

MAPPING CHINA JOURNAL

Mapping China's International Relations:
Processes of Integration and
Disintegration in the 21st Century

Number 1 / 2017

MAPPING CHINA JOURNAL

Editors

Aya Adachi
Tatjana Romig
Julia Tatrai

Advisory Board

Jörn-Carsten Gottwald, Ruhr-University Bochum
Robert Pauls, Ruhr-University Bochum
Gregor Walter-Drop, Free University Berlin

Peer Reviewers

Andreas Kechagias
Lenard Masuch
Thomas Otto
Josie-Marie Perkuhn
Marina Rudyak
Lea Schaumann
Matej Šimalčík
Miquel Vila
Theo Westphal

Language Editor

Sophie Schor

Proof Readers

Dominique Dryding
Thomas Otto
Samuel Maxwell Smith
Emma Wind



This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

About this Journal

This peer-reviewed Journal is explicitly aimed publishing work written by Bachelor and Master students and all interested PhD students in their early stages of their dissertation with an interdisciplinary background in Area Studies, Political and Social Science or in International Relations who have been working on or want to work on China and who are looking to publish their first research for a wider audience.

About Mapping China

MC is a student network and e.V. (i. Gr.) (a German type of NGO) dedicated to a political science based analysis of contemporary China. We are the first network in Germany with the purpose of connecting students of Modern China from different universities in Germany and beyond. We are also the first student think tank to offer students a publication platform for their own academic work specifically on China in order to engage in an academic discussion within a wider audience early on in their academic career. Kindly note that Mapping China publishes work in both German and English and does not translate any original work.

Journal Submission Guidelines

The Mapping China Journal (MCJ) accepts submission of research papers and essays of original scholarly articles by students on all levels, including students at the early stages of their PhD and recent graduates that engage in scholarly discussion. More information about the Journal itself can be found here.

Topics of discussion vary each year; more detailed information can be found at mappingchina.org/mapping-china-journal. Only manuscripts relevant to the topic of the relevant volume of the MCJ will be considered.

MCJ does not accept any work that has been published before or is set to be published elsewhere. This includes previous self-publishing of the author and articles that are mainly based on previously published manuscripts. Submission of a manuscript implies that the author is committed to publishing with MCJ if the manuscript is accepted. By submitting, authors attest that their work is entirely their own. Authors ensure proper acknowledgement and citation. Please read Statement of Publication Ethics for further information.

Additionally, authors wishing to publish work that has been submitted and graded as part of a University degree should make sure that their University guidelines allow publication. This sole responsibility lies with the author.

Regulations for Submission

Mapping China regularly posts Call for Papers for the MCJ. Please refer to any conditions of those in the original Call for Papers. Additionally, Mapping China accepts submission through the online portal or after contacting info@mappingchina.org. Research paper should feature original analysis or research, include a section on theory and have a length of 6000 to 8000 words. Essays should discuss opinions on a contemporary topic and have a length of three pages to 3000 words. Kindly include a cover page with the title of the submission, the author's name, affiliation, email address and phone number. Additionally, kindly include a 150 to 250 words abstract for any work handed in.

Process after Submission

MCJ employs a double-blind peer review policy whereby research papers that pass the original in-house editorial assessment are sent to at least two expert referees for evaluation. Essays are sent to at least one expert for evaluation. Authors should therefore be careful to avoid any personal information in text or endnotes that might reveal their identity.

Authors should be prepared for multiple stages of review. First corrections might be necessary after in-house editorial assessment. Manuscripts are then either rejected before peer-review, after peer-review, accepted on the condition of revise and resubmit or accepted as is. In exceptional cases manuscripts might be accepted on condition of "rewrite and resubmit". The whole process might take up to six

months. Work that cannot be featured in the MCJ might still be published as part of the Mapping China Working Paper Series. Accepted authors for the MCJ will sign an author's agreement with Mapping China e.V. All papers are reviewed based on their structure and coherency, theoretical quality, empirical quality, their research design and their analytical quality.

All accepted manuscripts are copyedited by MCJ for language and style. The author will receive the final galley proofs for inspection. At this stage, no changes are to be made in the text or notes, except for corrections of errors. Authors are responsible for obtaining permission from copyright holders where necessary – for example, stanzas of a poem, maps, photographs, illustrations, posters, tables, figures, or text exceeding the maximum length permitted by copyright law.

General Manuscript Preparation

- MCJ is using this Harvard Style Guide for citation. Please refer to it.
- Kindly use British English for texts written in English.
- Tables and figures may be included in the text and should be numerically ordered. They may contain captions.
- Any use of Mandarin Chinese is allowed and encouraged. Citation should be: pinyin in italics followed by characters followed by a direct translation in square brackets.
- Co-authored submissions are accepted. Kindly provide all authors' details on the cover page.
- Research papers are accepted in both English and German.
- If the author is not a native English speaker, kindly ensure a high level of language competency before submission. This means that the paper should be proofread by a native or almost-native English speaker. Papers whose arguments are not clear due to language cannot be accepted for the MCJ.
- Kindly use Times New Roman font with a text size of 12. Main titles should be in size 16, titles in size 14 and subtitles in 12. The text should be 1.5 spaced throughout. All paragraphs should be justified. Kindly only leave one space between sentences and after colons.

Research Paper Manuscript Preparation

- Research Papers should have a length of 6000 to 8000 words.
- Mapping China encourages the use of qualitative and quantitative methodology. Research Papers should be theory-based, meaning that they derive their arguments and hypotheses from theory. A section on methodology or the findings of the paper should be included.
- Kindly use scientific language in all parts of the research paper.

Essay Manuscript Preparation

- Essays should have a length of minimum three pages and maximum 3000 words. Please contact info@mappingchina.org to discuss individual cases.
- Essays are arguments-based, meaning that they do not require a section on theory. Nonetheless, they should be based on current academic discourse. Essays are discussing opinions on a contemporary topic.
- The language of an essay is allowed to be more non-scientific.
- While essays are not subjected to the same level of academic requirements as research papers, authors should make sure to include a wide variety of research sources, including academic texts.

Table of Contents

Editors' Note	i
Introduction Aya Adachi, Tatjana Romig, Julia Tatrai	3
<i>Part 1: The Impact of the Belt and Road Initiative on Asia and the EU</i>	
An Offer Too Good to Refuse: China's Belt and Road Initiative from the Viewpoint of Pakistan Nicola Hoochhausen	6
BRI: Converging and Diverging Ideological Narratives from China and the EU Samuel Maxwell Smith	11
<i>Part 2: Integration in Asia? Mapping Domestic and regional challenges for China</i>	
Soft Power the Hard Way: Three Reasons Why China's Belt and Road Initiative Could Become Its Most Successful Image Campaign Tobias Adam	16
China's Role Conception and Foreign Policy Role in Economic Integration Processes in the Asia-Pacific Kim Vender	27
<i>Part 3: Maturing Relations between China and Africa: What's Special in the "Special Relationship"?</i>	
Between the „China Threat“ and „Win-Win Cooperation“ Among „All-Weather Friends“: African Perspectives on China in Africa and the China Model Julia Breuer	52
Chinesische Medien in Afrika: Zur Darstellung der sino-afrikanischen Beziehungen im Programm von CCTV (heute CGTN) Africa Philipp Hertling	73
<i>Part 4: Changing Dynamics between a Fragmented EU and China's Rise as Rule-shaper in Global Politics</i>	
Implications of the 'Belt and Road Initiative' for the EU and Call for Engagement Barbara Pongratz	96
Sino-European Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative: Insights from the Chinese Investment in Poland Paulina Kanarek	106
Belt and Road Initiative: China's Rising Impact on Socio-Spatiality in European Cities Laura Henneke	116

Editors' Note

By Aya Adachi, Tatjana Romig and Julia Tatrai

Mapping China was founded as a network to connect students working on China with a social science approach in order to foster exchange and knowledge among a new generation of academics observing China. Although founded and based in Germany, **Mapping China** now connects students and young professionals from all over Europe. Out of this network grew a student think tank explicitly aimed at giving young voices a broader audience and the opportunity to contribute to academic discussions early on in their career. The numerous submissions and contributions to the project reflect the willingness and eagerness of a new generation of China scholars to actively shape the dynamic debates on China. Moreover, **Mapping China** intends to democratise academic discussions by offering additional opportunities for publishing bright, young voices in China studies.

The double-blind peer reviewed **Mapping China Journal (MCJ)** embodies the principles stated above and is the result of the cumulative effort of the Advisory Board, the Editorial Team, the Peer Reviewers, the Language Editor and the Proof-readers and most importantly the Authors. Most of them contributed their time freely and without their support, the publishing of the **MCJ** would not have been possible. We are very lucky to have found dedicated individuals committed to integrating students in the academic conversations on China and we hope to work with them on the next issue of the **MCJ** as well.

In a total of three Call for Papers and one Call for Essays published in the years 2016 and 2017, students were asked to hand in their original work on four different topics which can be found on the homepage and are reflected in the structure of this issue of **MCJ**. The selected student papers reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the **MCJ**, not only due to the variety of perspectives, but also due to the diverging backgrounds of the student authors ranging from China studies to other area studies and disciplines within social science.

Although only the last Call for Papers “The Impact of the Belt and Road Initiative on Africa, Asia and the EU” explicitly aimed at analyzing the effects of China’s flagship initiative, the overall majority of papers handed in focused on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a starting point. This is reflected in the high number of papers dealing with topics linked to BRI in this Journal. Although BRI is certainly an important element of China’s international relations in the 21st century, and this importance is currently reflected in academic debate, the editors take the view that other initiatives, organizations, and dynamics deserve our attention in order to account for a fuller picture of China’s integration and disintegration processes in the 21st Century. The **MCJ** therefore features three papers with an explicit non-BRI focus. Interesting to note is that although BRI is thought to link not only Central Asia and Europe, but also South-East Asia and Africa through the maritime trade route, not a single paper was handed in looking at the maritime aspect of Belt and Road. This is an interesting future sector of study in which student voices should also find their part.

We hope that all readers will enjoy reading our nine student essays. We also want to encourage other students to engage in the academic debates and provide fresh and new insights to the study

of Chinese politics by commenting on or handing in responses to our papers, as well as by writing for the next issue of the **MCJ** in 2018.

MAPPING CHINA JOURNAL

Introduction

By Aya Adachi, Tatjana Romig and Julia Tatrai

In a world where old certainties have become unsure, China is increasingly searching for its place on the global world stage. Though China remains a newcomer on the international stage, almost 40 years of engagement with the outside world under the leadership of the Communist Party of China – and in some cases in Africa and Asia that period of engagement dates back much longer – have started to generate change both within the global power structures as well as for the Chinese perceptions of its own leadership. Some claim that China has become assertive – for example in the South China Sea – or that China is building up a parallel institutional structure, for example by founding the AIIB. Others claim that China is still far from holding a role as a responsible stakeholder in the international system, given its human rights track record. To assess these competing and interwoven dynamics, the **Mapping China Journal (MCJ)** combines different perspectives on Chinese integration and/or disintegration on three different continents, namely Asia, Africa and Europe, to answer some of the most important questions surrounding China's rise in the 20th and 21st centuries. Will we experience a disintegration of our current international system or a deepening integration of the world? Furthermore, what role will China play in these global, political, and economic scenarios in the future?

Part 1: The Impact of the Belt and Road Initiative on Asia and the EU

BRI has attracted scholarly and public attention as China's most visible and prolific integration project to date. The impact of a full implementation of BRI has sparked several controversial debates. Most experts agree that BRI has the potential to significantly impact global politics in the future if it can reach its full potential. Yet its funding, scope, and results remain ambiguous—something that is reflected in the two vastly different perspectives the chosen papers employ. **Samuell Maxwell Smith** explores BRI as a global projection of a Chinese ideology and calls for the EU to note the diverging interests and (political) costs for the opportunities presented by its implementation. While **Smith** is concerned with the ideological overtones and its implications for the EU, **Nicola Hoochhausen** investigates BRI from the viewpoint of China's neighbour Pakistan. Taking the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor as her case study, **Hoochhausen** argues that China addresses the urgent need for economic development and infrastructure of Pakistan, thus making an offer too good to refuse. Hence, the essays offer diverging perspectives on how host countries of the BRI weigh the opportunities and the costs of the initiative.

Part 2: Integration in Asia? Mapping Domestic and Regional Challenges for China

Scholars are increasingly applying new theoretical approaches to the study of regionalism; for example, by focusing on Asia, and studying regional dynamics outside of the European Union. Today Asia as a region of study is facing a multitude of partly overlapping integration and disintegration processes, where institutions and actors follow conflicting and reinforcing strategies of integration. China as a major rising power is playing an increasingly important, and at times contradictory, role in its handling of security issues, domestic ambitions, relations to neighbouring states and the framing of its 'Chinese dream.' China is increasingly emerging as an actor in regional politics, rather than being passive and acted upon.

The two contributions in this section not only offer an analysis of China's behaviour in different regional initiatives, but they also draw on different theoretical arguments. **Tobias Adam** presents three distinct reasons why China could use BRI to broaden its soft power strategy and boost its international image. Additionally, **Adam** argues for an extension of Joseph Nye's concept of soft power that recognizes the possible attractive power of a country's economy. The contribution by **Kim Vender** applies a role theoretical approach to studying China's foreign policy in economic integration processes in the Asia-Pacific, especially the establishment of a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific. Thereby, **Vender** argues that China has developed an increasingly diverse understanding of its foreign policy roles and is more and more willing to take on international responsibility. Although the two contributions analyse China's engagement in different institutional contexts – within BRI as a Chinese proposal or within the existing regional structures of economic integration in the Asia-Pacific– **Adam** and **Vender** arrive at a similar conclusion: China increasingly aims to find its place in regional integration processes in Asia.

Part 3: Maturing Relations Between China and Africa: What's Special in the "Special Relationship"?

China's foreign direct investments and a deepening relationship with a number of African states have been a topic of academic and popular debate since the early 2000s. The key features in this journal regard the China in Africa debate, and focus on Chinese rhetoric, Chinese non-compliance to ODA-DAC standards, the question whether African countries could develop with the help of Chinese investment, the local opinions and perspectives of Africans, and the calling out of bad practices of Chinese SOEs and private firms active in Africa.

Despite the fact that China and African states like Mozambique or the Democratic Republic of Congo can look back at years and years of contact and engagement, academia has only recently started focusing on maturing relations between China and Africa. That China has become a fixed feature on the African continent is no secret and with a formalisation of relations through the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation, new focus areas of research have opened up. The two contributions by **Julia Breuer** and **Philipp Hertling** emphasise this point: both are looking at relatively "new" phenomena in research. **Julia Breuer** argues not only for African advocacy, but also for taking serious what Africans have to contribute to the China in Africa debate. Too often European and American scholarship dominates over African contributions to the debate. **Breuer** gives an in-depth overview of existing African scholarships to overcome this information gap. **Philipp Hertling** further looks at a field that is attracting increasing interest in both academia and media: the rise of Chinese cultural institutions such as China Global Television Network (CGTN) Africa or Confucius institutes and the subsequent questions of influence, power and propaganda.

Hertling analyses CGTN Africa's program to answer the question how CGTN Africa portrays the Chinese-African relationship(s).

Part 4: Changing Dynamics Between a Fragmented EU and China's Rise as Rule-shaper in Global Politics

Both China and the EU are relatively new actors in global politics. The EU has long faced constraints in defining its role in global politics. In recent years, China has increasingly acted as a rule-shaper in global affairs. As interdependent trade partners, both sides have vested interests in being able to enjoy maximum access to each other's markets. However, disagreements over human rights, arms embargoes, market access, and trade conflicts have constrained China-EU relations and their proclaimed strategic partnership. While the partnership has been elevated from when it was first announced (2003), to include the EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation that lays out four areas, it has not been operationalized nor does the non-binding nature of the agenda encourage utilization of the strategic partnership. Furthermore, while the EU is faced with economic and political crises in the face of severe challenges (from national debts to refugees) that fuel disunity and disintegration, China prefers bilateral relations to engagement with the EU as a whole.

The contributions in this section capture the implications that the Belt and Road Initiative has for the EU. The essays offer three perspectives on how different levels within the EU are influenced by the BRI: **Barbara Pongratz** presents recommendations for the *EU level*; **Paulina Karanek** provides insights from Chinese investments in one of the *members states*; while **Laura Henneke** showcases impacts on socio-spatiality in European *cities*. **Pongratz** weighs positive against negative implications of the BRI for the EU and concludes that in order for both China and the EU to make full use of the potential opportunities a framework for cooperation should be created and offers a number of policy recommendations to overcome the issue of disunity of the EU with regards to China. **Karanek** offers some insights from Chinese activities in Poland by placing Chinese investments – that have gradually increased in Poland since the global financial crisis – into the context of recent positive shifts in polish media coverage on China since the launch of the BRI and the 16+1. By looking at cases – such as Fuenlabrada, Spain and Tbilisi, Georgia – **Henneke** claims that large Chinese infrastructure projects have an impact on socio-spatiality in European cities. She argues that the BRI generates globalisation of Chinese architectural features and infrastructural characteristics that consequently affect the use of space and everyday lives of the people who inhabit such places.

MAPPING CHINA JOURNAL

Mapping China Journal 2017 / Number 1

Part 1: The Impact of the Belt and Road Initiative on Asia and the EU

An Offer Too Good to Refuse China's Belt and Road Initiative from the Viewpoint of Pakistan

By Nicola Hoochhausen*

Abstract

While experts speculate about the viability of BRI and the West worries about China's hidden agenda, most countries along the 'New Silk Road' welcome China's investments. This essay studies Pakistan and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor as a case to demonstrate what drives states to readily endorse China's initiative. The principle argument is that China addresses the urgent need for the infrastructural and economic development of Pakistan and other countries participating in BRI. With its large-scale investments China offers countries along the 'New Silk Road' a viable alternative to development cooperation with the West.

*Nicola Hoochhausen is currently studying a trilingual Master program in International Relations and European Studies at the Centre International de Formation Européenne in Nice, France, in cooperation with the University of Kent, UK. She was previously employed by the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin. From 2013-2016, she was posted to the German Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan.

An Offer Too Good to Refuse

China's Belt and Road Initiative from the Viewpoint of Pakistan

Many scholars and journalists have been quick to point out the risks of China's Belt and Road Initiative (hereafter BRI, in Chinese *yi dai yi lu* 一带一路) or speculate about China's hidden geo-political agenda and the likelihood that the project will fail. While the Economist (2017) reasons that behind China's economic aspirations lie "a plethora of secondary motivations", Tom Holland (2016) in the South China Morning Post claims that BRI is "doomed to fail". Yet, most countries along the 'New Silk Road' eagerly welcome China's investments. At the Belt and Road Forum in May 2017, a divide became visible: while many countries from around the world were represented by their heads of state, Germany, France, the United Kingdom and the United States (US) only sent delegations of minister-level or below (Tiezzi, 2017). Moreover, European Union (EU) member states present at the summit in Beijing did not endorse a common statement as it lacked commitments to social and environmental protection and transparency (Phillips, 2017). Using Pakistan as a case, this essay tries to explain why the developing world readily endorses BRI despite the warnings of some journalists and western sceptics.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a flagship project under BRI and, so far, China's biggest foreign investment. For Pakistan, the Chinese investment is its biggest foreign direct investment, far exceeding amounts received by its earlier biggest donor, the US. China's investment package of 55 billion US dollars will be used over a period of 15 years to address Pakistan's chronic energy shortage and lack of infrastructure. This will be done by building power plants and developing a network of 3000 kilometres of road, rail and gas pipelines. Once completed, the corridor will connect Western China to the deep-water port of Gwadar on the Arabian Sea (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017; Sender & Stacey, 2017). CPEC is the connection between the overland Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road.

In Pakistan, CPEC is heralded as a 'game changer'. In his inaugural address in 2013, Pakistan's former Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, declared that it will change the fate of the nation (Express Tribune, 2013). The official Pakistani CPEC website proclaims the corridor to be a "win-win model" which "will result in a well-connected, integrated region of shared destiny, harmony and development" (CPEC, n.d.). Pakistani leaders and the public hope that the improvement of infrastructure and energy will boost the overall economy. It is anticipated that high growth rates could reduce unemployment and brain drain and improve the living conditions of the lower and middle classes in Pakistan. In the long run, Pakistan's officials and public hope for political and social change leading to the promotion of 'good governance', the eradication of terrorism and a new regional and international standing of Pakistan (Wolf, 2016b). Pakistan's positive approach to CPEC is underpinned by China's general good reputation in Pakistan with 82% of Pakistanis holding a favourable opinion of China (Pew Research Center, 2015). The cooperation is regularly referred to as an 'all-weather friendship' which is "higher than the Himalayas and deeper than the deepest sea in the world, and sweeter than honey" (Sender & Stacey, 2017).

It is unlikely that CPEC can live up to such expectations. Researchers of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute state that the envisaged scale of the project undermines the

claim that CPEC has solely economic goals. It has also a geo-strategic dimension (Ghiassy & Zhou, 2017). Gwadar port, for example, was built and financed by Chinese companies and is leased to China until 2059. Initially proclaimed to be only for commercial purposes it might now also be used by Chinese military (Kynge in Merics Experts, 2017). India is deeply suspicious of the increased Chinese-Pakistani co-operation, not only for its geo-political impact, but also because CPEC runs through Kashmir - a disputed territory between Pakistan and India (Ghiassy & Zhou, 2017). India made its concerns known by not attending China's Belt and Road Forum in May this year (Sender & Stacey, 2017). A scholar at the German foundation 'Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik' fears that CPEC could lead to heightened tension between the nuclear powers, India and Pakistan, or an escalation of the Kashmir conflict (Wagner, 2016).

Despite the regional impacts of CPEC, Western experts also anticipate negative effects for Pakistan internally. Wolf (2016a) argues that the Pakistani military has built-up a parallel governance structure with vast executive and judicial powers to secure the development of CPEC. This weakens the civilian government and challenges Pakistan's democratic transition (Wolf, 2016a). Others worry that the scale of China's investments and repayment modalities of Chinese loans undermine Pakistan's sovereignty, trapping the country in debt (Sender & Stacey, 2017). As Chinese companies are often favoured in bids for contracts under CPEC (Sender & Stacey, 2017), one can raise the question about whether China or Pakistan profit the most from these investments.

It is too early to predict whether CPEC will bring an economic leap forward or bring doom and military tensions to Pakistan and South Asia. At this stage, however, it is crucial for the critics of BRI and CPEC to understand why Pakistan has embraced China's investments. A persistent lack of infrastructure and a huge energy deficit have harmed Pakistan's economy. Successive governments have failed to address these issues (Ghiassy & Zhou, 2017). Parallels can be drawn with other countries participating in BRI. All countries of South Asia have significant economic growth potential (Ghiassy & Zhou, 2017). The Economist (2017) adds that the region has an "unslakeable thirst for infrastructure". China addresses these needs without demands for transparency or good governance from the participating countries (Kynge in Merics Experts, 2017). Having a reputation "to get things done" (Kynge in Merics Experts, 2017), China offers to develop infrastructure in Pakistan and throughout Asia on a scale that dwarfs previous investors and other donors. Consequently, from the viewpoint of Pakistan and other countries along the 'New Silk Road', China is making an offer too good to refuse.

The Pakistani power grid is one of the prominent examples for the decision-making process of Pakistan's civilian government on CPEC. The government has been under pressure to address underinvestment in infrastructure, including the energy grid. Already suffering from frequent 'load-shedding'¹, Pakistan's energy demand continues to increase due to a growing population and economy. Whilst Chinese engineering and investment addresses these problems, the current Pakistani politicians can take the credit for the short term positive outcomes of so-called 'early-harvest-projects' under CPEC, with little regard to the negative consequences of the deals in the future.

¹ "the deliberate shutdown of electric power in a part or parts of a power-distribution system, generally to prevent the failure of the entire system when the demand strains the capacity of the system" as defined by dictionary.com (<http://www.dictionary.com/browse/load-shedding>).

BRI might not be the panacea it is claimed to be. However, it is crucial to consider the perspective of countries endorsing China's initiative and their alternatives (or lack thereof) to fully understand BRI. In the case of Pakistan, no donor other than China was prepared to invest in the country's much needed power infrastructure (Sender & Stacey, 2017). Xi Jinping promised to create a trading region of prosperity along the 'New Silk Road' and was perceived to be the defender of free trade at the 2017 World Economic Forum in Davos and the Belt and Road Forum in Beijing (Economist, 2017). While Chinese officials emphasize their peaceful intentions, and claim that BRI is open for all, the project stands in competition to the transatlantic economic region (Economist, 2017). For Pakistan and other Asian countries, BRI represents a viable alternative to development cooperation with the West (Kynge in Merics Experts, 2017), even more so since the current US administration has taken an isolationist turn. The call for more transparency and environmental and social standards by EU member states during the Belt and Road Forum was important, but is unlikely to make a difference. Most countries participating in BRI are too dependent on China's investments and lack the leverage to negotiate better terms. For them, China's offer comes on a 'take it or leave it' basis. As long as the West does not provide alternatives, it should not be surprised as many countries along the 'New Silk Road' jump on the bandwagon with China.

Sources Cited

CPEC (n.d.) *About CPEC – Introduction*. Available from: <http://cpec.gov.pk/introduction/1> [Accessed 12 August 2017].

Economist (2017) What is China's Belt and Road Initiative? Available from: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2017/05/economist-explains-11> [Accessed 12 August 2017].

Express Tribune (2013) PM's Address to the Nation: Nawaz Sharif Dreams to Make Pakistan an 'Asian Tiger'. Available from <https://tribune.com.pk/story/592284/pms-address-to-the-nation-nawaz-sharif-dreams-to-make-pakistan-an-asian-tiger/> [Accessed 22 September 2017].

Ghiassy, R. and Zhou, J. (2017) *The Silk Road Economic Belt, Considering Security Implications and EU-China Cooperation Prospects*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Sweden. Available from: <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2017/other-publications/silk-road-economic-belt> [Accessed 12 August 2017].

Holland, T. (2016) Why China's 'One Belt, One Road' Plan is Doomed to Fail, *South China Morning Post*, Available from: <http://www.scmp.com/week-asia/opinion/article/1999544/why-chinas-one-belt-one-road-plan-doomed-fail> [Accessed 12 August 2017].

Merics Experts (2017) #32 James Kynge on the New Silk Road and the "China Dream" [Podcast] 22 February. Available from: <https://www.merics.org/en/events/event-reports/merics-china-lounge-with-james-kynge/> [Accessed 12 August 2017].

- Pew Research Center (2015) *How Asia-Pacific Publics See Each Other and Their National Leaders*. Available from: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/09/02/how-asia-pacific-publics-see-each-other-and-their-national-leaders/> [Accessed 12 August 2017].
- Phillips, T. (2017) EU Backs Away from Trade Statement in Blow to China's 'Modern Silk Road' Plan, *The Guardian*. Available from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/15/eu-china-summit-beijing-xi-jinping-belt-and-road> [Accessed 12 August 2017].
- Sender, H. and Stacey, K. (2017) China Takes Project of the Century to Pakistan, *Financial Times*. Available from: <https://www.ft.com/content/05979e18-2fe4-11e7-9555-23ef563ecf9a> [Accessed 22 May 2017].
- Tiezzi, S. (2017) Who is Actually Attending China's Belt and Road Forum? *The Diplomat*, Available from: <http://thediplomat.com/2017/05/who-is-actually-attending-chinas-belt-and-road-forum/> [Accessed 12 August 2017].
- Wagner, C. (2016) *Die Auswirkungen des China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) auf die indisch-pakistanischen Beziehungen*, Stiftung für Wissenschaft und Politik, Berlin. Available from: <https://www.swp-berlin.org/publikation/der-china-pakistan-economic-corridor-und-die-indisch-pakistanischen-beziehungen/> [Accessed 12 August 2017].
- Wolf, S. O. (2016a) *China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Civil-Military Relations and Democracy in Pakistan*, South Asian Democratic Forum, Brussels. Available from http://sadf.eu/new/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/WORKING-PAPER.N.2.SOW_compressed.pdf [Accessed 12 August 2017].
- Wolf, S. O. (2016b) *The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: An Assessment of its Feasibility and Impact on Regional Cooperation*, South Asian Democratic Forum, Brussels. Available from: <http://sadf.eu/new/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/WORKING-PAPER.N.1.Siegfried.O.Wolf.pdf> [Accessed 12 August 2017].

MAPPING CHINA JOURNAL

Mapping China Journal 2017 / Number 1
Part 1: The Impact of the Belt and Road Initiative on Asia and the EU

Belt and Road Initiative: Converging and Diverging Ideological Narratives from China and the EU

By Sam Maxwell Smith*

Abstract

For Europe, Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has opened up new possibilities for investment. For China, it offers the possibility to shape the future of global economic governance, and is one of the greatest soft power opportunities to globally project a Chinese ideology. BRI helps build President Xi's promise of a 'China Dream' and an implicit alternative ideology to the American Dream. It is therefore important for a political and economic body such as the EU to note the ideological price tag attached to investment in BRI, and to recognise the potential divergences in interest.

* Sam Smith is a Management Trainee with John Swire & Sons, currently posted to Swire Coca Cola in Xiamen, China. He studied Chinese for undergraduate at the University of Oxford, specialising in Classical Chinese philosophy. He has achieved a Masters in Chinese/English interpreting at the University of Surrey and a Masters in International Affairs at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, where he also worked as a consultant for the Multilateral Diplomacy Programme at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

Belt and Road Initiative: Converging and Diverging Ideological Narratives from China and the EU

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI; *yidai yilu*, 一带一路), or The Silk Road Initiative is the epitome of China's new foreign policy, and in October 2015 was mentioned specifically by the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee as the focal point for China's ambitions to have a bigger voice in global economic governance. It seeks to build infrastructure, remove investment and trade barriers and deepen social cooperation through so-called 'people-to-people bonds' (NDRC, 2015). For Europe, it has opened up new possibilities for investment, and many countries including France, Italy and Germany have expressed interest (Gaspers, 2016; Goulard, 2017). Beyond the possibility of shaping the future of global economic governance, one of the greatest opportunities for China is the global projection of a Chinese ideology. When nations become involved in the BRI Initiative, they are in effect agreeing 'to support China's regional vision' (Brant, 2015). The Initiative helps build Xi's promise of a 'China Dream' and an alternative ideology to the American Dream, democracy and liberalism:¹ a country that can succeed by drawing on, among other things, its traditions and ideals of non-interference and 'win-win' strategies; a state that proclaims to be able to draw on 5,000 years of continuous history, a history which has in part inspired its largest modern foreign policy initiative, the two Silk Roads. It is therefore important for a political and economic body such as the EU to note the ideological price tag of supporting China's regional vision that is attached to investment in BRI, and to recognise the potential divergences in interest.

BRI certainly shares similarities with the ideology of European integration, and its ambition to be a peace project. From the European Coal and Steel Community onwards, European integration has used economic means, largely for political or security goals (Bideleux, 2012: 379). This is likewise true for BRI, which explicitly states its objectives to be both 'mutual benefit' and 'common security' (NDRC, 2015). The hope is to create trade routes and economic integration that will make participating countries increasingly interdependent. Such a system would integrate existing and new institutions, and create regulations on product safety, intellectual property rights and counterfeiting, all of which are ongoing issues between China and the EU. Given these similarities, it is unsurprising that BRI fits in to an already existing concept promoted by the European Commission, the EU-China 'strategic partnership.' This term refers to a conception of relations that promotes closer ties as both sides 'assume more active and responsible international roles, supporting [...] an effective multilateral system' (Caira, 2012: 284). This concept is almost tautological in its similarity to Xi's own language of 'win-win co-operation' and shared 'common development.'

The importance of using narratives that extoll the principles of integration is palpably obvious, given the power of opposing narratives to destabilise the European integration project. A report by the Directorate-General for External Policies in 2016 pointed to the fact that over the past few years, the EU has been 'increasingly hit by destabilising messages amounting – albeit in different forms and to different degrees – to coherent hostile 'strategic communications' campaigns' (EU,

¹ This observation should, of course, be qualified by the understanding that the Chinese government does not frame the China Dream as contrary to democracy or liberalism.

2016: 29). The ability of opponents to draw on narratives of history and identity, playing on the very real weakness of the EU, such as internal divisions and inadequate policy delivery, combined with rising populism, have made European countries more receptive to the counter messages. Under the auspices of ‘strategic partnership’, the EU has often supported China’s efforts to assert itself on the international stage, from China’s accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001 to BRI. The rhetoric used for this support is just as much a warning for Europe: a warning of the deadly repercussions of turning inward and of shutting out the rest of the world. In the words of Commissioner Tibor Navracsics, “In fact, we would all lose” (Europa.eu (a), 2016).

From China’s position, there is a flexibility to ideology, which depends on the audience. BRI is often described as a ‘strategy’ domestically, and a ‘proposal’ abroad (Yan, 2016). The linguistic difference here is that ‘proposal’ relies on cooperation, whereas ‘strategy’ implies a project that is unilaterally pushed forward. From a domestic Chinese perspective, therefore, the concept of an integrative peace project at times gives way to other narratives. A key ideology of the Chinese government, expressed by President Xi himself, is how to make the past serve the present (Creemers, 2013). This concept is in fact a Classical Chinese idiom (*gunwei jinyong* 古为今用), and becomes an antidote to the dominance of Western culture: by using rhetoric and symbols from China’s own history, it reinforces the idea that even when lessons can be learned from the West, it must be adapted to a Chinese context. This is at times combined with a victimhood narrative that describes China’s ‘century of shame’ at the hands of colonial powers, and is contrasted with the current state of affairs in which rising developing countries such as China are overseeing the world move towards peace. A further sub-narrative is that China’s own history and culture has much to teach the modern world. The Silk Road Initiative can be seen within this context as a project that wishes to fundamentally alter the order of global governance. The name ‘Silk Road’ is itself the ultimate embodiment of ‘making the past serve the present’, as the Chinese government attempts to revitalize the whole of Central Asia by reinventing its ancient silk roads.

The foreign and domestic ideologies outlined above are not always mutually exclusive and have found synergies in the cultural outputs associated with BRI. Online and offline exhibitions, such as the UNESCO Silk Road Online Platform, or The Silk Road exhibition in 2016 at the Latvian National Museum of Art (LNMM), combine multiple ideologies that fulfil the needs of opposing narratives. By way of example, the LNMM exhibition emphasised the artistic and innovative merits of Chinese art, free of Western influence (‘Few Ancient Chinese art pieces show the influences of Greek and Roman cultures’); the aesthetic taste that stems from ‘the grandeur of traditional Chinese culture’; and how the exhibition was the embodiment of ‘how the ancient Silk Road influenced the cultural exchange of the East and the West’ (LNMM, 2016). The synergies are strongest when both sides draw on the historical bonds of exchange between Europe and China, a narrative which has been fruitfully exploited by the EU also (Navracsics, 2016a), as it underlines the economic ties offered by BRI. Cultural ties aside, the hidden ideological buy-in for greater economic ties is more complex, and will largely be driven by domestic Chinese concerns. The EU must be more wary of encouraging European investment in BRI while, for example, the business atmosphere for European investors in China continues to deteriorate (Juncker, 2016b). BRI may be an opportunity for greater cooperation, but China’s ‘win-win’ rhetoric must not be allowed to dictate political dialogue over points of contention, including human rights (a topic that is already often tabled for later discussion), the EU’s arms embargo on China, or rules on government procurement.

Sources Cited

- Bideleux, R. (2012) European Integration: The Rescue of the Nation State? In *The Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History*, ed. By Dan Stone, ch. 18, pp. 379-405.
- Brant, P. (2015) One belt, one road? China's community of common destiny, *The Interpreter*. Available at: <http://www.lowyinterpreter.org/post/2015/03/31/One-belt-one-road-Chinas-community-of-common-destiny.aspx> [Accessed 20 April 2016].
- Caira, M. (2012) "The EU-China Relationship: From Cooperation To Strategic Partnership." In *The Foreign Policy Of The European Union: Assessing Europe's Role In The World*, 1st ed. Brookings Institution Press, pp. 281-289.
- CPC National Development and Reform Commission (2015). *Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road*. Available at: http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/newsrelease/201503/t20150330_669367.html [Accessed 20 April 2016].
- Creemers, R. (2013) Xi Jinping's 19 August speech revealed? (Translation). 12 November. Available at: <https://chinacopyrightandmedia.wordpress.com/2013/11/12/xi-jinpings-19-august-speech-revealed-translation/> [Accessed 20 April 2016].
- European Union (2016) *EU Strategic Communications with a view to counteracting propaganda*. Belgium: European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS).
- Navrasics, T. (2016a) - Press release - Speech of Commissioner Tibor Navrasics at the China-EU Education Ministers Conference 'Staying connected: why we need to strengthen our cooperation on education'. Available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-16-3421_en.htm [Accessed 20 April 2016].
- Juncker, J.C. (2016b). - PRESS RELEASES - Press release - The EU and China: A solid partnership - Speech by President Juncker at the EU-China Business Summit. Available at: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-15-5278_en.htm [Accessed 20 April 2016].
- Gaspers, J. (2016) Germany wants Europe to help shape China's Belt and Road Initiative. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2016/12/germany-wants-europe-to-help-shape-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative/> [Accessed 20 April 2016].
- Goulard, Sebastien (2017) France, Italy, and China's 'Belt and Road' Initiative. <https://thediplomat.com/2017/03/france-italy-and-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative/> [Accessed 20 April 2016].
- Latvian National Museum of Art (2016) The Silk Road. Ancient Chinese Art. Available at: <http://www.lnmm.lv/en/visit/exhibitions/2070-the-silk-road-ancient-chinese-art> [Accessed 13 Jan. 2017].

Yan, X. (2016) China And International Security: A Dialogue With Distinguished Chinese Scholars.
Lecture, Australia National University.

MAPPING CHINA JOURNAL

Mapping China Journal 2017 / Number 1

Part 2: Integration in Asia? Mapping Domestic and Regional Challenges for China

Soft Power the Hard Way

Three Reasons Why China's 'Belt and Road Initiative' Could Become Its Most Successful Image Campaign

By Tobias Adam*

Abstract

According to international public polls, China's comprehensive Soft Power (ruanshili 软实力) strategy to boost its international image is apparently not as efficient as Chinese leaders expected. Ongoing power struggles in the South and East China Sea, Western democracies' distrust towards its authoritarian political system or its human rights policy seem to frame China's Soft Power in a negative way, revealed in the vast diffusion of the Confucius Institutes, Olympic Games in Beijing (2008 & 2022) or CCTV's internationalisation (Hartig, 2016; Wang, 2011). However, in contrast to Joseph Nye's original concept, there are more ways to wield Soft Power than just through a country's culture or values. In the case of China, its recently launched 'Belt and Road' initiative (BRI) (yidai yilu 一带一路) - though actually mainly a commercial project - has the potential to work in favour of China's Soft Power, too. I will therefore propose three distinct reasons to support this assumption. Moreover, based on China's Soft Power strategy and its limitations, the following essay is designed to scrutinise the concept of Soft Power, present an alternative perspective and combine these findings with BRI to create theoretically based future scenarios that are deliberately designed to be open for critical review and debate.

* Tobias Adam studied China Studies and Political Science in Cologne and Wuhan and graduated with a diploma thesis on Confucius Institutes as a part of China's soft power strategy. Between September 2015 and January 2016, he studied Chinese and conducted research at Tamkang University, Taipei. Currently, Tobias is a PhD student of Modern China studies at the University of Cologne.

Soft Power the Hard Way

Three Reasons Why China's 'Belt and Road Initiative' Could Become Its Most Successful Image Campaign

Introduction

'Chinese cultural influence is virtually nil and unlikely to increase', commented Great Britain's new Foreign Minister Boris Johnson on China more than ten years ago as London's then mayor (Johnson, 2005). His rash words reflect what a more analytical view reveals: despite president Xi's stamina to uphold 'disseminating modern Chinese values and showing the charm of Chinese culture to the world' (Xinhuanet, 2014), China's Soft Power has to fight an uphill battle on multiple fronts. The recent ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration and the related territorial disputes in the South China Sea are just one issue hindering China's efforts to enhance its international image (PCA, 2016). China's overall strategy regarding Soft Power is to promote China as a reliable and peaceful partner – and shake off alleged threats of being a revisionist emerging power (van Broomfield, 2003). Among Soft Power's resources – culture, foreign policy and political values – Chinese leadership mainly relies on China's traditional culture to boost its attractiveness (Cao, 2014: 177). However, especially in contrast to its extensive efforts – overall, experts estimate that China spent some 10 billion US-Dollars in 2014 for its promotion campaign, compared to 'only' 666 Million US-Dollars by the USA (Nye, 2015) – manifesting in the vast spreading of the Confucius Institutes, events like the Olympic Games 2008 (and 2022) in Beijing or China Central Television's (CCTV) internationalisation, however there have been only limited returns so far. Especially in Western countries, China is apparently not able to rebut encrusted patterns of suspicion evoked by its authoritarian top-down policy (The Diplomat, 2013). Thus, what was intended to be cultural diplomacy is often turned down as mere propaganda (Shambaugh, 2015). But China's Soft Power also has a hard time within its direct neighbourhood, as polls of the US-American think tank Pew Research Center show that Soft Power's cultural weaponry is not altering fundamental perceptions of fear concerning military clashes for example in the South China Sea. Even in Malaysia (66% 'concerned' vs. 19% 'not concerned'), a country with a large Chinese diaspora, and South Korea (83% 'concerned' vs. 16% 'not concerned'), which on the whole shares good relations with China, one sees a majority who fret about China's rise reflected in its strategic – some would call it 'assertive'¹ – behaviour in the South China Sea which puts a strain on China's Soft Power enforcement (Pew Research Center, 2014a; Pew Research Center, 2014b). BBC's World Service Poll also conducted a long-time survey with eleven² participating nations. Between 2005 and 2014, positive evaluations towards China's political influence dropped by 13 percentage points (48% to 35%), hence performing worst among the participants (BBC, 2014). Furthermore, the political consultancy Portland Communications together with Facebook jointly published a Soft Power ranking called 'The Soft Power 30'. In this table, which gathered data for thirty countries and lists them according to a set of parameters³, China ranks 28th (The Soft Power 30, 2016).

¹ For a broader insight on China's 'assertiveness' in foreign politics see: Johnston, 2013.

² These participating nations are Australia, Brazil, China, Germany, France, Great Britain, India, Indonesia, Canada, Mexico, USA.

³ These include *engagement, culture, digital, government, education* and *enterprise*. Although only *culture, education* and, with some limitations, *government* belong to Nye's original Soft Power-sources, I support this rather broad understanding as it follows my general assumption that Soft Power can be found in more than just these three resources.

From a perception-based perspective, this essay adopts a rather radical approach. Therefore, any kind of attractive power – as pointed out by Nye himself (Nye, 2004: 6) – can be subsumed under Soft Power and thus enables BRI to eradicate China's Soft Power deficit mentioned above.

Soft Power – Theory, model or strategic instrument?

Soft Power, as introduced by Joseph Nye⁴, describes a kind of power that mainly relies on attracting others instead of coercing or inducing them. In other words, in comparison to Hard Power, which comprises economic and military instruments, Soft Power tries to co-opt and therefore to shape other's preferences beforehand in order to prevent the necessity of using economic or military force to change their counterpart's opinions (Nye, 2004: 6-7). While acknowledging Hard Power's existence, to Nye this 'second face of power' to some extent is the new determining factor in world politics after the end of the Cold War. When employing Soft Power, according to Nye (2004: 11), one can use three particular resources: a nation's culture, its (political) values and its foreign policy. In a broader sense, these resources can be developed into institutions, which reflect mutual trust and credibility, thus fostering stable and favourable international relations in which a government with sufficient Soft Power is able to set examples and make other countries admire and eventually follow this example (Nye, 2004: 32). Since Soft Power tries to shape and disseminate images, ideas and norms and thus integrates post-positivist parameters, it is helpful to categorise Soft Power as a concept, mode (of power), or sometimes just as a 'term' and locate it within the broader context of Social Constructivism (Wendt, 1995; Reus-Smit, 2005). As soon as it is identified as a model or concept, Soft Power becomes open to being used strategically. In this context, especially Chinese scholars of International Relations regard theories and incorporated models as practical 'manuals' or instruments (Noesselt, 2012: 10-11). This essay acknowledges this dualism⁵ and locates Soft Power in the broader framework of constructivism's premises as well as in the scope of strategic instruments.

Moving Soft Power's boundaries

Considering these assertions, there is no need to exclude features related to economy from the scope of Soft Power, as long as they contribute to the sense of attractive power. Thus, at least a smooth loophole out of China's strategic dilemma might not be far away as the same survey reporting only mediocre results in favourable responses to China's international image as discussed above also states that China's economic performance is regarded as beneficial for the region (Pew Research, 2014a). Although, according to Joseph Nye's original concept, economic power – just like military – belongs to Hard Power (Nye, 2004: 5), several indications reveal that economic power can be 'soft' as well. First, starting from Nye's explanations, economic power is just one end of a continuum. In this context, Hard and Soft Power are two extremes that are not apart, but linked to each other and are fluid in their transition (Nye, 2004: 8). Academia takes this circumstance into account as, for example, Young and Jong describe China's Soft Power as a merger of China's Culture, the 'Beijing Consensus' and its 'Peaceful Development Road' and thereby rightfully transcend Soft Power's traditional limitations (Young & Jong, 2008: 461-472),

⁴ Though Joseph Nye certainly coined the particular term 'Soft Power' and its recent popularisation, there have been various works considering power apart from military or economic force (e.g. Edmund Carr's 'Power over Opinion' from 1954).

⁵ The concept of Public Diplomacy would be another example for being both, analytical entity *and* strategic instrument (Manheim & Albritton, 1984).

while Li and Worm even refer to six⁶ Soft Power resources (Li & Worm, 2011: 69). A third position differentiates between economic aid and economic cooperation as China's main Soft Power sources. In this case, diplomacy be it traditional or cultural – only plays a supportive role (He, 2009: 24). Finally, Wong develops this idea even further and blends the two extremes of Soft and Hard Power into something he calls '[China's rising] Economic Soft Power' (Wong, 2016). These conceptual divergences are all justified as Soft Power is a quite vague and sometimes opaque model. Yet, they all respond to one focal point which leads us back to Joseph Nye: 'Soft Power is attractive power' (Nye, 2004: 6). And what is perceived as attractive – be it cultural, social or economic – highly depends on the recipients' mind sets (The Economist, 2009). Hence, this article argues that China should not refrain to play this economic card to boost its attractiveness and use its recently implemented 'Belt and Road' (BRI) initiative as an appropriate Soft Power vehicle, thereby curing its ailing Soft Power campaign. Though the project itself has seen only little concrete action so far, the paper 'Visions and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road', jointly issued by the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China (NDRC, 2015), gives a first insight on BRI's ambitious goals and scope. The whole initiative comprises two entangled networks ('The Silk Road Economic Belt' and its maritime counterpart, the '21st-century Maritime Silk Road') connecting East, Central, and Southeast Asia with Africa, Eastern and Central Europe. Around 60 emerging markets with over four billion people will be involved (Swaine, 2015). The initiative's general goals, principles and measures have been reiterated during the 'Belt and Road Forum' in May 2017 (Xinhuanet, 2017). Based on the conceptual premises mentioned above, this essay proposes three distinct reasons to show that BRI can be a valuable contribution to China's Soft Power.⁷

If you want to be a global player, use a global currency

When running an image campaign, you want your message to be heard by a large audience. Therefore, the choice of the right 'currency'⁸ to disseminate this is crucial. The more universal your currency, the more likely your success (Nye, 2004: 11). Although the USA is far from being popular everywhere in the world, its Soft Power by way of low or popular culture, like sports, movies or even lifestyle still remains on a high level (The Soft Power 30, 2016). And this is exactly the stumbling block, as Chinese leadership mostly resorts to traditional, high culture (Xinhuanet, 2014). But this source of Soft Power requires a certain educational background or general interest – sometimes called 'cultural literacy' (Hirsch, 1987) – in order to generate attractive power. Chinese ink painting, calligraphy or tea ceremonies might be appealing. Only to a limited number of people who are actually able to appreciate these cultural items (ABC, 2015). But economic matters affect everyday life just as much as low culture does, and provide a good reference point. The good thing for China is that its Asian neighbours seem to appreciate China's economic impact on the region, too. According to the survey referred to above, this applies to Thailand, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Pakistan, South Korea as well as Indonesia. And even Japan, whose relations with China are

⁶ I.e. cultural attractiveness, political values, development model, international institutions, international image, and economic temptation.

⁷ In a similar way, President Xi's pledge for free trade at the 2017 Davos World Economic Forum also exceeds the mere support for unimpeded trade, but displays China as advocate of the corresponding political values of cooperation, accountability and stability (BBC, 2017).

⁸ As a matter of fact, Nye also uses the term 'currency' to describe power's mode of action (Nye, 2004: 7).

historically charged, is rather well-minded when it comes to economic ties with China (Pew Research, 2014a). Furthermore, BRI might be just the right occasion to practically implement slogans like 'bilateral cooperation', 'mutual benefit' or 'win-win situations' that pop up in numerous speeches of Chinese politicians and White Papers (SCIO, 2011). This can be done through infrastructural, commercial and economic collaborations. Thereby proving that they are genuine Chinese political values rather than just lip service.⁹ Moreover, China's relatively weak cultural diplomacy can use commerce as a leverage to enhance its accessibility and efficiency (Nye, 2004: 13). Thus, the Chinese development model, the so called 'Beijing Consensus', could be just the right role model for emerging markets which directly benefit from BRI. This further underlines that economic matters harmonise well with Soft Power as they work as transmitters of Soft Power.

Stability and accountability in rough times

Foreign policy as one source of Soft Power is only efficient if it is regarded as legitimate and reflecting moral authority (Nye, 2004: 11). Considering the continuing six party-conflict in the South China Sea and its second front with Japan in the East China Sea, it is doubtful that China's foreign policy at present can be perceived as undisputed and legitimate. Though China pushes for bilateral negotiations, there seems to be no consistent procedure that pleases everybody. Without making a judgement about China's foreign policy in general, one has to see this circumstance from the perspective of China's Soft Power and its strategic impact. It is quite clear that the ongoing frictions are surely not beneficial for its image in regional and international circles. In this context, US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter stated that '[...] China's actions could erect a great wall of self-isolation as countries across the region – allies, partners and the unaligned – are voicing concerns publicly and privately at the highest levels [...]' (SCMP, 2016). In order to overcome this 'wall', BRI has the right toolbox since it contains a whole host of formal and informal rules, which are able to facilitate state-to-state communication and cooperation. According to Robert O. Keohane, institutions, understood as formal and informal¹⁰ systems of rules, create expectations, monitor partner's compliance and thus enhance credibility (Keohane, 1989: 2). In times of uncertainty about China's foreign policy behaviour and actions, these characteristics are the right remedy to counter Mr Carter's worries.

In this context, the 'Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank' (AIIB), which already entered into operation, could become one of these focal institutions. Being the largest single stakeholder within AIIB, China has the opportunity to play an active role in finding solutions for regional and global issues, which complies with the demand of World Bank's former president Robert Zoellick for China to be a 'responsible stakeholder' (The National Interest, 2016). As a number of Western countries¹¹ already joined the AIIB (AIIB, 2017), there is – at least – the chance that the concurrent existence of World Bank and AIIB is less an 'either-or-decision', but rather a case of complimentary co-existence. Moreover, liberal theories premise that trade and commerce positively affect peace and stability. Along with the institutionalisation mentioned above, BRI thus could provide more (regional) stability as forums and negotiations related to the context of BRI could link economic and security policies and provide useful package deals. As a consequence, BRI's rules of conduct

⁹ While the American Dream certainly belongs to the field of Soft Power, its key messages comprise (economic) prosperity, too.

¹⁰ Such as sovereignty, neutrality or reciprocity.

¹¹ E.g. Australia, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands [...].

might spill over on other policy fields and provide viable regulations for conflict resolutions depicting Chinese leadership as an organising, stabilising and eventually caring actor.¹² Doubts over the long-standing liberal presumption about the link between economic dependence and peace are justified, as historical and academic evidence have shown (Gartzke, Li & Boehmer, 2001). In this respect, the first 'Belt and Road Forum' also revives this idea by issuing a Joint Communiqué fostering the spirit of cooperation¹³ (Xinhuanet, 2017). However, one has to distinguish between economic collaboration and economic dependence. Whereas extensive economic dependence and thus imbalance certainly has only little positive effect on stability or even leads to instability (Barbieri, 1996), general economic ties in the sense of equal and mutual benefit certainly do work in this sense. Since economic relations can never be fully balanced, it is China's task to tackle the idea of a zero-sum game and instead convince partners that BRI is designed to meet their needs through multilateral processes. In this sense, it is the so called 'Silk Road Spirit' (NDRC, 2015) that transforms BRI from an economic project into a comprehensive idea that participating countries do not have to be willing to jeopardise themselves or descend into military mayhem.

Being a partner is better than being a target group

Lastly, BRI has to be analysed in the context of constructivism's emphasis on identity within the reciprocal interplay of agency and structure (Reus-Smit, 2005: 188). Although its content is cultural at first glance, China's Soft Power is highly political at its core. In other words, cultural diplomacy merely serves an overall political purpose and thus degenerates into becoming a mere instrument. Considering the fact that China is a one-party state, this setup hardly comes as a surprise. Yet, Soft Power's political background should not be noticeable but rather subliminal. Confucius Institutes, CCTV or events like the Olympic Games certainly create pathways that bring people together and foster exchange – at least on the drawing board. However, in the case of China's Soft Power this path is more like a government-to-people one-way-street than an open, unimpeded channel for vivid exchange. What is striking here is that China does not refrain from labelling its Soft Power as 'strategy'. The 2022 Olympic Games' Bid Committee, for example, states that 'bidding for the 2022 Winter Games provides an opportunity to [...] strengthen China's soft power'. China's Soft Power, like any kind of power, is designed to fulfil strategic goals (Beijing 2022 Bid Committee, 2014). Yet, recipients should not be aware that they are actually being influenced in order to avoid reluctance (Burgoon et al., 2002: 215-216). Beyond BRI's superficial economic goals, the large number of participating countries requires tight and transparent cooperation among the respective nations (Godement, 2015). The pleasant side effect could be the establishment of a partnership on true equal footing avoiding a Chinese solo-run that would cause distrust about its true intentions. To this extent, BRI symbolises the ideal of a two-way street that involves listening as well as talking, as Nye coins it (2008: 103).

¹² In this regard, transnational crime, for example, is a commonly underrated yet fundamental issue in (South-) East Asia (UNODC, 2016). Since unhindered international trade strongly depends on security and safety BRI could be a major contribution to tackle this issue in Central and Southeast Asia. Besides that, China's general commitment to assume more responsibility in global governance through BRI was expressed during the 2017 BRICS Xiamen Summit (Belt and Road Portal, 2017).

¹³ The whole document (1.851 words) mentions the term 'cooperation' 40 times.

All done and dusted?

Presuming the broader understanding of Soft Power as any form of attractive power, BRI certainly has the capability to work in favour of China's Soft Power strategy. First, traditional Chinese culture lacks a sufficient degree of 'literacy' in order to be an efficient Soft Power instrument. In contrast to this, economic matters are far more universal as they, just as low culture, affect everyday life. The fact that China's Asian neighbours appreciate its economic impact on the region makes the economy an even more suitable transmitter of Soft Power. Second, assuming that BRI is potentially able to form package deals and combine matters of economic and security policies, its institutional framework might help to foster accountability as well as stability. Considering the ongoing frictions in the South China Sea, this point is particularly important. Lastly, China's actual Soft Power strategy clearly constitutes recipients as target groups. However, this commonly leads to reluctance. By contrast, although participating countries' capacities are far from being equal to China's, BRI has the potential to display cooperation on formal equal footing and to create the idea of partnership. If it is capable of proving that, then China's idea of trade will not be a zero-sum game (Godement, 2015).

Yet, as I have also pointed out, there are some prerequisites that have to be met in order for BRI to be turned into a successful Soft Power tool. Just as with economic collaboration, if it turns into economic dependence, it is no assurance for peace, and China especially has to learn about the recipients, their specific cultural, political and economic demands and concerns to uphold the idea of just partnership and mutual benefit. Considering the fact that BRI brings together four billion people and a huge variety of cultures, economies and societies, at the very least we can say that this seems to be an ambitious project. Further complicating this picture, some of BRI's participants, especially in Central Asia, suffer from highly inefficient, if not corrupt governments. Instead of an ideal 'trickle-down' effect, investments might peter out instead of improving people's economic situations (Lu, 2016). This leads to the second and most crucial point. Considering the project has been launched only four years ago, China's main task now is to breathe life into it in order to create sustainable, reliable and – above all – genuine Chinese political values that are accepted and admired abroad.

Sources Cited

- ABC (2015) China pushes to expand its soft power through cultural exports. Available from: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/futuretense/soft-power-with-chinese-characteristics/6446990> [Accessed 21 Sept. 2016].
- AIIB (2017): Members and Prospective Members of the Bank. Available from: <https://www.aiib.org/en/about-aiib/governance/members-of-bank/index.html> [Accessed 03 Dec. 2017].
- Barbieri, K. (1996) Economic Interdependence: A Path to Peace or a Source of Interstate Conflict? *Journal of Peace Research* 33 (1), pp. 29-49.

- BBC (2014) World Service Poll: Negative Views of Russia on the Rise: Global Poll. Available from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2014/world-service-country-poll> [Accessed 17 December 2015].
- BBC (2017) Davos 2017: Can Xi Jinping be star of the show? Available from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/business-38633376> [Accessed 03 June 2017].
- Belt and Road Portal (2017) China Offers Wisdom in Global Governance. Available from: <https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/qwyw/rdxw/29808.htm> [Accessed 08 Oct. 2017].
- Beijing 2022 Bid Committee (2014) Bidding for 2022 Olympics is to live China Dream. Available from: <http://www.beijing-2022.cn/a/20140729/080968.htm> [Accessed 17 Dec. 2015].
- Burgoon, M., Alvaro, E., Grandpre, J. & Voulodakis, M. (2002) Revisiting the Theory of Psychological Reactance: Communicating Threats to Attitudinal Freedom, in: Dillard, J.P. & Shen, L. (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Persuasion: Developments in Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, SAGE Publications, pp. 213-232.
- Cao Q. (2014) China's Soft Power. Formulations, Contestations and Communication. In: Cao, Q., Tian, H. and Chilton, P. (eds) *Discourse, Politics and Media in Contemporary China*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia, John Benjamins Publishing Company, pp. 171-194.
- Carr, E. H. (1954) *The Twenty Years' Crisis: 1919-1939. An Introduction to the Studies of International Relations*. London: Macmillan.
- Gartzke E., Li, Q. and Boehmer, C. (2001) Investing in the Peace: Economic Interdependence and International Conflict. *International Organization* 55(2), pp. 391-438.
- Godement, F. (2015) 'One Belt, One Road': China's Great Leap Outward. *European Council on Foreign Relations. China Analysis*. Available from: http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/China_analysis_belt_road.pdf [Accessed 19 Nov. 2016].
- Hartig, F. (2016) *Chinese Public Diplomacy. The Rise of the Confucius Institute*, London & New York, Routledge.
- He Q. (2009) 'Soft Power' with Chinese Characteristics is Changing the World. *Human Rights in China*. 4, pp. 24-41.
- Hirsch, E. D. (1987) *Cultural Literacy. What Every American Needs to Know*. New York, Vintage Books.
- Johnson, B. (2005) Getting our knickers in a twist over China. Available from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/3619424/Getting-our-knickers-in-a-twist-over-China.html> [Accessed 15 Sept. 2016].
- Johnston, A. I. (2013) How New and Assertive is China's New Assertiveness? *International Security*, 37(4), pp. 7-48.

- Keohane, R. (1989) Neoliberal Institutionalism: A Perspective on World Politics. In: Keohane, R. (ed) *International Institutions and State Power. Essays in International Relations*. Boulder, Westview Press, pp. 1-20.
- Li X. and Worm, V. (2011) Building China's Soft Power for a Peaceful Rise. *Journal of China Political Science*. 16, pp. 69-89.
- Lu M. (2016) One Belt, One Road: Risks and Countermeasures for Chinese Companies. Available from: <http://www.brinknews.com/one-belt-one-road-risks-and-countermeasures-for-chinese-companies/> [Accessed 21 May 2016].
- Manheim, J. B. & Albritton, R. B. (1984) Changing National Images: International Public Relations and Media Agenda Setting. *The American Political Science Review*. 78(3), pp. 641-657.
- NDRC (2015) Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road", Available from: http://en.ndrc.gov.cn/newsrelease/201503/t20150330_669367.html [Accessed 29 Mar. 2015].
- Noesselt, N. (2012) Is There a Chinese School of IR? *GIGA Working Papers*, 188.
- Nye, J. (2004) *Soft Power. The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York, Public Affairs.
- Nye, J. (2008) Public Diplomacy and Soft Power. *The Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*. 616, pp. 94-109.
- Nye, Joseph S. (2015) The Limits of Chinese Soft Power. Taipei Times. Available from: <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2015/07/13/2003622893> [Accessed 29 Dec. 2015].
- PCA (2016) PCA Press Release: The South China Sea Arbitration (The Republic of the Philippines v. The People's Republic of China). Available from: <https://pca-cpa.org/en/news/pca-press-release-the-south-china-sea-arbitration-the-republic-of-the-philippines-v-the-peoples-republic-of-china/> [Accessed 20 Sept. 2016].
- Pew Research Center (2014a) Global Opposition to U.S. Surveillance and Drones, but Limited Harm to America's Image. Many in Asia Worry about Conflict with China. Available from: www.pewglobal.org/files/2014/07/2014-07-14-Balance-of-Power.pdf [Accessed 21 Dec. 2015].
- Pew Research Center (2014b): China's Image. Available from: www.pewglobal.org/2014/07/14/chapter-2-chinas-image/ [Accessed 27 May 2016].

- Reus-Smit, C. (2005) Social Constructivism. In: Burchill, S., Linklater, A., Devetak, R., Donnelly, J., Paterson, M., Reus-Smit, C., & True, J. (eds.) *Theories of International Relations*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 188-212.
- SCIO (2011) China's Peaceful Development. Available from: http://www.china.org.cn/government/whitepaper/node_7126562.htm [Accessed 27 Sept. 2016].
- SCMP (2016) US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter Warns China Against Building 'Great Wall of Self-Isolation'. Available from: <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/1957204/us-defence-secretary-ashton-carter-warns-china-against> [Accessed 29 May 2016].
- Shambaugh, D. (2015) China's Soft-Power Push. The Search for Respect. *Foreign Affairs*. Available from: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2015-06-16/china-s-soft-power-push> [Accessed 23 Sept. 2016].
- Swaine, M. (2015) Chinese Views and Commentary on the 'One Belt, One Road' Initiative. *China Leadership Monitor* 47. Available from: <http://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/research/docs/clm47ms.pdf>. [Accessed 12 Feb. 2016].
- The Diplomat (2013) Soft Power? China Has Plenty. Available from: <http://thediplomat.com/2013/06/soft-power-china-has-plenty/> [Accessed 15 Sept. 2016].
- The Economist (2009) Five Questions for Joseph Nye. Available from: http://www.economist.com/blogs/democracyinamerica/2009/06/five_questions_for_joseph_nye [Accessed 15 Sept. 2016].
- The National Interest (2016) China: A Responsible Stakeholder? Available from: <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/china-responsible-stakeholder-16131> [Accessed 15 Sept. 2016].
- The Soft Power 30 (2016) Overall Ranking 2016. Available from: <http://softpower30.portland-communications.com/ranking/> [Accessed 19 Sept. 2016].
- UNODC (2016) Protecting Prosperity and Peace in South East Asia: Synchronizing Economic and Security Agendas. *Report of The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime* (UNODC). Available from: https://www.unodc.org/documents/southeastasiaandpacific/Publications/2016/Protecting_peace_and_prosperity_in_SEA.pdf [Accessed June 22nd 2016].
- van Broomfield, E. (2003) Perceptions of Danger: the China Threat Theory. *Journal of Contemporary China*. 12(35), 265-284.

- Wang J. (2011) Introduction: China's Search of Soft Power. In: Wang J. (ed.) *Soft Power in China. Public Diplomacy Through Communication*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1-18.
- Wendt, A. (1995) Constructing International Politics. *International Security*. 20(2), pp. 71-81.
- Wong, J. (2016) China's Rising Economic Soft Power. Available from: <https://cpianalysis.org/2016/03/25/chinas-rising-economic-soft-power/> [Accessed 17th November 2016].
- Xinhuanet (2014) Xi: China to Promote Cultural Soft Power. Available from: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2014-01/01/c_125941955.htm [Accessed 02 June 2017].
- Xinhuanet (2017) Xi: Full text: Joint Communique of Leaders Roundtable of Belt and Road Forum. Available from: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-05/15/c_136286378.htm [Accessed 02 June 2017].
- Young, N. C. and Jong, H. J. (2008) China's Soft Power: Discussions, Resources and Prospects. *Asian Survey*. 48(3), pp. 453-472.

MAPPING CHINA JOURNAL

Mapping China Journal 2017 / Number 1

Part 2: Integration in Asia? Mapping Domestic and Regional Challenges for China

China's Role Conception and Foreign Policy Role in Economic Integration Processes in the Asia-Pacific

By Kim Vender*

Abstract

Studies on the role of the People's Republic of China in regional and global governance have increased concurrently with the country's dramatic enhancement of its economic performance and its international influence. By applying a role theoretical approach, this article focuses on the foreign policy role of China in regional integration processes in East Asia and the wider Asia-Pacific. It argues that since the end of the Cold War era, China has developed its national role conception from a "developing country among others" to the "leader of the developing countries" with increasingly diverse understandings of its international responsibilities and role(s). In order to identify China's changing role(s) in the region, this paper analyses the case study of the establishment of a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific within the framework of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. By taking into account several factors such as the influence of ego and alter expectations the study reveals a certain degree of coherence between China's NRC and its foreign policy roles and thereby provides a basis for further role theoretical research on China's roles in regional and global governance.

* Kim Vender is a PhD student of Politics and International Relations at the University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom. Her research focuses on Chinese foreign policy and China's role in regional and global governance. In her current research project, she examines China's role in international climate change negotiations. She obtained her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from the Free University of Berlin and the Ruhr University Bochum, respectively.

China's Role Conception and Foreign Policy Role in Economic Integration Processes in the Asia-Pacific

Introduction

Since the People's Republic of China (PR China, PRC) developed into the second largest economy in terms of nominal GDP (World Bank, 2017) and became a major player on the world stage, questions and concerns regarding China's foreign policy intentions emerged. Both in the global governance system, still dominated by Western norms, values and rules, and at the regional level in East Asia and the Asia-Pacific, the development of the PR China represents both opportunities and challenges for other countries. With the re-emergence of territorial disputes in the region e.g. in the South China Sea, China's behaviour has frequently been described in the media and within academic research as increasingly self-confident or even assertive. However, at least since the global financial crisis in 2007/2008, by which China was not as harshly affected as other big economies, the awareness arose that global issues cannot be solved without the PRC. The official rhetoric of the Chinese government, including the PRC's "peaceful development" (*heping fazhan* 和平发展) and the aim of a "harmonious world" (*hexie shijie* 和谐世界) (State Council Information Office, 2005), suggests the picture of a placid and gentle giant who does not claim a prominent role for itself among others.

However, regarding regional economic integration processes in East Asia and the wider Pacific primarily discussed within the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) process, Chen Fengyin, researcher at the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations, evaluated China's foreign policy behaviour as follows: "Back in 2001, China was asking humbly to get into the room; in 2014, China wants to take centre stage...China is now playing offensive, not defensive" (Bloomberg News, 2014). Inspired by this statement, this paper intends to reveal eventual changes in China's role within the APEC process between 1991 (the year of entering the process) and 2014 by examining the country's role behaviour based on the example of the establishment of the FTAAP.

In a wide range of academic and non-academic publications the term "role" is often used in an undefined way with no reference to any theoretical foundation. Unfortunately, this common practice distracts from its function as a valuable analytical tool in International Relations (IR) research and Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). Borrowed from the social sciences, the social-constructivist role theory in IR and FPA does not only provide a working definition of the term but considers several dimensions of its formation including in-depth analyses of a country's national role conception (NRC). For that reason, this paper will apply a role theoretical approach to analyse and assess the foreign policy role or even roles as well as the NRC of the PR China with a special focus on regional economic cooperation and integration processes in East Asia and the Asia-Pacific. Thereby, it aims to contribute to the enlargement of the role theoretical empirical basis for future research on China's international roles. By applying the analytical categories of role theory (role, NRC, role expectations), the paper will answer the questions (1) which national role conception China has been developing for itself regarding its position in the international system,

(2) which roles this conception entails within East Asian and Asian-Pacific economic integration processes as well as (3) if China enacts these roles and whether they have changed over time.

The paper is structured as follows: First, the theoretical framework will be introduced, followed by a short overview of the APEC as well as relevant actors for the analysis. The second part examines China's national role conception by considering its national identity and self-conception as a nation and actor in the international system. Therefore, speeches of Chinese government officials as well as the domestic scholarly debate will be analysed regarding statements on or with reference to China's identity, international role, and international responsibility. Part three will explore specific roles China enacts within the APEC process to reveal an eventual role change over the time of the analysis. It will also assess whether China's roles possess an either high or low correlation with the NRC and will close with a summary of the findings.

Role Theory in International Relations

Role theory originally derives from the disciplines of sociology and social psychology (Cantir & Kaarbo, 2016: 3; Harnisch, 2011: 7) and was developed to explain the behaviour of individuals within society and its sub-systems (e.g. the family). The core assumption of the role theoretical approach is that in social systems every individual's social position is connected to normatively grounded expectations regarding the individual's behaviour. For instance, a father, teacher or nurse all face specific expectations on how to behave within their respective position. These "social roles" are described as distinctive behavioural patterns, which occur in formalised relationships and represent an essential element of the social system (Bahrtdt, 1994: 67).

In 1970, K.J. Holsti was the first to conceptualise the theoretical approach for FPA by transferring the core assumptions and concepts of role theory from the level of society to the level of the international system. Moreover, he developed a typology of national roles and role conceptions by identifying at least 17 different role conceptions policymakers of 71 countries frequently had referred to. Building on Holsti's definitions of the core theoretical categories other scholars such as Walker (1987), Kirste and Maull (1996), and Harnisch (2011) among others applied the framework in not only FPA but also IR studies. Current role theoretical research in Europe is dominated by a symbolic interactionist approach, which proceeds from the assumption that social roles are rather flexible and dependent on the actor's own interpretation and interactions rather than rigid and predefined by the social structure of the international system (Harnisch, 2011: 7-8). From a symbolic interactionist viewpoint, social roles can be updated or modified by the actor due to his understanding of his role which is being influenced by the behaviour and expectations of so-called significant others (Harnisch, 2011: 8). In this reading, the starting point for the examination of foreign policy roles and the origins of national role conceptions is the individual actor and its interactions with others (inherited in the concept of the significant other) (Harnisch, 2011: 11).

Concerning the concept of *role*, various definitions exist highlighting different aspects regarding the constitution of a country's foreign policy role (Nabers, 2011). According to Biddle (1986) as well as Stryker and Statham (1985) an integrated version of role theory should be adopted in which the term role would include references to both "positions" in an organized group *and* to any socially recognized category of actors" (Thies, 2009: 3-4). Since this definition is most widely adopted in current role theoretical research it will also serve as the conceptual basis in this paper.

Social positions “are constituted by ego- and alter-expectations regarding the purpose of an actor in an organized group” (Harnisch, 2016: 5). *Role expectations* are expressed through both language and behaviour. They can be articulated endogenously, namely by individuals or groups within society (*ego expectations*) as well as exogenously by other actors in the international system (*alter expectations*). Ego expectations, on the one side, refer to the peoples’ ideas and perceptions regarding the role its country should adopt and what features this role should include. If domestic role expectations and the actual role of the nation state differ, *domestic role contestation* occurs. Alter expectations, on the other side, are constituted by demands of other states regarding the actor’s behaviour in the international arena. They are either explicitly expressed through language or implicitly indicated by other states’ counter role taking (Harnisch, 2011: 8). It is common ground among scholars that the analysis of foreign policy roles always involves the examination of the counter role taking of other actors (Stryker & Statham, 1985; Thies, 2009; Harnisch, 2016). Thus, role expectations can be regarded as a conceptual link between the individual level and the social structure, in other words, the actor level and the systemic level (Thies, 2009: 9). Since role expectations vary in scope, clarity and the degree of consensus among the individuals expressing them, either *intra-role conflict* (contradictions within a specific role) or *inter-role conflict* (contradictions between several roles) are likely to emerge (Harnisch, 2011: 8).

Gaupp (1983: 28) emphasises that, in case of contradictory expectations nation states selectively perceive those expectations and either accept, modify or disregard them based on their own experiences and preferences. Through this process, the nation state develops its own role conception. Holsti defines the term *national role conception* as “the "ego's" own conception of his position and functions, and the behavior appropriate to them” (Holsti, 1970: 239). However, both Gaupp (1983) and Harnisch (2011) highlight that the NRC is derived not only from the perception of the nation state’s own position in comparison to other states (ego part) but also from the perception of the external expectations (alter part). These ego and alter parts of the role conception are determined by the collective identity of the nation state as well as its interaction with its environment.

Just as individuals are influenced differently by other persons depending on their relationship, nation states, too, assess the importance of other actors in the international system differently. Countries having a closer relationship with the role beholder (e.g. former colonial powers, allies or adversaries) are described as a nation state’s *significant others*. They represent the core objects in the analysis of the influence alter expectations have on the formation and change of a nation state’s NRC and foreign policy behaviour (Harnisch, 2011: 12). The identification of the significant others for the role beholder is mostly based on their power relationship and level of dependency (Wendt, 1999: 327). Significance is assigned to an actor regarding both material and immaterial factors such as the role beholder’s dependence on resources as well as his past experiences with the other actor (Wendt, 1999: 328; Harnisch, 2011: 12).

Role change as well as changes in the national role conception of a country are closely tied to both the development of the actor’s national identity and the interaction with its significant others on a bilateral or multilateral basis (e.g. in an organisation). In case of organisational membership, the identity of the role beholder meets with the collective identity of the social group. With the application of mechanisms such as adaptation and learning by the nation state or *altercasting* and

socialisation by the other actors and the group as such, role change might be the consequence. In multilateral cooperation, the process of socialisation refers to the internalisation of previously determined norms and rules of behaviour by a newcomer. However, within social groups altercasting is regarded as a mechanism of socialisation, too (Thies, 2009: 8). Harnisch describes it as “the conscious manipulation of one’s own role-taking behaviour to (re)shape the role of another actor, presumably a counter- or commensurate role” (Harnisch, 2011: 13). A prerequisite for the impact of role taking on role change is that such behaviour always leads to counter role taking and, thus, to the adjustment of not only the actor’s role enactment but even the role itself (Harnisch, 2011: 12).

In the literature, it is hypothesised that new states in the international system enact only few roles, which are predominantly ascribed through altercasting by already established nation states in the system (Thies, 2009: 8; Harnisch, 2011: 12; Le Prestre, 1997: 7; Sarbin & Allen, 1968: 496f.). If this assumption is conferred from the context of the international system to that of multilateral organisations, the following hypothesis can be derived: New members in an organisation enact only few roles within the social group, which are primarily ascribed by the well-established members. Furthermore, the long-standing member states on their part inhabit multiple roles, of which the majority is attained by themselves and only few are ascribed by others. In accordance to this, it can be argued that newcomers in an organisation initially take on roles ascribed through the mechanisms of socialisation and altercasting (role taking). However, with extending membership they proceed to more self-confident role making, and moreover, ascribe roles to other actors in the group.

Since role theory takes into account several levels of the analysis ranging from the individual to the state to the international system, it allows to address agent-structure relationships (Walker, 1987: 2; Cantir & Kaarbo, 2012: 6). The concept of role as the analytical category serves as the link between these levels (Gaupp, 1983: 13). Representing an independent variable in the systemic analysis and a dependent variable in FPA, the concept of role is an instrument to include the interplay of internal and external variables in the analysis (Le Prestre, 1997: 6). This is considered a great advantage that role theory offers for the analysis of national foreign policy making. However, the complexity of role theory is not only positively perceived as “conceptual richness” but also negatively as having a “lack of methodological rigor” (Walker, 1979: 178). The concepts of role and national role conception still need a clearer definition and distinction. This becomes obvious when asking for the constituent elements of a specific NRC (e.g. the kind of roles) as well as the measurability of the influence of ego and alter expectations regarding the development and implementation of the NRC (Frenkler et al., 1994-1997: 14). Nevertheless, with its complex understanding of the individual actor as being both rational and reflective, role theory offers a way to integrate existing different (and sometimes competing) theoretical approaches of IR and FPA.

Regional economic integration processes in the Asia-Pacific

Established in 1989 the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is part of the regional economic integration processes in the Asian region. Following the definition of Börzel and Risse (2016: 7), who define regions as “social constructions that make references to territorial location and to geographical or normative contiguity”, I understand the Asia-Pacific region as a construction which is to some extent geographically but primarily normatively bound together, taken into account that for instance Russia is part of the APEC although it is not a Pacific country and its

belonging to Asia has been contested for decades within the academic discourse (Rangsimaporn, 2006; Neumann, 2017). With its 21 member economies encompassing countries from East Asia, North and South America as well as Australasia and the Pacific¹ APEC is the most comprehensive forum dealing with trade facilitation and economic integration in the Asia-Pacific. The PR China as well as Hong Kong and Taiwan (under the name “Chinese Taipei”) entered the process in 1991. Only due to the consent that APEC is regarded as an exclusively economically oriented cooperation mechanism Beijing agreed to the inclusion of Taiwan despite the ‘One China’ policy. According to the APEC Secretariat, members are designated as “economies” because “the APEC cooperative process is predominantly concerned with trade and economic issues ...” (APEC Secretariat, 2017). In 1994, at the second APEC Economic Leaders’ Meeting (ELM) in Bogor, Indonesia, the heads of state and heads of government adopted the so-called “Bogor Goals”. The ambitious trade liberalisation programme is targeted at the removal of all tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade and investments until 2010 for industrial countries and 2020 for developing countries (APEC, 1994). The APEC agenda is built on three pillars, which include (1) the liberalisation of trade and investments, (2) the facilitation of business relations, and (3) economic and technical cooperation (ECOTECH). Joint efforts for the reduction of tariff and non-tariff trade and investment barriers are pursued within the framework of the APEC Regional Economic Integration (REI) agenda. They include negotiations of bilateral and multilateral trade agreements with the long-term prospect of a Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP). The FTAAP is described by the APEC as “a comprehensive free trade agreement ...developing and building on ongoing regional undertakings, such as ASEAN+3, ASEAN+6, and the Trans-Pacific Partnership, among others” (APEC, 2010).

Compared to six bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) between APEC members in 2000, today the number amounts to more than 45 with even more under negotiation (Petri & Plummer, 2012: 1). To counter the negative impacts of this so-called East Asian “noodle bowl” or “spaghetti bowl”, which are perceived to be overlapping rules of origin and an undermining of the multilateral trade liberalisation process of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) among others (Kawai & Wignaraja 2012)² as well as to not lag behind other regions’ efforts of economic integration, several multilateral FTAs emerged in East Asia. In the Southeast, these agreements include the Association of South East Asian Nations free trade area (ASEAN FTA) comprising ten countries³ as well as the ASEAN Plus agreements adding the PR China, Japan and South Korea (ASEAN+1 and ASEAN+3) as well as Australia, New Zealand, and India (ASEAN+6). In the Northeast, a China-Japan-South Korea Free Trade Area (CJK) is in its 12th round of negotiation as of April 2017.

Proposed by China in 2012 but with ASEAN at its core, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement, consisting of the ASEAN+6 countries, is under negotiation. Coming into existence it would consist of an integrated market with more than 3 billion people

¹ The members comprise China, Japan, Korea, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Canada, USA, Mexico, Peru, Chile, and Russia.

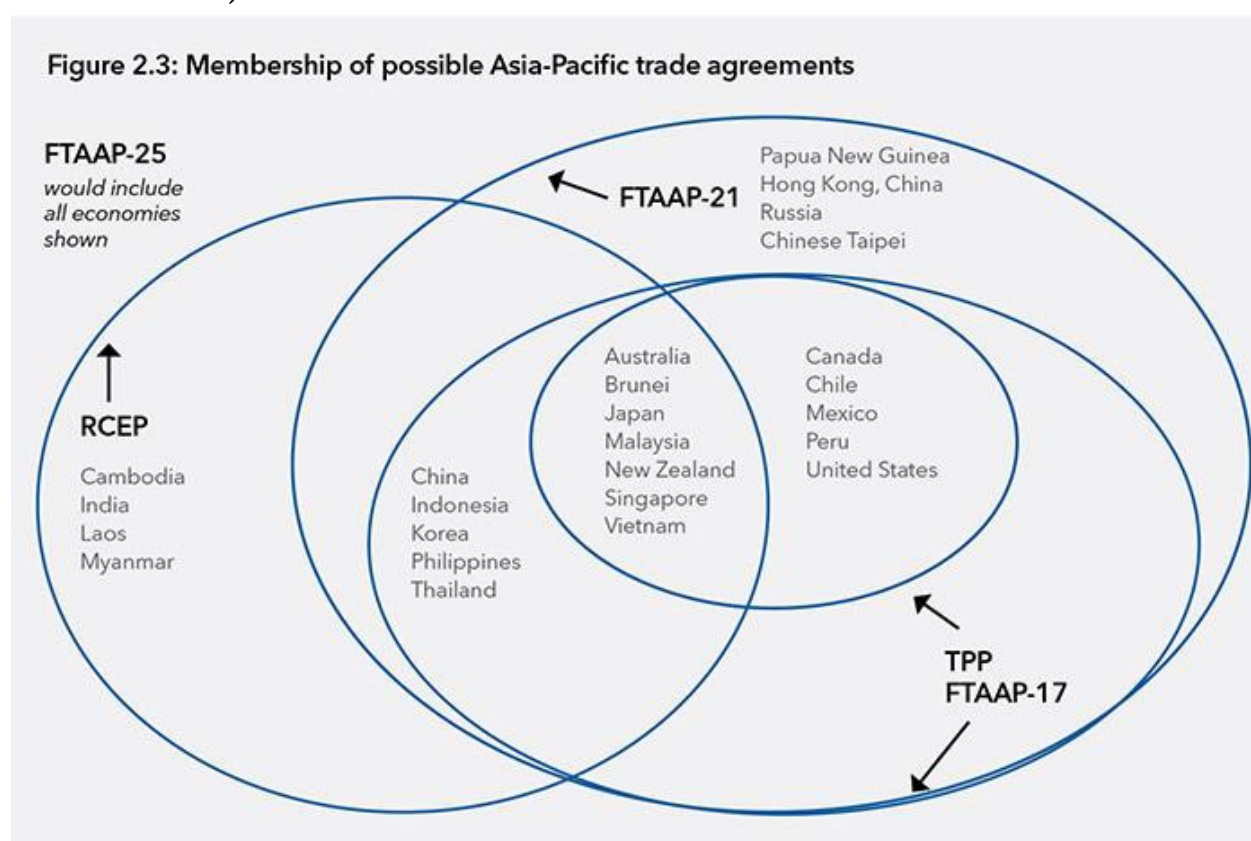
² According to a study of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) the negative effects of the “noodle bowl” on the business activity are overestimated (Kawai & Wignaraja 2009).

³ These ten countries are: Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei Darussalam, Viet Nam, Cambodia, Thailand, Singapore, Myanmar, Lao PDR, and Malaysia.

(over 45% of the global population) and a combined GDP of about 30% of global GDP. The RCEP would represent 29% of global trade and 26% of foreign direct investments worldwide (Wignaraja, 2013).

In contrast to the RCEP, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement includes not only countries from ASEAN, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, but also countries from North and South America at the time of its finalisation in 2015. Moreover, the TPP is a high standard agreement that exceeds the RCEP with regard to “the proportion of potential disciplines covered, the depth of such coverage, and the enforceability of provisions” (Petri & Plummer, 2012: 3). In contrast, the RCEP is described as not “go[ing] much beyond the bilateral deals that already crisscross the region” (Petri, Plummer & Zhai, 2014: 3). Nevertheless, according to Petri and Plummer, both agreements could serve as building blocks for a wider agreement and even within the APEC they are called “pathways” to the FTAAP. If it is going to develop in that way remains to be seen – especially against the backdrop of the US’ withdrawal from the TPP in 2017.

Figure 1: Multilateral Free Trade Agreements in the Asia-Pacific (since 2017 the TPP excludes the US)



Source: Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), 2014.

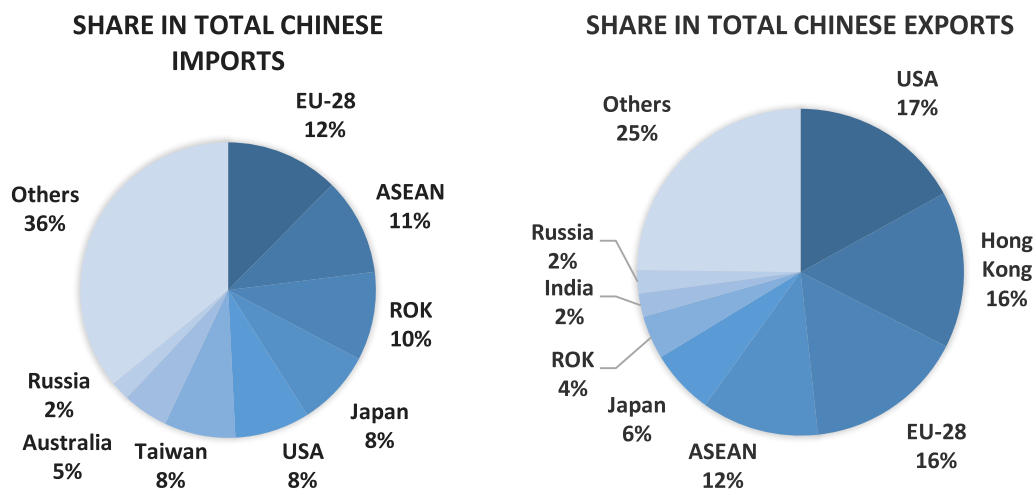
Identification of China's Significant Others

Since the determination of the significant others for the role beholder is based on the quality of their relationship including material and immaterial factors, economic and trade relations as well as

historical connections and current diplomatic relations between China and other APEC members will be assessed. Although major powers such as the Russian Federation, India, Australia, and even the Republic of Korea (ROK) are important member economies in the APEC and some of them have a special relationship with China, for this case study the paper will focus on the following countries based on their historical, economic, and political significance: United States, Japan, and the ASEAN member states.

One of the core interests of the Chinese government, the stability of the political system (State Council Information Office, 2011), to a great extent relies on stable and sustainable economic development. Thus, for the PR China, foreign trade and investments are a crucial factor for generating economic growth. This is expressed by the country's share of exports in its national GDP which accounted for 24% in 2014 (WTO, 2014). At the same time, the share of China's foreign trade sales in national GDP amounted to 43.8% in 2013 (US: 23.3%, Japan 31.5%, ROK: 82.4%) (World Bank Data). In order to ensure stable economic growth of the Chinese economy fruitful economic and trade ties with its main trade partners are of great importance to the People's Republic. Figure 2 shows that in the Asia-Pacific the US, the ASEAN, Japan, and South Korea rank among the most significant import and export partners of the PR China.

Figure 2: Main trade partner of the People's Republic of China (2014)



Own illustration, sources: International Trade Centre; World Bank Data.

When it comes to Beijing's political ties and diplomatic relations with countries in the Asia-Pacific it is obvious that Japan and the US are focal points of the analysis. Due to China's war time experiences and still ongoing struggles about the interpretation of historical issues but also its long-lasting territorial disputes with its neighbour in the East, Japanese foreign policy behaviour is of special significance to the decision-making of the Chinese leadership. Both countries are considerate to take into account the other's aspirations for a form of leadership in the East Asian region (Dent, 2008: 10).

With the PRC's rapid economic development during the past decades and its growing international influence not only Japan but also the United States were forced to recognise China as a major power not only in Asia but also internationally. However, especially the Obama administration's "pivot to Asia" and later "rebalance to Asia" since 2011 and the US' clear self-identification as a

“Pacific Power” (Barack Obama, 2011) indicate that the US is not willing to leave the stage to China. The question of regional leadership seems to be argued out between the countries of Japan, China, and the US. Caught between the three competing major powers, the ASEAN member states struggle to find a common stance on how to deal with each of them. According to Acharya (2009: 224-225), China poses the greatest challenge to ASEAN. The geographic vicinity to the huge neighbour, the modernisation and restructuring of the Chinese military with improved maritime power projection as well as China’s actions in the South China Sea in sum lead to a wary attitude towards the PRC. The combination of the described actions and Beijing’s rather contradictory “peaceful development” rhetoric give rise to ASEAN countries’ uncertainty regarding China’s true intentions (Ho, 2012: 15). However, China is also the main trade partner for the ASEAN (ASEAN External Trade Statistics, 2016). As a result, not only the strong economic ties but also the ASEAN members’ direct involvement in China’s territorial claims underline their status as significant others for Beijing in both material and immaterial regard. In sum, the US, Japan, and the ASEAN countries can be regarded as the most important actors for China concerning general cooperation in East Asia and the Asia-Pacific on the one hand as well as trade policy issues and free trade agreements within the APEC on the other hand.

China’s National Role Conception

In order to derive the national role conception of the PRC, it is necessary to get a basic idea of how the Chinese people understand the international system as well as the identity of the Chinese nation state. Within domestic debates about the direction of China’s foreign policy it is the big picture, *shi* 势 in Chinese, which is studied. On the one hand, the concept of *shi* 势 includes “the distinctive features of our times” and on the other hand, the international power distribution *guoji geju* 国际格局 (Zhu, 2010: 18). The first relates to the current state of the international system and, based on this, China’s relationship to it. The latter aims at the assessment of China’s position in relation to and relationship with other powers in the system. Both concepts serve as a basis for the domestic debate about the adjustment or reorientation of Chinese foreign policy strategy (Zhu, 2010: 17-18). Another important factor is the issue of national identity, which is closely tied to China’s loss of its “Middle Kingdom” status. After having experienced dramatic changes and defining events such as the semi-colonisation by certain Western imperialist countries, the Japanese invasion, civil war, the reunification by the Communist Party, the Cultural Revolution and not least the economic reform and opening-up policy since the end of the 1970s, questions regarding China’s national identity and the characteristics of China as a nation still linger on. As a consequence, China’s identity in the international system and, thus, its position towards other nation states and groups of nations as well remain a constant issue of the domestic debate. However, not only within China but also internationally it is widely discussed: “[W]hat kind of power is China, a global or regional power?; what type of state should China become, a *status quo* or a revisionist state? ...” as well as “what kind of responsibility should China shoulder in the international arena ...?” (Zhu, 2010: 19). Although relations and interactions are at the core of Chinese identity debates, those questions are not only addressed against the background of the international environment but also of national characteristics and capabilities.

In 1992, Jiang Zemin, then General Secretary of the Communist Party, stated that the Central Committee regards both the national conditions and the international environment as appropriate for a faster implementation of the economic reforms, which were introduced in 1978 (Jiang Zemin, 1992). This laid down the foundation for the enhancement of China’s foreign trade relations. From

the viewpoint of the Chinese leadership due to the end of the Cold War and the bipolarity of the international system, peace and development were the distinctive features of that time (Zhu, 2010: 21). Although there were setbacks to Beijing such as the international sanctions against China after the crackdown of the pro-democratic demonstrations in the capital in 1989 or the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999, the overall international situation was regarded as positive for the further development of the Chinese economy as well as building a good relationship with the international community.

However, with the dominant position of the United States in international politics concerns existed among Chinese scholars regarding how much space China will be granted for its development (Zhu, 2010: 22). In 1989, former Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping formulated a characteristic feature of China's political strategy, which is still discussed today: China should "observe calmly, hide its light, abide its time, ...not take on leadership and be active only to a certain degree" (own translation of *lengjing guancha*, (...) *taoguang yanghui*, (...) *juebu dang tou, yousuo zuowei* 冷静观察, (...) 韬光养晦, (...) 决不当头, 有所作为) (Xinhua, 2011). This guiding principle of Chinese foreign policy, which was often received and translated differently by Western scholars, is mostly abbreviated as *taoguang yanghui* 韬光养晦 and basically understood as "keeping a low profile" in international politics. According to Deng, China at that time should not play a prominent role on the global stage because it does not yet have the capacities and resources to invest in new initiatives (Shambaugh & Ren, 2012: 40-41). China's self-conception was that of a developing country still being in the early stage of socialism. From Deng's point of view, it needed to focus on its own development, the advancement of the reform process and the resolving of societal problems. Nevertheless, despite the strong emphasis on not taking on a leadership role, he also noted that China could not entirely stay out of global politics and had at least to "do something" (*yousuo zuowei* 有所作为). In his opinion, China should actively promote a new international political and economic order, in which it could gain more political weight and exercise greater influence (Xinhua, 2011).

Since the middle of the 20th century, China has a nuclear power status and is a member of the United Nations security council. Thus, it can be said that, China already has attributes of a major power for quite a long time. Nevertheless, the Chinese leadership always strongly emphasises China's status as a developing country highlighting its societal and economic challenges. Accordingly, Beijing distanced itself from taking over international responsibility inherited to a major power status. Jiang Zemin made this point abundantly clear during the negotiations of China's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) during the 1990s:

"We are ready to make efforts for greater global economic growth, but we are firm on not sacrificing our national interests in undertaking any international economic cooperation....China is a developing country and its social productive forces are yet to be developed, so it can join the WTO only on terms for a developing country.... China's accession to the WTO must be based on a balance between rights and obligations....It will not accept excessive terms which exceed its capacity." (Jiang Zemin, 1999)

In Chinese, the term responsibility is translated as *zeren* 责任, which is analogously comprised of “duty” (*ze* 责) and “to assume a post” (*ren* 任). According to the traditional Chinese understanding, obligations and tasks are linked to social positions and thereby power. However, it is rather seen as a moral than a legal obligation (Chan, 2013: 49-52). Above that, there is the notion that responsibility develops out of debt. In this reading, China does not feel morally obliged to take on international responsibility. On the contrary, it expects atonement in form of respect for the national sovereignty of the Chinese nation state from the former imperialistic powers, which, in the Chinese wording, brought about a century of humiliation to China (Chan, 2013: 49-50). At the APEC ELMs during the 1990s, the Chinese leadership repeatedly expressed their view on what kind of responsibility China would be willing to shoulder: It would make an important contribution to peace, stability, and development in the Asia-Pacific region as well as the whole world by strengthening its own economic development and maintain domestic political stability.

A first exemption of this understanding represented Beijing’s decision during the Asian financial crisis in 1997/98 to not depreciate its currency. This action prevented a competitive devaluation of currency exchange rates in the region and was described by the Chinese government as a “highly responsible attitude...for which China has paid a high price”(Jiang Zemin, 1998). However, Beijing’s behaviour was rather assessed as “an instance of crisis management that had regional implications than a deliberate or considered attempt at regional leadership” (Ba, 2014: 158). As if to underline this statement, China within APEC clearly assigned the responsibility for solving the crisis to the developed countries, namely those “big powers with influence in international finances” (Jiang Zemin, 1998). Still, China’s behaviour during the crisis, which was also expressed through bilateral financial support for countries such as Thailand and Indonesia, led to a change in the perception of China and its eventual role by the Southeast Asian countries. Until then, the PRC was regarded more as a recipient than a donor of aid (Ba, 2014: 159).

The changing perception of China by the ASEAN countries also led to an adjustment of their expectations towards Beijing with regard to its future actions in regional economic development (Ba, 2014: 160). In addition to raising external expectations, the rapid development of the Chinese economy after two decades of reform and opening-up also influenced the Chinese self-perception and had ramifications for its foreign policy behaviour. China’s self-description changed from that of a developing country among many to that of the “biggest developing country” (Jiang Zemin, 1997) and the “most populous developing country in the world” (Jiang Zemin, 2001a). In subsequent APEC meetings, China’s strong emphasis on the promotion of ECOTECH as well as its clear demands towards the developed countries to fulfil their obligations in restraining protectionism, invigorating trade and helping “lift developing members out of the current difficulties” (Jiang Zemin, 2001b) also indicates a self-understanding as being an advocate of the interests of other developing countries.

Especially the year of 2001, in which it acceded the WTO and hosted the APEC ELM in Shanghai, was assessed as a year of success in China. Chinese then Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan explained in an interview, that the ELM was a “centennial event at the focus of world attention” and China “has played an irreplaceable, important role in the successful holding of the meetings, for which it has won the praise of all members” (Tang Jiaxuan, 2001a). Regarding the WTO accession, which had spurred discussions in China about the ramifications of globalisation on the PRC’s development and identity, Jiang Zemin stated that after ten years of hard work, the membership

would herald the beginning of a new phase in China's opening-up to the world. Concomitant with that development, China "will participate in international economic cooperation and division of labor on a larger scale and in greater depth" (Jiang Zemin, 2001a). The WTO accession and the APEC meeting in Shanghai are only two examples for China's increasing visibility on the international stage since the beginning of the 21st century. According to the Yearbook of International Organizations (2002/2003), China joined 40 out of 67 international organisations, thus placing it on the 26th rank globally. In 2001 for instance, China was one of the six founding members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), which addresses non-traditional security issues among the member states.

In accordance with this development, Jiang Zemin expressed that, China "will shoulder corresponding obligations while enjoying due rights" (Jiang Zemin, 2001c). This decision can be explained by the Chinese assessment of the international system and the necessity for China's further integration into the world market. At the 16th National Party Congress in 2002, Jiang Zemin stated that the global trend was towards multilateralisation and economic globalisation and that "[c]ompetition in overall national strength is becoming increasingly fierce. Given this pressing situation, we must move forward, or we will fall behind." (Jiang Zemin, 2002).

At the same time, also external expectations had a significant influence on the Chinese self-conception. Aileen Baviera describes the perception of the ASEAN states of China's role in the region in the early 2000s as following: "From being perceived as mainly a potential economic threat, China has come to represent a potential benefactor...[and]...the region's new engine of growth which will help pull up the regional economy as a whole..." (Baviera, 2003: 347). At a press conference with Jiang Zemin during the 2001 APEC meeting, former US President George W. Bush said that, China is now a great power and America welcomes a China that is entirely integrated into the world community (George W. Bush, 2001). This statement is an expression of altercasting which the US exerted since the 1970s to push China into the role of a great power (Thies, 2016: 103). Furthermore, in 2005, former US Deputy Secretary of State, Robert Zoellick articulated his expectation, that China should be a "responsible stakeholder" in the international community (Zoellick, 2005), which inflamed a heated debate in the PRC about its role in the world and its international responsibility. After a primarily negative perception of the so-called "China's Responsibility" theory – a term used by Zhu Liquan (2010) to describe the heightened external expectations on the scope and width of China's international responsibilities⁴—controversial opinions arose regarding China's position and tasks in global politics. They include the view that China should be at least an "emerging major power" (Zhu, 2008: 28), which derives its responsibilities on the basis of its own national interests rather than that of the US or European states (Xue, 2009: 66). Other scholars expressed their standpoint more clearly with the statement that "China's responsibility is definitely not the obligatory list imposed by western powers..." (Sun, 2008: 83). In summary, it can be said that the external expectations regarding China's responsibility exceeded the internal expectations (Zhu, 2010: 42). After all, within the debate there was common ground on the fact that China should not do more or less than its capacities and capabilities allow.

⁴ These expectations were not only expressed by Zoellick but also by the EU Commission within its 2006 report "EU-China: Closer Partners – growing responsibilities," by German Chancellor Angela Merkel at the Davos World Economic Forum in 2007, and also from Japan. These actors basically demanded China to carry a "greater share of the global burden" in a range of issues in global governance and international politics (see Niu 2007: 81-83).

It should not assume any responsibility which it is not able to fulfil as a developing country and would jeopardise its sovereignty, security or development (Li Jie, 2008: 41).

With regard to China's national role conception it can be said that the self-assessment by the Chinese leadership and scholars from the beginning of the 1990s to the mid-2000s experienced a slight change towards greater self-consciousness due to China's rapid economic development and diplomatic successes. Simultaneously, meeting alter expectations regarding a more active role in international cooperation led to an increasingly positive perception of that role within China. However, demands for an adoption of responsibility resulted in China's return to its guiding principle *taoguang yanghui* 韬光养晦 and highlighting its status as a developing country with only narrow capacities and resources.

China's difficulties to meet the alter expectations of a more active and responsible stakeholder role continued also during the global financial crisis in 2007/2008 (Gottwald, 2016: 127). Nevertheless, due to the interplay with increasing ego expectations a gradual policy change began to loom and the picture of a "seat at the table" won increasing approval within the Chinese leadership (Gottwald, 2016: 130). In the end, a new national role conception emerged that depicted China as growing into a leadership role in international economic cooperation but without behaving or being depicted as a hegemonic power (Gottwald, 2016: 130).

Also in East Asia, the global financial crisis evoked concerns to what extent the US and Europe remain in the position to function as an engine for global economic growth. Hence, for China, the crisis did not only represent pressure and rising expectations but also opportunities for enacting a more pro-active role or even a leadership role in regional economic cooperation (Ba, 2014: 161). Against the background of the US' and Japan's economic difficulties, the Malaysian political scientist Abdul Razak Baginda already in 2005 expressed the view that "[there] is now this feeling that we have to consult the Chinese. We have to accept some degree of Chinese leadership, particularly in light of the lack of leadership elsewhere" (cited in Dent, 2008: 175).

Within the APEC, China repeatedly emphasised its active participation and peaceful development (Hu Jintao, 2003a). At other occasions, it also expressed its intention to defend the interests of the developing countries (Tang Jiaxuan, 2001b; Jiang Zemin, 2002). Together with its unprecedented economic development this leads me to the assumption that China wants to assume the role of an economic integrator in the Asia-Pacific and even has the ambition to take on a leadership role in East Asia.

China's Role Behaviour in the APEC

In the early 2000s, China's FTA strategy was characterised by a primarily bilateral rather than multilateral orientation (Yang, 2008). On the one hand, the Chinese leadership was still occupied with the implementation of structural economic reforms due to China's WTO accession. On the other hand, there was little progress in the APEC regarding the establishment of a comprehensive multilateral free trade agreement. Beijing was not pushing for it either. Its focus lied on domestic development and official statements highlighted that China is in the critical stage of its reform process (Hu Jintao, 2003b). Above that, with regard to FTAs, Chinese experts advised the government to follow the trend of negotiating bilateral agreements with countries in the region in order to not being marginalised and suffer from trade discrimination (Zhang, 2004: 75).

Concerning the development of multilateral FTAs, Chinese scholars (Zhang, 2004; Sheng, 2007) stated that China should focus on the East Asian region for political and economic reasons instead of a wider trade agreement within APEC. Sheng Bin described China at that time as a “firm supporter of the EAFTA [East Asia Free Trade Agreement] proposal” (Sheng, 2007: 46) comprising the ASEAN+3 countries, whereas Japan backed up the framework of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership in East Asia (CEPEA), which included the ASEAN+6 countries. These two approaches – EAFTA and CEPEA – finally merged into the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement, which was initiated at the East Asia Summit (EAS) in November 2012. Although APEC in its 1994 agenda already determined the aim of free trade in the Asia-Pacific, it was as late as 2004 that the APEC Business Advisory Council at the ELM meeting in Chile made a concrete proposal for the FTAAP together with a feasibility study. Along with the other members, China welcomed the “Santiago Initiative for Expanded Trade in APEC” but at the same time adopted a waiting attitude regarding the FTAAP. However, it must be recognised that most of the APEC economies at that time were hesitant regarding a free trade agreement spanning across the entire Asia-Pacific region (Medalla & Maddawin, 2015: 22).

Nevertheless, at the Hanoi meeting in 2006, Hu Jintao called for a greater role of the APEC in regional trade facilitation and the achievement of the Bogor Goals (Hu Jintao, 2006). Hence, it can be derived that Beijing was ready to turn towards the regional forum and, thus, the FTAAP instead of pursuing mainly bilateral free trade agreements or sub-regional FTAs within the ASEAN+3 framework as it did before. A reason for the slight change in its orientation is most likely interrelated with China's dissatisfaction concerning its role as an integrator in the East Asian region. Alongside the establishment of the East Asia Summit in 2005, China displayed itself as a strong supporter of the formation of an “Asian's only” East Asian Community (EAC) with a core group of East Asian countries (Malik, 2006: 3). After being confronted with very active performance by the ASEAN in the planning phase of the summit as well as being unsuccessful regarding the membership of the EAC China's enthusiasm declined (Medeiros, 2009: 132). The ASEAN stated that it was going to remain the “key driver” in the regional cooperation mechanism (Malik, 2006: 5). Beijing had to accept the limitation of its influence in the EAS and the building of an East Asian Community.

This development shows, that Beijing wanted to play a leadership role in East Asia but faced resistance from the ASEAN countries in that regard. As a consequence, China compromised its role and left the political leadership to the ASEAN. The statement of former Prime Minister Wen Jiabao at the 2006 China-ASEAN Summit to support the Association's “leading role” in regional cooperation underlines this conclusion (Wen Jiabao, 2006). The change in the PRC's diplomatic stance towards the ASEAN is based on Beijing's intention to sustain its image as a peaceful and non-hegemonic country and its role as the defender of the interests of the developing countries. China managed to solve an occurring inter-role conflict by adjusting its role behaviour. Nevertheless, its national role conception remained the same.

Due to only limited opportunities to enact a leadership role in East Asia, China seemed to turn to the APEC as an eventually more suitable environment for its ambitions. After the 2007 APEC ELM in Sydney, Australia, Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi rated China's participation as a great success. He also described the official visit as a “major diplomatic move of China towards

the Asia Pacific” because Chinese then President Hu Jintao and Australian Prime Minister John Howard declared to commence a strategic dialogue between the two countries (Yang Jiechi, 2007). His remarks that the PRC’s active involvement in and around the meeting “demonstrated China’s responsible attitude for seeking for constructive cooperation so as to guide the cooperation in the Asia Pacific region toward a healthy and balanced direction” (Yang Jiechi, 2007) first show the Chinese understanding of China’s international responsibility and second express a greater willingness to enact a more pro-active role and “guide” within the APEC.

China’s behaviour in the following APEC meetings indicates an extension of Beijing’s diplomatic efforts in form of deepening economic ties with countries in the Asia-Pacific. However, this development does not imply negligence towards the East Asian region. Nevertheless, China was not enacting an effective integrator role within the APEC process due to the fact that its efforts were pursued on a bilateral basis and, thus, cannot be regarded as a case of multilateral economic integration. Moreover, China’s official stance on the FTAAP remained hesitant. President Hu Jintao stated that the establishment of this comprehensive trade agreement should be a long-ranging and gradual process because many issues still needed to be examined. At the same time, he emphasised China’s readiness for collaboration with all members of the APEC (Hu Jintao, 2007).

Beijing’s stance did not change even with the TPP gaining traction. Since the US joined the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations in 2009 it took on a leading role (Rajamoorthy, 2013). The newly elected President Barack Obama explained that the US are working towards a new “era of engagement” in the Asia-Pacific region (Barack Obama, 2009). The US’ rebalancing to Asia includes not only a reinforcement of the US security alliances but also a political leadership position within the regional economic integration processes. Within China the engagement of the US in the TPP negotiations was interpreted as part of a containment strategy towards Chinese influence in the region (Hung & Liu, 2012). Concerns existed that the revitalisation of the US presence in Asia could divide the Southeast Asian countries regarding their cooperation with China. Chinese scholars perceived the US engagement within the TPP as a challenge for the PRC’s possible leadership role in the region, which it pursued through the establishment of an ASEAN-China FTA in 2002, that was implemented in 2010 (Hung & Liu, 2012: 6). From this perspective, the US within the TPP would undermine China’s influence in Southeast Asia the more, the longer Beijing would stay inactive towards the negotiations (Hung & Liu, 2012: 6-7). Hence, Washington’s promotion of the agreement effectively forced Beijing to demonstrate its positioning in the region (Hung & Liu, 2012: 6-7). To this point, no official statements were made by the Chinese leadership whether China would join the negotiations at that time or at any point in the future. Beijing was reluctant to deciding on the TPP not only due to strategic but also economic reasons, because it included high standards of market liberalisation that would have posed great challenges to the Chinese economy in terms of reduction of tariffs, intellectual property rights, and working as well as environmental standards. Due to these reasons, China turned again towards economic cooperation in East Asia, also to ensure its position and influence against an advancement of US influence (Yoshimatsu, 2015: 110). When at the APEC 2011 meeting in the United States “next generation trade and investment issues” were identified, ASEAN almost at the same time at the EAS in Bali proposed the “Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership” (RCEP) as an ASEAN+6 FTA. In China, the RCEP was perceived as an effective balancing mechanism with regard to the “rule-making process” of the industrialised countries (Quan, 2014: 133), what led the PRC to strongly support the partnership and promote its development and conclusion.

In the end, these developments show that China was enacting the role of an integrator only outside of the APEC and primarily in the East Asian region. Beijing was prepared to set aside its own interests in favour for the interests of the ASEAN nations. At the same time, Beijing was sending a new signal towards Washington. At the second China-US Strategic and Economic Dialogue in May 2010 the Chinese side proposed a “new type of great power relations” (Qi, 2015: 350). With this call for a new interpretation of the Sino-US relationship China tried to position itself towards the United States as a peaceful or even strategic competitor rather than an adversary and, thereby, cast the US into a complementary role. From the Chinese perspective, this role would be expressed by a less confrontational behaviour. In APEC, Hu Jintao called for greater transparency in the negotiation of free trade agreements and indicated that China will take the hosting of the 2014 APEC ELM as a chance “to deepen cooperation with other APEC members and make fresh and even greater contributions” (Hu Jintao, 2012).

Also against the background of Japan's decision to join the TPP negotiations in mid-2013, which was perceived in China as part of a “strategic diplomacy” to “contain, isolate, and encircle China” (Jia Xiudong, 2013), China's foreign policy behaviour became more pro-active in the same year. During his visit to Southeast Asian countries, the newly elected President Xi Jinping announced not only the establishment of an Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) but also the development of a Silk Road Economic Belt and a 21st-century Maritime Silk Road (Belt and Road Initiative, in Chinese *yidai yilu* 一带一路). Moreover, he stated that China would promote the “leading and coordinating role” of APEC in the definition of a long-term vision for the Asia-Pacific region at the next APEC meeting in 2014 (Xi Jinping, 2013). In the running up to the event, which was hosted by China, Foreign Minister Wang Yi expressed the expectation that APEC would initiate the FTAAP process in Beijing (Zhang Zhengfu, 2014). During the meeting China showed both initiative and its willingness to compromise by deferring its interests when facing pressure by other APEC members. Beijing's strong promotion of the FTAAP at the APEC 2014 meeting, which in the end led to the adoption of a “Beijing Road Map for ... the Realization of the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific,” is an expression of China's intention to extend its role as an economic integrator from the East Asian to the Asia-Pacific region. Above that, it seems as if Beijing tries to underline its role as a strategic competitor towards the US through emphasising the inclusive FTAAP instead of pushing solely for the conclusion of the RCEP.

Due to the fact that former US President Obama on grounds of pressing domestic political issues stayed away from the APEC ELM in 2013 and was taking on a hesitant attitude towards concrete steps for the establishment of the FTAAP in 2014, China took the chance to present itself as a more effective economic integrator in the Asia-Pacific region. In an interview, the economist Lu Feng of the Beijing University told the Wall Street Journal that “there is a game going on between the two countries... [but] the Chinese government doesn't just want to wait [for the Americans] ... China wants to do something else” (cited in Davis, 2014). This statement shows that China has become more ambitious in pursuing a pro-active foreign policy and that the original guiding principle *taoguang yanghui* 韬光养晦 is increasingly watered down by the Chinese leadership.

Conclusion

In accordance with the awareness of a change in the *shi* 勢 – the defining features of the time and the power configuration in the system – after the end of the Cold War bipolarity towards peace and development as well as multipolarity but also globalisation and economic competition, China's attitude towards and relationship with its environment changed, too. In East Asia China assumed a certain degree of responsibility in the late 1990s for the financial and economic stabilisation of the region but at the same time did not express any volition for leadership. The guiding principle of *taoguang yanghui* 韬光养晦 was held up high by the Chinese leadership. However, the following years revealed how a more positive perception of China within the region as well as the increasing alter expectations of its significant others, especially of the ASEAN countries, heavily influenced China's self-perception. The PRC's national role conception started to change from a 'developing country among many' to an 'advocate' or even 'defender of the interests of the developing countries' as the most heavily populated. The beginning of the 2000s can thus be identified as the first phase of change in the development of China's NRC. The second phase of change can be observed in the aftermath of the global financial crisis in 2007/2008, when the Chinese leadership faced increasingly demanding internal and external expectations regarding China's international role. Consequently, an NRC of a 'leader without hegemonic ambitions' emerged.

Within APEC China's role behaviour mainly developed according to the changes in its national role conception but with some difficulties to effectively implement the integrator and even leadership role due to domestic uncertainty about the ramifications for China's image and capacities to shoulder accompanying responsibilities. As a newcomer in the APEC in the early 1990s, China took on the role of a 'partner who is willing to cooperate' based on its foreign policy concept of "peaceful development" and due to the corresponding expectations of its significant others. However, at the APEC meetings shortly after the global financial crisis, China failed to translate its gradually developing leadership ambitions into a fitting role. Only as late as 2014, after several years of membership and enhanced international image as an economic heavyweight, its self-perception as a leader was more confidently implemented with the role of a regional economic integrator in the Asia-Pacific. This development was obvious when China took the initiative at the 2014 APEC ELM and actively promoted the establishment of the FTAAP. Moreover, China started to assign roles to other countries, such as the United States. This shows that the underlying hypothesis of newcomers in an organisation mainly taking on roles and only with longer membership proceeding to role making as well as ascribing roles to other actors in the group seems to be validated.

Finally, it can be summarised that China's national role conception gradually developed over two decades from a developing country with a 'low profile' to a developing country with a great power status. This certainly shows that China's NRC is not ultimately decided but is continuously developing further. Hence, within APEC, China adapted its role with delay and only late evolved from a participant in the cooperation to an integrator for the Asia-Pacific region.

Sources Cited

Acharya, A. (2009) *Constructing a Security Community in Southeast Asia: ASEAN and the problem of regional order*. 2nd edition. New York: Routledge.

- APEC (1994) APEC Economic Leaders' Declaration of Common Resolve, Bogor, Indonesia. 15 November.
- APEC (2010) APEC Economic Leaders' Declaration, Pathways to FTAAP, Yokohama, Japan. 14 November.
- APEC Secretariat (2017) Member Economies. Available from: <https://www.apec.org/About-Us/About-APEC/Member-Economies.aspx> [Accessed 09 Dec. 2017].
- ASEAN External Trade Statistics (2016) Available from: http://asean.org/?static_post=external-trade-statistics-3 [Accessed 09 Dec. 2017].
- Ba, A.D. (2014) Is China leading? China, Southeast Asia and East Asian integration. *Political Science*. Vol. 60. No. 2, 143-165.
- Bahrtdt, H.P. (1994) *Schlüsselbegriffe der Soziologie: eine Einführung mit Lehrbeispielen*. 9th ed. München: C.H. Beck.
- Baviera, A. (2003) The China factor in US alliances in East Asia and the Asia Pacific. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*. Vol. 57. No. 2, 339-352.
- Biddle, B.J. (1986) Recent Developments in Role Theory. *Annual Review Social*. No. 12, 67-92.
- Bloomberg News (2014) China Goes from Supplicant to Power Player as APEC Host. 07 November. Available from: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-11-07/china-goes-from-supplicant-to-power-player-as-apec-host> [Accessed 11 May 2017].
- Börzel, T.; Risse, T. (2016) Introduction: Framework of the Handbook and Conceptual Clarifications. In: Börzel, T.; Risse, T. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Regionalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 3-15.
- Bush, G.W. (2001) Remarks by President Bush and President Jiang Zemin at a press conference held during the APEC 2001 summit in Shanghai. 19 October. U.S. Department of State archive. Available from: <https://2001-2009.state.gov/p/eap/rls/rm/2002/8564.htm> [Accessed 11 May 2017].
- Cantir, C.; Kaarbo, J. (2012) Contested Roles and Domestic Politics: Reflections on Role Theory in Foreign Policy Analysis and IR Theory. *Foreign Policy Analysis*. Vol. 8, Issue 1, 5-24.
- Cantir, C.; Kaarbo, J. (2016) Unpacking Ego in Role Theory: Vertical and Horizontal Role Contestation and Foreign Policy. In: Cantir, C.; Kaarbo, J. (eds.) *Domestic Role Contestation, Foreign Policy, and International Relations*. New York, Abingdon: Routledge, 1-22.

- Chan, G. (2013) Power and Responsibility in China's international relations. In: Zhang, Y.; Austin, G. (eds.) *Power and Responsibility in Chinese Foreign Policy*. Canberra: Australian National University, 48-68.
- Davis, B. (2014) U.S. Blocks China Efforts to Promote Asia Trade Pact: Tussle Involves Regional Influence, Billions of Dollars in Trade. *Wall Street Journal*, 02 November. Available from: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-blocks-china-efforts-to-promote-asia-trade-pact-1414965150> [Accessed 23 May 2016].
- Dent, C.M. (2008) What region to lead? Developments in East Asian regionalism and questions of regional leadership. In: Dent, C. M. (ed.) *China, Japan and Regional Leadership in East Asia*. Cheltenham, Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, 3-36.
- Frenkler, U.; Harnisch, S.; Kirste, K.; Maull, H. W.; Wallraf, W. (1994-1997) *Deutsche, amerikanische und japanische Außenpolitikstrategien 1985-1995: Eine vergleichende Untersuchung zu Zivilisierungsprozessen in der Triade*. DFG-Forschungsprojekt: Zivilmächte. Projektleiter: H. W. Maull.
- Gaupp, P. (1983) *Staaten als Rollenträger: Die Rollentheorie als Analyse-Instrument von Außenpolitik und internationalen Beziehungen*. Zürcher Beiträge zur politischen Wissenschaft. Vol. 6, Univ.-Dissertation. Zürich.
- Gottwald, J.-C. (2016) China's Roles in International Institutions: The Case of Global Economic Governance. In: Harnisch, S.; Bersick, S.; Gottwald, J.-C. (eds.) *China's International Roles*. New York, Abingdon: Routledge, 127-144.
- Harnisch, S. (2011) Role Theory: Operationalization of Key Concepts. In: Harnisch, S.; Frank, C.; Maull, H.W. (eds.) *Role Theory in International Relations: Approaches and analyses*. Abingdon, New York: Routledge, 7-15.
- Harnisch, S. (2016) Role Theory and the Study of Chinese Foreign Policy. In: Harnisch, S.; Bersick, S.; Gottwald, J.-C. (eds.) *China's International Roles*. New York, Abingdon: Routledge, 3-21.
- Ho, B. (2012) *ASEAN's Centrality in a Rising Asia*. RSIS Working Paper. No. 249.
- Holsti, K. J. (1970) National Role Conceptions in the Study of Foreign Policy. *International Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 14. No 3., 233-309.
- Hu, J. (2003a) Speech by President of the People's Republic of China H.E. Hu Jintao at 11th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 20th October. Available from: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/hchf_665914/t31111.shtml [Accessed 09 Dec. 2017].
- Hu, J. (2003b) Speech by President Hu Jintao of China at APEC CEO Summit, 19th October, Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office at

- Geneva, 19.04.2004. Available from: <http://www.china-un.ch/eng/ljzg/zgwjzc/t85897.htm> [Accessed 09 Dec. 2017].
- Hu, J. (2006) President Hu Urges Bigger Role of APEC in Economic Development, GOV.cn (Xinhua). 19th November. Available from: http://www.gov.cn/english/2006-11/19/content_446620.htm [Accessed 20 May 2016].
- Hu, J. (2007) Hu Jintao Delivers an Important Speech at APEC Business Summit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 06th September. Available from: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t360596.shtml [Accessed 11 May 2017].
- Hu, J. (2012) Hu Jintao Attends the 20th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting and Delivers an Important Speech. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 08th September. Available from: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/hjtcxytjhzzdescldrfzshy_665706/t969855.shtml [Accessed 22 May 2016].
- Hung, M.-T.; Liu, T.T.-T. (2012) The Trans-Pacific Strategic Economic Partnership and its Implications for China's Role in East Asia Regional Integration. *Journal of Contemporary Eastern Asia*. Vol. 11. No. 2., 1-12.
- International Trade Centre (ITC). Trade Statistics for International Business Development. Available from: http://www.trademap.org/%28S%28bgl2qiww150giiliczces55%29%29/Product_SelCountry_TS.aspx [Accessed 22 December 2017].
- Jiang, Z. (1992) Full Text of Jiang Zemin's Report at 14th Party Congress. Beijing Review. 29th March 2011. Available from: http://www.bjreview.com.cn/document/txt/2011-03/29/content_363504.htm [Accessed 08 May 2016].
- Jiang, Z. (1997) President Jiang's Speech at Luncheon by America-China Society. 30 October. China Embassy. Available from: <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zmgx/zysj/jzxfm/t36251.htm> [Accessed 08 Dec. 2017].
- Jiang, Z. (1998) Speech by President Jiang Zemin at the Sixth APEC Informal Leadership Meeting, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 18th November. Available from: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t24917.shtml [Accessed 10 Dec. 2017].
- Jiang, Z. (1999) Jiang's Six Nation Tour. Jiang on China's Economy and Position on Joining WTO. China Britain Business Council. Available from: <http://en.people.cn/features/Sixnation/txt/19991021A104.html> [Accessed 11 May 2016].
- Jiang, Z. (2001a) Speech by President Jiang Zemin at APEC CEO Summit. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 10th August. Available from:

- http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t25042.shtml [Accessed 12 May 2016].
- Jiang, Z. (2001b) President Jiang Zemin Delivered a Speech at APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting: Strengthen Cooperation and Meet New Challenges Together in The New Century. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 21st October. Available from: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t25043.shtml [Accessed: 09 Dec. 2017].
- Jiang, Z. (2001c) President Jiang Zemin Gave A Press Conference 21/10/2001. Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office in Geneva. 22th April 2004. Available from: <http://news.xinhuanet.com/APEC2001/20011023/930318.htm> [Accessed 11 May 2017].
- Jiang, Z. (2002). Full Text of Jiang Zemin's Report at 16th Party Congress. China.org. Available from: <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/49007.htm> [Accessed 12 May 2016].
- Jia, X. (2013) Encircling China Just Japan's Wishful Thinking. People's Daily Online. 17th January. Available from: <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90883/8095303.html> [Accessed 23 May 2016].
- Kawai, M.; Wignaraja, G. (2009) *The Asian "Noodle Bowl": Is It Serious for Business?* ADBI Working Paper. No. 136.
- Kawai, M.; Wignaraja, G. (2012) Dealing with the "Noodle Bowl" of Asia's Free Trade Agreements. Asia Pathways. 24th April. Available from: <https://www.asiapathways-adbi.org/2012/04/dealing-with-the-noodle-bowl-of-asias-free-trade-agreements/> [Accessed 09 December 2017].
- Kirste, K.; Maull, H.W. (1996) Zivilmacht und Rollentheorie. *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen*. Vol. 3. Issue 2., 283-312.
- Le Prestre, P.G. (1997) Defining Foreign Policy Roles After the Cold War. In: Le Prestre, P. (ed.) *Role Quests in the Post-Cold War Era: Foreign Policies in Transition*. Montreal, Kingston, London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 3-14.
- Li, J. (2008) Cong Zerenlun Toudi Guoji Tixi Zhuanxing [Analysing the International System Transformation Through the Responsibility Theory], *Guoji Wenti Yanjiu* [International Studies], No. 1, 36-41+47.
- Malik, M. (2006) *China and the East Asian Summit: More Discord than Accord*. Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies.
- Medalla, E.M.; Maddawin, A.B. (2015) *Supporting WTO and Pathways to the Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific (FTAAP)*. Discussion Paper No. 2015-2017. Philippine Institute for Development Studies.

- Medeiros, E.S. (2009) *China's International Behavior: Activism, Opportunism, and Diversification*. Santa Monica, Arlington, Pittsburgh: RAND Corporation.
- Nabers, D. (2011) Identity and Role Change in International Politics. In: Harnisch, S.; Frank, C.; Maull, H. W. (eds.) *Role Theory in International Relations: Approaches and Analyses*. Abingdon, New York: Routledge, 74-92.
- Neumann, I.B. (2017) *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A Study in Identity and International Relations*. 2nd Edition. London, New York: Routledge.
- Niu, H. (2007) China's International Responsibility Examined. *Contemporary International Relations*. Vol. 17. No. 4, 82-93.
- Obama, B. (2009) Text of Obama's Tokyo Address. Wall Street Journal. 13th November. Available from: <http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2009/11/13/text-of-obamas-tokyo-address/> [Accessed 20 May 2016].
- Obama, B. (2011) Remarks by President Obama to the Australian Parliament, Canberra, Australia. The White House. Office of the Press Secretary. 17th November. Available from: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-pressoffice/2011/11/17/remarks-president-obama-australian-parliament> [Accessed 01 April 2016].
- Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC) (2014). State of the Region Report 2014-2015. available from: <https://www.pecc.org/resources/regional-cooperation/2155-state-of-the-region-report-2014> [Accessed 14 May 2017].
- Petri, P.A.; Plummer, M.G. (2012) *The Trans-Pacific Partnership and Asia-Pacific Integration: Policy Implications*. Peterson Institute for International Economics. Policy Brief No. 12-16.
- Petri, P.A.; Plummer, M.G.; Zhai, F. (2014) The TPP, China and the FTAAP: The case for convergence. In: Tang, G.; Petri, P. A. (eds.) *New Directions in Asia-Pacific Economic Integration*. Honolulu: East-West Center, 78-89.
- Qi, H. (2015) China Debates the 'New Type of Great Power Relations'. *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*. Vol. 8. No. 4, 349-370.
- Quan, Y. (2014) The RCEP: A Chinese Perspective, In: Tang, G.; Petri, P. A. (eds.) *New Directions in Asia-Pacific Economic Integration*. Honolulu: East-West Center, 131-137.
- Rajamoorthy, T. (2013) The Origins and Evolution of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Online: *Global Research*, 10 November. Original source: *Third World Resurgence*. No. 275. Available from: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-origins-and-evolution-of-the-trans-pacificpartnership-tpp/5357495> [Accessed 19 May 2016].

- Rangsimaporn, P. (2006) Interpretations of Eurasianism: Justifying Russia's Role in East Asia. *Europe-Asia Studies*. Vol. 58. No.3, 371-389.
- Sarbin, T.R.; Allen, V.L. (1968) Increasing Participation in a Natural Group Setting: A Preliminary Report. *Psychological Record*. Vol. 18, 1-7.
- Sheng, B. (2007) Political Economy of the Asia-Pacific Free Trade Area: A Dilemma for China. *China & World Economy*. Vol. 15. No. 5., 38-49.
- State Council Information Office (2005) China's Peaceful Development Road. White Paper. available from: http://www.gov.cn/english/official/2011-09/06/content_1941354_2.htm [Accessed 11 May 2017].
- State Council Information Office (2011) China's Peaceful Development. available from: http://english.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2014/09/09/content_281474986284646.htm [Accessed 11 May 2017].
- Sun, Z. (2008) Xiang Shijie Shuoming Zhongguo de Zeren – Du 2008 Zhongguo Guoji Diwei Baogao Yougan [Explaining China's Responsibility to the World: Comments on China's International Status Report 2008]. *Shijie Jingji Yanjiu* [World Economy Study]. No. 10, 83-84.
- Shambaugh, D.; Ren, X. (2012) China: The Conflicted Rising Power. In: Nau, H. R.; Ollapally, D. M. (eds.) *Worldviews of Aspiring Powers: Domestic Foreign Policy Debates in China, India, Iran, Japan, and Russia*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 36-72.
- Stryker, S.; Statham, A. (1985): Symbolic Interaction and Role Theory, In: Gardner, L.; Aronson, E. (eds.) *Handbook of Social Psychology*. New York: Random House, 311-378.
- Thies, C.G. (2009) Role Theory and Foreign Policy. International Studies Association Compendium Project. Foreign Policy Analysis section.
- Thies, C.G. (2016) The US and China: Altercast Roles and Changing Power in the 20th Century. In: Harnisch, S.; Bersick, S.; Gottwald, J.-C. (eds.) *China's International Roles*. New York, Abingdon: Routledge, 97-109.
- Tang, J. (2001a) Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan on the Success of the 9th APEC Informal Leadership Meeting. Xinhua. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 22 October. Available from: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/3699_665956/t18912.shtml [Accessed 12 May 2016].
- Tang, J. (2001b) Speech by Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan at the Meeting of China-ASEAN Dialogue 2001. Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva. 19.04.2004. Available from: <http://www.china-un.ch/eng/ljzg/zgwjzc/t85864.htm> [Accessed 09 Dec. 2017].

- Walker, S.G. (1979) National Role Conceptions and Systemic Outcomes. In: Falkowski, L. (ed.) *Psychological Models in International Politics*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 169-210.
- Walker, S.G. (ed.) (1987) *Role Theory and Foreign Policy Analysis*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Wen, J. (2006) Full text of Premier Wen Jiabao's speech at China-ASEAN summit, gov.cn, 30th October. Available from: http://www.gov.cn/misc/2006-10/30/content_427839.htm [Accessed 09 Dec. 2017].
- Wendt, A. (1999) *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wignaraja, G. (2013) Why the RCEP matters for Asia and the world. East Asia Forum. 15 May. Available from: <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2013/05/15/why-the-rcep-matters-for-asiaand-the-world/> [Accessed 12 April 2016].
- WTO (2014) Trade Policy Review. Report by the Secretariat. Document WT/TPR/G/300. 07 October.
- World Bank Data. China. Available from: <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&country=CHN&series=&period=> [Accessed 11 May 2017].
- World Bank (2017). China Overview. last updated March 2017. Available from: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/china/overview> [Accessed: 11th May 2017].
- Xinhua (2011) Zhongguo Gongchandang Lishi Dashi Ji (1921 Nian 7 Yue – 2011 Nian 6 Yue) Zhi San [Three Major Events in the History of the Communist Party of the PRC to Remember (July 1921- June 2011)]. 22th July. Available from: http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2011-07/22/c_121706389_10.htm [Accessed 09 May 2016].
- Xi, J. (2013) Give Full Play to the Leading Role of the Asia-Pacific Maintain and Advance an Open World Economy. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 08th October. Available from: <http://www.fmccprc.gov.hk/eng/xwtdt/wsyw/t1088516.htm> [Accessed 22 Dec. 2017].
- Xue, C. (2009) Feichuantong Anquan Wenti yu Guoji Gongong Chanpin Gongji – Jianlun Zhongguo Zerenlun yu Hexie Shijie Linian de Shijian [Non-traditional Security Issues and International Public Goods Supply: on China's Responsibility and Building a “Harmonious World”]. *Shijie Jingji yu Zhengzhi* [World Economics and Politics]. No. 3.
- Yang, J. (2007) Important Achievements Are Made with President Hu Jintao's Visit to Australia and Attendance of the APEC Meeting. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 10th September. Available from:

http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t361100.shtml
[Accessed 20 May 2016].

- Yang, J. (2008) China's Competitive FTA Strategy: Realism in a Liberal Slide. Paper presented at the International Symposium "Competitive Regionalism". Ibuka International Conference Hall. Waseda University. Tokyo, Japan, 30th-31st May.
- Yearbook of International Organizations (2002/2003) Vol. 1. 39th ed. Union of International Associations. Publisher: K.G. Saur, Gale Group.
- Yoshimatsu, H. (2015) Diplomatic Objectives in Trade Politics: The Development of the China-Japan-Korea FTA. *Asia-Pacific Review*. Vol. 22. No. 1, 100-123.
- Zhang, Z. (2014) Xinhua Insight: 25 years on, APEC to reshape Asia-Pacific in Beijing. Xinhua, 08th November. Available from: <http://newyork.china-consulate.org/eng/xw/t1208561.htm> [Accessed 23 May 2016].
- Zhang, F. (2004) Lun Goujian Zhongguo de FTA Zhanlue [On the Construction of China's FTA Strategy]. *Kaifang Daobao* [China Opening Herald]. No. 116, 74-77.
- Zhu, L. (2010) China's Foreign Policy Debates. European Union Institute for Security Studies. *Chaillot Papers*. No. 121.
- Zhu, F. (2008) Zai 'Taoguang Yanghui' yu 'Yousuo Zuowei' Zhijian Qiu Pingheng [Seeking a Balance Between "Keeping a Low Profile" and "Doing Something"]. *Xiandai Guoji Guanxi* [Contemporary International Relations]. No. 9.
- Zoellick, R.B. (2005) Whither China? From Membership to Responsibility. Remarks to the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations. 21st September. New York City. US Department of State Archive. Available from: <https://2001-2009.state.gov/s/d/former/zoellick/rem/53682.htm> [Accessed 14 May 2017].

MAPPING CHINA JOURNAL

Mapping China Journal 2017 / Number 1

Part 4: Maturing Relations between China and Africa: What's Special in the 'Special Relationship'?

Between the “China Threat” and “win-win cooperation” among “all-weather friends”:

African perspectives on China in Africa and the China model

By Julia Breuer*

Abstract

China's engagement in Africa and the “China model” are matters of intense debate. As first and foremost Africa is affected by China's engagement on this continent, the article argues for acknowledging African perspectives regarding these issues, i.e. having a dialogue with Africa instead of having a discussion about Africa. Such a dialogue has to start with acknowledging the diversity of African countries and of the different societal groups within these states, e.g. politicians and civil society. In some prominent African countries (such as Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenya), the literature covers public opinion vis-à-vis China quite well, while for others (especially in Central Africa) there is barely any data available. What transpires from the available sources is that, on average, Africa is the continent with the most positive image of China. The article allows for an insight into studies explaining the reasons for such a favorable view towards China while also considering critical voices. China's engagement in general is addressed as are specific issues such as (perceived) neocolonialism and different development models. The concepts of the “Washington Consensus”, the “Beijing Consensus” and the “New European Consensus on Development” are briefly summarized before a variety of African opinions regarding development models is presented.

* Julia Breuer is a PhD candidate and a scholarship holder within the Doctoral Programme of the *Alliance for Research on East Asia Ruhr (AREARuhr)*, Germany. Previously, she worked as a research assistant at the *Department for International Political Economy of East Asia* of Ruhr University Bochum. Julia holds an M.A. degree in East Asian Politics from Ruhr University Bochum as well as a B.A. degree in Chinese Studies and Sociology from the University of Hamburg.

Between the “China Threat” and “win-win cooperation” among “all-weather friends”:

African perspectives on China in Africa and the China model

Introduction

Many Western politicians, scholars and NGOs criticize China's “no strings attached” engagement in Africa, while others suggest drawing lessons from the China Model for developing countries, *inter alia*. African ones. This article argues for consideration of African perspectives in this conversation. They might differ from each other, since firstly, different African countries and different actors within them might have different needs and different experiences; secondly, Chinese engagement is not identical in every African country. While negative African views on China's involvement in Africa exist – as presented below – it is important to note that China is seen positively by a majority of the population in some African countries as a study conducted by Pew Research Center (2014) shows. Furthermore, “[a]lmost two-thirds (63%) of Africans say China's influence is ‘somewhat’ or ‘very’ positive, while only 15% see it as ‘somewhat/very’ negative” (Afrobarometer, 2016: 2). According to the same study the public in eight out of the thirty-six African countries surveyed preferred the China model over the US model or other Western models (Afrobarometer, 2016: 27-28).¹

First and foremost, this article aims to give an overview of the research so far conducted on African perspectives on China's role in Africa by compiling an overview of the outcomes. Two foci are the so-called “China Threat” as well as different development models. The respective concepts relevant in this context are briefly introduced first, before introducing African views regarding these issues.

The “China Threat” and ODA

The Chinese like to visit their “all-weather friends” in Africa regularly.² When doing so, Chinese politicians frequently speak of “win-win cooperation,” as Wang Yi did in January 2017 during the latest of his annual visits to Africa (Wang, 2017). However, many Western politicians, scholars and NGOs criticize China's “no strings attached” engagement in Africa. The EU for example is very concerned by this (Shambaugh, Sandschneider & Zhou, 2008: 311). The “China threat” has become a buzzword – not only regarding China's engagement in Africa. The case of Angola in 2004 is an example of an African state preferring Chinese financial support over Western Official

¹ With the Chinese model having only one percentage point more than the former colonial power, France (Afrobarometer, 2016: 27-28).

² The term “all-weather friends” (*quantianhou pengyou* 全天候朋友) was coined in the light of the Tiananmen massacre. It was used by Jiang Zemin (1996). Many African states supported the Chinese government's reaction as to the Tiananmen protests in 1989. While putting the protests down violently was widely criticized in the west, many African heads of state and government did quite the contrary. However, today, “friendship” is still a very common term in China-Africa relations: The words friendship and friendly (*youyi* 友谊 and *youhao* 友好) can be found 19 times in China's African policy (see FMPRC, 2006).

Development Aid (ODA)³ since the latter was linked to conditions such as good governance⁴ and transparency (Brautigam, 2011). Many developed countries feel that China poses a “threat” as it is a competitor with regard to economic advantages, plus its no-strings-attached development credits lead to decreasing influence of traditional development partners demanding good governance etc. “China’s expanding ties with resource-rich but politically unstable countries, such as Angola, Sudan and Zimbabwe, have led to diplomatic rivalry with the EU and US” (Cottey & Gottwald, 2010: 39) and “[...] they [Europe] regard[s] China’s economic growth and active diplomacy as threats to European interests and the so called ‘European model’” (Song, 2012: 33).

It is hard to tell if Western countries are worried about the well-being of the population of countries whose governments do not respect human rights and/or comply with good governance standards, or if they are simply competing for influence and economic benefit. I argue that the ultimate aim of both the EU and China, as development partners, should be the improvement of local living conditions. Economic and strategic considerations aside, we see that they try to reach this aim by using different approaches.

Three consensuses, but no consensus

As to what is the “right” development model, there is no global consensus. In the 1990s, US economist John Williamson put forward the “Washington Consensus,” consisting of suggestions and guidelines for Latin America’s development (Yip, 2012: 16). The Washington Consensus included fiscal policy discipline, tax reforms, market liberalization, deregulation, protection of ownership, and privatization of State owned enterprises (SOE). It was thus originally a purely

³ According to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development** (OECD) Official Development Assistance (ODA) is defined as “those flows to countries and territories on the DAC List of ODA Recipients and to multilateral institutions which are:

- i. *provided by official agencies*, including state and local governments, or by their executive agencies; and
- ii. each transaction of which:
 - a) is administered with the promotion of the *economic development and welfare of developing countries* as its main objective; and
 - b) is *concessional in character* and conveys a grant element of at least 25 per cent (calculated at a rate of discount of 10 per cent).” (OECD 2017).

⁴ According to the World Bank (2017) “Governance consists of the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them” (see also Kaufmann & Kraay, 2002: 5 for this definition). The World Bank’s Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) initiated by Kaufmann and Kraay make governance measurable by applying certain criteria within the following six fields: 1) Voice and Accountability, 2) Political Stability and Absence of Violence, 3) Government Effectiveness, 4. Regulatory Quality, 5. Rule of Law, 6) Control of Corruption (ibid.). Both, Kaufmann and Kraay (2007: 19) as well as Rothstein (2012) come to the conclusion that it is difficult to find a general definition of good governance. According to the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP, 2009) good governance is “participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law. It assures that corruption is minimized, the views of minorities are taken into account and that the voices of the most vulnerable in society are heard in decision-making. It is also responsive to the present and future needs of society.”

economic concept. Recommendations for concepts of good governance, democracy, transparency, rule of law, and human rights were added later on (Zhao, 2014: 46, 58; Yip, 2012: 17). However, after 2008, this neo-liberal, Anglo-American model, was discredited by the global financial and economic crisis (Cottey & Gottwald, 2010: 40).

The term “Beijing Consensus” was coined by J.C. Ramo, who described the Chinese model of economic development in his same-titled book published in 2004 (Ramo, 2004).⁵ Key characteristics of this model are “greater state involvement in economies” (Cottey & Gottwald, 2010: 40), and measuring progress by taking economic success as the main criterion (Wissenbach, 2011: 28). As to development aid, the Beijing Consensus is characterized by an emphasis on national sovereignty (Cottey & Gottwald, 2010: 44). Furthermore, its most important feature is that Chinese development aid is non-conditional (Jin, 2010).⁶ This is also the main point of criticism from the European side (Jin, 2010). The Chinese approach to supporting developing countries focuses on trade, while Western countries tend to prefer Official Development Aid (ODA) (see Stahl, 2012: 11).

A key element of the EU's developmental policy is the “European Consensus on Development”. It contains inter alia issues related to good governance – just like the Washington Consensus – and is thus different from the Beijing Consensus. “It [the European Consensus] also takes the view that the fundamental objective of poverty reduction is closely associated with the complementary objectives of promotion of good governance and respect for human rights, these being shared values underpinning the EU” (Council, EP, Commission on the development policy of the EU, 2006).⁷

African voices on China's engagement in Africa

As pointed out, many Western politicians, scholars and NGOs criticize China's “no strings attached”: engagement in Africa, while others suggest to draw lessons from the China Model for developing countries, i.e. African ones.⁸ Of course China's development model lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty (see Ravallion, 2008: 3), but if this has proven one thing, it is that there is more than just one way to achieve economic development. Consequently, there might be three, four or even dozens of models.

When it comes to China's engagement in Africa, hundreds of journalists, researchers and politicians from third-party countries, mostly from the so-called West, claim to know what is advisable and what is best for Africa. Africa might be a comparatively poor continent on average, but it is not a

⁵ See also Halper, 2010.

⁶ However, Chinese credits may come with other, non-political strings attached (except for the One-China principle), e.g. that 50% of the credit has to be spent on Chinese products and services. This practice is described in the case of Angola by several researchers, i.e. Bosshard, 05/2007:5; Brautigam, 2008: 201 and Davies, 2011: 191. However, the original document that was available on the English website of China's Exim-Bank, is no longer available.

⁷ A “new European Consensus on Development” is currently under way (EC, 2016).

⁸ Some publications whose authors were drawing such lessons have been discussed in an article by Power and Mohan (2010: 2).

continent that lacks decision-making capabilities and political maturity.⁹ One should not deny the sagacity of African politicians. As Abu-Bakarr Jalloh, who studied and worked in Sierra Leone before he joined Deutsche Welle, puts it “African states are simply trying to forge their own future and whoever they choose to do this with should be decided by themselves and not external actors” (Jalloh, 2017).

This article is about Africans’ perceptions, it is thus not aiming to verify or falsify points of criticism such as the claims that China was only interested in resources or that Chinese companies located in Africa hired predominantly Chinese workers. Instead, this article will highlight the “perceived reality” of different African people. While studies on public opinion allow for quantifiable results, the views expressed by individuals in this article do not necessarily represent the public opinion in the respective country. This is especially valid for statements by political leaders as shown below regarding the China model.

There is no such thing as “an African perspective”—there are many African perspectives. Africa is not a homogeneous entity. It is a huge continent consisting of over 50 states with about 1.2 billion inhabitants in total. Of course, these 1.2 billion do not all share the same opinion about China’s involvement in Africa. There are not only many different African countries in different political and economic situations, but also very heterogeneous societies within each of them (e.g. in terms of wealth, business sector, status, sex or religion). Furthermore, China’s engagement is not identical in each African country; even within one country there can be, and often are, different aspects of Chinese engagement, as embodied in oil-backend loans, infrastructure projects, Chinese doctors, or textile imports from China. While the majority of the population may be satisfied with one aspect, it might be dissatisfied with another aspect. Thus, regarding African opinions on China’s role in Africa, one always needs to distinguish not only between countries but also between interest groups. Countries will be indicated by bold letters in this article in order to facilitate distinguishing different views.

African perspectives on China in Africa is still an insufficiently studied field. However, there is some research, and even some empirical data, on some countries and some sectors of society. The following institutions and organizations published some contributions in this field of research:

⁹ Of course, there are corrupt, autocratic decision makers in some countries, who might not decide with the people’s wellbeing in mind, but one should consider that there is also a significant amount of more or less democratic states in Africa; namely, Namibia, Mauritius, Botswana are the most advanced democracies of the South-Eastern region according to Bertelsmann Foundation’s Democracy Index (2016). In West Africa, Senegal and Ghana are two countries with sound democracies. Another 14 African countries reach a “fair” level of democracy, among them several ones in which Chinese engagement is quite strong, e.g. Tanzania, Kenya, Nigeria and Zambia. Thus, about 50% of African states are not autocratic.

Furthermore, many African countries definitely feel responsible for their continent’s problems which is shown by the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), an instrument monitoring performance as to governance among its 35 Member States (as of Feb 12th 2017, <https://www.au.int/web/en/organs/aprm>), implemented by NEPAD as well as by the very recent example of Gambia, whose former president Yahya Jammeh was voted out of office by December 2016, but was not willing to hand his power over to the new president-elect, the opposition candidate Adama Barrow. States in the region such as Senegal intervened in accordance with the UN in order to support the democratic power transition, which finally succeeded.

- publications by Pambazuka Press (Fahamu)¹⁰ such as *Chinese and African Perspectives on China in Africa* (edited by Harneit-Sievers et al., 2010)
- another publication by Pambazuka Press (Fahamu): *African Perspectives on China in Africa* (edited by Manji & Marks, 2007)
- the website Pambazuka News (Fahamu)¹¹
- Pew Research Centre (2014): focused on China's image in **Kenya, Tanzania, Senegal, Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana** and **South Africa**
- views of China were polled by the company GlobeScan/PIPA in three African countries: **Ghana, Kenya & Nigeria**. The study was conducted for the BBC in 2014.
- Afrobarometer (2016) published statistics on public perceptions of China in Africa, providing data from – at the time – 36 African countries.¹²
- Centre for Chinese Studies, Stellenbosch University, South Africa¹³
- An article by Mohan and Lampert on **Angola, China** and **Nigeria**, entitled “Negotiating China: Reinserting African agency into China–Africa relations” published by *African Affairs*, 2012
- A study on African opinions on China in Africa by Sautman and Yan with about 2000 respondents (students & university members) from nine countries (100 to 250 per country). The countries studied were **Botswana, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Sudan** and **Zambia**. Published in 2009.¹⁴

Unfortunately, a large share of publications in the field of China's role in Africa, and especially the sub-item of African perspectives, are from the past decade and thus often about seven years old. There is thus an urgent need for more contemporary research on this issue.

This article is an attempt to provide a synthesized overview of those publications on African perspectives on China in Africa that are available. The countries mentioned are thus not chosen to be mentioned by this article's author based on certain criteria other than the criterion that research on the population's views on China's engagement in these very countries has been published. Research respectively publication on African perspectives on China's role in Africa has not been conducted with the same calibre of research in each of the 55 African countries. China does not even have diplomatic relations with some African countries which explains a lack of literature on African views regarding China in Africa in these cases.¹⁵ In other cases, there is Chinese

¹⁰ Fahamu is a pan-African Social Justice Organization. <http://www.fahamu.org/>

¹¹ <http://pambazuka.org>

¹² Afrobarometer started this kind of surveys as early as 1999 in some countries. 2016 results can e.g. be compared with data from the previous year, i.e. Afrobaromètre, 2015.

¹³ <http://www.ccs.org.za/>

¹⁴ This list is not intended to be exhaustive. Further recommendations are welcome, e.g. comments as to the *African Affairs* journal or Giese & Marfaing, 2016.

¹⁵ i.e. Burkina Faso and Swaziland due to their diplomatic relations with Taiwan (FOCAC n.d. Member States; Fabricius 2015). In the Afrobarometer (2016: 3) survey, respondents from Swaziland were asked about Taiwan instead of the PRC. The results do thus are not counted as research on views on the PRC's engagement in Swaziland.

engagement in certain countries, but still none or only very little literature on the population's perspectives on China in the respective countries can be found.¹⁶ Publications on this aspect are comparatively abundant regarding East African countries, while very little research results are available as to North African countries.¹⁷ Both, the Pew Research Centre (2014) study and the Afrobarometer (2016) study, which included 36 African countries, comprised many states in the East, the South and the West of the continent; whereas North and Central African countries were underrepresented. Several recent publications are available on public opinion on China in Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya. While research in this field is rather abundant regarding these countries, no research on African perspectives on China could be found for other African countries such as Libya and Liberia in North Africa. The region with the least research in this regard is Central Africa including Chad, Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, the Republic of Congo. East African countries not covered by research on public opinion towards China's engagement in Africa include Comoros, Eritrea, Rwanda, Seychelles and South Sudan. The same is true for Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau and Mauritania in West Africa. Thanks to the Afrobarometer (2016) survey, public opinion on China is available for all five South African nations.

The China model – a development model for African states?

Views expressed by political elites

The question whether the People's Republic of China (PRC) is suitable as a model for other processes of development in other countries is a matter of debate. William Gumede, Associate Professor at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg (**South Africa**) wrote a very detailed article on the suitability of the China model as an example for Africa (Gumede, 2015). A few years earlier, in 2007, Professor Calestous Juma, a **Kenyan** teaching at Harvard University, published an article on "Lessons Africa Must Learn from Chinese Expansion." Juma stated, "China is a startling example of how a region can rise from poverty within a generation and become a dominant player on the global scene. The West, on the other hand, continues to lecture Africa on economic growth but much of it is not backed by contemporary examples" (Juma, 2007). However, Juma does not omit "negative lessons," naming the ecological costs of China's fast economic development as an example (Juma, 2007).

Several high-ranking politicians from African countries made positive statements about China in general, and China's suitability as an economic and developmental model for Africa in particular. The competition between China and Europe in Africa is illustrated by a statement by **South Africa's** president Jacob Zuma: "We certainly are convinced that China's intention is different to that of Europe, which to date continues to attempt to influence African countries for their sole benefit" (Zuma, 2012). Apparently, he does not perceive the highlighting of "win-win cooperation"

¹⁶ Even though the list of literature presented in this article was compiled to the best of the author's knowledge and belief, no claim to completeness is raised.

¹⁷ To distinguish regions on the African continent, the United Nation's M49 standard was applied (see <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/> for further information). According to the UN there are six North African countries, 18 East African ones, nine Central / Middle African countries, five South African countries and 16 West African ones.

However, due to the limited scope of this paper, further research will be needed to examine the scope of and the relation between the intensity of China's engagement in each African country and the (corresponding) intensity of research on African views on China's engagement in these countries.

by China (see Wang, 2017) as empty rhetoric. The Angolan politician Filomeno Vieira Lopes also expressed very positive views on China in **Angola** (e.g. ANGOP, 2013) as well and the country's then-president José Eduardo dos Santos, who even called China an "example for our people" (Novo Jornal, 2014).¹⁸

Nigeria also has some politicians who see China as a model to emulate. According to Ken Nnamani, President of the Nigerian senate in 2006, "China [had] become ... a good model for Nigeria in its quest for an authentic and stable development ideology" (Obiorah, Kew & Tanko, 2008: 289).¹⁹ Samuel Ortom, the Minister of Industry of the country, expressed a similar view by saying,

"For instance, China with a population of over a billion people is able to contain the issue of unemployment to a large extent. We need to learn from the example of China and do something that will add value to our state" (Agirigi, 2014).

Zimbabwe's Deputy Prime Minister, Arthur Mutambara, does not make a concrete statement about whether Zimbabwe should follow China's development model, however, he is quoted saying, "China's model is telling us, you can be successful without following the Western example" (Wonacott, 2011).

Senegalese political and economic commentator and former African Development Bank senior official Sanou Mbaye states,

"There is no doubt that China's emergence onto the African scene is good for the continent. As a new actor willing to invest, it also gives Africans an opportunity to chart a different path to social and economic development than the unfettered capitalism forced upon them by western countries" (2010: 43).

He continues by remarking that, "As the poor state of Africans testifies, the liberal medicine dispensed to sub-Saharan Africa for decades under the Bretton Woods institutions (the IMF and the World Bank) has demonstrated this" (Mbaye, 2010: 45). However, he does not uncritically say so without shedding any light on negative aspects of China in Africa such as arms sales or textile imports from the PRC damaging Senegal's textile industry (45). Isaac of the Open Society for Southern Africa, **Angola**, corroborates Mbaye's opinion about the IMF and the World Bank by stating that IMF and World Bank conditions and prescriptions, according to the ruling elite (in Angola), had failed in most parts of Africa (Isaac, 2010: 165).

Makhtar Diop from **Senegal**, who is vice president for the African region at World Bank, states regarding the development model discussion,

¹⁸ With regard to China, Angola is using a strategy similar to China's diversification of countries it is importing oil from: Angola does not decide to take a completely anti-Western position. Angola welcomes Western companies' economic activities in Angola in order to prevent single-sided influence and to reach balance of power (Corkin, 2012: 54).

¹⁹ According to the authors originally quoted in Thisday (2006) Nnamani, "China: A Partner and Example in Development and Democracy", 28 April.

“Various models for structural transformation, as offered by different groups of academics, will need to be adapted to our unique circumstances and the conditions in subsets of African countries. No single approach will be suitable for the entire continent. Often the question is asked to which economic model Africa should adopt. I would answer: ‘the African model,’ or more precisely, the African models” (Diop, 2015).

Diop thus seems to share the official Chinese position on the whole discussion about development models.

However, interesting to note is that China does not promote its model as a model for other countries. Xi Jinping, for example, quoted an ancient Chinese wisdom during a speech in 2015: "People don't need to wear the same shoes; they should find what suit their feet. Governments don't have to adopt the same model of governance; they should find what benefits their people." Xi went on, stating, that there was no one-size-fits-all development model in this world (Xi, 2015). African states thus need to implement development strategies that are adapted to their respective conditions and needs.

Views expressed in public opinion surveys

A study recently conducted by Afrobarometer depicts what the public's opinions on the China model are and how they differ depending on the respective country (2016: 2). According to that study, the public in twenty out of thirty-six African countries, which is 30% of respondents according to the authors of the study, preferred the US model. In five countries, the South African model was the preferred one, and in three countries the preferred model was the respective former colonial power's model. In eight countries, the China model was named as the best development model by the largest group of the respective country's respondents (Afrobarometer, 2016: 27f).

China is the most popular development model (being preferred by about one third or more respondents) in **Sudan, Mozambique, Mali, Tanzania, Niger, Egypt, and Zambia** and to an even larger extent in **Cameroon**. However, in **Morocco, Mauritius, Burundi** and **Ghana**, only 10 to 15% preferred the Chinese model (Afrobarometer, 2016: 4f.&27f.). It is also important to note that, according to the Afrobarometer, respondents without formal education often favoured the respective former colonial power as a model, while respondents with at least a secondary-school education favored the US or China (2016: 6).

Interestingly, regarding the China model the public opinion in **Nigeria** differs from the view of the high-ranking politicians from these countries as cited above. Only 25% of the population prefer China as a model whereas the largest share of Nigerian respondents (43%) prefer the US model (Afrobarometer, 2016: 28).²⁰ And while South African president Zuma expressed a very positive view on China, a rather low share of the country's population shares this opinion compared to other African countries surveyed. With only 51% of the respondents from South Africa considering China's economic and political influence (rather) positive, and a comparatively high

²⁰ Angola was not covered by this Afrobarometer survey. Thus a comparison with the Angolan politicians cited is not possible. In Zimbabwe, whose was cited above with a less strong statement on the China model, the largest share of respondents (27%) preferred South Africa as a model with 25% naming the US and 20% China (Afrobarometer, 2016: 28).

percentage of respondents with somewhat / very negative views, **South Africa** is below African average regarding favourable views on China (Afrobarometer, 2016:15).

Earlier views on this issue can be found in Sautman & Yan's study:

“Except in **South Africa**, majorities in all countries viewed China's development as a positive model. As South Africa has a much higher per capita GDP than China, 26 respondents there tended not to see China's development as a model for emulation. **Ethiopians** (86 per cent), **Sudanese** (85 per cent), **Kenyans** (84 per cent) and **Ghanaians** (83 per cent) were most positive, with **Zambians** (75 per cent) and **Batswana** (56 per cent) somewhat less so” (2009: 735f.).

China in Africa: good or bad? And why so? Public opinion in several African countries

So what to make of the so-called “China Threat”? Well, many developed countries might feel that China poses a “threat” to them in economic terms as well as regarding influence on developing countries in terms of norms. However, China is definitely not perceived as a threat in general by the whole continent of Africa. In **Nigeria**, for example, two thirds of the population do see China's economic and political influence in Nigeria positively, while only 7% see it negatively (Gondyi et al., 2015: 7). Another Afrobarometer study confirms that this is valid for the average of the 36 African countries examined: about two thirds of the respondents consider China's influence somewhat or very positive, whereas only 15% consider it somewhat/very negative. A large majority in **Mali** (92%), **Niger** (84%), and **Liberia** (81%) expressed such positive views, while the public opinion towards China in **Madagascar**, **Tunisia**, **Ghana** and **Algeria** is rather negative (Afrobarometer, 2016: 2).

Further supporting this claim, a 2014 BBC study and a study by the Pew Research Institute in 2014 arrive to the same conclusion: the image of China is nowhere as good as in Africa.

According to the BBC study, views of China were polled in 23 countries, with three being African ones (2014: 37f.). In **Nigeria**, 85% viewed China mainly positive, in **Ghana** and **Kenya** it was about two thirds. The respondents of the Pew Research Institute (2014) study on the image of China, conducted in 43 countries worldwide, were asked whether they perceived China as rather “favourable” or rather “unfavourable.” According to the study's results **Nigeria**, **Tanzania**, **Kenya** and **Senegal** had the highest rates ($\geq 70\%$) of “favourable,” i.e. China is predominantly being seen in a positive light, whereas it reached only 28% among German respondents (Pew Research, 2014).

When asked by Afrobarometer which country had the greatest external influence on their home country the respondents from the following countries perceived China's influence to be highest: **Zimbabwe** (55%), **Mozambique** (52%), **Sudan** (47%), **Zambia** (47%), **South Africa** (40%), and **Tanzania** (40%), i.e. predominantly Southern African countries (Afrobarometer, 2016: 2, 10).

The factors that contributed most to a positive image of China were China's infrastructural investment and business investment, and the cost of Chinese products. The factor of infrastructure investment and business investment is especially seen positively in Central and East Africa, with about 70% of **Kenyan**, **Zambian** and **Gabonese** respondents naming investments as the factor contributing most to a positive image of China (Afrobarometer, 2016: 20). This might give the

West a hint as to the kind of support that many Africans wish for. Investing instead of giving aid makes a big difference. Unlike donor and recipient, business partners have at least the chance to be regarded as equals, if done correctly.

When asked about the factor that contributed most to a negative image of China, more than one third of the Afrobarometer study's respondents chose the poor quality of Chinese products—average across all 36 countries surveyed (2016: 22f). This was followed by “taking jobs from locals,” a response which was especially popular in **North Africa**. Resource extraction ranked third with only 10% of all respondents on average choosing it as the factor that contributed most to a negative image of China. However, there is a different picture in **Ghana** and **Madagascar**, where resource extraction was named as the number one factor for a negative Chinese image by about 40% of respondents (Afrobarometer, 2016: 22).

Diverse views on China in Africa: Empirical findings and individual voices

In the following, some examples for African individual's opinions on China's engagement in Africa will be presented. The amount of positive and negative statements as an example of the total statements is not intended to lean towards one extreme or to the other. These individual opinions are not to be confused with the insight provided by empirical studies (e.g. those done by Afrobarometer, 2016 or Sautman and Yan, 2009). Presenting individual opinions cannot mirror a country's overall image of another country. However, these qualitative perspectives can provide us further insight into the respective populations' opinions about China.

Harneit-Sievers, Marks and Naidu sum up the book chapters written by Elias Isaac (affiliation: *Open Society for Southern Africa*, **Angola**), Claude Kabemba (affiliation: *Southern Africa Resource Watch*, **South Africa**) and Daniel Ribeiro (affiliation: *Justica Ambiental*, **Mozambique**) as follows:

“However, [the authors] do not hold Chinese companies solely responsible if things go wrong. Instead they argue strongly that African governments often fail in their responsibility towards their own societies, lacking transparency in their use of public funds and failing to enforce the environmental standards they have set themselves. While Chinese companies take advantage of such deficiencies, the responsibility to effect improvements lies primarily in Africa itself” (Harneit-Sievers, Marks & Naidu, 2010: xiv f.).

Adama Gaye is a **Senegalese** who has published several pieces on China-Africa relations²¹ and used to work as a group corporate affairs manager of ECOWAS when he expressed a highly critical opinion towards China's engagement in Africa. He criticizes the prices of clothes imported from China to Senegal “that defy all potential competition” (Gaye, 2008: 131). Another point of criticism raised by Gaye is the “massive emigration of a Chinese labour force,” which according to Gaye “shows a political will [...] These men and women that one finds in the many corners of the continent are, perhaps, the new colonizers of Africa” (132).

When looking into China-**Nigeria** trade relations, Ikhuoria, head of communications and advocacy at the National Association of Nigerian Traders, points out the negative effect of cheap Chinese textiles (2010: 132f) – just like Gaye did regarding **Senegal**. Furthermore, in his article on **Nigeria**,

²¹ See Gaye 2006, written in French

Ikhuoria criticizes the quality of Chinese products sold in Nigeria, a factor that according to more than 30% of the Afrobarometer study's (2016: 22f) respondents contributed most to a negative image of China (average across all 36 countries surveyed) (see above).

According to an earlier study by Sautman and Yan "**Kenyans, Sudanese and Ethiopians** were most consistently positive about China–Africa links, **Botswana and Zambians** most negative, and **Nigerians, Ghanaians, Egyptians** and **South Africans** in between [...]" (2009: 735f.). The study's sample consisted of students, graduates and faculty members from nine African countries (see list above).

"**Ethiopian, Sudanese** and **Kenyan** respondents (84 per cent, 83 per cent, 81 per cent) perceived that China has most, many or some common interests with Africa. **South Africans, Botswana and Egyptians** were least enthusiastic (31 percent, 43 per cent, 48 per cent). Half of **Zambian** respondents saw most, many or some common interests with China; those who saw few or none often cited a fear of China reducing its population by sending migrants to Africa and/or cultural differences, mainly a supposed Chinese habit of keeping to themselves [...]. **Zambia** (58 per cent) and **Sudan** (51 per cent) top the list in strongly agreeing or agreeing that China is only interested in Africa's natural resources, followed by **Ethiopia** (46 per cent) and **Botswana** (41 per cent). Responses from Egypt, Kenya and Nigeria are divided between agree, disagree and neutral/don't know, but only 7.6 per cent of **South Africans** agree [...]. **Zambia** and **Sudan** are two countries with large investments from China in natural resource industries. There is proportionately little Chinese investment in South Africa and little to modest Chinese investment in natural resources of the other countries" (Sautman & Yan, 2009: 736).

"With regard to Chinese companies' projects in their respective countries, more than 50% of the respondents from **Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria and Egypt** felt very satisfied or satisfied." This makes six out of nine countries studied, while for all nine countries the following is valid: "In all countries more people feel very satisfied or satisfied than dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with Chinese projects" (Sautman & Yan, 2009: 739f).

Publications on China in **Angola** including publications on Angolan opinions about China were especially popular at the end of the past decade when the term "Angola Model" was coined as the PRC granted a two billion USD oil-backed credit to the country (see Power and Alves 2012; Corkin 2012b: 41). Angola was not included in surveys examining African views on China in Africa such as the ones conducted by Pew Research Centre (2014) and Afrobarometer (2016). However, Quintão and Santos published research on the opinion of Angolan workers in 2012. They conducted a study among 325 workers, who are/were working in either Chinese (123 out of 325 persons) or Western owned companies in the oil- and construction sectors. The respondents' monthly wage and working conditions as well as their preferences and perception as to team work between Angolans and Chinese were examined. If the same monthly wage was a given variable, almost all Angolan workers of Chinese companies in the study's panel would rather work for a Western company. Yet that aside, 40% of those working in Chinese companies said, that Angolans and Chinese are getting along well at work after all (Quintão & Santos, 2012: 149).

Another comparative study on African workers in Chinese companies was conducted by Kamau (2010: 122), researcher at the Institute of Development Studies, Nairobi) in **Kenya**. He concludes the results of a survey he conducted in the Kenyan apparel sector stating that the survey „did not show significant difference in the way employees were treated between those firms owned by Chinese and those owned by people from other countries. Salaries and working hours were more or less in the same range to all other exporting firms“ (Kamau 2010: 122).

Just to get back to the idea of the “China Threat” once more: the West does not seem to be the only one being worried about the impact of China’s Engagement in Africa with regard to good governance. In his article on **Angola**, Isaac (Open Society for Southern Africa, Angola) writes,

“The only concern many Angolans, in particular civil society organisations, have is that China does not care about systems and mechanisms for transparency and accountability to protect the loans. Critics are also concerned about China’s own internal position and behavior on human rights and civil and political liberties. Therefore, it is feared that China’s current levels of investment in Angola will further entrench and strengthen political arrogance and disrespect for human rights” (Isaac, 2010: 169).

China as a neo-colonial power in Africa?

Some Westerners accuse China of being neo-colonialists (e.g. The Economist, 2008). The statements made by Hillary Clinton (cited in Reuters, 2011)²² are a famous example for this attitude. Clinton’s opinion was commented on Pambazuka Press by Isaac Odoom, who studied in Ghana and Canada: “We need not wait to be warned or lectured by some self-interested actor somewhere before we act.” (Odoom, 2011).

In six out of nine African countries studied by Sautman and Yan more people were of the opinion that China did not practise neo-colonialism in Africa (disagreed or strongly disagreed) than less people who were of the opinion that China did do so (strongly agreed or agreed) (2009: 746). The countries in which the latter opinion is dominant according to this study are **Botswana, Egypt** and **Zambia** (ibid.). However, in a recent study by Afrobarometer (2016) on public opinion regarding China’s economic and political influence in their home countries, over 70% of respondents from Botswana and Zambia had had a favourable opinion towards China. Only in Egypt, Sautman’s and Yan’s findings from 2009 could be confirmed by Afrobarometer as only 38% of Egyptians perceived China’s influence in the country positively (ibid.) which makes Egypt one of the countries with the least favourable views on the African continent.

Another individual voice on this issue comes from **Angola** and contradicts the average findings across all countries studied (e.g. by Sautman & Yan or Afrobarometer, which did not include Angola): According to Isaac, “For the majority of **Angolan** citizens the Chinese presence is very problematic. It is seen as neo-colonialism in which the ruling political elite sold the country to Chinese capital without any consideration of the need to protect national interests” (2010: 167). As Isaac describes it, unlike the population, the political leaders consider cash paid with raw materials like e.g. fish or oil as an opportunity to access financial resources needed to invest into the devastated infrastructure (see Isaac, 2010: 165). With regard to the self-interest of foreign actors,

²² For further details see Schüller and Asche, 2007: 1, 4 and Wissenbach, 2012: 151.

mentioned by Isaac Odoom in the quotation above, Odoom finds very clear words for both China and the West: "I have no love for what the West has done throughout colonialism and after independence. Both the West and China's interests are very clear in **Angola** – exploitation of its natural resources and the impoverishment of its people. China is not doing charity and neither did the colonial powers" (Odoom, 2011).

Conclusion

The studies mentioned exemplify, especially Afrobarometer study from 2016, that large parts of the African population have a positive view regarding China and the China model. This means, even if Africans wanted development partners to demand good governance from the respective African governments, this is not their first priority. China is being seen rather positively, despite (or even because of) the fact that its approach is based on a "no strings attached" development cooperation. The factors that contributed most to a positive image of China were China's infrastructure investment/business investment and the cost of Chinese products (Afrobarometer, 2016: 20). This suggests that most of the African respondents considered the improvement of their economic situation as the most important feature of a development partner. It does not mean, that they do not want good governance. It just shows the priorities: being able to make a living.

Western development partners such as the EU could draw lessons from the shortcomings of the Chinese as well as from the perceived advantages of their engagement in Africa as described above. However, as this article focuses on African perspectives on China in Africa, the implications deriving from the results depicted above need to be discussed in a separate article. However, African views definitely need to be taken into consideration. "[The European Consensus] also takes the view that the fundamental objective of poverty reduction is closely associated with the complementary objectives of promotion of good governance and respect for human rights, these being shared values underpinning the EU" (Council, EP, Commission on the development policy of the EU, 2006).

As human rights are important to the EU, the importance of the EU Charter's Art.11 must be highlighted: "Everyone has the right to freedom of expression" (EU, 2012).²³ The opinion of affected local people should be considered before deciding whether a certain project in an African country or region should be implemented.

It is a matter of debate whether European countries are in a position to criticize others who are allegedly unfairly making economic profit in Africa. Cheap clothing from China might severely harm the textile industry in African countries (see e.g. Ikhuoria, 2010: 132f.; Mbaye, 2010: 45), but the effects of second-hand textiles from Europe need to be taken into account as well. Just quite recently, in late 2015, EU export subsidies were abandoned after many years of discussions. The remaining subsidies on agricultural products from the EU such as chicken meat and milk powder still have the effect that many of those EU products can be sold in Africa below market prices.

²³ The equivalent in the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights is Art.19: "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression." (UN, 1948).

Plus, from 2018 on, developing countries have to phase out their export subsidies as well.²⁴ When regarding the EU's exports to developing countries in due consideration of the EU subsidies in the agricultural sector, it can be questioned whether the EU meets its own standards. Affordable food might seem like a good thing at first glance, but it needs to be ensured that – on the long run – subsidized groceries from Europe do not cause job loss in the agricultural sector in Africa and thus destroy the livelihood of African farmers, i.e. a very large portion of the population. With regard to profit-oriented engagement in Africa, normative powers such as the EU need to avoid double standards.

As to the competition between China and the West in Africa, no matter whether competing for influence, resources or markets, Europe should thus listen to the African voices and evaluate the possibilities of support and cooperation based on the locals' needs. Both politicians, South African president Jacob Zuma as well as Nokosazana Dlamini Zuma (chairperson of the Commission of the African Union) expressed the same wish at Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2012. This is also seen in the EU-Africa Summit 2014: joint ventures or partnerships between Chinese relating to European and African companies. This sounds very much like a future of joint ventures as China requires support from foreign companies aiming to do business in the PRC and it could thus be the first sparks of an increasing African agency that might eventually lead to more benefits for African partners with regard to agreements with partners such as the EU or China.

Sources Cited

Afrobaromètre (2015) Les Togolais préfèrent le modèle américain mais reconnaissent l'influence positive de la Chine sur leur économie. Available from: http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/media-briefing/togo/tog_r6_presentation3_influence.pdf [Accessed 03 Nov. 2015].

Afrobarometer (2016) China's growing presence in Africa wins largely positive popular reviews, 24 October. Available from: http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Dispatches/ab_r6_dispatchno122_perceptions_of_china_in_africa1.pdf [Accessed 20 Jan. 2017].

Agirigi, B. (2014) Nigeria needs to adopt Chinese model to contain unemployment – Ortom, 17th August. Available from: http://businessdayonline.com/2014/08/nigeria-needs-to-adopt-chinese-model-to-contain-unemployment-ortom/#.VZR_ziiJZll [Accessed 27 June 2015].

ANGOP (2013) *Ministro das Relações Exteriores mantém conversações com homólogo Chinês*, 17 September. Available from: http://m.portalangop.co.ao/angola/pt_pt/noticias/politica/2013/8/38/Ministro-das-Relacoes-Exteriores-mantem-conversacoes-com-homologo-Chines,11e0df48-5d4b-4961-ba6e-88f6e66120cf.html [Accessed 03 June 2014].

²⁴ For more information see: Ikhuoria, 2010: 133 and Strubenhoff, 2016.

- BBC (2014) Poll. Available from: <https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/country-rating-poll.pdf> [Accessed 20 Jan 2017].
- Bertelsmann *Stiftung* (2016) 'Transformation Atlas 2016. Available from: <https://www.bti-project.org/de/berichte/regionalberichte/oestliches-und-suedliches-afrika/> [Accessed 20 Jan. 2017].
- Bosshard, P. (2007) *China's Role in Financing African Infrastructure*, May. Available from: <https://www.internationalrivers.org/sites/default/files/attached-files/chinaeximbankafrica.pdf> [Accessed 20 Jan. 2017].
- Brautigam, D. (2011) China and Oil-backed Loans in Angola: The Real Story, 17th October. Available from: <http://www.chinaafricarealstory.com/2011/10/china-and-oil-backed-loans-in-angola.html> [Accessed 19 Nov. 2017].
- Brautigam, D. (2008) China's Foreign Aid in Africa – What do we know? in: Rotberg, I. R. (ed.) *China into Africa – Trade, Aid and Influence*. Washington: Brookings Institution Press, 197-216.
- Brooks, A., Simon, D. (2012) Unravelling the Relationships between Used-Clothing Imports and the Decline of African Clothing Industries in: *Development and Change* 43(6), pp. 1265–1290.
- Corkin, L. (2012a) Angolan political elites' management of Chinese credit lines in: Power, M. & Alves, A.C. (eds) *China and Angola : a marriage of convenience?*. Kapstadt [u.a.]: Pambazuka, 2012, pp. 45-67.
- Corkin (2012b) Uneasy Allies: China's evolving relations with Angola, in: Taylor, I., Kopinski, D. & Polus, A. (eds) *China's Rise in Africa Perspectives on a Developing Connection*. New York: Routledge, pp. 41 – 52.
- Cottey, A. & Gottwald, J.-C. (2010) EU-China Relations in a New World Order – Status, Dynamics, Scenarios, in: Men J. / Balducci, G. (eds) *Prospects and Challenges for EU-China Relations in the 21st Century – The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement*. Brussels, pp. 21 – 31.
- Council, EP, Commission on the development policy of the EU (2006) European Consensus on Development. Available from: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=URISERV:r12544> [Accessed 05 Jan. 2017].
- Davies, M. (2011) How China is Influencing Africa's Development in: Men J. & Barton, B. (eds) *China and the European Union in Africa – Partners or Competitors?* Farnham (GB) u.a.: Ashgate, pp. 187-208.
- Diop, M. (2015) Lessons for Africa from China's Growth, 13 January. Available from: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/speech/2015/01/13/lessons-for-africa-from-chinas-growth> [Accessed 20 Jan. 2017].

- Dlamini Zuma, N. (2014) Remarks by H.E. Dr. Nkasazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union on the Occasion of 4th Africa – EU Summit, 2nd April.” Online available on: <https://www.au.int/en/speeches/remarks-he-dr-nkasazana-dlamini-zuma-chairperson-commission-african-union-occasion-4th> [Accessed 20 Jan. 2017].
- EC (2016) *New European Consensus on Development*, 22nd November. Available from: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-proposal-new-consensus-development-20161122_en.pdf [Accessed 05 Jan. 2017].
- EU (2012) The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. In: Official Journal of the European Union, C 326/391.
- Fabricius, P. (2015) Rebalancing an unbalanced relationship, 19 November. Available from: <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/rebalancing-an-unbalanced-relationship> [Accessed 30 Mar. 2017].
- FMPRC (2006) Zhongguo dui feizhou zhence wenjiang. Available from: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_chn/ziliao_611306/tytj_611312/zcwj_611316/t230612.shtml [Accessed 17 June 2014].
- FOCAC (n.d.) Member States. Available from: <http://www.focac.org/eng/lttda/lttj/> (as of 24.03.2017) [Accessed 30 Mar 2017].
- Gaye, A. (2008) China in Africa: After the Gun and the Bible: A West African Perspective, in: Alden, C., Large, D. & Soares de Oliveira, R. (eds) *China returns to Africa – A Rising Power and a Continent Embrace*. London: Hurst, pp. 129-141.
- Gaye, A. (2006) *Chine-Afrique: Le dragon et l'autruche*. Paris u.a.: L'Harmattan.
- Giese, K. & Marfaing, L. (eds) (2016) *Entrepreneurs africains et chinois: Les impacts sociaux d'une rencontre particulière*. Paris: Karthala.
- Gondyi, N.D. et al. (2015) Dispatch No.43 – Citizens hold mixed views on Nigeria's international relations. Afrobarometer Report. Available from: http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Dispatches/ab_r6_dispatchno_43_nigeria_international_relations.pdf [Accessed 3 Nov. 2015].
- Gumede, W. (2015) The China Model: Lessons for Africa, 17 November. Pambazuka Press. Available from: <https://www.pambazuka.org/global-south/china-model-lessons-africa> [Accessed 20 January 2017].
- Halper, S. (2010) *The Beijing Consensus – How China's Authoritarian Model will dominate the 21st Century*. New York: Basic Books.

- Harneit-Sievers, A., Marks, S. & Naidu, S. (eds) (2010) *Chinese and African Perspectives on China in Africa*. Cape Town, Dakar, Nairobi and Oxford: Pambazuka Press.
- Ikhuoria, E. (2010) The impact of Chinese imports on Nigerian traders in: Harneit-Sievers, A., Marks, S. & Naidu, S. (eds) *Chinese and African Perspectives on China in Africa*. Cape Town, Dakar, Nairobi and Oxford: Pambazuka Press, pp. 128 – 138.
- Isaac, E. (2010) The West's retreat and China's advance in Angola, in: Harneit-Sievers, A., Marks, S. & Naidu, S. (eds) *Chinese and African Perspectives on China in Africa*. Cape Town, Dakar, Nairobi and Oxford: Pambazuka Press, pp. 163 – 173.
- Jalloh, A. (2017) Opinion: China's Africa policy deserves applause, 11 January. Deutsche Welle. Available from: <http://www.dw.com/en/opinion-chinas-africa-policy-deserves-applause/a-37094543> [Accessed 18 Jan. 2017].
- Jiang, Z. (1996) *Wei Zhongguo shidai youhao jianli xinde lishi fengbei*, May 13th. Available from: <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64184/64185/180137/10818730.html> [Accessed 14 Feb. 2017].
- Jin, L. (2010) Gemeinsam mehr. Wege für eine chinesisch-europäische Zusammenarbeit in Afrika?, 22 September. Bundeszentrale Für Politische Bildung Available from: <http://www.bpb.de/apuz/32509/gemeinsam-mehr-wege-fuer-eine-chinesisch-europaeische-zusammenarbeit-in-afrika?p=all> [Accessed 14 Dec. 2015].
- Juma, C. (2007) *Lessons Africa Must Learn from Chinese Expansion*, 13 July. Available from: <http://www.belfercenter.org/publication/lessons-africa-must-learn-chinese-expansion> [Accessed 29 Jan. 2017].
- Kamau, P. (2010) China's impact on Kenya's clothing industry in: Harneit-Sievers, A., Marks, S. & Naidu, S. (eds) *Chinese and African Perspectives on China in Africa*. Cape Town, Dakar, Nairobi and Oxford: Pambazuka Press, pp. 108 – 127.
- Kaufmann, D. & Kraay, A. (2002) Growth without governance in: *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 2928*, World Bank Group.
- Kaufmann, D. & Kraay, A. (2007) Governance Indicators: where are We, where Should We be Going? in: *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4370*, World Bank Group.
- Manji, F. & Marks, S. (eds) (2007) *African Perspectives on China in Africa*. Nairobi & Oxford: Fahamu.
- Mbaye, S. (2010) "Matching China's activities with Africa's needs" in: Harneit-Sievers, A., Marks, S. & Naidu, S. (eds) *Chinese and African Perspectives on China in Africa*. Cape Town, Dakar, Nairobi and Oxford: Pambazuka Press, 39 – 53.

- Mohan, G. & Lampert, B. (2012) "Negotiating China: Reinserting African agency into China–Africa relations." *African Affairs*, 112 (446), 92-110. Available from: <https://academic.oup.com/afraf/article/112/446/92/10208/Negotiating-China-Reinserting-African-agency-into> [Accessed 21 Jan. 2017].
- Novo Jornal (2014) "José Eduardo dos Santos – China é exemplo para os povos," 10 May. Online available from: <http://novojornal.co.ao/Artigo/Default/46493> [Accessed 12 May 2014].
- Obiorah, N., Kew, D. & Tanko, Y. (2008) "'Peaceful Rise' and Human Rights Abuses in Africa: China's Expanding Relations with Nigeria" in: Rotberg, R.I. *China into Africa – Trade, Aid and Influence*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings, pp. 272 - 295.
- OECD (2017) "Official development assistance – definition and coverage." Report available from: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/officialdevelopmentassistancedefinitionandcoverage.htm#Definition> [Accessed 25 Nov. 2017].
- Odoom, I. (2011) "Contextualising Hillary Clinton's 'New Colonialism' remark," 22 June 2011. Pambazuka Press. Available from: <https://www.pambazuka.org/taxonomy/term/7364> [Accessed 12 Feb. 2017].
- Pew Research Center (2014) "Global Opposition to U.S. Surveillance and Drones, but Limited Harm to America's Image – Chapter 2: China's Image." Available from: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/07/14/chapter-2-chinas-image/> [Accessed 03 Nov. 2015].
- Power, M. & Mohan, G. (2010) "Towards a critical geopolitics of China's engagement with African development." Available from: https://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/bisa-africa/confpapers/geopolitics_power_mohan.pdf [Accessed 20 Jan. 2017].
- Power, M. & Alves, A.C. (eds) (2012) *China and Angola: A Marriage of Convenience?* Cape Town, Dakar, Nairobi and Oxford: Fahamu / Pambazuka Press.
- Quintão, A., and Santos, R. (2012) "Chinese Corporate Practices in Angola – Myths and Facts" in: Alves, A.C., Power, M. (eds) *China and Angola : a marriage of convenience?*. Cape Town, Dakar, Nairobi and Oxford: Fahamu / Pambazuka Press, pp. 145 – 161.
- Ramo, J.C. (2004) *The Beijing Consensus*. London: Foreign Policy Centre.
- Ravallion, M. (2008) *Are there Lessons for Africa from China's Success against Poverty?* Available from: <https://poseidon01.ssrn.com/delivery.php?ID=81611607406400102008002209506802308105603604202809100510503704107100002605402501005811710001811810611004202303702110710709708502607506400001500707909611111097079069018083004080065114124025&EXT=pdf> [Accessed 20 Jan. 2017].

- Reuters* (2011) "Clinton warns against "new colonialism" in Africa," 11 June. Available from: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-clinton-africa-idUSTRE75A0RI20110611> [Accessed 20 Jan. 2017].
- Rothstein, B. (2012) "Good Governance" in: Levi-Faur, D. (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sautman, B. & Yan, H. (2015) "Localizing Chinese Enterprises in Africa: from Myths to Policies." Available from: http://iems.ust.hk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/HKUST_IEMS_Thought_Leadership_Brief_Issue5.pdf [Accessed 10 June 2017].
- Sautman, B. & Yan, H. (2009) "African Perspectives on China–Africa Links." *The China Quarterly* Vol.199, pp 728 – 759. Available from: http://ira.lib.polyu.edu.hk/bitstream/10397/5415/1/African%20Perspectives_CQ.doc.pdf
- Schüller, M. & Asche, H. (2007) "China als neue Kolonialmacht in Afrika? Umstrittene Strategien der Ressourcensicherung." *GIGA Focus*, 01/2007.
- Shambaugh, D., Sandschneider, E. & Zhou, H. (2008) *China-Europe Relations. Perceptions and Prospects*. New York: Routledge.
- Song X. (2012) "Challenges and Opportunities in EU-China Relations," in: Vogt, R. (ed.) *Europe and China – Strategic partners or rivals?* Hongkong, pp. 19- 36.
- Stahl, A.K. (2012) "Trilateral Development Cooperation between the European Union, China and Africa: What Prospects for South Africa?," August. Available from: http://www.ccs.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Discussion-Paper_AnnaStahl_FINAL.pdf [Accessed 11 Jan. 2016].
- Strubenhoff, H. (2016) "The WTO's decision to end agricultural export subsidies is good news for farmers and consumers," 8 February 2016. Brookings Institute. Available from: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2016/02/08/the-wtos-decision-to-end-agricultural-export-subsidies-is-good-news-for-farmers-and-consumers/> [Accessed 12 Feb. 2017].
- The Economist (2008) "The new colonialists," *The Economist* 13 March. Available from: <http://www.economist.com/node/10853534> [Accessed 21 Jan. 2017].
- UN (1948) Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Available from: <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/> [Accessed 20 Dec. 2017].

- UNESCAP (2009) “What is good governance?” 10 July 2009. Available from: <http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/good-governance.pdf> [Accessed 25 Nov. 2017].
- Wang, Y. (2017) “Wang Yi: Build Taraza into a Road of Cooperation and Prosperity,” 11 January 2017. Available from: <http://www.chinese-embassy.org.za/eng/znjl/t1429695.htm> [accessed 21 January 2017].
- Wissenbach, U. (2012) “Much Ado about nothing? China’s Quest for a Place under the African Sun” in: Gehler, M., Gu, X. & Schimmelpfennig, A. (eds) *EU - China – Global Players in a Complex World*. Hildesheim (u.a.), pp. 147 – 179.
- Wissenbach, U. (2011) “China-Africa relations and the European Union – Ideology, conditionality, realpolitik and what is new in South-South co-operation” in: Dent, C. (ed.) *China and Africa – Development relations*. London / New York, pp. 21 – 41.
- Wonacott, P. (2011) “In Africa, U.S. Watches China's Rise,” 2 September 2011. *Wall Street Journal* Available from: <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424053111903392904576510271838147248> [Accessed 21 Jan. 2017].
- World Bank (2017) Worldwide Governance Indicators. Available from: <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/#doc-intro> [Accessed 25 Nov. 2017].
- Xi, J. (2015) *Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech in City of London*, 22 October. Available from: http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/xjpdygjxgfw/t1309012.shtml [Accessed 21 Jan. 2017].
- Yip, K. (2012) *The uniqueness of China’s Development Model – 1842 - 2049*. Singapore.
- Zhao, S. (2014) “The China model of development – Can it replace the Western model of modernization?” in: Hsu, S.P., Wu, Y.-S. & Zhao, S. (eds) *In Search of China’s Development Model: Beyond the Beijing Consensus*. New York: Routledge, pp. 45 - 63.
- Zuma, J. (2012) *Remarks by President Jacob Zuma at the opening session of the 5th Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, Beijing, China*, 19 July. Available from: <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/speeches/remarks-president-jacob-zuma-opening-session-5th-forum-china-africa-cooperation,-beijing> [Accessed 21 Jan. 2017].

MAPPING CHINA JOURNAL

Mapping China Journal 2017 / Number 1

Part 3: Maturing Relations between China and Africa: What's special in the 'Special Relationship'?

Chinesische Medien in Afrika: Zur Darstellung der sino-afrikanischen Beziehungen im Programm von CCTV (heute CGTN) Africa

By Philipp Hertling*

Abstract

Die chinesische Außenpolitik ist im 21. Jahrhundert zunehmend um eine Stärkung von Chinas Soft Power und um ein positives Bild von China in der Welt bemüht. Externe Propaganda, insbesondere durch den Aufbau einer globalen von China kontrollierten Medienlandschaft, soll dazu dienen, Chinas Stimme in die Welt zu tragen und ein wohlwollendes internationales Umfeld zu schaffen. Die vorliegende Arbeit reiht sich ein in die wissenschaftliche Forschung zu chinesischen Medien in Afrika. Die zentrale Fragestellung lautet: Wie werden China-in-Afrika und die sino-afrikanischen Beziehungen im Programm von CCTV Africa dargestellt? Die Analyse konzentriert sich auf die Darstellung des chinesischen Engagements in der afrikanischen Landwirtschaft und auf die Darstellung der Lokalisierung chinesischer Unternehmen und Projekte in Afrika. Zur Beantwortung der Fragestellung werden über eine qualitative Medienanalyse fünf Frames abgeleitet, die geeignet sind, die Darstellung der sino-afrikanischen Beziehungen im Programm von CCTV Africa in den Bereichen Landwirtschaft und Lokalisierung zu charakterisieren: (1) Partner, (2) Investor, (3) positives Vorbild, (4) guter Arbeitgeber und (5) Freund.

*Philipp Hertling studiert an der Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen den Master of Education in Sinologie/Chinesisch und Germanistik. 2015 hat er im Rahmen seines Bachelorstudiums ein Semester an der Beida verbracht. In seiner Bachelorarbeit hat sich Philipp mit der Darstellung der sino-afrikanischen Beziehungen im Programm von CCTV Africa (seit 2017 CGTN Africa) auseinandergesetzt. Seine Masterarbeit wird sich mit der Didaktisierung chinesischer Filmsequenzen für den ChaF-Unterricht befassen. Philipp ist Stipendiat der Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes. Für die Zeit nach seinem Studium plant er ein Praktikum am Goethe-Institut in Accra, Ghana, bevor er noch einmal für längere Zeit nach China gehen möchte.

Chinesische Medien in Afrika: Zur Darstellung der sino-afrikanischen Beziehungen im Programm von CCTV (heute CGTN) Africa¹

Einleitung und Fragestellung

„The countries that are likely to be more attractive and gain soft power in the information age are those with multiple channels of communication that help to frame issues [...]” (Nye, 2004: S. 31)

Die Ausdehnung wirtschaftlicher, politischer und kultureller Beziehungen zwischen China und Afrika hat nicht nur zahlreiche wissenschaftliche Studien motiviert, auch die mediale Aufmerksamkeit ist auf Chinas wachsende Präsenz in Afrika gefallen. Chinesische Wissenschaftler und Regierungsvertreter kritisieren eine aus ihrer Sicht einseitige, übertreibende, unfaire, verzerrende, voreingenommene und überwiegend negative Darstellung von China-in-Afrika in „westlichen“ Medien und sehen darin eine Gefahr für Chinas politische Interessen in Afrika (z. B. Shi, 2013).² Die chinesische Regierung versucht Wege zu finden, um der internationalen Dominanz und Meinungsmacht westlicher Medien entgegenzuwirken.³

Der damalige chinesische Präsident Hu Jintao beklagte 2008, nachdem die Olympischen Spiele in Beijing nicht den erhofften positiven Effekt auf Chinas internationales Image hatten, dass die chinesische Meinung in den internationalen Medien zu wenig Gehör finde (vgl. Hefele et al., 2015: S. 68). Mediale Repräsentationen beeinflussen, wie China von ausländischen Öffentlichkeiten wahrgenommen und bewertet wird, ob Chinas Aufstieg, z.B. Chinas wachsendes Engagement auf dem afrikanischen Kontinent, international als Chance oder als Bedrohung empfunden wird. Die chinesische Propaganda- und Außenpolitik ist im 21. Jahrhundert zunehmend um eine Stärkung von Chinas Soft Power und um ein positives Bild von China in der Welt bemüht. Externe Propaganda (*duiwai xuanchuan* 对外宣传), die sich an ausländische Öffentlichkeiten richtet, soll dazu dienen, Chinas Stimme in die Welt zu tragen, um einer „China Threat“-Theorie⁴ entgegenzuwirken und ein wohlwollendes internationales Umfeld zu schaffen, das es China ermöglichen soll, den eigenen Aufstieg und eigene politische Ziele ungestört zu verfolgen (vgl. Ohlberg, 2014: S. 397).

In diesem Zusammenhang ist die seit 2006 systematisch von der chinesischen Regierung vorangetriebene Ausweitung und Internationalisierung der chinesischen Staatsmedien und insbesondere die mediale Zusammenarbeit zwischen China und Afrika in den Fokus wissenschaftlicher Forschung gerückt (z. B. Ohlberg, 2014). Der Aufbau einer globalen von China

¹ CCTV Africa wurde am 31. Dezember 2016 in CGTN Africa (China Global Television Network Africa) umbenannt. In dieser Arbeit ist einheitlich von CCTV Africa die Rede. Im Fazit wird kurz Stellung zu der jüngsten Entwicklung genommen.

² Mawdsley (2008), der 230 Artikel aus britischen Zeitungen untersucht, kommt zu dem Ergebnis, dass britische Medien tendenziell negativ über China-in-Afrika berichten.

³ Die internationale Dominanz westlicher Medien wird in China mit der Phrase „der Westen ist stark, China ist schwach“ (*xi qiang wo ruo* 西强我弱) zusammengefasst (Ohlberg, 2014: S. 391).

⁴ „[...] i.e. what China considers to be the intentional spreading of fear about China by Western hostile forces in order to disrupt China’s ascent.” (Ohlberg, 2014: S. 357).

kontrollierten Medienlandschaft soll Chinas Stimme in der Welt stärken (vgl. Ohlberg, 2014: S. 414). Seit 2006 hat die chinesische Regierung beträchtliche Summen in den internationalen Ausbau der sogenannten „Big Four“ – Xinhua, CRI (China Radio International), China Daily und CCTV (China Central Television) – investiert.⁵ Insbesondere das chinesische Staatsfernsehen CCTV, das der auf Ministerialebene angesiedelten „State Administration for Radio Film and Television“ (SARFT) untersteht und finanziell wie journalistisch von der chinesischen Regierung abhängt (Ohlberg, 2014: S. 520f.), hat sich in den letzten Jahren rasant entwickelt (vgl. Ohlberg, 2014: S. 432f.). China Global Television Network, kurz CGTN, unterhält sechs verschiedensprachige Fernsehkanäle, die sich speziell an ein ausländisches Publikum richten und Nachrichten aus einer „chinesischen Perspektive“ berichten (CGTN, 2017). Im Januar 2012 wurde CCTV Africa, CGTNs Produktions- und Sendezentrale in Afrika, in Kenias Hauptstadt Nairobi eröffnet und berichtet seitdem täglich in unterschiedlichen Formaten aus und über Afrika.

Die vorliegende Arbeit reiht sich ein in die wissenschaftliche Forschung zu chinesischen Medien in Afrika. Die zentrale Fragestellung dieser Arbeit lautet: Wie werden China-in-Afrika und die sino-afrikanischen Beziehungen im Programm von CCTV Africa dargestellt? Die Analyse konzentriert sich auf die Darstellung des chinesischen Engagements in der afrikanischen Landwirtschaft und auf die Darstellung der Lokalisierung chinesischer Unternehmen und Projekte in Afrika. Zur Beantwortung der Fragestellung, die einen Teil der chinesischen China-Berichterstattung an ein afrikanisches Publikum deskriptiv untersuchen will, werden über eine qualitative Medienanalyse fünf Frames abgeleitet, die geeignet sind, die Darstellung der sino-afrikanischen Beziehungen im Programm von CCTV Africa in den Bereichen Landwirtschaft und Lokalisierung zu charakterisieren: (1) Partner, (2) Investor, (3) positives Vorbild, (4) guter Arbeitgeber und (5) Freund. Die Analyse möchte zeigen, wie diese Frames in der Berichterstattung konkret bedient werden. Diskutiert werden außerdem, ohne allerdings eine abschließende Antwort zu geben, die Fragen: Warum existieren gerade diese Frames im Programm von CCTV Africa? Welche Frames tauchen besonders häufig auf und warum? Inwieweit kann Chinas Selbstdarstellung zu einem positiven Bild von China bzw. zu einem positiven Bild der sino-afrikanischen Beziehungen in afrikanischen Öffentlichkeiten beitragen?

Im Ganzen ist die Arbeit wie folgt strukturiert: Zunächst wird ein Überblick über die Literatur zu chinesischen Medien in Afrika gegeben (Abschnitt 2). Danach informiert ein Theorieteil, der sich maßgeblich an Ohlbergs (2014) Definition von Externer Propaganda orientiert, über die konzeptuelle Grundlage dieser Arbeit (Abschnitt 3), bevor Chinas mediales Engagement in Afrika in einem kurzen Überblick vorgestellt wird (Abschnitt 4). Abschnitt 5 gibt eine nähere Erläuterung des methodischen Ansatzes und der Datenauswahl, der die eigentliche Frame-Analyse der gesammelten Daten und deren anschließender Diskussion in Abschnitt 6 folgt. Ein Fazit soll die Ergebnisse der Arbeit zusammenfassen und reflektieren (Abschnitt 7).

Forschungsstand und Relevanz dieser Arbeit

In den letzten Jahren sind vermehrt wissenschaftliche Artikel zu chinesischen Medien in Afrika erschienen, darunter Gagliardone et al. (2010), Gagliardone et al. (2012), Wu (2012), Gagliardone (2013), Olorunnisola & Ma (2013), Wekesa (2013), Zhang X. (2013), Wu (2014), Zhang (2014), Jiang et al. (2016), Madrid-Morales (2016), Marsh (2016), Ran (2016), Tan-Mullins (2016), Zhang & Matingwina (2016) und Zhang & Mwangi (2016).

⁵ 2009 ist von 45 Milliarden RMB die Rede (vgl. Madrid-Morales, 2016: S. 79; Ohlberg, 2014: S. 513).

Einige der Autor*innen diskutieren den Unterschied zwischen einem „chinesischen“ Journalismus und dem Verständnis von Journalismus in westlichen Ländern. Während Medien in Demokratien als sogenannter vierter Gewalt eine Kontrollfunktion zukommt – Medien sollen kritisch-investigativ berichten, um auf Probleme und Missstände aufmerksam zu machen –, haben chinesische Medien im Verständnis der Kommunistischen Partei Chinas (KPCh) eine unterstützende Funktion gegenüber der Regierung (vgl. Ohlberg, 2014: S. 554), deren Ideologie und Politik sie gemäß dem „Partei-Prinzip“ (*dangxing yuanze* 党性原则) nicht infrage stellen dürfen (Ohlberg, 2014: S. 546). In der Literatur wird im Zusammenhang mit chinesischen Medien von positiver Berichterstattung („positive reporting“), entwicklungsorientiertem Journalismus („developmental journalism“) oder konstruktivem Journalismus („constructive journalism“) gesprochen (z. B. Gagliardone, 2013; Zhang, 2014; Zhang & Matingwina, 2016). Das „chinesische“ Medienverständnis wird einem „westlichen“ Journalismus gegenübergestellt und vereinzelt als potentielle Gefahr für die Pressefreiheit und Unabhängigkeit in der afrikanischen Medienlandschaft gewertet (vgl. Gagliardone, 2013: S. 36).

In der Literatur wird oft die These vertreten, dass China seine Staatsmedien als Propaganda- und Soft-Power-Instrument dazu benutzt, durch eine positive China-in-Afrika-Berichterstattung das internationale Image von China zu verbessern, Vertrauen zwischen China und Afrika aufzubauen und ein Gegengewicht zur vorherrschenden negativen Narrative zu bieten: „[...] the PRC uses state-owned media to counterbalance prevailing narratives about its engagement in Africa.“ (Madrid-Morales, 2016: S. 84). In diesem Zusammenhang ist sowohl von einer proaktiven „Charme-Offensive“ (Kurlantzick, 2007) als auch von einer reaktiven „Charme-Defensive“ (Grassi, 2014; Shi, 2015) der chinesischen Medien geschrieben worden.

Allerdings mangelt es bisher an soliden empirischen Untersuchungen, die den Inhalt chinesischer Staatsmedien in Afrika analysieren. Madrid-Morales (2016) schreibt:

„[...] there is a general scarcity of empirical evidence and a predominance of theory-centered explanations. Almost no studies employ content from media organizations to explain the phenomenon, despite its potential usefulness [...]“ (S. 85)

Gagliardone (2013) ist der gleichen Ansicht:

„[...] greater empirical evidence is needed to fully understand the nature, scope and implications of China’s new role in the African mediasphere.“ (S. 28)

Unter anderem folgende Studien führen in diesem Zusammenhang eine inhaltliche Medienanalyse durch: Olorunnisola & Ma (2013)⁶, Wekesa (2013), Zhang X. (2013)⁷, Madrid-Morales (2016), Marsh (2016) und Zhang & Matingwina (2016)⁸.

⁶ Olorunnisola & Ma (2013) untersuchen, welche Frames Zeitungen aus Nigeria, Südafrika, China und den USA in ihrer Berichterstattung über Chinas Engagement in Afrika anwenden. Während das Wall Street Journal China als Wettbewerber der USA framt, wird China von der China Daily als Afrikas Partner geframt.

⁷ Zhang X. (2013) untersucht CCTV Africas Programm *Africa Live* zwischen Januar und April 2013. Dabei fiel auf, dass China stets positiv dargestellt wird (vgl. S. 84).

⁸ Zhang & Matingwina (2016) untersuchen anhand von 50 Videobeiträgen das Afrika-Bild im Programm von CCTV Africa, um herauszufinden welche Bedeutung „konstruktiver Journalismus“ für die Darstellung von Afrika in chinesischen Medien hat.

Marsh (2016) vergleicht unter anderem die Berichterstattung über den Besuch von Chinas Ministerpräsident Li Keqiang in Afrika im Mai 2014 in CCTV Africas Programm *Africa Live* und in BBC Worlds Programm *Focus on Africa*.⁹ Sie kommt unter anderem zu folgenden Ergebnissen:

„[...] news about China in Africa on CCTV [Africa] is treated very differently from other African issues [on CCTV Africa].“ (S. 64), „CCTV's relentlessly positive coverage of Li Keqiang's visit and the preponderance of official voices in its output ground it in Chinese state media practice [...]“ (S. 65), „The coverage of Chinese investment projects in Africa and the tenor of the reporting on Li Keqiang's visit were in sharp contrast to CCTV's routine Africa coverage in vocabulary, visual style, and editorial decision-making.“ (S. 67)

Diese Arbeit möchte die Forschung um eine Analyse der Darstellung von China-in-Afrika und der sino-afrikanischen Beziehungen im Programm von CCTV Africa ergänzen, um den bestehenden wissenschaftlichen Diskurs mit empirischen Befunden abgleichen zu können. Die Ergebnisse dieser Arbeit können einen Beitrag leisten, (1) die Motive und Absichten besser zu verstehen, warum chinesische Medien in Afrika aktiv sind, (2) die Selbstdarstellung Chinas und den offiziellen chinesischen Mediendiskurs über China-in-Afrika zu charakterisieren, (3) die Frage zu beantworten, wie China in Afrika gerne gesehen werden möchte und (4) den Einfluss chinesischer Medien auf das China-Bild des afrikanischen Publikums in weiteren Forschungen zu untersuchen. Insbesondere den vierten Punkt möchte ich betonen, da bisher kaum verlässliche Daten zur Rezeption und Wirkung chinesischer Medien in Afrika vorliegen. Neben einem interessanten Satz in Gagliardone (2013)¹⁰ sind mir lediglich zwei Studien bekannt, die sich mit der Rezeption von chinesischen Medien in Kenia beschäftigen. Gorfinkel et al. (2014) kommen über eine vergleichsweise geringe Zahl informeller Interviews in Kenia zu folgendem vorläufigen Ergebnis: „Many local Kenyans were unaware of the existence of CCTV-Africa.“ (S. 85). Zhang & Mwangi (2016) untersuchen ebenfalls die Rezeption chinesischer Medien in Kenia, insbesondere den Bekanntheitsgrad von CCTV Africa: von 201 befragten Kenianern kannten 146 CCTV Africa.¹¹ Die Autoren kommen zu dem Ergebnis: „The findings illustrate the fact that the move to strengthen China's international communication capacity in order to promote China's cultural soft power is gaining ground.“ (S. 75). Im Vergleich der beiden Studien scheint CCTV Africas Bekanntheit in der kenianischen Bevölkerung zugenommen zu haben.

Externe Propaganda (duiwai xuanchuan) als konzeptuelle Grundlage

Als theoretische und begriffliche Basis dieser Arbeit dient die Dissertation von Mareike Ohlberg (2014) „Creating a Favorable International Public Opinion Environment: External Propaganda (Duiwai Xuanchuan) as a Global Concept with Chinese Characteristics“, die sich primär auf

⁹ Marsh (2016) vergleicht weitere Aspekte, z. B. den geographischen Fokus der Berichterstattung, die Themen der Berichterstattung und die Rollen der Gesprächspartner (z. B. Beamte, Akademiker, Bürger).

¹⁰ „Audience surveys mapping CCTV Africa's reception across the continent are not publicly available, but at the time of this research there was a sense among Kenyan journalists working for the local media that CCTV Africa was boosting its audience base and gaining credibility beyond initial expectations.“ (Gagliardone, 2013: S. 30f.).

¹¹ China Daily kannten hingegen nur 49 von 201 befragten Kenianern (Zhang & Mwangi, 2016: S. 74).

chinesische Quellen stützt und deren Konzept von Externer Propaganda ich hier übernehme.¹² Externe Propaganda, wie Ohlberg (2014) sie darlegt, bietet einen Hintergrund, vor dem die Aktivitäten chinesischer Medien in Afrika und deren politische Bedeutung für China angemessen erfasst werden können.

Ohlberg (2014) entscheidet sich bei der Betrachtung Chinas bewusst gegen die Begriffe Soft Power¹³, Public Diplomacy¹⁴ oder Cultural Diplomacy, die ebenfalls verwendet werden, um auf entsprechende Externe-Propaganda-Maßnahmen der chinesischen Regierung Bezug zu nehmen. Externe Propaganda (*duiwai xuanchuan* 对外宣传) sei der chinesische Begriff für eine Politik, die in den meisten anderen Ländern wohl als Public Diplomacy bezeichnet werden würde (S. 9).¹⁵ Die Verwendung unterschiedlicher Begriffe verschleierte die Gemeinsamkeiten von Aktivitäten, die sich mit gleicher Zielsetzung an ausländische Öffentlichkeiten richten (S. 29). Außerdem entstehe durch die Verwendung von Begriffen wie Soft Power möglicherweise der Eindruck, dass es sich bei den chinesischen Externen-Propaganda-Maßnahmen seit Anfang des 21. Jahrhunderts um ein neues Phänomen handelt.¹⁶ Dem sei aber nicht so. Externe Propaganda habe eine Geschichte in China, die bis in die erste Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts zurückreiche (S. 510).

Der Begriff Propaganda bezieht sich nach Ohlberg (2014) auf alle Aktivitäten, die versuchen, „to influence the perception of publics through selective presentation of information and argument, either in order to get others to act in a certain manner or to diminish objection to one’s own actions.“ (S. 29) Die Autorin schlägt folgende Definition von Propaganda vor: „Propaganda [...] is a particular mode of communication before the public that is organized and funded.“ (S. 30).

¹² Vgl. „[...] this thesis [...] provides a basis and background for future studies on Chinese soft power.“ (Ohlberg, 2014: S. 24).

¹³ Joseph Nye, auf den Soft Power zurück geht, grenzt diese von wirtschaftlicher und militärischer Macht eines Staates („Hard Power“) ab: „Soft power is the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes one wants through attraction rather than coercion or payment.“ (Nye, 2008: S. 94). Die seit Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts wahrnehmbare Ausweitung der chinesischen Propaganda-Maßnahmen, die sich an ausländische Öffentlichkeiten richten, werden aus Perspektive der Internationalen Beziehungen meist mit dem von Nye geprägten Konzept der Soft Power in Verbindung gebracht. Ohlberg (2014) schreibt: „[...] a debate on Chinese soft power has developed that tries to assess Chinese resources of soft power as well as the role soft power plays in China’s rise from an IR perspective.“ (S. 14).

¹⁴ „In the academic debate in China, public diplomacy (*gonggong waijiao* 公共外交) is often used as a synonym or euphemism for external propaganda. In the Chinese bureaucracy, however, public diplomacy structures are separated from external propaganda structures and form a separate system“ (Ohlberg, 2014: S. 495). Public Diplomacy kann einerseits verstanden werden als Soft-Power-Maßnahmen, die sich an ausländische bzw. internationale Öffentlichkeiten richten (dieses Verständnis wäre gleichbedeutend mit Externer Propaganda), und andererseits als Soft-Power-Maßnahmen, die von nicht-staatlichen Akteuren (z. B. der Zivilgesellschaft, Universitäten, Unternehmen oder NGOs) getragen werden (dieses Verständnis steckt meiner Ansicht nach hinter den separaten Public-Diplomacy-Strukturen der chinesischen Bürokratie, wobei auch dieses Verständnis von Public Diplomacy als Teilstrategie einer übergeordneten Externen Propaganda betrachtet werden kann, vgl. Ohlberg, 2014: S. 495ff.).

¹⁵ Für die relative Austauschbarkeit der Begriffe und für eine einheitliche Betrachtung des chinesischen Beispiels unter dem Konzept der Externen Propaganda spricht meiner Meinung nach auch, dass die Begriffe Soft Power, Public Diplomacy und Cultural Diplomacy in der Literatur, die in Abschnitt 2 vorgestellt wurde, nicht klar voneinander unterschieden werden.

¹⁶ Vgl. „[...] the majority of studies on current developments implicitly or explicitly treat the country’s interest in shaping international public opinion as a relatively new phenomenon.“ (Ohlberg, 2014: S. 20).

Dabei legt sie einen weiten Kommunikationsbegriff zugrunde, der sich nicht nur auf verbale Interaktion beschränkt. Sie weist außerdem darauf hin, dass Propaganda niemals in einem leeren Raum stattfindet, sondern sowohl proaktive als auch reaktive Elemente beinhaltet:

„Propaganda does not take place in a vacuum in which one group simply spreads its message. Either directly or indirectly it always replies to a particular countertext. Thus, propaganda is not only concerned with **proactively** getting a particular message out, but also with **reactive** measures to deal with propaganda spread by one's opponents [...].“ (S. 30, Hervorhebungen durch den Verfasser)

Ohlberg (2014) betrachtet Externe Propaganda als „globales Phänomen“ (S. 24):

„[...] external propaganda as the effort of trying to establish a better image for oneself and gaining understanding for one's policies among foreign publics is ubiquitous among nation-states in modern times [...].“ (S. 12)

Natürlich weist China im internationalen Vergleich eigene Charakteristika auf, auch aufgrund seiner Geschichte. Ohlberg (2014) identifiziert fünf verschiedene Externe-Propaganda-Diskurse im China der 1980er Jahre, von denen zwei nach 1989 Bestand hatten und bis heute haben:

„Propaganda needed to serve the national interest as defined by the CPC, both as it pursued its overall development goals [„Funktionalistischer“-Diskurs] and as it tried to fight off 'hostile forces' [„Kampf“-Diskurs].“ (S. 285)

Insbesondere der „Kampf“-Diskurs weist einen reaktiven Charakter auf. Im 21. Jahrhundert lässt sich die Bedeutung von Externer Propaganda für die strategischen Ziele der chinesischen Regierung wie folgt zusammenfassen:

„[...] the most important function of external propaganda has been to help the Party realize its official strategic goals, namely development, unification (or deterring independence of Taiwan), and 'protecting world peace,' i.e. supporting China's rise [...].“ (S. 387)

Seit den Jahren 2003 und 2004 misst die KPCh Externer Propaganda zusätzlich eine Bedeutung für Chinas nationale Stärke, innere Sicherheit und soziale Stabilität bei, was den Stellenwert Externer Propaganda im 21. Jahrhundert weiter erhöht hat (S. 9, 38, 389).

In Kapitel 8 gibt Ohlberg (2014) einen Überblick über die bürokratischen Strukturen, Verfahrensweisen und Institutionen, die hinter Chinas Externer-Propaganda-Politik stehen. Ein Großteil der heute noch wirksamen Verfahrensweisen und Einrichtungen stammen aus den 1990er Jahren, als Externe Propaganda helfen sollte, Chinas internationale Isolation nach 1989 zu überwinden (S. 286). Das „Central Office of External Propaganda“ (OEP) der Kommunistischen Partei, auch bekannt als „State Council Information Office“ (SCIO) ist die wichtigste bürokratische Repräsentanz der Externen-Propaganda-Politik Chinas und dem Zentralkomitee der KPCh auf Ministerialebene direkt unterstellt. 2004, nachdem Externer Propaganda eine Bedeutung für Chinas nationale Sicherheit und soziale Stabilität zugeschrieben worden war, wurde die „External Propaganda Work Leading Small Group (EPWLSG) ins Leben gerufen, um die Arbeit der

zahlreichen beteiligten Einrichtungen besser zu koordinieren (S. 9).¹⁷ Allerdings ist so gut wie nichts darüber bekannt wie die EPWLSG arbeitet und wer darin vertreten ist (S. 486).

Methodischer Ansatz und Datenauswahl

Framing und Frames sind in der Literatur nicht einheitlich definiert. Die Frame-Theorie wird in unterschiedlichen Disziplinen auf verschiedene Weise angewendet. Diese Arbeit orientiert sich an Zhou & Moy (2007), die Framing aus einer medien- und kommunikationswissenschaftlichen Perspektive betrachten und deren Überlegungen daher für die Zwecke dieser Arbeit besonders geeignet sind.

Frames, auch als Deutungsrahmen oder Deutungsmuster bezeichnet, sind mentale Konzepte, mit denen Menschen die vermittelte Welt um sich herum wahrnehmen, verstehen und organisieren. Framing bezeichnet den Prozess der Einbettung von Wahrnehmung in entsprechende Deutungsrahmen, wodurch bestimmte Merkmale eines Gegenstandes hervorgehoben werden (Salienz), während andere unberücksichtigt bleiben (Selektion).

Zhou & Moy (2007) unterscheiden zudem frame-bildende von frame-setzenden Prozessen. Frame-bildende Prozesse beschreiben, wie Frames entstehen oder sich wandeln, und können beispielsweise durch bestimmte Ereignisse, kulturelle Prägungen oder Interessen beeinflusst sein. Frame-setzende Prozesse hingegen beschreiben, wie Frames sich gesellschaftlich durchsetzen, beispielsweise, indem mediale Frames von der Öffentlichkeit übernommen werden: „[Media] mold public opinion by emphasizing certain voices, highlighting particular views, and generating discourse about certain issues [...]“ (Zhou & Moy, 2007: S. 82).¹⁸ Frames können wiederum differenziert werden in themenspezifische Frames, die nur in bestimmten Kontexten anwendbar sind, und in allgemeingültige Frames, die in vielen Kontexten anwendbar sind.

Mit diesem Verständnis von Frames wird die in der Einleitung genannte Fragestellung methodisch konkretisiert: Wie werden China-in-Afrika und die sino-afrikanischen Beziehungen im Programm von CCTV Africa geframt? Welche Frames werden bedient und wie werden sie bedient? Die Frame-Analyse bewegt sich auf der Ebene des durch CCTV Africa vermittelten Externen-Propaganda-Diskurses über China-in-Afrika.

Die fünf Frames, welche die Analyse leiten, wurden zuvor ihrerseits aus den empirischen Daten gewonnen: (1) Partner, (2) Investor, (3) positives Vorbild, (4) guter Arbeitgeber und (5) Freund. Um die zu analysierende Datenmenge überschaubar zu halten, wird eine qualitative Inhaltsanalyse gegenüber einer quantitativen bevorzugt. Dabei werden die Daten weniger konkreter Beispiele reflektiert und organisiert. Die Aussagen der einzelnen Beiträge werden typisiert und den jeweiligen Frames zugeordnet, die sie bedienen. Wenn bestimmte Aspekte der Aussagen auch auf andere Frames hinweisen, wird in Klammern und kursiv darauf hingewiesen. In Klammern (aber nicht kursiv) wird außerdem vermerkt, von wem die Aussage stammt (z. B. Erzählerstimme, Moderator in Nairobi, Moderator vor Ort, afrikanischer Mitarbeiter, etc.). Der Partner-Frame beschreibt chinesische und afrikanische Akteure als Partner auf Augenhöhe, die zu beiderseitigem Nutzen zusammenarbeiten (win-win-Kooperation). Der Investor-Frame beschreibt chinesische Akteure als verantwortungsvolle, langfristig denkende Investoren in Afrika, die positive ökonomische Entwicklungschancen bieten. Der Vorbild-Frame beschreibt China als positives und

¹⁷ Vgl. „[...] the CPC still struggles to find an ideal coordinating mechanism for external propaganda work [...] external propaganda involves a large number of units of equal rank that need to coordinate their work.“ (Ohlberg, 2014: S. 510f.).

¹⁸ Voraussetzung dafür ist ein gewisses Vertrauen des Publikums in das Medium.

erstrebenswertes Vorbild für Afrika, das wirtschaftlich weiter entwickelt ist und von dem Afrika lernen kann. Der Arbeitgeber-Frame beschreibt chinesische Unternehmen und Investoren als gute und gegenüber ihren (afrikanischen) Mitarbeiter*innen verantwortungsvolle Arbeitgeber in Afrika. Der Freunde-Frame beschreibt China als helfenden und unterstützenden Freund Afrikas mit ähnlichen Herausforderungen, wobei ein unmittelbarer eigener Nutzen (vgl. Partner-Frame) fehlt.

Für die Analyse wurden Videobeiträge aus dem Programm von CCTV Africa berücksichtigt, die sich entweder mit der Darstellung von Chinas Engagement in der afrikanischen Landwirtschaft oder mit der Darstellung der Lokalisierung chinesischer Unternehmen und Projekte in Afrika beschäftigen. Die Entscheidung für CCTV Africa liegt zum einen in der Aufmerksamkeit begründet, die der Sender bisher sowohl in der Forschung als auch in afrikanischen Öffentlichkeiten erfahren hat (vgl. Abschnitt 2), zum anderen in CCTV Africas rasanten Entwicklung und wachsenden Bedeutung innerhalb der afrikanischen Medienlandschaft.¹⁹

Die Konzentration auf die Themen Landwirtschaft und Lokalisierung soll zum einen die Datenmenge für die Analyse eingrenzen, zum anderen existieren in westlichen Medien und Gesellschaften gerade in diesen beiden Bereichen negative Assoziation, die nach aktueller Forschung unbegründet scheinen (Brautigam, 2015; Sautman & Yan, 2015). Daher wäre besonders interessant zu erfahren, welche Darstellung chinesische Medien diesem Missverhältnis zwischen Wahrnehmung und Realität gegenüberstellen.

Brautigam setzt sich in ihrem Buch „Will Africa Feed China“ (2015) mit Chinas Engagement in der afrikanischen Landwirtschaft auseinander: „Many fears have been raised about the Chinese as a new colonial power in Africa, and the land issue is a central factor stoking these concerns.“ (S. 162). Sie stellt die im Westen verbreitete Narrative vom Landräuber China in Frage und führt in ihrer Einleitung zahlreiche Medienbeispiele an, die diese falschen Narrative bedienen: „[...] the headlines and media reports turned into „data“ that became the foundation for analysis by researchers in NGOs, universities, and think tanks.“ (S. 3). Brautigam kommt zu dem Schluss: „More than a decade after “China in Africa” began to hit the headlines, there continues to be an enormous gap between what many in the West imagine Chinese intentions in Africa to be and the realities.“ (Brautigam, 2015: S. 162).

Sautman & Yan (2015) widerlegen das Vorurteil der mangelnden Lokalisierung chinesischer Unternehmen und Projekte in Afrika. Die untersuchten Daten von 400 chinesischen Unternehmen und Projekten aus über 40 afrikanischen Ländern zeigen, dass chinesische Unternehmen durchschnittlich über 80 Prozent lokale Arbeiter beschäftigen.²⁰ Brautigam (2015) und Sautman & Yan (2015) zeigen, dass die negativen Assoziationen von China-in-Afrika in vielen Fällen nicht der Komplexität der realen Verhältnisse gerecht werden.

¹⁹ „Perhaps the most important element of the Chinese media presence in Africa is the establishment of CCTV's African headquarters in Nairobi and its impressive coverage of African news and contemporary issues in daily broadcasts.“ (Jiang et al., 2016: S. 3).

²⁰ Die Lokalisierungsrate in Führungspositionen ist hingegen deutlich geringer. Im Vergleich der afrikanischen Länder zeigt sich: Je weiter die Industrialisierung eines Landes fortgeschritten ist und je gebildeter die Menschen sind, desto mehr lokale Arbeiter sind in chinesischen Unternehmen beschäftigt. Geringe Lokalisierungsraten können in einem Mangel qualifizierter Arbeitskräfte oder im Wunsch nach einer schnellen Fertigstellung der Projekte begründet liegen (vgl. Sautman & Yan, 2015).

Die Auswahl der Daten für die Analyse erfolgte mittels Recherche im Youtube-Kanal von CCTV Africa.²¹ Stichworte der Recherche auf Youtube waren (in unterschiedlichen Kombinationen): cctv africa, china, africa, agriculture, companies, partnership, relations, localizing. Grundsätzlich wurden nur Videobeiträge für die Datenauswahl berücksichtigt, die aus dem Youtube-Kanal von CCTV Africa stammen. Die gesammelten Daten bewegen sich in einem Zeitraum zwischen Mai 2013 und Oktober 2016. Eine Liste mit 113 recherchierten Videobeiträgen zu sino-afrikanischen Beziehungen, von denen 31 aufgrund ihrer Thematik für die Frame-Analyse berücksichtigt wurden, befindet sich in der Anlage.²² Die Beiträge sind alphabetisch nach dem Titel des Videos auf Youtube geordnet. Videoverweise beziehen sich im Folgenden auf diese Liste.

Chinas mediales Engagement in Afrika

Spätestens 2006 begann, was von chinesischen Wissenschaftlern als „chinesische Mediendiplomatie“ (*meiti wajjiao* 媒体外交) bezeichnet wird (z. B. Zhang J., 2013). Im Januar 2006 veröffentlichte die chinesische Regierung ihr erstes Weißbuch zu Zielen und Maßnahmen der chinesischen Afrika-Politik (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2006). Das Dokument nennt Bereiche der zukünftigen Zusammenarbeit zwischen China und Afrika. Darin wird auch die mediale Zusammenarbeit in einem eigenen Abschnitt explizit erwähnt (Hervorhebung von mir):

„Media cooperation: China **wishes to encourage** multi-tiered and multi-formed exchange and cooperation between the media on both sides, so as to enhance mutual understanding and enable objective and balanced media coverage of each other.” (Part IV, 3., (5))

Im zweiten Weißbuch zur chinesischen Afrika-Politik von 2015 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2015) wird die Vertiefung der medialen Zusammenarbeit zwischen China und Afrika weiter ausdifferenziert:

„Broadening cooperation on press, radio, film and television: China **will push** forward diverse forms of exchanges and cooperation between Chinese and African media outlets [...] Support will be provided for the sound development of the China-Africa Press Center, with the aim to increase objective and balanced media coverage on the development of China and Africa and on China-Africa relations so as to promote mutual understanding and recognition between Chinese and African people.” (Part III, 5., (3) Hervorhebung durch den Verfasser)

Der Wechsel von „wishes to encourage“ zu „will push“ macht deutlich, dass China 2015 eine produktivere Position einnimmt und geht mit einem generellen Wechsel von einer reaktiven hin zu einer proaktiven chinesischen Externen-Propaganda-Politik einher (vgl. Ohlberg, 2014: S. 352).

²¹ Die Recherche von Videobeiträgen über Youtube hat sich als praktikabel erwiesen, da hierdurch auch Ausschnitte aus dem Programm von CCTV Africa über die Stichwortsuche zugänglich waren.

²² Für die Analyse der Darstellung des chinesischen Engagements in der afrikanischen Landwirtschaft wurden die folgenden zehn Videobeiträge berücksichtigt: 11, 63, 66, 67, 74, 75, 76, 89, 98 und 112. Für die Analyse der Darstellung der Lokalisierung von chinesischen Unternehmen und Projekten in Afrika wurden die folgenden einundzwanzig Videobeiträge berücksichtigt: 21, 25, 27, 28, 33, 39, 43, 46, 47, 50, 53, 54, 56, 61, 62, 72, 79, 82, 85, 101 und 102. Natürlich kann eine solche Liste keinen Anspruch auf Vollständigkeit erheben, sondern nur einen Ausschnitt darstellen. Video Nr. 52 stammt nicht aus dem Youtube-Kanal von CCTV Africa. Der Fehler ist dem Autor erst zu spät aufgefallen und wurde aus pragmatischen Gründen – die fortlaufende Nummerierung der Videobeiträge war bereits erfolgt – nicht korrigiert.

Die mediale Zusammenarbeit soll aus chinesischer Sicht dazu dienen, objektiv und ausgewogen über China-in-Afrika zu berichten und gegenseitiges Verständnis zwischen China und Afrika zu fördern. Parallel dazu soll negativen Assoziationen von China-in-Afrika entgegengewirkt werden, nicht nur medial, wie die folgenden Passagen im aktuellen Weißbuch von 2015 zeigen:

„Chinese [...] employees [...] will be encouraged to get along well with local people [...] The Chinese Government encourages Chinese enterprises and citizens in Africa to care more about the well-being of local people and repay local society [...] China will never repeat the past colonial way in its cooperation with Africa and never pursue development at the cost of Africa's natural and ecological environment or long-term interests.” (Part II)

„[...] localize their [chinesische Unternehmen] operations in Africa, contribute to the increase of local employment [...]” (Part III, 3., (1))

„China will strengthen quality control of the goods exported to Africa [...]” (Part III, 3., (5))

Konkrete Maßnahmen und Leitlinien der medialen Zusammenarbeit zwischen China und Afrika wurden auch in den Aktionsplänen des FOCAC (Forum on China-Africa Cooperation), dem Beijing Action Plan 2007-2009²³, dem Sharm El Sheikh Action Plan 2010-2012²⁴, dem Beijing Action Plan 2013-2015²⁵ und dem Johannesburg Action Plan 2016-2018²⁶, festgelegt.

Damit die chinesische Stimme und Sichtweise in Afrika und weltweit Gehör findet, wurde die Präsenz der chinesischen Staatsmedien Xinhua, CRI, China Daily und CCTV in Afrika ausgebaut.²⁷ Nairobi wurde das afrikanische Zentrum der chinesischen Staatsmedien. Als Kommunikationskanäle sollen sie im Rahmen einer Externen-Propaganda-Politik dazu beitragen, ein wohlwollendes Umfeld und eine soziale Basis der sino-afrikanischen Beziehungen zu schaffen, welche den politischen Interessen Chinas förderlich sind.

Folgende Aktivitäten ergänzen die mediale Zusammenarbeit zwischen China und Afrika: (1) Austauschprogramme, Fortbildungsangebote, Schulungen und Stipendien für afrikanische Journalisten, Redakteure und Medienvertreter, (2) die Vermittlung technischer Fähigkeiten, technische Unterstützung und die Bereitstellung von Telekommunikationsinfrastruktur, (3) Joint Ventures und Koproduktionen mit lokalen Medien und afrikanischen Partnern, (4) Investitionen in die afrikanische Medienlandschaft (vgl. Grassi, 2014; Zhang, 2014; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2015).

Private chinesische Unternehmen wie Huawei, StarTimes²⁸ oder ZTE, die von staatlichen Investitionsanreizen profitieren, ergänzen staatliches Handeln und sind mit ihren Technologien, Dienstleistungen und Investments am Ausbau der afrikanischen Telekommunikationsinfrastruktur beteiligt. Sie tragen dazu bei, dass sich die Zuschauer- und Nutzerzahlen auf dem afrikanischen

²³ <http://www.focac.org/eng/ltada/dscbjhy/DOC32009/t280369.htm> (Stand 10.09.2017).

²⁴ <http://www.focac.org/eng/ltada/dsibzjhy/hywj/t626387.htm> (Stand 10.09.2017).

²⁵ <http://www.focac.org/eng/ltada/dwjbzjhy/hywj/t954620.htm> (Stand 10.09.2017).

²⁶ <http://www.focac.org/eng/ltada/dwjbzjhy/1/hywj/t1327961.htm> (Stand 10.09.2017).

²⁷ China Daily beispielsweise publiziert seit 2012 eine wöchentlich erscheinende, englischsprachige Afrika-Ausgabe mit einer Auflage von 20.000 Exemplaren (Wu, 2014: S. 9).

²⁸ Am 14. Juli 2014 kündigte StarTimes an, in Nairobi eine Afrika-Zentrale für die Produktion und Ausstrahlung von TV- und Film-Formaten aufzubauen (Ronning, 2016: S. 67f.). Vgl. zu aktuelleren Entwicklungen auch Video Nr. 92 (siehe Anlage).

Kontinent stetig erhöhen. Beispielhaft seien Xinhua, Huawei und der kenianische Mobilfunkanbieter Safaricom erwähnt, die in Kooperation eine Zeitung für Smartphones entwickelten (vgl. Gagliardone et al., 2012: S. 178).

Wegen staatlicher Regulierung und Zensur – die sogenannten „Big Four“ müssen sich an redaktionelle Vorgaben des „Central Propaganda Department“ (CPD) halten – haben chinesische Medien international ein schlechtes Image.²⁹ Die gewünschten positiven Effekte von Chinas medialem Engagement in Afrika hängen allerdings von der Akzeptanz der Zuschauer, Leser und Hörer ab. Fehlt die Glaubwürdigkeit oder die Attraktivität, sind Medien als Soft-Power- bzw. als Externes-Propaganda-Instrument ungeeignet. Chinesische Beobachter sind sich dessen bewusst und empfehlen daher, einen liberalen, marktwirtschaftlich orientierten Kurs zu verfolgen (z. B. Zhang J., 2013). Es gibt Anzeichen dafür, dass chinesische Medien außerhalb Chinas freier arbeiten können, weniger staatlicher Kontrolle unterliegen und die Möglichkeit haben, sich den Marktbedingungen anzupassen, um konkurrenzfähig und glaubwürdig zu werden.³⁰ CCTV Africa nutzt beispielsweise, wie andere chinesische Medien auch, Social-Media-Kanäle wie Facebook oder Twitter, die in China verboten sind (vgl. Ohlberg, 2014: S. 435).

CCTV Africa wurde im Januar 2012 in der kenianischen Hauptstadt Nairobi eröffnet und gilt seither als Flaggschiff der chinesischen Medien in Afrika.³¹ Auch der damalige kenianische Vize-Präsident Kalonzo Musyoka nahm an der Eröffnungsfeier teil (Zhang J., 2013: S. 87). Mittlerweile produziert CCTV Africa täglich zweieinhalb Stunden Videomaterial, das über die englischsprachigen Nachrichtenkanäle von CGTN ausgestrahlt wird. CCTV Africa beschreibt seine Ziele und Absichten 2012 wie folgt:

„CCTV Africa seeks to provide a platform for its Chinese audience to better understand Africa and promote the China-Africa friendship so that the real China can be introduced to Africa, and the real Africa can be presented to the world.“³²

Die Ziele von CCTV Africa sind also dreierlei: (1) die sino-afrikanische Freundschaft fördern, (2) das wahre China vorstellen und (3) der Welt das wahre Afrika präsentieren.³³ CCTV Africa inszeniert sich als Verbündeter Afrikas, indem an afrikanische Kritik am negativen Afrika-Bild in westlichen Medien angeknüpft wird. Gagliardone et al. (2012) zitieren den ehemaligen Präsidenten Ghanas John Kufuor mit den Worten:

„We need to highlight more of the positives instead of always harping on the negatives [...] We must by all means talk about the wrong things that happen on the continent. Where there

²⁹ 2016 liegt China im World Press Freedom Index unter 180 Staaten auf Platz 176.

³⁰ „The current overall approach [...] is to give external propaganda media as much leeway as possible to enable them to raise their own credibility [...] but to remain [...] in the background and step in whenever the principles of the Party or the national interest are challenged [...]“ (Ohlberg, 2014: S. 549).

³¹ Die Eröffnung von CCTV Africa ist Teil einer umfassenderen Strategie der „Medien-Lokalisierung“ (*meiti bentubua* 媒体本土化): „[...] media have established regional headquarters and branches which directly produce and distribute content abroad.“ (Ohlberg, 2014: S. 437).

³² Zhang (2012): About CCTV Africa. URL: <http://english.cntv.cn/program/aficalive/20120111/117620.shtml> (Stand: 10.09.2017).

³³ Das chinesische Motto von CCTV Africa lautet: „Afrika das wahre China vorstellen, der Welt das wahre Afrika präsentieren.“ (*ba zhenshi de zhongguo jieshao gei feizhou, jiang zhenshi de feizhou chengxian gei shijie* 把真实的中国介绍给非洲, 将真实的非洲呈现给世界) (Zhang J., 2013: S. 87).

is corruption or bad governance we need to expose them; but it is important that we highlight success stories with equal, if not much greater emphasis.” (S. 184)

Die Bestrebungen chinesischer Externer-Propaganda-Politik nach einem positiveren China-Bild werden also mit vorhandenen afrikanischen Bestrebungen nach einem positiveren Afrika-Bild verbunden. Hierin spiegelt sich die chinesische Vorstellung wider, dass sich Medien inhaltlich und rhetorisch an die Geschmäcker ihrer Zielgruppe anpassen sollen (vgl. Ohlberg, 2014: S. 546).

CCTV Africa lässt in seinem Programm afrikanische Stimmen zu Wort kommen und beschäftigt selbst über 100 Menschen mit unterschiedlichem kulturellen Hintergrund. Ein Großteil der Angestellten, einschließlich Nachrichtensprechern, Reportern, Produzenten, Redakteuren, Korrespondenten und Technikern, ist afrikanischer Herkunft, was zur Lokalisierung von CCTV Africa und zur Attraktivität für das afrikanische Publikum beitragen soll. Zu den Gesichtern von CCTV Africa gehören unter anderem Beatrice Marshall, Peninah Karibe, Ramah Nyang, Lindy Mtongana, Uche Okoronkwo und Mahia Mutua.

CCTV Africa unterhält eine eigene Website³⁴ und nutzt Youtube (über 87.000 Abonnenten)³⁵, Facebook (über 2,1 Millionen Likes)³⁶ und Twitter als Kommunikationskanäle. CCTV Africa produziert fünf Programm-Formate: Africa Live, Talk Africa, Faces of Africa, Global Business und Match Point. Africa Live ist ein einstündiges Nachrichtenprogramm, das täglich ausgestrahlt wird. Talk Africa ist ein halbstündiges Talk-Format, das einmal wöchentlich aktuelle Entwicklungen mit Gästen (z. B. Politikern oder Wissenschaftlern) in Interviews diskutiert. Faces of Africa ist ein halbstündiges Dokumentarfilm-Format, das inspirierende Menschen aus Afrika und deren Geschichte vorstellt. Global Business berichtet regelmäßig über wirtschaftliche Entwicklungen in Afrika. Match Point berichtet über sportliche Ereignisse in Afrika und weltweit. Die Inhalte von CCTV Africa deckten von Anfang an Entwicklungen auf dem ganzen Kontinent ab. 2014 war das Programm bereits in 25 afrikanischen Ländern zu empfangen (Grassi, 2014: S. 2).

Die Frame-Analyse

Dieser Abschnitt widmet sich der Frame-Analyse. Jeder Frame wird in einem eigenen Abschnitt betrachtet. In Abschnitt 6.6 werden die Ergebnisse der Abschnitte 6.1 bis 6.5 diskutiert und weitere Auffälligkeiten bei der Videoanalyse genannt (Wer spricht? Wie sind die Rollen verteilt?). Die Titel der angeführten Videos, ihre Länge und ihr Veröffentlichungsdatum lassen sich der Liste in der Anlage entnehmen.

Der Partner-Frame

Video Nr. 11: Ein chinesisches Agricultural Technology Demonstration Center in Sambia habe das Leben der Kleinbauern drastisch verbessert (Erzählerstimme). Das Projekt demonstrierte die Partnerschaft zwischen Sambia und China (Erzählerstimme).

Video Nr. 98: Die Zim-China Wanjin Agricultural Company, ein Joint Venture zwischen der Anhui Provincial State Farms und der Regierung Simbabwe arbeite eng mit lokalen Institutionen wie z.

³⁴ <https://africa.cgtn.com/> (Stand: 10.09.2017).

³⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/user/CCTVAFRICALIVE> (Stand: 10.09.2017). Am 29.10.2016 waren es über 50.000 Abonnenten.

³⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/cgtnafrica> (Stand: 10.09.2017). Am 29.10.2016 waren es knapp 1,3 Millionen Likes.

B. Universitäten zusammen. Die Zusammenarbeit Sorge für hohe Produktivitätsraten, mehr Selbstversorgung und trage zur Nahrungsmittelsicherheit in Simbabwe bei (chinesischer Manager im Interview).

Die Frage der Moderatorin Beatrice Marshall „What is driving China’s interest in African agriculture?“ wird von Sudarkasa (CEO, African Business Group, Johannesburg) im Studiointerview mit „trade“ und „business opportunity“ beantwortet. China wird als wirtschaftlicher Partner von Afrika geframt.

Das von der Moderatorin eingeführte Vorurteil, China ginge es in der afrikanischen Landwirtschaft nur um die eigene Nahrungsmittelsicherheit, wird von Dr. Xu (Department of Development Studies, China Agricultural University, Beijing) verneint. Stattdessen betont Dr. Xu den Nutzen für alle: „In China the logic is that to help Africa to produce more food by themselves, then this will increase the food supply globally [...]“ Mit diesem Statement werden Frames, die den Fokus auf Konkurrent oder Ausbeuter (z. B. Landräuber) legen, entkräftet.

Während im Vorbild-Frame die asymmetrische Beziehung zwischen dem technologisch fortschrittlichen China und afrikanischen Ländern hervortritt, finden sich in dem Video auch Aussagen, die ein Partner-Framing begünstigen: „[...] the Chinese technology and our local technology, they match the two and then we are better off in terms of food production.“ (Vertreter des Landwirtschaftsministeriums von Simbabwe).

Die Notwendigkeit einer zukünftigen Partnerschaft mit China wird betont: „As with other countries on the continent, Zimbabwe sees the prosperity of its agricultural future closely linked with China [...]“ (Erzählerstimme).

Video Nr. 101: Die Sendung stellt den Bau der China Road and Bridge Cooperation (CRBC) an der Eisenbahnstrecke zwischen Mombasa und Nairobi (Standard Gauge Railway) in Kenia vor. In Aussagen der Moderatorin Beatrice Marshall vor Ort („[...] Chinese technology is combining with Kenyan skills to create one of the best examples of technological transfers on the continent. [...] the transfer of skills and technology from Chinese minds to Kenyan hands [...]“) wird das partnerschaftliche Zusammenwirken unterschiedlicher Kompetenzen betont. Der Aspekt des Technologietransfers begünstigt hingegen ein Vorbild-Framing.

Video Nr. 102: Auf der 2009 von China in Äthiopien initiierten Eastern Industry Zone, einer Sonderwirtschaftszone nahe Addis Abeba, haben sich viele chinesische Unternehmen angesiedelt (z. B. Huajian und Lifan Motors). (*Investor*) China unterstützt als Partner das Ziel der äthiopischen Regierung, ein produzierendes Gewerbe aufzubauen (chinesischer Manager vor Ort im Interview mit Beatrice Marshall).

Der Investor-Frame

Video Nr. 98: Auf die Frage der Moderatorin „What is China’s approach towards Africa’s agriculture?“ antwortet Dr. Xu aus Beijing: „[...] aid, investment and also trade“. (*Freund, Partner*) Chinesische Investitionen in afrikanische Landwirtschaftsprojekte gingen von Staatsunternehmen, von privaten Unternehmen oder von Einzelpersonen aus. Außerdem, so Sudarkasa, Experte im Studiointerview, helfen chinesische Akteure afrikanischen Ländern dabei, die steigende Nachfrage nach landwirtschaftlichen Produkten zu decken, indem sie in Infrastruktur und Warenlager investieren, um die Produkte auf dem Markt anbieten zu können.

Video Nr. 101: Prof. Chege (Universität Nairobi) erklärt im Studiointerview mit Moderatorin Beatrice Marshall, dass China ein guter Partner sei (*Partner*), der die vorhandene kenianische Arbeitskraft durch Investitionen ergänze. Prof. Tang (Qinghua Universität, Beijing), ebenfalls

Experte im Studiointerview, erläutert die chinesische Strategie seit 2012, dass Investitionen mit Technologietransfer Hand in Hand gehen. Afrikanische Länder können von Chinas eigenen Entwicklungserfahrungen profitieren (*Vorbild*).

Video Nr. 102: Die Investitionen des chinesischen Schuhfabrikanten Huajian in Äthiopien werden als Erfolgsgeschichte beschrieben: „The IMF has cited the factory as the biggest example of Chinese investment and job creation in Ethiopia.” (Erzählerstimme). Huajian möchte in den nächsten 10 Jahren 2 Milliarden in die Schuhproduktion in Äthiopien investieren, das aufgrund seiner Viehbestände und der lokalen Lederproduktion bestens dafür geeignet ist (Erzählerstimme).³⁷

Der Vorbild-Frame

Video Nr. 11: Eine sambische Pilzzüchterin sagt, dass sie Unterstützung von einem chinesischen Professor erhielt, was ihr geholfen habe, Geld zu verdienen. 800 Farmer wurden bereits in Trainingsprogrammen in der Nutzung von landwirtschaftlicher Technologie geschult (Erzählerstimme). Chinesische Akteure treten als Experten auf, von denen sambische Bauern lernen können.

Video Nr. 66: Die chinesische Regierung hat Nigeria Saatgut für Reis gespendet (*Freund*), das besser als lokales Saatgut ist. Durch eine höhere lokale Reisproduktion könne Nigeria seine Reimporte verringern.³⁸ (*Freund*) Chinesen bieten lokalen Bauern Schulungen im Umgang mit Maschinen zur Reisernte an (Erzählerstimme).

Video Nr. 98: Ein chinesisch-simbabwisches Joint Venture (*Partner*), welches moderne Technologien und Ausrüstung aus China nutzt, wird von chinesischen Agrarwissenschaftlern vor Ort unterstützt. Das Projekt werde von der Regierung Simbabwe und von Einwohnern gelobt und könne zum Vorbild für lokale Farmen werden (chinesischer Manager im Interview). Die Menschen profitieren von chinesischem Know-how, z. B. Bewässerungssystemen (afrikanischer Verwalter des Joint Ventures im Interview).

Über das Agricultural Demonstration Center in Simbabwe wird gesagt: „More than 2,000 agricultural students, lecturers and small scale farmers have been trained here, particularly in mechanization [...]” (Erzählerstimme). Afrikaner können vom Vorbild China lernen.

Dr. Njoroge (Senior Researcher, China-Africa Joint Research Center, Nairobi) framt China im Studiointerview mit Beatrice Marshall als Vorbild (und als Partner), wenn er sagt:

„I have been to China, I have seen how they do the farming [...] We need those techniques [...] so that we can increase our production [...] I think there are many benefits, that our collaboration with the Chinese is bringing along [...]”

Aussagen wie „[...] help it [Africa] regain some of its former farming glory [...]” (Moderator vor Ort) relativieren hingegen den Vorbild-Frame und dessen asymmetrische Beziehung zugunsten eines Partner- oder Freunde-Frames, weil hier nicht China, sondern die eigene Vergangenheit als erstrebenswertes Ziel genannt wird, bei dessen Erreichung China unterstützt.

Video: Nr. 101: „What China has done in the last 30 years is absolutely phenomenal.” (Prof. Chege) In dem Video ist auch von guten chinesischen Standards die Rede, welche internationale

³⁷ Weitere Videobeiträge, die über Huajian berichten sind Nr. 21, Nr. 28, Nr. 46 und Nr. 50. Diese Häufung von Beiträgen zu Huajian weist meiner Meinung nach darauf hin, dass es sich hier für die chinesische Seite um ein Vorzeigeprojekt handelt.

³⁸ Nigeria ist laut Videobeitrag zweitgrößter Importeur von Reis weltweit.

Qualitätsanforderungen erfüllen (Erzählerstimme, chinesischer Mitarbeiter vor Ort). Außerdem wird die schnellere Arbeitsgeschwindigkeit der Chinesen positiv erwähnt (kenianischer Mitarbeiter im Interview mit Beatrice Marshall vor Ort in einem Technology Transfer Training Lab).

Video Nr. 102: Äthiopien profitiere von chinesischen Erfahrungen mit Sonderwirtschaftszonen, um Investoren im produzierenden Gewerbe anzulocken (chinesischer Manager im Interview mit Beatrice Marshall vor Ort auf der Eastern Industry Zone).

Der Arbeitgeber-Frame

Video Nr. 27: 25 Kenianer studieren, gefördert durch ihren chinesischen Arbeitgeber CRBC, Eisenbahningenieurwesen an der Beijing Jiaotong Universität. Der Vize-Präsident der CRBC nennt in Beijing den Grund für die Förderung von Kenianern: „[...] integration and localization have become very important.“ China wird von einer kenianischen Studentin in Beijing als Vorbild für Kenia beschrieben. (*Vorbild*)

Video Nr. 33: Die chinesische HNA Group (Hainan Airlines) ist durch Investitionen an der ghanaischen Fluggesellschaft Africa World Airlines (AWA) beteiligt und trägt zu AWAs Erfolg bei. (*Investor*) Über 98 Prozent der 216 Mitarbeiter sind Ghanaer (Erzählerstimme). AWA hat die strikten Sicherheits- und Servicevorschriften der HNA Group übernommen. (*Vorbild*)

Video Nr. 39: Hisense produziert mit 600 lokalen Mitarbeitern Fernsehgeräte und Kühlschränke in Südafrika (Erzählerstimme). Der chinesische Manager beschreibt die Lokalisierungsstrategie des chinesischen Unternehmens: „We need to put down deep roots in South Africa if we want long-term development. Our factories provide jobs. We’re also committed to the local community.“

Video Nr. 63: Der chinesische Farmbesitzer Shi Ruitai baut in Südafrika erfolgreich Oliven und Rooibos-Tee an und schafft Arbeitsplätze. Oliven müssen nicht mehr aus Europa importiert werden, was die lokale Wirtschaft und Selbstversorgung stärkt. (*Investor*)

Video Nr. 72: CCTV Africas mehr als 90 Mitarbeiter stammen überwiegend aus afrikanischen Ländern und arbeiten gut mit ihren chinesischen Kollegen zusammen.³⁹

Video Nr. 74: Das chinesische Landwirtschaftsunternehmen Johnken Estates Limited schafft Arbeitsplätze in Sambia, schickt lokale Mitarbeiter zur technischen Ausbildung nach China (*Vorbild*) und hat für einen besonders hart arbeitenden Mitarbeiter sogar ein Haus gebaut. Der chinesische Manager sagt:

„[...] the company will always keep its commitment to local farmers and community. [...] localized operation [...] is the key to our survival [...] we employ over 270 local farmers. [...] Johnken Estates has created over 3,300 jobs in Sambia [...]“

Video Nr. 98: Ein chinesisch-simbabwisches Joint Venture führt jährlich Trainings für seine lokalen Mitarbeiter durch (*Vorbild*) und schafft Einkommen und Arbeitsplätze für die Einwohner.

Video Nr. 101: „[...] [CRBC] has become Kenya’s biggest employer outside of government [...]“ (Moderatorin Beatrice Marshall vor Ort). Mehrmals wird von verschiedenen Stimmen darauf hingewiesen, wie viele Arbeitsplätze die CRBC mit ihrem Projekt geschaffen habe. Es ist von 25.000 Kenianern und 2.000 Chinesen auf der Baustelle der Mombasa-Nairobi-Eisenbahnstrecke die Rede. Auf die Frage der Moderatorin Beatrix Marshall vor Ort „Why is this a good example of technology transfer?“ (*Vorbild*) antwortet der chinesische Deputy Project Manager:

³⁹ Weitere Videos, in denen CCTV Africa sozusagen selbstreflexiv über sich berichtet, sind Nr. 13 und Nr. 31.

„We have put a lot of emphasis on the training of the local Kenyan talent, so that once the project has been completed, they can handle similar tasks [...] on their own. [...] We use real life demonstrations on site to show our employees how the process is carried out. [...] After training for one year on the site our Kenyan employees are then able to take on all the many and various roles in the construction of the project.”

Das Verhältnis zwischen chinesischen und lokalen Arbeitern sei gut, auch die Kommunikation zwischen Chinesen und Kenianern funktioniere (Deputy Project Manager im Interview).

Das von der Moderatorin Beatrice Marshall im Studiointerview eingeführte Vorurteil, China importiere chinesische Arbeitskraft anstatt lokale Arbeiter einzustellen, wird von den Experten in der Sendung zurückgewiesen: „If somebody is making those allegations, let's challenge them to provide the prove.” (Prof. Chege). Gesetzliche Regelungen auf dem Arbeitsmarkt der einzelnen afrikanischen Länder und Visabestimmungen würden einen Import von chinesischen Arbeitskräften in großem Umfang ohnehin unmöglich machen. Außerdem wäre eine Anstellung chinesischer Arbeitskräfte ökonomisch nicht sinnvoll, da chinesische Arbeitskräfte teurer seien als lokale Arbeitskräfte (Prof. Tang).

Video Nr. 102: Chinesische Unternehmen in Äthiopien schaffen Arbeitsplätze und unterstützen die lokale Wertschöpfung (Moderator vor Ort), die das Leben der Mitarbeiter positiv beeinflussen (afrikanischer Mitarbeiter vor Ort im Interview mit Beatrice Marshall). Der Schuhfabrikant Huajian hat sich an die lokalen Bedingungen angepasst, beschäftigt über 4.000 Äthiopier (Erzählerstimme), die er mit drei Mahlzeiten am Tag verpflegt, bildet Arbeitskräfte aus und produziert Schuhe für bekannte Marken. Besonders engagierten Mitarbeitern werden Chinesisch-Sprachkurse in China ermöglicht (afrikanischer Mitarbeiter vor Ort, chinesischer Trainer vor Ort).

Weitere Videos, in denen der Arbeitgeber-Frame (Schaffung von Arbeitsplätzen, soziale Verantwortung, etc.) bedient wird, sind folgende: Nr. 25, Nr. 43, Nr. 47 (Tian Tang Group, Uganda), Nr. 53, Nr. 54, Nr. 56 (Humanwell Group, Mali), Nr. 62 (Tian Tang Group, Uganda), Nr. 79, Nr. 82 und Nr. 85.

Der Freunde-Frame

Video Nr. 11: Der Landwirtschaftsminister von Sambia Gevin Lubinda sagt: „[...] China is not taking anything through this center back to China, instead they are bringing skills [...] I expect that this center will play a very significant role in agricultural development of Sambia.” China wird in dieser Aussage als helfender Freund geframt, der keine eigenen Interessen verfolgt.

Video Nr. 72: Bei seinem Besuch der CCTV Africa Zentrale in Nairobi im Mai 2014 framt Chinas Ministerpräsident Li Keqiang China und Afrika als Freunde mit ähnlichen Herausforderungen („developing countries“) und Partner („cooperation“), die dieselben Interessen verfolgen:

„Today, I took this special visit to CCTV Africa, because [...] it's a station that covers African brothers and sisters [...]. I am happy to see [...] the cooperation between the Chinese and the African colleagues. [...] CCTV needs to report objectively about the continent and about China-Africa relations [...]. As developing countries we should speak with one voice to defend our rights and interests. Our cooperation shows that we are communicating positively to the outside world. [...]”

Video Nr. 98: Chinas Erfahrungen und Knowhow (*Vorbild*) können afrikanischen Ländern dabei helfen, sich von einer Subsistenz-Landwirtschaft zu einer für den Markt produzierenden

Landwirtschaft zu entwickeln und zukünftigen Herausforderungen wie dem Klimawandel besser zu begegnen: „China is assisting local farmers by equipping them with the skills, equipment and know-how to be able to reap the rewards of the agricultural potential.” (Moderator vor Ort). Das Wort „assisting“ spricht für den Freunde-Frame.

Video Nr. 101: Durch die Zusammenarbeit von Chinesen und Kenianern entstehen interkulturelle Freundschaften: „[...] our Chinese staff have learned basic Swahili to [...] communicate with their Kenyan colleagues [...] our Kenyan staff have learned basic Chinese [...] during holidays and celebrations they all send greeting messages to each other [...]”. (chinesischer Deputy Project Manager im Interview mit Beatrice Marshall vor Ort).

Diskussion der Ergebnisse und weitere Auffälligkeiten

Sämtliche Erzählerstimmen, Moderatoren und Reporter in den analysierten Ausschnitten sind Afrikaner (es gibt wenige Ausnahmen, z. B. Nr. 27 und Nr. 33). Chinesische Stimmen treten hingegen als Gesprächs- bzw. Interviewpartner auf, z. B. als Manager vor Ort oder als Experten im Studio in Nairobi. Zahlreiche Videoausschnitte werden von der Erzählerstimme eines nicht sichtbaren Moderators bzw. Reporters begleitet (z. B. in Nr. 11, Nr. 33, etc.). Aussagen der Erzählerstimme werden gelegentlich durch Aussagen von Afrikanern vor Ort exemplifiziert und bestätigt, ohne dass ein Gespräch oder Interview geführt wird (z. B. Nr. 39, Nr. 101, etc.). In einigen Ausschnitten von Talk Africa ist der Moderator bzw. Reporter auch direkt vor Ort, um zu berichten und beispielsweise chinesische Manager oder afrikanische Mitarbeiter zu interviewen (z. B. Nr. 98, Nr. 101). Sobald eine Person länger spricht, werden Bilder gezeigt, die das Thema des Beitrags (z. B. Landwirtschaft in Sambia) illustrieren sollen, wodurch viele Eindrücke gegeben werden, die mit dem Gesagten allerdings häufig nicht mehr in Bezug stehen. In vielen Videos kommen zudem offizielle Stimmen (z. B. Minister) sowohl von afrikanischer als auch von chinesischer Seite zu Wort, z. B. Nr. 11 (Landwirtschaftsminister von Sambia), Nr. 27, Nr. 33, Nr. 66, Nr. 72, Nr. 101 (Chinesischer Botschafter in Kenia).⁴⁰ Insbesondere in den Videos von Talk Africa (z. B. Nr. 98, Nr. 101 und Nr. 102) diskutiert die Moderatorin Beatrice Marshall im zweiten Teil der Sendung mit Experten und Wissenschaftlern im Studio in Nairobi, wobei immer einer der Experten Chinese ist und aus Beijing zugeschaltet wird. In diesen Diskussionen wurden Gegenpositionen „kontrolliert“ über die Moderatorin Beatrice Marshall eingeführt und anschließend von den Experten entkräftet (z. B. von Dr. Xu in Nr. 98 oder von Prof. Chege und Prof. Tang in Nr. 101). In diesen Momenten zeigt sich der reaktive Charakter der chinesischen Externen-Propaganda-Politik (vgl. Abschnitt 3). Interessant wäre hier die Frage, ob nicht-chinesische oder nicht-offizielle Stimmen im Programm von CCTV Africa eine höhere Glaubwürdigkeit beim afrikanischen Publikum haben, als chinesische bzw. offizielle Stimmen.

Aus den Daten (Veröffentlichungsdatum) wird ersichtlich, dass CCTV Africa besonders im Vorfeld des FOCAC Summit im Dezember 2015 in Johannesburg verstärkt über die sino-afrikanischen Beziehungen berichtet hat. Die Vermutung liegt nahe, dass hier Vorgaben aus Beijing im Hintergrund stehen (vgl. „[...] external propaganda departments make annual plans what to focus on at particular points in time of the year.” Ohlberg, 2014: S. 535). In diesem Zusammenhang wäre die Frage spannend, welchen prozentualen Anteil die China-in-Afrika-Berichterstattung am Gesamtprogramm von CCTV Africa zu unterschiedlichen Zeitpunkten hat.

⁴⁰ Zu diesem Ergebnis kommt auch Marsh (2016).

Zur Frage, warum gerade diese Frames im Programm von CCTV Africa existieren und bedient werden und warum einige Frames besonders häufig auftauchen (z. B. der Arbeitgeber-Frame), lassen sich nur Vermutungen anstellen. Unter anderem folgende Punkte können eine Rolle spielen: (1) Reaktion auf bestehende negative Wahrnehmungen von China-in-Afrika in „westlichen“ Medien und ausländischen Öffentlichkeiten, (2) Eignung der Frames, Ängste vor Chinas Aufstieg zu nehmen und Chinas Aufstieg als Chance für Afrika darzustellen, (3) Vorgaben des Central Propaganda Department (CPD) in Beijing, (4) die Überlegung, was das afrikanische Publikum hören möchte oder welche Darstellung von China dem Geschmack des afrikanischen Publikums entspricht.

Um die Frage zu klären, inwieweit Chinas Selbstdarstellung zu einem positiven Bild von China bzw. zu einem positiven Bild der sino-afrikanischen Beziehungen in afrikanischen Öffentlichkeiten beitragen kann (Frage der Wirkungsforschung), müsste die Rezeption chinesischer Medien in Afrika weiter erforscht werden. Dadurch ließe sich auch beurteilen, inwieweit die chinesische Externe-Propaganda-Politik in Afrika erfolgreich ist. Kann die Berichterstattung von CCTV Africa beispielsweise die öffentliche Meinung über China beeinflussen? Hat CCTV Africas Berichterstattung eine frame-setzende Wirkung? Die Rezeptionsforschung müsste untersuchen, wie afrikanische Öffentlichkeiten (z. B. in Kenia) die Glaubwürdigkeit von CCTV Africa einschätzen, um herauszufinden, ob CCTV Africa als Instrument einer Externen-Propaganda-Politik geeignet ist.

Fazit und Ausblick

Die Frame-Analyse hat gezeigt, dass sich (1) Partner, (2) Investor, (3) positives Vorbild, (4) guter Arbeitgeber und (5) Freund als Frames zur Beschreibung der Darstellung von China und der sino-afrikanischen Beziehungen im Programm von CCTV Africa gut eignen. Zusammenfassend lassen sich folgende Frame-Merkmale erkennen, wobei die Betonung oder Nicht-Betonung der asymmetrischen Beziehung zwischen China und Afrika (i. d. R. ökonomischer und technologischer Art) und der Nutzen für die beteiligten Seiten gute Unterscheidungskriterien darstellen:

- (1) Partner: China und Afrika als wirtschaftliche Partner im Industrialisierungsprozess Afrikas, Kooperation chinesischer und afrikanischer Partner auf Augenhöhe, win-win-Beziehung, keine Betonung der asymmetrischen Beziehung zwischen China und Afrika.
- (2) Investor: Chinesische Akteure als verantwortungsvolle, langfristige denkende Investoren in Afrika bieten wirtschaftliche Entwicklungschancen, Schaffung von Arbeitsplätzen als positiver Effekt, asymmetrische Beziehung (China als Geldquelle).
- (3) Vorbild: Betonung der asymmetrischen Beziehung zwischen China und Afrika, Afrika kann von chinesischen Erfahrungen lernen, China als Vorbild in den Bereichen Technologie, Know-how, Arbeitsgeschwindigkeit/Arbeitsmoral und Produktivität, die chinesische Entwicklung wird als erstrebenswert dargestellt.
- (4) Arbeitgeber: Lokalisierungsgrad (kulturelle Anpassung, Herkunft der Mitarbeiter, etc.) und Schaffung von Arbeitsplätzen als Merkmale eines guten Arbeitgebers, langfristiges Denken, funktionierende Kommunikation zwischen chinesischem Management und lokalen Mitarbeitern, gute Ausbildung lokaler Mitarbeiter in chinesischen Betrieben.
- (5) Freund: Betonung von gemeinsamen Herausforderungen oder Traditionen (Entwicklung, internationales Image), Hilfe ohne unmittelbaren eigenen Nutzen, interkulturelle Freundschaften auf individueller Ebene entstehen (z.B. zwischen chinesischen und afrikanischen Mitarbeitern).

Die frame-setzende Wirkung dieser Berichterstattung, das heißt, wie erfolgreich CCTV Africa das China-Bild seiner Zuschauer tatsächlich beeinflusst und verbessert, ist unter anderem abhängig vom Vertrauen der Zuschauer in CCTV Africa und sollte in weiteren Studien, die sich mit der Rezeption von CCTV Africa in unterschiedlichen afrikanischen Ländern beschäftigen, erforscht werden (vgl. Gorfinkel et al., 2014).

CCTV Africa sieht sich im internationalen Wettbewerb mit der Herausforderung konfrontiert, als glaubwürdige, unabhängige, verlässliche und professionelle Informationsquelle wahrgenommen zu werden (vgl. Ohlberg, 2014: S. 513). Die stellenweise anpreisende Darstellung der sino-afrikanischen Beziehungen (z. B. in Video Nr. 39) wirkt unter Umständen, je nachdem, was das Publikum gewohnt ist, befremdlich und könnte der Glaubwürdigkeit von CCTV Africa eher schaden.⁴¹

Ein Verständnis des chinesischen Externen-Propaganda-Diskurses über China-in-Afrika, wie ihn diese Arbeit am Beispiel von CCTV Africa herauszuarbeiten versucht hat, kann zukünftig auch zu einem tieferen Verständnis der komplexen sino-afrikanischen Beziehungen beitragen. Die chinesischen Medien in Afrika werden die weitere Entwicklung dieser Beziehungen entscheidend mitgestalten.

* Nachtrag: CCTV Africa wurde am 31. Dezember 2016 in CGTN Africa (China Global Television Network Africa) umbenannt. Die Umbenennung ging einher mit einer generellen Erneuerung von CCTVs internationaler Medienorganisation unter dem neuen Image von China Global Television Network (CGTN). Auf der Website von CGTN heißt es: „By launching CGTN, we want to re-brand our product to the world, to cope with the global trend in media convergence.” (CGTN, 2017). Der amerikanischen und afrikanischen Produktions- und Sendezentralen in Washington und Nairobi soll eine europäische Zentrale in London folgen. Das neue Image von CGTN kann als Versuch gedeutet werden, die eigene Glaubwürdigkeit und Attraktivität international zu erhöhen.

Anlage⁴²

Literaturverzeichnis

Brautigam, D. (2015) *Will Africa Feed China?*, New York: Oxford University Press.

China Global Television Network (2017) About us. URL: https://www.cgtn.com/home/info/about_us.do (Stand: 10.09.2017).

Gagliardone, I. (2013) China as a Persuader: CCTV Africa's First Steps in the African Mediasphere, *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies* 34 (3), S. 25-40. Später erschienen in: Wasserman, H. (Hg.) (2015) *Reporting China in Africa. Media Discourses on Shifting Geopolitics*. London/New York: Routledge, S. 25-40.

Gagliardone, I., Stremlau, N. & Nkrumah, D. (2012) Partner, Prototype or Persuader? China's Renewed Media Engagement with Ghana, *Communication, Politics and Culture* 45, S. 174-196.

⁴¹ Vgl. „[...] the norm of conforming to the Party line might have stifled CCTV Africa's capacity as a critical news medium [...]” (Jiang et al., 2016: S. 3).

⁴² Die Anlage enthält eine Liste aller kodierten Videos und deren Links. Diese Anlage kann auf Nachfrage über Mapping China bezogen werden.

- Gagliardone, I., Stremlau, N. & Repnikova, M. (2010) China in Africa: A New Approach to Media Development?, *Comparative Media Law and Policy (PCMLP)*, University of Oxford, Oxford.
- Gorfinkel, L., Joffe, S., van Staden, C. & Wu, Y. (2014) CCTV's Global Outreach: Examining the Audiences of China's 'New Voice' on Africa, *Media International Australia* 151 (1), Mai 2014, S. 81-88. URL: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1329878X1415100111> (Stand: 08.05.2017).
- Grassi, S. (2014) Changing the Narrative. Chinas mediale Offensive in Afrika, *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Internationale Politikanalyse*. URL: library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/10700.pdf (Stand: 29.10.2016).
- Hefe, P., Merkle, D. & Zhivkov, S. (2015) Mit Konfuzius nach Afrika. Wie Auswärtige Kulturpolitik Chinas Stimme und Sicht der Welt vermitteln soll, *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Auslandsinformationen* 5. URL: www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_41541-544-1-30.pdf (Stand: 29.10.2016).
- Jiang, F., Li, S., Ronning, H. & Tjønneland, E. (2016) The voice of China in Africa: media, communication technologies and image-building, *Chinese Journal of Communication* 9 (1), S. 1-7.
- Kurlantzick, J. (2007) *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power is Transforming the World*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Madrid-Morales, D. (2016) Why are Chinese media in Africa? Evidence from three decades of Xinhua's news coverage of Africa, in: Zhang, X., Wasserman, H. & Mano, W. (Hg.) *China's Media and Soft Power in Africa Promotion and Perceptions*, Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, S. 79-92.
- Marsh, V. (2016) Mixed messages, partial pictures? Discourses under construction in CCTV's Africa Live compared with the BBC, *Chinese Journal of Communication* 9 (1), S. 56-70.
- Mawdsley, E. (2008) Fu Manchu versus Dr. Livingstone in the Dark Continent: Representing China, Africa and the West in British broadsheet newspapers, *Political Geography* 27 (5), S. 509-529.
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (2006) China's African Policy, White Paper. URL: <http://www.focac.org/eng/zt/zgdfzccwj/t230479.htm> (Stand: 18.09.2016).
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China (2015) China's Africa Policy. White Paper, in: *Beijing Review* No. 51, December 17.
- Nye, J. (2004) *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York: Public Affairs.

- Nye, J. (2008) Public Diplomacy and Soft Power, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616 (1), S. 94-109. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25097996> (Stand: 08.05.2015).
- Ohlberg, M. (2014) *Creating a Favorable International Public Opinion Environment: External Propaganda (Duinvai Xuanchuan) as a Global Concept with Chinese Characteristics*, Heidelberg. URL: <http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/archiv/17289> (Stand: 10.09.2017).
- Olorunnisola, A. & Ma, L. (2013) Contemporary Sino-African relations: Interpenetration of history of relations with the West, ideology and comparative media frames, *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies* 34 (3), S. 41-61. Später erschienen in: Wasserman, H. (Hg.) (2015) *Reporting China in Africa. Media Discourses on Shifting Geopolitics*, London/New York: Routledge, S. 41-61.
- Ran, J. (2016) Evolving Media Interactions between China and Africa, in: Zhang, X., Wasserman, H. & Mano, W. (Hg.) *China's Media and Soft Power in Africa: Promotion and Perceptions*, Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, S. 47-61.
- Ronning, H. (2016) How Much Soft Power Does China Have in Africa? In: Zhang, X., Wasserman, H. & Mano, W. (Hg.) *China's Media and Soft Power in Africa: Promotion and Perceptions*, Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, S. 65-78.
- Sautman, B. & Yan, H. (2015) Localizing Chinese Enterprises in Africa: from Myths to Policies, *HKUST IEMS Thought Leadership Brief Series* 5, S. 1-4.
- Shi, A. (2013) Situation and strategy of China media's broadcasting of sino-african affairs under new circumstances (*xin xingshi xia zhongguo meiti zhongfei guanxi chuanbo de xianzhuang yu celiue* 新形势下中国媒体中非关系传播的现状与策略). In: *China Journalist (zhongguo jizhe 中国记者)*, S. 122-123.
- Shi, A. (2015) Re-orienting the 'charm offensive' to the 'charm defensive': A critical review of Chinese media development in Africa, *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies* 36 (1), S. 135-140.
- Tan-Mullins, M. (2016) Chinese Perception of Soft Power: The Role of the Media in Shaping Chinese Views and Discourses on Foreign Aid to Africa, in: Zhang, X., Wasserman, H. & Mano, W. (Hg.) *China's Media and Soft Power in Africa: Promotion and Perceptions*, Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, S. 107-119.
- Wekesa, B. (2013) The Media Framing of China's Image in East Africa: An Exploratory Study, *The China Monitor* 1 (1), S. 15-41.
- Wu, Y. (2012) The Rise of China's State-Led Media Dynasty in Africa, *South African Institute of International Affairs Occasional Paper* 117, S. 5-31.

- Wu, Y. (2014) China's Media and Public Diplomacy: illustrations from South Africa, Paper presented at the international conference "China and Africa Media, Communications and Public Diplomacy", September, Beijing.
- Zhang, J. (2013) Analysis of China's media diplomacy and strategic communication towards Africa (*zhongguo dui feizhou de meiti waijiao yu zhanlue chuanbo fenxi* 中国对非洲的媒体外交与战略传播分析), in: China Television (*zhongguo dianshi* 中国电视) 3, S. 87-90.
- Zhang, P. (2012): About CCTV Africa. URL: <http://english.cntv.cn/program/africalive/20120111/117620.shtml> (Stand: 10.09.2017).
- Zhang, X. (2013) How Ready is China for a China-Style World Order? China's State Media Discourse under Construction, *Ecquid Novi: African Journalism Studies* 34 (3), S. 79-101. Später erschienen in: Wasserman, H. (Hg.) (2015) *Reporting China in Africa. Media Discourses on Shifting Geopolitics*. London/New York: Routledge, S. 79-101.
- Zhang, Y. (2014) Understanding China's Media in Africa from the perspective of Constructive Journalism, paper presented at the international conference "China and Africa Media, Communications and Public Diplomacy", September, Beijing.
- Zhang, Y. & Matingwina, S. (2016) Constructive Journalism: A New Journalistic Paradigm of Chinese Media in Africa. In: Zhang, X., Wasserman, H. & Mano, W. (Hg.) *China's Media and Soft Power in Africa: Promotion and Perceptions*, Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, S. 93-105.
- Zhang, Y. & Mwangi, J. M. (2016) A perception study on China's media engagement in Kenya: from media presence to power influence?, *Chinese Journal of Communication* 9 (1), S. 71-80.
- Zhou, Y. & Moy, P. (2007) Parsing Framing Processes: The Interplay Between Online Public Opinion and Media Coverage, *Journal of Communication* 57, S. 79-98.

MAPPING CHINA JOURNAL

Mapping China Journal 2017 / Number 1

Part 4: Changing Dynamics between a Fragmented EU and China's Rise as Rule-Shaper
in Global Politics

Implications of the 'Belt and Road Initiative' for the EU and Call for Engagement

By Barbara Pongratz*

Abstract

As one of the most ambitious plans in recent history and a new milestone for regional and interregional integration, the 'Belt and Road Initiative' (BRI), launched by China in 2013, bears a great potential for economic development as well as for a deeper economic cooperation between the involved countries. This paper explores the positive as well as the negative economic, cultural, political and security implications the BRI will probably have for the European Union (EU) and weighs the arguments for and against a stronger engagement of the EU in the project. As the article shows the positive implications to be predominant, it suggests an active engagement of the EU in creating a norm-based framework for the BRI. While the paper argues that this framework could be based on the outcome of the current EU-China investment agreement negotiations, it strongly emphasizes the need for expanding this trade agreement by creating a legal and political basis for all involved parties as key for the successful realization of the BRI and for shaping international relations in the long run. Shortly outlining the reasons for the current fragmentation of the EU caused by Chinese investment activities, this article finally proposes a few possible actions of mastering the complex challenge of mapping out a joint strategy for the EU member states towards China.

* Barbara Pongratz is currently enrolled in a master's degree program in Chinese Studies at Free University Berlin. Having studied and worked in several Chinese cities while obtaining her bachelor's degree at Ludwig-Maximilian-University in Munich and Shanghai Tongji University, her research is focused on international relations as well as environmental politics in China. She is currently conducting research for her master thesis at Peking University and is gaining practical experience at Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

Implications of the 'Belt and Road Initiative' for the EU and Call for Engagement

The 'Belt and Road Initiative' as an Unprecedented Concept

As one of the most ambitious plans in history and a new milestone for regional and interregional integration, China's 'Belt and Road Initiative' (BRI) (*yidai yilu* 一带一路) aims at connecting over 62 countries and more than 4.4 billion global citizens (HKTDC, 2017). Launched by Xi Jinping in September 2013 in order to revive the old Silk Road, a relic of times of Chinese regional dominance, it consists of a land-based Silk Road Economic Belt as well as a 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. The Belt and Road project can be considered an international long-term economic initiative that supports economic development in the whole of Asia and particularly South- and South East Asia, the Middle East, partly Africa, the European Union as well as in other non-European Union states in Europe.

A major difference between the parties involved with the BRI is their state of economic development. While the BRI encompasses some of the least developed countries worldwide, it also includes highly developed industrial countries such as the EU member states. The EU as a trade network as well as a political and legal community is reluctant to engage more intensely in the initiative, as becomes clear from the fact that only six EU heads of state, half of them from Eastern European nations, accepted Xi's recent invitation to the 'New Silk Road' summit in Beijing (Covert Geopolitics, 2017). The reasons for the lacking engagement of the EU in the BRI might lie in the fact that the BRI is currently still in its initial development phase and that only few details about the far-reaching project are available (Grimmel & My Giang, 2017).

To date, the approaches of the two most powerful counterparts involved with the BRI, China and the EU, regard regional integration quite differently, as the strategy of the former is based on networks, while that of the latter is strongly based on norms (Grimmel, 2017). In order to foster closer cooperation between China and the EU, these two approaches need to be combined in the future and this might be what China is implicitly aiming for through the BRI, as this paper argues. In addition to regional integration within Asia, the BRI ambitiously aims to connect Asia and Europe and is therefore characterized by its far geographical reach as well as its goal to be both regional and interregional from the onset (Grimmel & My Giang, 2017). Due to this regional and interregional scope, the BRI clearly differentiates itself from other regional projects such as the EU, ASEAN or EAEU. As Grimmel and My Giang (2017) investigate and conclude, the BRI can be considered a 'new milestone in [the] trend of regional integration' (Grimmel & My Giang, 2017:1). According to said political scientists at Universität Hamburg, the new type of integration presented by the BRI holds the potential to 'match the global nature of the most pressing challenges more appropriately than other regional integration projects' (Grimmel & My Giang, 2017:2).

This paper is mainly concerned with the implications the BRI will have or already has on the EU regarding trade, politics, and national security. The People's Republic of China is the EU's second largest trade partner and the number of EU member states receiving Chinese investment as well as the total amount of investment transactions is continuously rising (Hanemann & Huotari, 2017). For instance, Chinese investment volume in Germany has risen by more than a third from 2011 to 2016 (as cited by PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2017). Keeping the ambitious agenda and the geographical reach of the BRI in mind, these investments are unlikely to decline in the near future.

The increasing investment has significant positive as well as negative economic and political implications for the EU. In the following analysis, a comprehensive assessment of these consequences will be made in order to assess whether and how the EU should actively engage with China through the ‘Belt and Road Initiative’.

The BRI Implications: Contra and Pro EU Engagement

There are reasonable political and economic concerns regarding the rise of Chinese investments in the EU. One main political concern of EU member states lies in the perception of Chinese outbound investments as a ‘manifestation of China’s state-led economic system’ (Conrad & Kostka, 2017: 646). While these concerns are justified, it is important to note, that China does not demand political conditions for foreign countries it is pursuing investment deals with, as long as the investment is economically lucrative (Li, 2010). However, since a main share of China’s outbound investments comes from Chinese state-owned or private companies indirectly funded by the state, they can be considered as a manifestation of China’s state-led economic system (Conrad & Kostka, 2017). If a deal is of national interest, the state functions as the funding source of Outbound Foreign Direct Investments. The state further does so, if the investment complies with one presumed objective of the BRI, which is to establish and gain control over main supply chains among the BRI countries’ regions (Dossani, 2017). In addition, the fact that private companies also receive funding by the state raises reasonable doubts about the maintenance of fairness in the field of trade and investment on the international level (Conrad & Kostka, 2017). That a huge part of Chinese state-funded investments into the EU are flowing into fields like nuclear energy and energy infrastructure, as Conrad and Kostka’s analysis shows (2017), raises serious concerns about national and public security in the EU.

Apart from the political issues, there are also economic concerns about the financial reliability of Chinese state-owned or state-led companies arising from the country’s high indebtedness (Conrad & Kostka, 2017). In addition, the Chinese investors’ non-compliance with international regulatory standards such as quality issues; as well as the highly protectionist market regulations in China, which favour local investors, cause a reserved approach of the EU towards BRI (Hanemann & Huotari, 2017). In addition, China’s openly promoted strategy of technology acquisition, e.g. ‘Made in China 2025’, provokes fear over a sell-out of technology on the EU side and evokes concerns about the long-term loss of its competitiveness. While the economic concerns are reasonable, it is important to note, that due to the lack of transparency and access to details of Chinese investments in the EU, in certain cases it is not entirely clear whether the concerns are justified. Especially concerning finance structures and investor networks, further investigations into the characteristics of Chinese investments would be needed to fully assess the risks (Conrad & Kostka, 2017).

While China’s new role as a big investor in the EU raises reasonable concerns, it also brings along significant economic and political benefits for the EU. China’s increasing investments present a long-term chance for developing an enduring partnership with China, which could prove to be especially crucial in times of growing uncertainties about the future development of the western model of good order through the current US presidency and its rather unpredictable, less rule-based approach. By increasing its engagement with China through the BRI, the EU has the opportunity to contribute with its “experience in negotiating frameworks for this kind of cooperation” (Wacker, 2017: 94). Particularly facing the US withdrawal from its international role, the EU additionally is advised to show responsibility in representing its core values and norms for

future shaping of global orders (Wacker, 2017). Given that the PRC pursues its current path, a Chinese demise on the global stage in the near futures seems unlikely. In addition to this political possibility and at the same time responsibility, an increased engagement in the BRI also promises economic benefits such as the attraction of capital into the EU, which would help stimulate investment and foster economic growth, the rescue of bankrupt European companies and the overall improvement of the latter's economic situation (Conrad & Kostka, 2017). Therefore, the BRI can be seen as a "double chance" for the EU as it contains the possibility of "shaping international relations" as well as "working towards a more liberal, [regulated, fair] and multilateral international trade regime" (Grimmel & My Giang, 2017: 2). Another benefit arises from a cultural perspective, since an enhanced cooperation with China through the BRI might lead to a further diversification and enrichment of the European culture. A stronger orientation towards the East could lead to a society, which is more open, pluralized, objective and less monopolized, and therefore, change our social fabric in a positive way in the long run.

Even if only parts of the project will be realized, it will most probably have a significant impact on the economy of associated regions, especially regarding infrastructural and economic development along the revived Silk Road with a planned investment sum of 900 billion US dollars (Hancock/Fitch Ratings, 2017). The implications for countries involved in the BRI in areas such as Eastern Europe, Western Asia and South-East Asia will be higher than in the EU due to the former's current poor economic development status and the consequently large potential for substantial growth. China's infrastructure investments and the development of new economic sectors will probably help the least advanced countries to grow relatively quick.

In order to make sure that these investments will take place in a fair and norm-based manner, in which risks can be adequately assessed and at least basic legal protection for all involved parties is given, an active engagement of the EU in the BRI is necessary. Furthermore, the BRI project implies a huge opportunity for stabilizing and enhancing EU-China relations and can thereby serve as a "gateway for further reforms and [possibly] deeper political cooperation" (Grimmel & My Giang, 2017: 3).

In summary therefore, it can be said that the positive implications of a more active EU engagement – above all its role as a provider of a fair legal and possibly even a political framework for future BRI investments – outweigh the negative implications in the long run.

How Should the EU Engage in the BRI – Rough Outline of a BRI Framework

As shown above, the EU can benefit immensely from proactively engaging in the Belt and Road Initiative by bringing in its own ideas to this concept and helping to clarify issues related to a concrete legal and political framework. Such a framework would help to mitigate the aforementioned risks of and concerns about Chinese investments in the EU. A clear formalization of the objectives and concrete agreements concerning an economic and financial as well as a legal and political foundation is crucial for the successful realization of BRI. "Sustainable programmes and institutional arrangements" are required in order "to allow for efficient and fair mutual exchange" regarding present Chinese investments in the EU as well as future BRI transactions (Grimmel & My Giang, 2017: 2).

Just like in a game, rules must be clarified and made especially transparent for a broad, public debate, so that this grand project is not doomed to fail (Grimmel & My Giang, 2017).

A breakthrough in the EU-China Bilateral Investment Agreement negotiations to create one single comprehensive investment agreement, that would replace the 26 existing bilateral investment treaties between the 27 individual EU member states and China, would be a great step into the right direction (Hanemann & Huotari, 2017). This would not only be a leap forward in the consolidation of EU-China relations in general, but, as this paper argues, would also be key to an enhanced cooperation with regard to the Belt and Road Initiative. According to an overview of the development of international trade agreements published by the European Commission, which was updated in July 2017, a clear conclusion about an ambitious and comprehensive scope for an EU-China Bilateral Investment Agreement was reached and a joint negotiating text was established in 2016 (EU Commission, 2017a). The 14th round of EU-China investment negotiations took place in Brussels in July 2017 and, according to another report by the European Commission, two rounds are expected to be conducted later in 2017 (EU Commission, 2017b).

A final agreement in this regard probably will not be achieved as long as China does not make any significant progress on domestic and external reforms that increase the role of markets and level the competition for foreign companies (Hanemann & Huotari, 2017). However, an EU-China investment agreement could be used as a rough draft for the negotiations on a legal foundation for BRI interactions, which should be valid for China, EU member states and non-EU countries. The agreement could possibly be expanded by the inclusion of political aspects in the long run, as this paper suggests. This framework, created broadly on the basis of the EU-China Bilateral Investment Agreement, could have a fixed main body that contains certain main principles for fair and norm-based BRI investments, which would also count for countries outside of the European Union. If China wants to make the Belt and Road Initiative a success, there is no way around making concessions in favour of the most powerful involved counterpart in this regard and consequently all other concerned BRI parties, in total accounting for 62 percent of the global population (HKTDG, 2017). In addition to this main body, there could be a flexible part of the framework, which can be adjusted dependent on different economic and societal circumstances in the various countries. However, the main principles comprised in the main body of the BRI framework must be complied with under all circumstances.

Recommendations for China and the EU

Concerning future BRI decisions, China is advised to choose a more 'holistic approach' towards their hesitant EU partners, who are insisting on accumulated legislation and transparent legal acts, wanting to establish a broader judiciary and a political framework (Grimmel, 2017). The EU-China investment agreement negotiations can be regarded as a huge opportunity for China and should be brought forward by all means, in order to lay the foundation for a framework and reach a consensus with the EU, which could be of greater importance in the future.

EU member states are strongly advised to coordinate their approaches, especially in strategic sectors, due to the development of a joint strategy towards China and future BRI engagement which is of the utmost importance for preventing an increasing European fragmentation (Conrad & Kostka, 2017). This fragmentation does not only become visible when considering the decreased number of the EU member states through the UK's EU-exit and the present conflicts inside of EU countries' borders such as Spain, but also when looking at the development of the relationship between EU member states through imbalanced Chinese investment engagement (Hanemann &

Huotari, 2017). Before concluding this article, reasons for the European fragmentation through the increased Chinese engagement in Europe as well as some recommendations for the EU for the creation of a joint response to China are given.

Reasons for the European Fragmentation through Chinese Investments and Recommendations for the Creation of a Joint-EU Strategy

After a period of relatively large-scale investments into Southern European and the Benelux states as well as moderately high investment rates in Eastern European countries, the focus of Chinese investment activities currently narrows down to the European “Big Three” (UK, Germany, France) as well as to Northern European countries (Hanemann & Huotari, 2017). The changing intensity and relatively unequal investment volumes are creating space for competition for Chinese investments among EU member states and are consequently shaping mutual perceptions among them, as Huotari and Gaspers state in an interview (2016). In addition, the two scientists from the Mercator Institute for China Studies are of the opinion that member states such as Germany and as of now the UK seem to possibly be fostering ‘special relationships’ with China, thereby causing distrust across EU borders. When looking at China’s cooperation initiative with Eastern European countries titled ‘16+1’, it is obvious that ‘special relationships’ to individual EU states or blocs of them are intended by China, as Kaczmarek and Jakóbski state (2015). The collaboration platform ‘16+1’ includes China and 16 Eastern European countries, of which 11 are EU member states, and forms a powerful interest group in favour of China, which is potentially able to influence EU policy making in Brussels (Hála, 2016).

The rising economic presence of China in the EU also creates room for potential conflict about security-related issues in the EU (Huotari & Gaspers, 2016). This becomes particularly clear when facing the fact that one of the aforementioned presumed goals of the BRI is to gain control over some of the important supply-chains in Europe and that the EU does not have a union-wide regulatory framework that weighs up economic opportunities against national security concerns and could hinder foreign investments from potentially having negative implications for security-related issues. While such regulatory frameworks exist on the national level within the EU, the fact that it does not on a union-wide basis, hinders risk assessment from being done in a more coordinated and effective manner (Conrad & Kostka, 2017). Differing risk assessments and clashing interests within EU borders divided through Chinese engagement can have serious long-term effects. Therefore, the EU needs to make efforts to coordinate their approaches towards China.

In fact, it is a complex task to create a joint-China strategy and a union-wide framework, especially since mastering this challenge individually is not adequate anymore. Particularly against the background of the EU-exit of the UK, Brussels is advised to figure out new ways to work with the island state and build alliances outside of Europe such as within the framework of the G7 (Huotari & Gaspers, 2016). In order to overcome differences and coordinate a unified approach within the EU, it will be advantageous for the member states as well as the EU institutions to enhance “joint European monitoring of and information sharing on China as well as [initiate steps to create] greater transparency on national dealings with China among member states” (Huotari & Gaspers, 2016). The EU with the European Council, Parliament and Commission as strong and independent supranational institutions are equipped with the most far-reaching competences in trade and investment agreement negotiations with China. Therefore, Brussels plays a key role in this regard

and could contribute to a large extent by providing compensation and damage control in cases of colliding EU interests when dealing with Chinese investments and future BRI investments (Huotari & Gaspers, 2016). This would serve as a proof of the strong authority and capacity of EU institutions and as a powerful symbol of a united Europe willing to prevent disintegration.

The aforementioned core institutions publish papers on general strategies for EU-China relations and main goals for future development such as the ‘EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation’ (2013). The representatives of these institutions are the main participants of the ongoing negotiations on EU side. The EU’s decision-making power in this regard is limited, as soon as single sovereign EU member states make their own deals with the representatives of the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, the main negotiators in the trade agreement negotiations on the Chinese side.

Brussels has made efforts to create a joint response to China, e.g. when releasing the clear-minded ‘China Strategy’ in 2016, an “overdue strategic repositioning” of the EU regarding the territorial disputes in the South China Sea (Huotari & Gaspers, 2016). However, a proactive agenda for regulating future economic interaction with China is still missing. Therefore, the key member states of the EU are advised to set the tone and present an improved strategy regarding the transatlantic coordination of continuous trade as well as investment negotiations with China to “face Beijing from a position of strength” (Huotari & Gaspers, 2016), which leads this paper to a few summarizing as well as concluding thoughts.

Conclusion

Commencing with introductory information about the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, this paper argues that this unprecedented project with its unique nature can be considered as a new type of integration due the fact that it is both regional and interregional. In addition to the fact that the BRI is still in its initial development phase, this paper, on the basis of Grimm and My Giang’s work (2017), further presents the two clashing approaches of the EU and China – ‘network versus norm-based’ – as the main reasons for the EU’s lacking engagement in the project. After weighing the negative and the positive political, economic, cultural and security implications of an increased EU engagement in the BRI against each other, this paper finds that a stronger EU engagement would be advantageous to both sides in the long run. The paper comes to this first conclusion primarily due to the argument that an increased EU engagement in the BRI offers the possibility for shaping international relations in the long run by playing a role in providing of a fair legal foundation for future BRI investments. In addition, a concrete regulation of future BRI investment activities on a legal basis would probably diminish most of the negative investment implications and would be a strong global sign from the EU side of working towards a liberal, norm-based and multilateral world order. To support a greater EU engagement in the BRI, this paper further suggests a norm-based BRI framework, created broadly on the basis of the EU-China Bilateral Investment Agreement, which is currently still being negotiated. The moderately high possibility of a breakthrough in this regard was discussed briefly and an update on the ongoing negotiations was given. Furthermore, this paper points out the recent unbalanced rise in Chinese investment within the EU and the urgent need for a unified European Union framework to weigh economic opportunities against national security concerns. The last part of this analysis deals with the reasons for the European fragmentation through Chinese investments within the EU and recommendations were given in order to reach the essential joint EU strategy with regard to China. The EU should not allow mistrust to arise within its own borders through the competition for

Chinese investment, but instead should enhance joint information sharing and create greater transparency on individual investment deals with China. To emphasize this point yet again, China is advised to choose a more comprehensive tactic regarding the BRI and approach the EU with the intention of viewing the situation from a more European perspective.

Xi Jinping stated in the opening speech of the aforementioned 'New Silk Road' summit that BRI is not aiming for unilateral gains, but rather working for the common prosperity of the whole world (XinhuaNet, 2017). Launching an initiative of this kind and declaring that it would work towards the common prosperity of the whole world would, from a logical standpoint, mean to include the interests of all member states. Xi's statement could be seen as an attempt to appeal to the EU to join hands in this initiative as well as incorporate its own interests.

When looking at the complications of reaching a consensus in the EU-China Bilateral Investment Agreement negotiations, one can clearly see the difficulties in combining the interests of the two counterparts. These negotiations must be brought forward by all means necessary to reach an agreement, as it could be of much greater importance in the future.

Sources Cited

Conrad B., Kostka G. (2017) Chinese Investments in Europe's energy sector: Risks and opportunities? *Energy Policy* 101. Editorial. Elsevier. 644-648.

Covert Geopolitics. (13th May 2017) List of Attendees to the 1st Belt and road Summit in Beijing: in geopolitics.co. Available at: <https://geopolitics.co/2017/05/13/list-of-attendees-to-the-belt-and-road-summit-in-beijing/> [Accessed 26Nov. 2017].

Dossani, R. (2017) The Driving Force Behind China's Ambitious 'Belt and Road Initiative'. *Rand Corporation*, RAND Center for Asia Pacific Policy. Available at: <https://www.rand.org/blog/2017/05/the-driving-force-behind-chinas-ambitious-belt-and.html>. [Accessed 26 Nov. 2017].

European Commission. (2017a) Overview of FTA and other Trade Negotiations. Report. Available at: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2006/december/tradoc_118238.pdf [Accessed 01 July 2017].

European Commission. (2017b) EU-China Investment-Agreement: Report of the 14th Round of Negotiations. Report. Available from: http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2017/july/tradoc_155832.pdf [Accessed 01 July 2017].

European Commission. (2014) EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation. Available from: http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/china/docs/20131123_agenda_2020_en.pdf [Accessed 01 July 2017].

Grimmel A., My Giang S. (2017) Why China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative should be taken more seriously by the EU and how it can be an interregional success. *blogs.lse.ac.uk*.

- Available from: blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2017/04/11/why-chinas-one-belt-one-road-initiative-should-be-taken-more-seriously-by-the-eu/ [Accessed 01 June 2017].
- Grimmel A. (27th March 2017) One Belt, One Road: A new model of interregionalism. *ShanghaiDaily.com*. Accessed from: <http://www.shanghaidaily.com/opinion/foreign-perspectives/One-Belt-One-Road-A-new-model-of-interregionalism/shdaily.shtml> [Accessed 20 June 2017].
- Hancock, T. (2017). China encircles the world with One Belt, One Road strategy. *Financial Times*. Available from: <https://www.ft.com/content/0714074a-0334-11e7-aa5b-6bb07f5c8e12>. [Accessed 26 Nov. 2017]. Please note: original source from rating agency Fitch Rating agency's report from January 2017.
- Hanemann, T., Huotari M. (2017) Record Flows and Growing Imbalances - Chinese Investments in Europe in 2016. A Report by MERICS and Rhodium Group. Available at: http://rhg.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/RHG_Merics_COFDI_EU_2016.pdf [Accessed 20 June 2017].
- Hong Kong Trade and Development Council Website. (2017) General Information about the Belt and Road Initiative. Available from: <http://info.hktdc.com/infographic/beltandroad/en/index.html> [Accessed 01 July 2017].
- Huotari M., Gaspers J., Segal-Williams S., Mattis P., Rampini F., Fallon T., Summers T., Hála M. (24th June 2016) A China File Conversation: Is Europe Prepared to Deal with the China Challenge? *ChinaFile.com*. Available from: <http://www.chinafile.com/conversation/europe-prepared-deal-china-challenge> [Accessed 20 June 2017].
- Kaczmarek, M., Jakobowski J. (2015) China on Central-Eastern Europe: '16+1' as seen from Beijing. Centre for Eastern Studies, Warsaw. Available from: https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/commentary_166.pdf [Accessed 01 July 2017].
- Li, Xiaofei. (2010) *China's Outward Foreign Investment: A Political Perspective*. University Press of America. 238.
- Wacker G. (2017) EU-China Relations: Horizon 2025, in Chinese futures: Horizon 2025. Pejsova E., Bund J. (Ed.), Report No. 35. July 2017. *EU Institute for Security Studies*. Available from: https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/Report_35_Chinese%20futures.pdf [Accessed 26 Nov. 2017].
- Pricewaterhouse Coopers (pwc). (2016) Chinesische M&A-Aktivitäten in Deutschland. Available from: https://imaa-institute.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/pwc_chinese-acquisitions-in-germany-2016.pdf. PPT. [Accessed 01 July 2017]. Please note: Original Source from People's Bank of China.

Xinhua (2017) Full text of President Xi's speech at opening of Belt and Road forum. Available from:
http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-05/14/c_136282982.htm [Accessed 25 July
2017].

MAPPING CHINA JOURNAL

Mapping China Journal 2017 / Number 1

Part 4: Changing Dynamics between a Fragmented EU and China's Rise as Rule-Shaper
in Global Politics

Sino-European cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative: insights from the Chinese investment in Poland

By Paulina Kanarek*

Abstract

By analysing the unsuccessful entrance to the Polish market by a Chinese company in 2009, this work attempts to show the problems that Chinese investors face while cooperating with European partners. Having investigated the reasons of the investment's failure, this paper argues that the communication gap between the Chinese investors and Polish government was the major hindrance for successful cooperation. As more investment is planned in Europe under the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), it is vital to analyse the past mistakes and find a way to improve collaboration between China and the European Union. Moreover, this work investigates the media discourse on Chinese investment in Poland. It will demonstrate that media discourse changed significantly after the introduction of the Belt and Road Initiative and can be very insightful in the analysis of changing attitudes towards bilateral relations.

* Paulina is a sinologist specializing in international relations and political economy. She completed a degree in Chinese and Economics at SOAS, University of London, and holds an MSc in Contemporary Chinese Studies from the University of Oxford. She is currently based in Beijing where she continues her research on the relations between China and Europe as a Yenching Scholar at Peking University.

Sino-European cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative: insights from the Chinese investment in Poland

Introduction

In 2009, China Overseas Engineering Group (COVEC) was the first Chinese company to win a public works contract in a member state of the European Union. COVEC was supposed to construct two parts of the A2 motorway linking two Polish cities - Lodz and Warsaw. The Chinese consortium offered an extraordinarily low price in comparison to other bidders and won the tender (Godement, 2012: 3). Nevertheless, instead of a win-win cooperation, COVEC's investment became an exemplification of China's failed entrance into the EU market as Poland cancelled the agreement in 2011, with less than 20 percent of the work being completed (Godement, 2012: 3). This unsuccessful project brought up questions regarding access to the EU's public procurement market by third countries and created a negative image of Chinese companies (Gu, Wang & Ni, 2011). It is important to acknowledge the reasons of this project's failure, as more investments are about to be made in Poland and other European countries under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI; *yi dai yi lu* 一带一路).

This work will analyse the possible causes of the failure of COVEC's project to construct the A2 motorway, arguing that the communication gap between the Chinese investors and Polish government was the major hindrance for the project's success. It will also show the implications of this investment for the image of China in media discourse in Poland using Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (CDA). It will demonstrate that media discourse changed significantly after the introduction of the BRI and can be very insightful in analysis of changing attitudes towards bilateral relations. Finally, the case study of COVEC will be used to show perspectives and risks for future Sino-European collaboration.

COVEC's failed investment

COVEC's investment in Poland was not the first project that this company conducted outside the borders of China. Pushed by the government's strategy of 'Going Out' (in Chinese *zou chu qu* 走出去), COVEC already had experience in construction works in several African and Asian countries and its initiative to construct the motorway in Poland was strongly linked to the desire to enter the European market. However, the EU public procurement market proved to be an unfamiliar ground for this Chinese state-owned enterprise (SOE), and the lack of preparation and research before entering the market seem to be important factors that contributed to COVEC's withdrawal, soon after starting the construction works (Jones, 2012).

COVEC showed lack of knowledge regarding EU laws, as well as business and cultural norms. Firstly, under the Polish labour law, overseas workers should be paid according to the local salary level (Wang & Hu, 2012: 91), not the Chinese one which COVEC was trying to offer to its employees. Moreover, in order to reduce the costs of labour, the Chinese consortium preferred to employ only workers from China. This is against the EU law, which imposes the obligation of hiring local subcontractors. Secondly, COVEC seemed to have followed the strategy of offering the lowest bid in order to be awarded the contract then attempted to renegotiate its terms in order

to receive additional funds. This pattern might be viable in Africa (Horwitz, Hemmant & Rademeyer, 2008), but cannot work in the EU. Therefore, it can be observed that COVEC was not familiar with the EU member states' laws and its strategy proved to be inadequate for the EU market (Gradziuk & Szczudlik-Tatar, 2012).

Apart from COVEC's lack of understanding concerning the functioning of the EU markets, some factors contributed to A2 motorway construction's failure but should not be categorized as COVEC's fault. Scholars note that there were some unforeseen circumstances, such as increase in the cost structure of building materials, particularly concrete and steel (Jones, 2012: 89). Moreover, some fault can be attributed to the Polish government, which did not support COVEC when it reported financial problems. The government threatened it would sue the Chinese consortium, which for COVEC meant losing their faces (Pyffel, 2011).

The role of the communication gap in bilateral relations

All the factors listed above, contributed to the failure of the project. Nevertheless, it should be noted that most of them are directly linked to the communication gap between Poland and China. Unawareness of the norms and culture of both sides led to many conflicts during the negotiation process that finally resulted in the withdrawal of COVEC from the market.

Misunderstandings between China and the European countries can be attributed to different interpretations of the same concepts (Pan, 2010: 227). They can be observed through contrasting approaches towards negotiations or distinctive business etiquette. Furthermore, communication misunderstandings often affect group and organizational capacities and assistance outcomes (Ngai and Koehn, 2005). These diverse attitudes can lead to conflicts in bilateral relations, which are then depicted in the Polish media discourse on Beijing's cooperation with the Western world¹.

This paper finds that the communication gap is very relevant to the case study of COVEC and can be observed in various aspects of Sino-Polish cooperation, predominantly regarding cultural norms. For example, Chinese business culture puts a strong emphasis on unofficial discussions and banquets apart from the formal meetings. Moreover, hierarchy plays a very important role in Chinese society (Graham & Lam, 2003: 84) and its significance is also noticeable during the business encounters. This is not necessarily a case in business negotiation processes in Europe, therefore Chinese delegates from COVEC experienced a disappointing reception in Poland. Not only did they not receive invitations for any banquets, but also the Polish representatives responsible for providing the documents before contract signing were civil servants, not high-level public office holders (CEED, 2012: 30).

Another significant cultural misunderstanding relates to the approach towards verbal and written agreements. While many Chinese consider verbal agreements as valuable as the written contracts (Roehrig, 1994), in the European Union all agreements need to be codified in writing in order to be valid. Some Chinese negotiators, who had visited Poland before the construction works started assumed that all formal verbal agreements would be treated seriously (CEED, 2012: 30). Unfortunately, the Polish side could not respect unofficial discussions as a form of contract and

¹The term 'Western world' refers to Europe, the Americas and generally any country whose cultural and ethnic origins can mostly be traced to Europe, collectively.

did not find the former negotiations binding. All of these gaps in mutual communication and different expectations seriously impacted the attitude of both sides towards each other, which was reflected in several media articles after the project failed.

Media discourse in Poland on China after COVEC

Some scholars argue that COVEC's investment had a negative impact on Polish attitude towards Chinese investment (Gu, Wang & Ni, 2011; Heiduk & McCaleb, 2014: 68), making many Polish companies sceptical and less willing to cooperate as they witnessed a failure of a large-scale Chinese project. Additionally, many studies conducted inside and outside Poland show that the attitude of Poles towards collaboration with the Chinese partners has been quite unfavourable for a long time before the COVEC's investment (Gu, Wang & Ni, 2011; Heiduk & McCaleb, 2014: 68). Research conducted by Dominik Mierzejewski focused on the analysis of articles in leading Polish daily newspapers written in August 2008, when the Olympic Games were taking place in Beijing, and revealed that over 60 percent of the articles expressed negative attitude towards the Middle Kingdom (Mierzejewski, 2009). Additionally, the Power Audit of EU-China Relations published by the European Council on Foreign Relations divided the European countries into four groups depending on their attitude, classifying Poland as a member of an 'assertive industrialists' group (Fox & Godement, 2009: 21). The main features of the 'assertive industrialists' include economic protectionism toward China and political criticism.

This paper argues that in the light of recent investment projects presented to Poland by China, especially under the BRI initiative, the negative sentiments are gradually being substituted by more open and welcoming approach towards Beijing. It can be noticed that after the 2008 financial crisis, Poland became less assertive on economic issues in order to attract Chinese investment (Godement, Parelló-Plesner & Richard, 2011: 7). Political criticism, on the other hand, tends to be partially replaced by the narrative of partnership with China in the light of the shrinking EU funds available and the investment linked to the New Silk Road. Previously dominated by such issues as human rights violation and the situation in Tibet, the media discourse on China changed into a more supportive and positive one.

In order to determine whether the positive attitude towards China in Polish media is still developing, I conducted a research on portrayals of Chinese investment in Poland under the New Silk Road concept. The study based on the analysis of five articles published between May 2015 and June 2016 in *Gazeta Wyborcza* (GW) (see Appendix 1), a Polish daily newspaper which had one of the largest circulations in the last 5 years and is considered to be the most opinion-making newspaper in the country (Institute of Media Monitoring, 2016: 3). I examined the rhetoric of GW's articles using Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, which is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that reveals the political considerations behind supposedly abstract linguistic representations (Behnam & Mahmoudy, 2013: 2196).

CDA as a research method is especially useful in social sciences as it relates ideology to social relations of power and domination (Fairclough, 1995: 17). It allows the researcher to draw a line between the text itself, the interactional process, and the social context, which influences it. This method allows examination of the written source, taking into account the written language text

(description), discourse practice (interpretation) and sociocultural practice (explanation) (Fairclough, 1995: 3; Fairclough, 2001: 21).

The outcome of my research proved that the way in which China was being presented in Polish media in 2015 and 2016 is significantly more positive than it was around the time of COVEC's failed investment. Linguistic analysis of the articles showed that the authors of *Gazeta Wyborcza*'s texts are persuading the readers that Chinese investment is a potential opportunity for Poland. The perspective of cooperation with Chinese companies is being described using the language that has a positive connotation towards Beijing and the issue of COVEC's failed investment is not being mentioned at all.

The overwhelmingly positive attitude towards the possibilities that the New Silk Road project could bring is marked by the frequent use of superlative forms of adjectives in the description of the importance of the project: "*largest*" (Article 2, paragraph 1), "*most important*" (Article 5, paragraph 1), "*pivotal*" (Article 1, paragraph 11). This is supplemented by the usage of hyperboles, including: "*enormous expansion project*" (Article 3, paragraph 3), "*the bridgehead of the western part of the New Silk Road*" (Article 4, paragraph 8).

Strong emphasis is put on investment and recently signed agreements, which frequently appear in the text together with adjectives that have a positive connotation (Table 1).

Table 1. Frequency of expressions most significant for the analysis of discourse towards China

	Article 1	Article 2	Article 3	Article 4	Article 5
"Investment/ investor"	2	7	8	7	4
"Agreement"	1	7	4	1	2
"chance/ hope/ to count on"	3	1	5	1	3
Adjectives describing the New Silk Road: "giant/ big/ huge/ enormous/ large"	5	3	2	1	2

The articles from GW focus on the perspectives that the investment under the New Silk Road project can bring, but barely mention past experiences. Referring to the Chinese investors, articles stress how the PRC "*will help*", "*will benefit*", "*wants to invest*" and therefore persuade the readers that Chinese investment is a potential opportunity for Poland. Given that the majority of text is using the future tense, it is intended that readers perceive a signal that there is some vision of the New Silk Road project as a factor that would strengthen the Polish position in the international arena.

One may argue that it is not possible to generalize about the media discourse basing on one newspaper only and that it implies certain political views. *Gazeta Wyborcza* was chosen as the subject of the analysis as it most widely published on the case study of COVEC and China. This work acknowledges that more research on media's approach towards China would be useful, however it is also noteworthy that in general the amount of news related to China in any way is very limited in the Polish press.

Current initiatives and communication issues between Poland and China

Another reason that explains the more positive discourse in media on any topic related to China is the establishment of the 16 + 1 initiative. The 16+1 framework is a relatively new cooperation format initiated by China with the 16 Central and Eastern European countries in 2012 (Stanzel, 2016). The area of Eastern Europe, including Poland, is attractive to China thanks to its strategic geographical position for the New Silk Road project (Stanzel, 2016). As part of the initiative regular high-level meetings are organized and increased investment by China in the region is one of the priorities of the 16 + 1. It is intended that Poland play a key role in the project as the largest economy among the participating European countries. The significant role of Poland is often emphasized by the Chinese; therefore, the Polish media are very keen on underlining that Warsaw is a strategic partner for Beijing.

Although COVEC's investment started before the official launch of the BRI in 2013, it can be linked to this initiative, similarly to many projects that were incorporated to the New Silk Road even though they started earlier (Szcudlik, 2016). One Belt One Road is to some extent a geopolitical initiative that aims at connecting China with Europe. Therefore, the shifting narrative regarding Chinese investments towards a more positive tone, is a good sign for Beijing as it facilitates the implementation of the New Silk Road. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the mistakes that were committed by both Chinese and Polish actors that led to the failure of COVEC's investment as this project shows the complexity of Sino-European relations and is a useful case study that sheds light on the communication gap between the Chinese and Europeans. The highly fragmented Europe poses many challenges to the Chinese investment projects that are the essence of the New Silk Road. The case study of COVEC revealed an important problem that the EU member countries face while collaborating with China – each country needs to follow its national interests but at the same time all states need to adhere to the EU legal regulations. Additionally, the lack of common EU policy on China complicates member states' relations with the PRC. While, Poland allowed China to enter the EU public procurement market, but it is highly improbable that Beijing would let any European country conduct similar infrastructural investment project in China. Therefore, the issue of the lack of reciprocity is currently one of the major problems in the Sino-European relations that impedes cooperation (Dollar, 2016).

The case study of COVEC's investment shows that China tends to choose countries with relatively low entry barriers for their investment projects and then aims at reaching the countries of the Western part of the EU. Under the New Silk Road, Poland serves as the gateway to the European Union (Xinhua, 2016) – trains arriving to Poland will then divide into different directions targeting countries such as Germany. Another example that demonstrates the pattern of choosing places that would easily allow China to enter the EU in the later course is the case of the high-speed railway between Belgrade and Budapest. As a candidate country, Serbia faces less strict laws and does not have to comply with EU regulations (Kynge, Beesley & Byrne, 2017), and therefore serves as a perfect destination for Chinese investment which from Belgrade aims at expanding towards the EU member countries.

Finally, it is important to stress that the case study of COVEC is not the only example of failed investment projects in the EU. Under the 'Go Global' strategy, many Chinese companies operating in various sectors approached the European market and faced difficulties, mainly caused by the

cultural misunderstandings, non-adherence to the local laws and unfamiliarity with the rules of operation in the specific markets. As it was discussed, the high-speed railway project between Belgrade and Budapest is currently under the question. Furthermore, in 2011 the Chinese multinational company, Huawei, experienced troubles with Swedish labour regulators for alleged violations (Hanemann & Rosen, 2012: 58). The TCL Group, one of the largest consumer electronics enterprises with a global presence, in China, made a series of mergers and acquisitions between 2002 and 2004 in Germany's Schneider, the French Thomson company's TV business, as well as France's Alcatel's mobile phone business (Wang & Hu, 2012: 90). However, all three M&A brought very serious losses to the group.

The failure in all those cases can be attributed to unfamiliarity with the local customs and the communication gap. Chinese representatives were reported to commit a series of mistakes such as scheduling meetings during weekends which were not attended by any European mid-level executives as they do not work on Saturdays and Sundays, which is not a case in China (Wang & Hu, 2012: 90). An analysis of the failed cooperation with the EU partners illustrated by the projects mentioned above, shows that the Chinese experience significant communication problems in Europe and the case study of COVEC was not exceptional in these terms.

Conclusion

The question that arises from the analysis of the unsuccessful projects by the Chinese companies in the EU is whether anything could have been done in order to avoid the failures? This work argues that the problem of the communication gap between China and Europe can only be avoided if both sides learn more about each other's cultures and make sure that there are not too many divergences between the national level and EU legal regulations.

The case study of COVEC proved that there is a necessity to employ experts with the academic and practical knowledge on Chinese business culture, negotiation style and law in order to advise the government on how to approach Chinese partners. This would be helpful in preparations to receive the delegates from Beijing and could reduce the tensions that are created due to the lack of knowledge on what to mutually expect from the business partners from Asia. Moreover, this is the way to improve the communication between China and the BRI participating countries that could significantly contribute to successful implementation of various investments planned as the part of the New Silk Road.

Furthermore, all EU member states need to acknowledge the difficulty of adhering to both domestic laws and the ones imposed by Brussels. The case study of COVEC showed that the differences in the Polish and European Union's regulations on public procurement proved to be an issue which significantly complicated cooperation with the Chinese. Disparities in the law on domestic and EU level, as well as the way of interpretation of some legal regulations are complex issues for the investors from third countries, therefore this work argues that cohesion of law on these two levels is a key factor that would facilitate the collaboration between China and the EU.

In conclusion, this essay finds that the communication gap is one of the major impediments in the Sino-European relations. The case study of COVEC revealed that some EU member countries like Poland still lack experience in the field of cooperation with the Chinese investors who, on the other side, are not entirely aware of the norms and laws that everyone has to adhere to in the EU. Despite the positive change in the media discourse after the failed investment by COVEC, the Chinese still

face many challenges in the EU. Favourable attitude towards the investment from Beijing definitely helps in China's conquer of the European market under the Belt and Road Initiative, however it will take a long time for both China and the EU to gain understanding of our diverse business culture and approach towards the law, which are the crucial components of the fruitful and successful future collaboration.

Appendix 1: Articles used for the CDA analysis

Article 1: "Gigantyczny chiński projekt transportowy. Polska kluczowa dla Nowego Jedwabnego Szlaku" (China's giant transport project. Poland crucial for the New Silk Road) (May-2015)

Article 2: "Chiński pas oplata Europę. Co udało się Dudzie załatwić dla Polski?" (Chinese belt embraces Europe. What did Duda manage to arrange for Poland?) (November-2015)

Article 3: "Prezydent Chin daje sygnał do inwestowania w Polsce" (Chinese President gives signal to invest in Poland) (June-2016)

Article 4: "Nowy Jedwabny Szlak, czyli wyścig do Chin koleją i statkami. Co zyska Polska?" (The New Silk Road: a race to China by rail and ship. What are the benefits for Poland?) (June-2016)

Article 5: "Co Polska ugrała z Chińczykami" (What Poland has negotiated with the Chinese) (June 2016)

Sources Cited

Behnam, B. & Mahmoudy, B. (2013) A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Reports Issued by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General on Iran's Nuclear Program during the Last Decade, *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 3 (12), 2196-2201.

Central and Eastern Europe Development Institute (2012) *Partners or rivals?: Chinese investments in Central and Eastern Europe*, Warsaw: CEED.

Dollar, D. (2016) China as a global investor, Asia Working Group Paper 4, Foreign Policy at Brookings. Available at: www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/China-as-a-Global-Investor-Asia-Working-Paper-4-2.pdf [Accessed 26 Sept. 2017].

Fairclough, N. (1995) *Language and power*, Harlow: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (2001) *Critical discourse analysis: the critical study of language*, London; New York: Longman.

- Fox, J. and Godement, F. (2009) A Power Audit of EU-China Relations, European Council on Foreign Relations Policy Report. Available at: [http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR12 - A POWER AUDIT OF EU-CHINA RELATIONS.pdf](http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR12_-_A_POWER_AUDIT_OF_EU-CHINA_RELATIONS.pdf) [Accessed 26 April 2017].
- Godement, F. (2012) Facing the Risks of the Going Out Strategy, *European Council on Foreign Relations China Analysis*. Available from: [http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/China Analysis Facing the Risks of the Going Out Strategy January2012.pdf](http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/China_Analysis_Facing_the_Risks_of_the_Going_Out_Strategy_January2012.pdf) [Accessed 26 April 2017].
- Godement, F., Parelló-Plesner, J. & Richard, A. (2011) The Scramble for Europe, *European Council on Foreign Relations Policy Brief*. Available at: [http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR37 Scramble For Europe AW v4.pdf](http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR37_Scramble_For_Europe_AW_v4.pdf) [Accessed 26 April 2017].
- Gradziuk, A. & Szczudlik-Tatar, J. (2012) Perspektywy rozwoju współpracy gospodarczej Polski z Chińską Republiką Ludową [Perspectives on development of economic cooperation between Poland and the People's Republic of China], *The Polish Institute of International Affairs Report*. Available at: http://www.gochina.gov.pl/files/?id_plik=16 [Accessed 07 Aug. 2017].
- Graham, J.L. & Lam, M.N. (2003) The Chinese Negotiation, *Harvard Business Review* 81 (10), pp. 82-91.
- Gu Y., Wang X., and Ni W. (2011) Ugly Highway Crash for Chinese Firm in Poland, Asian American Journalists Association at Columbia Journalism School. Available at: <https://aajaatcolumbia.wordpress.com/2011/07/07/ugly-highway-crash-for-chinese-firm-in-poland/> [Accessed 22 April 2017].
- Hanemann, T. & Rosen, D. H. (2012) China Invests in Europe. Patterns, Impacts and Policy Implications, *Rhodium Group Report*. Available at: [http://rhg.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/RHG ChinaInvestsInEurope June2012.pdf](http://rhg.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/RHG_ChinaInvestsInEurope_June2012.pdf) [Accessed 12 May 2017].
- Heiduk, G. & McCaleb, A. (2014) Chinese FDI and financial engagement in Poland, in Szunomar, A. (ed.) *Chinese Investments and Financial Engagement in Visegrad Countries: Myth or Reality?* Institute of World Economics, pp. 55-73.
- Horwitz, F., Hemmant, R. & Rademeyer, C. (2008) Chinese business negotiations: South African firm experiences and perspectives, *South African Journal of Business Management* 39 (1), pp. 1-13.
- Institute of Media Monitoring (2016) Najbardziej opiniotwórcze polskie media w 2015 roku [The most opinion-making Polish media in 2015], Report, March 2016.
- Jones, D. A. (2012) China's New Grand Strategy for Europe, *Transnational Corporations Review* Volume 4 (4), pp. 85-97.

- Kynge, J., Beesley, A. and Byrne, A. (2017) EU sets collision course with China over 'Silk Road' rail project, *Financial Times*, 20 February. Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/003bad14-f52f-11e6-95ee-f14e55513608> [Accessed 12 April 2017].
- Mierzejewski, D. (2009) Obraz Chin w polskich mediach – refleksja krytyczna [The picture of China in Polish media – critical reflection]. In: Górlaczyk B (ed.) *Polska- Chiny, Wczoraj, dziś, jutro* (Poland-China, Yesterday, today, tomorrow). Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek: Toruń.
- Ngai, P. & Koehn, P. (2005) Organizational communication and globally displaced perimeter populations: a neglected challenge for intercultural-communication training, in: G. Cheney and G. Barnett (eds.) *International and Multicultural Organizational Communication*. Cresskill, N.J., Hampton Press.
- Pan, Z. (2010) Managing the conceptual gap on sovereignty in China–EU relations, *Asia Europe Journal* 8 (2), pp. 227–243.
- Pyffel, R. (2011) Analiza. Konsekwencje klęski pod A2. "Jak przeistoczyć się we wroga drugiego mocarstwa świata" [Analysis. The consequences of A2 failure. How to become the enemy of the world's second most powerful country], *Rzeczpospolita*. Available at: <http://wpolityce.pl/polityka/116295-analiza-konsekwencje-klaski-pod-a2-jak-przeistoczyc-sie-we-wroga-drugiego-mocarstwa-swiate> [Accessed 15 April 2017].
- Roehrig, M. F. (1994) *Foreign Joint Ventures in Contemporary China*, New York: St Martin's Press.
- Stanzel, A. (2012) China's investment in influence: the future of 16+1 cooperation, *European Council on Foreign Relations Policy Brief*. Available at: http://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/chinas_investment_in_influence_the_future_of_161_cooperation7204 [Accessed 12 May 2017].
- Szczudlik, J. (2016) Three Years of the Silk Road: Successes and Challenges, *The Polish Institute of International Affairs Report* no. 71. Available at: <https://www.pism.pl/publications/bulletin/no-71-921#> [Accessed 13 April 2017].
- Wang, Y. & Hu, H. (2012) The cultural Path Dependence in the Process of Chinese SOEs' "Going out" - On the basis of the discussion of some typical cases, Proceedings of 2012 Annual Meeting of the Academy of International Business-US North East Chapter: Business Without Borders, *SHU Conference Publications*. Paper 1.
- Xinhua (2016) Xi's state visit to Poland to promote Belt and Road construction, cement ties with CEE, *Shanghaidaily.com*. Available at: <http://www.shanghaidaily.com/nation/Xis-state-visit-to-Poland-to-promote-Belt-and-Road-construction-cement-ties-with-CEE/shdaily.shtml> [Accessed 15 April 2017].

MAPPING CHINA JOURNAL

Mapping China Journal 2017 / Number 1

**Part 4: Changing Dynamics between a Fragmented EU and China's Rise as Rule-Shaper
in Global Politics**

Belt and Road Initiative: China's Rising Impact on Socio-Spatiality in European Cities

By Laura Henneke*

Abstract

On the 1st of January 2017, a train began its 7500-mile maiden voyage from Yiwu, East China to Barking, East London. Its arrival, 18 days later, strikingly demonstrates the UK's presence in the yidai yilu 一带一路 (lit. One Belt One Road) initiative which is officially translated into 'Belt and Road Initiative' (BRI). This is China's grand strategy to, among other things, expand China's influence by means of ambitious infrastructure projects across its borders, into territories beyond. This includes a redevelopment site next to London's City Airport where a Chinese developer is erecting a business park for Chinese small and medium-sized enterprises. This essay argues that large Chinese infrastructure projects have an impact on socio-spatiality in European cities. By looking at cases – such as Fuenlabrada, Spain and Tbilisi, Georgia – where Chinese investment has already had a visible impact on the urban landscapes, I argue that BRI is a globalisation of Chinese architectural features and infrastructural characteristics that consequently impact the use of space and everyday lives of the people who inhabit such places. The essay contributes to discussion on the impact of China's grand strategy, analysis of which is to date dominated by economists and geopolitics who overlook its social and spatial dimensions.

* Based in London, Laura Henneke is a visual sociologist specialised in urbanism. She studied Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at the Technical University of Berlin, completed a dual degree Master's in Architecture and Urban Design at the Technical University of Berlin and Tongji University Shanghai, and is currently doing a University of London-funded PhD in Visual Sociology at Goldsmiths College, University of London. Her main research interests are the migration of transnational traders to and from China, the New Silk Road / Belt and Road Initiative, architectures of logistics and transportation, and visual research methods. She is co-founder of Present Spaces, a collaborative unit at the intersection of research, design, sociology and urbanism (www.presentspaces.com), and an active member of the Centre of Urban and Community Research at Goldsmiths College as well as the PhD Migration Reading Group. Laura has lived, studied and worked in Berlin, Shanghai, Sydney and London and presented and exhibited her work in several international events.

Belt and Road Initiative: China's Rising Impact on Socio-Spatiality in European Cities

From the office of a Chinese investor, I am overlooking the Royal Albert Dock – or what is left of what was once London's busiest dock: an emptied piece of land, ready for redevelopment, along a water basin that parallels the runway of London City Airport. Some rowers are passing by the large glass front, enjoying a particularly sunny day in this unreal urban landscape where airplanes take off at what seems only a few strokes away. "And right behind that green hill", says the investor's representative, pointing North East, "is where the New Silk Road ends".¹

Introduction

The New Silk Road is called 'Silk Road Economic Belt' and is part of the *yidai yilu* 一带一路 initiative, which literally means 'One Belt One Road', but officially translates into 'Belt and Road Initiative' (BRI). It is China's grand strategy to expand its influence by means of ambitious infrastructure projects across its border and into territories beyond (Summers, 2016; World Bank, 2016; Leverett & Bingbing 2017). By establishing alternative trade routes, stabilising China's border regions, increasing trade with neighbouring countries, integrating them into quickly evolving Asian value chains, and by promoting economic development in BRI countries, BRI's intention is to create a more connected, wealthier Asia. This interconnected Asia will have China as its core and have stable links to Africa and Europe. The increase of Chinese outward foreign direct investments (FDI) has been observed for several years but only in 2013 did China's president Xi Jinping brand this trend as the 'Belt and Road Initiative'. In this he "cleverly folded a number of existing or planned schemes into the grand narrative" (Miller, 2017: 34) while claiming it to be his contribution in the quest of rejuvenating the 'empire' (Miller, 17: 33).

To this day only very tentative definitions exist of what the geographic scope of the Belt and the Road exactly is. Basically, the Belt and Road initiative has two main prongs: one is called the 'Silk Road Economic Belt' (the Belt) and the other the '21st Century Maritime Silk Road' (the Road)" (Phillips, 2017a). The latter refers to a sea route linking China's southern coast to east Africa and the Mediterranean mainly in terms of investment in geostrategic harbours. For instance, Piraeus harbour, the Gate to Europe, was sold to COSCO, a Chinese state-owned company, when Greece privatised many of its assets as austerity measures. Contrary to what the metaphor suggests, the expansion of 'the Belt' is not limited to China's neighbours, nor is it shaped evenly round. It reaches as far as to the African continent, criss-crossing Central Asia, a region that forms a focus of the initiative. After the Soviet Union fell apart, investors mostly overlooked -or rather neglected- Central Asian countries such as Kyrgyzstan or Uzbekistan. Today they are especially open to contracts with Chinese developers who want to build highways, transport hubs and other supporting infrastructure to enable the circulation of goods in the most remote areas of the Eurasian continent. According to the Chinese government, BRI will run through 67 countries, however, a clear definition of what it is, is not provided (Miller, 2017: 31). The BRI will rather "form a network of trading routes influenced by the competing demands of geography, commerce

¹ Meeting between the author and investor's representative. London, 07 April 17.

and geopolitics” (Miller 2017:31). Chinese firms will build new roads and railway tracks, linking mines with power plants, factories, wholesale markets, and new mushrooming cities “wherever they can find willing partners” (Miller, 2017:31).

This essay is written from the perspective of an urban sociologist and points at the socio-spatial impact that the New Silk Road will presumably have on urban landscapes, and London's East in particular. Learning from Doreen Massey, “we recognise space as the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny” (Massey, 2005:5). Hence, the question of how the social and built fabric of a place changes when Chinese investment, commodity flows, and people intersect. To answer this, two exemplary cases will be investigated: Fuenlabrada in Spain and Tbilisi in Georgia. They may geographically, economically and culturally seem to be far afield from London but it will be shown that they can hint towards its future.

The remaining sections of this essay are devoted to the following tasks. The first untangles the UK's involvement in BRI in the light of Brexit and what this means for the capital's urban development. The next, on the two case studies Fuenlabrada in Spain and Tbilisi in Georgia, discusses the architectural and socio-economic impact that Chinese investment has had respectively and draws parallels between them and London. The last is speculating about the impact that BRI may have on socio-spatiality in London's East by highlighting the docklands' past as so-called arrival quarters for Chinese migrants.

The New Silk Road reaches London

At a summit in Beijing on May 15th 2017, China was hoping to give global legitimacy to Xi's signature initiative through the endorsement from all participating countries. However, the European Union refused to back a statement on trade because several EU member states raised concerns about the lack of commitments to social and environmental sustainability and transparency (Phillips, 2017b). Thereby the EU made it clear that they would not belong to the willing partners of Xi Jinping (yet). The UK however, on its way out of the Union, does. What had begun under the David Cameron premiership is being continued under Theresa May and repeatedly emphasised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond: the strengthening of economic ties with China stands at the forefront of the UK. From the summit in Beijing Hammond tweeted “Britain is ready to work with all OBOR [One Belt One Road] Partners” (Hammond, 2017).

This essay focusses on one of the latest expansions of the New Silk Road that underlines the growing trade partnership between China and the UK. In January 2017, a freight train went on its maiden voyage between Yiwu in East China and Barking, East London. The inauguration of this new connection coincides with the start of the redevelopment of the Royal Albert Docks, which are situated near the goods yard (right behind the green hill) that marks the final stop of the train journey. Here, neighbouring London City Airport, a Chinese investor is currently erecting a business park, supposedly the capital's third financial district (Greater London Authorities, 2013). Compared to numerous other Chinese investments in London's property and infrastructure, the Royal Albert Docks present a novel scenario with uncertain, yet exciting outcomes. Aimed at Chinese small and medium sized enterprises, it goes beyond the monetary level, possibly marking the beginning of a new Chinatown. Most likely it will be accompanied by an indispensable transnational migration of Chinese entrepreneurs who may eventually transform the social and material fabric of London's East.

This argument is based on geographer Doreen Massey's theory that social change and spatial change are integral to each other. She writes:

“‘The spatial’ [...] can be seen as constructed out of the multiplicity of social relations across all spatial scales, from the global reach of finance and telecommunications, through the geography of national political power, to the social relations within the town, the settlement, the household and the workplace. It is a way of thinking in terms of the ever-shifting geometry of social/power relations, and it forces into view the real multiplicities of space-time. It is a view of space opposed to that which sees it as a flat, immobilised surface, as stasis, even as no more than threatening chaos – the opposite of stasis – which is to see space as the opposite of History, and as the (consequently) depoliticised. The spatial is both open to, and a necessary element in, politics in the broadest sense of the word.” (Massey, 1994: 4)

When translating this into the case of the Royal Albert Docks, the spatial scales described by Massey are all clearly identifiable: global finance reaches London via the FDI of a private Chinese investor; the bi-lateral agreements between participating nations form the geopolitical backbone that allow such project; and finally, the social layer will surface through new trade relationships, job creation, the goods and services that enter British households, and the migration of individuals along this newly established trade route.

Comparing the Royal Albert Docks to other cases of Chinese investment

Two cities that recently received Chinese investor's money for infrastructure projects can signpost the possible outcome for the Royal Albert Docks. One is Fuenlabrada, a municipality at the southern fringes of Madrid, where an influx of Chinese migrants is associated with the opening of a business park and the arrival of the Yiwu-Madrid freight train that has been running since 2014 (Borgen, 2014). Most of the imported goods that arrive with this train are forwarded to Fuenlabrada's business park Cobo Calleja. When local enterprises struggled in the financial crisis and many had to close down, the mayor saw an alternative in Chinese entrepreneurs to fill the deserted warehouses. It worked out and in 2011 the project 'Plaza de Oriente', an addition to the existing industrial zone of 40.000m² exclusive to Chinese entrepreneurs, was launched (El Mundo, 2011). Albeit based on nebulous sourcing the business park has become the most important wholesale market of Chinese imported goods. Shoes, textiles, toys and household goods are sold in bulk and distributed around the country. In fact, those goods are mostly found in shops informally called *El Chino*: typical corner shops with long opening hours run by Chinese migrants. Madrid's Chinese community has grown significantly since the 2008 financial crisis. It now accounts for 55.784 people, signalling the highest influx of new arrivals compared to any other migrant group (Comunidad de Madrid, 2016). Many of them live in the southern fringes of the city, perhaps unsurprisingly close to the warehouses in the economic zone of Cobo Calleja. The community of Chinese migrants has gained so much visibility due to the concentration in specific neighbourhoods that "China Pequeña" has become a term coined by Madrileños in the city's South. Events such as the Chinese New Year are celebrated openly and Chinese restaurants and supporting services in Mandarin flourish in the area.

The other city that showcases a possible scenario for the future of London's Royal Albert Docks is Tbilisi in Georgia. The country is a major location for Chinese investment from mainly one

source: the Hualing Group, which has its headquarters in Urumqi, Xinjiang Province. The Hualing Group became involved in Georgian infrastructure projects during the preparations of the 2015 European Youth Summer Olympic Festival, where shortly before the start of the games accommodation was still missing. Coming to help last minute, Hualing Group provided an immaculate Athlete's Village situated between Tbilisi's city centre and the airport. Once the Youth Games were over, the buildings were returned to the investor's real estate portfolio (Shepard, 2016). The master plan as well as the architectural features of the so-called 'Hualing Tbilisi Sea New City' strikingly resemble modern neighbourhoods in China. The greenfield development site consists of about 20 ten-storey-high apartment blocks. The apartments have richly ornamented facades and roofs, which are imitating a mix of European styles and respond to current Chinese tastes. Clustered in a gated community, the buildings are connected through neat greenery, walkways, and ponds. They could not differ more from the adjacent grey-in-grey neighbourhood. Hualing's successful project has whetted Georgia's appetite for more. Within sight of the former Athlete's village that is now inhabited by well-to-do homeowners, the Chinese investor is building a wholesale market that will serve as distribution centre for Chinese imported commodities. The goods arrive by train through the China-Turkey corridor operated by DHL and launched in late 2015 (DHL, 2015). As well as this, 'Hualing Kutaisi Free Industrial Zone' is built near the city of Kutaisi to facilitate imports from China. Hualing Group is not only leaving a footprint with distinct architecture but also naming the developments after the company.

All projects – the Royal Albert Docks in London, Cobo Calleja near Madrid and the Hualing developments in Georgia – have at least two things in common: First, the Chinese investments were accepted in a moment of economic uncertainty. Like most Western European countries, the UK used to stop Chinese developers from building large infrastructural projects locally. This changed when local investors pulled out of ongoing projects in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. In the case of the London Docklands, the almost ten years of stand still in the highly-valued stretch of land, prompted the City of London to finally agree to Chinese investment to transform the urban landscape between the O2 Arena and London City Airport. The next step² – to agree on plans for a Chinese business park – is a good example for the UK's increasing interest in strengthening economic ties with China and what is now described as "post-Brexit trade deals" (Tisdall, 2017).

Secondly, in all three cases Chinese FDI is finding its way through large infrastructure projects on locations along the newly established train routes. These projects *de facto* expand the transportation networks on the Eurasian continent in favour of spreading Chinese influence and soft power based on goods. As seen for example in the South of Madrid, traders and entrepreneurs migrate to where the goods go. As in the times of the ancient Silk Road, they bring not only merchandise but also their culture, language and architectural designs.

Even though remarkable parallels can be found in the cities of Madrid, Tbilisi and London, I acknowledge the vagueness of anticipating the outcomes of future projects such as the Royal Albert Docks through a simple comparison. Each case of Chinese investment encounters very diverse preconditions and local regulations. The impact of the large infrastructure projects on socio-spatiality also depends on the collaboration of the investor and the receiving municipality. After all, it is migrating individuals that I assume will have the biggest impact on everyday life in the country of investment/London in the long-run.

² Still under David Cameron.

BRI's impact on socio-spatiality in London

Returning to the question of how Chinese outward FDI might have an impact on the socio-spatiality of European cities, one can look at the history of London's Docklands to understand the role the Chinese entrepreneurs will play in this.

Amidst the then bustling docks lies the district of Limehouse, extremely unhealthy living conditions, overcrowding, bad sanitation and a high crime rate prevailed in the area during the age of early globalization. However, in the 1880s Chinese businessmen started to settle exactly here because of the convenient maritime connection (Seed, 2006:59) and by the 1920s Limehouse had become London's first Chinatown. Limehouse became "the most cosmopolitan district of the most cosmopolitan city of Britain" (Seed, 2006:59)

In fact, ever since goods circulated globally by locomotives and steamboats, the London Docks were a so-called 'arrival quarter' for migrating entrepreneurs (Gidley, 2017). During the late 19th and beginning of the 20th century "migrants were not just immigrants but rather part of larger networks of circulation. Arrival quarters were not just gateways to particular nations but nodes in these larger circuits" (Gidley, 2017). Such quarters are described to "provide social networks, mutual aid and linguistically accessible economic niches as a way of integrating people into the city" (Saunders, 2011).

The Limehouse Chinatown was mostly destroyed by aerial bombing during World War II and its population were dispersed further West of London. In the 1960s the once so prosperous Docklands decayed when they outlived their original purpose. Freight transport was containerised and larger vessels were demanding more accessible ports further downstream the river Thames. The area was subsequently deserted but the redevelopment – as mentioned earlier – was delayed for many years.

"The very formation of the identity of a place – its social structure, its political character, its 'local' culture – is also a product of interactions. the 'character of an area' is no more the product of an internalised history than are the recent fortunes of its manufacturing industry. the global is in the local in the very process of the formation of the local. This then, is an extension to the concept of place of that element of the argument about space which has it that not only is space the product of social relations but that 'it is those relations which constitute the social phenomena themselves'." (Massey, 1994:122)

With the plans to erect a business park for Chinese entrepreneurs on the site of the Royal Albert Docks – within a stone's throw of the former Limehouse Chinatown – a new arrival quarter is underway. Following Massey's idea that the formation of the identity of a place is a product of interactions (Massey, 1994), I expect the individual entrepreneurs will establish dense social networks within a globally connected urban structure that combines work with living and leisure. Surrounding neighbourhoods will likewise see an influx of Chinese migrants as well as supply services and facilities such as kindergartens, schools, medical institutions or elderly homes operated in Chinese language. Having all those services locally available will make the Chinese entrepreneurs independent from the inner city and thereby contribute considerably to the budget of the

municipality. That will then allow for further investments in parking lots, wholesale and storage depots, suburban logistics and living quarters.

Conclusion

Informed by the glimpses at the cases in Spain and Georgia, and based on Gidley's and Saunders' concepts of 'arrival quarters' and Massey's theory of space, I presume that BRI will have an impact on the socio-spatiality of European cities. Wherever Chinese FDI becomes visible in urban structures and architectural features, like in the case of Tbilisi. The migration of Chinese individuals who then settle down in the vicinity of certain projects like in the case of Cobo Calleja will soon follow. The Royal Albert Docks, as such, will likely also experience these developments. The increase in Chinese FDI and the consequential growing number of projects associated with BRI will also generate a gap in academic research. Further exploration and research will show to what extent BRI will impact everyday life in European cities and how much visual influence Chinese engineering will have on urban landscapes in the long run.

Sources Cited

- Burgen, S. (2014) The Silk Railway: freight train from China pulls up in Madrid, *The Guardian*, 11 December. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/dec/10/silk-railway-freight-train-from-china-pulls-into-madrid> [Accessed 19 April 2016].
- Comunidad de Madrid (2016) Informe de Poblacion de Origen Extranjero Empadronada en la Comunidad de Madrid. Available at: <http://www.madrid.org/cs/Satellite?blobcol=urldata&blobheader=application%2Fpdf&blobheadername1=Content-Disposition&blobheadervalue1=filename%3DInforme+de+poblaci%C3%B3n+Extranjera+en+la+C.M.+Enero+2016.pdf&blobkey=id&blobtable=MungoBlobs&blobwhere=1352905454028&ssbinary=true> [Accessed 19 April 2016].
- DHL (2015) DHL lays tracks for new Silk Road with China-Turkey rail corridor. Available at: http://www.cn.dhl.com/en/press/releases/releases_2015/local/121715.html [Accessed 14 Jan. 2017].
- El Mundo (2011) Blanco acude a la apertura de Plaza de Oriente, un macroproyecto chino, 16 February. Available at: <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2011/02/16/madrid/1297882310.html> [Accessed 12 May 2016].
- Gidley, B. (2017) Arrival Quarters: Diasporic Cartographies and Migrant Urbanism, in: *Migrant Cartographies: Cities, Circuits and Circulations*, Goldsmiths College, University of London.
- Hammond, P. (2017) In China for @OBORCHINA *One Belt and One Road* Britain is ready to work with all OBOR partners, @PhilipHammondUK, 11 May. Available at: <https://twitter.com/PhilipHammondUK/status/863642713568268288> [Accessed 04 Nov. 2017].

- Leverett, F. and Bingbing, W. (2017) The New Silk Road and China's Evolving Grand Strategy, *The China Journal*, 77(1), pp. 110–132.
- Massey, D. B. (1994) *Space, Place and Gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Massey, D. B. (2005) *For Space*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Miller, T. (2017) *China's Asian Dream: Quiet Empire Building along the New Silk Road*. Zed Books.
- Phillips, T. (2017a) The \$900bn question: What is the Belt and Road initiative?, *The Guardian*, 12 May. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/12/the-900bn-question-what-is-the-belt-and-road-initiative> [Accessed 12 May 2017].
- Phillips, T. (2017b) EU backs away from trade statement in blow to China's "modern Silk Road" plan, *The Guardian*, 15 May. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/may/15/eu-china-summit-beijing-xi-jinping-belt-and-road> [Accessed 15 May 2017].
- Saunders, D. (2011) *Arrival City: How the Largest Migration in History is Reshaping Our World*. London: Windmill Books.
- Seed, J. (2006) Limehouse Blues: Looking for "Chinatown" in the London Docks, 1900-40 - pdf, *History Workshop Journal*, Autumn 2006(62), pp. 58–85.
- Shepard, W. (2016) Silk Road Impact: Chinese Company Turns Old Soviet Factory Into Free Industrial Zone, *Forbes*. Available at: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/wadeshepard/2016/06/30/how-chinas-hualing-group-revived-an-old-soviet-factory-to-help-restore-an-ailing-economy-in-kutaisi-georgia/> [Accessed: 27 November 2016].
- Summers, T. (2016) China's "New Silk Roads": sub-national regions and networks of global political economy, *Third World Quarterly*, 37(9), pp. 1628–1643.
- Tisdall, S. (2017) UK's need for post-Brexit trade deals will trump human rights concerns, *The Guardian*, 4 April. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/apr/04/uks-need-for-post-brexit-trade-deals-will-trump-human-rights-concerns> [Accessed 14 April 2017].
- World Bank (2016) Europe and Central Asia Economic Update, April 2016: The Impact of China on Europe and Central Asia. *The World Bank*. Available at: <http://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/book/10.1596/978-1-4648-0912-5> [Accessed 06 Jan. 2017].