africa. Underlining the importance of such rhetoric in framing, legitimating and rendering comprehensible the foreign policy of a state, her main point is on exploring the puzzle of why the Chinese rhetoric towards the African continent has changed so little over the last thirty years.

In her analysis of the case she identifies the use of historical narratives as a form of supporting stories for the rhetoric used, pointing out the intertwined nature of "Official rhetoric (seeking to persuade), [and] historical narrative (the supporting stories about what has happened)" Strauss (2009:777). She does however fail to specify further the nature of what she describes

14

as historical narratives, and also do not demarcate in any clear terms what distinguishes such narratives from other rhetoric instruments. Nevertheless, she proceeds through an analysis of official and semi-official coverage of China-Africa affairs from the 1960s onwards to demonstrate the strong longevity of the rhetoric framework utilised. Her explanation for the occurrence of this stability is that the rhetorical points narrated are of a nature fundamental enough to serve the interests of core audiences both at home and abroad, disregarding the fluctuations in ideological and economical orientation.

Valid critique might be raised against this article for providing an overwhelmingly descriptive approach to the subject, little to no attempts are made of framing the question in any coherent theoretical terms, and subsequently one is left with little insight into the processes of how and why a certain historical narrative is being propagated. But nevertheless, Strauss raises an important aspect too little explored, in pointing out how the propagation of a rhetoric underpinned by historical narratives are of importance not only for affecting domestic audiences, but is also a tool for furthering foreign policy interests. Additionally, she does also provide through her somewhat descriptive treatise, a useful background for further investigations of Chinese rhetorical practices.

Addressing in more specific terms the use of historical narratives as a tool for foreign policy purposes, James R. Holmes (2006) investigates the Chinese government's embrace of the long forgotten Ming-dynasty admiral Zheng He. He points out how the widespread propagation of narratives involving this seafarers far-ranging and, allegedly, peaceful journeys not only serves as a tool to reorient a traditionally land-oriented Chinese strategic culture more towards the sea. It is also an important element in China's crucial efforts to reassure those fearful that it may seek regional military dominance, driving home the point that "China's strategic culture will restrain it, just as it did in the days of the treasure fleet, so banding together in balance it is unnecessary."(Holmes 2006:22). Framing his investigation in terms of "strategic culture", underlining like e.g. Barnett the reciprocal process of instrumental action within a cultural framework, Holmes concludes through anecdotal evidence that China has made impressive use of this narrative, largely succeeding both in the domestic goal of recasting the country's strategic culture in a nautical direction, and in the foreign policy area of bolstering China's cultural appeal vis-à-vis the South-East Asian coastal states.

In the later article Is China a "Soft" Naval Power (Holmes & Yoshihara 2009), Holmes, together with Toshi Yoshihara, returns to the subject, in somewhat more global terms. Raising the issue from the vantage point of analysing the motives behind the deployment of Chinese destroyers to the Indian Ocean, policing the area for Somali pirates, they take notice in the use of the Zheng He narrative as a rhetorical justification of the idea that China's rise as a naval power in the High Seas of the World poses no threat. "Tales of the Ming "treasure fleet," in effect the first foreign squadron ever forward-deployed to the Indian Ocean, appear to act as a proxy for China's conduct at sea today" (Holmes & Yoshihara 2009:5). Leaving the concept of "strategic culture" for the more encompassing framework of Nye's soft power theory, Holmes and Yoshihara describes this narrative of the great although peaceful mariner as a major reserve of soft power. They go on to provide certain examples of this discourse being furthered through Chinese officials, reflecting briefly on how this use of the past serves as part of a wider soft power strategy on behalf of the Chinese authorities. Although, again, this article directs focus against an ideational strategy arguably featuring quite prominent in Chinese foreign policy, the investigation is both brief and somewhat unsystematic, and it fails to elaborate the theoretical framework further than brief references to Nye's soft power theory.

In his analysis of China's large scale investments in public diplomacy, Kurlantzick (2007) addresses the same aspect, again utilizing Joseph Nye's soft power theory as the preferred framework of understanding. Addressing in his book how in a short period of time, "China appears to have created a systemic, coherent soft power strategy, and a set of soft power tools to implement that strategy." (Kurlantzick 2007:xi), Kurlantzick is acknowledging, however in rather brief terms, how the perceptions of the past propagated by Chinese officials are indeed one of these soft power tools. In this he follows Holmes & Yoshihara in appreciating how narratives of the past may serve as vehicles for political power, also in cases where the core audience for the propagation is foreign. However, in my view, he also shares a common trait with Holmes & Yoshihara in that the configuration of the theoretical framework applied remains somewhat elusive.

Given the central position soft power occupies in the academic literature treating the Chinese attempts at utilizing the past as a part of public relations policy directed towards a foreign audience, I find it necessitates a closer look at the concept in order to justify my deviance from this approach when analysing a similar case. Soft power, as the term was coined by

Joseph Nye, is defined as the ability to obtain from others the outcomes you want, not through threat or inducement, but through being able to shape their preferences in accordance to yours (Nye 2004:5). When a country's culture, values and politics includes and promotes universal values and interests shared by others, the probability of that country to obtain its desired outcome is increased, because of the relationships of attraction and duty that it creates (Nye 2004:11). However, in my view, Nye pays little or no attention to what means he believes is forming the causes of these effects. Neither does he directly address the issue of applying history to strengthen a country's soft power stature, the closest thing he comes being probably in implicitly agreeing to the importance of historic ties in pointing out that "popular culture is more likely to attract people and produce soft power in the sense of preferred outcomes in situations where cultures are somewhat similar rather than widely dissimilar" (Nye 2004:15-16). It is my opinion, then, that Holmes & Yoshihara and Kurlantzick are making a flawed case in claiming that the theory of soft power proves a salient tool for the purpose of understanding the workings of how the propagation of historical narratives serves to shape the preferences of others.

2.4 Concluding Remarks

The significance of history and narratives told of the past in conditioning and framing present behaviour, is a subject that has witnessed a growing body of knowledge being gathered over the course of the last three decades. However, of the works dealing with the impact of history on present-day politics through the means of identity-shaping and analogy, the overwhelming majority of academic work engages this issue solely from the viewpoint of the domestic sphere; analysing how collective memory and competing narratives being championed by powerful domestic groups contribute and vie for the power to define the character of present realities, thereby setting the stage for policies to play out. When it comes to the, in my view, potent question of how similar constitutive struggles may play out on the international arena, historical narratives being propagated consciously by vying nations in order to constitute a field of discourse that allows their foreign policies to play out at a minimum possible cost, the body of academic knowledge is rather scant. China's very overt use of such historical rhetoric in their strive to manage the dynamics of their economic and political rise has led attention to this field, however, but my view is that the investigations hitherto undertaken lacks both in scope and theoretical austerity.

In sum, I find the academic literature on politically motivated application of the past to be divided along two, mainly corresponding, fault lines; one regarding the empirical focus of the investigations, and one in terms of theoretical orientation. The overwhelming majority of academic work undertaken, investigates the role of collective memory and competing narratives being championed by powerful groups on the domestic level, and have succeeded in developing a coherent post-structuralist theoretical framework. The literature dealing with similar questions on the international level, on the other hand, are both scant and, arguably, theoretically unsatisfactory in that the investigations undertaken have not been framed in any coherent theoretic terms, but have mainly been of a descriptive nature, or informed by a shallow adherence to soft power theory.

The pivotal point of my theoretical application is then the assumption that the post-structuralist theoretical framework developed mainly through investigations into the utilization of history as a tool on the domestic arena, can advantageously be used to grasp the central aspects of the processes also when the propagation of a certain set of historical narratives is due to a foreign entity rather than a domestic group. This thesis will build upon the assumption that this indeed is possible, as it would seem that the fundamental mechanics of identity-building, the processes through which narratives affect these, and the challenges to the acceptance of certain versions of the past, is something that for the greater part is shared by all attempts to advance certain narratives, no matter the geographical origin of that drive. By thus bridging a gap in the literature, combining the salient analytical rigour of the post-structuralist approach with empirical analysis of how historical narratives are utilised as a tool on the foreign policy arena, I believe this thesis may be able to throw light upon an important aspect of international policy insufficiently mapped.

3.0 Theoretical Framework

I will through this chapter clarify the key concepts of my theoretical approach, seeking to combine a Foucauldian understanding of the power-relations inherent to discourse with insights from the historiographical field of collective memories into the formations and dispersion of historical narratives. Firstly I will clarify how the concept of discourse is applied in my text. Secondly, the concept of historical narratives will be defined and contextualized

through a discussion of the literature on collective memory and narrative structure. Finally I will go in detail on my argument on how the impact of historical narratives on contemporary discourse may be brandished through the mnemonic means of identity, analogy and temporal legitimacy.

3.1 Discourse

When asked by his disciple Zi Lu what his first priority would be as ruler of a country, the Chinese sage Confucius replied the foremost duty at hand would be to "rectify names" (Zhang 2002:461), going on to explain that "If names be not correct, language is not in accordance with the truth of things. If language be not in accordance with the truth of things, affairs cannot be carried on to success" (Confucius 1893:263-264) Exemplifying thus how our words are pervaded by politics, Confucius reply showcases one of the main insights of the post-structuralist approach, illustrating how language is a medium of power, providing the preconditions for action upon the world. As these perceptions were explored and developed in Europe through the post-structuralist movement of the 20th century, an increasing body of scholarship has contributed massively to our understanding of the nexus between language and power, one of the most fundamental analytical tools being the concept of discourse.

The French political philosopher Foucault, the leading figure in the advent of post-structuralist theory in modern academia, would in his works define, although in a rather loose manner (Neumann 2001a:17), a discourse as system for the production of truth (Foucault 2002:121, Græger 2007:25). Building further upon this notion, the concept of a discourse is in the academic literature commonly summarized as "a system for the formation of statements" (Bartelson 1995:70, Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982).To this is implied the core features of how a discourse enables and limits what statements we may make, thus constituting our perceptions of reality. "Discourses organise knowledge systematically, and thus delimit what can be said and what not." (Wæver 2002:29). As the social and material aspects of the world are thus constituted through discourse, the reverberation of a change in the discursive frameworks through which our perceptions are being negotiated carries potent impact on to the political arena.

I will throughout my thesis adhere to the more elaborate definition of discourse worded by Jennifer Milliken (1999b: 92), designating it as "an ordering of terms, meanings and practices that forms the background presuppositions and taken-for-granted understandings that enable

people's actions and interpretations". To this particular definition is implied a theoretical decision worthy of further detailing, pertaining the inclusion of practices as an integral part of the discursive structure. While certain scholars prefer to delimit the concept of discourse to the realm of texts in its narrow definition (Reisigl & Wodak 2009:89, Græger 2006:24), through which discourse analyses merely deals with the semiotic aspects of social action, my approach will be broader in scope. The chosen theoretical platform for this thesis will be in concurrence with the view that practice, is an inherently intertwined part of the discursive[1]. Thus, by broadening the definition a more comprehensive understanding of the discursive materiality may be obtained. (Neumann 2002, Burr 1995:34-37, Hall 2001:72, Fairclough 2001 18-20, Olick & Robbins 1998:124) The mainstay of my methodological approach will however consist of analyses of semiotic material, mainly speeches and policy papers, given that states, being the main objects of my analysis, as Lene Hansen (2006:23) points out, are very verbal entities. "States communicate widely, both domestically and internationally, leaving very little foreign policy action that is entirely non-verbal." Nevertheless, in accordance with the theoretical approach here rendered, I will also seek to enrich my analysis by drawing on examinations of relevant Chinese practices in the African context, such as the erection of monuments, the sponsoring of archaeological expeditions, and similar actions.

What, then, is the relevance of discourse to politics, justifying its inclusion as the object of study for this thesis? In short, the defining traits of discursive frameworks are how they do define which subjects are authorized to speak and act, the relations in which the actors see themselves and others, and the terms of how they handle an issue area (Keeley 1990:92, Milliken 1999a:228). A discourse thus is a tool of power, as it is in itself "a classifying and exclusionary practice and it is through these and other properties of knowledge making that power works." (Wetherell 2001:289-290). Obviously, though, one cannot from a certain discursive reality make predictions about a specific policy to be undertaken, given that the room for actions and reinterpretations usually is large enough to allow for a wide range of options, however discourses define the framework within which policies are undertaken (Neumann 2001a:51, Hansen 2006:212). "[D]iscourses do not define one particular policy,

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[1] Practices, understood as patterns of action producing reality and defining legitimate and acceptable actions in collaboration with established norms (Neumann 2001b:33) is integrally embedded with a discursive aspect. Through language and discourse practices are endowed with meaning, and through practices a discourse may be constituted, solidified or even tweaked.

[2] Scholars are even talking about a "memory boom" characterizing the last twenty-five years, the question of how our past shapes and ties us together being brought increasingly into the spotlight as the modern globalizing world forces us to rethink old concepts of identity and sameness, and the ever-increasing pace of change in the post-industrial society challenges old concepts of time. (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi & Levy 2011a:3-5, 8, Huyssen

but structure the policy space within which concrete decisions are being made."(Hansen 2006:213). The often cited saying pointing out how the one faction's terrorist is the other faction's freedom-fighter, may serve as a crude way of illustrating the relevance of discursive frameworks, noting how these two different discourses of a phenomenon carries with it very different constraints on thought and action. My exploration of the role played by historical narratives as a tool of foreign policy is built on this understanding that discourses are pivotal in mediating our perceptions of the world, constraining how people categorize and think about the world, and as such providing preconditions for action (Dunn 2008:80-81, Neumann 2008:62, Connolly 1993:30). "It constrains what is thought of at all, what is thought of as possible, and what is thought of as the 'natural thing' to do in a given situation." (Neumann 2008:62).

Having through the preceding paragraphs illustrated the impact of discourse on policy, it is the other aspect of the co-constitutive relationship between politics and discourse that will constitute the main object of interest for my thesis, namely how political actors seek to shape relevant discourses to their advantage. In the mutual association between language and power, it is not only discourse that holds power over politicians, politicians also hold power over discourse. In addition to do things to actors, discourses may also be used by actors to do things. (Smith 2006:14, Bourdieux & Wacquant 2001, Fischer 2003) The inherently unstable nature of the structure of language, brings to the fore the importance of political agency, and the political production and reproduction of discourses (Hansen 2006:21, Foucault 1977). Structures within discourse condition possible policies, and *overall* policies must be in accordance with discursive structures (Wæver 2002:27). Being able to control the framing and dominant modes of categorization of a current issue, thus entails wide-ranging control over what policy actions are considered normal, relevant or downright folly. Discourse is power, therefore words are politics. In the words of Foucault (1980:93): "We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth". The political essence may thus be defined as the struggle to fixate the discourse, so that actors will comprehend, enquire and act according to an understanding of the topic that serves to further certain desired consequences (Neumann 2001a:173, Guzzini 2000). The linchpin of this thesis is thus to explore how historical narratives are used by Beijing as a political tool, through which they seek to shape a positive African discourse on China.

3.2 Historical narratives

Through the following sections I will seek to flesh out the mainstay of my theoretical approach through an in-depth discussion of the particularities of collective memory and narrative structure. Having thus provided analytical breadth for the establishment of my main analytical concept, that of historical narratives, I will in the subsequent chapter go in detail on the mnemonic means allowing historical narratives to impact on temporary political discourse.

3.2.1 History and Collective Memory

That the societies we inhabit are not simply dissociated finite consequences of history, but instead are being continuously steeped in and shaped by our memories and perceptions of the past, is an insight and a field of study that has gathered increasing academic clout in the latter decades.[2] Although not coining it (Olick & Robbins 1998:106), the French sociologist Halbwachs was pivotal in defining the term around which most of the field of memory studies is centred, that of collective memory. The core insight this term brings to this thesis is the observation that the traces of the past enters into the consciousness of the present through more than just personal recollections, memory is also a social process.

In Halbwach's works he distinguishes broadly between the memories and personal recollections of an individual, and the processes of memory that we share in as part of a broader community, pointing out how the collective memory is convoluting our personal recollections, shaping social interaction, creating and reforming our memories at all levels of our daily life. (Belov 2012:84, Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi & Levy 2011a:19-20, Olick & Robbins 1998:111, Zerubavel 1996, Connerton 1989:36-39) "It is in this sense that there exists a collective memory and social frameworks for memory; it is to the degree that our individual thought places itself in these frameworks and participates in this memory that it is capable of the act of recollecting." (Halbwachs 1992:38).

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[2] Scholars are even talking about a "memory boom" characterizing the last twenty-five years, the question of how our past shapes and ties us together being brought increasingly into the spotlight as the modern globalizing world forces us to rethink old concepts of identity and sameness, and the ever-increasing pace of change in the post-industrial society challenges old concepts of time. (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi & Levy 2011a:3-5, 8, Huyssen 2000:21, Nora 2011:437-439, Maier 1992:140-141, 147-150) This new wave of academic interest in the past is obviously not lacking precedents, questions of related nature stemming all the way back to the days of antiquity (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi & Levy 2011a:3, Olick & Robbins 1998:106), but the field of memory studies found its modern form in the early 20th century, the origin commonly traced back to the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi & Levy 2011a:18, Hutton 1993:74, Douglas 1950).

Groups provide the individual with frameworks within which its memories are localized, and recollection is happening within the mental spaces the group provides[3]. The term collective memory has seen certain criticism being levied upon it for being too broad (Geli & Edam 1996), or too focused on the collectivist side of the spectre (Sturkin 1997: 4-6, Fentres & Wickham 1992). For the purpose of this thesis however, the critique has left the term's essential salience unscathed, as the main strength of it is to clearly distinguish the collective realm of history from that of personal memory. History, in the capital letter term of the word, belongs to the realm of memory in its collective sense. Providing a foundational theoretical base for my thesis, the concept of collective memory highlights the social constitution of history, thus buttressing the theoretical groundwork for how the propagation of historical discursive frameworks may alter politically relevant perceptions in the present.

Defining history as socially mediated entails a further set of ontological implications that adds to this thesis' theoretical argument. To explore further these characteristics of the past that is brought into the present through collective action, it might be illuminating to turn again to Halbwachs treatise. In his works the French sociologist makes a sharp distinction between collective memory and written history, the former being treated as a social construct while the latter is regarded as a science that through concerted efforts allows the academic community to portray an objective reality with a high degree of precision. While collective memories are multiple, history is one. (Halbwachs 1980:83, Halbwachs 1992:183, Burke 1989:97, Assmann 1995:125-126, Hutton1993:77). Against such a positivist attitude towards the field of historic writing, I will posit the crucial argument that Halbwachs and his supporters on this issue, has failed to grasp the essence of the past that is bestowed upon us by our peers. Historians are as much heralds of partial pasts as are our families or social classes, as there is no single objective history to proclaim.

The near infinite realm of events foregone, and the near infinite ways these occurrences may be combined to fit into certain discourses, makes the attempt at writing history a task, whether

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[3] An interesting aspect of this attribute, is the way in which technological innovation has shaped and enhanced the capacity for collective memory to be stored and changed the dynamics of how it is utilised. "Quite simply, there are mnemonic technologies other than the brain. Historians of memory, for instance, have demonstrated the importance of various forms of recording for our mnemonic capacities. These affect both individual rememberers as well as societies" (Le Goff 1992). Affecting both the arenas for communicating the past, the main sources shifting from grandparents' tales to mass media, and the availability and amount of stored past, the transfer from pre- to post-literate societies and onwards to our current"information age" having transferred our possible collective perception of time, and thus its effects upon us, up throughout history. (Assmann 2011:8, Deudney & Matthew 1999:207, Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi & Levy 2011b:311-312, Donald 1990: 308, Connerton 1989:38-39)

consciously or unconsciously, of selection. History is, in the words of the historian nestor J. Burckhardt (1959:158), "the record of what one age finds worthy of note in another". And when it comes to the question of what is regarded as worthy to remember, historians are also convoluted in the discursive structures of society. History is written in the present by people arbitrarily selecting and interpreting the traces left by time. As we cannot have any unmediated experience of the past, it is only through a process of interpretation that we can proclaim to have knowledge of what went before us. Because knowing occurs only in the epistemological present, no theoretically sufficient verification of any past fact can ever be hoped for (Lewis 1961:42-43).

> [P]ast events exists, qua events, only in terms of some historically situated conception of them. The notion of a historical truth for events, that is, a perspective on happenings untainted by human perception and categorization, proves to be incoherent. There exists a world not of our making, but any subdivision of it into specific events is our doing, not nature's."(Roth 1991:185)

As the leading post-structuralist scholar Barthes poignantly pointed out, although historical descriptions apparently refer to things in the world, they are really about the historians' ideas and concepts of the past (Barthes 1986:138-139). As professional historiography is thus deeply entangled in the co-constitutive relationship between knowledge, power and interpretation, historical writing becomes as much a construction of facts as an uncovering of them. (Olick & Robins 1998:110, White 1973, Novick 1988).

As would be intuitively clear for anyone who has opened their great-grandparents' history books, the subject of history is thus deeply embedded in the ideational structures of the contemporary, the conception of past events and developments changing in line with the discursive frameworks of the present. "[C]ollective memory is essentially a reconstruction of the past in the light of the present" (Coser 1992:34) Instead of forming a separate entity with privileged ontological access, historiography is thus instead an integral part of the collective memory. In the words of Schelling, man has history "not because he participates in it, but because he produces it." (Quoted in Koselleck 2004:196). Collective memory thus is not "simply the storage of past "facts" but the ongoing work of reconstructive imagination. In other words, the past cannot be stored but always has to be "processed" and mediated. This mediation depends on the semantic frames of and needs of a given individual or society within a given present." (Assmann 1998: 8-9).

The past is thus in essence malleable. Although the limits of this malleability may not be infinite within the social context historical truth-claims are made (Schudson 1992, Olick & Robbins 128-129, Schwartz 1996), the presentist nature of history making entails the fundamental plasticity of the past in response to processes in the presence (Hobsbawn & Ranger 1992, Mead 1959, Mannheim 1956). As will be argued throughout the following pages, the process of selection and interpretation that forms our collective memory, our conception of history, is seldom the result of any "natural" organic process. The potent force the collective memory holds over society is instead subjected to the works of power, the ultimate victory being fulfilled were, as Foucault pointed out, their version of history indeed to be conceived of as the natural, untampered one.[4] Collective memory is a collective product of society, and like in all fields of societal life power comes into play. The uneven distribution of power-resources between groups and individuals shapes the outcome of the conception of the past. "Collective memory, it turns out is an extraordinarily useful tool of politics, and is also continually subject to it. (…) there is a great deal at stake in how we represent the past, and different groups in societies struggle to advance their own view of the past and its meanings." (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, & Levy 2011c:249).[5] The argument that this treatise follows is that not only actors of the domestic scene, but also members of the international society may engage in this struggle over the past, seeking to harness their representations of history to serve their foreign policy goals.

The field of what we as a society remembers and forgets is thus a battlefield into which a variety of actors invests large amounts of power and skill to advance their view. (Irwin-Zarecka 1994:116, Renan 1990:8-20, Southgate2005:61, Assmann 2008:107, Finney 2001:392-393) The reason why such efforts are undertaken is to be found in the very nature of collective memory. It does not merely claim to reflect past experiences, it has also an orientational function, collective memory being, in Schwartz's (1992:124) words "both a mirror and a lamp – a model of and a model for society." Such a postulation of power on

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[4] As Orwell (1987:88) famously put it in his novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, "'Who controls the past, 'ran the Party slogan, 'controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.' And yet the past, though of its nature alterable, never had been altered."

[5] A recent research project on the politics of memory in post-Soviet Eastern Europe, spearheaded by the University of Cambridge, is very fittingly being named "Memory at War" as an accentuation of the conflictual nature of the making of history (http://www.memoryatwar.org/). The work required for the construction and maintenance of collective memory is also naturally a matter of adjusting not only what is remembered, but also what is forgotten. As Nietzsche remarked we are characterized by what we choose to forget together as much as by what we choose to remember together (Quoted in Neumann 2011:92) Hence, in the Czech novelist Kundera's (1983:3) words: "The struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting."

behalf of collective memory is reasoned on the pivotal role our collective memory is playing in constituting who we are as a society, why we are here, and where we are going further.

> Collective memory is a precious resource, after all, for maintaining social bonds and claiming authority, for mobilizing action and legitimating it. Indeed it is one of the most important symbolic resources we have, imbued as it often is with quasi-sacred meanings and capable of evoking very powerful emotions. (Irwin-Zarecka 1994:67)

Our collective memory is a most crucial part of the discourses that circumscribes our lives, and inform our sense of what is normal, appropriate, likely and possible. (Rüsen 2008:3, Schudson 1989:113, Grew & Yengoyan 1993:1, Shore 2000:41, Wright 1985:148) Collective memory, then, is "what keeps the past – or at least a highly selective image of it – alive in the present" (Bell 2006:4). The life of these images of the past are, however, subjected to a process of selection, breeding and dispersion, political forces utilizing the ideational forces of collective memory to shape the political discourse. The most potent mode through which this happens, is found in the form of historical narratives.

3.2.2 Narratives

In essence, narrative can be summarized as that mode of discourse which arranges discrete occurrences into a meaningful order, what Ricoeur dubs a rule of linguistically mediated temporal synthesis. (Ricoeur 1985:157, Wood 1991:8, Lemon 2001:127) Narratives are texts distinguished by being "a clear sequential order that connects events in a meaningful way for a definite audience and thus offer insights about the world and/or people's experiences of it." (Hinchman & Hincman 2001:xvi). They do not simply list events[6], they tie them together and order them into a story, endowing the events with meaning as they are being identified as parts of an integrated whole. (White 1987:9, White 2005: 289-290, Gustafsson 2011:42-43, Lawson 2012:218) Every narrative, in Ricoeur's (1980:178) words "combines two dimensions in various proportions, one chronological and the other nonchronological." The "chronological" being the episodic aspect of narratives, the history as made out of events, while the "nonchronological" aspect points the plots that configure wholes out of these scattered events (Ricouer 1980:178, Flores 2002:82) For the purpose of this thesis, my

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[6] The narrative structure thus entails very different repercussions from the mode of storytelling that might be found in medieval annals, where the names and dates of certain events are simply listed up without any explanation of reasons, consequences, importance or motivation (White1987:6-7).

definition of historical narratives will thus refer to references to historical occurrences framing contemporary policies in a wider temporal narrative.

As Danto (1985:141-142) argues, any complete description of events requires its inclusion into a broader narrative, as establishing a description of a thing or event requires a connection between them and other things or events in order to achieve saturation. Thus, the narrative structure is deeply rooted in the human consciousness, being one of the main modes through which we are able to understand the world around us. As would have become clear, any narrative, being literary, mythical or anchored in the real world, is deeply imbued with temporality, tying the things it tells about together in a temporal framework. A historical narrative is thus a chronological aspect of discourse, treating as its subject our actions in time and bestowing meaning on them, making the histories that by establishing our past constitutes our present, and gives directions for our future.

History is, as earlier established, a mere representation of events passed beyond the horizon of direct experience. As such, history is inevitably tied to the rhetorical and literary modes of presentation found present in society.[7] (Lévi-Strauss 1966:257, Neumann 2011:87-88, Mink 2001:219) Compiled in few words, this latter insight is based on the wider realization suggesting that narrative is a structure that is imposed upon the shapeless world of historical occurrences in retrospect, rather like the way Kant argues sense impressions would be but a blind play of representations if they were not subsumed under the categories of understanding (Kant 1970:139, Callinicos 1994:74). A historical narrative is a semantic innovation where, by means of language, the world of the past is redescribed into a network of meaning. (Callinicos 1994:49-51,74, Roberts 2001:9-10, Kermode 1966:35, Chatman 1978:47, White 2001b:234-235)

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[7] While history philosophers like Morton White (1965:4) simply argue that narrative is "the typical form of discourse employed by the historian", others hold the view that the narrative mode is somewhat more inherent to history itself (Morrow 1963:286, Louch 1969:54, Danto 1965: 137, 142). According to the realist historian David Carr, alongside e.g. Elton and Hexter, narrative has not simply an epistemological aspect, but also entails an essentially ontological significance. Human lives and historical experience is distinguished by being constituted on a narrative structure prior to and independently of history being recounted by a historical narrator. (Carr 2001a:155, Roberts 2001:6, Carr 2001b:197-199, Somers 1994, Carroll 2001:262) As such, historical narratives "must be regarded not as a departure from the structure of the events they depict, much less a distortion or radical transformation of them, but as an extension of their primary features." (Carr 2001a:155). Pitted against this stance in the debate on the epistemic nature of historical narratives, is the more post-positivist position foreshadowed by Nietzsche and taken further by philosophers of history like Barthes, Ricoeur, Mink and White, arguing to the contrary that, in Mink's (2001:9) words "Stories are not lived but told", "Narrative qualities are transferred from art to life". It is this post-positivist understanding of the ontology of the past that will inform my thesis.

> Historical actuality has, we may presume, its own complex structure (or lack of it); narrative has another […] It could be no more than a lucky accident if the structure of the narrative ever successfully represented the structure of historical actuality; but even worse, no one could possibly know whether it did, since to do so would require *comparing* the two and thus would require knowing the structure of historical actuality in itself independently of *any* representation of it. But this is impossible. (Mink 1980:19)

Historical narratives are thus shaped from the semantic structures available to us, in order to bestow meaning and direction upon the past, constituting a conceptual tool to grasp a reality of which we can never successfully conceive. It is representing the past, but it can never coincide with it, as "a representation *stands for* something by *taking its place*."(Straub 2005:47) In the words of Frank Kermode (1966:144), we feel a need to experience that concordance of beginning, middle and end which is the essence of our explanatory fictions, in order to make sense of the world. This is the function historical narratives fulfils.[8]

> To emplot real events as a story of a specific kind (or as a mixture of stories of a specific kind) is to trope these events. This is because stories are not lived; there is no such thing as a "real" story. Stories are told or written, not found. And as for the notion of a "true" *story*, this is virtually a contradiction in terms. *All* stories are fictions which means, of course, that they can be "true" in a metaphorical sense and in the sense in which any figure of speech can be true. Is this true enough? (White 1990:27).

This last question, is one that merits further attention, given that what in particular differentiates historical narratives, from literary narratives is precisely the truth-claim the former make about their subject-matter (White 2005:308).

The relationship between truth, history and discourse has been subject to analysis earlier in this thesis. However, the concept of historical narratives, with its specific structure and particular modes of meaning, means these questions are put forward with even greater gravity and clarity. When constructing a story out of the events of the past, in order for the narrative

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[8] According to White, what is more, this construction of the past necessarily entails the imposition of generic plot structures from the realm of fiction on to the sequence of historical events. The tropes and modes of emplotment, of which he labels four; Romance, Tragedy, Comedy and Satire, being utilised to give meaning to the story by designating what kind of story is to be told. (White 1973, Carroll 2001:246, White 2001b:234-235, Callinicos 1994:49-51) However, given that the main object of analysis in this thesis will be on narratives whose main treat of interest is their claimed historicity, I find that for my purposes including this aspect would divert focus without adding enough substantial gains to the analysis. Although the boundaries of this thesis entails that White's tropes on this occasion fall victim to Occam's razor, I do however believe that White's theories is a an approach that might saliently be introduced to research on historical narratives in the future, at a later stage in the theory development.

to achieve the coherence necessary to imbue times foregone with meaning, choices will have to be made. As such "storytelling inevitably involves selectivity, rearranging of elements, redescription, and simplification" (Hinchman & Hincman 2001:xvi). A historical narrative is thus anything than a transparent representation of a sequence of past events, narratives presents aspects of the past, a presentation that is destined to be partially.[9] To quote E. H. Carr (1964:130), "History acquires meaning and objectivity only when it establishes a coherent relation between past and future.".

However there is far from only one possible narrative of the past able fulfil such a function. "The creative and constructive character of narrative knowing allows for different stories about the same past events." (Polkinghorne 2005:10). Connerton (1989:15-16) points illustratively to the detail that there existed no "Crusades" in Arabic history writing before the Second World War, the attacks in Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia being simply a continuation of the wars against infidel forces in no way fundamentally different to earlier such wars. The Crusades as an organizing concept of history where brought forth in the wake of the liberation movements of the 20th century, now being a central theme comparing the malicious intentions of Europeans then and now. Typically enough, the concept of "contested pasts", that in the later years has gathered much attention, particularly in Eastern Europe, is not concerned so much with factual errors as with what histories are being spun of which events. (Hodgkin & Radstone 2006, Müller 2002, Heer et. al. 2008) Hayden White (2001:378-380) quotes Hillgruber's experimental treatment of Wehrmacht's history on the Eastern front 1944-45, as one example of how the two very different narratives, a heroic tragedy or a victory march of the righteous may be constructed of the same events.

> In my view, 'history', as a plenum of documents that attest to the occurrence of events, can be put together in a number of different and equally plausible narrative accounts of 'what happened in the past', accounts from which the reader, or the historian himself, may draw different conclusions about 'what must be done' in the present. (White 1973:283)

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[9] Historians of a predominantly realist like Bryant (2005:358-359) accuses post-structuralist thinkers of proclaiming that chronicled facts like "Caesar was assassinated on the Ides of March" are being subjecting to radical transfiguration as a result of their implementation in a narrative, imparting directionality and establishing meaning to it. In my view, this is a fundamental misunderstanding on Bryant's part, the malleability of history does not concern so much single events, as the stories that are told about them, stories that may be entirely different, although the events they treat is the same and their factual premises are unaltered. (Jenkins 1991:13-19, 32, McCullagh 1998:14)

This characteristic of the narrative epistemology is of particular importance in that another central feature of the narrative structure is how it helps bestow meaning and explanation upon events. Narrative itself may indeed be regarded as a distinct kind of explanation, that when ideally formulated showcases self-explanatory features. The closure of a narrative's trajectory from the past may thus be very much given by the structure of narrative itself. The Chinese narrative of the peaceful African journeys of Zheng He, can thus arguably intuitively give itself to the intended conclusion that China's contemporary "journeys" to Africa is also of a non-threatening nature, without this having to be implicitly expressed. (Louch 1969:58, Gallie 1964:108, Danto 1965:141, 251) "Historical interpretations thus consist of narratives about events from different perspectives. These perspectives, consciously or otherwise are always influenced by vested interests" (Heer & Wodak 2008:1)

Trouillot (1995:2) uses the battle of Alamo as an example on how a new narrative were brought forward to successfully eclipse its competitor, when the victorious Mexican general Santa Anna after his victory against the Texan rebels later "was doubly defeated at San Jacinto. He lost the battle of the day, but he also lost the battle he had won at the Alamo." When the Texan army charged the Mexican with the battle cry "Remember the Alamo!", the imbued the Alamo event with a new meaning. "The military loss of March was no longer the end point of the narrative but a necessary turn in the plot, the trial of the heroes, which, in turn, made final victory both inevitable and grandiose."(Trouillot 1995:2) History is brimming with fortified insurgents being defeated by government forces, both in America and elsewhere, the question of which of them will be vilified, which of them forgotten, and which of them become national gathering points and potent symbols is, again, a question of power. In sum: "Power comes into play when one narrative is chosen out of the many competing and possible ones" (Wodak 2002:145).

One aspect that often seems to be overlooked in treatises of historical narratives, and the power to define these, is the role of the audience. Given that this thesis takes as its subject the application of historical narratives abroad, outside of the perceived cultural community of the state, this is however a subject that warrants a somewhat closer look. At many occasions it would seem that actors regard as given that narratives will be received in the same manner abroad as domestically, and thereby overlook how the exported stories are de-contextualized and re-contextualized in a new cultural and discursive environment (Leheny 2010:131, Gustafsson 2011:42). Culture plays an important role in providing the concepts applied to

bestow meaning upon events. It is malleable and therefore capable of absorbing and inventing new frameworks of understanding, however, to internalize new narratives into the existing discourse will obviously be a far easier task if these narratives to high degree are in accordance with the already existing discursive structures. (Polkinghorne 2005:7, Hall 2006:134-138) As such, the historical narratives brought forth by the Chinese, will more easily be able to make its mark on the discourses of the African political elite, were they to coincide with the narratives currently underpinning their perceptions[10]. As Wæver (2002:27) points out, when formulating policies, policymakers must always be able to convince an audience "where this takes us" by operating inside acknowledged discursive structures.

Operating inside existing structures is far easier than shaping them, particularly when cultural differences might inhibit the formative process. Thus, in order to propagate historical narratives to a foreign audience, an effective set of narratives will have to be able to employ meaning within the discursive structure of the target country, something easiest achieved when, as tentatively pointed out by Joseph Nye (2004:15-16), they are applied within an existing discursive space common to sender- and recipient-country. One aspect of this that arguably may distinguish the application of historical narratives domestically from propagating it towards the public of a foreign state, is that in the former case the domestic public will usually display a denser web of shared meanings than a foreign policy actor does share with the public of a different state, thus providing a narrower common discursive space in which to effectively formulate historical narratives. A related communicative feature of this with defining implications for the research design of my thesis is the fact that effectively propagating narratives to an audience does require the fundamental ability to draw upon a language understood by the receptors. As such, China's utilization of historical narratives on the African continent implies the necessary use of a language readily understood in the appropriate bilateral and multilateral fora. As the focus for this thesis, as detailed earlier, is on the application of narratives, not the motivations or deliberations behind these discourses, thus the textual material relevant for analysis will not be in Chinese, but in English.

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[10] This feature of the application of historical narratives abroad, does constitute an interesting field for furture research. However, to be able to say something about the degree to which the Chinese narratives propagated correspond to those present in African discursive frameworks, let alone how they may affect these, must necessarily entail an in-depth analysis of the African discourses, something that goes wide beyond the boundaries of this thesis.

3.3 The Mnemonic Means

Historical narratives, as de Certeau (cited in Neumann 2002:635) formulates it are "stories that go in a procession ahead of social practices in order to open a field for them." The core of this dissertation, then, is to try and investigate the means through which the past may be utilised by a state to shape the ideational policy space of a foreign entity, in order to enable certain desired foreign policies to be undertaken at a minimum of political cost. A main purpose of this thesis is to attempt to create a theoretical model suited for analysing through what ideational means the potency of historical narratives may be bestowed upon the discourse of a foreign society to serve political ends. This framework being, as it is, an emic structure, other models might also well be proposed, but I will argue that through providing tools for applying an in-depth analysis of the nature and potential impact of historical narratives, my chosen approach can saliently be applied with a high degree of added academic value. Based on contributions from historiography, collective memory-analysis and the growing academic field investigating the use of history as a tool in domestic policies, I do propose a three-legged approach wherein the concepts of identity, analogy and historical legitimacy constitutes ideational discursive means drawing upon central features of human psychology and meaning-construction to allow the narratives of the past to shape political and cultural discourses of the present.

3.3.1 Identity

In *Ulysses*, James Joyce (2010:190) has his character remark "I, entelechy, form of forms, am I by memory". Being a pertinent observation on the role of memory in establishing one's identity, the same importance is taken on by history when it comes to shaping the identity of a community. One of the main building blocks in order to understand the impact of the past upon the present, is thus the recognition of the role the narratives of the collective memory plays in shaping the identity and interests of a social entity "Identities [personal or collective] are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves in, the narratives of the past." (Hall, quoted in Huyssen1995:1). As Erik Ringmar poignantly pointed out in describing the temporally interlinked nature of identity; "We can be someone today since we were someone yesterday and since we will be someone tomorrow." (Ringmar 1996:76-77).

The chosen definition of identity adhered to in this thesis, is poignantly summed up in few words by Jan Assmann (quoted in Heer & Wodak 2008:7):

By a collective or we-identity, we mean the image that a group builds up of itself and with which its members identify. Collective identity is a matter of identification on the part of the participating individuals. It does not exist "in itself", but only ever to the extent that specific individuals subscribe to it. It is as strong – or as weak – as it is alive in the thoughts and actions of the group members, and able to motivate their thoughts and actions.

The core process of this creation process of collective identification is the inclusion of the "we"-group through its delineation from the out-groups perceived as different. It is through this exclusionary practice that the identity of the "we"-group is constituted, and the boundary delimiting us from them is thereby the central object for the analysis of identity. (Koselleck 2004:155-191, Wigen 2012:188, Giesen 1998:13, Heer & Wodak 2008:7) Providing a most useful tool for such an analysis is Lene Hansen (2006:37-38, 41-42), who advocates a methodology of identifying the signs, terms, that articulates the construction of identity. Reorienting the conception that the creation of the self necessarily entails only the construction of one radically different other (Campbell 1992:55), she argues that it allows also for a set of degrees of difference and otherness, constituting the identity of the self through a series of related but slightly different juxtapositions that can be theorized as constituting processes of linking and differentiation. "[M]eaning and identity are constructed through a series of signs that are linked to each other to constitute relations of sameness as well as through a differentiation to another series of juxtaposed signs."(Hansen 2006:42).

In the example of a classic European Balkans-discourse this approach is demonstrated through showing how the construction of the Balkans is made through linking it to signs like "violent, irrational, underdeveloped" etc. while differentiating it from the "controlled, rational, developed" etc. identity of Europe (Hansen 2006:42). How we define us against the other, obviously entails weighty ramifications for our actions against them. "[R]epresentations of identity place foreign policy issues within a particular interpretative optic, one with consequences for which foreign policy can be formulated as an adequate response." (Hansen 2006:6) Behaviour becomes meaningful, and intentions and motives are ascribed to foreign entities in accordance with what discursive identity-structure they are inscribed in, as our perceptions of reality is based on our social information (Hopf 2002:6, Moscovici 1984:7-8).

A particularity that comes into being when applying this theoretical model to research on the utilisation of historical narratives as a tool of foreign policy, is how the narratives serve to

convey an impact on the identity discourse that can, I will argue, be saliently subdivided into two different aspects. The first, what one may term the image aspect, concerns how a foreign policy actor may seek to utilise narratives to convey a set of benevolent signs to construct a positive identity of them in the foreign country's discourse, as juxtaposed to a negative other actor. In the Chinese case this might be exemplified by how the narratives propagated serves to construct China as "respectful" and "benevolent" as opposed to the "meddling" and "condescendence" of the othered West. The second aspect entails how an actor might seek to propagate signs that it proclaims to share in common with the other actor, thus seeking to establish in the other country's discursive structure a sense of shared identity, again as juxtaposed to a shared other. China's frequent referral to proclaimed shared signs as cf. "colonized" and "developing country", as opposed to the "colonizer", "developed countries" of Europe is a protruding example of how the means of identity in its second aspect is communicated through historical narratives propagated towards the African continent.

This identity structure is closely connected to narrative and the past. "History enters individual identity because to have a sense of who one is requires being able to tell a story about oneself, and, furthermore, a story which relates one to others by connecting with the stories they tell about themselves. It requires, in short, making oneself part of a shared narrative."(Gilbert 2000:48). Without shared stories of the past, nothing but fleeting group identities would be attainable. "The possession of an historical identity and the possession of a social identity coincide."(MacIntyre 1984:218). How people experience the past is intrinsic to their perception of the present, as such history is central to the construction of a society. (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi & Levy 2011d:177, Bellah et. al. 1985: 153, Wallerstein 1991:78, Zerubavel 1996) Summarized in layman's terms; "Historic narratives tell us who we are and where we should be going." (Liu & Hilton 2005:537) These historical narratives provide the stories necessary to connect the individual to the collective and the collective to the past (Hinchman & Hincman 2001:xiv-xviii, Triandafyllidou & Wodak 2003, Gustafsson 2011:42). As Hobsbawn (1992:3) wrote of history in relation to nationalism:

> [H]istorians are to nationalism what poppy-growers in Pakistan are to heroin addicts: we supply the essential raw material for the market. Nations without a past are contradictions in terms. What makes a nation *is* the past, what justifies one nation against others is the past, and historians are the people who produce it.

Producing history, however, is not the straightforward process one might think it to be, and there are far more chefs involved in this messy business than just historians. The collective memory is instead a result of a series of ongoing intellectual and political negotiations, a process very prone to be influenced by those with the power to do so (Müller 2002:21). In shaping the identity of the self, and thereby the distinction to the other and the outlook on the wider world, then, the shaping of the self's history stands pivotal. As Campbell (1998:34-36) points out further, to this renegotiations of the past, narrative is central, as events acquire a status as real as they are remembered assuming a place in the context of a narrative, a process occurring relatively independent of the occurrence of the event itself. "Narrative is thus not simply a re-presentation of some prior event, it is the means by which the status of reality is conferred on events." (Devetak 2009:187). Given that, again, any event of the past may sustain a number of equally plausible narratives (White 1987:76), the question of which of them will become dominant is then a political battle in which the prize is the chance to influence a nations identity and the configuration of the dichotomy between the self and others, with far ranging consequences in term of both domestic and foreign policy. In the prolonging of this issue lies the question, invoking again the ideational "switchmen" of Max Weber (Gerth & Mills 1948:280), of the role played by history in the construction of a state's interests.

As the past holds power over politicians, however, politicians also hold power over the past. "[A]ctors will reconstruct the past as they debate the future, and as they act towards the future they are likely to (re)remember the past." (Barnett 1999:14). Gildea (2002:59) renders an example on how different parties will propagate historic myths, or narratives, both as arguments and eventually as constitutive factors of national interest. "History will be rewritten, and rewritten in different ways, to legitimate competing policies." In the words of Müller (2002:30), "memory and interests become interdependent, as political meanings and interests emerge in the struggle over past and future." It is into this mutually constitutive relationship between memory and power that China, most like any domestic actor, brings to bear a certain set of historic narratives, seeking to influence the delineation between the African self and others in a direction suitable to legitimate and promote policy behaviour compatible to China's interests. Identity is established by how we perceive of the past, thus internalizing new and significant narratives of the past carries with it the potential to alter how one identify oneself and the states with which one interact.

3.3.2 Analogy

As Machiavelli (1883:209) did underscore in one of his treaties on politics, "The wise are wont to say, and not without reason or at random, that he who would forecast what is about to happen should look to what has been; since all human events, whether present or to come, have their exact counterpart in the past." The idea that the past can teach the present, that the human nature and social means are constant to such a degree that the lessons stand to be drawn directly to present events from the similar situations inevitably finding place at some time in history, is an idea that has followed us from the beginning of written history. From the Greek historiographers to the philosophers of the enlightenment era, Nietzsche's (1997:63-64) words that "Life is in need of the services of history" have stood true. (Lowenthal 1985:46-47) Also in modern historical science, the lessons drawn from seemingly comparable events foregone has gathered much attention as one of the main means through which the past influence present discourse, and provides guidance for future action.

The impact of historical analogies are constituted, according to Müller (2002:27), by that they serve to reduce the complexity of current issues, short-circuiting critical reflection, and creating what he defines as 'instant legitimacy', functioning as "a set of archetypical situations [that] provides rules or guidelines for acting in the present." (Buckley 1989:184). In his treatment, Koselleck (2007:32-33, 38) would confer in his concepts of experience and the horizon of expectations the essential traits of historical analogies, utilizing as an example how the analogy of the execution of Charles I of England were shaping the horizon of expectations and thus the court politics of Louis XVI. Importantly, however, he points to how the modern age with its accelerating social and technological ruptures has led the gap between experience and expectations to grow wider, as the stability and essential socioeconomic stalemate of the agricultural society has given way to the accelerating changes of the post-industrial world.

However, although some, mistakenly in my opinion, might use this in making the argument that the lessons of the past are growing ever more obsolete, the fact still remains that, as Paul Connerton (1989:6) put it, the modern imagination "has turned back again and again" to the past for guidance. E. H. Carr (1964:66-68) comments wryly that;

> Those who reject generalization and insist that history is concerned exclusively with the unique are, logically enough, those who deny that anything can be learned from history. But the assertion that men learn nothing from history is contradicted by a multitude of observable facts. No experience is more common.

Later he goes on to tell how he, as member of the delegation to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, first-hand experienced how a historian's essay about which lessons to be drawn from the Vienna Congress become a dominant force in shaping their policies, applying "the lesson drawn from one set of events to another set of events". "These lessons of history were taken for gospel and influenced our behaviour."(Carr 1964:67) Rather than these lessons of the past simply being invoked by decision makers to support whatever policies they seek to implement, past experiences leave traces that might predispose the policymakers to act and react in certain ways. (Jervis 1976:217-287)

The rationale underpinning the impact of parallels from the past is to be found in the fact that politicians rarely have detailed information, and cannot have complete information, about a case, and is thereby forced to rely upon simplified structures of information, where this is available. (Hansen 2006:6) Khong (1992:24-25), demonstrates, aided by the tools of cognitive psychology, how humans' limited capacity to handle large portions of data inevitably will assimilate impressions into simplified pre-existing structures of the mind, these again, being to a large extent shaped by memory and internalized narratives. On this basis he develops a framework assessing the different ways in which analogies work their influence, defining analogies as

> cognitive devices that "help" policymakers perform six diagnostic tasks central to political decision-making. Analogies (1) help define the nature of the situation confronting the policymaker, (2) help assess the stakes, and (3) provide descriptions. They help evaluate alternative options by (4) predicting their chances of success, (5) evaluating their moral rightness, and (6) warning about dangers associated with the options. (Khong 1992:10).

These diagnostic tasks are, again, based upon the presumption of repetition and repeatability. The layman's definition of insanity is to do the same thing twice and expect different results from it, historical analogies promises to help untangle the conundrum of decision-making by revealing the likely results of the actions beforehand.

Analogy is a discursive means with far-ranging implications for policymaking and actions taken in the realm of international relations. When the Americans viewed the jungle of Vietnam, seeing the beaches of Normandy (Buffet & Hauser 1998:271, Englund 1992:32), that carries with it real world implications, implications entirely different from when Bush sr.

would later leave the sands of Iraq in fear, arguably reasonable, of another Vietnamese quagmire. This acknowledged fact has given rise to a sizeable literature discussing the importance it holds for politicians to able to select the "right" analogy from which to draw the lessons of history (May 1975, Vertzberger 1986:223-247). However, as already treated, the malleability of the past, and the uniqueness of historical events leaves a wide smorgasbord of potential analogies available for selection. However, they cannot possibly all be utilised, and as such a selection needs to be made. Implicit is the notion of structural power, namely the power to define what is put on the agenda, and in what terms political issues are framed (Müller 2002:26).

When the American Secretary of State Madeleine Albright during a strategy meeting in London 19999, in order to reach an agreement on which action to take against the Milosevic government, sought to end a deadlock by reminding her colleagues that "This is London, remember, not Munich" (quoted in Ash 2000), she sought to further her position through establishing as dominant an analogy that served to frame the issue in terms of the importance not to appease dictators. Shortly after, the bombing started. An analogy that again and again has defined the headlines regarding the Chinese engagement in Africa is the question of whether China is a new colonial power. Acknowledging the adverse effects it would entail where this analogy to become too dominant in African discourses on China, this is something Beijing is taking on considerable effort to challenge. As different analogies utilised opens a conceptual and discursive space for very different actions, the decisive question is then who has the power to define which analogies are defined as relevant in the co-constitutive relationship between past and present.

3.3.3 Historical Legitimacy
"The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in in revolutionising themselves and things, in creating something entirely new […] they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle slogans and costumes in order to present the new scene in world history in this time-honoured disguise and borrowed language." (Marx 1978:595) These words by Karl Marx serve to lead the attention towards another, closely interrelated, main means for conveying the impact of the past on to the present, namely how legitimacy is founded and performed on the basis of historical experience. As formulated by Müller (2002:26) "policies are legitimated through appeals to the collective or national memory for

social consumption both home and abroad", attempting to construct what could be dubbed a 'mnemonic legitimation' close in terms to the Weberian notion of traditional legitimacy (Müller 2002:26). The key connection being the one "between the legitimacy of existing institutions, their historical roles and the question of representation. Memory takes on a certain importance when claims of legitimacy rest on claims of representativeness. These, in turn, often rely on historical identification." (Joshua Dienstag1996:60). Thus the past serves to validate present actions and attitudes by affirming their resemblance to former ones. Historical precedence legitimizes what exists today, previous usage sealing with approval what is now done (Lowenthal 1985:40, Lincoln 1989:15-16).

This mnemonic means is, however, not necessarily constituted only by notions of unbroken tradition, such legitimacy can also be based on a break with the past, legitimation being gathered from the "traumatic experiences and disastrous policy failures from which the appropriate lessons have been drawn" (Müller 2002:26). Legitimacy may thus be found precisely in the contrast constructed to the practices of the past. This notion is connected closely in terms with the construction of identity based on the "othering" of one's past, such a temporally based legitimacy founded on the fear of a return to troublesome practices of the past, being e.g. a central point of analysis in investigating European institution-building, and in defining the ideational legitimacy basis for the new democracies of Eastern Europe. (Wæver 1996, Miklóssy 2007:68-69, Berger 2002)

Nevertheless, it is perhaps through the invokement of continuity that historical legitimacy most visibly plays out its impact on modern day politics. One very visible aspect of such attempted validation of the present through applying the past, might be found in the literature examining the role of traditions, and the invention and reconstitution of such as a tool of politics. (Shore 2000:40-41, Smith 2006:3-4, Shils 1981:326-330) The very core of these inventions of tradition being, in the words of Hobwsbawn & Ranger (2012:1-2) the imbuement of certain values and norms of behaviour by implying "continuity with the past". The main purpose of tradition thus being to define the present, what aspects of the past are kept alive and which practices of the present is tied into a genealogy bestowing upon it the potential of historical legitimacy, is thus, again, a matter of political contestation. As Grew and Yengoyan points out "heritage is heritage *because* it is subjected to the management and preservation/conservation process, not because it simply '*is*'." (Grew and Yengoyan (1993:1) To establish a continuity able to claim historical legitimacy demands discursive work, as it is

pointed out by e.g. Alonso (1988:40) how historiographical nation-building "solder a multiplicity of personal, local, and regional historicities and transform them into a unitary national time." Thus it is possible to create a coherent, self-same national institution able to claim an uncontested heritage of which to reap the legitimacy of historical durability. (Duara 1997:4, Benjamin 1969:84) As the Chinese ambassador to South Africa would point out, when underlining the time-honoured bilateral relations over which he currently presided, there is a Chinese saying that, "as distance can test a horse's strength, so time can reveal a person's heart" (Tian 2012a). It is a deeply rooted layman's perception that a long friendship per definition is stronger than short, for no other reason than the fact of its longevity. It is thus not without reason that dignitaries on state visit often will bring forth the longevity of the relevant interstate relations among the very first things to be officially uttered. A present with long roots in the past can tap into a reserve of historical legitimacy with considerable political potency.

3.4 Summary

In sum my theoretical approach is rooted in the post-structuralist tradition, focusing on the role played by discourse in constituting our perceptions of reality, and the importance held by history as a central source of the discursive frameworks circumscribing our lives with meaning. This temporal aspect of discourse is most clearly found in how narratives constructed from past events serve to bestow meaning on our current experiences, and provide guidelines for what is regarded as appropriate action in the future. The theoretical framework applied in this thesis seeks to analyse these nexuses between the social constitution of history and their impact on discourses framing foreign policy decisions, by investigating historical narratives being propagated towards foreign countries as a tool of international politics, analysing how these narratives may convey an impact on the foreign actor's discursive framework.

In analysing this I apply a model where the historical narratives convey their impact onto the contemporary discourse by drawing on three mnemonic means, namely identity, analogy and historical legitimacy. The main point of this thesis will then be to try to identify attempts by Chinese authorities to propagate narratives that serves the purpose of shaping identities based on constructing a positive set of signs describing China and sets of signs perceived as commonly shared, that buttress perceptions of historical legitimacy, and that creates and highlights a set of historical analogies suitable to serve China's political interests. Arguably,

the more of these means a historical narrative is able to draw upon, the more potent the narrative is in conveying the past in terms that serves to influence discourse.

4.0 Methodology

Going in-depth in some of the core traits and challenges of case studies, the discursive research approach, and the question of text selection, I will here clarify the research procedure utilised in this dissertation. In the subsequent sections, I will define and elaborate the research design followed in my thesis and contextualize it within the academic literature. Thereafter I will be going into a discussion on how I have sought to counter the possible shortcomings of my approach so as to ensure the highest possible degree of saturation, validity and trustworthiness to my research, before going on to define what limitations my research approach does entail.

4.1 Case Study Design

As a case study, this thesis shares the features common to its category, in that is seeks to derive an up-close look or otherwise in-depth understanding of a single or small number of "cases" set in their real-world contexts (Bromley 1986:1, Yin 2012:4). The rationale behind my decision to utilize the case study design derives from the strength of this approach in enabling a more in-depth analysis of the particularities and relevant context of a certain case (Dunn 2008:85-86). "Case-oriented studies […] are sensitive to complexity and historical specificity" (Ragin 1987:ix). As the typology presented by Andersen (1997) asserts, there is a main division to be found in research design in whether a researcher chooses to work inductively, building theory from the exploration of a case, or whether the researcher follows the deductive way of research, where one seeks to test a set of already existing theoretical assumptions towards empirical data. The main strength of a case study, according to Gerring (2004), being as a design for exploratory, inductive research. This approach is thus valuable, as my study's aim is to inductively establish a theoretical approach by an exploratory in-depth analysis of the use of historical narratives as a tool of foreign policy. According to Eckstein's classification of case studies based their position in the theory-development and -testing process, my thesis will thus share its defining features with what he terms the "plausibility

probe"-case study, where the objective is the probing of a tentative theoretical approach to establish the potential validity and added academic value of the theory (Eckstein 1992:147-150, Walker 2004:281-282). The case study approach will also allow for a "thick description" (Geertz 1973:6-7) of my chosen case of China's Africa policy, that will enhance the study's inductive relevance, its internal validity, and its suitability for providing contributions to the field of memory and narrative studies.

4.2 Designing Discourse Analysis

My investigation will consist of a discourse analysis of relevant textual and non-textual material utilised by China, seeking to identify the main historical narratives and mnemonic strategies applied towards Africa. Taking as my vantage point the methodological approach of Lene Hansen (2006), there is a set of main decisions to clarify in order to satisfactorily spell out the design of my discourse analysis. Firstly, one needs to decide whether to define as your object of study only the official foreign policy discourse, or if the scope should be expanded further to include political opposition, the media and marginal discourses. Thereafter one needs to make choices along three additional dimensions: "first, whether one or multiple Selves are examined; second, whether one makes a study of one particular moment or a longer historical development; and third, whether the analysis is based on one event or multiple events." (Hansen 2006:75). In the following sections I will go through how my thesis is structured according to this framework of research design.

In the case of the delimitation of the discursive area of study, Hansen (59-63) suggests three different models, the first delimiting the selection of texts to official policy discourse, the second expanding the universe of relevant texts to include also oppositional voices, media and other major actors, the third model also including marginal material not directly related to foreign policy issues and texts in marginal publications. In my thesis the main objective is to research how narratives are being employed as a tool of foreign policy in the rhetoric of the Chinese government, and as such my focus will be delimited to what Hansen designates the first model of textual selection. To this implied that my discourse analysis will mainly be based on official foreign policy discourse, focusing on political leaders with official authority to sanction foreign policy as well as those central in executing these policies.

Given the exploratory nature of my research, and the theoretical framework I seek to probe based on my case I find such an approach provide the desirable amount of simplicity and

clarity to my study, such as to better be able to untangle the modes and means of impact of the use of historical narratives. Additionally, as the state being subject of this specific case is an authoritarian political system where media to an overwhelming degree is controlled by the state and oppositional voices are rather side-lined, the gains to be made from including such marginal sources will be particularly slim in the case of China. However, given the dominant media's major role as government mouthpiece, particularly in the case of the major state-owned English language newspapers developed to propagate official Chinese viewpoints to an international audience (Latham 2000:633-642, BBC News 2012a), I choose to include such material as part of the official discourse, given the central role these publications play in disseminating government policy abroad. Nevertheless, as the official discourse like all other discourses is situated within a wider intertextual web of references, there will of course be necessary to move beyond any strict one-eyed focus on official policy statements in order to obtain a proper understanding of them. "This implies that while an organizational starting point in official discourse might seem rather conservative, it is simultaneously pointing to the inclusion of a multitude of texts and genres"(Hansen 2006:60).

What concerns the number of Selves to be analysed, namely the choice of how many states or other foreign policy subject one wishes to examine, I have in order to achieve maximum analytical depth within the framework of a Master's thesis decided to design my study as a single case analysis of the Chinese Self, and how this is projected as part of Chinese foreign policy. (Hansen 2006:76-77) The number of events will likewise be concentrated to one, the recent Chinese economic and political offensive on the African continent, from the year 2000 onwards. The delineation of the temporal dimension of my investigation will of course to a certain extent be arbitrarily, as the relationship between Africa and China is distinguished by steady, although extensively growing, development rather than sudden shifts. My choice to focus on the period from this day and back to the turn of the millennium is however based mainly on the fact that the first Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) was held in Beijing in October 2000 (FOCAC 2012a). This inaugurated what would become the most central arena for Sino-African political and economic cooperation, and thereby also one of the paramount fora for China's propagation of historical narratives towards the African continent. As to the temporal aspect of my research design, it logically follows that it will be delimited to one moment in history. I will follow a synchronic approach, again, in order to enable analytical clarity and in-depth focus within the framework of this thesis, focusing my research on which historical narratives are being

propagated, and through which mnemonic means they seek to influence Africa's China discourse. The analysis being directed to this limited point in time, rather than to take on a diachronic perspective on how these narratives have changed throughout the duration of Sino-African relations. Although a genealogy of the Chinese rhetoric towards Africa indeed would constitute a salient field worthy of future research, I find it falls outside of the framework of this thesis.

As to the analysis procedure itself, it is hardly possible to give any detailed account, given that the very nature of discourse analysis is more of a craft than an organized scheme (Wood & Kroger 2000:34; Bryman 2008:501). Implicit to the successful exercise of such a craft is to clarify the basic assumption about language. Discourse analysis is not about the relationship between the signifier, words, and the signified, "reality", but about the discursive structure and the differential relationship between signs within the structure. Instead of working from a referential understanding of language, where the structure and logic of language is locked to the relationship between things and words, a differential understanding of language opens up for studying discursive structure as a separate stratum of reality. As the differential understanding entails, meaning is located in the difference between concepts rather than in what the difference refers to. (Saussure 1959)

Having thus pointed out the methodological particularities of the discourse analytical approach, my research has been based on the application of these analytical tools to the relevant Chinese sources. The main features of my research have, in short, been to recognise the use of historical narratives in rhetoric utilised towards an African public by authoritative Chinese sources. In operationalized terms this will designate that I have through my readings sought to identify explicit use of references to historical occurrences and experiences being used to, explicitly or implicitly, include current positions and policies into a wider historical framework. I then categorized this historical rhetoric, recognizing them as diversified into three divergent narratives based on three separate sets of historical occurrences, namely tying them to the explorations of the Ming dynasty admiral Zheng He and histories of earlier contact, the common colonial experience, and the solidarity and rebuilding-efforts of the 60's and 70's. Singling out these three particular main narratives is based on my analysis of the source material, the distinguishing factors being their positions in the relevant texts, and the historical events their trajectories are based on. Furthermore I proceeded to analyse these narratives by applying the theoretical approach established earlier in this dissertation, seeking

to identify the main instruments through which these narratives may impact the African discourse on China.

An important clarification to be made with regard to my discursive research is that, in line with the differentiation between signifier and signified treated above, my analysis has as its subject the discourse itself, and do not take aim to explain the motivations of the actors, whether they themselves believe their statements, or to judge the truth-claims of statements made. My concern is the discursive structures made and propagated, and how these serve to frame and constitute present policy issues.

> Discourse analysis works on public texts. It does not try to get to the thoughts or motives of the actors, their hidden intentions or secret plans. Especially for the study of foreign policy where so much is hidden, it becomes an advantage – and one inherent in the approach – that one stays on the level of discourse. If one sticks rigorously to the level of discourse, the logic of the argument remains much more clear – one works on public, open sources and uses them for what they are, not as indicators of something else. (Wæver 2002:26)

As a person's "real" intentions in effect can only be approached at indirectly, through speech and actions, any attempt at gathering knowledge of this will inevitable be based on interpretation and guesswork. The locus of discourse analysis is instead to investigate the discursive conditions allowing certain policies to be formulated. (Neumann 2001a:115, Swidler 2001:75, Græger 2007:25-26) "What interests us is neither what individual decision makers really believe, nor what are shared beliefs among a population (although the latter comes closer), but which codes are used when actors *relate* to each other." (Wæver 2002:26-27). What can be ascertained through my analysis is whether certain narratives are used, and whether these narratives incorporates a repertoire of mnemonic means suitable for influencing a foreign actor's political discourse. Whether these narratives are constructed instrumentally by the actors propagating them, or whether they "believe" in them themselves is beyond this analytical framework to make any assertions about. In effect, the Chinese discursive structures are in the last instance properties neither of the Chinese people, nor of the Chinese politicians, but of the Chinese political arena.

A further, interrelated, clarification to be made, given that this thesis' main focal point will be the analysis of historical narratives, concerns the take on the historical ontology. Again, the purpose of this study is not to evaluate the truth-claims of the past, but to analyse how these

mnemonical structures are utilised. As Assmann (1998:9) very usefully points out in defining his concept of memnohistory, the concern is on how the past is remembered, not on the past as such. "The past is not simply "received" by the present. The present is "haunted" by the past and the past is modelled, invented reinvented, and reconstructed by the present […] The aim of mnemohistorical study is not to ascertain the possible truth of traditions […] but to study these traditions as phenomena of collective memory." (Assmann 1998:9, cf. Foster 1991:241). Given the similarities between my theoretical approach to historical analysis, and that of Assmann's mnemohistorical studies, this principle is equally valid in the case of this thesis.

On a less fundamental level, a precondition for proper discourse analysis is of course to possess a certain cultural competence, to enable you to understand properly the cultural codes, rhetorical tools and political conventions (Neumann 2001a:50). Through two separate stays in China as exchange student, as well as experience from travelling and working in Africa, and an academic trajectory focused on sinology and international relations, I am confident to posit the competence necessary to undertake the discourse analysis outlined in this thesis. My interpretative focus will be on the identification of what I have specified as the main nexuses for the transformation of historical narratives into political power through influencing foreign states' discursive frameworks. This post-structuralist framework points to three mnemonic means; the identity-constituting function, the logic of analogy, and the legitimization of certain policies on the grounds of historical experience. The main point of my thesis is then to identify historical narratives propagated by Chinese authorities, that may serve the purpose of framing Chinese identity in beneficial terms, shaping perceptions of historical legitimacy, and creating and highlighting a set of historical analogies suitable to serve China's political interests.

4.3 Sources

At the core of every discourse analytical research design is the selection of texts. The realm of available textual research material is for practical purposes next to endless as contemporary research is concerned, and as such the nomination of sources is basically a question of delimitation. Disregarding Foucault's (quoted in Malmvig 2006:40) insistence that a researcher should "read and study everything", the mechanisms of intertextuality and the "diminishing returns" inherent in discourse analysis entails that it is possible to conclude that one has has read enough. (Neumann 1996:3, Wæver 2002:42) Given that it would be a

hopeless undertaking to read everything related to the issue, a certain set of guidelines of text selection has been followed in order to enable the fullest possible degree of saturation.

Firstly, the designation of my research project to focus on politically propagated discursive frameworks, will delimit the relevant texts to those with the most potential to define such structures, namely leading political actors. (Wæver 2002:42) Lene Hansen (2006:85) posits three further criteria, namely that texts should be selected based on them being "characterized by the clear articulation of identities and policies; they are widely read and attended to; and they have the formal authority to define a political position." Ole Wæver (2002:26-27) argues the texts selected for discourse analysis should be public texts, as this is what makes them relevant to the political arena, this notion is all the more true in my case, where the focal area is precisely on the disseminating of narratives towards a foreign public.

Not all political texts are equally important, though. No piece of writing is imbued with meaning only by and of itself, meaning is constituted as a text explicitly or implicitly builds upon other texts and implicit understandings of culture and codification. As all texts are woven together in a web of other writings, sharing a textual space referencing other texts, what Kristeva (1980:66) defines as "intertextuality", there are certain texts that forms the central nodes in this web. (Jørgen & Phillips 1999:84, Eco 1981:178-179**,** Hansen 2006:82, Foucault 2002:145-147) These canonical textual "monuments" (Andersen 1994), that are frequently quoted and functions as points of reference in the intertextual debates, will need to be given appropriate attention as keys to the discursive formation. In addition to these primary political texts, it also regarded as useful to explore the parts of the intertextual sphere that is constituted of sources like TV-productions and so forth, as these may serve as useful reflections of dominating discourses that do their part in shaping the discursive frameworks of policymaking, as well as, even more relevant for the purpose of this thesis, useful vessels for the propagation of narratives. (Neumann 2001a:55, Neumann & Nexon 2006:11) Additionally, and equally important, is examples from the wide range of mnemonic practices, like remembrance days and monuments, that by keeping certain aspects of memory vivid is of central importance in constituting historical narratives (Hunt 1984, Spillmann 1997, Olick & Robbins 1998:124).

Based on these assumptions and guidelines for text-selection, my main sources are official Chinese policy documents, government whitepapers, and speeches and statements made by

leading Chinese politicians and diplomats in international and bilateral Sino-African fora, such statements being regarded as of great importance in shaping perceptions of the past (Müller 2002:21, Taylor 2001:25). Because of the purpose of this thesis is the analysis of statements propagated towards an African audience, the public character of such texts paired with a Chinese policy of making such sources available online, this in itself being a form of propagating the relevant narratives, the overwhelming majority of these sources are easily available and in English translation. I intend to ensure a maximum degree of saturation through reading all Chinese Governmental public statements on its African relations, as well as all Chinese official statements and speeches made during FOCAC ministerial conferences.

I have also delved thoroughly into the body of speeches and statements made during various bilateral meetings on state and ministerial level, as well as interviews and statements by Chinese ambassadors to African countries. Given the prominent role China's state-owned English-language news press holds as a tool to convey Beijing's viewpoints and discursive positions to the outside world, articles from this news conglomerate has also provided valuable material for my analysis. In addition I have drawn upon an array of secondary sources, especially where this is needed to describe mnemonic strategies of a non-textual category, such as the promotion of archaeological expeditions, the raising of monuments, establishment of official remembrance days and so forth. Informing, inspiring, and providing invaluable background material for this research project were a wide arrange of secondary literature. Additional valuable advice and input was gathered during my studies in international relations at Tsinghua University, through discussions with the Chinese academic personnel, and through a large conference on Chinese-African relations in Beijing in autumn 2011 drawing a wide array of African and Chinese scholars and African diplomatic representatives.

In operationalized terms my research project has proceeded drawing mainly on the extensive archives made accessible on internet by Chinese authorities. Given the centrality of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) to Chinese-African relations, I have through the organization's official website accessed all speeches, statements and other textual material made by Chinese officials during and in the preparations of the 5 ministerial conferences that to date has been arranged under the auspices of FOCAC, the 5th and latest taking place only weeks before this thesis' deadline (People's Daily 2012b). Additionally, FOCACS webpages made accessible a large database of material on Chinese-African political and cultural ties,

diplomatic exchanges, official statements and media coverage related to Chinese activities on the African continent. This data was painstakingly reviewed, selecting sources for detailed analysis based on the conditions clarified earlier in this section.

The second main source of material for this investigation's analysis was the webpages of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which not only included transcripts of Chinese official communiques and policy whitepapers, but also a wide arrange of reports on political and diplomatic contact with African states and regional bodies, as well as coverage of appearances by Chinese diplomats in local African media. All documents under the Africa department of the "Regional organizations and issues"-section were gone through, and search on Africa-related keywords were done in the Foreign Ministry's databases on "Communiques", "Speeches" and "Diplomatic Agenda", as well as in the media-coverage section, resulting in a wide array of texts for analysis.

Supplementing this material, I turned to the Chinese media. Drawing on the databases of the five, closely interrelated and often overlapping, news media whose task it is to function as an English-language projection of government-sanctioned Chinese views to an international public, I made searches on relevant keywords like "Zheng He", "TAZARA" and so forth, in the databases of Global Times, China Daily, the People's Daily's English edition, the Xinhua News Agency, as well as in Beijing Review. Additional material was also accessed through the homepage of Chinese embassies, international news media, discussions with professors in international politics and African representatives at Tsinghua University, and through references in secondary literature on Chinese-African relations.

Certain implications of my source selection deserves to be given further attention, as it carries with it significant ramifications for the analysis. My decision to focus on the institutional framework of the FOCAC and the Chinese Foreign Ministry to provide the main sources for textual material does, firstly, entail that the pan-African rhetorical traits will be dominant. The decision to term my case to be about China's political use of rhetoric towards "Africa", rather than to break it down to the level of the separate African country is founded in this fact. If one were to focus singularly on the propagation of historical narratives inside a certain country, the focus of the narratives would naturally be somewhat different as the receiving entity differed. But, as I have sought to examine through including textual sources from local Chinese diplomatic staff in the analysis, any sharply divergent narratives seems not to have

made an appearance on the country-specific level. Focusing on "Africa" as the subject position, did due to the extensive diplomatic, political and media communication on this level, enable a far broader range of textual sources, and as such this decision has been important to ensure the validity of the analysis. Furthermore, this approach is justified also by that it is a characteristic of the Chinese discourse towards Africa, and as such also of the historical narratives propagated towards them, precisely that it tends to treat this diverse continent in rather all-embracing terms It is through this discursive logic that China is able to claim 600 years of relations with "Africa", based on Zheng He's visits to a couple of villages on the coastline of Somalia. Correspondingly, Chinese politicians, like President Hu Jintao, does frequently address leaders from African countries referring to "our two" great civilizations; the Chinese and the "African" (see cf. Hu 2012, Hu 2006).

The second major implication of my chosen approach to source selection is that it naturally entails the analysis of texts that are directed mainly towards the African political elite rather than the broader African public. Having directed the focus more towards statements of Chinese officials in popular media, might have led to a somewhat different rhetoric nuance, but again, my sampling of such interviews and media statements gave no predicament for any further investigation into this area. Furthermore, media appearances leave for a far scanter selection of source material, given that the main Chinese platform for communicating on the political level is through diplomatic channels rather than through public diplomacy. Additionally, and importantly, in order for the propagated historical narratives to maximise the desired impact on the political discourse on China, the key public one must seek to effect is precisely that of policy-makers and economic elites.

4.4 Trustworthiness

Given the anti-realist, constructionist orientation inherent to the discoursal methodology, researchers of a more positivist strand may be likely to point out severe limitations regarding the validity, and even more so the reliability and replicability of such investigations. However, it would likewise be in the very nature of the discoursal methodology to refuse these claims, on the grounds that such allegations are missing out on the very nature of what is to be researched, and that indeed any more reproducible analytical approach "such as codification is probably impossible" (Bryman 2008:501). However, what regards the alternative criteria of "trustworthiness" being furthered by, among others, Lincoln & Guba

(1985), I find that these constitute a framework somewhat better suited to assess the qualitative work undertaken through my discourse analysis.

I have strived to ensure maximum trustworthiness through seeking to ensure credibility by drawing my material of analysis from a wide and coherent selection of relevant material, to avoid overemphasis on a set of texts that arguable may be too narrow to sustain credible conclusions. In addition, my experience as an exchange student to China has given me a certain cultural competence, enabling a more precise interpretation of the material (Leander 2008:14) A criticism that might be raised, regards that I choose not to draw directly upon written Chinese material, thereby arguably barring my access to credible primary sources to such a degree as to invalidate my claims to empirical representativity. However, I will argue that this limitation do not posit any substantial hindrance, given that the purpose of this thesis is concerned solely with analysing the application of historical narratives to countries outside the Sinophone area. As my argumentation then is founded upon interaction and rhetoric used in bilateral and international fora where Chinese is not a common language, so will the language used for communication chiefly be English, and the relevant policy statements will either be made in English or be available in official translations to this language. As this dissertation then deals not with the inner workings of the Chinese power structure, but solely with the external rhetoric presented *vis a vis* a selection of foreign actors, undertaking overwhelmingly in English, I find my approach to be justifiable.

Furthermore I have sought to make possible maximum transferability, by providing as rich a description of the relevant case as possible (Bryman 2008:378), and ensuring dependability and confirmability by following the standards of open research, and also by providing extensive amounts of direct quoting from my sources, leaving the readers to cross-check my discursive conclusions. As to the criteria of authenticity, I find it to be of very little relevance to this sort of investigation, and I note that this seems to be a notion held by many social science researchers (Bryman 2008:380). As my investigation is based on the analysis of public documents rather than fieldwork, I also find that the range of applicable ethical concerns is rather slim in comparison, but I have of course done my utmost to adhere to the relevant requirements of good practice regarding citation, referencing and related aspects.

4.5 Limitations

Inherent to a case study, whose main aim is the development of theory through a probationary case, are certain limitations to the transferability of the results. Additionally the post-structuralist methodology utilised entails strict delimitations what concerns questions of causality in regard to the application of historical narratives.

4.5.1 Transferability

"The real business of case study is particularization, not generalization." (Stake 1995:8) As such, the strength of my study will be found in ensuring the internal validity of my chosen case, a feat that necessarily will entail sacrificing any grand claims of external validity, my thesis thus cannot claim any large degree of empirical generalisation beyond the case of China in Africa (Yin 1994, Andersen 1997). The very nature of my dissertation, being deeply enmeshed in the cultural and temporal specifications of one case, renders obvious the limited support for wider generalization of my findings. However, being what Eckstein terms a utility probe-case study, whose main objective is to serve as a tool for developing theory, my dissertation is seeking to indicate a set of analytical tools that might prove salient for application to a wider range of investigations into the use of historical narratives as an instrument of foreign policy (Eckstein 1992:147-150, Walker 2004: 281-284) The exploratory nature of my proposed investigation will ensure any derived assumptions to be of a tentative character. However, my hope is through a thorough analysis to establish a set of conceptual tools valuable for application to other cases, providing salient groundwork for further theory development to be undertaken.

4.5.2 Causality

An often-met question facing discursive research is how it "works"? Which direct effects does the alteration of discursive structures have on policy, and how is the causality established? (Hansen 2006:25, Katzenstein 1996, Adler 1997). When it comes to my brief attempts to assess the effect of China's application of historical narratives, an impact analysis, if only on the general effect of historical memory on foreign policy, to establish a clear causal relation borders, as in so many other issues in the social sciences, to the impossible. "The connections between history and politics are often subterranean" (Dienstag 1996:205). Although certain scholars, like Berger (2002:81-83), proposes a tedious research strategy, analysing in-depth the political debate and public opinions of a country, in order to try and establish a consistent causal relationship between discourse and policy, and corresponding changes in these two

variables, such approaches are in my view based on a misinterpretation of the nature of discursive research. On the other hand, one might imagine a discourse analysis being made of African China discourses, seeking through painstaking diachronic analysis to establish whether these discourses have changed in manners corresponding with the narratives propagated by China, this being, then, an analysis of the relationships between signs in a discourse, not the relations between signs and "real life". Any such research project would, in my view be highly interesting, but for the case of this thesis such research is far off bounds.

In essence, the discourse analytical research is largely incompatible with with a causal epistemology. As the fundamental assumption of the post-structuralist framework of my discourse analysis is that it is impossible to study a social phenomenon outside of the meaning it is given in discourse, it thus becomes futile to measure any relative causal effects of discourse on materiality and policy, as these in effect are inseparable. (Hansen 2006:25-27).

> [T]here is, as laid out above, no extra- or non-discursive realm of explanations from which one might construct competing explanations. There is no 'extra-discursive' materiality that sets itself forward independently of its discursive representation – which, to reiterate, is not to say that the material has no importance, but rather that it is always discursively mediated. (Hansen 2006:25).

Unlike objects of natural research, the objects of social research are often abstract products of human interaction, and cannot be studied directly through human perception, this social universe is understood through discourse; concepts and words rendering reality understandable (Wendt 1998:77-88, Hansen 2006:28). A discourse analysis thus may say something about the conditions present for formulation and action on foreign policy, but might not say anything directly of the specific processes. The mutually constituting link between discourses and policy hinder such causal conclusions to be made. (Hansen 2006:28, Neumann 2001a: 51) Using this non-causal, post-structuralistic framework for analysis is an epistemological and ontological choice rather than a research flaw. Even though it produces knowledge in a different manner than causal research designs, this does not by any means entail that anything goes in terms of valid knowledge production (Hansen 2006:28).

Although the possibility to draw any causal conclusions about the effects of the application of historical narratives are beyond the mandate of this research agenda, what one might firmly establish is whether the Chinese authorities are consistently using a historically loaded

rhetoric, spending considerable resources on buttressing and communicating historical narratives towards an African public. Furthermore, one might establish that the narratives propagated brandishes mnemonic means with potential to make an impact on Africa's China discourse in manners that is in concordance with expressed Chinese political goals. Finally, although the ontological nature of discourse precludes one from drawing any conclusions on whether these narrative tools do «work», the conclusion might be drawn, of an equally interesting and significant nature; that China does believe it works. No matter the methodological difficulties of determining measurable effects, the Chinese authorities themselves will seem to believe, thus in itself ensuring their significance, that by propagating a set of historical narratives towards the African public, they do stand to gain politically and economically from the impact of these histories of the past on the current and future African discourse on China. From this it follows that by analysing the narratives China propagates, one will be able to derive useful information of China's Africa policy and the dynamics of the Sino-African relationship.

5.0 The Application of the Past: Alluring Africa

Throughout the following sections I will apply my theoretical framework to a case that has caught increasing global attention in the later years. Moving into a region of central interest to Chinese foreign policy, I seek to probe the validity and salience of my theoretical model through analysing China's application of historical narratives towards an African public. With the aim of supporting the country's far-ranging engagement in Africa, securing economic opportunities and harnessing political capital in spite of raised accusations of neo-colonialist behaviour, China has been undertaking a considerable public relations-offensive on the African continent, where the propagation of historical narratives has been a central tool in seeking to influence African discourses on China.

The structure of this case study is organised so as to first provide an extensive background on Sino-African relations and China's interests and challenges on the continent, in order to offer the necessary political and economic backdrop for my analysis. Having then contextualized the case, I will from there go on to analysing , in turn, what I have identified as the three main narratives propagated by China as a tool in aiding its Africa policies. In accordance with my

theoretical framework, I will through the analysis seek to identify how these historical narratives may impact on the present-day African discourse on China through the mnemonic means of identity, analogy and historical legitimacy. The application of history to shape the ideational framework of understanding at the African continent, revolves mainly around the propagation of three interrelated narratives, distinguishing themselves through their positions in the text, by basing their narrative trajectories on different historical occurrences, and conveying their potential impact to a different degree through the respective mnemonic means.

The first narrative identified concerns ancient contacts between China and Africa, highlighting mainly the 15th century travels of the Chinese admiral Zheng He, the second narrative emphasizes a common past under foreign subjugation during the colonial era, and the third main narrative concerns the Maoist era's political and material support for the liberation movements and the economic development of the African countries, centring on the construction of the well-known TAZARA railway. I will structure the analysis by first providing a general overview and introduction of the relevant narrative as commonly expressed by the Chinese authorities. To this I will also, for the sake of demonstrating the plasticity of historical narratives and provide more depth to the historical background, add a very brief presentation of an alternative narrative drawn from the same historical occurrences. Through the subsequent sections I will then turn to my investigation of the relevant mnemonic means, analysing in separate sections how the means of identity, analogy and historical legitimacy can be said to be present in the three main historical narratives China utilize towards the African public, and how these serves to buttress central Chinese policies towards Africa.

6.0 Background: China and Africa in the New Millennium

Towering high above the cityscape of Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa, the glitzy new headquarters of the African Union could not have proven a better symbol of the scale and importance of China's recent involvement in the African continent. Inaugurated before the African Summit in January 2012, when a large golden key was presented by China's most senior political adviser, Jia Qinglin, the new Conference Centre is a 200 million dollar gift

designed, built and funded in its entirety by the Chinese government. (FOCAC 2012b, Bayoumy 2012, Xinhua 2012a) This very visible milestone of Sino-African relations, does communicate, in Jia's own words: "The towering complex speaks volumes about our friendship to the African people, and testifies to our strong resolve to support African development,"(BBC News 2012b).

The Chinese involvement with the African continent started, according to the conception held by most historians, to take on notable dimensions only after the establishment of the People's Republic of China. Earlier eras witnessed, barring occasional trade contact, few connections between the regions, and there were no specific African element to Chinese foreign policy. The Asian-African Conference in Bandung in 1955 is usually regarded as the starting point of Sino-African ties, witnessing the first diplomatic contacts with African countries, establishing formal diplomatic relations with Egypt, as the first African country, in 1956. (Larkin 1971:15-19, Raine 2009:14-17, Snow 1989) In the following years the emerging Chinese balancing act between the two superpowers USSR and USA led to the African countries being increasingly important to Chinese foreign policy, as China provided ideologically motivated support for national liberation groups and, as the first *developing* country to establish an aid programme, initiated a range of aid projects in a large number of African countries. Chinese support to the continent, grew from 428 million to nearly 1.9 billion USD in the period from 1966 to1977, by 1975 China had aid programmes in more African countries than USA, although their involvement in Africa would overall remain secondary in scope to that of the two superpowers. (Cheru & Obi 2010:54-55, Brautigam 2009:31-33, Taylor 2009:13, Brautigam 1998:4) African countries also offered support to China, playing an important role in securing the People's Republic of China its seat in the United Nations. However, in the aftermath of the reform and opening up-programs initiated by Deng Xiaoping Chinese interest in Africa dwindled during the late 70's and 80's, until economic developments and the need to secure new allies after the events in Tiananmen Square estranged much of the Western world, made Beijing return its gaze towards Africa as an important partner politically and, to a rapidly increasing degree, also economically. (Taylor 2009:13-14, Brautigam 2009:33-42, Taylor 1998:457-460, Raine 2009:18-24)

China's political and economic involvement in Africa during the last decade has been described as the most momentous development on the continent since the end of the Cold War (Taylor 2009:1). China is now the continent's largest trade partner, and political ties are

growing ever stronger (China Daily 2010). China's trade with and investment in Africa have been expanding at a breakneck speed. According to Chinese President Hu Jintao (Hu 2012), the two-way trade reached 166.3 billion U.S. dollars in 2011, three times the figure in 2006. Cumulative Chinese direct investment in Africa has exceeded 15 billion U.S. dollars, with investment projects covering 50 countries. At the recent opening ceremony of the 5th Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) President Hu (2012) used the occasion to to pledge further 20 billion dollars in credit to African countries, further buttressing China's position as a key economic player on the continent.

As a tourist to Beijing may be quick to note, delegations from African states, regardless of their size and international stance, is given the full red carpet treatment by China. Central parts of Beijing flies the unfamiliar colours of marginal states for days on end, treating them with a deference they do not meet in the capitals of other of the world's dominant powers (Kurlantzick 2007:58). By undertaking frequent official visits, in fact it has become a tradition that the first overseas trip of the Chinese foreign minister each year is to Africa, maintaining embassies in every African country except those six still recognizing Taiwan (Tull 2006:462), providing substantial amounts of aid (Lum et. al. 2009:9), promoting private investment (Alden, Large & Oliveira 2008:151-152) and arranging various high-level summits, China is undertaking an economic and diplomatic offensive in order to secure the necessary political space for Chinese-friendly policies to play out in this region regarded to be of core importance.

China's motives for engaging so deeply in the African continent are found in a set of very tangible material interests deeply rooted in the all-encompassing Chinese goal of maintaining the country's economic growth, and, through that, ensuring the legitimacy of China's domestic political elite. In terms of securing the raw materials necessary to sustain the rapid economic development in China, Africa is increasingly becoming one of the core suppliers (Pannell 2008:709). Especially concerning the supply of hydrocarbons, the access to the resource rich countries of Africa has become a main objective of Chinese foreign policy, as the People's Republic seeks to diversify its energy trade away from the Middle East. Estimations show that Africa in the very near future will be accounting for 30% of Chinese oil imports (Lanteigne 2009:134), while the continent is also being a significant contributor of metals and ore to the demands of China's booming economy (Broadman 2007:81). At the other end of the economic chain of production, African markets are becoming increasingly

important for the export driven Chinese economy. "The basic element of China's Africa policy is the search for markets for Chinese goods and services. This involves identifying and creating new markets for a variety of manufactured goods" (Pannell 2008:707). The economic macro processes of China's rise is thus providing ample motivation for Beijing to ensure hospitality and loyalty at the African continent. "the mounting saturation of China's export markets, combined with a rapid increase in the cost of importing raw materials into China […], makes Africa more and more important to the Chinese economy." (Taylor 2009:15).

In addition, also less material factors are important in understanding the significance Africa has taken on in Chinese foreign policy, being magnified the more as the concurrent economic incentives are rising. Since the days of Mao, China has enjoyed portraying itself as a leader of the third world (Lanteigne 2009:132-133). The drive to take on the heed of this leadership position has increased further in the later years, and whatever the Shanghai skyline might convey to a visitor, China is still decisively defining itself a developing country. As stressed by, among others, Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, "China is the biggest developing country while Africa has the largest number of developing countries. With similar historical experiences, same tasks of developing and common interests, the two sides have always been supporting each other and forged a friendship of brotherhood." (Deng 2009). Holding a permanent seat in the UN Security Council, China has drawn upon this to position itself as a mentor for African countries, supporting important African causes as the establishment of various African reform-oriented institutions, and the shaping of a more fair trade system, although the vagueness of many of these pledges are considerable (Tull 2006:462).

Nevertheless, by shaping a South-South alliance with the African continent, Beijing perceives important gains to be made. First of all this could help dampen the effects of what the Chinese authorities regard as an unfortunate American hegemony. "Sino-African cooperation is considered important for strengthening a multi-polar world order and promoting both China's and Africa's international positions and influences therein." (Alden, Large & Oliveira 2008:145). Furthermore, and in the prolonging of this, China seeks to establish a strong diplomatic support base in international fora, the sheer numerical strength of African states being of considerable use in arenas such as the UN General Assembly (Pehnelt & Abel 2007:7-8). And not at least, pursuing the "One China"-policy's goal of diplomatically isolating Taiwan, having the African nations breaking off their diplomatic ties to Taiwan is regarded as a principal target of China's foreign policy, and are a precondition for establishing

relations with China (PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006a). When adding these diplomatic factors to the vital role Africa increasingly is playing in sustaining the growth of China's economy, the reasons for Beijing to regard Africa as an issue of core importance in their foreign policy should become clear. In fact, quoting Ian Taylor, "Indeed, it would be difficult to overstate the importance of Africa to China's own development." (Taylor 2009:15).

In pursuing their political goals in this important region, China is meeting the usual challenges, ranging from political instability and corruption to infrastructure bottlenecks. However, a new issue has come to the forefront in this decade carrying with it potentially damaging consequences for Beijing's involvement in Africa. A new discourse branding China as a neo-colonialist power has highlighted concerns over the country's engagement on the continent, and is something regarded by the Chinese government as paramount to address (Taylor 2009:64). As Africa's exports to China are dominated by natural resources and raw agricultural commodities, the imports from China are typically value-added products (Alden, Large & Oliveira 2008:99). This gives raise to ghosts from the colonist past threatening to frame China's engagement as just another attempt from a foreign power to secure the continent's resources for itself, while giving little or nothing back (Ding 2008:201, Alden 2007:86-88). Such worries has led the well-known African scholar Fantu Cheru (2007) to characterize the Sino-African relationship as "recolonization by invitation", while African newspapers have been found discussing whether Africa might be China's next imperial frontier base (quoted in Taylor 2009:2). As a senior Senegalese development consultant acidly commented on the situation:

> Indeed, within a mere decade, more Chinese have come to live in Africa than there are Europeans on the continent, even after many centuries of European colonial and neocolonial rule. With apartheid-style practices – including the gunning down of local workers by a Chinese manager in Zambia – Chinese managers impose appalling working conditions on their African employees. […] Africa's colonisers have all been defeated and kicked out; and apartheid's proponents are now governed by those they despised and abused for generations. Unless the Chinese mend their ways, the same fate awaits them in Africa. Sun Tzu would understand that. (Mbaye 2011).

Quoting former South-African President Thabo Mbeki: "the potential danger […] was of the emergence of an unequal relationship similar to that which existed in the past between

colonies and the colonial powers. China can not only just come here and dig for raw materials, then go away and sell us manufactured goods." (Quoted in Taylor 2009:2). Closely related concerns are being expressed concerning the alleged detrimental effect the Chinese business policies entail for African labour rights, the recent news of a Chinese manager being killed by Zambian coal miners during a pay protest will hardly serve to calm these allegations (BBC News 2012). Additionally the Chinese official non-intervention policy approach to the African regimes they are dealing with is a source of worry, as it is claimed it might serve to undermine good governance- and anti-corruption efforts. These worries are particularly being raised in the Western discourse on China's Africa policy, who tend to regard China's policies as detrimental to their approach of making aid conditional on factors like a anti-corruption initiatives and governments' dedication to human rights and good governance (Brautigam 2009:273-277, Halper 2010:98-100).

Chinese leaders have repeatedly sought to refute such allegations, stating their sincere concern for the development of Africa's nations and the benefit of its people (Taylor 2009:64). Although the discourse branding China as a negative influence on the African continent, arguably is more prominent in Western political discourses than African, the Chinese authorities would seem to regard it as paramount to counter this discourse before it becomes dominant in the African political debate on China's influence. This public relations-offensive has become a prime concern of Beijing, of the latest results being the decision to make an African edition of the state-owned newspaper China Daily, with bureaux in Johannesburg and Nairobi as part of a wider media offensive towards the African public (Smith 2012, China Daily 2012, Xinhua 2011a). Through media and through political and diplomatic contacts on both bilateral and multilateral levels, the Chinese seek to press home to the African public and political elite that their presence on the continent is nothing for the Africans to fear, that China as a true friend of the African peoples seek not to exploit, but to offer Africa a future based on a win-win relationship benefiting both parties. In this important effort of reassurance one of the strategies adhered to, is that of seeking to shape a framework of understanding positive to China through the conscious propagation of historical narratives.

In spite these concerns and allegations I have referred to, throughout the later years the Sino-African relationship would seem to suggest that the Chinese to a large extent has managed to take the edge of the accusations raised, addressing the claims of neo-colonialist policies and harnessing political goodwill to an extent where the ever stronger political and economic

bonds to the African continent seems to be mainly positively received by both political establishment and populace. To quote Denis M. Tull: "The extent to which China appears to be welcomed with open arms by many of Africa's leaders is perhaps the most striking element in recent Sino-African relations." (Tull 2006:466). One indicator of such apparent swerve of goodwill could be the aforementioned surge in Sino-African trade, growing at 33,5% annually the last decade (FOCAC 2010a). However a more convincing argument, somewhat more detached from the materialist interest base of the world market, would be that of the political course chosen towards China in international fora. A recent report shows for example that the voting on human rights issues at the UN General Assembly through the last two decades have seen a clear decline in the support of the EU position in favour of the position held by the Chinese; China's preferred position rising from under 50% support in the 1990's to 74% in 2007-2008 (Growan & Brantner 2008:8).

The African countries have played an important part in this regard, presenting valuable diplomatic support, not only in the UN but also in other international institutions such as the WTO, where they were vital in ensuring China the crucial recognition as a market economy (Tull 2006:467). Turning to the Chinese scholar He Wenping (2007:27) for an illustrative example:

> For instance, prior to 2004, the United States, in its efforts (along with other western countries) to foist their values on others, brought 11 proposals against China for its human rights record at the United Nations Conference on Human Rights. African nations, which hold 15 of the 53 seats at the Commission on Human Rights helped block these proposals. China could not have defeated such proposals without the stalwart support of Africa.

African countries also supported China in its bid to host the 2008 Olympics and the 2010 World Expo (Xinhua 2006a). In asking an official in Sierra Leone's Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the important support from African nations in securing China's successful bid for the 2008 Olympics, he simply answered by explaining that "In Africa we look after our friends and help them." (Quoted in Taylor 2009:24).

A variety of opinion polls are all supporting the claim that China enjoys a widespread popularity on the African continent, especially in the Sub-Saharan region. The number of people with positive views of China is also, importantly, substantially higher than the number

of those holding a favourable view of the EU, and also, despite the "Obama effect" overall more than on par with the popularity score of the USA. Although variances from country to country obviously exists, African countries are consistently ranking among those with the most positive view on China in international surveys, the 2010 Pew Global Attitudes Project shows that of the countries polled, among the Kenyan public 86% holds a favourable view of China, a rating only surpassed by the 97% held among the Chinese people themselves. (BBC World Service Poll 2009; Pew Global Attitudes Project 2010; Gallup 2010)

As established in the chapters on theory and methodology, whether the internalization of Chinese-propagated historical narratives into the Sino-African discourse has had any impact in conditioning and easing China's entrance as a large scale actor on the African continent is something this thesis cannot, and will not attempt to try to, say anything about. The ontological and epistemological foundations for my analysis does preclude conclusions establishing any causal relationship in regards to the effect of China's public relations-offensive on the African continent. What on the other hand might be firmly established, is that such narratives spun of the past is a central part of the rhetoric employed towards the African public, being a tool frequently resorted to by the Chinese in seeking to promote their political agenda in Africa.

7.0 The Zheng He Narrative

The first of the three historical narratives identified in the Chinese rhetoric directed towards African audiences, draws its utility from the fact that the narrative constructed on Zheng He's travels carries potential to make an impact through each of the three mnemonic means of identity, analogy, and historical legitimacy. Thus it carries a substantial potential to draw upon the past in order to shape the African China-discourses in ways desired by the Chinese government.

7.1 The Narrative

This prevalent narrative builds on the historical occurrence of the 15th century travels of the Chinese admiral Zheng He. During the Ming Dynasti, the eunuch admiral led seven major

expeditions to the Indian Ocean in the years from 1405 to 1423, visiting the coast of Eastern Africa on a number of occasions (Stearns et. al. 2007:605, Ebrey 1996:209-211). Consisting of about 250 ships, manned by more than 27 000 men, the Ming emperor's treasure fleet was unsurpassed in size until the war fleets of 19th century's Europe (People's Daily 2005a, Levathes 1994:20). With the orders to "display his soldiers in strange lands in order to make manifest the wealth and power of the Middle Kingdom." (Unknown author 15th century:187), this armada controlled the marine landscapes from the Pacific coast to Eastern Africa, fighting pirates, and integrating Asia into the diplomatic network of symbolic political subjugation, gift-exchange and trade that was the Chinese imperial tribute system. In Zheng He's own words: "once again, in command of the fleet, we go to the foreign countries to proclaim and read [the emperor's edicts and to] confer gifts." (Zheng 1431:199). As many historians will be quick to assert, this period of grand expeditions were however soon to come to an end. For a variety of reasons[11], the expeditions were halted, and China turned away from the ocean to an increasingly inwardly focused orientation. Death penalty was introduced for building oceangoing ships, the maps and official records from Zheng He's expeditions were destroyed (Tsai 1996:164), and the voyages were left to relative oblivion, generally frowned upon by those who paid them any heed.

Today, however, this past is being brought into the spotlight with gusto, the role Zheng He now carries as the "poster boy" for China's political and economic offensive in Africa, can difficultly be overstated.). In the words of Tian Peiliang, Director at the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs:

> China and Africa share a profound traditional friendship and good cooperative relationship. […] Although and Africa are separated by vast oceans, the friendship between them goes back to ancient times. In the seventh century A.D., there were already direct contacts at sea between and Africa . In the 15th century, the famous Chinese navigator Zheng He commanded a fleet and reached the coastal areas of Eastern Africa four times. Personages from some African countries also successively visited . As the trade and cultural exchanges between and Africa progressively increased, mutual understanding and friendship were further enhanced. (Tian 2005)

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[11] Among those most normally pointed out are court intrigues between the eunuchs and conservative Confucian officials opposed to the journeys, a renewed threat from the Mongols in the north forcing a reallocation of resources and attention, and the simple fact that the great Treasure Fleets was a vastly expensive project creating little revenue to make up for the costs (Dreyer 2007:3-4, Wang 1968:321).

This narrative is however far from being contained to academic circles, but is instead one of the historical narratives that is the most often referred to by Chinese politicians and diplomats in seeking to shape a discourse of China's history that serves to buttress foreign policy goals. Already at the first page of the government's white paper on "China's Peaceful Development Road", the narrative of Zheng He is being invoked:

> It is an inevitable choice based on China's historical and cultural tradition that China persists unswervingly in taking the road of peaceful development. The Chinese nation has always been a peace-loving one. Chinese culture is a pacific culture. The spirit of the Chinese people has always featured their longing for peace and pursuit of harmony. Six hundred years ago, Zheng He (1371-1435), the famous navigator of the Ming Dynasty, led the then largest fleet in the world and made seven voyages to the "Western Seas," reaching more than 30 countries and regions in Asia and Africa. What he took to the places he visited were tea, chinaware, silk and technology, but did not occupy an inch of any other's land. What he brought to the outside world was peace and civilization, which fully reflects the good faith of the ancient Chinese people in strengthening exchanges with relevant countries and their peoples. (People's Daily 2005a)

The propagation of this narrative also utilizes other mnemonic techniques than merely linguistic ones. As the year 2005 marked the 600th anniversary of his first voyage, this was constructed to be a golden opportunity to accelerate and cultivate the narrative of Zheng He, marking the jubilee with massive celebrations both at home and abroad, international expositions, books and a TV-series (China Daily 2004, China Daily 2005a, Xinhua 2005b). In further remembrance of the eunuch admirals accomplishments, July 11, the day the treasure fleet first set sail, were also set as an annual national celebration day known as "Maritime Day", whose first theme is that of "Love the motherland, be good friends with neighbouring countries and navigate scientifically." (Xinhua 2005c). Furthermore, Beijing's effort to spread the story of Zheng He, have taken shape of organizing museum exhibitions abroad (Kurlantzick 2007:62), building a grand cultural centre close to his once hidden-away tomb, and the sponsoring of efforts to build replica ships to retrace the treasure fleets' paths (Luard 2005, Xinhua 2012b).

Furthermore, the recent round-the world navigation and public relations tour of a Chinese navy training ship under the codename "Harmonious Mission" is, not surprisingly, being undertaken by a ship named "Zheng He" (People's Daily 2012a). Especially notable to the

African context are the Chinese-sponsored joint Sino-Kenyan archaeological expedition searching for remains of Zheng He's visits along Kenya's northern coastline (BBC News 2010). This quest for further evidence of these 15th century bilateral ties serves not only to strengthen the narrative by providing further material to draw upon, as the archaeological excavations has been met with considerable success so far (Greste 2010), but it also serves to draw widespread public attention and engrave the events more firmly into the collective memory of the region, serving the goal of legitimizing China's current engagement with Africa. DNA samples gathered in connection to the excavations have reportedly found traces of Chinese ancestry among the population of certain coastal villages, seemingly confirming local legends of shipwrecked Chinese sailors being integrated into society (Greste 2010). In a well-publicized gesture a young descendant of these sailors were given a scholarship in China, being toured around in a highly symbolically loaded return to the Motherland (China Daily 2005b).

Not all pundits, however, accept this narrative of Zheng He's journeys. As certain scholars argue, while the Zheng He narrative makes for apt diplomacy, the history is shaky (Holmes and Yoshihara 2009:5). This critique revolves mainly around the question of whether the voyages undertaken to foreign kingdoms really were so peaceful as the narrative do communicate. Of the ones questioning Beijing's version of the past are historian Geoff Wade who disputes the portrayal of a benign adventurer, saying that the historical records show the treasure fleets carried sophisticated weaponry and participated in at least three major military actions; in Java, Sumatra and Sri Lanka (Murphy 2010). "Chinese nationalism is fed on ignorance of its past relations. The way Zheng He is being represented is part of this." (Murphy 2010). The International Zheng He Society reputes this, saying that the battles that Zheng was embroiled in were either retaliatory or an effort to rid the high seas of pirates. According to spokesman Chen Jian Chin, "These incidents were hardly the nature of true battle but, instead, vividly signify the peaceful diplomacy of Zheng He." (Murphy 2010).

 Zheng He's treasure fleets were certainly armed, and partook in military operations, equally certain is it that they did not undertake in anything like the wars of conquest and empire-building of the later Europeans. It all then boils down to just what constitutes a journey as violent, and who possesses the power to define it. Likewise, one might point to how justified it might be for the Chinese to lay claim to 600, and then some, years of relations with "Africa", based on a few naval landings on what some less pageant tongues might dub a few

villages on the Eastern fringe of this gargantuan and multifaceted continent. Again, this is where the important distinction between events and the narratives derived from them comes into relief, emphasizing once more what was considered in the theoretical discussion of this thesis. An event may support many equally valid narratives, some of them, then, gaining prominence, due to being nurtured by groups with the power to establish this version of the truth as dominant, and the will to do so, because of inherent qualities with that narrative suiting it to serve those groups' interests.

7.2 The Mnemonic Means

The Zheng He narrative draws its strength from being able to draw on several of the interwoven mnemonic means in seeking to convey an impact on the contemporary African discourse on relations with China, thus adding to its utility as a tool for impinging the political milieu in favourable directions. Arguably the most prominent mode through which the past is being conveyed in this narrative, is through the means of historical legitimacy, framing the current Sino-African relationship deeply rooted in a history of benevolent relations. [12]

7.2.1 Identity

Of the two aspects of identity this analytical approach singles out as relevant to the impact of historical narratives, the Zheng He narrative cannot to any large degree be said to draw upon the means of buttressing perceptions of shared identity between China and the African continent. However, the narrative is excellently suited for seeking to shape the African notions of Chinese identity in a positive direction by drawing on it as a testimony of a benevolent Chinese culture that has proven throughout history to be a consistent and essential feature of China. The message being that China throughout its long and time-honoured history has not taken to exploiting any African country, or any at all, and therefore will be hindered by the very essence of their identity to do something similar in the future. As pin-pointed by Chinese President Hu Jintao in his speech at the University of Pretoria, South Africa:

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[12] There is a multitude of other references to primary sources referring to the Zheng He narrative in an African context, providing further evidence in a number of places. Although these have played an important as basis for my analysis, I find the references quoted here in full text is sufficient to saturate the subject, and provide ample illustration for the reader. As such I choose to leave further quotations out, simply referring to them as a means to emphasize the widespread utilization of this narrative in the leading political and academic circles of China. Refer for example to PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2012a, China Daily 2004, PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2010, Yang 2009, Mohan 2004, Yang 2010, Xinhua 2010b, Wen 2009a.

> The Chinese are a peace-loving nation. We believe in cooperation and harmony among nations, and we hold that the strong and the rich should not bully the weak and the poor. Six hundred years ago, Zheng He, a famed Chinese navigator of the Ming Dynasty, headed a large convoy which sailed across the ocean and reached the east coast of Africa four times. They brought to the African people a message of peace and goodwill, not swords, guns, plunder or slavery. […] China has never imposed its will or unequal practices on other countries and will never do so in the future. It will certainly not do anything harmful to the interests of Africa and its people. (Hu 2007)

This basic narrative, forming in addition one of the fundaments of Beijing's rhetoric counter-offensive towards any China Threat theory[13], is then also being pressed home through official statements and speeches held in international and bilateral fora all over the world. Talking at Harvard University, Premier Wen Jiabao was eager to underline that "China tomorrow will continue to be a major country that loves peace and has a great deal to look forward. Peace loving has been a time-honoured quality of the Chinese nation. […] Five hundred years ago, Zheng He, the famous diplomat navigator of the Ming Dynasty, led seven maritime expeditions to seek friendly ties with other countries, taking along China's exquisite products, advanced farming and handicraft skills." (Wen 2003).

This discursive framework, focusing mainly on the communication of the non-threatening nature of China's rising power and influence, applies directly to the African context. As the Chinese UN-diplomat Du Xiaocong decisively pointed out when addressing what he described as the unfair accusations of China practicing neo-colonialism in Africa:

> The illusion that China would do bad things as others did before is out of ignorance in Chinese politics, history and culture. More than 600 years ago, Zheng He, a noted Chinese navigator of the time, led fleets to the west on seven voyages, including four times to the east coast of Africa, which is today's territory of Somalia and Kenya.

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[13] The China Threat theory is a header commonly applied to the concerns raised, particularly in the United States, that China, instead being the status quo-power it proclaims, instead is aiming to forcefully overturn the current USA-led global international system, establishing themselves as the new hegemon. (New York Times 2010, Pomfret & Cohen 2010). As put in a somehow crude, but nevertheless best-selling book: "To the Communist Chinese, we are the enemy, the one barrier to Chinese greatness. With that understanding, Beijing devised its strategy" (Gertz 2000:12-13). Reassuring concerns over China's rapid rise, is therefore commonly held to be of Beijing's main objectives. (Pang 2009:134; Huang & Ding 2006:28), even leading to them changing the main slogan of China's "peaceful rise" into "peaceful development", out of concerns that the term "rise" sounded too aggressive (Ramo 2007:9-11). Being keenly aware of history's lesson that rapidly raising powers tend to cause alarm and aggressive behaviour in the international system that in the end might have fatal consequences for the new power itself, China is determined to avoid the fate exemplified by Wilhelminian Germany or Imperial Japan (Lee 2008:11).

Zheng He brought Chinese silk and porcelain to countries on the route and promoted the spirit of "Harmony with All Nations", offering valuable historical lessons to the harmonious co-existence today. The establishment of a harmonious world remains an important part of China's diplomatic philosophy today. (Du 2010)

Thus, applying Lene Hansen's (2006:41-42) analytical terms, Beijing is drawing upon the narrative centred on Zheng He to seek to establish among the African public an identity of themselves based on articulating a series of interlinked positive signs drawing on peacefulness and benevolence. As it was put by China's ambassador to South Africa, Liu Guijin (2006):

Apparently, China did not colonize others in history not for lack of power. China simply did not have any intention to do so. The pursuit of harmony is deeply rooted in Chinese traditions. More than 2,500 years ago, the great Chinese philosopher Confucius already set the Golden Rule-what you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others. Or to put it in a more literal way, do unto others as you would have them do unto you-which has nurtured the mindset of the Chinese people for thousands of years. The concept of harmony is actually a key theme of the Confucian thought. To colonize others is simply against Chinese traditions and values.

So, from a deeper perspective of the Chinese traditional culture, what Zheng He the great navigator did-not to colonize any others though he was able to-was by no means accidental. Quite the opposite, that was inevitable. That's why all through history China never occupied an inch of African land and never put a finger in the slave trade. […] I see no logic for China to break away from its traditional pursuit of harmony, forget its miserable past, and damage its fundamental national interests to be an unpopular "neocolonialist" in Africa or elsewhere. In no way does China deserve the title of "neocolonialist".

As established through the theory section, any articulation of identity must also entail a negative differentiation to a relevant other. In the case of the Zheng He narrative, this other would be found in the inherent comparison between the Chinese behaviour and that of the Europeans arriving in the Indian Sea just few decades after the great treasure fleets where docked for good.

Yet the rise of the Western powers was reminiscent of the merciless law of the jungle applied to the human world. How could China be an exception when it regains strength? Unlike later Western explorers driven by greed for gold, diamonds and fragrances, the mammoth fleet of the world's strongest navy at the time brought to foreign countries presents and advanced technology, and even helped mediate conflicts between indigenous clans. One can see the

difference in the firearms used by European explorers and the china presented as gifts by the Chinese that are displayed side by side in some African museums. (People's Daily 2005b).

Chinese identity is thereby marketed by constructing it from signs as "Benevolent", "Peaceful", "Respectful" and "Generous", juxtaposed to the Western other constructed by differentiated signs such as "Imperialistic", "Aggressive", "Oppressive" and "Greedy". The Zheng He narrative thus serves not only as an excellent starting point for reminding the West of their atrocities abroad, but first of all as a good medium for selling in a notion of an inherent dissimilarity between China and the Western powers. This, obviously, further entails the significant added treat that a significant number of these Western powers will happen to be the very same ones with which China is currently competing for influence on the African continent. It would be fair to say that it would prove beneficial to China should the contemporary disputes over such issues as aid conditionality and sovereignty were to be argued by African authorities within a discursive framework defining Chinese traditional benevolence as opposed to the exploits of the old colonialist powers.

> Today, few traces can be found of Zheng He's voyages to Africa apart from those broken porcelain pieces. But Zheng sowed the seeds of friendship and culture. African people take great delight in telling Zheng He's stories because they cherish China-Africa friendship and respect the Chinese culture. They know what the Chinese brought to Africa was peace and friendship, along with a culture representing the apex of world civilization at the time. Large numbers of Western colonizers arrived in Africa after Zheng He. They brought to Africa warships and cannons, looting, killing, and slavery, and they imposed their religions and languages on the African people.
>
> We can see from our visit that cultural exchanges should be based on respect and peace. The African people cherish their friendship with China because the Chinese have a culture of peaceful coexistence and tolerance, rather than of arrogance, condescension, and egoism. (Liu 2012)

7.2.2 Analogy

Another aspect from where Beijing's Zheng He narrative draws its utility is by exemplifying the claimed peacefulness of these journeys, serving as an illustration for how peacefully China supposedly bore the mantel of this former superpower status, establishing a bridgehead for making historical analogies between the inherently benevolent China of then, and the

rising China of today. As a Chinese ambassador was keen to point out to his South African audience;

> What brings to my mind at the moment is that China could be a colonialist hundreds of years ago if China ever wanted to be one. As you may remember, I mentioned earlier Zheng He, the famous navigator of China's Ming Dynasty. 600 years ago, he led the then largest fleet in the world and made seven voyages to the "Western Seas," reaching more than 30 countries and regions in Asia and Africa. […]. Zheng He did not colonize before the era of colonialism, nor did his countrymen till the end of the colonialism era. (Liu Guijin 2006)

As Commerce Minister Bo Xilai, quoted by Xinhua (2007), pressed the point further in a retort towards allegations of overseeing neo-colonial practices in Africa: "In history, the Chinese people had suffered a lot from colonialists, and the country had never tried to colonize any foreign land even when it was in the period of great strength and prosperity, said Bo. When Zheng He, a senior official of the powerful Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), made his seven epic sea voyages in 1405-1433 to many places extending from the South Pacific to remote Africa, he only brought back one giraffe." (Xinhua 2007). To the degree that historical analogies then form, in Buckley's (1989: 184) words, rules or guidelines for acting in the present, the implicit lesson of the Zheng He narrative, and the threat assessment to be drawn from it, is that there is no need to fear China's current rise to a great power status with reach far into the spheres of African countries, as the nation has proved itself to be benevolent even in its days as the worlds' dominant superpower.

> In Zheng's time China had no close rival. The nation was the first in the world to have developed the might to possibly conquer, occupy, or colonize on foreign shores. We did not harm others then, so why should we do so now? […] Looking back on the country's past may help one understand some unchanging that weave through the evolution of the nations view of the world. […] Zheng He's legendary voyages this is evidence that China chose to be a bringer of peace when it had the potential to be a bully. (People's Daily 2005b).

Stating the point, former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad once said that if China wanted to carry out aggression against foreign countries it could have done so 600 years ago (People's Daily 2005a). The promotion of this narrative does also further serve the purpose that it would rule as invalid the historical analogies that is often being proclaimed comparing China's rise to that of Wilhelminian Germany or Napoleonic France (Lee 2008:11), highlighting the overwhelming potential for conflict and violent search for new

markets and spheres of interest. The propagated narrative of Zheng He's travels serve as the foundation to say that this aspect of a power shift might very well apply to a European context. China, however, is different. China is peaceful.

7.2.3 Historical Legitimacy

Maybe the main strength of this narrative's application to Africa is found in its ability to establish notions of tradition and long-time continuity to Sino-African relations, drawing upon the mnemonic means defined as historical legitimacy to establish China's African presence not only as benevolent, but also as inherently normal. The notion of a relationship based on time-honoured roots is mentioned as a central feature in the Beijing Declaration, the founding document of FOCAC (FOCAC 2000). Stating further in China's policy white paper on its African policy how "China-Africa friendship is embedded in the long history of interchange" (PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006a), Ambassador Zhong Jianhua (2010) illustrates poignantly this aspect of the Zheng He narrative in a lecture at St. Alban's College in South Africa:

> There has been a saying that China suddenly came to Africa in recent days and repeated what some western countries had done several hundred years before. This is simply absurd. I want to emphasize the fact that China and Africa have been friends for long. Our first contact and exchange began 600 years ago when the Ming Dynasty emissary Zhenghe led a flotilla to Africa to promote trade and friendship. This trip took place much earlier than the colonialists arrived in Africa, and in stark comparison, the Chinese people never grabbed one inch of land and took one single slave.

Again the discursive framework is found through which the positive aspects of China's engagement with Africa is contrasted with the shortcomings of the Western nations. "Unlike Julius Caesar, Zheng [He] came, and saw, but he did not conquer. That has been a consistent theme of Chinese engagement with Africa." (Xinhua 2009a). Depicting the European engagement with Africa as comparatively nasty, brutish, and short, compared with the longevity of Chinese relations of a far more benevolent sort, is of the most central aspects of the historical narratives the Chinese seek to spread. Furthermore, in a region where the ties between former colonies and their respective "motherlands" continue to play an important role in both domestic and foreign policies, and where the "discovery" by Europeans still counts as a defining moment in the history, it is a very potent point to drive home, that the Chinese, in fact, where there first.

Additionally, it draws further upon historical legitimacy by invoking images of China's great past, the reach and might of Imperial China, and what achievements the Chinese where able of doing in the days when European overseas exploration still was in its starting blocks, the iconic effect of the popular line up of Zheng He's gargantuan flagship next to the minuscule one of Columbus being a striking example in this regard. Although seldom explicitly formulated, by thus emphasizing China's historical record as one of the most central, dominating states of the last thousand years, this serves the purpose to implicitly normalize China as a great power, underlining the fundamental continuity of this, communicating that the exception is not so much Chinas current rise to worldwide influence and strong African presence as the last hundred years' absence from such.

The narrative of the inherent continuity of a Chinese presence in Africa, draws strength from the fundamental mnemonic means bestowing value on, and trust in, ties that have survived establishing a legacy throughout time.

> As you may know, friendly exchanges between China and Africa date back to ancient times. By the 6th century, China and Africa already had direct contacts via sea route. 600 years ago, Zheng He, the famous Chinese navigator of the Ming Dynasty, led the then largest fleet in the world and made voyages to the eastern coast of Africa, visiting places in Somalia and Kenya of today for four times. In 2002, a copy of the Chinese map entitled "Da Ming Hun Yi Tu", or "the Great Ming Amalgamated Map", made a stir in South Africa while being displayed as part of the Parliamentary Millennium Project Exhibition. That map was drawn in the year of 1389 and is recognized as the earliest map in the world which outlines the whole African continent. It proves that direct communications between China and Africa were over 100 years earlier than the "discovery of the African continent" by Europeans. In this context, China was the first country to have official contacts and exchanges with Africa.
> […]
> Dear Friends. As a Chinese saying goes, "Distance tests a horse's strength, and time tells a person's sincerity." So much has changed in the world but China and Africa remain good friends, good brothers and good partners, sharing both weal and woe and profound friendship. I am firm in the conviction that no matter how our world may change, the friendly relationship between China and Africa will last and have an ever brighter future. (Liu Guijin 2006)

The Chinese saying pointed to in this quote is one that is found repeatedly in political and diplomatic statements (Cf. Wen 2006, Tian 2012a). In few words this proverb sums up the central qualities of historical legitimacy, highlighting how an impression of continuity serves to strengthen a relationship. Sticking to the Chinese fondness of pointing out the date the

relevant country established official relations to the PRC (Cf. PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2012b, Xinhua 2005d), Hu took care to mention for Zambian President Levy Patrick Mwanawasa, how the half century of diplomatic relations between the countries is founded in a China-Zambia friendship that goes back to ancient times (PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006b). Arguably, this aspect of the narrative is all the more important as the scale and comprehensiveness of China's current relations with the African continent is something radically new, and as such the legitimacy of a claimed long heritage might serve to ease the tensions that might erupt from this. Rooted deeply in past validation, the Zheng He narrative underscores the normality of Sino-African bonds, and implicitly underscores that a good friend for over 600 years is likely to continue as such also for the next half millennium to come.

> As a Chinese poem goes, "mutual understanding knows no distance, we can be close at heart even thousands of miles apart." Geographical distance has never stood in the way of China-Africa friendship. As early as in the 2nd Century B.C., China and Africa have already started to know each other. In the 15th Century, Chinese navigator Zheng He's fleet visited the eastern coast of African continent several times, bringing the unique Chinese culture and the friendliness of the Chinese people to Africa. Many African countries also used to send envoys to China. These stories are all legacies of our friendship. (Tian 2012b)[14]

In propagating means of historical legitimacy through this narrative Beijing is building mainly on the on the basis of Zheng He's travels, but does also take advantage of whatever other similar historical occurences might serve to underscore notions of historical legitimacy with the relevant country. As such, the Chinese Ambassador to Morocco would search even longer back in time. " Though thousands of miles apart from each other, China and Morocco share a long history of friendly exchanges. As early as the 8th century, Du Huan of the Tang Dynasty made it all the way to Morocco. Wang Dayuan, a great Chinese traveler of Yuan Dynasty, also managed to arrive at Morocco in 1336. The Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta arrived in China in 1346 and stayed for more than 3 years." (Xu 2010). More important, as already exemplified in earlier quotes, Chinese authorities does also utilize whatever slim evidence do exist of further contact going back to the days of antiquity (Strauss 2009:781, Yang 2009, Gao 2006), thus being able to proclaim 2000 years of friendship (Deng 2009). In the words of the

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[14] For further sources, cf. Xinhua 2011c or Tian 2005 will prove good examples of expressions of similar rhetoric.

Ambassador to Nigeria, Deng Boqing (2011) in a speech in Laos: "China and Africa enjoy a long-standing friendship. Indirect trade between China and Africa began as early as over 2000 years ago. In the seventh century, direct marine contact was established. In the fifteenth century, Mr. Zheng He, the renowned Chinese navigator, reached the shores of Eastern Africa." One of the Kenyan archaeologists working on that very same coastline to secure any remains of these expeditions, in an endeavour largely bankrolled by Chinese authorities, were quoted exemplifying the means of historical legitimacy in a telling way, stating that "A long time ago, the East African coast looked East and not West, [it] gives politicians a reason to say: 'Let's look East' because we've been looking that way throughout the ages." (Greste 2010).

8.0 The Colony Narrative

The second narrative that can be derived from the Chinese source material, is the narrative constructed on the basis of Chinese and African experiences during the age of colonialism. Of this narrative's main features is how it functions as a conveyer buttressing notions of shared sufferings and common destinies that serve to anchor the much proclaimed South-South relationship between China and Africa in a shared historical identity.[15]

8.1 The Narrative

To turn again to Beijing's white paper on its African policy, what is underscored as one of the most central features defining Sino-African relations is that they share "similar historical experience", a concept that permeates Chinese rhetoric on Africa (PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006a). The main basis on which this claim is founded, is the repeated assertions by the Chinese that they share in a common colonial past with Africa.[16] This other main historical narrative propagated by China in seeking to shape discourse with which they are met on African continent, is thus that of propagating a narrative of the of the colonial era centring on the double rhetoric points that not only was China not a perpetrator, it was also a

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[15] For some additional sources exemplifying the use of this narrative, refer to cf. Tian 2012b, Li 2010, Tian 2012a.

[16] It is worth noticing that such rhetoric is also being utilised when engaging other developing countries sharing in similar colonial history as Africa, cf: PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2011a, Xinhua 2001a, PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2011b.

victim sharing a common fate with Africa. As formulated by Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zhai Ju:

> The Chinese people and the African people share similar historical experiences. They have long stood by each other in weal and woe. […] China has never imposed its will upon African countries. The starting point and focus of its policy have always been greater solidarity and cooperation with African countries and common development. China's approach to relations with African countries is fundamentally different from the unequal and unfair practices of colonialists. The label of "neo-colonialism" does not apply to China. (Zhai 2011).

As will be known, the imperialist efforts of the industrialized European powers had through their technological advantages enabled them to partition nearly the whole African continent between themselves by the end of the the so-called Scramble for Africa in the first years of the twentieth century, transforming the African mainland into a patchwork of colonies to serve the European Great Powers' economical, strategic and ideological aims. (Iliffe 2007:193-197, Boahen 1990:10-15) China were during the later stage of the colonial era subjected to a set of "unequal treaties" and concessions imposed by Western powers, and Japan, from the 1840s forwards, developing into what might be termed a semi-colonial structure where the foreign powers would dominate important cities while never attaining full rule over the country (Wang 2005:1-3, Murphey 2006:330-337). An experience that where to give rise to strong notions of "the Century of Humiliation", that continues to play an important role in shaping Chinese domestic and foreign policies (Callahan 2010:10-24, Wang 2012:10-14). As such, one might feel free to raise the protest that China's colonial experiences did in fact differ sharply from those of the African continent, the concession-based domination of the former bearing little resemblance to the complete colonial takeover of the latter (Murphey 2007:336). Again it is necessary to distinguish between what actual events might have occurred at some point in history, and what narratives it is possible to draw from this, serving whose ends. In recognizing the artificial construction of the narratives of the past, however, one should also be aware of that, in Gildea's words; "some are more artificial than others." (Gildea 2002:74). Nevertheless, in this case emphasizing the similarities of the colonial experience can hardly be regarded as more or less correct as emphasizing the differences. And as the historical narrative affiliated with the latter interpretation, is central to China's efforts to secure vital foreign policy interests, and their

African counterparts see little interest in challenging this view, so it has become the dominant version in the Sino-African discourse.

8.2 The Mnemonic Means

The main mnemonic means from where this narrative draws strength, would in my view be by allowing the past to effect on the perceptions of current identity, conveying a set of common identity signs based on the proclaimed similarities of their past, drawing on these notions of common past to frame a discourse of China and Africa as two players on the world stage moulded by the same experiences into a shared conception of the world. In addition, through the means of analogies and historical legitimacy the colony narrative can also effectively serve the purpose of highlighting China's presence in Africa as untainted by any of the neo-colonialist intentions of which it is often accused.

8.2.1 Identity

The colony narrative's first aspect of identity singles China out with a historical moral superiority, underlining their benevolent history as opposed to their Western counterparts. Constructing a similar network of positively and negatively connected signs as a basis for identity as did the Zheng He narrative, history is again summoned as truth-witness to the respectful and peaceful nature of China's ties to Africa, then and now. The Ambassador to Morocco in a speech at Ben Abdullah University:

> The traditional Chinese culture stresses on the "value of harmony" and "harmony with differences", being non-expansionist. In the modern history, China has engaged neither in aggression nor colonialism but suffered a lot from bullying instead. Today, China pursues an independent foreign policy and defensive national defense policy and opposition against hegemony is written in China's Constitution and made into the nation's fundamental policy.
> (Xu 2010)

The second aspect of identity conveyed by this historical narrative is in the prolonging of this, stressing that China is not only *different* to most of the great powers operating in China, but also inherently *better* suited for understanding the plights and challenges facing the African nations. This is achieved as the colonial experience serves to construct a set of signifiers of identity shared in common by both China and Africa. Drawing on what I've earlier detailed about the central role notions of common history serves in shaping the common identity of a

group, this concept of a shared past conveyed in this historical narrative thus becomes a powerful tool in buttressing and giving ideational depth to the idea of South-South co-operation, being a central goal of Chinese foreign policy (PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003, Taylor 2006). "As developing regions that […] once suffered the oppression and exploitation of imperialism and colonialism, China and the African countries […] easily understand [one another's] pursuit of independence and freedom and […] have a natural feeling of intimacy" (Qian 2005:200).

Beijing seeks through the promotion of the colony narrative to harness a perception of solidarity and shared struggle. The title of an influential new Chinese TV-series should prove ample example in this regard; "China and Africa: Sharing a Common Fate" highlights effectively the notions of mutual identification the Chinese government seeks to nurture (CCTV 2005). The same sense of shared Sino-African suffering is also especially brought into play to counter the accusations of neo-colonialist behaviour. Quoting He Wenping (2007:29), a Chinese scholar with close ties to the Chinese government:

> The Chinese have endured their own grievous history of national humiliation at the hands of foreign powers and understand the pain of colonialism. China has staunchly supported Africa's struggle against colonialism and to go back on this would betray not only China's kinship with Africa on this issue but China's own constitution, which explicitly opposes colonialism.

Tellingly enough, a Peking University professor of international relations would in his lecture to a public of African diplomats and students at a Sino-African conference in Beijing illustrate his point of Chinese solidarity by exhibiting two succeeding pictures on the screen; one of the ruins of the Summer Palace burned to the ground by Western forces, and the other of the ruins of the ancient fortress of Old Zimbabwe, plundered by the British. The message he conveyed was clear; we've been in this together. As further illustrated by Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao's counter when being presented with accusations of neo-colonial practices at a press conference in Egypt: "The hat of "neo-colonialism" simply doesn't fit China. For over 110 years after the Opium War in 1840, China was the victim of colonial aggression. The Chinese nation knows too well the sufferings caused by colonial rule and the need to fight colonialism. This is a main reason why we have all along supported the national liberation and resurgence of Africa." (Wen 2006).

Again, this construction of common identity based on shared signs as "victims", "occupied", "strugglers for freedom", is tied in negative terms to the significant other; the "perpetrating", "occupying" Western nations. This ideational construct serves as a valuable bridgehead from where to address the current concerns raised about the Chinese hands-off approach to African aid and investment. By presenting the conditionality of Western democracies' African policy as based on their detachment from the African worldview shaped by traumatic historical experiences in which they did not share, but China did, further legitimacy is bestowed on their policies by presenting them as an outcome of a common historically conveyed concern for sovereignty.

> Given the similar experiences between China and Africa in their historical encounters with Western countries and their common pursuit of development, the two sides share a higher degree of consensus on human rights and sovereignty than on democracy, and China can hold in-depth dialogue with Africa on these two subjects and thus reach further consensus. In fact, compared with the Western world that over-stresses the universality, individuality and supremacy of human rights, China and many African countries attach greater value to collective human rights such as national rights. (He 2012)

In a continent where cultural subservience and notions of inferiority towards the former colonialists has been often presented as a fundamental issue plaguing African politics (Boahen 1994:309-315), drawing on these notions of shared identity based on common history might further prove an asset in competing politically and economically with the developed nations on the African continent. As the South African President Jacob Zuma illustrates in what can be counted as an example of such notions, quoted in an article from the Xinhua (2011b) news agency:

> Africa is cooperating with China in a manner that is different from its interaction with the traditional partners, South African President Jacob Zuma said here Wednesday. Zuma made the remarks during the World Economic Forum on Africa which opened here in the South African city of Cape Town. As Africa has a history of being a colony, its relationship with the traditional partners has been marked by a "colonial kind of approach," according to Zuma. "Whatever was being done, that issue (colonial approach) was always there," he said during the opening session of the forum. However, "with the coming of China seeking to have relations (with Africa), it comes on a different kind of angle," Zuma said. "It doesn't have that psychological problem," said the president, whose country joined the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) group of emerging economies this year.

8.2.2 Analogy

In stressing the point that China is untainted with regards to the African era of colonialism, the colony narrative also provides the force of historical analogies as a useful tool to make a moral distinction between themselves and the Western powers. "as [...] is known to all, Western powers, not China colonized Africa and looted resources there in history." (Mu 2006). As the current debate on China in Africa tends to gravitate towards a central question of just which, Western or Chinese policies, constitutes the neo-colonial approach, such analogies contributes to bestows legitimacy on the Chinese political modus operandi.

> The conditional assistance that the West, including the US, offers is actually interference in the domestic affairs of African countries in the guise of humanitarian aid. The West has been doing this for long, which instead of helping African countries develop economically has forced them into a debt trap and sounded the death knell of many an industry in which they were adept.
>
> In contrast, China's cooperation with African countries is built on mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit. This is the reason why China's assistance is welcomed in Africa and why African people have developed an aversion for so-called international standards.
>
> It is widely believed that Clinton hinted at China when she warned African countries against "neocolonialism", although she did not refer to China by name. The truth is that African countries were colonized by Western powers and they fear the return of the West's gunboat diplomacy - the most recent example of which is the NATO bombing of the sovereign state of Libya. Western powers are trying unsuccessfully to shake off their colonizers' image - camouflaging their real intentions with sweet talk.
>
> China has made remarkable progress on the economic and social fronts. It has devised its own path of development and diplomacy, a model that does not force any country, including those in Africa, into submission. And it does not believe in advising, let alone pressuring, another country to follow its path.
> (Li 2011)

The colony narrative provides for China through the means of analogy the ability to emphasize a "pure" legacy implicitly pointing to the guilt of the West is of significant use to China. Particularly since they in gaining foothold in the various countries of the African continent often need to compete in markets where Western companies' dominance is firmly established due to their ties with the former colonialist "motherlands" (Lanteigne 2009:134)

> So where does China fall? Is it a colonizing power or not when it engages Africa, especially as more and more Chinese began to arrive on the continent at the beginning of the 21st century? Obviously, China hasn't occupied any African country. And as a country with a deep historical memory of being colonized by Western powers, China doesn't want to control Africa's

economic and political systems. The Chinese Government neither appoints military consultants to African governments nor constructs military bases on the continent. Moreover, China hasn't used deceitful means to steal and exploit African resources. Relations between China and African countries are grounded on reciprocal benefits, which is not just a slogan but a fact.. (Jian 2007)

By framing the discourse on African policies in terms that again and again underlines how the accusations of neo-colonial practices are an argument raised by the colonists against those who did not colonize, the colony narrative is excellently suitable for bestowing legitimacy on China simultaneously as detracting it from the Western donors. As an editorial by Yu Zhixiao in the Xinhua's web pages sarcastically drove the point in further:

> Meanwhile, let's have a look at Western countries' colonization record in Africa. From the 15th century on, Western powers invaded and colonized Africa, and snatched raw materials from there. They even sold Africans as slaves to other continents. It was not until 1990 when Namibia won independence that the African continent broke its colonial shackles from head to heel. Hundreds of years of Western colonization, to a great extent, have led to the current relative poverty and backwardness of the African continent. Judging from history and reality, it can be reasonably concluded that the West's calling China's investment and programs in Africa "neocolonialism" is unreasonable and prejudiced. (Yu 2010)

8.2.3 Historical Legitimacy

The colony narrative can also draw upon historical legitimacy, conveying to the African discourse on China notions of Chinese benevolence deeply rooted in time. It thus participates in serving the very important task of framing the Chinese policy of non-intervention in far more benevolent terms than those Pilatean notions nurtured in the developed world. The 5 principles of non-intervention that constitutes the stated fundament of Chinese foreign policy (PRC Embassy in the UK 2005) takes on a hue of righteousness when regarded as part of a long legacy of respect for the sovereignty of the African peoples, while it implicitly makes it easier to brand Western pressure for political and economic reform as just the latest stage in a long history of illegitimate interference. As President Hu Jintao did accentuate in a speech to a university audience in Pretoria, South Africa:

> For more than one hundred years in China's modern history, the Chinese people were subjected to colonial aggression and oppression by foreign powers and went through similar suffering and agony that the majority of African countries endured. […] Because of the sufferings they

experienced and the struggle they launched, something they will never forget, the Chinese people are most strongly opposed to colonialism, oppression, and slavery of all manifestations. […] China has never imposed its will or unequal practices on other countries and will never do so in the future. It will certainly not do anything harmful to the interests of Africa and its people. (Hu 2007)

The colony narrative thus serves to shape a framework of understanding that rings comfortably in the ears of many in the African elite. In Prime Minister Wen Jiabaos' words: "The Chinese government and people respect the right of African countries to independently choose their social systems and support the African people in exploring development paths that suit their national conditions. We firmly believe that Africa is fully capable of solving its own problems in an African way." (Wen 2009b). As Chinese scholar He Wenping asked rhetorically; "is it neocolonial behavior to allow Africans to conduct their own affairs?" (He 2007:29). When the Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei was asked to comment on remarks made by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton warning in implicit terms African nations not to let China lead the continent into a new era of economic and political dependence (Krause-Jackson 2011) he would again point to that "Both China and Africa suffered from colonialism invasion and oppression in history, so they know best what colonialism is and the importance of respect and equality. China fully respects African countries' right to choose their development path. China never imposes its will on African countries, nor adds political conditions to its aid for Africa." (Xinhua 2011c) A statement that carries all the more weight if the relevant discourse frames it in terms of a historical legacy of never in the past do have done something similar.

9.0 The TAZARA Narrative

Tying closely into the historical narrative of the colonial era, what I have termed the TAZARA narrative is constructed on the basis of the support China bestowed to African nations during the decolonization of the 60s and 70s, with the large-scale Tanzania-Zambia railway (TAZARA) project being showcased as the monumental symbol for this support. Serving as a natural bridge carrying many of the themes of the former narratives further towards the present day, this narrative serves to further reinforce the legacy, brotherhood and

benevolence of Chinese presence in Africa, linking it temporally to the present and providing further ideational grounds for drawing these trajectories into the future of Sino-African relations.[17]

9.1 The Narrative

Closely related to the colony narrative, is a narrative that takes as its subject the very struggle for sovereignty and development that the colonial era gave rise to. Reinforcing the proclaimed causality between the shared historical sufferings, and the natural feelings of solidarity and brotherhood, this historical narrative is utilised time and time again to tell the tale of how China, even in the days where they themselves were experiencing dire poverty, would do their best to aid their African peers. This tale is being illustrated at its most iconic through the history of the TAZARA railway-construction, a history that receives continual advancement as a symbol of "all-weather" Sino-African friendship. As expressed by the Chinese Ambassador to Tanzania:

> China and Africa have both suffered foreign invasion, oppression and enslavement in the past and, therefore, the Chinese people have deep understanding of African people's aspiration to safeguard their countries' independence and develop their economies. That is why China would mobilize the whole country in helping African people construct the Tanzania-Zambia Railway when China itself was not so well off. Such selfless aid to Africa fully showcases the Chinese people's sincere friendship with the Tanzanian and Zambian people as well as with African people in general. (Liu Xinsheng 2011a)

The starting point of Chinese aid to post-war Africa is be found in the aftermath of the 1955 Asia-Africa Summit in Bandung, where they endorsed the principles of anti-colonialism, and started fashioning diplomatic ties with certain African countries. (PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000b, CVCE 2011 [1955]), Wang 2004, Cheru & Obi 2010:54-55) As the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs summarizes the relations during the last half century;

> The Chinese Government and people deeply sympathized with and vigorously supported the African countries and peoples in their just struggle against imperialism and colonialism and for national independence. China rendered forceful support to them both morally and materially. China provided African countries with a wealth of selfless aid to help them to develop their economies and consolidate their independence, in spite of the fact that China itself was

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[17] For further source material, refer to cf. Chang 2006, Xinhua 2006c, Xinhua 2004, Li 2007, Xinhua 2001b. Deng 201, PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007.

economically very difficult due to enormous imperialist pressure and embargo. In this way, China made important contribution to the national liberation and economic development of Africa. The aid project Tanzam Ralway is well known in the world. (PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2000a).

What is, as illustrated above, regarded as the centrepiece of this assistance to the African continent, continuously underlined as "the landmark of China-Africa friendly relations." (Lu 2012), is the TAZARA railway linking land-locked Zambia to Tanzania After the presidents of Zambia and Tanzania unsuccessfully had sought support for the project from the World Bank and Western nations, China, in the midst of the Cultural Revolution agreed to finance and build the railroad, sending around 20 000 Chinese workers to complete what was to be the longest railroad in Africa. (Rettman1973:232-234, Raine 2009:56-57, Monson 2009:2-3)

> In 1960s and 1970s, to support African people's just cause of developing their economies, breaking up imperialistic blockade and winning national independence and liberation, the then Chinese leaders made the resolute decision to help African people construct this major project. For it China not only provided funds, but also selected qualified technical staff from all over the nation and sent them to Africa. Working together with more than a hundred thousand Tanzanian and Zambian workers, the Chinese engineers made tremendous efforts in constructing the rail line in spite of the scorching heat and endemics, during which 70 Chinese staff laid down their lives. The Chinese, Tanzanian and Zambian constructors successfully built the high-quality and high-grade railway with extraordinary endeavors upon overcoming all sorts of unimaginable obstacles in 5 years' time. (Liu Xinsheng 2011a)

Constructed between 1970 and 1975, and informally often termed the "Freedom Railway", it was after the Aswan and Upper Volta dams, the third largest foreign aid project undertaken in Africa, and the largest aid project undertaken by China (Zhong 2010, Rettman1973:232-234). The narrative based on these historical occurrences have in the later years become one of the centrepieces in China's public relations-offensive towards Africa. At the core of this narrative is the simple message that even when poor and themselves riddled with problems China was willing to stand up for their African friends. As the Chinese Government's white paper on China's Peaceful Development states:

> In October 1971, with the support of other developing countries, China resumed its legal seat in the United Nations, established relations of economic and technical cooperation with more developing countries, and funded the Tanzania-Zambia Railway (TAZARA) and other major infrastructure projects. In this period, China overcame its own difficulties, and provided

maximum assistance it could afford to other developing countries in their efforts to win national independence and to develop national economy, thus laying a solid foundation for its long-term friendly cooperation with developing countries. (Beijing Review 2011)

A thing worthy of noticing about this narrative, as it is currently applied to the African public, is how it is abstaining from making references to the role played by of Maoist revolutionary thought in the support given to Africa from the 50's forward (Taylor 2009:14-17, Duffield 1984:137). One might bring forth a competing narrative claiming that it was this Maoist motivation, not a deeply felt solidarity for Africa being ingrained by a continuous history of past friendship, that was the main source for China's support to the struggle of African nations, especially given how can be said to have waned off in the 80's after the Maoist era ended (Taylor 2009:13, Raine 2009:21-22, Taylor 1998:457-460). Again, this is a narrative that could have been put forth with just as much validity as the current TAZARA narrative, but as in the former examples made of possible alternative narratives, such a narrative spun of the Sino-African relations arguably would not serve China's interests to the degree that the currently propagated narrative does. As China through its rhetoric seemingly seeks to alter the African discourse on themselves by propagating narratives emphasizing the continuous brotherhood of China and Africa, a narrative implying that Maoist China, rather that China as such, stood behind the support to the fledgling African nations would serve to counter the notions of continuity and historical legitimacy they pursue to convey. Additionally, underscoring the revolutionary nature of China's near past would hardly serve Beijing's efforts of claiming the peaceful, non-threatening nature of China's rise. Again, while different narratives of the past might be equally valid, certain of them serves the interests of the present better than others, and as such end up dominating the discourse.

Distinguishing this narrative somewhat from the two former is the fact that the timeline of the historical occurrences referred to in this case brings the basis of the narrative into the realm of living memory. The events are still part of the personal memories of a large body of people. Although this might restrain somewhat the plasticity of possible versions of the past feasible to the public, still, as detailed in the theoretical section, the struggle of competing narratives is not so much about the truth of events, but of the narratives spun from them. As such I postulate that the same mnemonic means applies also in cases of narratives drawn from near history, and that the same theoretical approach to the analysis thus is justified.

9.2 The Mnemonic Means

The TAZARA narrative contributes to strengthen China's claim to historical legitimacy, and underscores further the construction of shared aspects of identity between China and the African countries. Certain analogies may also be found, drawing mainly on how China was the actor constructing the lifeline of the TAZARA railroad when other nations refused, but this mnemonic means is not the most dominating from which this narrative draws its potential effect.[18]

9.2.1 Identity

Based on the notion of commonly shared identity founded on shared sufferings that the colony narrative conveys, the TAZARA narrative draws the trajectory further, providing additional weight to the claim of a shared historical destiny resulting in a shared identity between the two peoples of China and Africa. These notions of shared historical struggles ushering into a shared identity is aptly illustrated in a speech by Chinese President Hu Jintao (Hu 2009) during an official visit to Tanzania:

> As an old Chinese saying goes, "Nothing can separate people with common goals and ideals, not even mountains and seas." In spite of the long distance between us, leaders and people of our two countries have engaged in friendly exchanges since the 1960s and forged a profound friendship during Africa's struggle for national liberation. […] In the 1950s and 1960s, people of China and Africa fought shoulder-to-shoulder against the colonial rule in order to achieve national liberation on the African continent. […] Similar historical experiences and shared goals have tied our destinies together and enabled our relationship to withstand the test of time and changes in the international situation. I wish to reiterate here that the Chinese people have always cherished our traditional friendship with Africa and we will continue to do so in the future. We will always view African people as our all-weather friends whom we can fully trust and count on. We will forever remain good brothers and good partners of the African people.

Both China and Africa, according to the narrative, faced the same challenges of colonial domination and underdevelopment, and fought together in the struggle to overcome these foreign-imposed hurdles and establish free and prosperous societies, these experiences forging a strong bond between them. As further underlined by President Hu (2007)

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[18] Among the other primary sources that provided the basis on which these analyses are made, recommended references would be Jiang 2000, He 2006, FOCAC 2010b, Xinhua 2010a, Tang 2005, GOV.cn 2012a, Li Xiguang 2010.

on the occasion of a speech at a university in South Africa;

> Over the years, the Chinese and African peoples shared weal and woe and forged a close bond of empathy and friendship. In particular, over the past half a century, we have supported each other in national liberation and maintained sincere cooperation in development and close coordination in international affairs. China-Africa friendship has stood the test of times, and China-Africa cooperation has benefited both sides. We in China take great pride in our friendship with the African people. The Chinese people and the African people have always been and will remain true friends who treat each other as equals and with mutual trust and all sincerity, good partners of mutually beneficial cooperation and close brothers who stand together in times of difficulty. I call on the Chinese people and the African people to carry forward their friendship from generation to generation. And I am sure that the Chinese and African peoples will live in friendship from generation to generation.

Tying into the colony narrative, this common struggle and brotherly support is not only presented as forging new bonds between the two peoples, but also as the result of the feelings of common identity the years under colonial oppression had bestowed upon the relations between China and Africa. Through such terms the TAZARA narrative can draw upon the means of what I chose to term identity's second aspect, in that it serves to weave a set of common signs defining China and Africa as sharing the traits of being "oppressed", "freedom fighters", "generous", and "trustworthy friends".

> Why Chinese people always feel kind and grateful towards African people? Because China has been receiving generous support from Africa all the time, for example, China's legitimate resumption of its membership in the family of United Nation in 1971 was most attributed to the votes of African countries. Every Chinese student has been taught in the school to remember this, and show goodwill to the African people in return. (Zhong 2010)

As the Chinese Ambassador to South Africa here demonstrates in his speech, in order to establish firmly how solidary friendship is a trait shared by both China and Africa, it is necessary to underline how also Africa has been reaching out to their Chinese brothers in their time of need. Thus the narrative of a common history allows claims to be made of a common identity, through which one may invoke help and support in the time of need.

> As both the Chinese and the African people had similar experiences of being invaded and oppressed by foreign forces in the history, they share common grounds on major important issues, cherish the friendship that have earned by supporting each other. That was why China

had been among the most ardent supporters for the African national liberation and independence, and that was why African leaders were singing and dancing when they voted the People's Republic of China into the United Nations. Only brothers and sisters would help each other like that. (Liu Xinsheng 2011b).

The other against which these signs of the common self is contrasted is in this occasion the, often implicitly identified, oppressing colonial regimes put into power by the colonialist Western nations. The TAZARA narrative's means conveying historically founded common identity juxtaposed towards a significant other constituted by the developed countries, also serves to support other markers of common identity that China seldom tires of underlining, such as how China as the largest developing country is the natural ally of Africa, the continent with the largest number of developing countries: "China is the world's largest developing country and Africa is home to the largest number of developing countries. We have similar historical experiences, face similar tasks of development and have the same or similar concerns in international affairs." (Tian 2012a).

To turn to the first aspect of identity, how one of the central means through which historical narratives may convey its impact on the present is through effectuating the impression the self, Africa, holds of the identity of the other, China, the main findings follows closely the pattern from the analysis of the second aspect of identity. To quote from the leading Chinese official Jia Qinglin's (Jia 2012) speech at the 18th summit of the African Union:

> Despite the vast geographical distance, China and Africa enjoy a long-standing friendship. Our peoples have over the years shared weal and woe and forged a strong bond of affinity. Back in the 1950s and 1960s, China and Africa supported each other and worked together hand in hand. In the new century, with the establishment of the FOCAC, particularly with the launch at the FOCAC Beijing Summit of the new type of China-Africa strategic partnership featuring political equality and mutual trust, economic win-win cooperation and cultural exchanges, relations between China and Africa have entered a new era of all-round, fast and in-depth development and demonstrated strong vigor and vitality.

The speech itself, being given on such a central venue to African policy and identity constitution as an AU-summit, serves well to illustrate how Beijing through the TAZARA narrative seeks to impose on the African discourse on China, a set of interrelated signs defining China as "solidary", "faithful", "friendly" and "supportive". Again, implicitly

juxtaposed towards the Western powers through which the struggle for freedom had to be undertaken. Successfully conveying this perception of Chinese identity as inherently solidary to the African plight and the African countries struggle for economic development, is obviously of importance as the African decision makers and public ponders on which terms they should regard the new overwhelming Chinese presence on the continent.[19]

9.2.2 Analogy

As a means of mnemonic impact, the TAZARA narrative does to a comparatively small degree serve to convey and highlight historical analogies that might serve as a guide for policymaking in the present. However, the narrative implicitly propagates an important analogy constructing a lesson to be learned from how the countries initiating TAZARA railroad project sought in vain for loans and support from Western countries and agencies, and only saw the project come to fruition after presenting it to the Chinese. As formulated by Chinese Ambassador Zhong Jianhua a public of South African university students:

> The TAZARA Railway, which was also called Freedom Railway in Swahili, cost five years to complete. 60, 000 Chinese technicians and workers, working hand in hand with nearly the same number of African brothers, had overcome all natural and economic difficulties to accomplish this seemingly impossible mission. […] For the construction of this railway, the Chinese government and people had provided aid valued 500 million US dollars. And most importantly, more than 60 Chinese workers sacrificed their lives and were laid at rest eternally in the soil of this continent. It is also of significance to note that the African proposal to build this railway was previously turned down by several Western countries. And the unselfish assistance was given during the time when China itself faced acute shortage in resources and its poverty problem not yet addressed. (Zhong 2010)[20]

The implications of the analogy to be drawn from this narrative may, in simple terms, be summed up to the point that the past has shown that one can trust China to be a friend having the good of the African peoples in their mind, even when economic or strategic considerations make Western countries turn away. As Zambia's former president Kenneth Kaunda would

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[19] See also Zhu 2000, Zhai 2011, Xinhua 2009a.
[20] Of particular interest to the South African public in question, Zhong goes on to explain in detail how the Chinese-built TAZARA railroad was of instrumental in bringing down the Apartheid regime, thus reinforcing further China's self-proclaimed tradition as a champion for the liberty of the African peoples. "By its effort to support South Africa's neighboring African countries to build infrastructure capacity and develop economy, China facilitated the anti-Apartheid struggle of the ANC. Without TAZARA Railway, ANC would have received much less support than it could. Not to further mention that material donations and weapons for the liberation struggle were largely transported using this railway." (Zhong 2010).

proclaim in support of China's claims, thus further legitimizing this narrative for the African public:

> The history of TAZARA is that former President Nyerere of Tanzania and I, myself went to the west and told them we need this railway between Tanzania and Zambia because the railways out therein the southern part (of Africa) are being controlled by the racists in Rhodesia, racists in South Africa, racists in Namibia, racists in Angola, in Mozambique, so we need this railway to be built […] The west rejected that proposal. They said that the problem in South Africa will soon go, and the problem in Rhodesia will soon go. Don't worry about those problems, don't think of this [...] President Nyerere and I then went to see Chairman Mao, and the prime minister (Zhou Enlai). We talked and put it to them, and they readily agreed, 'we'll go together to build that railway,' this came. They came as brothers and sisters, as friends, as comrades with common struggle, they built that with our help. […] What more friendship do you want to see more than that? (Xinhua 2009c)

Another related analogy can be summed up in the title of a recent Sino-African study conference in Beijing, "African Independence and China". During this conference African and Chinese diplomats, students and scholars did convene to discuss how China might aid Africa in obtaining economic freedom in the same manner they once helped them obtain political freedom from the suppressing colonial structures put in place by the Western world. As this analogy was given voice by President Hu Jintao (Hu 2009) in a speech held in Tanzania's former capital Dar es Salaam:

> In the 1950s and 1960s, people of China and Africa fought shoulder-to-shoulder against the colonial rule in order to achieve national liberation on the African continent. This was followed by our cooperation in various forms on the basis of equality and mutual benefit. Now in this new century, we are working together to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and bring about development and rejuvenation of China and Africa. Let us join hands to build on our past achievements, work tirelessly to advance the new type of China-Africa strategic partnership and write a new chapter in the annals of China-Africa friendship!

The logic the analogy conveys to the African people is rather simple, in the strive to achieve economic development and raise living standards, who better to trust than those who would stand up to give Africa a hand even when turned down by the Western powers. Successful in helping the African countries achieve independence, they can be trusted to do their best to help Africa to success in achieving liberation from the underdevelopment caused by the very

same colonial shackles. Given the large degree to which the Chinese investments in Africa currently concerns building of infrastructure, the TAZARA narrative takes on extra relevance as the analogy is more easily made between the China of then providing what would prove essential infrastructure that others would refuse to help construct, and the China of today that is willing to take on such projects driven by the same solidarity as then. These notions that the TAZARA narrative emphasizes through means of analogy, serves to illustrate how China is the country that one might trust to deliver what is necessary to develop the African continent, now as it did then. "China has also funded infrastructure and industrialization projects that the West has refused to fund since the days of colonialism. It is to be hoped that these projects will finally help Africa modernize - a dream that seems attainable for the first time since independence." (China Daily 2011)

9.2.3 Historical Legitimacy

The TAZARA narrative is, particularly when regarded in continuation of the colony narrative, very well suited to build and reinforce perceptions of historical legitimacy on to the Chinese presence in Africa. As formulated by China's Prime Minister Wen Jiabao (Wen 2009a) at the opening ceremony of the 4th FOCAC ministerial conference, propagating this narrative to a core public of African political leaders:

> The rapidly growing relations and cooperation between China and Africa have attracted the world's attention in recent years. I would like to point out that it was not just a few years ago that China suddenly started its presence in Africa or Africa started its support for China. As early as in the 1950s and '60s, China and Africa fought shoulder to shoulder in the historic struggle against imperialism, colonialism and hegemony and worked side by side in the hard endeavor to revive our respective national economies. The Tanzania-Zambia Railway, the Chinese medical teams and the young Chinese volunteers in Africa are vivid examples of China's selfless assistance to this continent, while Africa's tremendous effort in helping restore China's seat in the United Nations, the successful Beijing Olympic torch relay in Africa and Africa's generous donations to the victims of the Wenchuan earthquake in China give full expression to the friendship of the African people toward the Chinese people.

Propagating the TAZARA narrative thus firstly serves to emphasize the normality of the China's presence on the continent. But what is more, it also underlines how the relationship itself is not only time-tested, but also imbued by deep feelings of friendship and solidarity, that the duration of time itself has proven to be both sincere and reciprocal. Tying the current surge in economic investment and political engagement with the continent to a long tradition

of ever growing development of friendly relations, thus implies both reassurance and legitimacy. To quote Zhu Rongji's (Zhu 2000) speech from the closing ceremony of the summit establishing the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC):

> The road towards friendship and co-operation is covered with footprints of Chinese and African leaders of several generations and thereon stand monuments to the joint struggle waged by the Chinese and African peoples shoulder by shoulder. Over the decades and particularly since the beginning of the 1990s, this co-operation between China and Africa has steadily expanded and substantiated. […] As an ancient Chinese saying goes, "Distance tests the endurance of a horse and time reveals the heart of a person". Over the past five decades and more, China-Africa co-operation in the political, economic, cultural and other fields has developed steadily and the friendship between the Chinese and African peoples has grown deeper and deeper with each passing day in spite of the vicissitudes in the international arena. Under the new conditions, China and Africa will stand together through thick and thin, close ranks, enhance co-operation and seek common development. (Zhu 2000)

As the former quote may also serve to illustrate, being able to establish the TAZARA narrative as a central feature of the African discourse on China's economic and political offensive on the continent, will also serve to tie together the past with the present and future of Sino-African relations. The narrative constructs a trajectory where the future friendly relations between Africa and China are presented as the natural continuation of the past experiences. In the words put forth by President Hu Jintao (Hu 2009) in Dar es Salaam:

> China-Africa friendship has travelled a glorious path in the past half century and more. Similar historical experiences and shared goals have tied our destinies together and enabled our relationship to withstand the test of time and changes in the international situation. I wish to reiterate here that the Chinese people have always cherished our traditional friendship with Africa and we will continue to do so in the future. We will always view African people as our all-weather friends whom we can fully trust and count on. We will forever remain good brothers and good partners of the African people. Dear Friends, to strengthen friendship and cooperation between China and Africa is a noble mission that history has entrusted to us.

The TAZARA narrative's potential to bestow historical legitimacy to the Chinese relationship with Africa, and to the friendliness and benevolence characterizing these ties, has particularly been utilised when the Chinese authorities have sought to refute the claims of neo-colonialist practices on the African continent. As Premier Wen (2009c) would emphasize when

answering a question from the Reuters News Agency about his response to the allegations that China is exploiting the African people while plundering their natural resources:

> There has long been the argument that China is plundering Africa's resources and pursuing the so-called "neo-colonialism." This is not worth refuting. Any one who is familiar with history would know that the friendly relations and cooperation between China and Africa did not start just yesterday but as early as half a century ago. In those years, we helped Africa build the Tanzara railway and sent to Africa large numbers of medical teams. But we did not take away a single drop of oil or a single ton of mineral ores from Africa. […] Why should China be singled out for criticism? Is this an African view point or rather a Western viewpoint? A line from a Chinese poem is sufficient to respond to this question: "A time-honored friendship is like the gold. After repeated smelting, it keeps its true color."

Utilizing an old Chinese saying that simultaneously serves to illustrate central aspects of the means of historical legitimacy, Wen's response to the question raised during a press conference in relationship to the 4th Ministerial Meeting of FOCAC brought out to an African public the time-tested nature of the benevolent bonds between China and Africa. His further reply to the question serves also underscore the claim that this long and strong friendship is alsot reciprocal.

> We hold the view that support between China and Africa is mutual. At the time when Africa struggled for independence, China supported it and the independent African countries also supported China in restoring its lawful seat in the United Nations. That's why we often say it is our African brothers and sisters who carried China into the United Nations. In other words, we feel indebted to the African people. I often say that one should always remember with gratitude the help one receives from others, while one should forget the help one renders to others. Our assistance to and cooperation with Africa is selfless and has no political strings attached. This is clear for all to see. (Wen 2009c)

A country sharing in such time-tested bonds of friendship to the African nations, and owing them so much gratitude for essential support given to China through time would, such may the message be summed up, not be very likely to plunder and exploit the continent it is so grateful to. The central point China here seeks to implement into the African China-discourse, is how the Chinese will continue to be, what Beijing enjoys to term, a trusted "all-weather friend", the same way they have proven themselves to be again and again since the establishment of the People's Republic. As such, then Namibian President Pohamba (Quoted in Xinhua 2005a) expressed quite precisely the notions China seek to establish with as wide an African public as possible "For most Africans, China is an "all-weather" friend […] China

has stood firm and provided Namibia with political, material and diplomatic support in its struggle for freedom and independence. […] China was a genuine friend of Namibia during our time of serious need".

In defending against neo-colonial acquisitions, the TAZARA narrative is also being utilised to grant historical legitimacy to China's proclaimed good intentions by referring to all the support given by China to Africa throughout the decades. "China's presence in Africa today is therefore to continue what the TAZARA Railway workers have done 40 years before, that is, to seek common development and help Africa address its poverty and realize full development potential." (Zhong 2010). This quote taken from a lecture held by the Chinese Ambassador to South Africa at St. Alban's College is a good example on how the coming generations of African leaders are through the TAZARA narrative being presented with the core message that China's current presence on the continent entails merely the same spirit of support and solidarity that they have shown towards Africa ever since the African states came into being.

> Ambassador Gong stressed that Sino-African friendship has a long history that had started over half a century ago. In the beginning, China helped Africa build railroads and send medical teams without obtaining any oil or mineral from Africa. China and Africa were, are and will be good friends in the past, at present and in the future. Sino-African cooperation has a solid foundation and broad prospects, having proved that China's presence in Africa is not a threat but opportunities for Africa; and is not looting African resources but assisting its development. The facts have refuted the accusation that China is practicing "new colonialism". Ambassador Gong also expounded upon the Chinese diplomatic principle of no interference in internal affairs, which received wide acknowledgement from the audience. (Gong 2010)

These words from the Chinese Ambassador to Senegal, shares the same basic narrative as also Prime Minister Wen Jiabao echoes in a speech to a Tanzanian audience "China's aid to Africa will, as always, be sincere and altruistic," (Xinhua 2006d). Additionally it, again, serves to frame the Chinese policy of non-interference in a long tradition of Chinese respect and solidarity with the African countries strive for sovereignty, implicitly contrasting it with the conditional aid policies of the Western nations, of which many was among the colonial powers against who Africans fought for independence not so many decades ago. As further illustrated by Hu Jintao in his 2007 tour to eight African countries:

> During his trip, Hu spoke widely on the Chinese people's ever-lasting friendship with the African people [...] President Hu further promised that the Chinese people would never impose their ideology, social system or mode of development on other countries, or carry out any activities detrimental to the African people and their countries. These remarks met with warm applause from audiences, stated China's top diplomat. (Beijing Review 2007)

The TAZARA narrative thus, very valuably, serves to effect, by the means of historical legitimacy, the terms of discourse surrounding the debate of China's non-conditional aid. Rather than framing it in the terms so prevalent in the Western discourse, regarding China's policies as unscrupulously profiting from aiding corrupt and authoritarian regimes (Brautigam 2009:273-277, Halper 2010:98-100), the narrative the Chinese seeks to propagate instead frames the controversy in terms of whether to impose or to respect African sovereignty, showcasing simultaneously how this respect for the self-rule of African countries is something China has a long tradition for supporting.

Additional historical legitimacy may also be drawn from the TAZARA narrative as it is used to remind and emphasize towards an African public the long tradition of selfless aid provided by China through the years. A point that is repeatedly driven home in encounters with relevant African audiences, often in rather detailed terms.

> For the past more than 50 years, China has provided assistance to Africa to the best of her ability. African friends also rendered Chinese people invaluable supports during the same period. [...] Since 1963, China has sent medical teams to 46 African countries with a total number of 18,000 medical workers, treating as many as 200 million patients and training tens of thousands of African medical staff over the decades. At present, over 1,000 Chinese medical workers are providing medical services in 41 African countries. By the end of 2009, China had helped to build 54 hospitals, set up 30 malaria prevention and treatment centers, and provided anti-malaria drugs worth 200 million Yuan to 35 African countries. From 2000 to 2009, China canceled 312 debts of 35 African countries, totaling 18.96 billion RMB. The debt relief measures demonstrate China's determination and aspiration to help Africa develop. [...] For over 50 years, Chinese and African people have stood together through thick and thin, helped each other and relied on each other's support. We have become good friends, brothers and partners who can trust each other. (Deng 2011)

Through such recitations, here presented in a speech by the Chinese Ambassador to Nigeria, of the reach and longevity of Chinese good intentions towards Africa, and the positive results

these have given rise to, China is seeking to establish themselves firmly as a continuous benevolent force on the African continent.

> China started to offer assistance to Africa from the second half of the last century despite serious economic difficulties at home. I personally witnessed the inauguration of the Tanzania-Zambia Railway, an example of China's selfless assistance and a symbol of China-Africa friendship. Even today there is a cemetery in Dar-es-Salaam where Chinese railway engineers and workers were buried. China has since provided assistance to 53 African countries and helped build more than 900 projects. (Liu Xiaoming 2011)

As this quote serves to illustrate, China seeks through the TAZARA narrative to propagate how even from the first fledging years of the People's Republic of China's existence China was ready to share what little they had, in solidarity with their African counterparts. And, as the TAZARA narrative implicitly conveys, when able to do so much for Africa even when they were poor, how much more may they not contribute to the development and prosperity of the African continent now, as one of the major economic powers of the world?

10.0 Conclusion

That narratives of the past can be a recurring and central feature of a country's rhetoric towards a foreign actor on the field of international politics, is something that should have been amply ascertained through this thesis. I will furthermore proceed to conclude that this application of historical narratives may be saliently analysed through the applied post-structuralist framework wherein the potential influence of the past is conveyed through a set of mnemonic means whose ability to shape discursive frameworks has been established through a range of investigations focusing on the domestic arena. The role played by history in shaping identities, the role of historical analogies in providing templates for future actions, and the importance of historic legacies to establish legitimacy, are all means that seem to be equally present in historical narratives applied towards a foreign public as towards a domestic so.

Through its application to the case of China's political rhetoric towards Africa, the discourse analysis guided by the established theoretical framework, has ascertained how historical

narratives have proven to be a major feature of the Chinese rhetoric. Being in widespread and consistent use, politicians, diplomats and media would draw upon the three narratives identified in addressing the African public. Through propagating the narratives centred on Zheng He, on the colonial experience, and on the TAZARA railroad project, using a varied set of mnemonic techniques, ranging from official speeches and statements to sponsoring archaeological expeditions and museum exhibitions, the past was framed in terms that serve to influence African China-discourses in directions legitimising and promoting policies beneficial to China, supporting China's engagement in Africa in spite of raised accusations of neo-colonialist policies.

Through these narratives a discourse of China is propagated that serves to frame their actions on the African continent as rooted in a long legacy of benevolent relations, relations that is founded on a strong sense of common identity sprung from shared historical experiences, and that easily lend themselves to analogies emphasizing how China is a partner to be trusted to respect and show deep-felt solidarity with the African peoples. Of what these narratives serve to communicate, certain overall aspects are worthy of further detailing.

First, they carry an implicit edge towards the Western developed nations, by highlighting their long history of condescendence and exploit on the African continent, juxtaposing this to the proclaimed unbroken legacy of respectful and benevolent Sino-African relations. This is a discursive structure that carries particular importance given the centrality of the current debate on whether China's non-interventionist policies are undermining the development boons derived from Western aid conditionality. The historical narratives propagated serve to instead frame this core argument in terms of Western nations continuing their meddling in African affairs, while China upholds its time-tested policy of respecting the African countries' demand for sovereignty. Secondly, these narratives serve to advance the cause of the south-south partnership that China seeks to establish with the African continent to in order to facilitate a more multi-polar world order, through anchoring these relationships in notions of shared history and identity.

And lastly, China is seeking to depict their large-scale economic offensive in Africa, not as a neo-colonial effort to serve China's needs, but as an essential component in, at last, bringing development and economic freedom to the continent. In thus proclaiming to offer a future to Africa, China's offer carries all the more weight when framed in a discourse of the past

conveying a wider temporal perspective of time-tested ties between the two regions that throughout more than half a thousand years, unlike the brutal encounter with the Europeans, was based on friendship, respect and benevolence deeply rooted in the ties between the two peoples.

Whether these propagated narratives have succeeded in influencing African discourses of the Chinese presence on the continent, is a question that falls outside the boundaries of this dissertation, but a question I will argue to be a salient subject for future research. However, I will likewise argue that the consistency and prevalence of China's use of historical narratives in their rhetoric, and the resources spent on propagating them, would strongly suggest that at least the Chinese themselves believe these narratives of the past to be a tool of importance in conditioning their relationship with the African continent.

Through applying this thesis' theoretical approach to the case in question, it has been possible to fruitfully analyse a cornerstone in China's public relations-offensive towards the African continent, a Chinese rhetoric mainstay that has been subject to much attention, but little theoretically informed investigation. As such, I will contend that my chosen theoretical approach has proved through its application to this probability probe-case study, its ability to provide valid and academically salient results. Thus, in conclusion, I will argue that this theoretical framework stands to saliently be further developed as an analytical model for investigating the application of historical narratives as a foreign policy tool. Additionally, I believe it will prove beneficial to our understanding of the dynamics of the relationship between discursive frameworks and foreign policy, to allocate larger attention to analysing how states are seeking political gains through shaping the configuration of another country's discursive policy space by propagating particular historical narratives; applying stories told of times past in order to serve the present.

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