The London School of Economics and Political Science

Securing the Way to Power:

China's Rise and its Normative Peace and Security Agenda in Africa

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Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented for examination for the MPhil/PhD degree of the London School of Economics and Political Science is solely my own work other than where I have clearly indicated that it is the work of others (in which case the extent of any work carried out jointly by me and any other person is clearly identified in it).

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Abstract

China's role as a global security actor has increased dramatically over the last decade and the country is now projecting its power and promoting its agenda well beyond Asia. In particular, peace and security have come to be at the centre of China's Africa strategy and are now a major factor affecting not only China's relations with African countries, but also its global image. Studying China through its engagement with the continent's security regime allows us to see the global actor the PRC is becoming.

In order to obtain a more nuanced understanding of the topic, I advance an argument that is both theoretical and empirical. Theoretically, I argue that the concept of normative power, understood as the power to shape the 'normal' in international affairs, gives us insights into China's preferred norms and practices and into the mechanisms through which it is promoting its vision of world order.

Empirically, I claim that not only is China being socialised into the international system, but it also contributes to shaping it. Its norms-making attempts become more evident if we look at its engagement with Africa's security environment. I thus make two related claims. First, China increasingly acts as a security norms-shaper in the continent thanks to a stable discourse articulating China and African countries as fellow members of the Global South. Second, as China-Africa security cooperation develops mostly through multilateral institutions, I argue that its normative power potential varies depending on the contingent institution.

After mapping China's Africa discourse on security across the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the African Union, and the United Nations Security Council in the period 2000-2018, I argue that it is especially through creating dedicated forums responding to its interests and priorities, that China is becoming a normative power.

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but who left us too early to see it completed.

List of Acronyms

AIIB – Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
AU – African Union
AUC – African Union Commission
BASIC – Brazil South Africa India China
BRI – Belt and Road Initiative
CCP – Chinese Communist Party
CELAC – Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
COMESA – Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CPC – Communist Party of China
DPKO – Department of Peacekeeping Operations
ECOWAS – Economic Community of Western African States
EU – European Union
FOCAC – Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
FP – Foreign Policy
G77 – Group of 77
HIPPO – High-Level Panel on United Nations Peace Operations
ICRC – International Committee of the Red Cross
IGAD – Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IGOs – Intergovernmental Organisations
ILO – International Labour Organization
IMF – International Monetary Fund
IOs – International Organisations
IOC – International Olympic Committee
IR – International Relations
MoU – Memorandum of Understanding
MOOTW – Military Operations Other Than War
NAM – Non-Aligned Movement
NEPAD – New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs – Non-governmental Organizations
OAU – Organization of African Unity
P-5 – Permanent Five
PAIDA – Partnership for Africa's Integration and Development Agenda
PKOs – Peacekeeping Operations
PLA – People's Liberation Army
PRC – People's Republic of China
PSC – Peace and Security Council (of the AU)
PSOs – Peace Support Operations
RECs – Regional Economic Communities
SADC – Southern African Development Community
TICAD – Tokyo International Conference on African Development
TYCBP – Ten Year Capacity Building Programme
UFWD – United Front Work Department
UK – United Kingdom
UN – United Nations
UNCERD – Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme
UNGA – United Nations General Assembly
UNMISS – United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNSC – United Nations Security Council
US – United States
WTO – World Trade Organization
XUAR – Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region

Part I – Research Design

Chapter 1 – Introduction

临渊羡鱼，不如退而结网
Better to go home and weave a net
than to stand by the pond longing for fish
(The Book of Han, Volume 56)

1.1 Introduction

Chinese domestic and foreign policy (FP) has been quite eventful in the last few years. From the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), from the militarisation of the South China Sea to the opening of the first military base abroad in Djibouti, the country's rise as a global power under the rule of Xi Jinping is indeed one of the defining features of international relations (IR) and contemporary politics. In response to these developments, many in the community of China-experts have been debating which direction will the country take with President Xi and his China Dream. Whether one wants to think this is the beginning of an Asian century or not, it is undeniable that China's reach has considerably expanded in a relatively short period of time. There is hardly somewhere in the world where Chinese investments or infrastructure projects have not proliferated; where Confucius Institutes have not opened; where Chinese sharing bicycles cannot be spotted in the streets; where Chinese workers and migrants have not settled. Yet, there is a region in particular that has attracted a lot of attention: Africa. Browse any newspaper or magazine these days and there will be stories of Chinese in Africa or Africans in China. Search among China- and international politics-focused journals and there will be articles discussing China's engagement in the continent. Though China-Africa relations are all but a new phenomenon, they have gained in popularity in the last two decades. In this thesis, I look at both topics—China's rise and China-in-Africa—as two sides of the same coin. Analyses of the rise of China as a responsible global power would be incomplete without looking at its engagement with Africa; similarly, the People's Republic of China's (PRC) role in promoting development and stability in the continent is inevitably tied to its role as a major actor in global politics. Moreover, preconceptions about the nature of the country's rise tend to shape the ways in which China's engagement with the Global South is received and understood.

Therefore, what China does in Africa matters; it matters both for Africa and for China's global image and credibility. In particular, by reading China through its discourse on peace and security and its relations with Africa one begins to see the global

actor that China is, or aspires to, becoming. What China does globally also matters; it matters both for the world and for its Africa policies, because it sets the tone for its interactions with Africa's elites and peoples.

The success of China's relations with the continent is due not only to attractive economic incentives, but also, and most importantly, to its skilful use of multilateralism and soft power and to a stable and coherent discourse articulating China and African countries as fellow members of the Global South, united in the struggle against Western hegemony. While relations so far have mostly been based on economic and trade interactions, the extraction of resources, and the promotion of development through infrastructure building, recent years have seen a surge in peace and security-related activities. This dissertation explores China's Africa discourse and its main representations and explains how Chinese leaders have gradually introduced and legitimised increased engagement with peace and security. The discourse is examined across the three main multilateral platforms where China-Africa security policies are discussed and negotiated, namely the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), the African Union (AU), and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). I then analyse the findings of the empirical chapters through the lens of normative power: Thanks to the stability of the discourse depicting them as friends, brothers, and partners, China has gained the necessary respect and recognition to be considered a normative power in the continent and, increasingly, beyond. In this chapter, I first present the empirical puzzle that motivated this thesis and outline the research questions that guide the analysis. Second, I sketch my argument and the main claims I make throughout the dissertation. Third, I deal with the ontological and epistemological commitments that underlie the analysis, and I explain my choice of the case study, the methods utilised, and the limitations of this research. I conclude with an overview of the dissertation.

1.2 The empirical puzzle

On the one hand, the rise of China is at the heart of many debates within the discipline of IR. Yet, as the next chapter argues in more detail, these debates tend to revolve around a series of nested dichotomies (i.e. revisionist versus status quo, engage versus deter); these, however, do not reveal much of the modalities of its rise. Moreover, for the most part ongoing discussions stem from anxieties within the Western and the American community of scholars in particular, who worry that a rising China will

constitute a threat to the existing rule-based international system.[1] While for many years academics have debated whether China's participation in international organisations would lead to norms-taking or norms-making, to system-maintaining or system-reforming attitudes, more recently China declared itself an advocate of multilateralism and a champion of globalisation and international cooperation. The AIIB, the BRI, and its active participation in, and contributions to, UN peacekeeping are only a few among many examples of its international activities in this sense. It is thus imperative that we gain a better understanding of the rise of China and its characteristics, since they have wider implications for international politics. On the other hand, China-Africa ties have gained steam in the last two decades and now constitute a large field at the intersection of many disciplines, including IR, political economy, anthropology, and development studies. As part of a growing presence in the continent, as well as China's global ambitions, peace and security, which once occupied only a marginal role, now feature prominently in all exchanges. Yet, most works tend to focus on either bilateral relations with specific countries, or areas such as resources extraction, migration, infrastructure building, agriculture projects, migration, and the media. There are only a few comprehensive studies that tackle the opportunities and challenges of engaging China in the African peace and security architecture. By and large, the work on Sino-African ties has remained "under-theorised and fragmented, and mostly driven by events of the day."[2] Furthermore, some of the literature and media reports, still tend to characterise the PRC as either a neo-colonialist or not, thus missing the nuances of what are much more complex relations.[3]

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[1] See one of the latest policy-oriented reports in this sense: Michael J. Mazarr, Timothy R. Heath, and Astrid Stuth Cevallos, "China and the International Order," Rand Corporation, 2018, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2423.html; See also: A. Feigenbaum, "Reluctant Stakeholder: Why China's Highly Strategic Brand of Revisionism Is More Challenging Than Washington Thinks," *MacroPolo*, April 27, 2018, https://macropolo.org/reluctant-stakeholder-chinas-highly-strategic-brand-revisionism-challenging-washington-thinks/.

[2] Chris Alden and Daniel Large, eds., *New Directions in Africa-China Studies* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), xv.

[3] See for instance: Adama Gaye, *Chine - Afrique: Le Dragon et l'autruche*, Études Africaines (L'Harmattan, 2006); "Online Debate: Is Chinese Investment Good for Africa?," *Council on Foreign Relations*, February 20, 2007, http://www.cfr.org/china/chinese-investment-good-africa/p12622; Juan Pablo Cardenal and Heriberto Araújo, *China's Silent Army: The Pioneers, Traders, Fixers and Workers Who Are Remaking the World in Beijing's Image* (Allen Lane, 2013); Howard W. French, *China's Second Continent: How a Million Migrants Are Building a New Empire in Africa* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014); Nick Van Mead, "China in Africa: Win-Win Development, or a New Colonialism?," *The Guardian*, July 31, 2018, sec. Cities, https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/jul/31/china-in-africa-win-win-development-or-a-new-colonialism; To be sure, more recent studies have attempted to push the debate beyond such oversimplifications and called for more attention to the complexity of China-Africa. See for exmaple: Chris Alden, "In Search of Gravity's Rainbow. Theoretical Approaches and China-Africa Scholarship" (Making sense of the China-Africa Relationship: Theoretical Approaches and the Politics of Knowledge,

Hence, enquiring into both topics has value for IR *and* for the field of China-Africa studies. This thesis contributes to the former in a number of ways. First, it maps the emergence of China as security/development norms-setter in Africa and establishes a link between its regional engagement and its global role and aspirations. Second, it contributes to debates on China's rise by providing a more accurate and nuanced analysis of its rise as a global security actor. Third, and related, it contributes to enriching the debate on China's participation in international institutions by looking not so much at the material and strategic components of advancing its interests—aspects which the literature has dealt with in detail—but also by bringing both discourse *and* practice back in. While some have referred to China's foreign policy as a "discursively enacted normative ideal"[4], to the best of my knowledge, no study so far has provided an accurate analysis of such a discourse, which is needed to seriously investigate how the material and the discursive inform each other. In turn, this will contribute to a long overdue debate on how to engage IR theory in the study of China's rise in a way that contributes to theory itself, rather than only to the empirical or methodological realms.[5] Fourth, it addresses China's use of soft vs hard/economic power in formulating foreign policy towards the continent and argues against common perception of Chinese soft power being 'weak'. Instead, it will be argued that China's normative power in Africa rests upon being recognised as such thanks to a successful use of soft power alongside economic incentives. Fifth, it contributes with empirical material to support explanations of the normative power of China's foreign policy, and thus simultaneously contributes to the growing literature enquiring into how emerging and rising powers participate in, shape, and change the international system.

As regards the field of China-Africa studies, this thesis contributes to filling the gaps in the literature by providing a comprehensive study of the official discourse informing peace and security policies in the continent. Analysing the discursive basis upon which the PRC's Africa policies rest and the changes and continuities in the official China's Africa discourse, is essential to understand the future direction of such policies. In short, as mentioned above, the material and the discursive are both important and constitutive of the China-Africa story, which would not be as successful if one of the two were missing. This dissertation will therefore contribute both to the

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Yale University, 2013); Alden and Large, *New Directions in Africa-China Studies*; Deborah Bräutigam, *Will Africa Feed China?* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[4] Chris Alden and Daniel Large, "China's Exceptionalism and the Challenges of Delivering Difference in Africa," *Journal of Contemporary China* 20, no. 68 (2011): 26.

[5] Chengxin Pan and Emilian Kavalski, "Theorizing China's Rise in and beyond International Relations," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 18, no. 3 (2018): 293, doi:10.1093/irap/lcy018.

growing, yet still small body of works on China-Africa security cooperation and to studies of the discursive dimension of China's engagement.

1.2.1 The research questions

I divide the research questions guiding this thesis into two separate but interrelated sets. The first set of questions addresses China's contemporary engagement in the Africa and the changing policies towards its peace and security environment since the creation of the FOCAC in 2000. The second set of questions links its involvement in the continent with its global policies and explores the possibility of China becoming a norms-setter in the area of security, peacekeeping, and conflict management. These questions start from the premise that China is rising and it is especially rising as a security actor both globally and through its engagement in Africa (Chapter 3 will provide further background for these claims). While in the past China lacked the resources and confidence to 'broker' security abroad, it is now ready to expand both its soft and hard/military power beyond Asia.[6] In other words, China is in a position to shape the way other countries think about security. Since much of China's security activities abroad is happening in the continent and given the recent developments highlighted above, Africa occupies a central role in China's strategy. Until recently, peace and security were only marginal in China's Africa policies. However, since 2011-2012, we have witnessed increased attention to issues related to Africa's security environment coupled with substantial funding to a range of security-related activities, ranging from contributions to the AU, to peacekeeping missions and military training. We have thus witnessed a shift in China's foreign policies towards the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), which reflects a broader shift in the country's general foreign policy behaviour. Yet, such a shift in China-Africa relations does not seem to be mirrored by changes in the official discourse. Thus, the first research questions ask:

- *How is China's Africa discourse constructed and how have Chinese leaders gradually included increased engagement in peace and security within such discourse in the years 2000-2018?*
- *Is the shift in policies mirrored by a shift in the discourse?*
- *How could Chinese leaders justify such growing involvement without infringing the principles of state sovereignty and non-interference?*

[6] Mikko Huotari et al., "China's Emergence as a Global Security Actor," MERICS Papers on China (MERICS, July 2017).

- *How has the China-Africa discourse contributed to build China's image as a legitimate norms-maker in the continent?*

China has indeed showed its willingness to contribute to the international system not just by deploying more boots on the ground and building military bases in Africa or elsewhere, but also by contributing to (re)shaping global norms. This in turns begs the question of whether its Africa policy can be considered as part of a more coherent global (grand) strategy whereby China 'pushes' for the sinicization of world order and the spread of socialism with Chinese characteristics, rising as much within the existing system as by creating alternative normative platforms. If there is such a global strategy, it may be argued that it is the result of both the country being socialised into existing practices and organisations and the PRC increasingly socialising others (in this case, African leaders) into its developmental peace model. According to Callahan, paraphrasing Qin Yaqing, "at the heart of Chinese FP is not a realist security dilemma, but a constructivist identity dilemma: who is China, and how does it see the world? … Xi (and many public intellectuals) sees China as a normative power whose values should inform global governance in a world that is a 'community of shared destiny'."[7] As I clarify in the next Chapter, I understand normative power to mean being able to set the 'normal' in international relations. The questions in the second set provide a link between the specificity of China's Africa discourse and its global image and credibility, and ask:

- *Can China be considered a normative power?*
- *Can it shape norms on peace and security in Africa (and beyond)?*
- *Does China's security policy in Africa tell us something about what kind of international actor China is, or aspires to, becoming?*

Answering these questions requires three analytical steps. First, I map the main representations of the China-Africa story in China's official policy discourse, as well as their persistence throughout the nearly two decades since the creation of the FOCAC. Second, I unpack how the discourse has slowly made space for a shift in China's

[7] William A Callahan, "China's 'Asia Dream': The Belt Road Initiative and the New Regional Order," *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics* 1, no. 3 (September 1, 2016): 227; Yaqing Qin, "Guoji Guanxi Lilun Zhongguo Pai Shengcheng de Keneng He Biran [A Chinese School of International Relations Theory: Possibility and Inevitability]," *Shijie Jingji Yu Zhengzhi [Wolrd Economics and Politics]* 3 (2006): 7–13; Honghua Men, "Liangge Daju Shijiao Xia de Zhongguo Guojia Rentong Bianqian (1982–2012) [China's National Identity in Transition: Domestic and International Perspectives (1982-2012)]," *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue*, no. 2 (2014): 54–66; see also Pu and Wang for a study of the debate among Chinese scholars over strategic overstretch: Xiaoyu Pu and Chengli Wang, "Rethinking China's Rise: Chinese Scholars Debate Strategic Overstretch," *International Affairs* 94, no. 5 (2018): 1019–35, doi:10.1093/ia/iiy140.

approach to security policies in the continent, although no major change in the basic discourse is detectable. Third, I trace how these representations have been maintained and cultivated across all levels of engagement with the continent, from the regional, through the continental, and to global, which involves tracing the discourse not only in FOCAC documents, but also in AU and UNSC texts. After comparing across the three fora, I finally explore the link between the discourse and the practice of security policies in Africa and link these with the country's global ambitions as a rising security actor. By looking at how China asserts its normative power thanks to a logic of relationships that stresses equal partnership and mutual benefit, it is possible to identify a long-term vision where China is positioned at the centre stage of world affairs and international security.

1.2.2 The argument

In answering the research questions above, I advance an argument that is both theoretical and empirical. Theoretically, I argue that the concept of normative power, understood as the power to shape the 'normal' in international affairs, gives us insights into China's preferred norms and practices and into the mechanisms through which it is promoting its vision of world order.

On the one hand, existing approaches to China's rise do not tell us much of the kind of actor China is becoming, besides unproductive dichotomies (i.e. peaceful versus threat, deter versus engage), and they see Chinese foreign policy in terms of its material and economic power. The literature on China-Africa relations similarly suffers from a number of flaws: It remains under-theorised and fragmented and it has not properly addressed security cooperation (with a few exceptions), nor it has given much attention to the discursive dimension of China's engagement with Africa. On the other hand, given that such a coherent set of strategies, goals, and policies are actively being promoted by Chinese leaders as alternative norms to existing standards, the concept of normative power promises to reveal much more of China's attempts to socialise others into its worldview. Normative power is power in context, meaning that is given by the contingent context of interactions between actors. Thus, an actor's capacity to define the normal depends on the recognition of this agency by target states. In this case, as China applies a relationship logic to international affairs, aimed to optimising relations rather than transactions, it is thanks to years of intense and skilful 'diplomacy of respect' that China has improved relations with Africa and gained the respect and recognition that are necessary to become norms-shapers. In this sense, therefore, a

normative power is able to shape the normal only so long as the other actors involved in interactions recognise its agency as such. To be sure, China's economic clout and its attractive investments are important components of its policies in Africa. However, it is important to also look at how the discourse has contributed to pave the way into Africa and building an image for China of a friendly and trustworthy ally.

Empirically, I claim that not only is China being socialised into the international system and 'uses' liberal norms to its advantage, but it also contributes to shaping it. In particular, it acts as a security norms-shaper in Africa and does so by: 1) proposing new norms and concepts that are based on the country's history and domestic experiences, or re-elaborating on existing norms and concepts by adding a Chinese 'flavour'; 2) simultaneously acting inside and outside of typically Western-dominated arenas; 3) creating or co-constituting regional forums with other actors in the developing world; and 4) framing these efforts into a broader foreign policy strategy that acts at different levels, from the regional, through the continental, to the global. I thus make two related claims. First, China increasingly acts as a security norms-shaper in the continent thanks to a stable discourse articulating China and African countries as fellow members of the Global South. The stability and persistence of what I called the "South-South cooperation" discourse granted China the reputation of a trustworthy friend and partner, one that delivers on its promises and commitments and that acts in pursuit of win-win cooperation. This discourse consistently paints China and Africa as long-term friends united in an anti-hegemonic struggle against the domination of the 'West'. The stability of these narratives has been maintained throughout a long period of engagement, mostly thanks to the positive response encountered from African elites, which have been hailed into China's vision of world order, and to the security-development nexus. As the concept entails a close link between the promotion of economic growth and social development and the achievement of stability and peace, growing security and military commitments appear legitimate and reasonable. By presenting itself as a reliable partner and by being acknowledged as such across Africa, the Chinese model represents an attractive alternative to Western modes of engagement. The discourse is structured into three layers, which gradually make space for peace and security. Starting from the basic "South-South cooperation" discourse, the second layer allows for a number of representations to develop, such as China and Africa as friends, brothers, and partners, and focuses on the developmental aspect of the security-development nexus, whereby development is considered a prerequisite for stability. The third layer introduces a new aspect of China's engagement, namely the

securitisation of development, which understands the latter as necessarily premised on a peaceful and secure environment. This change produced a shift in policies, ranging from non-interference to growing military presence—which now align with the country's broader grand strategy—but not a change in the first and second layers of discourse, which remains stable and coherent.

The second claim is that, as China-Africa security cooperation develops mostly through multilateral institutions, its normative power potential varies depending on the contingent institution. China's Africa discourse is organised horizontally across three multilateral platforms through which peace and security matters and the related policies are discussed, namely the FOCAC, the AU, and the UNSC. China promotes its vision of world order and its normative security agenda across *all* these platforms. In other words, not only has the country been socialised into the existing system, but it has also been an agent of socialisation and has expressed the desire to become a norms-maker both *inside* and *outside* of Western-dominated institutions—what scholars have called a two-way socialisation. Such efforts have, in turn, encountered responses from regions of the Global South. This thesis' focus on the three multilateral institutions aims to bridge across fora where power dynamics and processes are different, with the objective of contributing to our understanding of China's rise as an active participant to international peace and security. While the coherency of dominant representations of China and Africa is maintained across the three organisations, it seems that China tends to conform to existing norms and maintaining the normative status quo when it operates within existing normative frameworks (the UN and the AU); and it shows a more active approach aimed to redesign selected norms when it operates within the framework of Chinese-led or co-constituted regional organisations (the FOCAC). However, as will be shown later, signs of the Chinese discourse and its diplomatic language are increasingly appearing and are becoming naturalised in the context of the UN as well. Depending on its position with each of these institutions, therefore, the potential for China to effectively promote its preferred security and development norms varies greatly. Therefore, analysing Chinese-led forums and agreements reveals more of the country's preferred norms and practices than exclusively focusing on the country's behaviour in already established institutions.

The empirical chapters thus trace how China's Africa discourse has been constructed around a set of recurring representations of China and Africa backed by political and historical narratives. I first show how China's engagement with peace and security has been negotiated and co-constituted as part of the FOCAC, an exclusive

China-Africa platform launched in 2000 with the aim of negotiating, designing, and agreeing on common policies. The Forum also provides China with an opportunity to announce generous funding initiatives, thus also strengthening its soft power appeal. The platform can be considered the perfect example of China's attempt to create Chinese-led alternative institutions with the objective of increasing its influence abroad. Second, the African Union, a continental organisation which was originally inspired by the desire to promote pan-Africanism and a common vision for the continent. The institution is heavily dependent on external funding to conduct its activities and China is still in the early phase of learning and familiarising itself with existing practices; in this sense, it lags behind other powers that have been interacting with the organisation for longer, most importantly the European Union (EU). This is the locus where China struggles the most to take the normative lead. Third, I look at ways in which China has been conforming to international norms without showing major signs of revisionism, with the exception of human rights, at the UNSC. The Council represents China's global stage for advancing its preferred ideas on peace, security, and development and promoting the security-development nexus. While the PRC has been socialised into the existing institutional order, its own vision of peace and security—mostly in the form of developmental peace, preventive diplomacy, a soft approach to conflict resolution, and non-intervention—is gradually being promoted at the global level too.

Through the analysis of such a coherent set of representations and the policies that the discourse enables, we begin to see the contours of a strategy that entails a number of elements, including a focus on the security-development nexus; continued assistance for developing countries in the fields of development, infrastructure building, trade, and investment, as well as increased militarisation and securitisation of foreign relations; and the promotion of Chinese preferred norms and practices via both existing organisations and new institutional arenas. In terms of the country's specific peace and security strategy in Africa, this long-term vision includes an even bigger commitment to peacekeeping; growing contributions to both the UN and the AU; and an emphasis on political mediation and diplomacy as the primary means to resolving conflicts, although China is also ready to accept more robust intervention when needed.

1.3 Methodology and methods

As argued above, this thesis aims to understand how the shift in Chinese policies towards Africa's security environment was constructed in the discourse and how such discourse has contributed to building China's image as a legitimate partner in the

continent to the point that we can consider the PRC a normative power. Thus, from the outset, this thesis is committed to answering "how-possible" questions rather than "why-questions". According to Doty, "[h]ow questions examine how meanings are produced and attached to various social subjects and objects, thus constituting particular interpretive dispositions that create certain possibilities and preclude others. How questions thus highlight an important aspect of power that why questions too often neglect: *the way in which power works to constitute particular modes of subjectivity and interpretive dispositions*."[8] In this section, I clarify the ontological and epistemological framework guiding the present work and I detail the reasons for the choice of discourse as the preferred 'tool' in analysing China's Africa policies on peace and security. As Haugevik reminds us, "methodologies are distinctly different from methods. Whereas methodology may be understood as our position on how and in what ways knowledge is acquired, *methods* refer to the various research techniques employed in analysing empirical data." [9] Thus, in the first part of this section, I clarify the thesis' epistemological and ontological commitments, while in the second part I detail the 'tools' utilised to gather empirical material.[10]

As De Zutter underlines and as I further discuss in Chapter 2, the question of what normative power 'is' has often been confused with the question of what normative power 'should be'; however, while

> Normative power is an identity attributed to a political entity that diffuses its norms in the international system … the norms that are diffused are not by definition universal. … neither universal norms nor a particular set of instruments can be considered as ontological necessities for normative power. This move enables us to overcome the force-for-good connotation inherent in much of the NPE literature. A normative power is not 'good' because it diffuses norms.[11]

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[8] Roxanne Lynn Doty, *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 4; emphasis added.

[9] Kristin M. Haugevik, *Special Relationships in World Politics: Inter-State Friendship and Diplomacy after the Second World War*, New International Relations (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 54; emphasis in original.

[10] Jackson argues that the decisive issue in social sciences, more than our methdological choices, is internal validity, that is "whether, given our assumptiongs, out conclusions follow rigorously from the evidence and logical argumentation that we provide." Which means that "even someone who rejects our values should be able to acknowledge the validity of our empirical results within the context of our perspective." I have thus strived to be as clear and explicit as possible about my research design in order to ensure such internal validity. See Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and Its Implications for the Study of World Politics* (Routledge, 2010), 22–23.

[11] Elisabeth De Zutter, "Normative Power Spotting: An Ontological and Methodological Appraisal," *Journal of European Public Policy* 17, no. 8 (2010): 1107. Thus, while Manners links action and universal norms with the identity of a norm-diffuser (an association which is constructed as ethical necessity), De Zutter distinguishes between an ethical and a normative power ontology. Unlike her, I do not consider the ethical dimension of China's normative power, as I explain in more detail in Chapter 2.

In order to understand what power 'is', one needs to identify the material conditions (or power capacities) of a certain actor or state; the identity and role of such an actor (awareness of the capacities, construction of its own norms as universal, and willingness to project these norms); the relational dimension of normative power (the assessment of an actor's image and how others perceive it); and the impact of such power on other actors' practices. In other words, "[a] normative power's identity needs confirmation by relevant others."[12] Therefore, because of its commitment to how-possible questions and its focus on the relationality of norms-diffusion and of social processes more in general, this thesis is positioned at the intersection of constructivist and post-structuralist scholarships.[13] On the one hand, according to Guzzini,

> Constructivism makes the epistemological claim that *meaning, and hence knowledge, is socially constructed*. … This *knowledge is moreover socially or intersubjectively constructed*. Concepts are part of language. Language can neither be reduced to something subjective nor objective. … Second, [it] *makes the ontological claim that the social world is constructed*. … Third, since constructivism distinguishes and problematises the relationship between the levels of observation and action, it is finally *defined by stressing the reflexive relationship between the social construction of knowledge and the construction of social reality*.[14]

The claim that social knowledge and language are co-constitutive of reality is not unique to constructivism: Poststructuralists also argue that "it is not that nothing exists outside of discourse, but that *in order to exist for us, phenomena have to be grasped through discourse*."[15] Furthermore, frustrated by IR's obsession to focus on either materialism or ideationalism, the structure or the agent, Jackson and Nexon recommend that attention should instead be given to the relational processes occurring between agents and structures.[16] In order to explore the nature of social processes of interaction, post-structuralist scholars draw on Foucault's work on discourse and discursive representations.[17] Discourse has been defined in a number of ways but can be best

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[12] Ibid., 1117.

[13] For more background on the differences between rationalist and constructivist approaches, including "middle-ground" constructivism, see James D. Fearon and Alexander Wendt, "Rationalism v. Constructivism: A Sceptical View," in *Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse-Kappen, and Beth A. Simmons (London: SAGE Publications, 2002); For a discussion on the overdue dialogue between constructivism and post-structuralism, see Oliver Kessler, "The Contingency of Constructivism: On Norms, the Social, and the Third," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 45, no. 1 (2016): 46 (footnote 15).

[14] Stefano Guzzini, "The Concept of Power: A Constructivist Analysis," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33, no. 3 (2005): 498-499; emphasis added.

[15] Kevin C. Dunn and Iver B. Neumann, *Undertaking Discourse Analysis for Social Research* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 9; emphasis added; see also Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006), 22.

[16] Patrick Thaddeus Jackson and Daniel H. Nexon, "Relations Before States: Substance, Process and the Study of World Politics," *European Journal of International Relations* 5, no. 3 (1999): 291–332, doi:10.1177/1354066199005003002; Roxanne Lynn Doty, "Aporia: A Critical Exploration of the Agent-Structure Problematique in International Relations Theory," *European Journal of International Relations* 3, no. 3 (1997): 365–92, doi:10.1177/1354066197003003004.

[17] See Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1982).

described as "a system producing a set of statements and practices that, by entering into institutions and appearing like normal, constructs the reality of its subjects and maintains a certain degree of regularity in a set of social relations. Or, more succinctly, discourses are systems of meaning-production that fix meaning, however temporarily, and enable actors to make sense of the world and to act within it."[18] Representations are defined by Dunn and Neumann as "things and phenomena as they appear to us, that is, not the things themselves but things filtered through the fabric existing between the world and ourselves: language, categories, and so on. The discourse analyst makes it her task to show how representations are constituted and prevail, and the span of different representations that at any given time constitutes a discourse."[19] Within a discourse, representations construct regimes of truth or knowledge; importantly, discursive representations do not only produce identities, but also foreign policies and their outcomes. As Hansen suggests, within specific discourses, certain paths of action become possible while others are made more unlikely or even unthinkable.[20] While discursive representations precondition foreign policy, they are also "(re)produced through articulations of policy."[21] Or, in the words of Wæver, "[f]inding and presenting in a systematic way patterns of thought in a specific country will always be helpful in making the debates and actions of that country more intelligible to other observers."[22] In other words, unpacking China's normative power potential and its changing foreign policies towards Africa's security (and the world's) would be impossible without looking at how China's Africa discourse is constructed in the first place.

Therefore, a study of discourse implies the study of both language and practice. Indeed, Neumann calls for returning practice to the study of language: "the linguistic turn is not just a turn to narrative discourse and rhetoric, but to how politics is actually

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[18] Dunn and Neumann, *Undertaking Discourse Analysis for Social Research*, 4; Doty, *Imperial Encounters*; David Campbell, *Writing Security. United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992); Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*.

[19] Dunn and Neumann, *Undertaking Discourse Analysis for Social Research*, 33–34; It should be noted that discursive representations do not mean the same thing to everyone. As Laclau and Mouffe explain, "[a]n earthquake or the falling of a brick is an event that certainly exists, in the sense that it occurs here and now, independently of my will. But whether their specificity as objects is constructed in terms of 'natural phenomena' or 'expressions of the wrath of God' depends upon the structuring of a discursive field"; Laclau and Mouffe cited in Iver B. Neumann, "Discourse Analysis," in *Qualitative Methods in International Relations. A Pluralist Guide*, ed. Audie Klotz and Deepa Prakash, Research Methods Series (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 74.

[20] Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 21.

[21] Hansen cited in Haugevik, *Special Relationships in World Politics*, 42.

[22] Ole Waever, "Identity, Communities and Foreign Policy: Discourse Analysis as Foreign Policy Theory," in *European Integration and National Identity: The Challenge of the Nordic States*, ed. Lene Hansen and Ole Wæver, The New International Relations Series (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 26.

effected. … Practices are discursive, both in the sense that some practices involve speech acts (acts which in themselves gesture outside of narrative), and in the sense that practice cannot be thought 'outside of' discourse."[23] Practices are defined by Barnes as "socially recognized forms of activity, done on the basis of what members learn from others, and capable of being done well or badly, correctly or incorrectly"[24]—in other words, while discourse refers to preconditions for action, practices are socialised patterns of action, and "[a]s long as people act in accordance with established practices, they confirm a given discourse."[25] Hence, for instance, Chinese authorities' first visit abroad of the year to African countries has become a routine enactment of one of the main representations of China and Africa as good friends and, more recently, good brothers and good partners.[26] It should be noted, however, that discourse "does not try to get to the thoughts and motives of the actors, their hidden intentions or secret plans. … What interests us is neither that individual decision makers really believe, nor what are shared beliefs among a population … but which codes are used when actors *relate* to each other."[27]

Not surprisingly, then, for Weldes and Saco discourse is a "structure of meaning-in-use that is both intersubjective and, in part, linguistic. It is linguistic in that language is a central sign system that provides the resources out of which representations are constructed. It is intersubjective in that the language through which people construct meaning is necessarily shared."[28] In particular, in Weldes' study of the construction of the national interest, she explains that such a construction takes place in three steps.[29] First, state officials create representations which serve to populate the world with 'objects'—including both the self and others—drawing on already available cultural

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[23] Iver B. Neumann, "Returning Practice to the Linguistic Turn: The Case of Diplomacy," *Millennium* 31, no. 3 (2002): 627–28.
[24] Barnes, cited in Neumann, ibid., 629–30.
[25] Ibid., 637.
[26] For a study of China based on an understanding of IR as a relational ontology, focusing on friendship through the study of guanxi relations, see Astrid H. M. Nordin and Graham M. Smith, "Reintroducing Friendship to International Relations: Relational Ontologies from China to the West," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 18, no. 3 (2018): 369–96, doi:10.1093/irap/lcy011; Kavalski similarly uses the concept of guanxi to amplify the intrinsic relationality of IR; see Emilian Kavalski, "Guanxi or What Is the Chinese for Relational Theory of World Politics," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 18, no. 3 (2018): 397–420, doi:10.1093/irap/lcy008.
[27] He adds that "What is often presented as a weakness of discourse analysis – 'how do you find out if they really mean what they say?', 'what if it is only rhetoric?' – can be turned into a methodological strength, as soon as one is conscientious in sticking to discourse as discourse." Waever, "Identity, Communities and Foreign Policy: Discourse Analysis as Foreign Policy Theory," 26–27; emphasis in original.
[28] Jutta Weldes and Diana Saco, "Making State Action Possible: The United States and the Discursive Construction of 'The Cuban Problem', 1960-1994," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 25, no. 2 (1996): 373.
[29] Brian Fay, *Social Theory and Political Practice*, Controversies in Sociology ; 1 (London: Allen & Unwin, 1975), 85.

and linguistic resources; importantly, an identity is given to each of these objects, based on more or less precise characteristics. Second, these representations postulate relations among the various objects; such relations often appear in the form of "quasi-causal arguments". Fay calls the "accounts of the ways in which certain configurations of conditions give rise to certain forms of action, rules, and common meanings" quasi-causal instead of causal, because

> in these sorts of conditionship (sic) relations, consciousness functions as a mediator between the determining antecedent factors and the subsequent action; in other words, men act in terms of their interpretations of, and intentions towards, their external conditions, rather than being governed directly by them, and therefore these conditions must be understood *not as causes but as warranting conditions* which make a particular action or belief more *'reasonable', 'justified', or 'appropriate', given the desires, beliefs, and expectations of the actors*. Nevertheless, such quasi-causal accounts are a legitimate explanatory device without which a social science would be radically impoverished.[30]

Third, as these representations provide a vision of the world of international affairs, they *have already defined* the national interest. For instance, Weldes analyses the construction of the United States (US) national interest in the context of the Cuban missile crisis and proposes to look at how representations are produced and naturalised through the processes of articulation and interpellation. I especially draw on the latter when I briefly explore the acceptance of China's Africa discourse among African leaders in Chapter 4 and I thus clarify its meaning here. Interpellation (or hailing) is discussed by Althusser as a mechanism that "'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals … or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects".[31] Weldes further explains that it refers to a process whereby identities or subject-positions are created and simultaneously individuals are hailed into such identities; these individuals thus come to identify with a certain subject-position *and* with the representations in which they appear. These representations make sense to them *because* they have identified with a specific subject-position.[32] As a result, the

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[30] Brian Fay, *Social Theory and Political Practice* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1975), 85.

[31] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, translated by B. Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1971), 174.

[32] Weldes, "Constructing National Interests," 287; Hall defines articulation as "the form of the connection that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. … the so-called 'unity' of a discourse is really the articulation of different, distinct elements which can be rearticulated in different ways because they have no necessary 'belongingness'." Hence, uncovering process of articulation means trying to understand how ideological elements come to cohere together within a discourse, as well as how and under which conditions they become articulated. See Lawrence Grossberg, "On Postmodernism and Articulation: An Interview with Stuart Hall," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10, no. 2 (1986): 53; Weldes elaborates on this and describes it as the process through which "[m]eaning is created and temporarily fixed by establishing chains of connotations among different linguistic elements." Importantly, such meanings already exist and make sense in a particular society; but they are (re)combined thus producing contingent and contextually specific representations. Thus, for instance, 'totalitarianism' was often articulated by US foreign policy actors during the Cold War and came to

representations appear to be common sense, to reflect 'the way the world really is'."[33] Hence, all foreign policy makers have to do is to present foreign policies that seem legitimate to the relevant audiences. The construction of a link between policy and identity becomes the centre of political activity and it is what makes both parts appear coherent with each other.[34] As foreign policy discourses are analytical constructions, they are identified through the reading of texts. After all, states are verbal entities that "communicate widely, both domestically and internationally, leaving very little foreign policy action that is entirely non-verbal."[35] However, equal importance is given to spoken discourse and I draw heavily on Chinese and African leaders' speeches, as well as interviews with practitioners and diplomats, true to the poststructuralist mantra that "everything—gestures, monuments, films, dress, grave goods, and so on—can be read as text."[36] While showing how acceptance works is not the main purpose of the thesis, it is also possible to advance some preliminary conclusions on such mechanisms based on the analysis of the official documents and the fieldwork interviews.

Therefore, because the relationship between discourse and politics is co-constitutive, not only does discourse hold power over politicians and policymakers, but the latter can shape such discourse and use it to justify their preferred policies. In Wæver's words, "*overall* policies in particular hold a definite relationship to discursive structures" since policy makers ought to be able to argue where a certain policy "takes us" and how it resonates with how the state views itself.[37] As Hansen suggests building on Foucault, Butler, and others,

> Language's structured yet inherently unstable nature brings to the fore the importance of political agency and the political production and reproduction of discourses and the identities constructed within them. Policy discourses construct … problems, objects, and subjects, but they are also simultaneously articulating *policies* to address them. Policies are thus particular directions for action, whereas the construction of identity in discourse is seen more broadly as a political practice. The conceptualization of foreign policy as a discursive practice implies that policy and identity are seen as ontologically interlinked: it is only through the discursive enactment of foreign policy, or in Judith Butler's terms 'performances', that identity comes into being, but this identity is at the same time constructed as the legitimization for the policy proposed. … Identities are thus articulated as the reason why policies should be enacted. But they are also (re)produced

connote 'expansion' and 'aggression'. As a result, when 'totalitarianism' was invoked, it also carried the meanings of 'expansion' and 'aggression'. See Weldes, "Constructing National Interests," 284.

[33] Ibid. In her case, the subjcet-position 'the US' brings with it a sense of belonging to an American national community. Through this representation, individuals are interpellated into the language of the national interest as members of the imagined American community.

[34] Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 28; For more on the question of what degree of freedom exists in the forging of articulations, see Weldes, "Constructing National Interests," 286–87.

[35] Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 23.

[36] Dunn and Neumann, *Undertaking Discourse Analysis for Social Research*, 39.

[37] Waever, "Identity, Communities and Foreign Policy: Discourse Analysis as Foreign Policy Theory," 27; emphasis in original.

> through these very policy discourses: they are simultaneously (discursive) foundation and product.[38]

Among the possible modes of discourse arranging information in a logical order, it is argued that narratives have been be important tools in China's foreign policy in Africa, and the PRC's official political rhetoric is rich in narratives recalling historical links between the Middle Kingdom and African countries. [39] Indeed, the main representations I identify in the thesis are backed up by powerful narratives. These can be defined as "linguistically mediated temporal syntheses": [40] They are texts characterised by "a clear sequential order that connects events in a meaningful way for a definite audience and thus offer insights about the world and/or people's experiences of it."[41] They differ from other representations of historical reality, such as annals, and chronicles, in that they do not simply list events, but rather *order them in a story*.[42] As Strauss points out, "[o]fficial rhetoric (seeking to persuade), historical narrative (the supporting stories about what has happened), the presumptive audience(s) the rhetoric seeks to persuade, and the politics and concerns of the time in which the rhetoric is propagated are deeply entwined; as audiences, topical concerns and political leaders themselves change, so too should the rhetoric and the narrative."[43] Also, as Somers suggests, "[i]f identities are fixed there can be no room to accommodate changing power relations—or history itself—as they are constituted and reconstituted over time."[44] In her article, Strauss asks why is there such a relatively uniformity of discourse on Africa, while the actual conditions of China-Africa ties have changed and are so multifaceted, even through periods when such ties were tenuous at best. To be sure, China's rhetoric of its relations with Africa has not remained entirely unchanged, and large parts of it have been dropped at the leaders' convenience. Rather, she suggests that rhetoric is not just "empty words":

> In China as elsewhere, official and semi-official rhetoric provides the framework within which policy and initiatives are developed, explained and legitimated both domestically

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[38] Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 21. Emphasis in original.
[39] Bjørnar Sverdrup-Thygeson, "The Chinese Story: Historical Narratives as a Tool in China's Africa Policy," *International Politics* 54, no. 1 (2017): 54–72; Julia C. Strauss, "The Past in the Present: Historical and Rhetorical Lineages in China's Relations with Africa," *The China Quarterly* 199 (September 2009): 777–95.
[40] Ricoeur cited in David Wood, *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation.* (London: Routledge, 1992), 8.
[41] Lewis P. Hinchman and Sandra Hinchman, eds., *Memory, Identity, Community: The Idea of Narrative in the Human Sciences*, SUNY Series in the Philosophy of the Social Sciences (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997), xvi.
[42] Hayden V. White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 4-9; emphasis added.
[43] Strauss, "The Past in the Present," 777.
[44] Margaret R. Somers, "The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach," *Theory and Society* 23, no. 5 (1994): 611.

> and internationally. Rhetoric is part of a complex of critical appeals between the state and significant audiences it wishes to attract, persuade, mobilize or consolidate support within. … reality in policy implementation often departs from stated ideals, but the grounding rhetoric continues to matter to a range of different audiences, both domestic and international. Official rhetoric is also significant as the framing within which policy is articulated. Hence it includes "givens" that Chinese policy makers and elites do not need to question, offers a shorthand for the limited knowledge about Africa the Chinese population at large encounters, and sets forth a set of legitimating claims about China's intentions towards international actors, particularly in Africa itself.[45]

Thus, no matter what a state's principles and foreign policy rhetoric are, there always will be gaps between rhetoric and practice. After all, as White points out, "[i]n the historical narrative the systems of meaning production peculiar to a culture or society are tested against the capacity of any set of "real" events to yield to such systems", suggesting that narrative discourse is all but a neutral medium for the representation of historical events.[46] China's Africa discourse is based on a set of logical supporting ideas, which ultimately "undergird a developmental model for Africa that is at least implicitly deemed both separate from and better than what the West (or in its time, the Soviet Union) has had to offer. … the consistency of China's rhetoric on Africa makes it possible for it to make a credible claim to be Africa's 'all-weather friend' and appeal broadly to African elites."[47] China's attachment to this rhetoric continues to be attractive to core groups in China, Strauss suggests, even as audiences change and norms shift. I here build on some her conclusions by proposing a more theoretically grounded and methodologically accurate analysis of China's Africa discourse and how it adapts to changes in both the international environment and the specificity of China-Africa ties, and I ascribe the longevity of the main representations to the successful layering of the discourse, which I further discuss in Chapter 4.

A more sceptical view would further point to the character of political rhetoric. While conventional constructivist research has sought to demonstrate how persuasion is an essential process in norm building, others have suggested that language and rhetoric are instruments of coercion. On the one hand, constructivist scholarship focuses on communication, especially persuasive messages, as the central mechanisms for (re)constructing social facts.[48] For instance, some argue that some ideas prevail because they 'resonate' with relevant audiences. In this context, frames "provide a singular interpretation of a particular situation and then indicate appropriate

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[45] Strauss, "The Past in the Present," 779.
[46] White, *The Content of the Form*, 44; see also Marc Trachtenberg, *The Craft of International History: A Guide to Method.* (Princeton University Press, 2008), chap. 1.
[47] Strauss, "The Past in the Present," 779-780. See also Chapter 4 for further arguments and empirical material on China's Africa discourse.
[48] Rodger A. Payne, "Persuasion, Frames and Norm Construction," *European Journal of International Relations* 7, no. 1 (2001): 38.

behaviour for that context. … [they] are basic building blocks or the construction of broadly resonant norms and they thereby serve to legitimate normative orders."[49] On the other hand, however, the normative developments observed by constructivists are often the result of a coercive mechanism rather than genuine persuasion, as Payne suggests.[50] Similarly, Krebs and Jackson maintain that although persuasion does occur in the political arena, it is rare and does not exhaust the ways through which rhetoric shapes political contest.[51] Methodologically, they invite scholars to "avoid centering causal accounts on unanswerable questions about actors' true motives and to focus instead on what actors say, in what contexts, and to what audiences"; theoretically, they argue for a move away "from constructivism with a liberal flavor, focused on the transformation of values, toward constructivism with coercive characteristics, focused on the exercise of power."[52] Indeed, "[t]he acquisition and maintenance of rule ultimately hinge as much on legitimacy as on physical coercion, and such legitimacy can be established only through rhetorical action."[53] Hence, while the constructivist enquiry into public rhetorical interchange is much needed, Krebs and Jackson remind us that power and rank are omnipresent in the political sphere and actors do not employ language "unadulterated by earlier political contestation."[54] Similarly, Mattern suggests that reality is constructed not through evidence-based arguments, but through representational force, which she defines as

> a form of power that operates through the structure of a speaker's narrative representation of 'reality'. Specifically, a narrative expresses representational force when it is organised in such a way that it threatens the audience with unthinkable harm unless it submits, in word and in deed, to the terms of the speaker's viewpoint. The unthinkable harm threatened, however, is not physical … Instead the harm promised is to the victim's own ontological security – it is a threat that exploits the fragility of the sociolinguistic 'realities' that constitute the victim's Self.[55]

While this thesis does not apply Krebs and Jackson's rhetorical coercion or Mattern's representational force models—given that the purpose of the research is a different one—they should not be excluded as possible mechanisms at work behind the success of China's discourse in Africa. After all, "it does not matter whether actors believe what

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[49] Ibid., 39; Michael Barnett, "Culture, Strategy and Foreign Policy Change: Israel's Road to Oslo," *European Journal of International Relations* 5, no. 1 (1999): 25.
[50] Payne, "Persuasion, Frames and Norm Construction."
[51] Ronald R. Krebs and Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, "Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms: The Power of Political Rhetoric," *European Journal of International Relations* 13, no. 1 (2007): 36.
[52] Ibid., 36; 37.
[53] Ibid., 38; Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, Nachdr. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), chap. 3.
[54] Krebs and Jackson, "Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms: The Power of Political Rhetoric," 40.
[55] Janice Bially Mattern, "Why 'Soft Power' Isn't So Soft: Representational Force and the Sociolinguistic Construction of Attraction in World Politics," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33, no. 3 (2005): 586.

they say, whether they are motivated by crass material interests or sincere commitment. What is important is that they can be rhetorically maneuvered into a corner, trapped into publicly endorsing positions they may, or may not, find anathema."[56]

1.3.1 Case selection

The choice of China's engagement in African peace and security is motivated by a number of reasons. First, it was chosen in order to address the pitfalls of the bodies of literature on China's rise on the one hand, and on China-Africa ties on the other hand. Examining Africa as a region instead of Asia allows me to go beyond China's immediate neighbourhood, where the US has much influence and many interests, arguably more so than in Africa. In a way, therefore, this can be considered a single case study, one that emerges from an empirical puzzle where "[w]e see something that does not fit our expectations based on prevailing theories or conventional wisdom."[57] Second, and related, this case study shifts the focus away from places where US-China competition is more pronounced, such as the Asia-Pacific—although as argued earlier, it is increasingly the case that both the media and some scholars see the African continent as a 'testing ground' for tensions between the two. European powers, especially France, the United Kingdom (UK), and Portugal, have traditionally not only engaged with the continent for longer than the US, but also have substantial political, economic, and security interests there. And yet, China's 'advance' into Africa is perceived less as a competition by those powers than by the US; some of the concerns raised by former US secretary of state Rex Tillerson during his 2018 tour of five African countries are a good example of such perception.[58] Simultaneously, the continent is at the centre of most debates and resolutions at the UNSC, thus providing a good case for linking the regional with the global sphere. Finally, while China's involvement has so far mostly focused on areas such as trade, investment, agriculture, infrastructure building, extraction of natural and mineral resources, and education, it is not until relatively recently that leaders in Beijing have expressed the desire to engage in peace and security areas in a more substantial way. Africa thus represents a unique

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[56] Krebs and Jackson, "Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms: The Power of Political Rhetoric," 42.
[57] Audie Klotz, "Case Selection," in *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, ed. Audie Klotz and Deepa Prakash (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 51.
[58] Laura Koran, "Why China's Footprint in Africa Worries the US," *CNN*, March 10, 2018, https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/10/politics/china-africa-footprint-tillerson/index.html; On the competition between Chia, the EU, and the US in Africa, see Witney Schneidman and Joel Wiegert, "Competing in Africa: China, the European Union, and the United States," *Brookings*, April 16, 2018, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2018/04/16/competing-in-africa-china-the-european-union-and-the-united-states/.

platform to ascertain China's commitments to shifting norms on peace and security internationally.

1.3.2 Conducting discourse analysis

As the research questions revolve around the construction of China's Africa discourse, how it has gradually incorporated more peace and security, and how the discourse has contributed to creating an image for China as a reliable partner and credible norms-maker, I apply discourse analysis to search for, and identify, the dominant representations of China-Africa—what Dunn and Neumann call an "inventory of representations".[59] I proceed in three analytical steps. First, I map the main representations of the China's Africa discourse as it appears in official policy documents, as well as their persistence throughout the nearly two decades since the creation of the FOCAC in 2000. Second, by utilising the concept of layered discourse, I show how China's Africa discourse is structured along three layers and how it has gradually accommodated narratives on the securitisation of development, producing a major shift in policies, but not in the basic discourse. Third, I trace how the discourse is maintained and cultivated across all levels of security engagement with the continent, namely regional, continental, and global, by analysing AU and UNSC sources.

An essential element of a discourse analytical design is the selection of relevant texts, as suggested by Neumann.[60] As much as the textual material available is practically endless, time and space constraints demand a clear delimitation of sources, which means establishing when enough documents have been read. Because of the focus of the present project on China's security policy towards Africa, the sources examined belong to the realm of official foreign policy discourse, which Hansen describes as "the discourse through which state action is legitimized, and thus under any circumstances crucial for understanding political and social relations within and beyond state boundaries."[61] She understands official discourse as situated in a large intertextual web tracing intertextual references to other texts. Following the first research model she proposes, I thus focus "on political leaders with official authority

[59] Dunn and Neumann, *Undertaking Discourse Analysis for Social Research*, 116–17.
[60] See Neumann, "Discourse Analysis."
[61] Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 59-60; She further clarifies that "adopting official discourse as the analytical point of departure offers a useful tangent between discourse analysis and more conventional forms of foreign policy analysis, and it provides a point of demarcation for a structured account of how to define the analytical, empirical, and methodological focus of one's research project." See; ibid., 60; the time and other constraints of the PhD do not allow to broaden the analysis to the intertextual influences on foreign policy makers' discourses. In order to go deeper into the discursive layers of China's foreign policy, the number and range of texts under analysis would need to be significantly expanded.

to sanction the foreign policies pursued as well as those with central roles in executing these policies, for instance high-ranked military staff, senior civil servants (including diplomats and mediators), and heads of international institutions. [This model] identifies the texts produced by these actors, including speeches, political debates, interviews, articles, and books, as well as the texts which have had an inertextual influence on their discourse."[62] In particular, texts are selected based on three criteria, namely that "they are characterized by the clear articulation of identities and policies; they are widely read and attended to; and they have the formal authority to define a political position."[63]

Based on this model, my choice of texts includes official Chinese policy documents, white papers, and speeches by leading Chinese politicians and diplomats, especially in the context of international and bilateral Sino-African exchanges. These are sourced through a variety of official websites and, when relevant, official media outlets, such as Xinhua News and the People's Daily. Given the primary role played by the FOCAC, output documents, declarations, and speeches from each meeting constitute an essential part of the discourse. In addition to Chinese foreign policy texts, I selected official policy documents issued by the African Union, speeches, and statements from African leaders, officials, and diplomats, who on the one hand are the targeted audience of China's discourse, and on the other hand prove essential in shedding light on African responses to such discourse. Moreover, my sources include official documents, resolutions, and statements from the UNSC, especially from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), and from the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) when relevant, as well as from the Chinese diplomatic delegation to the UN. All the texts are selected starting from 2000 until today, since that is the year when the FOCAC was launched first, thus marking the institutionalisation of Sino-African relations. While I occasionally refer to the Chinese original of certain texts, mostly in the case of President Xi's speeches, the majority of the documents under examination has been analysed in its English official translation. This is due to the nature of the documents, which, with the exception of those targeted at the Chinese domestic audience, are of an international nature. Output documents of FOCAC meetings are published in a mutually-agreed English version. Similarly, meetings between Chinese and African Union representatives are held in English (albeit sometimes with the help of translators) and the subsequent media reports are

[62] Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 60.
[63] Ibid., 85.

published on the respective websites in several translations. Furthermore, while a thesis focusing exclusively on Chinese foreign policy would have benefitted from a greater use of primary sources in the original language, the nature of the project itself, which is interconnected and transnational, demands the analysis to focus on texts in the shared *lingua franca*.

To be sure, Chinese politics presents researchers with unique challenges. Chinese government lingo is characterised by a particular vocabulary and language structure; as a matter of fact, one may say that two different languages exist in China, the official language and the ordinary language. Such a bifurcation became especially pronounced during the Mao era, when official language became "another kind of truth": "[i]t could tell a person about policy, and policy was important to know about regardless of what one thought of it."[64] Moreover, "[a]s the bifurcation of language spread more and more widely through society, a second order of reality—an image of "the official version of things"—seemed to take on a life of its own whenever topics with political implications were being discussed. This second order of reality was not idle puffery. It could have real consequences in the world, and in that sense was itself very real."[65] Arguably, China's discourse is imbued with a language that, according to Davies, "reflects not only the constraints of prolonged, ongoing state censorship but also a poetics of anxiety constitutive of the very discourse that seeks to articulate it."[66] Furthermore, in the era of Xi Jinping, "[g]rowing centralization of Party power has come with a pronounced narrowing of the discourse spectrum."[67] Thus, as Callahan points out, while "[o]fficial Chinese discourse is often very vague, repetitious and unwieldy" and it is tempting "to dismiss official slogans (*tifa*) as propaganda, they are crucial in organizing thought and action in Chinese politics. … Rather than simply search the texts for 'facts,' it is imperative to actively interpret Chinese foreign policy documents by paying close attention to how existing official slogans are employed, how new ones emerge, and how the usage of both old and new slogans changes over time."[68] Doing so allows us to understand "how the text can be understood in terms of the hidden content it discloses."[69] In particular, looking for repetitions of representations is

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[64] E. Perry Link, *An Anatomy of Chinese: Rhythm, Metaphor, Politics* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2013), 236.
[65] Ibid., 278–79.
[66] Gloria Davies, *Worrying about China: The Language of Chinese Critical Inquiry*, 1. paperback ed (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 1.
[67] David Bandurski, "China Shutters Top Leftist Website," *China Media Project*, May 23, 2018, http://chinamediaproject.org/2018/05/23/thoughts-on-the-closure-of-chinas-top-leftist-website/.
[68] Callahan, "China's 'Asia Dream,'" 228.
[69] Michael J. Shapiro, *Studies in Trans-Disciplinary Method: After the Aesthetic Turn*, Interventions (London , New York: Routledge, 2013), 29–30.

useful to construct an inventory of such representations, which in turn contributes to mapping the discourse being analysed.[70]

After having selected the texts to analyse, I proceed to the three analytical steps. First, is mapping representations, which entails detecting patterns of discursive representations in the selected texts, including both dominant and alternative representations.[71] As mentioned earlier, narratives have been identified as important tools in China's foreign policy in Africa and the PRC's discourse is rich in narratives recalling historical links between the Middle Kingdom and African countries, which can thus be considered the main patterns of representations of China-Africa. In particular, I am concerned with the continuity and longevity of representations of China as a fellow member of the Global South and as a developing country; of China and Africa as friends, brothers, and partners; of China and Africa as united in the struggle against the imbalances of a system dominated by the developed North; and so on. In this sense, I follow a "plastic" approach to discourse, which focuses on "the identity of linguistic signs and tropes or the persistence of particular metaphorical schema".[72] This approach "seeks to uncover an organizing principle within a given discourse, often by using the technique of intertextuality (identifying connections of texts and meanings through reference to other texts)." To be sure, "a good discourse analyst should also be able to demonstrate that where the carriers of a position see continuity, there is almost always change."[73] Thus, for instance, as I proceed chronologically, starting from the basic discourse representing China and Africa as fellow members of the Global South and then progressively focusing on the security-related texts, I find that the security-development nexus has been a constant feature of official rhetoric, but that the securitisation of development only becomes prominent roughly starting from 2011-2012.

The second step consists in layering the discourse, that is, demonstrating how the identified representations differ in historical depth, in variation, and in the degree of their dominance or marginalisation in the discourse.[74] Expanding on the research questions presented earlier, how was it possible for Chinese leaders to incorporate

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[70] Dunn and Neumann, *Undertaking Discourse Analysis for Social Research*, 117; of course, "repetition does not preclude variation or gradual re-presentation, so discourse analysis also seeks to capture the inevitable cultural changes in representations of reality. In his interrogation of Western discourses on the Congo, for example, Kevin's mapping of the 'heart of darkness' representation allowed him to recognize that it was being employed during the early 20th century to enable." See; ibid., 119.
[71] Neumann, "Discourse Analysis," 70 and following.
[72] Mark B. Salter and Can E. Mutlu, *Research Methods in Critical Security Studies: An Introduction* (Routledge, 2013), 114.
[73] Neumann, "Discourse Analysis," 71.
[74] Ibid., 73.

increasing engagement with peace and security and justify growing financial commitments, when such topics have been largely absent by, or only mentioned superficially in, relevant policy documents until 2012? How could they justify such growing involvement without infringing the principles of respect for state sovereignty and non-interference? How could such a major shift in policies not be reflected by a mirroring change in the narratives utilised? I will argue that rather than fabricating an entirely new discourse to legitimise China's new security and military presence in the continent, they have instead built on the existing, basic discursive representations. I use Wæver's concept of layered discourse, which can "specify change within continuity" by referring to "degrees of sedimentation: the deeper structures are more solidly sedimented and more difficult to politicise and change, but change is always in principle possible since all these structures are socially constituted."[75] Each layer of the structure adds specificity as well as constraints to the analysis. According to this understanding of discourse, scholars are able to make contingent 'predictions' and establish, for instance, that when the discursive system is under pressure, it may happen that several policies are presented as possible; while these may be very different from each other at the surface level, they are all logically possible constructions on the basis of the basic discursive elements available to policy makers.

Here I present the structure of China's Africa discourse, which will serve as a framework for the empirical chapters and especially for Chapter 4, where I unpack the three layers through the reading of relevant policy texts. As Figure 1 illustrates, the discourse is structured in three layers. At the first level, the basic discourse provides "an analytical perspective that facilitates a structured analysis of how discourses are formed and engage each other within a foreign policy debate" and offers an ideal-type of the China-Africa partnership (and of China's identity):[76] I call it the "South-South cooperation" discourse. This layer consists of the basic representation of China and Africa as members of the same group of developing countries and serves the purpose of positioning China's self *within* the group. China and Africa share a history of colonialism and Western encroachment and are thus united in the fight against the imbalances of an unjust world system. The basic discourse provides a series of possibilities and constraints in terms of how foreign policy may be presented, what kind of foreign policy options actors may pursue, and how China-Africa relations may be (re)defined. The second discursive layer comprises a number of representations that

[75] Waever, "Identity, Communities and Foreign Policy: Discourse Analysis as Foreign Policy Theory," 31–32.
[76] Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 95.

are informed by the "South-South cooperation" logic: China and Africa are friends, brothers, and partners; they are both affected by, and need to take advantage of, globalization and economic cooperation; they share the commitment to multilateralism and equal participation in international organisations, especially the UN; they abide by the 5 Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, in particular respect for state sovereignty and non-interference in others' internal affairs; and they are committed to the security-development nexus. The latter is the key representation for this thesis, as I show in Chapter 4: It understands peace, security, and development as fundamental and interconnected features of a desirable political environment, and it links stability to economic growth.

The inequality of the current international system represents a threat to both the development and security of countries in the Global South; hence, *both* need to be addressed and pursued in order to achieve a more equal and democratic world order. Thus, as members of the Global South, both China and Africa are said to yield for, and work towards, a shared future and a "common destiny" of peace. The third layer adds further specificity to the abstraction of the second layer by presenting more specific policies. This is where a certain degree of contestation or change is allowed: While China's focus until 2011-2012 was on the developmentalisation of security, premised on the belief that economic growth leads to stability, since then the discourse embraces a change towards a more pronounced securitization of development, whereby economic prosperity and social development can only be achieved in a peaceful and safe environment. This is accompanied by an increasing role for the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the continent. This change in the third discursive layer eventually leads to a major change in the patterns of Chinese engagement without producing changes in the discourses at the first or second level. It should be noted that both the second and the third layer are constituted by a larger number of policies about a wider range of topics, including education, capacity-building, agricultural cooperation, and so on. However, because this thesis focuses on China's normative security agenda, I only provide an overview of the relevant security-related discourses.

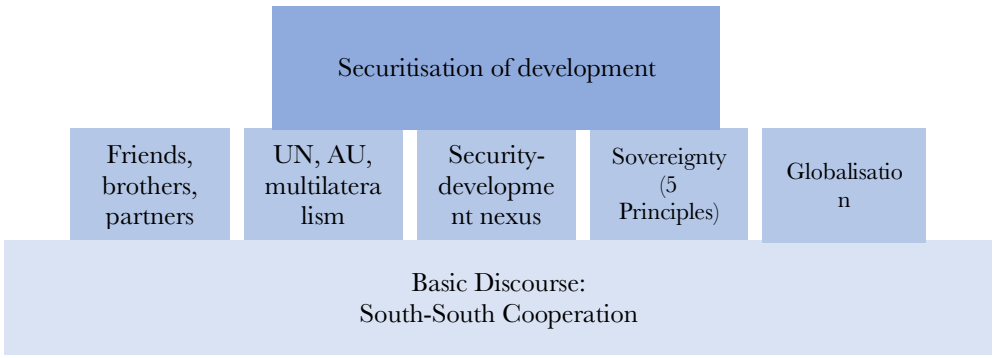

Figure 1 Layered structure of China's Africa discourse on peace and security

The third analytical step consists of tracing the discourse across the main multilateral institutions where China's security policies towards Africa are being discussed and negotiated. The above discursive structure is reproduced across the FOCAC, the AU, and the UNSC. Unlike the layered structure, which develops along a vertical, hierarchical dimension, these institutions represent the horizontal level of China's Africa discourse (Figure 2). While I start my analysis from the FOCAC, I do not suggest there is a hierarchy between them; quite the opposite, discourses and policies crafted at the FOCAC could be the results of interactions happened elsewhere. However, the Forum is an exclusive China-Africa platform where it is more likely to encounter norms-making attempts and thus represents the starting point for the discourse (and China's normative power) to spread horizontally across the three institutions. In Chapters 5 and 6, I trace China's Africa discourse in AU- and UN-related documents in order to explore how the main representations of China and Africa have been maintained beyond the regional, co-constituted Forum.

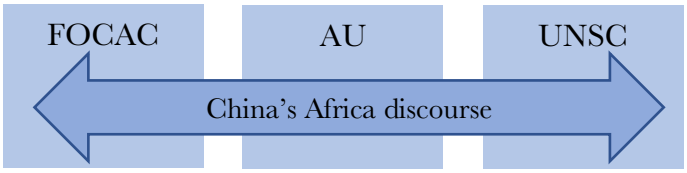

Figure 2 Horizontal dimension of China's Africa discourse on peace and security

In Chapter 7, I will then compare across the three fora to show how China's normative power potential changes depending on the contingent institution. I will further explore the link between these platforms and the country's global ambitions as a rising security actor. By looking at how China asserts its normative power thanks to a logic of relationships that stresses equal partnership and mutual benefit, it is possible to identify

a strategy that envisions China as positioned at the centre stage of world affairs and international security.

1.3.3 Elite interviews

As highlighted earlier, discursive representations generate expectations about policy and practice; to be more precise, discourse and practice are mutually constitutive and reciprocal. Thus, once I have identified, mapped, and layered the discourse, I link such linguistic representations to patterns of interaction between Chinese and African elites. So, for example, Chinese leaders have made it a tradition to visit African countries in their first trip abroad every year; this seems to reflect and reinforce the representation of China and Africa as friends and partners. As this kind of interactions are harder to capture exclusively from reading official documents and given the everyday exchanges involved behind the scenes of big diplomatic events such as the FOCAC, ethnography would have been the preferred method. However, the scope of the project made it unrealistic to carry out such ethnographic observation within the limits of the PhD. Instead, I conducted elite interviews, in person or over the phone, with researchers, diplomats, military and foreign policy officers, and international organisation officers from China, Africa, and New York over a period of three years.

The choice of fieldwork interviews was also motivated by the desire to pursue a "pluralistic and pragmatic position on research methods", whereby "the selection of methodological approaches should depend on the questions being pursued, to be assessed on a case by case basis. Different methods shine under different lights, and generally have different limitations (e.g. depth versus breath, singularity versus generalizability, site-based study versus drawing on a wider range of respondents, and so forth)."[77] In particular, Lamont and Swidler provide a defence of interviewing as a data gathering technique and promote an open-minded approach to interviews which aims "to collect data not only, or primarily, about behavior, but also about representations, classification systems, boundary work, identity, imagined realities and cultural ideals, as well as emotional states."[78] Thus, we should not mistake interviews for a "realistic account of some aspect of social life", but rather remember that "interviews are 'narratives', stories about what the person being interviewed *thinks*

[77] Michèle Lamont and Ann Swidler, "Methodological Pluralism and the Possibilities and Limits of Interviewing," *Qualitative Sociology* 37, no. 2 (2014): 154–55, doi:10.1007/s11133-014-9274-z.
[78] Ibid., 157.

happened, or thinks *should have* happened, or even *wanted* to have happened … interviews are, almost by definition, accurate accounts of the kinds of mental maps that people carry around inside their heads, and that it is this, rather than some videotape of 'reality', which is of interest to us."[79] Interviews can therefore be treated as the locus for political discourse to play out, as much as official documents or speeches are.[80] In this thesis, I rely on 33 interviews with policy makers, officials, researchers, and practitioners from China's political elites, the African Union, and the UN, which I conducted in Beijing, Shanghai, Addis Ababa, and New York (see Appendix I for a complete list). These have given me precious insight into the practices of China's Africa policy at different institutional levels, and they have broadened my understanding of how the underlying discourse is constituted, solidified, or changed through practice.

Throughout most of the conversations with my interviewees, I sought to maintain the structure of a typical semi-structured interview, in which "the researcher asks informants a series of predetermined but open-ended questions."[81] I have equally sought to give my interlocutors the time and space to speak freely about the topic in question, while striving to maintain focus and maximising the time available. Every interview would typically involve three sets of questions. The first set of questions was designed to warm-up the discussion, where my main purpose was to familiarise with my interlocutors, acquire more information on their work, and their preliminary thoughts on China's rise and its relations with Africa. The second and main batch of questions were more focused and spanned specific topics such as China's increased involvement in peace and security activities on the continent, its modus operandi, the relevant debates within both the Chinese and African policy and academic side, changing representations of peace and security in China's discourse, and the link between the different levels of China's engagement with African security. The main purpose was to both gather factual information and understand how perspectives changed (or not) depending on the interviewee's organisation. Finally, I would ask the interviewees if they had any additional, personal thought on the changing Chinese

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[79] Kristin Luker, *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences: Research in an Age of Info-Glut* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008), 167. Emphasis in original.

[80] For more on interviewing as a social science research method, see Herbert Rubin and Irene Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, 2nd ed. (SAGE Publications, Inc., 2005), doi:10.4135/9781452226651; Hilary Arksey and Peter Knight, *Interviewing for Social Scientists* (SAGE Publications, Ltd, 1999), doi:10.4135/9781849209335; Robert Stuart Weiss, *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*, First Free Press paperback ed (New York: Free Press, 1995); for more on both the strengths and weaknesses of interviews, see Lamont and Swidler, "Methodological Pluralism and the Possibilities and Limits of Interviewing."

[81] "Semi-Structured Interview," in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, by Lisa Given (SAGE Publications, Inc., 2008), http://sk.sagepub.com/reference/research/n420.xml.

foreign policy and on China-Africa ties in light of their own experience. Furthermore, I have maintained the anonymity of those of wished to remain off the record and I left the names of those who wanted to be on the record, in accordance with their individual wish and consent.

1.3.4 Limitations of the research

This thesis sits at the intersection of a number of disciplines, but mostly IR and area studies. What does it mean for this thesis? It means two things. First, that I have strived to find a connection between the Chinese perspective and Western IR scholars. That is, I have tried to strike a balance between a US/Western-centred discipline, which tends to see much of what goes on in the world in terms of power politics, conflict, and hegemony, and the Chinese perspective. Second, I have been aware that another side is involved in this project besides China and Western views of China, namely Africa. However, the subject of the present work is Chinese politics and China's rise and the constraints of a PhD project only allow for that much to be done within the scope of one dissertation. As I suggest in more detail in Chapter 8, more research is needed in order to retrieve African perspectives on international relations.[82] In sum, this project aims to provide a more nuanced and accurate view on China and its global ambitions, with a special attention to its perspectives on the world, and to the interconnectedness of such perspectives with the blurry confines of a global discipline such as IR is.

Furthermore, while an inclusion of bilateral relations between China and the 53 African countries it entertains diplomatic ties with would have made the picture even more comprehensive, such an enterprise would require more time and space than the thesis' scope allows for. Moreover, one of the characterising features of Xi's new security concept and his general foreign policy commitment is multilateralism, and I thus gave priority to multilateral settings in order to highlight how these are emerging as new powerful sites for foreign policy negotiation. This is also due to the nature of the project itself, which focuses on foreign policy making at the highest levels. However, a number of institutions and researchers have explored African perceptions of China

[82] See for instance Christopher S. Clapham, *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Ian Taylor and Paul D Williams, *Africa in International Politics: External Involvement on the Continent* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), http://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/9780203493175; Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo, *The Dynamics of Economic and Political Relations between Africa and Foreign Powers a Study in International Relations* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1999); Errol Anthony Henderson, *African Realism? International Relations Theory and Africa's Wars in the Postcolonial Era* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2015).

in more detail at the individual and/or country level, either with the aid of surveys or through case study-based research, and I address some here to account for the lack of focus on ordinary people and individual countries. For instance, in 2014-2015 Afrobarometer conducted surveys in 36 African countries asking how Africans viewed China's foreign investment and influence in their countries. The findings from such surveys suggested that the public holds generally favourable views of economic and assistance activities by China. Africans rank the United States and China in the first and second position respectively, as development models for their own countries. In three out of five African regions, China either appeared to match or surpass the US in popularity as a development model. The surveys also highlighted that in terms of current influence, both China and the US are outpaced only by Africa's former colonial powers. Researchers that participated in devising the surveys and analysing their results argue that "[p]ublic perceptions not only confirm China's important economic and political role in Africa but also generally portray its influence as beneficial. China's infrastructure/development and business investments are seen as reasons for China's positive image in Africa, though that image is tainted by perceptions of poor-quality Chinese products."[83] A recent Pew Research Center survey suggests that "[a]cross the 25 countries polled … a median of 45% have a favorable view of China, while 43% hold an unfavorable view. Majorities or pluralities in 12 countries give China positive marks, with favorable attitudes most prevalent in Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia."[84] The survey also highlighted a generally low confidence in Xi Jinping, although in Kenya, Nigeria, and Tunisia confidence in the Chinese leader was reported to be higher (53%) than in any European country polled.

Scholars have also explored the question of how China is perceived in Africa through case study- and fieldwork-based research. For instance, through fieldwork in eight African countries (Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Namibia, Tanzania, South Africa and Zimbabwe), Wang and Elliot find that "Beijing has acquired substantial goodwill in Africa yet is developing deep issues and facing uncertain challenges and growing obstacles."[85] Based on random sample and university-based

[83] "China's Growing Presence in Africa Wins Largely Positive Popular Reviews," October 2016, http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/ad122-chinas-growing-presence-africa-wins-largely-positive-popular-reviews; For a paper based on Afrobarometer data, see also Marek Hanusch, "African Perspectives on China–Africa: Modelling Popular Perceptions and Their Economic and Political Determinants," *Oxford Development Studies* 40, no. 4 (2012): 492–516, doi:10.1080/13600818.2012.728580.

[84] Kat Devlin, "5 Charts on Global Views of China," *Pew Research Center*, October 19, 2018, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/10/19/5-charts-on-global-views-of-china/.

[85] Fei-Ling Wang and Esi A. Elliot, "China in Africa: Presence, Perceptions and Prospects," *Journal of Contemporary China* 23, no. 90 (2014): 1012–13, doi:10.1080/10670564.2014.898888.

surveys, Sautman and Yan present three interesting findings: African views are not as negative as Western media make out, but they are indeed variegated and complex; the survey results are at odds with dominant Western media representation that it is only African elites who are positive about China; and that the dominant variation in African perspectives is by country, as compared to variations such as age, education, and gender.[86] Rebol uses case studies from unions, political elites and civil society across conducted by a number of institutions, and concludes that civil society groups on the one hand tend to be more critical of China, but on the other hand are increasingly being engaged by the PRC. In general, he finds that Africa is the continent where, on average, people hold the most positive views on China.[87]

1.4 Chapters overview

This thesis is divided into two parts. The first part includes Chapter 1, where I have clarified the empirical puzzle and research questions that prompted the thesis, and outlined the methodology and methods used; and Chapter 2, where I present a detailed theoretical framework placing the thesis at the crossroads of studies of China's rise within, and its socialisation in, the current international system, and debates on normative power.

The second part consists of the empirical analysis and comprises Chapter 3 to 8. Chapter 3 contextualises China's engagement in Africa's peace and security in the broader context of China's foreign policy under Xi Jinping and the development of a "new security concept". Chapter 4 starts from the exclusive China-Africa platform, the FOCAC, and performs two functions. First, it identifies the basic discourse that guides and structures China's Africa policy as it developed in FOCAC documents. This consists in mapping the recurring representations of China-Africa in China's discourse, as well as their endurance throughout the 18 years since the creation of the Forum (the first analytical step). The chapter pinpoints a basic discourse consisting of a series of representations backed up by political narratives that have remained stable, despite China-Africa ties going through ebbs and flows. Second, it explores the construction of the security-development nexus within the existing discourse: this corresponds to the

[86] Barry Sautman and Hairong Yan, "African Perspectives on China–Africa Links," *The China Quarterly* 199 (September 2009): 728.

[87] Max Rebol, "Public Perceptions and Reactions: Gauging African Views of China in Africa," *African Journal of Agricultural Research* 5, no. 25 (2010): 3524–35, doi:10.5897/AJAR10.003; For similar studies, see also K. K. Prah, ed., *Afro-Chinese Relations: Past, Present and Future*, CASAS Book Series, no. 45 (Cape Town, South Africa: CASAS, 2007); Firoze Manji and Stephen Marks, eds., *African Perspectives on China in Africa* (Fahamu, 2007); Michael Bratton, Robert Mattes, and E. Gyimah-Boadi, *Public Opinion, Democracy, and Market Reform in Africa* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

second analytical step, which is aimed to unpack how the discourse has slowly made space for a change in China's approach to, and engagement with, peace and security in the continent, leading to a shift in policies, but without any major change in the basic discourse in the first and second layers. I also briefly explore how China's approach to security and development has been accepted by African heads of state as a direct or indirect response to Chinese leaders' successful socialisation and normative attempts.

Both Chapter 5 and 6 are part of the third analytical step, which is aimed to trace how dominant representations of China-Africa relations have been maintained and cultivated across all levels of multilateral engagement with the continent, from the regional, to the continental and the global levels—what I called the horizontal dimension of China's Africa discourse. In particular, Chapter 5 moves onto the next institutional level of the discourse and explores the African Union's mandate and its challenges, which are crucial to understand the dynamics underlying relations between the organisation and its external partners. The chapter unpacks China's contributions to the AU's peace and security objectives and traces the main narratives of the China-Africa discourse in official documents. Chapter 6 looks at the global institutional level of China's normative power and examines how the discourse on peace and security takes on a global twist. As a permanent member of the Security Council China has enormous normative potential, although it here competes with other major powers for influence. I analyse China's Africa discourse as it emerges from UNSC-related documents and find many known elements of the representations and narratives identified in Chapter 3.

Chapter 7 presents and compares the findings of the empirical chapters in light of the research questions and the theoretical framework. I explore the link between discourse and policy by looking at the practice of China's normative power and its security policies in Africa, and I link these with the country's global ambitions as a rising security actor. Chapter 8 draws some conclusions and proposes new avenues for future research agendas on both China's rise and China-Africa studies.

Chapter 2 – Understanding the rise of China: Is the PRC a normative power?

Ubuntu Ngumuntu Ngabantu
(Zulu saying, roughly meaning a person is a person through other persons)

If China wants to … achieve Peaceful Rise,
it is crucially important that it get other nations
to buy into the world view it proposes.
(J.C. Ramo, The Beijing Consensus)

2.1 Introduction

Recent developments in China's foreign policy suggest that the country may have turned to a more assertive (some say aggressive[88]) foreign policy. This, in turn, has sparked renewed interest in China's rise and the challenges it poses to the existing international system. As the 'West' welcomed the country into the global economic order, leaders believed that "giving China a stake in institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) would bind it into the rules-based system set up after the second world war. … They hoped that economic integration would encourage China to evolve into a market economy and that, as they grew wealthier, its people would come to yearn for democratic freedoms, rights and the rule of law."[89] However, when the Communist Party announced that it would change the constitution to allow the President to serve for more than two consecutive terms, many interpreted this as a sign that China had rather embarked on a path to challenge liberal institutions and democracy.[90] Scholars and practitioners in the 'West' are thus wondering, how does China's emergence as a global security actor affect 'our' interests?[91] Is China rising to challenge or rather to participate more actively in the current world order? Is it shaping an order of its own? If so, what are its main features?

Simultaneously, China-Africa relations have also gained renewed attention among both media and academia. In particular, many are closely monitoring the country's military activities in the continent, ranging from contributions to

[88] Tim Rühlig, "A 'New' Chinese Foreign Policy Under Xi Jinping?," *Institute for Security and Development Policy*, March 2, 2018, http://isdp.eu/publication/new-chinese-foreign-policy-xi-jinping-implications-european-policy-making/.
[89] "How the West Got China Wrong," *The Economist*, March 1, 2018, https://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21737517-it-bet-china-would-head-towards-democracy-and-market-economy-gamble-has-failed-how.
[90] "CPC Proposes Change on Chinese President's Term in Constitution," accessed March 5, 2018, http://www.ecns.cn/2018/02-25/293534.shtml; On why the West gets China wrong, see for instance: William H. Overholt, "The West Is Getting China Wrong," *East Asia Forum*, August 11, 2018, http://www.eastasiaforum.org/2018/08/11/the-west-is-getting-china-wrong/.
[91] Huotari et al., "China's Emergence as a Global Security Actor."

peacekeeping missions to the opening of the country's first overseas base in Djibouti.[92] These once again prompt questions on the future of the Sino-African partnership, what it means for Africa, what it means for the world, and what does China's engagement in the continent may tell us about its changing foreign policy.

However, the existing literature on China's rise often tends to revolve around a series of unproductive dichotomies (i.e. peaceful versus threat, deter versus engage) and predominantly sees Chinese foreign policy in terms of its material and economic power. The literature on China-Africa relations similarly suffers from a number of flaws: It remains under-theorised and fragmented and it has not properly addressed security cooperation (with a few exceptions), nor it has given much attention to the discursive dimension of China's engagement with Africa. In order to address these gaps, I argue that the concept of normative power, understood as the power to shape the 'normal' in international affairs, gives us a more nuanced understanding of both topics. In short, I maintain that normative power allows us to see how China contributes to international security by giving us insights into its preferred norms and practices and into the mechanisms through which it is promoting its vision of world order. Only by accepting that not only is China being socialised into the international system, but also actively contributes to shaping it, we can reach a more nuanced understanding of its rise and norms-making attempts.

In order to make its case for utilising a normative power framework, the chapter proceeds in four sections: first, I introduce the main scholarly positions on China's rise and argue that the debate suffers from an excessive focus on China-US relations and the balance of power, thus missing other important aspects of China's foreign policy. Second, I explore the literature on China's behaviour in the international system and argue that it has gone some way into advancing a better understanding of China's participation in international affairs. Third, and related, I maintain that there is more value in exploring *how* the country's rise is unfolding and what kind of power is China becoming. I do so by introducing the concept of normative power and asking whether

[92] See for instance: Chris Alden et al., eds., *China and Africa: Building Peace and Security Cooperation on the Continent* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Monica Wang, "China's Strategy in Djibouti: Mixing Commercial and Military Interests," *Council on Foreign Relations*, April 13, 2018, https://www.cfr.org/blog/chinas-strategy-djibouti-mixing-commercial-and-military-interests; Abdi Latif Dahir, "Thanks to China, Africa's Largest Free Trade Zone Has Launched in Djibouti," *Quartz*, July 9, 2018, https://qz.com/1323666/china-and-djibouti-have-launched-africas-biggest-free-trade-zone/; Dietmar Pieper, "Geopolitical Laboratory: How Djibouti Became China's Gateway To Africa," *Spiegel Online*, February 8, 2018, sec. International, http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/djibouti-is-becoming-gateway-to-africa-for-china-a-1191441.html; Jiangtao Shi, "Why China's New Man at the UN Signals Greater Ambition on Global Stage," *South China Morning Post*, January 21, 2018, https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2129869/ma-zhaoxu-chinas-next-man-united-nations-and-front-line.

it can be used to describe China. Fourth, I examine elements of China's Africa policy that are central to its growing role as a global security actor and norms-provider in the continent, with the aim to clarify why its engagement with African countries is essential for understanding its foreign policy and rise globally.

2.2 Problematising the "China's rise" debate

It is commonly believed that China's 'Open Door' policy under Deng Xiaoping has had wider implications for the rest of the world. Many contemporary commentaries assume that since then, China has been rising: Such a perception arguably depends on the definitions and indicators we choose to use.[93] In 1999, Segal argued that China was overrated as both a power and a market, and that it had repeatedly failed to deliver what had been promised by its leaders. He analysed to what extent China did or did not matter economically, militarily, and politically, concluding that, at the time, it was "merely a middle power."[94] Many scholars afterwards have either supported or questioned his claim through more detailed empirical studies, and since the 1990s, a growing sense of anxiety about the implications of China's increased economic and military power, especially within the United States and the Asia-Pacific region, has led to the production of a rich body of texts on the country's status quo or revisionist ambitions.[95] China's rise has thus been addressed from a range of perspectives and has produced what Hughes terms "a range of exceptionalist arguments."[96] In this section, I present an overview of the most influential scholarly theses on China's rise and I suggest that they suffer from a number of flaws.

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[93] S. Chestnut and Alastair Iain Johnston, "Is China Rising?," in *Global Giant Is China Changing the Rules of the Game?*, by E. Paus, Penelope B. Prime, and Jon W. Western (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

[94] G. Segal, *Does China Matter?*, Foreign Affairs, September/October 1999, reprinted as: G. Segal, "Does China Matter?," in *Does China Matter? A Reassessment: Essays in Memory of Gerald Segal*, by B. Buzan and R. Foot (Routledge, 2004).

[95] Much of the debate reflects concerns among policymakers and analysts within the US. For more on this, see for instance: Elizabeth Economy and Michel Oksenberg, eds., *China Joins the World: Progress and Prospects* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1999); John W. Garver, "America's Debate over the Rise of China," *The China Quarterly* 226 (June 2016): 538–50, doi:10.1017/S030574101600059X; for more on the vast body of works on China's rise, see David Shambaugh, *China Goes Global. The Partial Power* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 255, footnote 9. At the risk of oversimplifying and for the sake of not overloading the debate further, here I only discuss the major positions that such works represent.

[96] Christopher R. Hughes, "China as a Leading State in the International System," in *China in the Xi Jinping Era*, ed. Steve Tsang and Honghua Men (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 272–73; Hughes also argues that arguments pointing to the inescapability of a war between China and the US "are of little use unless they can look at how domestic politics impacts on foreign policy in ways that may lead to outcomes that appear to be irrational from the perspective of the international system." See ibid., 293.

On the one hand, some scholars argue against a peaceful rise.[97] According to Mearsheimer, the rise of China has the potential to alter the architecture of the international system in a way that threatens the US. His argument is that if China continues to rise, it would want to dominate Asia, thus emulating the US and eventually leading to a Sino-American war, which he sees as more likely than a war between the superpowers was in the Cold war era.[98] Similarly, Allison argues that "[a]s far ahead as the eye can see, the defining question about global order is whether China and the US can escape the Thucydides's Trap."[99] He suggests that unless both Beijing and Washington are willing to compromise, tensions will escalate into a full-out war. To be sure, this perception is also partly the result of internal debates within China: Shih shows how realism represented a source of strategy for Chinese scholars and policymakers to view China's international status. This, in turn, resulted in Chinese intellectuals struggling to deploy a non-confrontational depiction of China's rise.[100] Analyses that fit in a more realist understanding of international affairs thus tend to agree that there will be a major military confrontation between China and the US, not the least over influence in the Asia-Pacific—what Shambaugh argues is a description of the country's ascent as "vertical" in its asymmetrical encounter with the US.[101] Shambaugh acknowledges that China is "the world's most important rising power", but unlike others, he claims his study is different in that first, it investigates "*how* is China's newfound comprehensive power manifest globally today, and *how* will China influence global affairs in the future"; and second, it takes a more "horizontal" approach to how China's impact is spreading across the globe in certain areas rather than to its rise per se.[102] In the end, he concludes that China still has a long way to go

[97] John J. Mearsheimer, "China's Unpeaceful Rise," *Current History* 105, no. 690 (2006): 160–62; John J. Mearsheimer, "The Gathering Storm: China's Challenge to US Power in Asia," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3, no. 4 (2010): 381–96, doi:10.1093/cjip/poq016; John J. Mearsheimer, "Can China Rise Peacefully?," in *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, by John J. Mearsheimer, Updated Edition (New York: W. W. Norton, 2014), http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/can-china-rise-peacefully-10204; Chih-Yu Shih, "Breeding a Reluctant Dragon: Can China Rise into Partnership and Away from Antagonism?," *Review of International Studies* 31, no. 4 (2005): 755–74.

[98] Mearsheimer, "Can China Rise Peacefully?"

[99] Graham T. Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydide's Trap?* (Scribe Publications, 2017), 25.

[100] Although internal struggles with those leaning towards idealism or liberalism were also part of the debate. See Shih, "Breeding a Reluctant Dragon: Can China Rise into Partnership and Away from Antagonism?"

[101] Shambaugh, *China Goes Global. The Partial Power*, 5; James Kynge, *China Shakes the World: The Rise of a Hungry Nation* (London: Phoenix, 2009); Aaron L Friedberg, *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012).

[102] Shambaugh, *China Goes Global. The Partial Power*, 4; 5; emphasis in original.

to becoming a true global power; he goes a step further and suggest that China will never rule the world and remains a partial power.[103]

On the other hand, some scholars are more confident that international institutions will eventually incorporate China and thus constrain its behaviour.[104] For instance, Ikenberry discusses the prospects of China overthrowing or becoming a part of the existing order in what he calls "one of the great dramas of the twenty-first century."[105] Unlike some of the scholars mentioned above, he does not see China's rise as inevitably leading to conflict with the declining hegemon (the US), but rather argues that the PRC can not only gain full access to a Western-centred, open, and rule-based system, but can also thrive from doing so. Such a strong framework of rules and institutions facilitates China's integration and the country is increasingly working within the existing order. Hence, he concludes, the power shift China's rise leads to can be peaceful and favourable to the US. Similarly, Tang argues that in the long-run, the US and the West will remain the most influential players in the international order and that a rising China may want to participate more actively in writing the rules of the system, but does not seek its fundamental transformation.[106] Thus, these analyses also view the rise of China in terms of its relations with the US, but advance a better prospect for a power transition to happen—one that results in the country eventually 'succumbing' to the pressures to reform its economic and social systems in alignment with the existing liberal order.

Other scholars also take China's rise as given but focus on whether such a rise will be peaceful within the current world order, or on how the 'West' can respond to it.[107] For instance, Kang suggests that China's rise does not cause alarm—at least not in East Asia—because the region will accommodate its growing power rather than balance against it. His argument is based on the belief that "China's expected

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[103] On this, he makes explicit reference to Jacques' book: Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World: The End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order* (New York: Penguin Press, 2009).

[104] G. John Ikenberry, "The Rise of China and the Future of the West: Can the Liberal System Survive?," *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 1 (2008): 23–37; John G. Ikenberry, "The Rise of China: Power, Institutions, and the Western Order," in *China's Ascent: Power, Security, and the Future of International Politics*, ed. Robert S. Ross and Feng Zhu, Cornell Studies in Security Affairs (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008); Shiping Tang, "China and the Future International Order(S)," *Ethics & International Affairs* 32, no. 01 (2018): 31–43, doi:10.1017/S0892679418000084.

[105] Ikenberry, "The Rise of China and the Future of the West," 23.

[106] Tang, "China and the Future International Order(S)."

[107] Barry. Buzan and R. Foot, *Does China Matter? A Reassessment: Essays in Memory of Gerald Segal* (London; New York, NY: Routledge, 2004); Barry Buzan, "China in International Society: Is 'Peaceful Rise' Possible?," *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3, no. 1 (2010): 5–36; Liping Xia, "China: A Responsible Great Power," *Journal of Contemporary China* 10, no. 26 (2001): 17–25; Thomas Christensen, "The Advantages of an Assertive China: Responding to Beijing's Abrasive Diplomacy," *Foreign Affairs* 90, no. 2 (2011): 54–67; David C. Kang, "Why China's Rise Will Be Peaceful: Hierarchy and Stability in the East Asian Region," *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 3 (2005): 551–54.

emergence as the most powerful state in East Asia has been accompanied with more stability than pessimists believed possible because China is increasingly becoming the regional hierarch."[108] Christensen provocatively argues that the United States and the international community *need* a more assertive China, since a more assertive foreign policy would be decisive for the country to assist the global community in facing common problems such as nuclear proliferation and climate change. Thus, despite challenging, sending messages of persuasion rather than containment represent a good opportunity for the 'West' to seek China's cooperation through multilateral efforts.[109] Xia also echoes 'liberal' arguments and maintains that the more China will be integrated into international economic and political mechanisms, the more willing its leaders will be to play the role of a responsible power.[110]

English School scholars have also studied China and its rise. In particular, Buzan has suggested how "the apparent clarity of polarity is a false gain. A more nuanced and historically rooted social structural view gives better insight into how China relates to international society both globally and regionally, and enables a clearer view of how those levels relate to each other."[111] After exploring China's path into international society since its forceful encounter with the West in the mid-1800s, and especially over the past 30 years, he concludes that such rise has been peaceful. He claims that while the country accepts some of the institutions of international society, it still resists and wants to reform others. Regardless of its reformist goals, however, he suggests that a peaceful rise is the only possible outcome (contra a warlike rise).[112] Such a rise "involves a two-way process in which the rising power accommodates itself to the rules and structures of international society, while at the same time other great powers accommodate some changes in those rules and structures by way of adjusting to the new disposition of power and status."[113] Foot similarly rejects a dichotomous view of China's rise. She argues that, on the one hand, realist arguments that China is set to lead an anti-hegemonic coalition and is intentionally building up its economic and

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[108] Kang, 'Why China's Rise Will Be Peaceful: Hierarchy and Stability in the East Asian Region', 552.
[109] Christensen, "The Advantages of an Assertive China: Responding to Beijing's Abrasive Diplomacy."
[110] Xia, "China: A Responsible Great Power," 22.
[111] Buzan, "China in International Society: Is 'Peaceful Rise' Possible?," 7; for a survey of China in English School perspective, see also Barry Buzan, "China's Rise in English School Perspective," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 18, no. 3 (2018): 449–76, doi:10.1093/irap/lcy005.
[112] On warlike versus peaceful rise, see Barry Buzan and Michael Cox, "China and the US: Comparable Cases of 'Peaceful Rise'?," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 6, no. 2 (2013): 109–32, doi:10.1093/cjip/pot003.
[113] Barry Buzan, "The Logic and Contradictions of 'Peaceful Rise/Development' as China's Grand Strategy," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 7, no. 4 (2014): 402, doi:10.1093/cjip/pou032. For a similar view, see Xiaoming Zhang, "A Rising China and the Normative Changes in International Society," *East Asia* 28, no. 3 (2011): 235–46, doi:10.1007/s12140-010-9131-y.

military capabilities to directly compete with the US, are attractive because they are simple; on the other hand, however, they do not capture "the complexity of Chinese perspectives or the sense of vulnerability that underlies Chinese behaviour."[114]

After presenting the most influential scholarly approaches to China's rise, I contend that they are flawed with the following fundamental, inter-related problems. First, most of these analyses are overly focused on the relationship between China and the United States; second, and related, they tend to view IR as a matter of either war or peace;[115] third, the revisionist-to-status-quo-continuum that appears to characterise most analyses is premised on the Western-centric idea that revisionism or integration can only happen within an existing system that is strictly based upon a US-led order; fourth, the most important issues at stake in the rise of China for these scholars seem to be American power and the liberal order, and whether these will remain unchanged and unchallenged in the future; fifth, they tend to understand China's foreign policy in terms of other great powers' reaction to it, which leaves as the only viable options either deterrence or reassurance/engagement, once again leading us back to unproductive dichotomies. However, I argue that there is much more to China's rise than this: Instead of focusing exclusively on the balance of power between the current hegemon and its challenger, I suggest investigating how China's foreign policy is unfolding and what are the features of its normative power.[116] The empirical chapters consist of a discourse analysis of the main representations of China-Africa. A discourse analytical approach provides us with insights into how discursive representations produce both identities and foreign policies and their outcomes. The analysis will therefore show how the stability of the first layer of China's Africa discourse has made it possible to legitimise increasing peace and security engagement without producing a shift in the basic discourse; and how such stability granted China's discourse and policies the necessary legitimacy to be seen as a reliable norms-maker in the continent. China's socialisation into the international system is thus coupled with the country's own contributions to such system. The next section addresses the former aspect and explores the literature on the socialisation of China in international institutions, which

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[114] Rosemary Foot, "Chinese Strategies in a US-Hegemonic Global Order: Accommodating and Hedging," *International Affairs* 82, no. 1 (2006): 82.

[115] By harking back to another dichotomy between two 'theories' of IR misunderstood for foreign policy doctrine—that between deter or engage/reassure—it seems that all that matters for IR scholars is war/peace. I would like to thank Stefano Guzzini for pointing this out as a problem that affects many analyses of international politics.

[116] A similar call also comes from Pan and Kavalski, who define China's rise as "a complex, evolving and possibly border-traversing and paradigm-shattering phenomenon in global life" requiring fresh and innovative theorising. See Pan and Kavalski, "Theorizing China's Rise in and beyond International Relations," 289.

has contributed to gain a more nuanced understanding of the PRC and its participation in international affairs.

2.3 Socialising China in international institutions

In this section, I explore some works that have been less explicit about the rise of China but have nonetheless advanced our understanding of how such a rise is unfolding. In particular, some scholars have looked at China's behaviour in international organisations and asked whether it displays elements of rupture or continuity with the existing rules-based system. In 2003, Johnston already expressed concerns over policy debates within the US that viewed the problem of China's rising power as the primary source of instability in Sino-US relations and, by extension, in the Asia-Pacific region.[117] According to him, the argument tends to focus on its dissatisfaction and revisionism, generally falling within a power-transition version of realism where China's set of interests is static and interact with its changing relative capabilities to give it more opportunities to challenge US power. However, he claims, such argument is inattentive to the analytical ambiguities of the terms revisionism and status quo themselves and fails to examine the status quo elements in Chinese foreign policy until the early 2000s, as well as the problematic status of the empirical evidence used to make such claims of revisionism. Even when implying more rigorous criteria to determine whether a state's foreign policy is status quo or revisionist, he suggests, it is hard to conclude that China is clearly a revisionist power. Instead he maintains, "the PRC has become more integrated into and more cooperative within international institutions than ever before. Moreover, the evidence that China's leaders are actively trying to balance against U.S. power to undermine an American-dominated unipolar system and replace it with a multipolar system is murky."[118] He also argues that approaches to Chinese foreign policy generally provide a limited understanding of the country's involvement in international institutions and normative regimes.[119] Acknowledging that China has increasingly shown a greater level of integration and cooperation within the international arena leads him to conclude that "Chinese diplomacy since the 1990s [has been] more status quo-oriented than at any period since 1949."[120] This is because Chinese decision makers have started to recognise the

[117] Alastair Iain Johnston, "Is China a Status Quo Power?," *International Security* 27, no. 4 (2003): 5–56.
[118] Ibid., 49.
[119] Alastair Iain Johnston, *Social States. China in International Institutions, 1980-2000* (Princeton University Press, 2008).
[120] Ibid., 207.

positive impact of global economic and information integration on the country's economic development. Globalisation and multilateralism have thus become part of a "new identity discourse that describes China as a 'responsible major power', a key characteristic of which is to participate in and uphold commitments to status quo international economic and security institutions."[121] While things have indeed changed after Xi took power in 2013 and embarked on a more active foreign policy, especially focusing on promoting China's global image and its commitments to international institutions, Johnston's analysis and conclusions still have value nowadays.[122]

To be sure, accepting that China has become increasingly socialised into the existing world system, does not mean that the PRC has not expressed the desire to change some rules and norms at times. Instead, based on evidence from years of engagement, scholars have described its postures and behaviours in International Organisations (IOs) as ranging from avoidance and suspicion, to caution, to confident use of institutions to advance its power.[123] Lanteigne suggests that "[w]hat separates China from other states, and indeed previous global powers, is that not only is it 'growing up' within a milieu of international institutions far more developed than ever before, but more importantly, it is doing so while making active use of these institutions to promote the country's development of global power status."[124] According to Kim, China's path in the UN was system-transforming in the 1960s, system-reforming in the 1970s, and system-maintaining in the 1980s.[125] Elsewhere, he suggests that "[t]here is little doubt that Beijing sees many global political [intergovernmental organisations] IGOs … as congenial platforms from which to project its own world outlook."[126] Indeed, he argues, China's behaviour in the international arena is best understood by looking at its quest for legitimation. Whilst this is a fundamental aspect of every political system, it has enduring resonance for China. Beijing's belief in being endowed with the Mandate of Heaven and the post-1949 long period of isolation from the international community contributed to make international legitimation one of the main objectives

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[121] Johnston, *Social States. China in International Institutions, 1980-2000*; Alastair Iain Johnston, "How New and Assertive Is China's New Assertiveness," *International Security* 37, no. 4 (2013): 205; for a different view of China as a responsible power, see Rosemary Foot, "Chinese Power and the Idea of a Responsible State," *The China Journal* 45 (2001): 1–19, doi:10.2307/3182363.

[122] For a more sceptical view of China's commitment to multilateralism in the Asia-Pacific, see Hongying Wang, "Multilateralism in Chinese Foreign Policy: The Limits of Socialization," *Asian Survey* 40, no. 3 (2000): 475–91, doi:10.2307/3021157.

[123] Marc Lanteigne, *China and International Institutions: Alternate Paths to Global Power* (Routledge, 2005).

[124] Ibid., 1.

[125] Samuel S. Kim, "China and the United Nations," in *China Joins the World: Progress and Prospects*, ed. Elizabeth Economy and Michel Oksenberg (Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1999).

[126] Samuel S. Kim, "International Organizations in Chinese Foreign Policy," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 519 (1992): 141.

of its foreign policy. Kim nicely summarises China's strategy by describing it as a "multifaceted and multiprincipled multilateral diplomacy allowing China to be all things to all nations on all global issues."[127]

Kent similarly finds that China is not only motivated by a system-maintaining and system-exploiting approach (norms-taking), but also by a system-reforming attitude (norms-making) and has thus committed to making a shift to a multipolar world.[128] More recently, Nathan has examined China's participation in the arms control and disarmament regime and argues that the PRC largely supports the status quo.[129] According to him, China does not display "a pattern of promoting a distinctive 'Chinese model' in the international normative system or an alternative vision of world order".[130] If anything, a pattern can be identified of resisting efforts by the US (and its allies) to shape regimes in an unfavourable way toward China (and its allies). The question then becomes whether the changes brought about by China's efforts can be characterised as fundamental. Recently, Breslin also noted that "[t]he idea that China is, can, or wants to be either a wholly status quo or a wholly revisionist power seems somewhat problematic."[131] While there are aspects of the liberal order that do not suit Chinese preferences, such as norms on sovereignty and intervention, there are other areas where China has shown the desire to push for change and assume more power. Breslin suggests that since 'revisionist' has lost its original meaning and is now associated with "fundamental and revolutionary change", it is more accurate to see these efforts as part of a "selective reformist agenda."[132]

According to such literature, therefore, there are some tensions between a 'passive' norms-taking attitude and a more active norms-making posture. Once more, however, it seems like we cannot shake off the idea that China's (peaceful) rise within the system depends first and foremost on how well relations with the US develop or on the extent the US can accommodate China in the system. On the one hand, it is

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[127] Ibid., 144.
[128] Ann Kent, "China's International Socialization: The Role of International Organizations," *Global Governance* 8, no. 3 (2002): 343–64.
[129] Andrew J. Nathan, "China's Rise and International Regimes: Does China Seek to Overthrow Global Norms?," ed. Robert S. Ross and Jo Inge Bekkevold (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2016).
[130] Ibid., 189 I share Nathan's critique of the existing literature on China and international regimes, but my approach differs from his in that I provide an alternative explanation to traditional realpolitik accounts of China's behaviour in international affairs. While the importance of interests in determining a state's behaviour is not denied, primacy is given here to socialization, learning, and co-constitution dynamics. .
[131] Shaun Breslin, "Global Reordering and China's Rise: Adoption, Adaptation and Reform," *The International Spectator* 53, no. 1 (2018): 60, doi:10.1080/03932729.2018.1401804.
[132] Ibid.

undeniable that the US still holds much control over setting the rules and norms of international relations; on the other hand, scholars have tried to suggest for a while how the world is moving away from unipolarity and bipolarity and towards one of "decentred globalism."[133] Whether one embraces this specific definition or not, the idea is that Western hegemony is coming to an end and a regionalised international order is instead emerging.[134] Moreover, as Acharya suggests, mainstream IR theories have tended to privilege hegemonic power and socialisation in international order-building;[135] the literature on normative change is, according to him, "biased in favor of a 'moral cosmopolitanism'. It concentrates on moral struggles in which *good* global norms (championed by mainly Western norm entrepreneurs) displace *bad* local beliefs and practices (mainly in the non-Western areas)."[136] Related, hegemony is manifested in the attempt of the (liberal) hegemon to socialise secondary states into liberal norms and rules: This is reflected in the focus of much socialisation literature not so much on who is being socialised, but rather what are they being socialised into; moreover, many of the norms, rules, and institutions that are being promoted are liberal norms.[137]

As a matter of fact, however, China has also been an agent of socialisation and has expressed the desire to become a norms-maker both *inside* and *outside* of Western-dominated institutions and within the Global South, especially via the re-articulation of concepts of development, peace, and security, and through regional forum diplomacy; such efforts have, in turn, encountered responses from regions of the Global South. This thesis' focus on the three multilateral institutions aims precisely to

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[133] Barry Buzan, "A World Order Without Superpowers: Decentred Globalism," *International Relations* 25, no. 1 (2011): 3–25; Barry Buzan and George Lawson, "Capitalism and the Emergent World Order," *International Affairs* 90, no. 1 (2014): 71–91.

[134] To be sure, the way Buzan and others view future scenarios of the international systems is still informed by a rather mainstream understanding of great- and super-powers.

[135] Amitav Acharya, "Nonhegemonic International Relations: A Preliminary Conceptualization," in *School of Sociology, Politics, and International Studies*, vol. Working Paper No. 10-08 (University of Bristol, 2008).

[136] Amitav Acharya, *Whose Ideas Matter? Agency and Power in Asian Regionalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009). For more on the literature for and against norms and norms diffusion, see in addition: Susan Park, "Norm Diffusion within International Organizations: A Case Study of the World Bank," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 8, no. 2 (2005): 111–41, doi:10.1057/palgrave.jird.1800051; Charlotte Epstein, "Stop Telling Us How to Behave: Socialization or Infantilization?," *International Studies Perspectives* 13, no. 2 (May 1, 2012): 135–45; Charlotte Epstein, ed., *Against International Relations Norms: Postcolonial Perspectives*, Worlding beyond the West 13 (London; New York, NY: Routledge, an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, 2017); Kessler, "The Contingency of Constructivism."

[137] A detailed critique of the mainstream literature on socialisation goes beyond the scope of this chapter and thesis; for more on this, see for instance: Acharya, *Whose Ideas Matter? Agency and Power in Asian Regionalism*; Acharya, "Nonhegemonic International Relations: A Preliminary Conceptualization"; Susan Park, "Socialisation and the Liberal Order," *International Politics* 51, no. 3 (2014): 334–49; Epstein, "Stop Telling Us How to Behave"; Naeem Inayatullah and David L. Blaney, "The Dark Heart of Kindness: The Social Construction of Deflection: The Dark Heart of Kindness," *International Studies Perspectives* 13, no. 2 (2012): 164–75, doi:10.1111/j.1528-3585.2012.00462.x.

address this gap, in that it sets out to bridge across forums where power dynamics and processes are different, with the objective of contributing to our understanding of China's rise as an active participant to international peace and security. On the one hand, emerging countries may contribute to reshaping the system from within: according to Chin, who discusses China's relationship with the World Bank, "[t]here was a time when it made a lot of sense to envision China's interaction with the global financial institutions as "socialization," or a process in which China internalized global norms through its participation in international institutions. … however … China is no longer only learning the established process and rules of the global institution and adapting itself to them, but is also actively working to move the [World] Bank beyond some of its established endogenous norms and practices."[138] This entails looking at China as an emerging power that is reshaping the norms and rules of the international institutions, as well as the whole system, albeit gradually. Similarly, Pu suggests that the current focus of the socialisation literature on such a process as a one-directional mechanism is biased and incomplete, and that we should rather see it as a two-way process in which China is not just a receiver of normative pressure but also an active agent shaping international norms. How emerging powers might influence international norms has been so far under-theorised but is becoming more and more salient in international politics.[139] When discussing Brazil South Africa India China (BASIC) countries' "penetration of the existing Western order", Terhalle raises similar concerns and discusses their attempts at reshaping the status quo in terms of a "reciprocal socialisation": such a pattern "accounts for the dynamics underlying the renegotiation process of the existing settlement. It shows how rising powers are socialized into the order, while at the same time reshaping it when they enter."[140] Bader contextualises China's rise against the background of goods substitution: in the sense that China's enhanced leverage allows recipients of its aid and trade to shield themselves from pressures to democratise or protect human rights, goods substitution threatens the mechanisms that Western countries use to uphold the international

[138] Gregory Chin, "Two-Way Socialization: China, the World Bank, and Hegemonic Weakening," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 19, no. 1 (2012): 211.

[139] Xiaoyu Pu, "Socialisation as a Two-Way Process: Emerging Powers and the Diffusion of International Norms," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 5, no. 4 (2012): 341–67; similarly, Pan and Kavalski claim that IR conventional theorising, which focuses mostly on applying existing theories to to the topic, fails to see China's rise as a theory-generating event. See Pan and Kavalski, "Theorizing China's Rise in and beyond International Relations."

[140] Maximilian Terhalle, "Reciprocal Socialization: Rising Powers and the West: Reciprocal Socialization," *International Studies Perspectives* 12, no. 4 (2011): 245, doi:10.1111/j.1528-3585.2011.00442.x.

liberal order.[141] She also concludes that the PRC's more active role in the provision of international public goods has more varied results than the binary of revisionism versus status quo would suggest.

On the other hand, Alden and Alves suggest that the literature on China's integration into Western norms, motivated by the need to assess the PRC's desire to endorse and sustain the Western-dominated international order,

> has ignored the raft of Chinese-instigated regional initiatives, from the Boao Forum for Asia to the China–Latin America and the Caribbean Forum ... These initiatives are inevitably constructed within the developing world where Beijing surfaces as an alternative to the 'Washington Consensus' by proposing multilateral dialogue platforms within the South. Grounded on a different set of norms (non-conditionality, equality, mutual benefit, non-interference in internal affairs), such regional forums in the developing world are supported by competing financial institutions and funds where China appears as the main shareholder, namely the China–Africa Development Fund, the US$40bn Silk Road Fund and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.[142]

Crucially, according to Hughes, "working with and shaping existing international institutions and regimes" or unilaterally deploy "the various foreign policy instruments that are given potency by the country's growing reserves of economic, military, and possibly soft power" are among the options available to China in "trying to reconcile this dilemma between a diplomatic stance that advocates 'peaceful development' and the mission of protecting 'core interests' that is driven largely by concerns over the [Communist Party of China] CPC's domestic legitimacy."[143]

Therefore, China's normative efforts can be seen outside of Western-led institutions too. Chung suggests that the country's interest in constructing regional multilateral regimes, especially in Asia, responds to Beijing's desire to both shape the rules of regional cooperation and creating a peaceful environment for its growth, as well as reassuring partners of its benign intentions.[144] Thus, seeing China exclusively as a norms-taker in a Western-led system means falling in the same trap I highlighted earlier, namely that the PRC is purely an 'object' of change: While this may have had some validity in the first decades of its engagement with the international system, it is now inaccurate. Acknowledging its system-reforming attitudes may not be enough anymore: It is time to recognise that China is already actively contributing to transforming the global order and shifting our perceptions of such order. And I argue

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[141] Julia Bader, "China and Undermining Hegemony," in *Undermining Hegemony*, forthcoming.
[142] Chris Alden and Ana Cristina Alves, 'China's Regional Forum Diplomacy in the Developing World: Socialisation and the "Sinosphere"', *Journal of Contemporary China* 26, no. 103 (2017): 2.
[143] Hughes, "China as a Leading State in the International System," 275.
[144] Chien-Peng Chung, "China's Approaches to the Institutionalization of Regional Multilateralism," *Journal of Contemporary China* 17, no. 57 (2008): 747–64, doi:10.1080/10670560802253527.

that it does so in a way that is not either 'good' or 'bad', according to current standards of action. It is however important to keep in mind that both sides of the 'socialisation game'—within and outside of the international system—are important in order to capture the full picture and this is why the empirical chapters will explore China's normative agenda across a range of forums which display different levels of Chinese vis-à-vis Western engagement. I elaborate more on these points in the following sections of this chapter, where I first clarify what does being a normative power imply and second, whether we can consider the country a normative power.

2.4 What does it mean to be a normative power?

Building on the above discussion of China's rise and processes of two-way socialisation, the last two sections of the chapter present the idea of normative power and suggest that it can be applied to China and provide us with a more nuanced analysis of its rise. Traditionally, the concept of normative power is associated with the EU: A rich research agenda prompted by Manners in 2002 has since attempted to refine the concept of 'normative power Europe' while simultaneously responding to its critics.[145] Manners suggested that "by refocusing away from debate over either civilian or military power, it is possible to think of the ideational impact of the EU's international identity/role as representing normative power" and that its "normative difference comes from its historical context, hybrid polity and political-legal constitution."[146] In short, a normative power is one that is able to shape conceptions of the normal.[147] Manners further maintains that a normative power is a vehicle of ideological power, seen as separable from military and economic power; this, however, does not mean that the latter are not important or that they cannot coexist with normative power. Instead, he suggests, normative power should be given greater attention. In sum, "the most important factor shaping the international role of the EU is not what it does or what it says, but what it is."[148] In this first conceptualisation, as

[145] For a review of such literature see Nathalie Tocci, ed., *Who Is a Normative Foreign Policy Actor? The European Union and Its Global Partners* (Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2008); Thomas Forsberg, "Normative Power Europe, Once Again: A Conceptual Analysis of an Ideal Type," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 49, no. 6 (2011): 1183–1204, doi:10.1111/j.1468-5965.2011.02194.x; Ian Manners, "Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no. 2 (2002): 235–58, doi:10.1111/1468-5965.00353; Henrik Larsen, "The Missing Link: The EU as a Normative Power and the Research on External Perceptions," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 52, no. 4 (2014): 896–910, doi:10.1111/jcms.12109; Richard G. Whitman, ed., *Normative Power Europe* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2011), doi:10.1057/9780230305601.

[146] Manners, "Normative Power Europe," 238; 240.

[147] Ibid., 239–40.

[148] Ibid., 252. As Manners clarifies, his "presentation of the EU as a normative power has an ontological quality to it – that the EU can be conceptualized as a changer of norms in the international system; a

Tocci reminds us, normative thus conveys a sense of standardisation rather than a moral imperative. Nonetheless, she notes how such a definition is entrenched in power dynamics: norms are associated with power insofar as only major international actors have the power to determine what is considered as normal and thus shape the 'norm' of international affairs. In this sense, therefore, any major power—including China—could be a normative foreign policy actor "at least in those regions and in all those policy areas in which it has an active interest and presence (i.e. its neighbourhood)."[149]

For the sake of clarity, there is also a second interpretation of normative power, which is ethically non-neutral, meaning that normative is associated with 'good' and 'ethical'. Here the challenge is to avoid sliding "into an imperialistic imposition of what is subjectively considered 'good' on the grounds of its presumed universality."[150] In order to do so, it is necessary to strike a balance between claims to the 'objective' and universal nature of certain norms and the 'subjectivity' from which they emerge. While I acknowledge the importance of such an interpretation, in this thesis I limit my analysis of China to its ontological quality as a normative power, but I do not engage with questions over its normative quality as such. This decision follows from the purpose of this research, which is to explore not the normative, but the ontological character of China's Africa engagement and, consequently, of its global rise. I ask if and how China is contributing to shaping conceptions of and norms on security in the continent and the world; but I do not ask whether this is a good or a bad thing. I analyse if and how it is possible for decision makers in Beijing to become norm-shapers; but I do not question whether this represents a positive or negative change for the international community.

To be sure, the first interpretation of normative power is also problematic in many respects. As Diez notes in his critique of the EU's normative power discourse, the success of the representation of the EU as a normative power "is a precondition for other actors to agree to the norms set out by the EU; it also constructs an identity of the EU against an image of others in the 'outside world'."[151] Thus, he claims, such a discourse "constructs a particular self of the EU … while it attempts to change others

positivist quantity to it – that the EU acts to change norms in the international system; and a normative quality to it – that the EU should act to extend its norms into the international system." (Ibid., 252). As argued earlier, for the purpose of this thesis, I only refer to China as a normative power from an ontological perspective and as regards the way it acts as such. I abstain from any normative judgement .

[149] Tocci, *Who Is a Normative Foreign Policy Actor?*, 4.

[150] Ibid.

[151] Thomas Diez, "Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe,'" *Millennium* 33, no. 3 (2005): 614, doi:10.1177/03058298050330031701.

through the spread of particular norms."[152] Thus, normative power is not only a specific kind of actor, but it also connotes

> the characteristic of a relationship (in the Weberian sense of power as A being able to make B do what s/he would otherwise not have done). … normative power … is not a power that relies on military force, but one in which norms in themselves achieve what otherwise is done by military arsenals or economic incentives. … To the extent that normative power is used as an analytical category to distinguish a particular kind of actor (such as 'Europe'), it relies on the possibility to trace empirically the impact of norms in contrast to other possible factors.[153]

However, the debate on normative power Europe does not examine much whether the country has normative power in the relational sense, as much as whether it acts as a normative power. Thus, he calls for a greater degree of reflexivity, which would make normative power Europe stand out as opposed to the propagation of particular European norms. Importantly, he highlights, "'normative power' is not an objective category. Instead, it is a practice of discursive representation. From a discourse-analytical point of view, the most interesting question about normative power, therefore, is not whether Europe is a normative power or not but how it is constructed as one, paraphrasing Stefano Guzzini, what the use of the term 'normative power' does."[154] In short, the narrative around normative power Europe constructs both the EU's identity and the identity of the EU's Others in a way that allows it to disregard its own shortcomings unless some self-reflexivity is inserted in such narrative.

Partly, the empirical analysis will indeed touch upon how China's discourse is constructed to make China look like, and be, a normative power, as much as it will touch upon questions of identity, especially Chinese identities, and how these are fundamental in the construction of a certain image (or more) for China—after all, norms and identity are mutually constitutive. However, the construction of China's identities is not the main object of the analysis. Similarly, I do not focus on how China constructs either the 'West' or Africa as its Others, since it is beyond the scope of the thesis to do so. This does not mean neglecting China's position of power or its subject positioning as compared to other actors in each of the forums analysed; instead, it means starting from such a position (and self-positioning), acknowledge that it is not fixed or given a priori, and compare the extent to which the country's normative power may play out in different ways according to the place (or power position) China occupies in each institution.

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[152] Ibid.

[153] Ibid., 616.

[154] Ibid., 626; See also Ian Manners and Thomas Diez, "Reflecting on Normative Power Europe," in *Power in World Politics*, ed. Felix Berenskoetter and Michael J. Williams (New York: Routledge, 2007), 183. For more on 'what power does', see Guzzini, "The Concept of Power: A Constructivist Analysis."

Diez and Manners also suggest that he EU is not unique and different actors could be seen as exercising normative power; however, "these actors [ranging from the Vatican to the USA] differ from the EU in the extent to which the spread of universal norms plays a role as an aim as well as the means, and to what extent it is combined with or is dominated by military or other forms of power."[155] According to Tocci and Manners, all global actors make claims regarding their normative character in international relations.[156] However, as the chapters in their volume suggest, when viewed from other actors' perspective, the picture may change. This points to two important realisations: first, that normativity "comes in shades of grey", thus explaining the different interpretations by different actors occupying different space and time places; and second, that normative interpretations differ across different actors and each proposed norm can claim strong roots in international law and ethics, since actors themselves interpret norms and normative action in different ways depending on their interests and identity. Moreover, normative interpretations are closely linked to the "power political configuration in which an actor finds itself in the international system": the stronger the actor, the more it will subscribe to norms allowing for 'intrusion' in other countries' affairs.[157] Beyond power, the legitimacy and moral standing of an actor also play a crucial role: thus, an ascending power (such as is the case for China) is more prone to make new norms, but less able to 'break' existing ones. As the power balance shifts and the world becomes increasingly multipolar and multilateral, rising powers are more likely to set norms, especially relational norms concerning mutual respect and solidarity.

Hence, given the great diversity existing across normative interpretations, it is imperative that, in order to understand how normative power works, we focus on the mechanisms and concrete episodes of power.[158] For the purpose of this thesis, this means exploring the ways in which China is becoming a normative power by shaping the normal and/or shifting our understanding of norms concerning security in a way that is inspired by equal relations and mutual respect and benefit, while simultaneously

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[155] Manners and Diez, "Reflecting on Normative Power Europe," 180.

[156] Nathalie Tocci and Ian Manners, "Comparing Normativity in Foreign Policy: China, India, the US and Russia," in *Who Is a Normative Foreign Policy Actor?* (Centre for European Policy Studies, 2008), 300; The question is also, as Kavalski puts it, "to what extent 'normative power Europe' can be used as the template for a general model (if not for a theory) of normative power in world politics." He challenges the universalising claims implicit in many studies of the normative power Europe model, and argues that key features of such power link together interaction, deliberate relations, and communities of practice. See Emilian Kavalski, "The Struggle for Recognition of Normative Powers: Normative Power Europe and Normative Power China in Context," *Cooperation and Conflict* 48, no. 2 (2013): 260–63.

[157] Tocci and Manners, "Comparing Normativity in Foreign Policy: China, India, the US and Russia," 312.

[158] Forsberg, "Normative Power Europe, Once Again," 1199–1200.

safeguarding its own interests. In this sense, mechanisms of socialisation, interpellation, and so on are relevant only insofar as we understand them as *empirical evidence* for whether a normative power explanation holds. The remainder of this section asks whether we can think of China as a normative power, while the following section of the chapter lays the basis for understanding China as a normative actor in Africa.[159] Chapter 8 will then reflect more critically on what would it mean for China to engage in more normative foreign policy while increasingly using military power to back that up.

In the last few years, a debate has been going on within China discussing what ideas and norms should constitute the country's contributions to world civilisation: Instead of simply providing parallels to (Western) IR concepts, many intellectuals have been promoting traditional Chinese concepts, such as harmony and *Tianxia*, to explain China's visions of world order in a way that goes beyond its official policy of peaceful rise.[160] If such discussions were once marginal in Chinese foreign policy circles, they have now become mainstream. Indeed, Womack suggests that "if we allow for the possibility that 'our' norms are not the only possible norms, and perhaps not the only valid ones, then the distance between China's behaviour and that of the West may not be a measure of China's moral defects, but rather of the distinctiveness of China's perspective in its external relationships"; therefore, in order to understand China as a normative foreign policy actor, we should first understand China "on its own terms" and this requires "a stretching of ideas about normative action beyond the common sense of the West."[161] In Chinese, normative is translated into 标准 (*biaozhun*), which

[159] When I presented a slightly modified version of this chapter at an English School-sponsored panel during ISA 2018, Cornelia Navari raised the question of whether it would be 'too romantic' to think of China as a normative power, given the concept's traditional association with the EU and its soft power, and she suggested I instead use the term 'norm protector'. I address her concerns by making two claims. First, seeing an actor as normative does not exclude the use of other forms of power, as explained extensively in this chapter. The construction of the military dimension within the EU does not change either its hybrid polity or its treaty-based legal order. A normative power, thus, *can* use military power, but importantly does so multilaterally and with respect for international law (with all the tensions identified by Tocci et al.) The same can be said of economic power, which the EU uses in abundance. It then becomes trivial to ask the same question on China. In this sense, China's normative power can even provide further proof of how it has become socialised into the international system—i.e. by highlighting that it has learned to play the rules of the game and utilises all the foreign policy tools at its disposal. Second, and following from this, if I referred to China as a 'norm protector', I would inevitably frame such a protection as aimed towards the existing, liberal, Western-inspired norms—the same that keep the consensus between great powers over maintaining certain norms stable. While this may be true for China's behaviour at the UNSC, as Chapter 6 shows, and to a lesser extent at the AU, as Chapter 5 discusses, it is less the case as regards its behaviour in other multilateral institutions, especially the FOCAC. I am thankful to Navari for her comments and encouragement.

[160] William A. Callahan, "Introduction: Tradition, Modernity, and Foreign Policy in China," in *China Orders the World: Normative Soft Power and Foreign Policy*, ed. William A. Callahan and Elena Barabantseva (Washington, D.C: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2011), 6–7.

[161] Brantly Womack, *China as a Normative Foreign Policy Actor* (Brussels: CEPS, 2008), 1; 294.

conveys a sense of standardisation rather than a moral imperative. Thus, for instance, China understands normative actions as hinging on the idea of sovereignty and collective rights based on respect and equality in relationships; it emphasises the sources of international rules rather than the rules themselves, hence placing more importance on mutual respect than the rule of law.[162] While Western studies of normative international actors tend to look at the actor and its moral motives, the Chinese tend to focus on the ethics of the relationship between actors. According to such a relational perspective, "[a]s China applies relationship logic to international relations, its actions aim to optimize relationships rather than transactions. In this model China does not use preponderance of power to optimise its side of each transaction, but rather to stabilise beneficial relations."[163] Thus, for instance, it was customary for tribute mission to leave the capital with more goods, wealth, and gifts than they have come with, since it was more important for the Chinese empire that they *wanted* to be part of it, than to gain more from each transaction. It is thanks to years of intense and skilful 'diplomacy of respect' that China has improved relations with both its neighbours and Africa. And, Womack continues, "[t]o countries that normally do not get much respect, China lavishes attention on the leadership, assures that it will not publicly murmur about domestic politics, much less intervene, and it shows understanding for the vulnerabilities of local economies. China is not only nonthreatening, it is reassuring."[164] What this implies for my analysis of China is that, as we see in Chapter 4, China views the international system as one of multipolarity, where no one state should and could dominate the others and successful foreign policy involves cooperation based on mutual interest and respect. To be sure, as often happens when it comes to politics, there is a gap between rhetoric and practice. However, it is my view that even though China may in reality want to 'dominate' world politics, there is a general tendency towards multipolarity which will act as a brake for China's efforts.[165] Importantly, Womack reminds us, "in relationship logic … both sides feel that they are better off if the relationship continues—this is the minimum meaning of 'mutual benefit'. A normal relationship does not require symmetry of partners or equality of exchanges, but it does require reciprocity."[166]

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[162] Tocci and Manners, "Comparing Normativity in Foreign Policy: China, India, the US and Russia," 307–14.
[163] Womack, *China as a Normative Foreign Policy Actor*, 20.
[164] Ibid., 21.
[165] See for instance Qiao on the "inevitable trend" towards multipolarity: Mu Qiao, "Duojihua Qushi Bu Hui Gaibian [The Trend towards Multipolarity Cannot Change]," *Dangdai Yatai [Contemporary Asia Pacific]* 6 (2002): 10–13.
[166] Womack, *China as a Normative Foreign Policy Actor*, 21.

Kavalski similarly suggests that we are witnessing the rise of normative powers outside of the West, especially if one looks at the prominence of Asian actors.[167] According to him, acknowledging "the emergence of alternative (and oftentimes) contending conceptualizations of political goods in global life and the appropriate way(s) for their attainment" would lead to acknowledging that "normative powers are in the business not of enforcing orders over other actors, but of engaging other actors in shared practices."[168] He builds his analysis on Manner's definition of a normative power as one that can shape the normal in international relations, though, following Jackson, he places more emphasis on the legitimacy of definitions of the normal.[169] In other words, while recognition may not be considered essential by great powers, normative powers on the other hand require a certain degree of acquiescence by their partners in order to reveal themselves as such. China has, in many ways, tried to picture itself as the antithesis to the EU-kind of neoliberal, cosmopolitan power, by articulating its practice as singularly historical. In this sense, normative power is given by the contingent context of interactions between actors—it is *power in context*. Thus, Kavalski suggests, a "normative power emerges *in relation to* the inter-subjective environment to which its agency is applied. … an actor's capacity to define the 'normal' depends on the recognition of this agency by target states."[170]

While on the one hand, China has been eager to learn from the experience of other great powers, on the other hand "the reflexivity animating China's international agency has been much more introspective and has tended to focus on China's own historical recollection. [Thus t]he patterns of China's nascent normative power present an intriguing intersection of the discursive memory of the past with the contexts of the present and the anticipated tasks of the future."[171] To an extent, therefore, China's normative power may be premised more on practices of interaction than on explicit norms of appropriateness.

Echoing Womack and his claim that respect is central to China's socialising attempts, he also maintains that the country's emphasis on dialogue has contributed to promoting the understanding that China's unique experience is not to be imposed with the use of force, but by making Beijing *attractive* to others. Following from Chinese

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[167] Kavalski, "The Struggle for Recognition of Normative Powers: Normative Power Europe and Normative Power China in Context."
[168] Ibid., 249.
[169] Ibid., 248; See also: Jay Jackson, "Normative Power and Conflict Potential," *Sociological Methods & Research* 4, no. 2 (1975): 237–63, doi:10.1177/004912417500400205.
[170] Ibid., 250, emphasis in original.
[171] Ibid., 253.

ethics, meaningful engagements happen only when interactions are based on respect for, not agreement with, the other, and not in the imposition of rules or norms. Thus, *recognition* becomes the constitutive moment of international interactions: the viability of a 'China model' is not entirely dependent on Beijing's will and decisions, but contingent on how other actors interpret their agency. Indeed, since an actor's capacity to shape the 'normal' depends on whether other actors recognise their agency as such, "[t]he emphasis on recognition-in-context draws attention to the performative qualities of normative power … 'the *performative enactment* of foreign policy' … which intimates that *to be* a normative power is oftentimes less important than to *appear to be* a normative power."[172] How is recognition defined in this context? Although there is no systematic account of the concept and its meaning yet, it is possible to identify its main uses.[173] For instance, Bartelson distinguishes between political, legal, and moral recognition: while these differ in their assumptions on the nature of the social order, they all "share a focus on the *sovereign state* as the paradigmatic subject and object of recognition."[174] Ringmar similarly suggests that states too, as much as individuals, "are coming up with self-descriptions and struggling to have them recognized."[175] And, more importantly, he clarifies that "any process of recognition, as always, will not concern its object as much as our way of orienting ourselves towards it."[176] Indeed, in the case of China he argues that "[t]he real subject of the current torrent of newspaper articles, best-selling books, and assorted policy advice is not 'the rise of China' as much as how this rise, if that indeed is what it is, relates to the rest of us."[177] Prior to being recognised by others, however, we must make it possible for others to recognise us; this is why recognition regimes—understood as "socially prepared judgments, prejudgments, regarding how best to recognize things"[178]—have certain rules regarding self-presentation. For Ringmar, therefore, the most interesting question is not so much what China is really like, but rather "why we come to imagine the country under one recognition regime rather than another. … How we choose between them will depend not on China but on how we dream, what we hope for, and what we fear."[179] In general, "we ask our

[172] Ibid., 250.
[173] Jens Bartelson, "Three Concepts of Recognition," *International Theory* 5, no. 01 (2013): 107–29, doi:10.1017/S175297191300002X.
[174] Ibid., 110–11; emphasis in original.
[175] Thomas Lindemann and Erik Ringmar, eds., *The International Politics of Recognition* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2012), 3.
[176] Erik Ringmar, "China's Place in Four Recognition Regimes," in *Recognition in International Relations. Rethinking a Political Concept in a Global Context*, ed. Christopher Daase et al. (New York/Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 49.
[177] Ibid., 50.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Ibid., 63.

audiences to *recognise us* as the kind of persons that our stories identify. Only if they affirm the validity of the description have we survived the test; *only as recognised can we conclusively come to establish a certain identity*."[180]

In practical terms, Kavalski suggests that countries can be recognised as such when they deliver credible commitments to the intended target(s). In his words,

> The ability to treat others with respect allows normative powers to gain the recognition that creates the permissive environment allowing them to define and redefine the standards of the 'normal' in international life. … the ability of a normative power to exert influence is contingent on its capacity to generate locally appropriate interactions, [which empower] local participants and enhances the perception that they (and their inputs) are respected. … it is by engaging in [deliberate practices of] interactions that definitions of the 'normal' gain their causal effects.[181]

This is especially the case when other actors and states do as China does, rather than what China (or others) tell them to do. According to Breslin, "the China model isn't important for others because of the specifics of what has happened to China; rather it is important for establishing what can be done if other countries do what is best for themselves based on their own concrete circumstances and not simply what they are told to do by others."[182] Therefore, normative powers deliberately engage in learning and interactions through which they can socialise other states. This is especially important in the case of China's relations with African countries via the FOCAC, as will be shown in Chapters 4 and 5: a normative power is one that tries to engage other actors in shared practices and by creating communities of practice that contribute to the socialising of targeted actors.[183] China, in particular, "seeks to socialize regional countries by developing shared beliefs and norms that will build the 'community of shared destiny' of the Sino-centric regional order."[184]

2.4.1 China's emergence as a normative power in Africa (and beyond?)

Building on such an understanding of China as a normative power, in the last section I introduce elements of China's Africa policy that are central to its growing role as a global security actor and norms-provider in the continent, with the aim to clarify

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[180] Erik Ringmar, *Identity, Interest and Action. A Cultural Explanation of Sweden's Intervention in the Thirty Years War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 81; emphasis in original.
[181] Kavalski, "The Struggle for Recognition of Normative Powers: Normative Power Europe and Normative Power China in Context," 259; 261.
[182] Breslin, cited in ibid., 254.
[183] Other authors have attempted analyses of China as a normative power, albeit in a narrower sense and focusing on specific topics/areas. On the international financial governance structure, see: Zhongzhou Peng and Sow Keat Tok, "The AIIB and China's Normative Power in International Financial Governance Structure," *Chinese Political Science Review* 1, no. 4 (2016): 736–53; On the South China Sea disputes, see: David Guo Xiong Han, "China's Normative Power in Managing South China Sea Disputes," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 10, no. 3 (2017): 269–97.
[184] Callahan, "China's 'Asia Dream,'" 231.

why its engagement with African countries is essential to understanding its rise globally. If we accept that normative power rests on an ethics of relationships where mutual respect is crucial, one must first clarify how China-Africa relations have been constructed in the discourse as respectful and reciprocal. To this end, Alden and Large suggest that the notion of Chinese exceptionalism acts as a normative modality of engagement that seeks to structure relations with African countries in a way that, while they remain asymmetrical in economic content, they are characterised as equal in terms of economic gains and political standing.[185] The official rhetoric of China's government as regards its relations with Africa, they argue, should be considered as importantly constitutive of China-Africa relations. In particular, they maintain that

> China's official foreign policy rhetoric as a discursively enacted normative ideal relates to and coheres with discourse as a descriptive feature of increasingly multifaceted, complex Chinese experience throughout the African continent. … [in this sense] China's foreign policy rhetoric can serve to both constrain and enable: it constrains by imposing restrictions and storing up policy challenges, but it also enables by continuing to offer a tremendously successful discourse of a particular form of intervention into Africa to date.[186]

China's exceptionalism, they add, is informed by a discourse of difference and similitude: China is different than other external powers because it shares with African countries a past of colonial subjugation and a similar experience as a developing country; while economic asymmetry is not denied, the respect and benefits are mutual, which reminds us of Womack's claim that a successful relationship does not imply the symmetry of partners, but it does imply reciprocity.[187] Chapters 4, 5, and 6 will provide a much needed analysis of China' Africa discourse, which is so far lacking in the literature, and will contribute to developing a more empirically-based perspective on China's foreign policy towards the continent.

This discourse is nor static or unchanging: As argued in Chapter 1 and as I show later in the thesis, while the basic discourse in the first layer and the discourse on peace and security in the second layer have been maintained stable and coherent through the years, new elements and nuances have been gradually added and others stretched and modified in the third layer, as a result both of changing Chinese interests and policies in the continent and interactions with African actors. Importantly, therefore, we should rethink China-Africa ties in light of "a form of African development with Chinese characteristics, one which folds together classic assertions of modernisation theory, mercantilist self-interest and actual development experience within the open-

[185] Alden and Large, "China's Exceptionalism and the Challenges of Delivering Difference in Africa."
[186] Ibid., 26–27.
[187] For more on the main features of such exceptionalism, see ibid., 27–29.

ended rhetoric of 'South–South co-operation'."[188] This approach is constructed in line with practical experience ("practice-based methodology"), and is paired with an outcome-based approach, where the impact of certain policies and initiatives is considered the only constructive locus for assessment of those policies.

Analysing Chinese-instigated regional agreements would reveal a lot more of the preferred norms and practices of Chinese contemporary approaches to multilateralism than studies of the same within already established international institutions where China is more likely to conform to existing norms.[189] Echoing this call, what I propose in this thesis is to examine China's norms and practices of peace and security through a range of multilateral arenas, from the regional (FOCAC), through the continental (AU), to the global (UN) level. Such an analysis promises to expand our understanding of China's exceptionalism and distinctive normative practices in ways which have been ignored so far, but that could reveal a great deal of the direction where Xi's China is going in terms of its interactions with the developing world. As a matter of fact, Alden and Alves remind us, "although China holds a preponderance of structural power within … regional forums there is an ongoing process of socialisation—driven in this case by developing country member states and expanding over time—aimed at reshaping China's behaviour to bring it more closely in line with the other members' interests."[190] Hence, the importance of viewing socialisation as a two-way process: not only China is socialising leaders of African countries into its world view, but relations are in turn being affected by the responses China encounters in such countries.

Establishing formalized relations with regional groupings of developing countries reflects the country's aspiration to shape the rules and norms of regional cooperation, as well as to create a favourable environment for its domestic growth and the expansion of its interests abroad. Not the least, such platforms "become emblematic of Chinese efforts to site and order their foreign relations within a structure that reflects their vision of a harmonious global order without the overlay of Western influence."[191] The FOCAC is one such example: It is precisely through the Forum that China can promote its views on norms on sovereignty, political equality, and mutual benefit, as well as seek recognition for its identities as a developing country and responsible rising

[188] Ibid., 35–37.
[189] Alden and Alves, "China's Regional Forum Diplomacy in the Developing World: Socialisation and the 'Sinosphere.'"
[190] Ibid., 2.
[191] Ibid., 6. See also Anshan Li and April Funeka Yazini, eds., *Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. The Politics of Human Resource Development.* (South Africa: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2013); Ian Taylor, *The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)*, Global Institutions (Oxon/New York: Routledge, 2011).

power. Importantly, the FOCAC is also a crucial avenue for Africans to voice their expectations and concerns on shortcomings in China-Africa relationships.[192]

As regards peace and security specifically, Alden and Large note a number of issues that make it unpalatable for China to simply adapt to established practices, including a

> distinct ambivalence towards the interventionist character of Western-inspired 'liberal peace' approaches, [and] the absence of a post-conflict and fragile states policy [which] sits uneasily with Beijing' s commitment to play a greater activist role in international affairs generally and in support of African interests in particular. The result is a conscious effort to move away from ad hoc participation in African post-conflict settings to gradualist forms of engagement that include fomenting common Chinese–African values and re-imagining liberal norms on intervention. In short, China is in the process of becoming a norms maker in Africa.[193]

The continent represents one of those regions where, amidst an international system that remains structurally dominated by the West, China's relative position has improved so much so that it can prove as a testing ground for the expression of its foreign policy activism. According to the authors, the "initial process of norms making can be seen in China's rhetorical steps towards intervention in post-conflict reconstruction, and to a lesser degree, the engagement with fragile states such a process entails."[194] Huotari and others also briefly mention that elements of its African security priorities are increasingly included in UN resolutions, signalling that China is trying to carve out a more autonomous role for itself in an attempt to become a "shaper" of the way other countries and organisations discuss and perceive security issues.[195] Thus, it becomes clearer how China's behaviour in Africa is not only important in and of itself; but it also carries a deeper meaning with broader implications: what the PRC's power 'does' in the continent can give us an indication of what it will do elsewhere too.

As I suggest that the concept of normative power can be applied to China, I am not denying that its strategy in Africa is also premised on leveraging its economic influence to advance its security interests. I am not questioning the claim that "Confucian rhetoric notwithstanding, its strategic thinking is fundamentally guided by realist power politics."[196] As Buzan points out, this is not only well documented by

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[192] Alden and Alves, "China's Regional Forum Diplomacy in the Developing World: Socialisation and the 'Sinosphere'"; Lina Benabdallah, "Towards a Post-Western Global Governance? How China-Africa Relations in(Form) China's Practices," *Rising Powers Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (2016): 135–45.
[193] Chris Alden and Daniel Large, "On Becoming a Norms Maker: Chinese Foreign Policy, Norms Evolution and the Challenges of Security in Africa," *The China Quarterly* 221 (March 2015): 125.
[194] Ibid., 133–34.
[195] Huotari et al., "China's Emergence as a Global Security Actor," chap. 6.
[196] Buzan, "The Logic and Contradictions of 'Peaceful Rise/Development' as China's Grand Strategy," 396.

scholars and commentators but is also not hard to find in Chinese writings.[197] And, as Diez suggests, "… strategic interests and norms cannot be easily distinguished, and … the assumption of a normative sphere without interests is in itself nonsensical."[198] Yet, China's normative power and its influence over developing countries through the use of soft power constitute an important part of its Africa policies, one without which its presence in the continent would probably look different. On the one hand, normative and soft power have sometimes been used interchangeably.[199] However, Diez and Manners suggest, Nye envisioned soft power as an empirical (positive/descriptive) rather than theoretical concept—it is, therefore, a foreign policy tool. In contrast, they argue, "normative power is not a foreign policy tool to be wielded for national interests. … normative power is part of discursive practices that are both constitutive and always present."[200] Moreover, as opposed to Nye's combination of soft and hard power, they argue that "the imposition of norms through military force cannot be equated with changing the behaviour of other actors, which relies primarily on socialisation processes. Thus … normative power invariably diminishes in the presence of military force."[201] On the other hand, treating normative power as an analytically separate category does not mean that it cannot go alongside other forms of power in international relations, notably military and economic power; indeed, normative power may itself be underpinned by economic incentives or military capabilities.[202] Interestingly, Ngangom proposes that while "[m]ilitary might and economic coercion have traditionally been the preferred tools for the pursuit of geopolitical ambitions with soft power playing a supporting role", China has shifted this norm as in several cases, "we see development diplomacy assum[ing] a central role in reinforcing Beijing's hegemonic ambitions. Beijing's conduct calls into question not only established understanding of geopolitics, but also that of global development."[203] Yet, while the country seems to have all the characteristics to lead effectively and unleash its soft

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[197] For more on China's realist power politics, see among others: Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton University Press, 1998); Christopher Hughes, "Globalisation and Nationalism: Squaring the Circle in Chinese International Relations Theory," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 26, no. 1 (1997): 103–24; David Shambaugh, "Growing Strong: China's Challenge to Asian Security," *Survival* 36, no. 2 (1994): 43–59, doi:10.1080/00396339408442736; Y. Xuetong, "The Rise of China and Its Power Status," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 1, no. 1 (2006): 5–33, doi:10.1093/cjip/pol002.

[198] Diez, "Constructing the Self and Changing Others," 625.

[199] Manners and Diez, "Reflecting on Normative Power Europe."

[200] Ibid., 179.

[201] Ibid., 180.

[202] Ibid., 176.

[203] Tanoubi Ngangom, "The Sharp Power of Development Diplomacy and China's Edge," *Observer Research Foundation*, April 11, 2018, https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/sharp-power-development-diplomacy-china-edge/.

power potential, it is still not loved abroad.[204] For Nye, the limits of China's soft power reside in fanning the flames of nationalism and holding tight the reins of party control.[205] Shambaugh similarly suggests that China's mission to enhance its soft power could only work if the government relaxed its "draconian restraints at home and reduce[d] efforts to control opinion abroad."[206] Concerns in the 'West' over China's influence have also translated into the latest addition to the family of power concepts, namely 'sharp' power. Walker and Ludwig coined it to describe the kind of power that centres on distraction and manipulation. Techniques to spread it include co-optation and manipulation, targeted at the media, academia, and policy communities.[207] Similar concerns have emerged recently over the role of the Confucius Institutes in spreading pro-Chinese propaganda in the 'West';[208] and the establishment of cooperation agreements between Chinese media and overseas publications, such as the case of the UK-Chinese Times.[209] Thus, many have questioned whether we should expect a 'convergence' of Chinese and Western interests, motivated by the belief that the PRC will be fully integrated into the Pax Americana;[210] or whether its norms-

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[204] George Gao, "Why Is China So ... Uncool?," *Foreign Policy*, March 2017, https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/03/08/why-is-china-so-uncool-soft-power-beijing-censorship-generation-gap/; Richard Wike, Bruce Stokes, and Jacob Poushter, "Views of China and the Global Balance of Power," *Pew Research Center*, June 2015, http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/06/23/2-views-of-china-and-the-global-balance-of-power/#china-receives-generally-positive-ratings-from-global-publics. See also: Daniele Carminati, "Pushing the Boundaries of Soft Power: The Controversial Chinese Case," *E-International Relations*, July 11, 2018, http://www.e-ir.info/2018/07/11/pushing-the-boundaries-of-soft-power-the-controversial-chinese-case/; Zhen Liu, "China's Human Rights Record, Military Aggression Hit Its Soft Power," *South China Morning Post*, July 12, 2018, https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2155051/chinas-human-rights-record-aggressive-military.

[205] Joseph S. Nye, "The Limits of Chinese Soft Power," July 2015, https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/china-civil-society-nationalism-soft-power-by-joseph-s--nye-2015-07?barrier=accessreg.

[206] David Shambaugh, "China's Soft-Power Push: The Search for Respect," *Foreign Affairs*, June 16, 2015, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2015-06-16/china-s-soft-power-push.

[207] Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig, "The Meaning of Sharp Power," *Foreign Affairs*, November 2017, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2017-11-16/meaning-sharp-power. To be sure, sharp power means have also been used by and in the US, both during the Cold War and more recently during the 2016 presidential campaign. So, what is new, according to Nye, is not the basic model, but rather the speed with which disinformation ('fake news') can be spread. See: Joseph S. Nye, "How Sharp Power Threatens Soft Power," *Foreign Affairs*, January 2018, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2018-01-24/how-sharp-power-threatens-soft-power.

[208] Ellie Bothwell, "Confucius Institute Crackdown Predicted as Global Inquiries Mount," *Times Higher Education (THE)*, April 12, 2018, https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/confucius-institute-crackdown-predicted-global-inquiries-mount.

[209] Emily Feng, "China and the World: How Beijing Spreads the Message," *Financial Times*, July 12, 2018, https://www.ft.com/content/f5d00a86-3296-11e8-b5bf-23cb17fd1498.

[210] James Kynge, "China and the West Head for a Clash of Systems," *Financial Times*, January 2018, https://www.ft.com/content/6aae4a1c-e0f2-11e7-a0d4-0944c5f49e46.

making ambitions will lead China to reshape some of the rules of global governance in an 'illiberal' way.[211]

As Chapter 7 further stresses, suspicion and scepticism over China's soft power capabilities are more common in the West than in the developing world; in this respect, I argue that Western scholars may have missed that had it not been for China's soft power and the success it achieved in building 'equal' relationships, perhaps there would not be any discussion over its normative power potential at all. Much has changed over the last two decades and Chinese leaders have arguably become more skilled at utilising the tools available to them. The win-win and mutual benefit principle that forms the bulk of China's development assistance model usually contribute to building the perception of a horizontal partnership and equal power dynamic—of course, as pointed out earlier, such power relations are rarely horizontal and are charged with important geopolitical implications.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I aimed to clarify the theoretical foundations of the thesis. I started by asking whether China is rising to challenge, or be a more active participant in, the existing world order. Its emergence as a global security actor and its growing security engagement in Africa have sparked a renewed debate over its influence on global affairs. I have claimed that the literature on China's rise is too polarised and works tend to focus on how such rise affects US-China relations and the balance of power. Even proponents of a more liberal and optimistic view only consider the growing interconnectedness of the Chinese and world economies as relevant insofar as it happens within Western-led institutions. Instead, building on scholars who have studied China's behaviour in the international system and its organisations, I proposed to explore how this rise is actually unfolding. In particular, I argued that China can be seen as a normative power, understood as the power to set and shape the normal in international relations. Importantly, it is power in context, and China's normative power rests not only on an ethics of relationships where mutual respect is crucial, but also, and more importantly, on being recognised as such by the targeted audiences. By appearing to its partners as reliable and reassuring, China is in a position to set the

[211] Richard Fontaine and Daniel Kliman, "On China's New Silk Road, Democracy Pays A Toll," *Foreign Policy*, May 16, 2018, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/05/16/on-chinas-new-silk-road-democracy-pays-a-toll/ It will suffice here to say that such polarised debates are rather unsatisfactory and sterile—which is why this thesis instead rests on a more nuanced theoretical and empirical framework, aiming at capturing the complexities of China's engagement in Africa.

common discourse; by engaging its partners in shared practices—in this case, shared security and development practices—China is emerging as a normative power in relation to the inter-subjective environment of such practices and interactions. In short, as long as China is recognised as a friendly partner that is able to deliver on its promises, it will hold the power to set standards of action. If one looks at its engagement with Africa and especially its growing role as a security provider; processes of socialisation; political rhetoric; and shared practices, these can be used as empirical evidence for whether a normative power explanation holds. Furthermore, looking at China's understanding and practice of soft power in the continent, we incur into a different and broader characterization of soft power than traditional accounts. Thus, I argued, China's participation in international affairs through its engagement with the African continent and its security regime can bear both positive and negative consequences; its contributions do not necessarily imply 'good' or 'bad' behaviour (from whichever standards). A study of China's engagement with African countries does not only have value in itself but will also contribute to illuminate characteristics of Chinese behaviour elsewhere too. The second part of the thesis directly addresses these issues by exploring China's Africa discourse and how it relates to its rise as a global security actor.

Part II – China Rises Globally and in Africa

Chapter 3 – Setting the context

贫瘠的土地上长不成和平的大树,
连天的烽火中结不出发展的硕果
The tree of peace does not grow on barren land,
the fruit of development is not produced amidst flames of war reaching towards heaven
(Xi Jinping, May 2014, speech on security cooperation in Asia)

3.1 Introduction

As mentioned earlier, the shift to a more active engagement in Africa's security environment fits into a broader shift in China's foreign policy happening under the leadership of Xi Jinping. Simultaneously, this shift also follows a broader trend within the continent where the political focus has moved from economic integration to security. This chapter provides the background for the empirical analysis that follows and aims to contextualise the China-Africa dimension within wider political developments in both the country's foreign policy and the international system. China has now come to the forefront of international decision making and has committed to be even more active in addressing global issues. As China becomes a major power, scholars have started to debate the implications of a Chinese vision of world order: In particular, the concept of *Tianxia* as pit against the international system by influential Chinese intellectuals such as Zhao Tingyang and Yan Xuetong, has had a profound effect on popular culture and state policy.[212] An idealised version of China's imperial past is now inspiring scholars and policy makers within the country to plan for the future: The aim is not only to "save China", but also to "save the world".[213] If we understand soft power as growing out of a normative view of one's own political culture, the question should ask which norms are being revived in China: In Callahan's view, intellectuals and policy makers are not just reviving ancient concepts, but they are mixing ideas and institutions, thus creating hybrid models of thought.[214]

Intellectual and policy engagement with debates over China's rightful place in the world accompany the practical opportunities and challenges that come with increased power. In addition to the domestic environment, China's new leadership is tasked with steering the country in international waters, which has become increasingly difficult given the PRC's impressive growth.[215] The country's global image has received

[212] Ban Wang, ed., *Chinese Visions of World Order: Tianxia, Culture, and World Politics* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2017), 1.
[213] Callahan, "Introduction: Tradition, Modernity, and Foreign Policy in China," 2.
[214] Ibid., 7.
[215] Robert S. Ross and Jo Inge Bekkevold, eds., *China in the Era of Xi Jinping. Domestic and Foreign Policy Challenges* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2016).

a considerable push with President Xi: In the wake of the 18th Party Congress, many called for a more explicit overall plan for China's rising international standing and its expanding global interests.[216] Unlike his predecessors, Xi has taken important steps in promoting a grand strategy for China, by formulating his own vision under different slogans, some of which are analysed in this chapter, and promoting state prosperity, collective pride, and national rejuvenation. In this sense, he has proved to be more of a political visionary and strategic thinker than many observers expected him to be.[217]

I start the chapter by introducing China's foreign policy under Xi Jinping and Chinese visions of world order. Second, I call attention to the "new security concept", how it has been promoted as China's own articulation of collective security, and how it differs from the latter. Third, I provide an overview of the security dimension of China's engagement in Africa's, thus linking China's global security ambitions with its regional diplomacy.

3.2 China's vision of world order: Change and continuity in the Xi Jinping era

Arguably, China's hermetic communism and revolutionary fervour nowadays has been replaced by a pragmatic approach to multilateral diplomacy. [218] Contemporary China is especially seeking to increase its political influence and prestige through active participation in, rather than confrontation with, the existing international liberal order.[219] It does so through a number of strategies, including: denouncing US unilateralism and promoting multilateralism; participating in and creating new international organisations; pursuing soft power diplomacy in the developing world; voting against the US in international institutions; and setting the agenda within such institutions, hence seeking a gradual modification of Pax Americana rather than a direct challenge to it. [220] Thus, according to Breslin, "[a]ttempts are underway to establish a new discourse that articulates a clear Chinese

[216] Stig Stenslie and Chen Gang, "Xi Jinping's Grand Strategy. From Vision to Implementation," in *China in the Era of Xi Jinping*, ed. Robert S. Ross and Jo Inge Bekkevold (Georgetown University Press, 2016).
[217] Ibid., 121.
[218] Paula Cristina Roque and Chris Alden, "China and the UN Security Council: From Observer to Activist," China in Africa Policy Briefing (SAIIA, April 2008).
[219] By international liberal order I mean the political, economic, and strategic system created by the United States and its allies in the wake of the second World War. See for instance Daniel Deudney and John G. Ikenberry, "The Nature and Sources of Liberal International Order," *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 2 (1999): 179–96.
[220] Randall L. Schweller and Xiaoyu Pu, "After Unipolarity: China's Visions of International Order in an Era of U.S. Decline," *International Security* 36, no. 1 (2011): 41–72, 53.

vision of a new world order through the continuing search for a Chinese version of modernity."[221] Some scholars are consequently trying to indigenise international relations theories and integrate it with Chinese thought. Others are advocating for new norms and values to be the source of a new world order led by China. While only a few years ago Breslin and others concluded that China lacked the will to either push for revolutionary change or take the leadership role that a reform of the current system would require,[222] it seems that Xi's thought might constitute a first step towards a discourse that describes China's vision of (a new) world order. In the case of his predecessor, the vision for China's role in the world was encapsulated in the idea of 'peaceful rise', attributed to Zheng Bijian, who put it forward in the occasion of the Asia Forum in Bo'ao in 2003; it includes:

> China getting actively and economically involved in the globalization process, but doing so on its own terms and on the basis of its own capacities; at the same time, it entails China relying on domestic institutional innovations, industrial restructuring, developing domestic markets, transforming high savings into investment capital, and improving the quality of the workforce to overcome the limitations imposed by resources and other circumstantial problems.[223]

As leaders started to acknowledge that rhetoric and perceptions matter, the concept of peaceful rise later became "peaceful development", suggesting a much less threatening transition, although peaceful rise still frequently appears in academic debates, as I showed in Chapter 2.[224]

In terms of the 'practical' realisation of Chinese visions of world order, some scholars claim that China does not have a "grand strategy" on international peace and security.[225] Instead, Goldstein suggested that Chinese leaders have designed a strategy to pursue the country's interests in the international system of the 21st century and that

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[221] Shaun Breslin, "China and the Global Order: Signalling Threat or Friendship?," *International Affairs* 89, no. 3 (2013): 630; Interestingly, for Kim, China's vision of world order is "coloured by the assumptions, values, and beliefs of the Confucian moral order. The traditional Chinese image of world order was no more than a corollary of the Chinese image of internal order, and thus and extended projection of her self-image." Thus, for him, "Sinocentrism, in all its pretense of paternalistic benevolence and cultural chauvinism, was an outgrowth of centuries of Chinese contacts with surrounding peoples in the Sinic (East Asia) world order." See Samuel S. Kim, *China, the United Nations, and World Order* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1979), 19; 21.

[222] Breslin, "China and the Global Order"; Evan S. Medeiros, "Is Beijing Ready for Global Leadership?," *Current History* 108, no. 719 (2009): 250–56.

[223] Steve Tsang, "China's Place in East Asia," in *China, Japan and Regional Leadership in East Asia*, ed. Christopher M. Dent (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2008), 85.

[224] Breslin, "China and the Global Order"; B. Glaser and E. Medeiros, "The Changing Ecology of Foreign Policy Making in China: The Ascension and Demise of the Theory of 'Peaceful Rise,'" *The China Quarterly* 190 (2007): 291–310.

[225] Jisi Wang, "International Relations Theory and the Study of Chinese Foreign Policy: A Chinese Perspective," in *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, ed. Thomas Robinson and David Shambaugh (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); John Gittings, "China's Foreign Policy: Continuity or Change?," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 2, no. 1 (2008): 17–35; Jisi Wang, "China's Search for a Grand Strategy. A Rising Power Finds Its Way," *Foreign Affairs* 90, no. 2 (2011): 68–69.

such a strategy is designed to foster favourable conditions for China's continued modernization, while also reducing the risk that China is perceived as a threat that must be countered.[226] Buzan similarly suggests that "China has a reasonably clear and stable set of aims that involve continued increases in the country's absolute and relative power, continued development and increase in prosperity, defence of territorial integrity, and continued domestic stability and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rule."[227] Hughes goes as far as arguing that

> It is somewhat surprising that a number of scholars propose that the country does not have such a strategy, because its government and the Communist Party have always gone to great efforts to rationalize foreign policy actions in terms of guiding principles and objectives. … Since 2008, the most significant development in this grand strategy has been the enumeration of non-negotiable 'core interests'. These were stated most systematically by State Councillor Dai Bingguo at the China–US Strategic and Economic Dialogue in Washington, July 2009, as: [d]efend fundamental systems and national security; [p]reserve national sovereignty and unification; [m]aintain steady and sustainable development of the economy and society.[228]

Thus, based on these and more recent developments in both domestic and foreign policy, scholars conclude that while the definition of a Chinese grand strategy is ongoing, more prominent features have emerged under the rule of President Xi.[229] The literature on China's foreign policy is rich and comprehensive and given the scope of the thesis, I here focus only on China's foreign policy and visions of world order under Xi Jinping.[230] As Xi proclaims that "socialism with Chinese characteristics" has entered a new era, China analysts are left to wonder what are the new and old elements of China's foreign policy.[231]

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[226] Avery Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China's Grand Strategy and International Security*, Studies in Asian Security (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2005).
[227] Buzan, "The Logic and Contradictions of 'Peaceful Rise/Development' as China's Grand Strategy," 401.
[228] Hughes, "China as a Leading State in the International System," 274.
[229] Angela Stanzel et al., *Grand Designs: Does China Have a 'Grand Strategy'?*, China Analysis (ECFR, 2017), http://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/grands_designs_does_china_have_a_grand_strategy; Aaron L. Friedberg, "Globalisation and Chinese Grand Strategy," *Survival* 60, no. 1 (January 2, 2018): 7–40; Stenslie and Gang, "Xi Jinping's Grand Strategy. From Vision to Implementation."
[230] For more background on the sources of Chinese foreign policy, the main actors, and its behaviour at the regional and international levels, see for instance: Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh, eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, Repr, Studies on Contemporary China (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006); Suisheng Zhao, ed., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Pragmatism and Strategic Behavior* (Armonk, N.Y: M.E. Sharpe, 2004); Marc Lanteigne, *Chinese Foreign Policy: An Introduction*, Third edition (London; New York: Routledge, 2016); William A. Callahan and Elena Barabantseva, eds., *China Orders the World: Normative Soft Power and Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2011); Thomas J. Christensen, *The China Challenge: Shaping the Choices of a Rising Power*, First edition (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2015); Sebastian Heilmann and Dirk Schmidt, *China's Foreign Political and Economic Relations: An Unconventional Global Power*, State and Society in East Asia (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014); Michael H. Hunt, *The Genesis of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Xuetong Yan et al., *Ancient Chinese Thought, Modern Chinese Power*, The Princeton-China Series (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2013).
[231] "习近平在中国共产党第十九次全国代表大会上的报告--新闻报道-人民网," October 28, 2017, http://cpc.people.com.cn/n1/2017/1028/c64094-29613660.html.

On the one hand, there has indeed been a shift towards a more proactive and assertive posture in international affairs: The leadership is "moving away from China's long-standing policy approach of 'hiding one's capabilities and biding one's time' (*taoguang yanghui*), and becoming more confident and proactive in utilizing China's growing power and influence to protect and advance its national interests and to shape a favourable external environment."[232] Some of Xi's activities marking a change from previous leaders include: a very active diplomacy of bringing in (请进来, *qingjinlai*) and going out (走出去, *zouchuqu*); the introduction of new concepts such as a new type of major country relations, major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics, a global community of common destiny, and a new type of international relations; and he has left a profound impact on global economic development through his signature initiatives.[233] Thus, under his rule, China enters a pivotal decade, in which he is determined to pre-empt a Soviet-style implosion as well as to revive both the Party and the country.[234] To be sure, "[w]hile the goals have been set, how best to achieve them is still an open question, about which the Chinese authorities and intellectuals are exploring and debating."[235] What is clear is that the "megatrends" of Xi's China are to deepen domestic reforms in a calculated way and play a more proactive role in international affairs.[236]

On the other hand, some elements of continuity can also be identified. After the death of Deng Xiaoping in 1997, a political system has then taken shape in China that has been called "consultative Leninism": Such a system is based on a social contract whereby the Party delivers stability, order, rapid growth, and general improvement of people's living conditions in exchange for its continued and unchallenged dominance of both government and politics.[237] According to Tsang, this system has five defining characteristics, namely: an obsession with staying in power; a focus on governance reform in both the Party and the state apparatus; a commitment to enhance the Party's capacity to respond to public opinion; a commitment to sustain rapid economic growth

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[232] Jian Zhang, "China's New Foreign Policy under Xi Jinping: Towards 'Peaceful Rise 2.0'?," *Global Change, Peace & Security* 27, no. 1 (2015): 6–7, doi:10.1080/14781158.2015.993958.
[233] Xie Tao, "Chinese Foreign Policy With Xi Jinping Characteristics," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, November 20, 2018, https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/11/20/chinese-foreign-policy-with-xi-jinping-characteristics-pub-74765.
[234] Honghua Men and Steve Tsang, "Genesis of a Pivotal Decade," in *China in the Xi Jinping Era*, ed. Steve Tsang and Honghua Men (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Steve Tsang, "Consolidating Political and Governance Strength," in *China in the Xi Jinping Era* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).
[235] Steve Tsang and Honghua Men, "Megatrends of the Xi Decade," in *China in the Xi Jinping Era*, ed. Steve Tsang and Honghua Men (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2016), 337.
[236] Tsang and Men, "Megatrends of the Xi Decade."
[237] Steve Tsang, "Consultative Leninism: China's New Political Framework," *Journal of Contemporary China* 18, no. 62 (2009): 865–80, doi:10.1080/10670560903174705.

and development; and the promotion of a specific kind of nationalism as the ideology. In short, Xi's plan is to "restoring China's greatness as a rich country supported by a powerful modern military." [238] He promises to achieve the country's peaceful development by reinvigorating the CCP and reasserting the Party's narrative of history and reaffirming its legitimacy based on its "great historical achievements." Xi has fully embraced this system as the basis to build the China Dream; at the same time, he understands that "it is not a static system but one that needs to adapt to the changing environment so that the Party will stay in power and direct China's development."[239]

It is therefore not surprising that China's political discourse under Xi is full of both ancient and new concepts. For instance, the concept of 天下(*tianxia*, all under heaven) has been promoted as a universally valid model of world order.[240] In 2005, philosopher Zhao Tingyang published a book on the *tianxia* system, sparking intense conversations among intellectuals and scholars on 'Chinese-style IR' as alternative to Western narratives. In its geographic connotation, the term indicates 'everything below the sky', 'the earth'. However, the term also has two normative meanings, namely 'all the people' and 'world institution'. Zhao therefore uses the term to suggest a solution to the problematic chaos of the world, too complicated to be resolved by any super power or international organisation, and which instead requires a global perspective, an all-including way of looking at things that would allow for more equitable solutions. He argues that the 'all-under-heaven' pattern is similar to the United Nations pattern of 'all-states-in-a-family'. But, according to him, the UN inherits the problems of an individualist society and "has taken oneness as a mission of Western modernity to be accomplished"[241], whereas "all-under-Heaven commits us to the oneness of the world as the intact wholeness that implies the acceptance of the diversities as they are and are meant to be in the world."[242] Eventually, he suggests *tianxia* as a world theory that "could provide a better view for political philosophy and political science."[243] While a full analysis and critique of the concept goes beyond the scope of the chapter, it will suffice here to say that its revival does indeed represent a

[238] Tsang, "Consolidating Political and Governance Strength," 18.
[239] Ibid., 35.
[240] William A. Callahan, "Chinese Visions of World Order: Post-Hegemonic or a New Hegemony?," *International Studies Review* 10 (2008): 749–61.
[241] Tingyang Zhao, "Rethinking Empire from the Chinese Concept 'All-under-Heaven,'" in *China Orders the World. Normative Soft Power and Foreign Policy*, ed. William A. Callahan and Elena Barabantseva (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center Press, 2011).
[242] Ibid., 31.
[243] Ibid., 34.

sign of the 'bold face' of China's diplomacy.[244] In Callahan's words, "the success of *The Tianxia System* shows that there is a thirst in China for ''Chinese solutions'' to world problems, and a hunger for nationalist solutions to global issues, especially when they promote a patriotic form of cosmopolitanism."[245]

Restoring the *tianxia* system is, however, only one of the many ideas of world order informing China's contemporary foreign policy. These also include striving for more power to reshape the current system in accordance to rising Chinese interests (but still upholding the Westphalian world order); and advocating for a more peaceful integration into the American-led liberal system.[246] Thus, alongside what I just called the bold face of Chinese diplomacy, there is also 'softer' rhetoric, such as former President Hu Jintao's plan for a 和谐社会 (*hexie shehui* , harmonious society), announced in 2005 during a speech at the UN.[247] He then argued that China was ready to follow the road of peaceful development and hold the banner of a long-lasting peace. Xi Jinping's idea of a world order is instead reflected in his 中国梦 (*zhongguo meng*, China Dream), adopted as his official slogan in November 2012, which has once again ignited debates among both Western and Chinese media.[248] The China Dream represents, according to Xi, "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation", which consists of four parts: a strong China, economically, politically, diplomatically, scientifically, and militarily; a civilised China, based on equity and fairness, rich culture, and high morals; a harmonious China, where amity is reached among all social classes; and a beautiful China, with a healthy environment and low pollution.[249] Xi's nationalism consists of a clear distinction between a Chinese way of enacting economic

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[244] For more on the concept of tiaxia and its critics, see for instance Callahan, "Chinese Visions of World Order: Post-Hegemonic or a New Hegemony?"; Bijun Xu, "Is Zhao's Tianxia System Misunderstood?," *Tsinghua China Law Review* 6, no. 1 (2013): 95–108.

[245] Callahan, "Chinese Visions of World Order: Post-Hegemonic or a New Hegemony?," 759. Emphasis in original.

[246] Fei-Ling Wang, "From Tianxia to Westphalia: The Evolving Chinese Conception of Sovereignty and World Order," in *America, China, and the Struggle for World Order: Ideas, Traditions, Historical Legacies, and Global Visions*, ed. G. John Ikenberry, Wang Jisi, and Feng Zhu (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[247] Jintao Hu, "Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity," September 15, 2005, http://www.china-un.org/eng/zt/shnh60/t212614.htm.

[248] See for instance: William A. Callahan, *China Dreams: The Debate*, n.d., https://vimeo.com/80820310; "Xi Jinping and the Chinese Dream," *The Economist*, May 4, 2013, http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21577070-vision-chinas-new-president-should-serve-his-people-not-nationalist-state-xi-jinping; Robert L. Kuhn, "Xi Jinping's Chinese Dream," *Global Opinion, The New York Times*, June 4, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/05/opinion/global/xi-jinpings-chinese-dream.html?pagewanted=all&_r=1; Angang Hu, *Zhongguo Daolu Yu Zhongguo Mengxiang [China Path and the China Dream]* (Zhejiang renmin chubanshe [Zhejiang People's Publishing House], 2013); Mingfu Liu, *Zhongguo Meng: Hou Meiguo Shidai de Daguo Siwei Zhanlue Dingwei [The China Dream: The Great Power Thinking and Strategic Positioning of China in the Post-American Era]* (Beijing: Zhongguo youyi chuban gongsi, 2010); Mingfu Liu, "'Zhongguo Meng' Yinling Zhongguo Qianjin [The 'China Dream' Will Lead China Forward]," *Jundui Zhenggong Lilun Yanjiu* 14, no. 3 (2013): 135–38.

[249] Kuhn, "Xi Jinping's Chinese Dream."

reforms and serving Western, particularly American, interests. It seems that in the face of domestic concerns—namely, the need to consolidate power and launch economic reforms, the need to legitimise the CCP's rule and to maintain stability and unity across the country—nationalism represents the President's most powerful tool to unite an extremely diverse nation, as it "resonates intrinsically and passionately across Chinese society."[250] And indeed, discussions of nationalism as in a close relationship with globalisation have permeated political debates in China at all levels.[251] Simultaneously, Xi has shown confidence in the fact that the existing political system is sufficiently strong, effective, and robust to deliver the national rejuvenation encapsulated in the China Dream.[252] In one of the latest chapters of what the Party's mouthpiece Xinhua New calls "Xiplomacy", Xi took pride in the success that his formulation of "a community with a shared future for mankind" has had among other countries and people, even coming to be written into UN documents.[253] In his vision, such a shared future is encapsulated in China Dream, blending together the national and the international dimensions. In short, the China Dream can be realised by achieving the "Two 100s": first, the material goal of transforming China into a "moderately well-off society" by 2020, which is the 100th anniversary of the CPC; and second, the goal of modernising the country to make it fully developed by 2049, the 100th anniversary of the founding of the PRC.[254] In his long speech during the 19th Party Congress, Xi further laid out a specific timetable in order to reach the second goal, with a first period from 2020 to 2035 and a second from 2035 to the middle of the twenty-first century.

In light of these objectives, the President's main focus has been to unify and centralise the foreign policy making process, to strengthen his own position and the Party's, and to take China into a new stage of development. Such an attempt has become far more evident since after the latest National Congress of the CCP held in November 2017. Only a couple of months afterwards, the People's Daily called Xi "人民领袖" (*renmin lingxiu*), which, according to Xu Wei from the Party School, does not simply mean leader, but "it is often bestowed to a leader who enjoys the highest prestige,

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[250] Ibid.
[251] Christopher Hughes, *Chinese Nationalism in the Global Era* (London: Routledge, 2006).
[252] Steve Tsang, "Contextualizing the China Dream: A Reinforced Consultative Leninist Approach to Government," in *China's Many Dreams*, ed. David Kerr (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 10.
[253] On Xiplomacy, see Hui Lu, "China Focus: New Chapter for 'Xiplomacy,'" April 10, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-04/10/c_137100867.htm; Xi's speech at the Boao Forum can be found here: "Transcript: President Xi Addresses the 2018 Boao Forum for Asia in Hainan," *US-China Perception Monitor*, April 11, 2018, https://www.uscnpm.org/blog/2018/04/11/transcript-president-xi-addresses-2018-boao-forum-asia-hainan/.
[254] "Full Text of Xi Jinping's Report at 19th CPC National Congress," October 18, 2017, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/19thcpcnationalcongress/2017-11/04/content_34115212.htm.

who is the most capable and who is widely recognized by the entire Party."[255] Around the same time, the Party proposed to include Xi's thought on "socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era" into the country's constitution.[256] As a matter of fact, Chinese foreign policy is being strictly controlled by the Party now more than ever, and Xi's process of centralisation and unification of leadership and power within the CCP are a good indication of this development. Thus, his personality and ambitions are strong drivers of the country's foreign policy and while the process has indeed become more open to other influences and actors throughout the years, the trend seems now to be reversed, at least for the time being.[257] Analysis of Xi's operational code beliefs seem to suggest that while he will not depart significantly from his predecessor, he has a more instrumental understanding of achieving goals.[258]

The strategy to achieve "national rejuvenation" includes both ideological and practical components. On the one hand, as part of the government reshuffle, the United Front Work Department (UFWD) is being strengthened, as it will subsume the activities of the three departments responsible for ethnic affairs, religion, and overseas Chinese (namely the State Ethnic Affairs Commission, the State Administration for Religious Affairs and the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council).[259] The UFWD has traditionally been tasked with winning support for Chinese political interests and building influence abroad through measures such as co-opting and influencing the overseas Chinese diaspora and other groups outside the Communist Party—in short, it helps the CCP tell its preferred "China story".[260] As Groot highlights,

> Much of the rationale for the shift in policy seems to revolve around Xi Jinping's rise and his analysis of what the Party must do to both survive and to achieve his vision of national rejuvenation. Xi takes very seriously those Party analyses undertaken in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Soviet Bloc which stressed the loss of Party control over the levers of government, the failure to take ideology seriously enough, the alleged role of "hostile foreign forces" and civil society forces like churches, and the

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[255] Tiantian Bai, "Party Paper Swears Loyalty to Lingxiu Xi," *Global Times*, January 16, 2018, http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1085070.shtml.
[256] "Xi Jinping Thought Proposed to Be Included in Constitution," *Xinhua*, February 25, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-02/25/c_136999028.htm.
[257] For more on the new foreign policy actors in China, see Linda Jakobson and Dean Knox, "New Foreign Policy Actors in China," *SIPRI Policy Paper*, no. 26 (September 2010).
[258] Kai He and Huiyun Feng, "Xi Jinping's Operational Code Beliefs and China's Foreign Policy," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 6 (2013): 209–31; See also Gregory J. Moore, "Xi Jinping: Strongman Among Rivals," *Asia Dialogue*, December 5, 2018, http://theasiadialogue.com/2017/12/05/xi-jinping-strongman-among-rivals/.
[259] Philip Wen, "China Strengthens Global Influence Agency in Government Reshuffle," *Reuters*, March 21, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/china-parliament-influence/china-strengthens-global-influence-agency-in-government-reshuffle-idINKBN1GX189; Gerry Groot, "The Rise and Rise of the United Front Work Department under Xi," *Jamestown*, April 24, 2018, https://jamestown.org/program/the-rise-and-rise-of-the-united-front-work-department-under-xi/.
[260] A. Kuo, "China's United Front Work: Propaganda as Policy," *The Diplomat*, February 14, 2018, https://thediplomat.com/2018/02/chinas-united-front-work-propaganda-as-policy/.

> growth of ethnic consciousness among the USSR's many minority nationalities. The UFWD's new policies reflect his determination to prevent anything similar from happening in China.[261]

As the Party understands the importance of winning allies through the appeal of China's ideals, institutions, and policies, it regards the UFWD's work as key to its soft power projection, "behind which looms the hard power attraction of China's continuously growing economic clout and relatively efficient bureaucracy."[262]

On the other hand, among the major initiatives that are part of this strategy, the "Made in China 2025" was launched as China's ambitious industrial plan aiming to turn the country into a manufacturing superpower in the coming decades.[263] In January 2016, Xi addressed the opening ceremony of the China-backed AIIB and hailed the new bank as a stepping stone in boosting development in Asia as well as reforming the economic governance system.[264] But Xi's true signature project is arguably the now ubiquitous 一带一路 (*yidai yilu*, One Belt One Road, now called Belt and Road Initiative). In its initial formulation during Xi's state visit to Kazakhstan in 2013, the plan was to revive the ancient Silk Road connecting Central Asia. It was then expanded to incorporate a more ambitious, global network of transportation, energy, and telecommunication infrastructures linking Europe, Asia, and Africa via land and sea.[265] As of its fifth anniversary in September 2018, China has invested USD25 billion into BRI-related infrastructure projects, not counting the projects still under construction or in the planning phase, which involve much larger investment volumes.[266] However, as Tsang aptly puts it in a recent interview, while the definition

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[261] Groot, "The Rise and Rise of the United Front Work Department under Xi."

[262] Kuo, "China's United Front Work"; For more background on this, see: Gerry Groot, *Managing Transitions: The Chinese Communist Party, United Front Work, Corporatism and Hegemony.* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

[263] See for instance Jost Wübbeke et al., "Made in China 2025. the Making of a High-Tech Superpower and Consequences for Industrial Countries," Papers on China (MERICS, 2016); "Made in China 2025: The Domestic Tech Plan That Sparked an International Backlash," *SupChina*, June 28, 2018, https://supchina.com/2018/06/28/made-in-china-2025/.

[264] "Chinese President Addresses AIIB Opening Ceremony," January 16, 2016, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-01/16/c_135015075.htm; see also L. Jin, "'Yatuoxing' Shi Dui Guoji Jinrong Zhixu de Wanshan. [The AIIB Will Improve the International Financial Order]," in *"Yidai Yilu" Guojia Dingceng Zhanlue Shiji Yu Xingdong Buju. ['One Belt, One Road': National Strategic Top-Level Design and Action Plan]*, ed. Caixin (Beijing: Zhongguo wenshi chubanshe, 2015), 41–44.

[265] "President Xi Jinping Delivers Important Speech and Proposes to Build a Silk Road Economic Belt with Central Asian Countries," September 7, 2013, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/xjpfwzysiesgjtfhshzzfh_665686/t1076334.shtml; Rolland Nadège, *China's Eurasian Century? Political and Strategic Implications of the Belt and Road Initiative.* (National Bureau of Asian Research, 2017), https://muse.jhu.edu; Michael D. Swaine, "Chinese Views and Commentary on Periphery Diplomacy," China Leadership Monitor, 2015, http://carnegieendowment.org/2014/07/28/chinese-views-and-commentary-on-periphery-diplomacy-pub-56306.

[266] See for instance: Li Xing, ed., *Mapping China's "one Belt One Road" Initiative*, 1st edition, International Political Economy Series 13996 (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); "MERICS Belt and Road Tracker," *MERICS*, accessed August 14, 2018, https://www.merics.org/en/bri-tracker; "China

is vague, getting too caught up in it misses the point; according to him, "[i]f you'd like a project to be Belt and Road, it can be Belt and Road … You can fit anything into it. It's a way of getting support for your project."[267] Thus, which projects exactly are framed as part of the BRI is not so much important as the fact that these initiatives and the accompanying slogans decisively set apart Xi's presidency from his predecessors'; and the fact that Xi considers "how China can use connectivity to influence the 'software' of global governance's ideas, norms, and rules."[268]

China's foreign policy activism under Xi's rule is thus marked by an emphasis on multilateralism, both via strengthening its participation in existing institutions and creating new ones—an aspect which, among others, this thesis is set to explore in more detail.[269] According to Lanteigne, one of the most visible changes in China's foreign policy since the post-Deng reform era is its approach to multilateralism and international institutions.[270] A more active process of engagement with various types of organisations, with the aim of gaining more goods and information from the international system, had already begun under Jiang and Hu, and as China's power grew, so did its ability to shape the policies and directions of political, economic and security organisations, and thus of its structural power. However, it is only under Xi that we are witnessing a further step in advocating and creating new organisations, such as the above-mentioned AIIB, the BRI, and the FOCAC. In particular, the creation of institutions such as these "adds further weight to the idea of shifting global economic power further towards Asia … [and] it is the strongest proof to date that China is now much more confident about putting forward its own economic ideas and institutions on a global scale."[271] It is therefore clear that, with Xi, a new kind of thinking has emerged: what Wang Yizhou calls "creative involvement", "a guiding thread somewhere between a metaphysical theory and an exemplified interpretation

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Creates a Global Infrastructure Network," accessed August 14, 2018, https://www.merics.org/en/bri-tracker/interactive-map; "Mapping the Belt and Road Initiative: This Is Where We Stand," accessed August 14, 2018, https://www.merics.org/en/bri-tracker/mapping-the-belt-and-road-initiative; Reid Standish and Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, "Interactive Map: Follow the Roads, Railways, and Pipelines on China's New Silk Road," *Foreign Policy*, May 7, 2015, https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/05/07/interactive-map-follow-the-roads-railways-and-pipelines-on-chinas-new-silk-road/; "中国贡献: 既立足当前又着眼未来（'一带一路'五周年系列报道)," August 13, 2018, http://politics.people.com.cn/n1/2018/0813/c1001-30223946.html.

[267] Mead, "China in Africa."

[268] Callahan, "China's 'Asia Dream,'" 233.

[269] For more on China's multilateralism in general, see for instance: Alice Ekman, "China's Multilateralism: Higher Ambitions," *European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)*, January 2016; Chung, "China's Approaches to the Institutionalization of Regional Multilateralism"; Joel Wuthnow, Xin Li, and Lingling Qi, "Diverse Multilateralism: Four Strategies in China's Multilateral Diplomacy," *Journal of Chinese Political Science* 17, no. 3 (2012): 269–90, doi:10.1007/s11366-012-9202-6.

[270] Lanteigne, *Chinese Foreign Policy*, 73.

[271] Ibid., 94.

of policy".[272] Or, as the more assertive Yan Xuetong argues, a radical rethinking of the principles of Chinese foreign policy is ongoing.[273]

3.3 The "new security concept" defined

China's engagement with economic and political organisations has always been more pronounced as compared to its participation in security regimes; however, Xi's mark on the country's foreign policy can be felt in the security realm as well, which represents the most interesting development in terms of the topics addressed in this thesis. China's "creative involvement" includes embracing collective security in a way that, not unlike other major powers, is informed by its changing interests, power status, and identity; nonetheless, its multilateral diplomacy, especially at the UN, is not just an ad-hoc reaction to outside stimuli, but rather indicates Beijing's interest in establishing a less instrumental international order.[274] Collective security can be defined as aiming to provide security for all states, by the action of all states, against those seeking to challenge the existing order; it thus contrasts both the notion of self-help and the concept of alliances, and it is best embodied by the UNSC.[275] Hence, under a collective security arrangement, an aggressor against any one state is considered an aggressor against all other states, which act together against it.

Building on this definition, China made sure to articulate its own understanding of collective security, which arguably looks more like *cooperative* security. Especially relevant in this sense is Xi's "new security concept". Of course, this security concept is not very new, as it started to emerge in the late 1990s as a response to both domestic and external challenges, and converged with other notions such as peaceful rise, responsible great power, harmonious world, and so on.[276] Such security concept draws from principles that the Chinese government has advocated for long since the 1950s, especially the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, but early formulations only seemed to cohere by 1998, when a white paper was issued in that respect. The

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[272] Wang Yizhou, "Creative Involvement: A New Direction in Chinese Diplomacy," in *China 3.0*, ed. Mark Leonard (London: European Council on Foreign Relations, 2012).
[273] Xuetong Yan, "The Weakening of the Unipolar Configuration," in *China 3.0*, ed. Mark Leonard (ECFR, 2012).
[274] Jianwei Wang, "China's Evolving Attitudes and Approaches toward UN Collective Security," in *America, China, and the Struggle for World Order*, ed. G. John Ikenberry, Jisi Wang, and Zhu Feng (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
[275] Joel Wuthnow, *Chinese Diplomacy and the UN Security Council* (Oxon/New York: Routledge, 2013), 3.
[276] Gill even traces the origins of the "new security concept" to the early 1980s Bates Gill, *Rising Star: China's New Security Diplomacy* (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution Press, 2007), chap. 1; see also Wu Baiyi, "The Chinese Security Concept and Its Historical Evolution," *Journal of Contemporary China* 10, no. 27 (2001): 275–83, doi:10.1080/10670560124748.

following year, then President Jiang Zemin presented the new security concept in a speech and it was subsequently enshrined in the declaration at the 16th CCP Congress in 2002. Its core consisted of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, cooperation, dialogue, consultation, and negotiation conducted on equal footing, all based on the UN Charter, the Five Principles, and other universally recognised principles.[277] President Xi has recently presented his own interpretation of the new security concept, as he has done with other aspects of China's foreign policy. In a 2014 speech addressing the Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia, he describes such a concept as being informed by four characteristics: 共同 (*gongtong*, common), 综合 (*zonghe*, comprehensive),合作 (*hezuo*, cooperative), and 可持续 (*kechixu*, sustainable). He argued that

> As a Chinese saying goes, 'a wise man changes as time and circumstances change.' We need to keep pace with the changing circumstances and evolving times. One cannot live in the 21st century with the outdated thinking from the age of Cold War and zero-sum game. *We believe that it is necessary to advocate common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security in Asia*. We need to innovate our security concept, establish a new regional security cooperation architecture, and jointly build a road for security of Asia that is shared by and win-win to all.[278]

First, with common he means "respecting and ensuring the security of each and every country." Despite the great variety of countries, people, and traditions across the region, security must be universal, equal, and inclusive: all Asian countries should have the same right to participate in the security affairs of the region and seek their own security, although that should not come at the expense of others. Hence, we should do so by abiding "by the basic norms governing international relations such as respecting sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and non-interference in internal affairs, respect the social systems and development paths chosen by countries on their own, and fully respect and accommodate the legitimate security concerns of all parties." Second, comprehensive speaks to the need to address both traditional and non-traditional security threats: In particular, he maintains that the challenges brought about by terrorism, transnational crimes, environmental security, cyber security, energy and resources security, and natural disasters are on the rise and thus require a security concept that is broader in both "scope and implication". Third, cooperative entails "promoting the security of both individual countries and the region as a whole

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[277] Gill, *Rising Star*, 4–7.

[278] These and the following excerpts are taken from "New Asian Security Concept For New Progress in Security Cooperation," 2014, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1159951.shtml; for the Chinese original, see "习近平: 积极树立亚洲安全观 共创安全合作新局面-新华网," accessed November 14, 2017, http://news.xinhuanet.com/world/2014-05/21/c_126528981.htm.

through dialogue and cooperation." This means engaging in dialogue and communication that increase mutual trust, reduce misunderstandings, and seek common ground. He stresses that "[w]e should stay committed to resolving disputes through peaceful means, stand against the arbitrary use or threat of force, oppose the provocation and escalation of tensions for selfish interests, and reject the practice of shifting trouble to neighbours and seeking selfish gains at the expense of others." Finally, he defines sustainable security as the need to

> focus on both development and security so that security would be durable. … *Development is the foundation of security, and security the precondition for development*. … To build an Asian security mansion that could stand the test of wind storms, we need to focus on development, actively improve people's lives and narrow down the wealth gap so as to cement the foundation of security.[279]

These four features essentially reiterate China's traditional opposition to unilateralism and unilateral intervention; no interference in the internal affairs of other states and respect for state sovereignty; respect for each country's chosen path of development; and the emphasis on the security-development nexus.

Hence, as Wang suggests, for historical reasons there is still a preference for common and cooperative over collective. However, China's attitude towards collective security has indeed changed throughout the years, as the concept was initially perceived as a synonym for imperialist intervention, whereas now it is a legitimate word in the international vocabulary of Chinese leaders and elites.[280] It is furthermore worth noting that while Xi's formulation was originally intended for the Asian security environment, Chinese officials have adopted the term to refer to the country's engagement in security elsewhere too, as will be shown in the empirical chapters. Alongside these formulations, we also find more specific references to a future where the PLA will play a more important role abroad. In China's latest white paper on defence, published in 2015, Beijing lays out a new military strategy emphasising a more active defence posture and a greater naval presence abroad.[281] The paper envisions a greater global role for the country's military to face a variety of "new threats", including "hegemonism, power politics and neo-interventionism." [282] Especially following operations in Libya and South Sudan, the paper "provides a clear confirmation that the PLA will continue to expand its range of operations and

[279] "New Asian Security Concept For New Progress in Security Cooperation."
[280] Wang, "China's Evolving Attitudes and Approaches toward UN Collective Security."
[281] "China's Military Strategy," May 26, 2015, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/Press/2015-05/26/content_4586805.htm.
[282] Ibid.

capabilities." [283] China's military is thus increasing its participation in military operations other than war (including Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs), non-combatant evacuation operations and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief operations. Furthermore, China is laying the ground for its troops to operate overseas and is increasingly focusing on military cyber and space capabilities. According to Huotari et al., "these trends reflect China's newfound level of comfort with potential intervention abroad."[284] Thus, for all practical purposes, China is emerging as a "full-spectrum global security actor", mostly through performing four different roles: diplomat, soldier, trader, and shaper.[285]

3.4 The security dimension of China-Africa relations

China's increased attention to Africa's security environment is thus not happening in a vacuum. On the one hand, we have seen how its leaders have been promoting a more active approach to international security and how the country is emerging as a global security actor. On the other hand, the continent has witnessed a shift of political focus from matters of economic integration to security over the last 20 years. If the 1990s saw the consolidation of economic integration communities, mostly through the regional economic communities (RECs), the 2000s brought a bigger focus on security and on the security-development nexus. Policy and academic attention was redirected to understanding the role regional economic and security organisations could play in conflict management in post-Cold War Africa.[286] In this sense, therefore, China's increased engagement with the APSA has been following broader trends across the continent. The shift has been accompanied by growing attention to non-traditional security threats, while moving away from traditional, Cold War-type warfare. Today, not only is China's global role expanding, both security- and otherwise, but its current engagement in Africa moves at an unprecedented pace, and peace and security are finding a larger space in Sino-African relations. Empirically, this can be easily observed by comparing the PRC's latest Africa white papers from 2013 and 2015, as I show below.

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[283] Shannon Tiezzi, "In New White Paper, China's Military Embraces Global Mission," *The Diplomat*, May 28, 2018, https://thediplomat.com/2015/05/in-new-white-paper-chinas-military-embraces-global-mission/.
[284] Huotari et al., "China's Emergence as a Global Security Actor," 49.
[285] Ibid., 9–10.
[286] See for instance: David J. Francis, "Linking Peace, Security and Developmental Regionalism: Regional Economic and Security Integration in Africa," *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 2, no. 3 (2006): 7–20, doi:10.1080/15423166.2006.875613387186; Earl Conteh-Morgan, "The Danger of Supplementing Aid to Africa with Weapons," *The Conversation*, August 14, 2017, http://theconversation.com/the-danger-of-supplementing-aid-to-africa-with-weapons-81418.

The field of China-Africa studies is a very rich one and debates abound; therefore, I only focus on the contemporary era and security engagement, which is a relatively novel area of involvement and is only now starting to receive attention from IR and other scholars.[287] According to Kuo, Chinese leaders view the liberal peace as a neocolonial hegemonic imposition of the West and they believe such a project contributes to African insecurity; according to him, this view comes from its interactions with African elites, China's own experience with colonialism, and a mix of realist, Marxist, and postcolonial perspectives on the African security context.[288] Beijing essentially understands African (in)security as a direct result of "weak" states and this weakness as the result of colonialism, tribal conflicts, and enforced democratization. Thus, leaders believe that China's engagement in African security should be balanced among many demands. This leads to tensions between respect for state sovereignty and the need to demonstrate the country's credentials as a peaceful rising power. Furthermore, they are aware of the need to maintain good bilateral relations with African countries as well as with Western-dominated organisations; and they are wary that while increased participation in PKOs shows good faith, too much engagement will raise concern among other countries, especially in the 'West'.[289]

As relations evolve and China's interests expand, therefore, the quantity and quality of its involvement in the continent are changing. Although the conventional perception is that China is only interested in Africa's natural resources, relations are also prompted by political, economic, security, and ideological motives.[290] In particular, as relations deepen, so do related challenges, and this could not be truer for the country's engagement with peace and security. Crucially, the Chinese have

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[287] For a discussion on whether Africa-China studies is a field and for a comprehensive literature review, see: Chris Alden and Daniel Large, "Studying Africa and China," in *New Directions in Africa-China Studies*, ed. Chris Alden and Daniel Large (Routledge, 2019); For a historical overview of China-Africa relations, see: David H. Shinn and Joshua Eisenman, *China and Africa: A Century of Engagement* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); Ian Taylor, *China and Africa Engagement and Compromise* (London; New York: Routledge, 2006); Deborah Bräutigam, *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); For more background on China-Africa, see among others: Denis M. Tull, "China's Engagement in Africa: Scope, Significance and Consequences," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 44, no. 03 (September 2006): 459, doi:10.1017/S0022278X06001856; Hany Besada and Ben O'Bright, "Maturing Sino–Africa Relations," *Third World Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (2016): 655–77, doi:10.1080/01436597.2016.1191343; Julia C. Strauss and Martha Saavedra, "Introduction: China, Africa and Internationalization," *The China Quarterly* 199 (September 2009): 551–62; Chris Alden and Christopher R. Hughes, "Harmony and Discord in China's Africa Strategy: Some Implications for Foreign Policy," *The China Quarterly* 199 (2009): 563–84; Alden and Large, "China's Exceptionalism and the Challenges of Delivering Difference in Africa"; Steve Chan, *The Morality of China in Africa: The Middle Kingdom and the Dark Continent* (London: Zed Books, 2013).

[288] Steven C. Y. Kuo, "Beijing's Understanding of African Security: Context and Limitations," *African Security* 5, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 24–43, doi:10.1080/19392206.2012.653306.

[289] Ibid., 35.

[290] Yun Sun, "Africa in China's Foreign Policy" (Brookings, 2014).

traditionally understood overseas military activities as a political means serving their strategic purposes, and not simply as freestanding initiatives from the part of military professionals.[291] Historically, "the shadow of the past loss of Chinese sovereignty during the 'century of humiliation' caused elites to be particularly leery of humanitarian intervention"[292] and to stick to a conventional understanding of sovereignty. However, during the 1990s, Chinese elites came to a re-interpretation of the sovereignty-intervention nexus both as a consequence of humanitarian operations during this period—including US-led interventions in the Gulf War and Kosovo—and of China's eagerness to be seen as a responsible member of the international community. The official discourse still aimed to delegitimise the normative change, while foreign policy elites started internalising these new norms. The importance of history is clear in that "we should place the 'new learning' that is taking place within the context of earlier 'lessons' that have made Chinese elites particularly sensitive about ceding any aspect of Chinese sovereignty."[293] Hence, even though the principles of non-interference and respect for state sovereignty traditionally represent the cornerstone of China's diplomacy, the need to protect its citizens and interests abroad has gradually led to a shift away from those principles to a more active participation and pragmatic adaptation to changed circumstances.[294] China's engagement in Sudan undoubtedly marks a crucial moment in the PRC's engagement in peace and security and the existing IR literature documents the motives and dynamics of this shift.[295]

During the Hu Jintao era (2002-2012), China's diplomatic reach into Africa expanded considerably. It was during these years, Sun argues, that China began to adopt the principle of an "all-round/all-directional" foreign policy that, in theory, does not differentiate among geographical regions or countries, thus emphasizing balanced diplomacy and seeking to develop ties with all countries.[296] According to Qin Yaqing, developing countries are the foundation of such a foreign policy direction while

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[291] Shinn and Eisenman, *China and Africa: A Century of Engagement*.
[292] Allen Carlson, "Helping to Keep the Peace (Albeit Reluctantly): China's Recent Stance on Sovereignty and Multilateral Intervention," *Pacific Affairs* 77, no. 1 (2004): 9–27, 11.
[293] Ibid., 26.
[294] Mathieu Duchatel, Oliver Brauner, and Zhou Hang, *Protecting China's Overseas Interests. The Slow Shift Away from Non-Interference*, SIPRI Policy Paper 41 (SIPRI, 2014).
[295] See among others: Laura Barber, "Chinese Foreign Policy in the 'Going Out' Era: Confronting Challenges and 'Adaptive Learning' in the Case of China-Sudan and South Sudan Relations" 2014, http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/3129/; Daniel Large, "China's Sudan Engagement: Changing Northern and Southern Political Trajectories in Peace and War," *The China Quarterly* 199 (September 2009): 610–26; Daniel Large, "China and Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Africa: The Case of Sudan," *SAIIA China in Africa Project*, Policy Briefing 36, October 2011.
[296] Sun, "Africa in China's Foreign Policy."

multilateral platforms are the stage for such relations to expand.[297] Following from this, China has consistently stepped up its efforts in Africa, a trend which continues under Xi. According to Shinn, during his time as leader of China Xi will continue to pursue the country's interests in the continent (including access to raw materials, garnering support in international forums, and cultivating an attractive market for its exports) and even increase efforts to strengthen existing ties, both with individual African countries and with regional organisations.[298] To be sure, Xi Jinping also faces increasing challenges in the Sino-African partnership, such as growing Chinese migration to the continent, trade deficits with individual countries, environmental concerns, work safety, and concerns with the security of its citizens abroad—challenges which arguably have become more urgent now than they were for the previous administration.

In terms of China's engagement with peace and security in particular, the decisive move began towards the end of Hu's administration, when the China–Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security was announced. In addition to supporting the AU's own peacekeeping operations in the continent, China committed to provide financial support to the AU's standing army and to train security officials and peacekeepers. But China's direct involvement in African security reached a new level only under Xi and is now an explicit part of Beijing's foreign policy.[299] Van Staden even argues that "[f]or the foreseeable future, Africa's engagement with China will be shaped by Xi's vision."[300] Among the trends he identifies that will shape such future are UN reform and its global security role, especially in terms of military expansion and contributions to peacekeeping. In part, Dûchatel et al. suggest that "the Chinese military is now more involved in African security affairs because it can be—China has been the world's second-largest military spender since 2009, with a military budget of $146 billion in 2016. Its changing capacities are themselves a driver of change in its foreign policy."[301] In addition, other decisive factors shaping this renewed foreign

[297] "十七大新闻中心," October 2007, http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/100804/6370470.html.
[298] David H. Shinn, "China and Africa in the Xi Jinping Era," *The Diplomat*, March 25, 2013, https://thediplomat.com/2013/03/china-and-africa-in-the-xi-jinping-era/.
[299] Mathieu Dûchatel, Richard Gowan, and Manuel Lafont Rapnouil, "Into Africa: China's Global Security Shift," Policy Brief (ECFR, June 2016); Chris Alden and Laura Barber, "Introduction: Seeking Security: China's Expanding Involvement in Security Cooperation in Africa," in *China and Africa: Building Peace and Security on the Continent* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
[300] Cobus van Staden, "How the Extended Rule of China's President Xi Will Influence Africa's Future," *Quartz Africa*, April 11, 2018, https://qz.com/africa/1249772/china-xi-jinping-in-africa-xi-extended-rule-influence-on-african-countries/.
[301] Dûchatel, Gowan, and Lafont Rapnouil, "Into Africa: China's Global Security Shift."

policy are its interest in contributing to international peace and security and its commitment to protecting its interests abroad.[302]

Moreover, Alden and Large identify several areas where China has been emphasizing its own perspective.[303] First, a focus on restoring social order (not the least by physical reconstruction and a maximalist state role in directing economic development) as opposed to traditional, liberal peacebuilding which combines democratization with market liberalization. Second, emphasis on indigenous African ownership of solutions. Third, a belief in the efficacy of economic processes to achieve peace (the 'developmental peace' as opposed to 'liberal peace'[304]). Fourth, a predilection for enhancing the primary role of regional organisations, especially the AU, in managing peace and security on the continent. Fifth, and finally, the belief that the state is a central actor in peacebuilding efforts. If we look at all these issues collectively, the authors argue, it is increasingly plausible that there is an agenda in the making—one of African state building with Chinese characteristics.

From an empirical perspective, a comparison between China's two latest Africa white papers already reveals such a shift among Beijing policy makers. While the 2013 paper was entirely dedicated to economic and trade cooperation, the 2015 paper is much more comprehensive and better reflects the pace of the relations (and of FOCAC declarations).[305] There are also explicit references to the new security concept, which,

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[302] See also: Bates Gill and Chin-Hao Huang, "China's Expanding Role in Peacekeeping. Prospects and Policy Implications," SIPRI Policy Paper (SIPRI, 2009); Bernardo Mariani and Thomas Wheeler, "China's Growing Role in African Peace and Security" (Saferworld, January 2011); Duchatel, Brauner, and Hang, *Protecting China's Overseas Interests. The Slow Shift Away from Non-Interference*.

[303] The focus of Alden and Large here is on peacebuilding rather than peacekeeping, as the latter is more prominent in the literature, whereas peacebuilding has always been deemed a much more complex area, one where China has been less engaged until recently. For more on China's approaches to peacekeeping see for instance: Courtney J. Richardson, "A Responsible Power? China and the UN Peacekeeping Regime," *International Peacekeeping* 18, no. 3 (June 1, 2011): 286–97, doi:10.1080/13533312.2011.563082; Bonny Ling, "China's Peacekeeping Diplomacy," *International Relations and Institutions* 47, no. 1 (2007); Miwa Hirono and Marc Lanteigne, "Introduction: China and UN Peacekeeping," *International Peacekeeping* 18, no. 3 (June 2011): 243–56; Zhongying Pang, "China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping," *International Peacekeeping* 12, no. 1 (2005): 87–104; Chin-Hao Huang, "Principles and Praxis of China's Peacekeeping," *International Peacekeeping* 18, no. 3 (June 2011): 257–70; Chien-pin Li, "Norm Entrepreneur or Interest Maximiser? China's Participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations, 2001-2010," *China: An International Journal* 9, no. 2 (2011): 313–27; Bates Gill and James Reilly, "Sovereignty, Intervention and Peacekeeping: The View from Beijing," *Survival* 42, no. 3 (2000): 41–59; Lei Zhao, "Two Pillars of China's Global Peace Engagement Strategy: UN Peacekeeping and International Peacebuilding," *International Peacekeeping* 18, no. 3 (2011): 344–62.

[304] The "liberal peace project" is underpinned by (what are considered to be) universal values of human rights, multiparty democracy, open and free markets, and good governance, among other principles. See for instance: Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[305] To be sure, as Chapter 3 illustrates, FOCAC declarations, which are the most important textual site for Africa-related policies and initiatives, have been dealing with security issues for longer than the State Council's documents. However, the white papers are still considered to be important markers of foreign policy impetuses.

although initially meant with reference to the Asian region, has been widely applied to Africa as well.[306] In 2015, China pledges to "play a constructive role in maintaining and promoting peace and security in Africa."[307] Furthermore, the security-development nexus has been 'promoted' to principle, as we read that "China will strengthen dialogue and consultation with African countries and regional organizations on peace and security issues, *pursue the principle of securing peace through development and promoting development with peace*, and implement the consensus on achieving common, cooperative, comprehensive and sustainable security."[308] The empirical chapters will further show how such nexus has become a building block of China's Africa discourse. The 2015 white paper also outlines deepened military cooperation through initiatives including military and technological exchanges, joint military exercises, training of military personnel, and capacity building in national defence and peacekeeping. Thus, the grounds are firmly laid for the future of China-Africa security ties; more importantly, these steps represent a blueprint for how China's military and security apparatuses work abroad, both in the sense of what China is learning and how it is improving its practices, and as a way to understand potential future engagement in other regions of the developing world.

Perhaps the most discussed topic in China-Africa studies in this sense is the recently-built military base in the Eastern African nation of Djibouti. Announced in 2015 and opened in 2017, the base is China's first military facility abroad. It adds to a number of already existing foreign outposts in the small country operated by the US, France, and Japan. For some, this represents a change in China's role from a resource extractor to a long-term strategic partner;[309] for others, Djibouti is a testing ground for the PRC's meddling of commercial and military interests abroad;[310] some question whether the base is simply a logistics facility or rather a platform for China's

[306] Interview with senior ambassador at the MFA (who has been using the concept himself when on duty in several African countries), May 2017, Beijing. The special representative for African affairs Ambassador Xu Jinghu also employed the concept during an institutional visit to Senegal in December 2016, when she addressed China's participation in Africa's peace and security as "based on the concept of common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security." See "Special Representative of the Chinese Government on African Affairs Xu Jinghu Attends the 3rd Dakar International Forum on Peace and Security in Africa," accessed November 14, 2017, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjbxw/t1422782.shtml.

[307] "China's Second Africa Policy Paper," December 5, 2015, http://www.china.org.cn/world/2015-12/05/content_37241677_2.htm.

[308] Ibid. emphasis added.

[309] François Dubé, "China's Experiment in Djibouti," *The Diplomat*, October 5, 2016, https://thediplomat.com/2016/10/chinas-experiment-in-djibouti/.

[310] Wang, "China's Strategy in Djibouti."

geopolitical ambitions;[311] some are starting to draw parallels with similar Chinese ventures elsewhere and speak of a "debt-trap".[312] Meanwhile, Africa's largest free zone has been opened there too and is set to focus mostly on trade, logistics, export processing, business and financial support services, manufacturing, and duty-free merchandise retail.[313] Not surprisingly, these latest developments have been of special concern for the American administration.[314] An equally important development, in line with China's defence strategy in Africa more in general, is the China-Africa Defence and Security Forum hosted in Beijing in June 2018. The Forum brought together representatives from over 50 African countries, the African Union, and the Chinese Ministry of National Defence to discuss the continent's independent capacity-building in security and China's contributions to it.[315] According to Benabdallah, the Forum is yet another example of Beijing's efforts to solidify its role as a provider of expertise and technical know-how.[316] Sino-African security relations have thus become relevant beyond the community of China and/or Africa scholars and is now of interest to the IR discipline more in general, as is China's rise as a global actor.

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311 Sarah Zheng, "China's Djibouti Military Base: 'Logistics Facility', or Platform for Geopolitical Ambitions Overseas?," accessed October 4, 2017, http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2113300/chinas-djibouti-military-base-logistics-facility-or.

312 Amy Cheng, "Will Djibouti Become Latest Country to Fall Into China's Debt Trap?," *Foreign Policy*, July 31, 2018, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/07/31/will-djibouti-become-latest-country-to-fall-into-chinas-debt-trap/; Brahma Chellaney, "China's Creditor Imperialism by Brahma Chellaney," *Project Syndicate*, December 2017, https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/china-sri-lanka-hambantota-port-debt-by-brahma-chellaney-2017-12; Brahma Chellaney, "China Ensnares Vulnerable States in a Debt Trap," *Nikkei Asian Review*, February 20, 2018, https://asia.nikkei.com/Viewpoints/Brahma-Chellaney/China-ensnares-vulnerable-states-in-a-debt-trap; On a rumoured similar basis in Pakistan, see Minnie Chan, "First Djibouti ... Now Pakistan Tipped to Have Chinese Naval Base," *South China Morning Post*, January 5, 2018, https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2127040/first-djibouti-now-pakistan-port-earmarked-chinese.

313 Dahir, "Thanks to China, Africa's Largest Free Trade Zone Has Launched in Djibouti."

314 See for instance: Koran, "Why China's Footprint in Africa Worries the US"; Justina Crabtree, "US' Tillerson Warns against China Loans to Africa," March 9, 2018, https://www.cnbc.com/2018/03/09/us-tillerson-warns-against-china-loans-to-africa.html; Yun Sun, "American Companies and Chinese Belt and Road in Africa," *Brookings*, July 11, 2018, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2018/07/11/american-companies-and-chinese-belt-and-road-in-africa/; See Foreign Minister Wang Yi's response: Liu Zhen and Ng, "China Denies Trying to Supplant US Role in Global Affairs," *South China Morning Post*, March 8, 2018, https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2136260/china-denies-trying-supplant-us-role-global-affairs.

315 Liangyu, "China-Africa Defense, Security Forum Opens in Beijing," June 26, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-06/26/c_137282618.htm.

316 Lina Benabdallah, "China-Africa Military Ties Have Deepened. Here Are 4 Things to Know.," *Washington Post*, July 6, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/07/06/china-africa-military-ties-have-deepened-here-are-4-things-to-know/.

3.5 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to provide the background for the empirical analysis and contextualise the China-Africa dimension within wider political developments in both China's foreign policy and the international system. China's shift to a more active engagement with Africa's security environment is happening within a broader shift in the country's foreign policy, which has taken an especially international and, some say, aggressive turn under the rule of Xi Jinping. Simultaneously, this shift is also accompanied by a political trend within Africa where debates have moved from focussing on economic integration to security.

As China has come to be at the centre of international decision making, scholars and intellectuals in the country have started to debate the implications of a Chinese vision of world order. An idealised version of the country's past, coupled with consultative Leninism and lessons from China's contemporary experiences, are increasingly informing leaders' vision of the future. Xi Jinping has articulated his own vision of a future where China plays a major role in international affairs and has laid out slogans and initiatives such as the China Dream, the Belt and Road, and the new security concept. In particular, as China is now a major contributor to international security, the new security concept serves as a framework for policy action and a guide towards contributing to world order. The concept envisions international cooperation as based on the principles of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. These four features fit with China's traditional opposition to unilateralism and unilateral intervention; no interference in the internal affairs of other states; respect for state sovereignty; respect for each country's chosen path of development; and emphasis on the security-development nexus. As the country proposes its own understanding of security, its involvement in African countries similarly reflects an emboldened foreign policy, which aims to both promote its global image as a responsible power and protect its interests and citizens. China pledges to play a constructive role in maintaining and promoting peace and security in the continent and explore new ways—with Chinese characteristics—to constructively participate in resolving critical issues in Africa. Such increased engagement coherently fits as much in China's broader foreign policy as well as continental and international political trends, as in China's Africa discourse, which the next chapter presents as the starting point of the empirical analysis.

Chapter 4 – The Forum on China Africa Cooperation: Legitimising security policies

摸着石头过河
Crossing the river by feeling the stones
(Deng Xiaoping)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter performs two functions. On the one hand, it represents the first part of empirical puzzle that motivated this thesis and its aim is to trace China's Africa discourse at the regional level. On the other hand, and most importantly, this chapter consists of the first and second analytical steps identified in Chapter 1. The first step consists in identifying and mapping the basic discourse on China-Africa, as well as its endurance throughout the 18 years since the creation of the Forum, through a discourse analysis of FOCAC documents. The basic discourse includes a series of representations backed by historical and political narratives that have remained relatively stable despite China-Africa ties going through ebbs and flows. The FOCAC is an 'exclusive' institutional space for Sino-African relations to be developed outside of the West and provides an ideal platform for China to promote its discourse and its norms-making attempts. Then, I explore the construction of the security-development nexus within the existing discourse. This corresponds to the second analytical step—layering the discourses—which aims to unpack how the discourse has made space for a change in China's approach to, and engagement with, peace and security in the continent, leading to a shift in policies, but without any major change in the basic discourse. This step will enlighten the discursive construction of the security-development nexus in the China-Africa context, because, "for problems or facts to become questions of security, they need to be successfully constructed as such within political discourse."[317] Using the concept of interpellation presented in Chapter 1, I also look at how China's approach to security and development has been accepted by African heads of state as a direct or indirect response to Chinese leaders' successful socialisation and normative attempts.

The main argument I make here is that Chinese decision makers have constructed a successful discourse that pictures China and Africa as long-term friends, united in a shared effort to redress the imbalances of a Western-centric international

[317] Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, 30.

order. They have done so by mobilising a series of historical and political narratives which have successfully interpellated African actors by creating a sense of belonging and 'common destiny'. The creation of the FOCAC in 2000 has greatly contributed to building this idea of a shared community. As the country's foreign policy towards the continent shifted towards greater engagement with peace and security matters, this shift has not been accompanied by changes in the basic discourse (first and layer), but rather by adding new narratives (from the second to the third layer). I argue that rather than fabricating an entirely new discourse to justify and legitimise China's new security and military presence in the continent, they have instead built on the existing, basic discursive representations. Maintaining a coherent and logical discourse despite the change has been possible mostly thanks to the security-development nexus: As the concept entails a close link between the promotion of economic growth and social development and the achievement of stability and peace, growing security and military commitments appear legitimate and reasonable. Of course, the success of the discourse depends not only on the coherence and persistence of its main representations, but also on the positive response these have found among African leaders.

The chapter beings by providing a brief history of the Forum. I then zoom in on the latest edition of the Forum and some of the features that set it apart from the other meetings. Third, I delve into China's Africa discourse and explain how FOCAC documents have contributed to create stability in the construction of China and Africa as friends and members of the same group of developing countries. Fourth, I explain how this basic discourse provides a broad framework to span across a range of policies towards security on the continent. Finally, I explore how African leaders have positively accepted the Chinese narratives, and I conclude by assessing the 'success rate' of China's normative power in the context of the regional forum.

4.2 The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation: A Brief History

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation is a dialogue platform established in 2000 to foster Sino-African exchanges on a broad variety of topics and issues, and which follows an exponential increase in cooperation between the two actors from the late 1990s and early 2000s. As Taylor puts it, the Forum can be seen as the "institutionalization of Sino-African [relations and] also the formalization of relationships which have been long in existence".[318] Ministers and head of states of 53

[318] Taylor, *The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)*; Dunn and Neumann, *Undertaking Discourse Analysis for Social Research*.

member countries,[319] as well as the African Union (admitted as a full member in 2011), gather together with their Chinese counterparts every three years, alternately in China and Africa. The original purposes of such meetings included: promoting an overall Chinese foreign policy strategy towards the continent which emphasises South-South cooperation and economic development; 'advertising' the Beijing's leadership position of "moral relativism" on issues such as human rights, as well as their own vision of the global order; and countering Taiwan.[320] In practical terms, FOCAC action plans—the output documents of Ministerial Conferences and Summits—discuss future cooperation in the areas of "trade, investment, poverty reduction, infrastructure building, capacity building, human resources development, food security, hi-tech industries", and, more recently, peace and security.[321] There have been seven editions of the Forum to date, with the last one taking place in Beijing in September 2018. Among these, the 2012 meeting was considered by many to be ground breaking: A credit line of USD20 billion was extended by China over the following three years and commitments were made to strengthening and operationalisation the APSA.[322]

The FOCAC represents a global governance platform for Chinese decision makers to discuss the agenda plans and development goals for the future with their African counterparts.[323] Benabdallah focuses on three main opportunities that the FOCAC provides for China to enhance its role in global governance. First, she argues, it offers Chinese policy makers feedback from African leaders so that they can continuously adjust and adapt their policies. Second, interaction on such a wide range of subjects enhances the international practice and credibility of Chinese practitioners,

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[319] In May 2018 Burkina Faso established formal diplomatic relations with the PRC, leaving eSwatini as the only African state which still has ties with Taiwan. See Abdi Latif Dahir, "Taiwan Now Has One Diplomatic Ally Left in Africa," *Quartz Africa*, May 26, 2018, https://qz.com/africa/1290170/burkina-faso-cuts-taiwan-ties-under-one-china-policy-pressure/.

[320] Taylor, *The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)*; Alden and Alves, "China's Regional Forum Diplomacy in the Developing World: Socialisation and the 'Sinosphere'"; on South-South cooperation since the Forum see also Lei Ji, "Cong Zhongfei Hezuo Luntan Wenjian Kan Zhongguo Nannanhezuo Linian de Fazhan [Looking at the Development Concept of South–South Cooperation since the Forum on China African Cooperation Declaration]," *Shijie Jingji Yu Zhengzhi [Wolrd Economics and Politics]*, no. 3 (2010): 97–105; for background on China's trade with developing countries from a South-South perspective, see Xiaodong Lu and Changzhou He, "Zhongguo Yu Fazhanzhong Guojia Maoyi Jiegou de Jingzheng He Hu Bu – Jiyu Nannan Hezuo de Shijiao [Competition and Complementarity in China's Trade with Developing Countries: A South–South Cooperation Perspective]," *Guoji Jingmao Tansuo [International Economics and Trade Research]*, no. 6 (2010): 16–23. To be sure, countering Taiwan's influence played a bigger role in the past than it does today, when e-Swatini (former Swaziland) is the only African country that entertains diplomatic ties with Taiwan. While the "One China" policy undoubtedly remains a central issue in China's foreign policy as a whole, it is currently not a priority in its relations with African countries.

[321] Li and Funeka Yazini, *Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. The Politics of Human Resource Development.*

[322] Ibid.

[323] Benabdallah, "Towards a Post-Western Global Governance? How China-Africa Relations in(Form) China's Practices."

soldiers and policy makers alike. Finally, projects implemented via the FOCAC give China a chance to test its development-led model on African contexts and thus gain experience and feedback.[324] Moreover, Africa in general offers China the opportunity to engage in activities and policies in which they are less willing to get involved elsewhere (i.e. contributing to peacekeeping in Africa is arguably less contentious than doing so in China's neighbourhood).[325]

Indeed, the FOCAC is an instrument of China's regional forums diplomacy, which the PRC has been implementing elsewhere in the world—for instance through the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum (2004), the China-Central and Eastern European Countries Cooperation Forum, or 16+1 (2012), and the China-Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Forum (2015).[326] According to Beijing officials, regional forums are efficient and time-saving, and they also reflect China's "new type of major power relations": Instead of focusing on major powers, this group cooperation diplomacy is aimed to gather comparatively smaller countries—a move that makes it easier for China to promote its key official priorities and development model.[327] Hence, for instance, the FOCAC "serves as a means by which Beijing can advance a position of moral relativism regarding human rights to a mostly sympathetic audience, consolidating its standing within African elite circles."[328] Regional forum diplomacy, in turn, is said to be part of a wider attempt to become a global normative power through seeking recognition by other fellow developing countries.[329] Practically speaking, however, "China's ability to ensure its interests is influenced over time by its capacity to maintain effective control over the administrative and financial structures [of regional forums]."[330] Interestingly, the majority of non-Chinese scholarship tends to regard the FOCAC as a multilateral platform, whilst some Chinese authors claim instead that it is the best practice of bilateral relations.[331] On the one hand, FOCAC meetings are carried out at three different levels: individual countries, regional organizations, and African Union. In this sense, therefore, it represents a 'multilateral' scheme. On the other hand, if one takes

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[324] Ibid.
[325] For more on this point, listen to the China-Africa podcast from 13 May 2018, see "The China in Africa Podcast: What Should Be on the Agenda at This Fall's China-Africa Summit," May 13, 2018, http://chinaafrica-podcast.com/what-should-be-on-the-agenda-at-this-falls-china-africa-summit.
[326] Alice Ekman, "China's Regional Forum Diplomacy," *European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)*, November 2016.
[327] Ibid.
[328] Ian Taylor, *The Forum on China- Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)* (Routledge, 2010).
[329] Alden and Alves, "China's Regional Forum Diplomacy in the Developing World: Socialisation and the 'Sinosphere.'"
[330] Ibid., 13–14.
[331] Interviews with Chinese scholars in Beijing and Shanghai, June 2016.

the whole of Africa as the point of reference, it can be defined as a bilateral platform.[332] The Chinese MFA Ambassador for FOCAC affairs, who has extensive experience working in several African countries, seems to believe that security is one area that cannot be dealt with at the bilateral level: Its broad implications for a number of other areas make it necessary to find solutions at the multilateral level, first and foremost through the Forum. However, he does not deny that security moves via the AU and multilateral agreements and bilateral agreements between some countries.[333] Zhang Chun instead suggests that while its negotiation process happens between China and Africa as a whole, its implementation is bilateral—that is to say between China and individual African countries. Thus, according to him neither the negotiation nor the implementation process is a multilateral one like others suggest.[334] While I will return to the issue of reaching a consensus in the last section of the chapter, it is important to note here that China unequivocally enjoys a privileged position in the platform.

Before moving on to the next section, an explanation is needed for why I chose the FOCAC as the thesis' point of departure. This is due to two reasons. First, starting from the Forum roughly follows the 'spatial' scope of the empirical puzzle: One of the main objectives of this project is to trace the institutionalisation of China's Africa discourse across several organisations. I thus start the analysis from the regional platform and then proceed in concentric circles through the continental and finally to the global platform. The second reason, which has more important normative implications, is that the Forum constitutes an exclusive institutional space where basic discourses are being normalised. To be sure, the concentric circles metaphor I just used does not imply any temporal or causal path. As a matter of fact, it is the case that certain linguistic elements employed by Chinese leaders and representatives to describe relations with African countries were developed at a much earlier stage than the creation of the FOCAC; it will suffice to look at mentions of Africa at the UN to realise that China's preoccupation with the continent goes far back, as do Sino-African relations themselves for that matter. Related, I do not mean to give these levels a teleological character either: Discourses crafted during FOCAC meetings may well be the results of social interactions happened elsewhere (Beijing or New York), and thus their contents per se may not be any more valuable than discourses developed within

[332] Interview with Professor, Peking University, April 2017.
[333] Interview with Ambassador for FOCAC affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beijing, May 2017.
[334] Zhang Chun, "China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security," in *China and Africa. Building Peace and Security Cooperation on the Continent*, ed. Chris Alden et al. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 130; see also Zhang Chun, "Sino-Africa Relationship: Moving to New Strategic Partnership," *Shanghai Institute for International Studies*, May 1, 2013, http://en.siis.org.cn/En/Research/1676.

other institutions. Nonetheless, the FOCAC does represent a space which is uniquely co-constituted and dedicated to China and Africa, where broad foreign policy lines as well as economic deals are negotiated, announced, and discussed.

4.2.1 The 7th FOCAC Summit

Now at its 7th edition, the 2018 Forum was upgraded to Summit in order to respond to the needs of this growing partnership and hailed with a new website launched a month before its start in September.[335] These are just some of the novelties that the latest Forum carries with it. For instance, a number of promotional videos were released ahead of the meeting and some were aired during the opening ceremony. A series titled "China and Africa – The fruits of cooperation" comprises four episodes, each touching on the themes of shared opportunities, win-win cooperation, mutual progress, and enduring friendship respectively.[336] Another series titled "A new era of China-Africa cooperation" instead addresses the topics of shared dreams, shared aspirations, integrated interests, connecting people, and future partnership, thus stressing the reciprocity and mutual character of China-Africa ties.[337] Significantly, another video was called "The family" and dramatically shows images of Africa's nature, historical heritage sites, cities, and people—all of this as two kids (a Chinese and an African) swing together on a see-saw, while a voice-over tells us about Xi's trips to the continent and his commitments to its development.[338] China and Africa are described as sharing "weal and woe, although their skin colors are different" and as "feel[ing] close and understand[ing] each, although they are thousands of miles apart".[339] Another video, showed at the opening ceremony and titled "A shared dream, a shared future", is said to demonstrate "the successful cooperation and achievements of China and Africa in industry, agriculture, infrastructure, healthcare, education, sports and cultural exchange"; it also shows "that relations between China and Africa are as good as ever, and China will always stand with Africa, as a friend committed to connecting its development with that of Africa in order to kick off an era of win-win

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[335] See: Xiaoxiao Ding, "Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in 2018 Upgraded to Summit," January 3, 2018, http://chinaplus.cri.cn/news/china/9/20180103/73268.html; Joseph S. Margai, "China's Foreign Affairs Ministry Launches FOCAC Website," August 9, 2018, http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/0809/c90000-9489154.html; The new website can be found at: "中非合作论坛北京峰会," accessed August 20, 2018, http://focacsummit.mfa.gov.cn/chn/.

[336] "Videos," accessed September 4, 2018, https://focacsummit.mfa.gov.cn/eng/jcsp_3/default.htm.

[337] Ibid.

[338] "The Family," accessed September 4, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-09/01/c_137434358.htm.

[339] Narratives focusing on geographical distance but emotional proximity are very common in China's Africa discourse, as will be shown later in the chapter; Ibid.

bilateral cooperation."[340] Since everything, including gestures, monuments, and films can be read as text, these videos should not be overlooked as carriers of China's discourse.[341]

Furthermore, the Summit was not only co-hosted by Xi Jinping and South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa, but it was exceptionally inaugurated by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the AU for the year 2018 Paul Kagame, and the UN Secretary-General António Guterres.[342] Their presence confirms China's aspiration to align the FOCAC and the BRI with both the AU Agenda 2063 and the UN 2030 Agenda for sustainable development—an alignment that seems to be shared by some UN representatives.[343] This is also reflected in the action plan, where, among the priorities, are stepping up BRI security cooperation and creating a "[s]trong synergy between the BRI and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations, Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU), as well as the development strategies of African countries."[344]

Xi Jinping began his inaugural speech by enumerating his visits to the continent during his presidency; he also praised the China-Africa partnership for being authentic and strong:

> China values sincerity, friendship and equality in pursuing cooperation. … We respect Africa, love Africa and support Africa. We follow *a "five-no" approach* in our relations with Africa: no interference in African countries' pursuit of development paths that fit their national conditions; no interference in African countries' internal affairs; no imposition of our will on African countries; no attachment of political strings to assistance to Africa; and no seeking of selfish political gains in investment and financing cooperation with

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[340] "Promotional Video for the Beijing Summit of the FOCAC 2018 Airs at Opening Ceremony," September 3, 2018, https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d3d414d3251544f79457a6333566d54/share_p.html.

[341] See relevant citation of Dunn and Neumann, *Undertaking Discourse Analysis for Social Research* on page 40 of this thesis.

[342] "In Beijing, UN Chief Urges Win-Win Collaboration between China and Africa for 'the Future We Want,'" *UN News*, September 3, 2018, https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/09/1018242; "AU Commission Chairperson Arrives in Beijing for FOCAC Summit," September 1, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-09/01/c_137436708.htm; "Rwandan President Says FOCAC Summit Comes 'at the Right Time,'" September 3, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-09/03/c_137439506.htm.

[343] See for instance Desheng Cao, "New Measures to Be Rolled out for Africa Cooperation," August 23, 2018, //www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201808/23/WS5b7df391a310add14f3873c0.html; "In Beijing, UN Chief Urges Win-Win Collaboration between China and Africa for 'the Future We Want'"; Xu Wang, "UN Official Sees Bright Future in BRI Connections - World - Chinadaily.Com.Cn," September 4, 2018, //www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201809/04/WS5b8dc4bfa310add14f3895f0.html.

[344] "Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Beijing Action Plan (2019-2021)," 2018, https://focacsummit.mfa.gov.cn/eng/hyqk_1/t1594297.htm; links between the Belt and Road and Africa's economic integration and sustainable development agenda are also mentioned in the 2015 action plan: "The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Johannesburg Action Plan (2016-2018)," December 25, 2015, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dwjbzjjhys_1/t1327961.htm; see also Annex II.

> Africa. … For China, *we are always Africa's good friend, good partner and good brother*. No one could undermine the great unity between the Chinese people and the African people.[345]

Coherent with the relationship logic that Womack suggests is driving China's normative efforts, where both sides feel equally rewarded and better off as the relationship continues, President Xi also pointed out that "China believes that the sure way to boost China-Africa cooperation is for both sides to leverage its respective strength … In doing so, China follows the principle of giving more and taking less, giving before taking and giving without asking for return."[346] Xi further announced eight major initiatives that will be the focus of cooperation over the next three years. These include: industrial promotion, infrastructure connectivity, trade facilitation, green development, capacity building, health care, people-to-people exchanges, and peace and security. In order to implement such initiatives, Xi pledged USD60 billion "in the form of government assistance as well as investment and financing by financial institutions and companies."[347] It is worth noting that unlike previous FOCAC meetings, where the amount of funding was bigger every time, the 2018 financing pledge was lower than what announced in the 2015 edition, if one considers that the government is contributing USD50 billion, while USD10 billion are to be invested by Chinese private companies.[348] As Moore suggests, Chinese financing is indeed changing, as a result of both domestic and international pressures; of course, since it starts from a high baseline, any reduction will not lead to a disappearance of Chinese lending, but rather to a readjustment of economic priorities.[349] All these announcements fit in the broader trend of China's Africa discourse, which I proceed to mapping in the next section.

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[345] "Full Text of Chinese President Xi Jinping's Speech at Opening Ceremony of 2018 FOCAC Beijing Summit," September 3, 2018, https://focacsummit.mfa.gov.cn/eng/zxyw_1/t1591508.htm; emphasis added. Note how the "five-no" policy is also an implicit critique of Western-style aid.

[346] Ibid.

[347] Ibid.; see also Jiayao Li, "Xi Says China to Implement Eight Major Initiatives with African Countries - China Military," September 3, 2018, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2018-09/03/content_9271031.htm; for more details on how much of the 2015 financing has been delivered, see Yun Sun, "Foresight Africa Viewpoint – China's Engagement in Africa: What Can We Learn in 2018 from the $60 Billion Commitment?," *Brookings*, January 30, 2018, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2018/01/30/foresight-africa-viewpoint-chinas-engagement-in-africa-what-can-we-learn-in-2018-from-the-60-billion-commitment/.

[348] Deborah Bräutigam, "China's FOCAC Financial Package for Africa 2018: Four Facts," September 3, 2018, http://www.chinaafricarealstory.com/2018/09/chinas-focac-financial-package-for.html.

[349] W. Gyude Moore, "2018 FOCAC: Africa in the New Reality of Reduced Chinese Lending," *Center For Global Development*, August 31, 2018, https://www.cgdev.org/blog/2018-focac-africa-new-reality-reduced-chinese-lending.

4.3 The "South-South cooperation" discourse: Mapping representations of China-Africa

In this section, I analyse FOCAC action plans, declarations, and related speeches given by China's top leaders, officials, and diplomats on a number of occasions, including follow-up meetings to the Forum, in the period 2000-2018. In addition to these documents, I use interviews from my fieldwork in 2016 and 2017 in both Beijing and Addis Ababa. Arguably, since the Forum's inception in 2000, attention to peace and security, and peacekeeping in particular, has gained prominence, and this has resulted in a shift in policies from non-involvement and non-intervention to considerable engagement in a variety of security-related activities. Simultaneously, while the change is detectable in the third discursive layer, the first and second discursive layers that sustain China's Africa policies have remained the same (I further clarify this aspect in section 4.4.) Here, I start by mapping the main representations of the China-Africa story as backed by political and historical narratives, as well as their persistence throughout the nearly two decades since the creation of the FOCAC.

Through this analysis, a basic discourse emerges that constructs China and Africa as fellow members of the Global South and defines their relations in terms of South-South cooperation. The South, according to Alden, Morphet, and Vieira, forms a source of identity for both state and non-state actors; an identity that is constantly negotiated at the meetings of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Group of 77 (G77), and other regional and sub-regional organisations and which encapsulates the common experience of colonialism and imperialism. Ultimately, the South is being used as a mobilising strategy based upon a critique of the asymmetries and inequalities of the contemporary international system.[350] Furthermore, according to Breslin, in promoting South-South cooperation, "we see China's leaders clearly trying to establish common motivations with other developing countries as they frame their calls for change to the existing structures of global governance."[351] Assuring the West, as well as developing countries, that China is not a neo-colonial power entails building an image of the PRC as a fraternal state seeking to establish win-win partnerships. A close read of FOCAC declarations and Chinese leaders' speeches has revealed a constant, coherent discourse which frames China and Africa as members of the same group.

[350] Chris Alden, Sally Morphet, and Marco Antonio Vieira, *The South in World Politics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
[351] Shaun Breslin, "China and the Global Order: Signalling Threat or Friendship?," *International Affairs* 89, no. 3 (2013): 615–34.

Based on this, a number of different representations have come to define China-Africa relations as based on friendship, brotherhood, partnership, shared experience with colonialism and Western encroachment, and unity in fighting a hegemonic world order. Despite relations going through difficult times as much as successes, the basic discourse has remained stable and coherent. To be sure, the historical and political narratives that support it have not remained entirely unchanged either: At times, some have been dropped and new ones introduced that better suited changes in the relationship.[352] However, as Strauss mentions, a set of consistent logical supporting ideas can be identified, including the shared history of anti-colonial struggle and respect for state sovereignty and non-interference.[353] While her piece represented an important contribution to the China-Africa field, it was in many ways limited.[354] Here, I expand on Strauss' study by identifying a more precise and nuanced set of representations that have contributed to the construction of a stable and coherent basic discourse. These representations not only draw on past experiences, but also, and most importantly, they accompany China-Africa ties as they develop, thus (re)producing a discourse that allows such relations to proceed unscathed even in the face of change. As Krebs and Jackson remind us, any form of political communication is premised on a political community that shares at least some understandings of the boundaries of acceptable discourse; such a political community is "defined by a common rhetorical lexicon and coalesce around particular rhetorical configurations."[355] The more tightly linked the community, the greater the possibility for successful political communication. It is thus especially important for Chinese decision-makers to build their discourse on a strong 'belonging' basis. This is why some representations we encounter below, such as China as a fellow developing country and an ally are especially relevant and need to be constantly cultivated.[356] Afterwards, utilising the concept of 'interpellation', I show how Chinese elites have so far been successful at combining and recombining

[352] On this, see Strauss, "The Past in the Present"; Sverdrup-Thygeson, "The Chinese Story: Historical Narratives as a Tool in China's Africa Policy."
[353] Strauss, "The Past in the Present," 779–80.
[354] First, her analysis is not based on any clear methodological principles, including no definition of discourse, no specification on how and why the texts were chosen, or what kind of analysis was conducted; second, while she repeatedly asks why was it possible for such a coherent rhetoric to survive the changes in the relationship, her answer is unfortunately unsatisfactory, since she only focuses on a limited set of "bursts of China's official and semi-official coverage of China–Africa affairs", and mentions the important topic of target audiences without following up on it. Ibid., 779.
[355] Krebs and Jackson, "Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms: The Power of Political Rhetoric," 61.
[356] While it is legitimate to wonder whether China can still be considered part of the Global South (if one is to look at the World Bank's income category, for instance), we must not forget that such a category relies on broader shared experience, such as colonialism, geographical and political position in world affairs, and a shared identity. A more appropriate question is instead, for how long China will be able to sustain its self-identity as a member of the developing countries group.

existing representations (North/South, developed/developing, colonial/anti-colonial, etc.), thus creating a coherent discourse that has enabled Beijing to span across a relatively wide range of policy options without deviating from the basic representations.[357] The main discourse provides the framework within which policies are undertaken.[358] In particular, I am interested in exploring how it has progressively made space for peace and security to become an essential element of China's Africa policies while maintaining a stable rhetoric. To be sure, changes in the narratives are detectable, especially if one compares the tone of the 7th FOCAC with the previous one, but these changes only apply to the third discursive layer, while the basic discourses have remained the same. The analysis of FOCAC-related documents thus highlights both continuities and changes in Chinese decision makers' representations of the China-Africa story in the face of developing relations and instability in the continent.

4.3.1 The main representations

The basic discourse not only comprises the "South-South cooperation" logic, but also elaborates on the premise of such cooperation, which is the unjust world system. Such injustice is said to be rooted in the economic, scientific, and technological gap between the North and the South. This widening divide, said Premier Wen Jiabao during the 2003 Ministerial Conference,

> makes it all the more difficult for developing nations, particularly African nations, to maintain economic security and achieve sustainable development […] It is all too clear that world peace and development cannot possibly be sustained if the North-South divide grows wider and developing nations go poorer.[359]

Imbalances between the North and the South are the symptom that "[h]egemonism and power politics still exist. Developing countries are still faced with an arduous task of safeguarding their sovereignty, security and interests."[360] In turn, such system is identified as the cause of "[p]rolonged poverty and backwardness, [which] coupled with external factors, have exacerbated the otherwise latent ethnic rifts, religious feuds and social conflicts in some developing countries, led to conflicts and wars in these

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[357] Weldes, "Constructing National Interests;" see also Chapter 1.
[358] Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*.
[359] "Let Us Build on Our Past Achievements and Promote China-Africa Friendly Cooperation on All Fronts: Address by H.E. Mr. Wen Jiabao Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China At Opening Ceremony of the Second Ministerial Conference of the China-Africa Cooperation Forum," accessed April 12, 2017, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dejbzjhy/SP22009/t606816.htm.
[360] Zemin Jiang, "China and Africa-Usher in the New Century Together," 2000, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dyjbzjhy/SP12009/t606804.htm; "Full Text of Chinese President Xi Jinping's Speech at Opening Ceremony of 2018 FOCAC Beijing Summit."

countries and impaired their state stability and national development."[361] Hegemony, in the eyes of the Chinese leaders, is represented by the domination of developed countries in the current world order, which are also responsible for practicing power politics (a practice from which China distances itself), as well as for exploiting natural resources from developing countries.[362] Such hegemony is held responsible for the poverty and backwardness which are the "true" causes of conflicts in the continent. The current world order is inequitable, because tailored to developed countries' needs. It is thus beset by contradictions, which, if not addressed, could escalate to crisis. The most serious are: exploitation of the poor by the rich; an attempt to force ideologies on others against their will; the violation of state sovereignty; and the persistence of hegemonism.[363] Hence, China's proposal—creating a new world order: "[i]t has been the demand of the times and call of the people all over the world to establish an equitable and just new international political and economic order. Let us work together with wisdom and courage to build such a new order and advance the lofty cause of peace and development for mankind."[364] Chinese leaders are careful to clarify that it is not the country's intention to subvert the existing system altogether. Rather,

> The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, the principles and spirit enshrined in the [Organization of African Unity] OAU Charter and other *universally recognised norms* governing international relations should form the political basis for the new international order. Furthermore, *it is imperative to establish some new principles responsive to the spirit of the times and to the changes and developments in the world* provided that people of all nations can reach consensus.[365]

China accepts some of the universal norms upholding international relations, thus reassuring Western countries that it does not pursue a revisionist foreign policy, whilst also calling for the inclusion of "new principles" that reflect both the role developing countries deserve to perform in such a system and China's norms-making ambitions.

Premised on this basic discourse, a number of representations (and related policies) are developed. As shown above, during the latest Forum President Xi described China and Africa as friends, brothers, and partners. China attaches even

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[361] Jiang, "China and Africa-Usher in the New Century Together."
[362] "Developed countries should effectively reduce or exempt the debts owed by developing countries, help them to enhance their capabilities for self-development and vigorously develop their human resources with a view to gradually narrowing the gap between the North and the South in economy, science and technology and other fields. They should not do nothing but seek natural resources, market and profit from the developing countries", see ibid.; Xi also mentions hegemony and power politics during his inaugural speech at the 2018 FOCAC; see "Full Text of Chinese President Xi Jinping's Speech at Opening Ceremony of 2018 FOCAC Beijing Summit."
[363] Marc Lanteigne, *China and International Institutions: Alternate Paths to Global Power* (Routledge, 2005).
[364] Jiang, "China and Africa-Usher in the New Century Together."
[365] Ibid., emphasis added.

more value to this friendship by positioning itself within the group of developing countries. The first FOCAC Action Plan states that

> there exists a solid foundation for *friendly relations* and co-operation between China and Africa, given their *time-honoured traditional friendship*. We also emphasise that both China and African countries are developing countries with common fundamental interests and believe that close consultation between the two sides on international affairs is of great importance to consolidating *solidarity among developing countries* and facilitating the establishment of a new international order.[366]

In 2006, President Hu Jintao spoke to participants of the third Ministerial meeting and argued:

> Though vast oceans keep China and Africa far apart, *the friendship* between our peoples has a long history and, having been tested by times, *is strong and vigorous*. In the long course of history, the Chinese and African peoples, with an unyielding and tenacious spirit, created splendid and distinctive *ancient civilisations*. In the modern era, our peoples launched unremitting and heroic *struggle against subjugation*, and have written a glorious chapter in the course of pursuing freedom and liberation, upholding human dignity, and striving for economic development and national rejuvenation.[367]

Not only China and African countries are friends, but several other assumptions are implied here. First, according to the narrative their friendship is a long-lasting one, dating back to the early Ming dynasty: A friendship which had been maintained long enough and is therefore likely to continue for as long.[368] Of course, such a depiction of the events does not represent the historical reality of China-Africa ties since then, which were all but continuous. As a matter of fact, some scholars argue that Zheng He's expeditions may not have been as peaceful as Beijing likes to portray them.[369] Furthermore, after such few encounters, China-Africa relations were essentially interrupted and only resumed in their modern form during the Mao era.[370] However

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366 "Beijing Declaration of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation," accessed April 12, 2017, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dyjbzjhy/DOC12009/t606796.htm.

367 Jintao Hu, "Address by Hu Jintao President of the People's Republic of China at the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation," 2009, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dscbzjhy/SP32009/t606840.htm; "FOCAC Addis Ababa Action Plan (2004-2006)," 2003, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dejbzjhy/DOC22009/t606801.htm; "FOCAC Beijing Action Plan (2007-2009)," accessed April 12, 2017, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dscbzjhy/DOC32009/t280369.htm; "FOCAC Sharm El Sheikh Action Plan (2010-2012)," 2009, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dsjbzjhy/hywj/t626387.htm; "The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Johannesburg Action Plan (2016-2018)."

368 The "Zheng He narrative", see Sverdrup-Thygeson, "The Chinese Story: Historical Narratives as a Tool in China's Africa Policy" Thus, the history of relations between China and Africa is often used by Chinese policy makers to emphasise the longevity of the contacts between the two. this is the Chinese narrative around the events; for the discrepancies between the narrative and historical facts on Zheng He's journeys, see ibid., 62.

369 See for instance: James Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara, "Is China a 'Soft' Naval Power?," *Jamestown*, August 20, 2009, https://jamestown.org/program/is-china-a-soft-naval-power/; James R. Holmes and Toshi Yoshihara, "China's Naval Ambitions in the Indian Ocean," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 31, no. 3 (2008): 367–94, doi:10.1080/01402390802024700.

370 See for instance: Sverdrup-Thygeson, "The Chinese Story: Historical Narratives as a Tool in China's Africa Policy"; Shinn and Eisenman, *China and Africa: A Century of Engagement*; Chris Alden, *China in Africa* (London; New York: Zed Books, 2007); Strauss, "The Past in the Present."

inaccurate, the narrative has served, and still does, the diplomatic purpose of portraying China and African countries as sharing a long past as 'friends'. Second, in ancient times Chinese and Africans civilisations used to be "splendid" and "distinctive", whilst in modern times these civilisations have been threatened by colonialism and have jointly mobilised against "subjugation". In the case of Africa, this refers to the struggle for independence from European colonial powers from the 1950s throughout the 1970s. In the case of China, it refers to British encroachment following the first Opium War (1839-1842) and the century of national humiliation, from which China is believed to have recovered only with victory over Japan in 1945 and the founding of the PRC in 1949. As Sverdrup-Thygeson argues, this historical narrative, which he calls the colony narrative, is often used, together with the Zheng He narrative and the TAZARA narrative, as a tool in China's Africa policy.[371] In short, "Beijing is […] challenging the current historicity applied to the African continent by bringing forth a set of historical narratives that serves […] also to turn the tables with regard to the Western actors that find themselves occupying the unusual role of the "Other" in this new mode of regarding Sino-African history."[372] Hence, China and African countries are depicted as sympathetic members of the same community of developing countries with "common fundamental interests". The latest Forum goes a step further and describes the two as a "family"; they share a temporal identity, which belongs to a glorious past, and an ethical one, which makes them victims of subjugation, colonialism, and imperialism. As a token of such friendship, it has become a tradition for Chinese leaders or officials to visit African countries as their first destination abroad each year.[373] Furthermore, new research points to the importance of "in person" diplomacy: the Chinese leaders have shown that they prioritise the continent by showing up, something that is not necessarily part of other major countries' foreign policy priorities (with the exception of France).[374]

Another important representation is globalisation as a challenge and a risk, based on China's narrative that understands today's international environment as not being

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[371] Sverdrup-Thygeson, "The Chinese Story: Historical Narratives as a Tool in China's Africa Policy."
[372] Ibid., 56.
[373] See all countries visited each year at: "Topics," accessed April 18, 2017, http://www.focac.org/eng/zt/.
[374] "Who Does China Prioritise? Our First Infographic Sheds Some Light," *Development Reimagined*, January 30, 2018, https://developmentreimagined.com/2018/01/30/who-does-china-prioritise-our-first-investigation/; Jackson Miller, "A Visual Guide to Foreign Engagements across the African Continent (March 2008 - February 2018)," March 6, 2018, https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/visual-guide-foreign-engagements-across-african-continent-miller/?lipi=urn%3Ali%3Apage%3Ad_flagship3_detail_base%3BBp1iY8CxS6ulPexYikEZ0w%3D%3D.

friendly for developing countries.[375] The first Action Plan states that "globalization currently represents more challenges and risks than opportunities to the vast number of developing countries".[376] This depiction remains largely stable throughout the first three Forums and is then replaced by concerns around the global financial crisis starting from the fourth Action Plan, according to which "the world is still gripped by the economic recession triggered by the global financial crisis."[377] In the former case (globalisation as a threat to developing countries), the implication was that developed countries, which have shaped the current world order according to their norms and interests, are benefitting from globalisation, whilst developing countries, including China, are left with a series of arduous tasks. In the latter case (financial crisis as a threat), interestingly, the idea is that the

> international financial crisis has led to a world economic recession and has brought about profound and complex changes to the international political and economic landscape. Therefore, it is of even greater importance to strengthen China-Africa cooperation in international affairs. […] Despite its own difficulties caused by the impact of the global financial crisis on the Chinese economy, China expressed commitment to further scaling up assistance to Africa.[378]

It should be pointed out that both narratives equally legitimise increasing economic contributions to the continent. Either ways, it seems, "China […] believes that the world should not overlook the issue of development while tackling the crisis."[379] In both instances, therefore, China still portrays itself as a faithful ally of African countries, willing to continue, and even scale up, its financial commitments to ensure economic growth for the continent. As "[b]oth African countries and China are developing countries facing common challenges of development and sharing broad common interests in a world that is undergoing and will continue to undergo profound and complex changes", China remains a reliable and trustworthy partner.[380] Globalisation eventually comes to be represented as an opportunity that developing countries need to seize: Chinese official discourse, Johnston notes, has come to accept, albeit reluctantly, that global economic integration could have a positive impact on economic

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[375] As much as China's understanding of democracy is different than the Western meaning, globalisation may also be interpreted differently. Interestingly, Friedberg argues that "What Xi has in mind when he sings the praises of 'globalization' is not a level playing field but a situation in which China is able to persist in these practices while preserving the greatest possible access to the economies and societies of its open, liberal trading partners." See Aaron Friedberg, "China's Understanding of Global Order Shouldn't Be Ours," *Foreign Policy*, January 2018, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/01/24/niall-ferguson-isnt-a-contrarian-hes-a-china-apologist/.

[376] "Programme for China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development," accessed April 12, 2017, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dyjbzjhy/DOC12009/t606797.htm.

[377] "FOCAC Sharm El Sheikh Action Plan (2010-2012)."

[378] Ibid.

[379] Ibid.

[380] "The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Johannesburg Action Plan (2016-2018)."

development. [381] Recently, China acknowledged that "anti-globalization, trade protectionism, falling commodity prices and policy uncertainty of developed economies have exerted a negative impact on the development environment of emerging markets and developing countries."[382] In the 2018 declaration, China and Africa call on the international community "to join efforts in promoting trade and investment for development and making economic globalization more open, inclusive, balanced and beneficial to all."[383]

This is coupled with support for Africans' positions and for their inclusion in the UNSC. Support for the UN and multilateral organisations is thus another essential element of China's discourse. Sections on international affairs and multilateral cooperation appear in each Action Plan, and Chinese leaders like to stress "the central role of the United Nations in international affairs and promote multilateralism and *democracy* in international relations." [384] Interestingly, the idea of democratising international relations is often associated with multilateral cooperation. Chinese decision makers use democracy when referring to democratic negotiations, that is, equality among all countries in being able to make decisions, especially in the Security Council. The latest Declaration reads that China and Africa "follow the principle of achieving shared benefits through consultation and collaboration in global governance, advocate multilateralism and democracy in international relations, and believe that all countries are equal, irrespective of their size, strength or wealth."[385] It is therefore different from a liberal, Western understanding of democracy, which prescribes the equal protection of human and civil rights and political freedom. Again, the international system is presented as undemocratic because it precludes (certain) developing countries from actively participating in political, financial, and economic decisions within international organisations. On the contrary, it is argued that China, by being a member of the UNSC, holds this power and intends to use it to advocate for developing countries' positions.

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[381] Alastair Iain Johnston, *Social States. China in International Institutions, 1980-2000* (Princeton University Press, 2008).

[382] "Joint Communiqué of the Fourth Round of Political Consultations between Chinese and African Foreign Ministers," accessed October 2, 2017, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1495711.shtml This could also be interpreted as a not so subtle attack on recent American and European policies.

[383] "Beijing Declaration: Toward an Even Stronger China-Africa Community with a Shared Future," 2018, https://focacsummit.mfa.gov.cn/eng/hyqk_1/t1594324.htm.

[384] FOCAC, "The Fifth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Beijing Action Plan (2013-2015)," 2012, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dwjbzjjhys/hywj/t954620.htm, emphasis added. .

[385] "Beijing Declaration: Toward an Even Stronger China-Africa Community with a Shared Future."

Related, adherence to the principles of non-interference in other's internal affairs and respect for state sovereignty is a milestone of China's Africa discourse. China reiterates "support for [African countries'] efforts in independently resolving regional conflicts and strengthening democracy and good governance and oppose the interference in Africa's internal affairs by external forces in pursuit of their own interests."[386] Often accused by some of being a neocolonialist,[387] Chinese leaders have rejected such accusations by arguing that

> The structure of trade between China and Africa that is based on energy and resources should indeed be improved. Meanwhile, the same situation exists between Africa and all its major trading partners. […] China-Africa cooperation does not match that between Africa and its traditional partners in either scope or depth. […] One should also recognize that the unfair and unreasonable international political and economic order is still a major obstacle hindering Africa's development. To reverse the situation, it is crucial that those countries leading international relations make an effort.[388]

To be sure, the question of China's position on non-interference has often come up in China-Africa debates in the last few years. Its support of mediation efforts in Sudan, its alleged role in some countries' changes of leadership and elections, and its growing contributions to the continent as a whole are putting these principles increasingly under strain. The next section aims to address the question of how do peace and security policies, as well as China's increasing involvement in security and military activities in the continent, fit into the basic discourse.

4.4 The layered structure of China's Africa discourse: Legitimising the securitisation of development through the security-development nexus

As discussed in Chapter 1, I argue that the discourse is structured along three layers, which have gradually made space for increased engagement in the continent's peace and security regime, producing a major shift in policies, but not in the basic discourse. The last 18 years since the inception of the FOCAC have seen a gradual shift to increased Chinese engagement in peace and security on the continent and UN-led PKOs, based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, albeit with space for

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[386] FOCAC, "The Fifth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Beijing Action Plan (2013-2015)."

[387] See for instance: Gaye, *Chine - Afrique: Le Dragon et l'autruche*; "Online Debate: Is Chinese Investment Good for Africa?"; Cardenal and Araújo, *China's Silent Army: The Pioneers, Traders, Fixers and Workers Who Are Remaking the World in Beijing's Image*; French, *China's Second Continent: How a Million Migrants Are Building a New Empire in Africa*.

[388] Jun Zhai, "Broad Prospects for the New Type of China-Africa Strategic Partnership," 2012, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dwjbzjjhys/zyjh/t951074.htm; "China's Pledge to Africa Refutes 'Neocolonialism' Rhetoric," 2015, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dwjbzjjhys_1/t1322064.htm; "West Has No Grounds for Criticizing China Model in Africa," September 5, 2018, https://focacsummit.mfa.gov.cn/eng/zpfh_1/t1592167.htm.

adjustments. The concept of security itself has undergone changes in the narrative horizons of Chinese leaders, as seen already in Chapter 3. A position paper from 2002 maintains that

> After the cold war, the international situation has become characterized by relaxed international relations and growing world economy. Under the new historical conditions, the meaning of the security concept has evolved to be multifold with its contents extending from military and political to economic, science and technology, environment, culture and many other areas. *The means to seek security are being diversified*. Strengthening dialogue and cooperation is regarded as the fundamental approach to common security.[389]

The understanding of peace and security that emerges from FOCAC documents is one very much rooted in China's domestic practices, where security is intimately connected to development: reducing poverty and improving living conditions is considered to be key to achieving peace and, consequently, security.[390] To be sure, Chinese official rhetoric in this sense does not mention domestic social and political control and repression as other forms of security, which is another example of the gap between rhetoric and practice. China's own experience in focusing on economic development in order to strengthen stability informs its international approach too. Poverty, backwardness, and lack of development, which China essentially blames on hegemonic powers, are the main causes of insecurity, conflicts, and war. While the security-development nexus is a Western concept, it does have an equivalent in China.[391] In the Western context, it is a familiar representation that has long been at the centre of what Duffield calls the 'liberal way of development'.[392] And, in the context of China-Africa relations, the use of 'security' in the nexus refers to the links between internal stability and economic growth. However, within China the nexus refers to something different: As Benabdallah argues, "China's own history with political interference in economic development since the inception of the CCP under Mao's rule has resulted in a strong belief in the necessity of economic growth to maintaining internal order."[393] Therefore, it points to the fundamental difference between regime security and national security. While the former involves the governing elites as being secure from violent challenges to their rule, the latter, which has long meant military security, has now come to incorporate other issues as well, such as the people, the economy, the energy, and the

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389 "China's Position Paper on the New Security Concept," 2002, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t27742.htm.
390 Lina Benabdallah, "China's Peace and Security Strategies in Africa: Building Capacity Is Building Peace?," *African Studies Quarterly* 16, no. 3–4 (December 2016): 17–34.
391 Ibid.
392 Mark Duffield, "The Liberal Way of Development and the Development—Security Impasse: Exploring the Global Life-Chance Divide," *Security Dialogue* 41, no. 1 (2010): 53–76.
393 Benabdallah, "China's Peace and Security Strategies in Africa: Building Capacity Is Building Peace?," 20.

environment.[394] Despite such differences, establishing the nexus as a successful representation in China's Africa discourse was possible also *because* the link between security and development has existed for a long time already. Such nexus, I argue, is key to understanding the successful legitimisation of increased security practices within the existing discourse.

As Xi Jinping argued during the Fourth Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia,

> Sustainable security means that *we need to focus on both development and security so that security would be durable*. As a Chinese saying goes, for a tree to grow tall, a strong and solid root is required; for a river to reach far, an unimpeded source is necessary. *Development is the foundation of security, and security the precondition for development.* The tree of peace does not grow on barren land while the fruit of development is not produced amidst flames of war.[395]

Premier Li Keqiang further said that "[w]ithout a peaceful and stable environment, development will be out of the question."[396] In a joint statement following the third round of consultations between Chinese and African Ministries held in New York in 2013, we read that "efforts should be made to strike a balance between peace, security, stability and development in order to deal with the root causes of conflicts. It is important to take a holistic approach to address both the symptoms and root causes of hotspot issues and to persevere with dialogue and negotiations in settling regional disputes."[397]

The principle thus understands peace, security, and development as fundamental and interconnected features of a desirable political environment. Since the inequality of the current world order represents a threat to both the development potential and the stability of countries in the Global South, it is *necessary* to address *both* in order to achieve a more equal and democratic international system. In other words, the nexus creates a sort of quasi-causal argument à la Weldes, and the importance of such an argument lies "in their provision of 'warranting conditions' which 'make a particular action or belief more "reasonable", "justified", or "appropriate", given the desires, beliefs, and expectations of the actors'".[398] In this case, given that security can

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[394] On the former, see Richard Jackson, "Regime Security," in *Contemporary Security Studies*, by Alan Collins (Oxford University Press, 2015); ; on the latter, see Joseph J. Romm, *Defining National Security: The Nonmilitary Aspects* (Council on Foreign Relations, 1993) for a comprehensive account of how the concept of national security has evolved.

[395] Jinping Xi, "New Asian Security Concept For New Progress in Security Cooperation," May 2014, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1159951.shtml.

[396] "Bring About a Better Future for China-Africa Cooperation," accessed November 21, 2017, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1154397.shtml.

[397] "Joint Communiqué of the Third Round of Political Consultations between Chinese and African Foreign Ministers," 2013, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t1080961.htm.

[398] Fay, cited in Weldes, "Constructing National Interests," 282.

only be achieved through development, it is 'acceptable' that China provide substantial economic aid to African countries in order to simultaneously promote security. Furthermore, the nexus is considered appropriate by both parties, since African leaders seem to have accepted the China model based on development-first policies (I return to this in the last section of the chapter). Hence, such discourse legitimises developmental, infrastructure, and logistics-related policies in light of the pursuit of peace and security. Simultaneously, as we have seen from the documents cited earlier, security issues have gained more prominence in China's Africa policy and this reflects a major change in its security policies on the continent. The analysis above has shown that the discourse has remained stable throughout the years: The centrality of the security-development nexus allows Chinese leaders to modify their policies toward peace and security without changing the basic discourse or the narratives supporting it. To say this with Weldes, since "identities are the basis of interests",[399] "the interests of the state are already entailed within the representations in which the identities of and relations among the relevant actors or objects are established".[400] As the largest developing country and leader of the developing world, it is believed that China *should* and *must* provide economic assistance to African countries. Crucially, economic development is considered an essential tool in achieving security. As suggested in Chapter 3, this is in line with continental priorities, and the African Union itself is premised on the securitisation of development: Security is a prerequisite for development, and the barriers between security, governance, and development are not rigid but rather malleable.[401] Both Chinese and Africans seem to agree that "security forces can, and should on occasion, contribute directly or indirectly to development."[402] The third discursive layer thus adds further specificity to the abstraction of the second layer and results into more specific policies that consists of increased participation in peacekeeping missions and building a military base in the continent, among other things. This is where a certain degree of contestation or change is allowed: While China's focus until 2011-2012 was on the developmentalisation of security, premised on the belief that economic growth leads to stability, since then the discourse embraces a change towards a more pronounced securitization of development, whereby

399 Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 02 (March 1992): 391–425.
400 Weldes, "Constructing National Interests," 282.
401 Knox Chitiyo, "African Security and the Securitisation of Development," in *Resurgent Continent? Africa and the World*, ed. Nicholas Kitchen, IDEAS Reports - Strategic Updates (London, UK: LSE IDEAS, 2010).
402 Ibid., 26.

economic prosperity and social development can only be achieved in a peaceful and safe environment. This is accompanied by an increasing role for the PLA in the continent. The change in the third discursive layer eventually leads to a major change in the patterns of Chinese engagement without producing changes in the discourse at the first or second level.

In the preceding section, I have identified the basic discourse and the main representations that Chinese decision makers have been employing when constructing China-Africa relations within a South-South cooperation framework. Such discourse legitimises policies directed at helping African countries develop economically as a need, a duty, and a priority. Within this framework, security occupies an important place; however, the extent to which it has been a part of China's Africa policy has changed throughout the years. While mentions of peace and security as one element of the China-Africa partnership are detectable from 2000, the first two Forums only present vague and general references to the topic; then, they start becoming more prominent from 2005, when China takes part in the peace negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan. But it is only from 2012 that the PRC starts to fund peace and security through both the AU and the UN and that is when China's position on security matters becomes more clearly articulated (see Appendix II). These developments coincide with the start of Xi Jinping's term and his foreign policy informed by multilateralism and the new security concept. The first sign of change can be detected in speeches from 2005; for instance, during the Consultation between the Secretariat of the Chinese Follow-up Committee of the FOCAC and African Diplomatic Envoys in China (a follow-up mechanism that is aimed to revise the progress of each action plan in-between the Ministerial Conferences), Director-general Xu Jinghu said:

> In March this year, China decided to join the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Sudan, rendering its support to Sudan's peace process with real actions. In the coming weeks and months, Chinese engineers, medical and transportation detachments, military observers, civilian police, and political officers will arrive in Sudan. On the question of Darfur, China ardently supports a leading role of the African Union. To back up the AU's peacekeeping efforts there, China provided certain financial assistance at the beginning of this year. In April, the 218 Chinese peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of Congo have been replaced. At present, there are a total of 843 Chinese military staff serving in eight areas of UN peacekeeping operations in Africa, among whom 776 are peacekeepers and 67 are military observers.[403]

[403] Jinghu Xu, "Talking Points for Director-General Xu Jinghu at the Consultation between the Secretariat of Chinese Follow-up Committee of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and African Diplomatic Envoys in China," 2005, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dejbzjhy/FA22009/t196995.htm.

China's mediation efforts in Sudan mark an important moment in the PRC's engagement with peace and security in Africa and the existing literature documents well the motives and dynamics of this shift.[404] One of my interviewees, who took part in the peace negotiation process from 2005 as a EU delegate, confirmed that the situation in Sudan at the time prompted an alignment of the Chinese position to the EU's, and even saw Chinese representatives being more assertive than Europeans and finally "getting their hands dirty with diplomatic mediation".[405] From then on, peace and security, and peacekeeping in particular, feature more prominently in all FOCAC action plans. For instance, the implementation of the follow-up actions of the Beijing Summit document in 2009 states that

> China continued to take an active part in the United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa. Since the Beijing Summit, China's deployment of peacekeeping troops and police to Africa has totaled 6,281 person-time, with 1,629 Chinese soldiers and police officers remaining in service in six UN peacekeeping missions in the region. China actively supported post-war reconstruction in relevant countries and strengthened cooperation with them on the establishment of the UN Peace Commission. In order to support the efforts of Africa to maintain regional peace and security, the Chinese Government appointed a Special Representative on African Affairs, actively participated in the resolution of, and strengthened, with the African side, consultation and coordination on Darfur and relevant issues of significance to peace and security in Africa.[406]

However, it is from 2012 that peace and security occupy a central position in China's Africa discourse and China starts to commit funding to it. The Sharm el Sheikh Action Plan (2010-2012) places political affairs and regional peace and security as the first item of concern, and states that, in the spirit of "solving African problems by Africans", China will intensify cooperation with African countries in peacekeeping theory research, peacekeeping training and exchanges, as well as in supporting the building of peacekeeping capacity in Africa.[407] The Beijing Declaration following the 5th FOCAC meeting maintains that the Chinese are "deeply concerned about the turbulences in certain regions and reaffirm our commitment to upholding the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the basic norms governing international relations" and they commit to "[i]ncrease the exchanges and cooperation between the two sides in operationalizing Africa's Peace and Security Architecture,

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[404] See among others: Barber, "Chinese Foreign Policy in the 'Going Out' Era: Confronting Challenges and 'Adaptive Learning' in the Case of China-Sudan and South Sudan Relations"; Large, "China's Sudan Engagement"; Large, "China and Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Africa: The Case of Sudan."
[405] Interview with head diplomat at the EU delegation to the African Union, Addis Ababa, February 2017.
[406] FOCAC, "Implementation of the Follow-up Actions of the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation," 2009, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dscbzjhy/FA32009/t627504.htm.
[407] "FOCAC Sharm El Sheikh Action Plan (2010-2012)."

continue to support and assist African countries in increasing their capabilities for maintaining peace and security, and enhance coordination and communication in the UN Security Council and other multilateral institutions."[408] The 2013-2015 Action Plan commits RMB600 million in free aid and other measures to strengthen the practical cooperation between China and the AU.[409] Furthermore, the 6th Forum's Action Plan argues that

> The Chinese side will continue to take an active part in UN peacekeeping missions in Africa, offer the African side support on peacekeeping training and intensify communication and coordination with Africa in the UN Security Council, in adherence to UN Security Council Resolution 2033 that recognizes the importance of an enhanced relationship between the United Nations and the African Union, as well as a strengthened capacity of regional and sub-regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in conflict prevention and crisis management, and in post-conflict stabilization.[410]

This time, USD60 million in free military assistance over the following three years are pledged for the strengthening of the APSA. In his speech during the 7th FOCAC Summit, Xi explicitly links future China-Africa security cooperation with his "new security concept" and he proposes to

> Build a China-Africa community with a shared future that enjoys common security. People that have gone through adversity value peace most. China champions *a new vision of security featuring common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security*. We firmly support African countries and the African Union as well as other regional organizations in Africa in solving African issues in the African way, and we support the African initiative of "Silence (sic) the Guns in Africa". China is ready to play a constructive role in promoting peace and stability in Africa and will support African countries to strengthen their independent capacity for safeguarding stability and peace.[411]

The promise is to implement "100 million dollars military assistance in support of the African Standby Force and African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis, and work with Africa to raise the voice and influence of developing countries in the field of UN peacekeeping."[412] Moreover, peace and security features as one of the eight initiatives that will constitute the focus of the next three years, and likely for longer as well. As Xi states,

> We will launch a peace and security initiative. China decided to set up a China-Africa peace and security fund to boost our cooperation on peace, security, peacekeeping, and law and order. China will continue to provide military aid to the AU, and will support

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408 "Beijing Declaration of the Fifth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation," 2012, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/gfmmotfocac_665708/t953958.shtml.
409 "中非合作论坛第五届部长级会议——北京行动计划（2013 年至 2015 年）," 2012, https://www.focac.org/chn/zywx/zywj/t954617.htm.
410 "The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Johannesburg Action Plan (2016-2018)."
411 "Full Text of Chinese President Xi Jinping's Speech at Opening Ceremony of 2018 FOCAC Beijing Summit"; emphasis added.
412 "Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Beijing Action Plan (2019-2021)."

> countries in the Sahel region and those bordering the Gulf of Aden and the Gulf of Guinea in upholding security and combating terrorism in their regions.[413]

Among the 'news', a China-Africa peace and security forum was also announced, which will serve "as a platform for conducting more exchanges in this area"; furthermore, "[f]ifty security assistance programs will be launched to advance China-Africa cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative, and in areas of law and order, UN peacekeeping missions, fighting piracy and combating terrorism."[414]

To be sure, the question remains as to how the official Chinese rhetoric is adapting in light of these changes, at least in a way that guarantees the continued credibility of China as a friend and partner. Another response to the often-raised accusation of neocolonialism came from then vice Foreign Minister Jun Zhai, who argued that

> Non-interference in domestic affairs has not gone outdated. For developing countries in particular, it remains an important tool for defending their rights and interests. In recent years, some countries ignored opposition from regional countries to intervene militarily in some regional hot-spot issues and press for regime change. This has disrupted regional and world peace and stability. […] Support for democracy and good governance in Africa is not the "monopoly" of certain countries.[415]

Former Premier Wen Jiabao similarly said allegations that China has come to Africa to plunder its resources and practice neocolonialism are "totally untenable".[416] A Global Times article tellingly called the FOCAC the "poster child for South-South cooperation" and maintained that the responsibility to put Chinese aid, investments, and loans to good use is Africa's, not China's: While the latter should lay down feasible principles and targets, the former has the responsibility for successfully reaching those targets.[417] It should also be noted that Chinese academics and scholars are currently at work to conceptually redefine these important pillars of their policy (respect for state sovereignty and non-intervention/non-interference) with the aim to "keep them intact but adapt them retroactively".[418] It is furthermore interesting to observe the shift occurring both in the narratives utilised and in the kind of financing extended to African countries. On the one hand, in the official Chinese media's narrative around BRI-related projects nowadays the tone has gone from assertive—i.e. calling for the

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[413] "Full Text of Chinese President Xi Jinping's Speech at Opening Ceremony of 2018 FOCAC Beijing Summit."
[414] Ibid.
[415] Zhai, "Broad Prospects for the New Type of China-Africa Strategic Partnership."
[416] "China Pledges $10bn Concessional Loans to Africa," *The Guardian*, November 8, 2009, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/nov/08/china-pledges-10bn-loan-africa.
[417] Joyce Chimbi, "Africa Must Prove Critics of China's Aid Wrong," September 18, 2018, http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1120092.shtml.
[418] Interview with senior SSRC researcher, New York, March 2018.

BRI to spread "Chinese solutions"—to a more tempered and defensive one.[419] Recently, Xi commented that the BRI is an economic cooperation initiative and not a geopolitical or military alliance building; it is an open process, not an exclusive "中国俱乐部" (*zhongguo julebu*, China club); it is a welcoming initiative, not a zero-sum game defined by ideological lines.[420] On the other hand, China is now giving more money to African countries via grants and interest-free loans, than through interest-bearing credit lines; it is hard to ignore how this change is happening in the context of mounting criticism of Chinese debt.[421] The discursive and practical developments of these principles are important elements in China's foreign policy and they need to be carefully monitored in the future as China-Africa ties enter a phase of even greater engagement.

4.5 Accepting China's discourse

As mentioned earlier, the endurance of China's representation of itself as a faithful friend to African countries throughout decades of relations does not only depend on the leaders' intriguing articulation of such identity and the related policies. On the one hand, some find China's Africa policy even "disturbing". In a recent report, the Council of Foreign Relations describes China as plundering Africa's natural resources, causing environmental damage, and, it accuses China of willingly using "its seat on the UN Security Council to protect some of Africa's most egregious regimes from international sanction, in particular Sudan and Zimbabwe", a practice which is labelled as "most disturbing to US political objectives".[422] On the other hand, the discourse revolving around the concepts seen above, and its security policies in particular, have arguably been more successful among African decision makers. I argue that China's process of interpellation has been successful in constructing China-

[419] Tianjie Ma, "August Monthly Round-up: BRI Turns 5 Years Old," *Panda Paw Dragon Claw*, September 7, 2018, https://pandapawdragonclaw.blog/2018/09/07/august-monthly-round-up-bri-turns-5-years-old/.

[420] "习近平：共同绘制好'一带一路'工笔画," August 28, 2018, https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/sAehCcGY92bAVbjAIdywJg.

[421] Shannon Tiezzi, "FOCAC 2018: Rebranding China in Africa," *The Diplomat*, September 5, 2018, https://thediplomat.com/2018/09/focac-2018-rebranding-china-in-africa/. As Tiezzi notes based on the data as analysed by Brautigam, the total of government-supplied funding includes USD20 billion in new loans and USD15 billion in foreign aid, and an additional USD15 billion in two special funds. This marks a decrease in interest-bearing loans offered to Africa relative to 2015, while foreign aid ("grants, interest-free loans, and concessional loans") makes up for "USD5 billion per year, the highest level ever" offered to Africa from China. See also; Bräutigam, "China's FOCAC Financial Package for Africa 2018."

[422] "More Than Humanitarianism. A Strategic U.S. Approach Toward Africa," *Council on Foreign Relations*, accessed April 17, 2017, http://www.cfr.org/africa-sub-saharan/more-than-humanitarianism/p9302.

Africa friendship as opposed to colonialist practices perpetrated by developed countries, as well as the security-development nexus as central to its policies, even when these have shifted from focusing on the importance of economic development as a driver to peace, to focusing on the centrality of security to achieve sustainable development. I have defined interpellation as the process of hailing or recruiting subjects: Through this mechanism, identities (or subject-positions) are created and individuals are hailed into such identities. As the targeted audience come to identify with a certain subject-position and its representations, such representations appear as common sense. Foreign policy makers need only present foreign policies that seem legitimate to the relevant audiences. African leaders have been successfully interpellated into the language of the security-development nexus as members of the same group of developing countries with a "shared destiny". China, on its part, seems to believe that Africans share its positions on sovereignty and seek to emulate the PRC's path to modernisation.[423] In one of my interviews with a Chinese diplomat, it emerged that requests for creating the Forum in the late 1990s came from Africans themselves, who felt the moment was ripe to institutionalise bilateral relations with China.[424] Indeed, such perception finds confirmation in many African leaders' speeches. For instance, the Ethiopian special envoy to the Forum in 2005 argued that

> China is a beacon of hope for Africa. What we Africans could learn from China's successful and remarkable economic development in the past three decades is that, if the right domestic policies, coupled with peace and stability, are prevailing, it is possible to bring sustainable economic development to Africa also. It is our conviction that Africa's development endeavors need genuine partnership from countries like China whose development experiences are relevant to Africa's present day conditions. […] In today's globalizing world, economic cooperation is at the heart of relations between countries. It is the foundation, on which the entire edifice of relations has to be built.[425]

President of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe similarly stated that "indeed, […] poverty and hunger, if not properly addressed, pose a serious threat to peace and security."[426] In 2009, then Vice President of Ghana John Dramani Mahama argued that

> Since its inception in the year 2000, the FOCAC has provided a veritable channel for the incremental enhancement of Sino-African relations. The architects of this strategic partnership were motivated by the lessons of history, the realities of today and the

[423] Alden and Large, "On Becoming a Norms Maker."
[424] Interview with former Chinese Ambassador to Africa, Beijing, April 2017. See also Li and Funeka Yazini, *Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. The Politics of Human Resource Development.*
[425] "Remarks by Honorable Haile-Kiros Gessesse Special Envoy of Ethiopia on China-Africa Cooperation Forum at the Opening Ceremony of the 4th Senior Officials Meeting," accessed April 17, 2017, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dejbzjhy/FA22009/t207966.htm.
[426] "Statement By His Exellency The President Of The Republic Of Zimbabwe And Chairman Of The Common Market For Eastern And Southern Africa (Comesa) Comrade Rorbert Gabriel Mugabe, At The 4th Ministerial Conference Of The Forumon China-Africa Co-Operation (Focac)," accessed April 17, 2017, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dsjbzjhy/zyjh/t631592.htm.

> legitimate aspirations of the millions of people in China and Africa. In spite of the difficulties that have characterized the global economic and financial environment, China and Africa have shared the virtues partnership and are well-placed to deepen this new strategic engagement for sustainable development.[427]

Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf also remarked that the partnership between China and Africa, "based on mutual respect and mutual benefit, is the spirit of South-South cooperation."[428] During the 12th Senior Officials Meeting of the FOCAC held in Beijing in November 2017, Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Nomaindiya Mfeketo of South Africa argued that the Forum has indeed become a model for South-South cooperation and that China has always attached great importance to Africa.[429] During the first stop of a four-countries tour preceding the BRICS Summit in 2018, Xi was welcomed by Rwandan President Kagame who praised China for treating Africa as "an equal", an attitude which he called "more precious than money."[430]

To be sure, while China's discourse has found wide acceptance among African elites, I am not suggesting that China's policies toward the continent are solely motivated by its benevolence and generosity. Quite the opposite, the slow shift away from a strict understanding of non-interference reflects the increasingly urgent need to protect Chinese citizens and interests abroad.[431] Security is a prerequisite for investments, Sr. Col. Ouyang Wei told me candidly during an interview.[432] The first Chinese military strategy white paper released in 2015 also acknowledges that China has become "more vulnerable to international and regional turmoil, terrorism, piracy, serious natural disasters and epidemics, and the security of overseas interests concerning energy and resources, strategic sea lines of communication, as well as institutions, personnel and assets abroad, has become an imminent issue."[433]

Yet, increased Chinese involvement in peace and security policies has largely been welcomed by Africans regardless of their motivations. South African President

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[427] "Statement by H.E. The Vice President of the Republic of Ghana at the Opening Ceremony of 4th Ministerial Conference of Forum of China-Africa Cooperation," 2009, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dsjbzjhy/zyjh/t632435.htm.

[428] "Remark by the H.E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf President of the Republic of Liberia at the Opening Ceremony of 4th Ministerial Conference of Forum of China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)," 2009, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dsjbzjhy/zyjh/t632439.htm.

[429] "The 12th Senior Officials Meeting of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation," 2017, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjbxw/t1514525.shtml.

[430] The Associated Press, "Rwandan Leader Says China Relates to Africa 'as an Equal,'" *The New York Times*, July 23, 2018, sec. World, https://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2018/07/23/world/africa/ap-af-china-africa-xis-visit.html.

[431] For a case study-based analysis of China's protection of its overseas interests see Duchatel, Brauner, and Hang, *Protecting China's Overseas Interests. The Slow Shift Away from Non-Interference*.

[432] Interview with Sr. Col. Ouyang Wei, Professor at National Defense University, Shanghai, July 2016.

[433] "Document: China's Military Strategy," *USNI News*, May 26, 2015, https://news.usni.org/2015/05/26/document-chinas-military-strategy.

Zuma had been reported by a local newspaper to have said that "we are certainly convinced China's intention is different from Europe's, which to date continues to attempt to influence African countries for its sole benefit."[434] Then Tanzanian Minister of Foreign Affairs said in 2012 that the Chinese "had proved to be true friends of Africans by investing in Africa and keeping the relationship with Africa regardless of the difficult circumstances and the challenges Africa faced […] China is the greatest ally of the continent of Africa. No matter whether a country was devastated by civil war, drought, floods or disease, the Chinese would be there."[435] Thus, the security-development nexus is appealing to African leaders because China was able to reframe it within an appealing narrative of long-lasting friendship and equal relations. In the words of a senior researcher from the IPSS, their "descriptive" approach, rather than a typically "prescriptive" Western approach has led such a discourse to succeed and find acceptance among African elites.[436] During the 7th FOCAC, African leaders described the China-Africa cooperation in a variety of ways. President Paul Kagame of Rwanda called China's engagement in the continent "deeply transformational"; President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa said the Forum "refutes the view that a new colonialism is taking hold in Africa, as our detractors would have us believe"; President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya proclaimed himself "satisfied" with the great progress achieved by bilateral relations between his country and China; Ghanaian president Nana Akufo-Addo admitted to be "inspired" by the Chinese model and committed to replicate it at home; and Mokgweetsi Masisi of Botswana said the Forum was a "unique" opportunity for African countries to build stronger relations with the Asian giant.[437] In his speech at the opening ceremony, President Ramaphosa further added that

> Africa and China enjoy a *rich history characterised by friendship and solidarity*. … The progress that has been made over the last 18 years demonstrates the tangible and lasting benefit of FOCAC to the people of Africa and to the people of China. The relationship that we have forged through FOCAC *is premised on the fundamental and inalienable right of the African people to determine their own future*. It is premised on the African Union's Agenda 2063, a vision that has been crafted in Africa, by Africans. It is a vision of an integrated,

[434] "South African Media Praises Forum for China-Africa Cooperation for Promoting Common Development," accessed April 17, 2017, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dwjbzjjhys/t954521.htm.
[435] "Tanzanian FM Says FOCAC Significant in Enhancing Africa-China Ties," July 18, 2012, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dwjbzjjhys/t952590.htm.
[436] Interview with senior researcher and programme director, Institute for Peace and Security Studies, January 2017, Addis Ababa. For a different view on foreign elites collaborating with China, see for instance Juan Pablo Cardenal, "China's Elitist Collaborators," *Project Syndicate*, April 17, 2018, https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/china-latin-america-engagement-soft-power-by-juan-pablo-cardenal-2018-04.
[437] Abdi Latif Dahir, "'Satisfied' and 'Inspired': All the Ways African Leaders Praised Their Alliance with China," *Quartz Africa*, September 5, 2018, https://qz.com/africa/1379457/china-africa-summit-african-leaders-praise-relations-with-beijing/.

> prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena. It is a vision of a continent where commerce, trade, investment, skills and knowledge move freely across the borders that were imposed on us by our colonial rulers. We look to *China as a valuable and committed partner* in advancing Agenda 2063. *It is in pursuit of this vision that we embrace China's 'Belt and Road' initiative.*[438]

Indeed, he also acknowledged the trade-gap between China and Africa and exhorted his African colleagues to use platforms like the FOCAC to balance the structure of trade between the two parties. He further mentioned global economic volatility and concerns about peace and security as challenges for developing countries, as well as renewed threats to the rules-based multilateral global trading system, and the need to utilise China-Africa cooperation to reaffirm their commitment to multilateralism and a fair international system—both of which are recurring representations in China's discourse.[439]

As stated in Chapter 1, the analysis presented in this thesis refers to elite perceptions. Time and word limits do not allow for analysis of other kinds of documents or actors that go beyond the official sphere. The perceptions presented here are hence those of the main foreign policy actors, which are most involved in policy formulation. Whilst I am not suggesting that foreign policy processes are the exclusive domain of a restricted group of actors, nor that the foreign policy decision making process is a unitary one, discourses and narratives appear to be still in the hands of selected elites.[440] This, however, does not mean that policies are formulated via a top-down approach only. On the contrary, the leadership in Beijing often relies on feedback and suggestions from their officials and ambassadors on the ground, at least on selected issues.[441] The Central Foreign Affairs Leading Small Group remains in control of final decisions on which policies to propose and/or implement, and does not *actively* look for suggestions or advice, except in case of exchange and official visits to and from Africa, my interviewee said. In fact, much of what happens on the ground seems to be due to the initiative of the individual ambassadors, who may present their ideas to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, who in turn would consult with their counterparts in other Ministries, to then seek approval from "the top". Chinese officials would have also consulted with their African counterparts on what kind of policies are more need in a certain country. As one can see, therefore, such top-down and bottom-up processes remain confined within the realm of foreign policy elites. The FOCAC

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[438] "Remarks by President Cyril Ramaphosa during the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation," September 3, 2018, http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/speeches/2018/cram0903a.htm; emphasis added.
[439] Ibid.
[440] For a summary of works on a pluralistic approach to foreign policy analysis, see Chris Alden and Amnon Aran, *Foreign Policy Analysis: New Approaches* (Routledge, 2012), chap. 4.
[441] Interview with former Chinese Ambassador to Africa, Beijing, April 2017.

follow-up mechanisms, such as the Chinese Follow-up Committee of the FOCAC and the African Diplomatic Envoys in China, provide institutionalised mechanisms to make such exchanges smoother. The practice, however, my interviewee suggests, is less smooth than it seems, and it may take a long time before suggestions and advice from the bottom are considered by the leadership. For instance, when he was involved in such mechanisms himself between 2003 and 2005, he found that most often African ambassadors would only report to Beijing what was in the interest of their own country, while not necessarily reaching regional consensus with their neighbours. Sometimes, these mismatches involuntarily create a layer of competition among the 53 country members of the FOCAC, which has been acknowledged by some African leaders too. During the fifth Forum, the then Zambian Foreign Minister told Xinhua that he was hoping African countries would "present an African Agenda, and not myopic specific country agenda. [He thought Africans] must go [to FOCAC meetings] united to bring development to the whole of the continent."[442] It is such flaws in the follow-up mechanisms which make the FOCAC simultaneously a multilateral and a bilateral platform. This, however, while it may create disagreement as to the individual countries' policy preferences, does not affect broader consensus on the beneficial effects of the China-Africa friendship.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I mapped China's basic discourse as premised on South-South cooperation: Such a discourse includes a number of representations backed by historical and political narratives that have remained relatively stable despite China-Africa ties going through ebbs and flows. The FOCAC is an exclusive institutional space for Sino-African relations to develop outside of the West and provides an ideal platform for China to promote its discourse and its norms-making attempts. The main argument I made is that Chinese decision makers have constructed a successful discourse that pictures China and Africa as long-term friends, united in the shared effort to redress the imbalances of a Western-centric international order. They have done so by mobilising a series of historical and political narratives which have successfully interpellated African actors by creating a sense of belonging and 'common destiny'. The creation of the FOCAC in 2000 has further contributed to building this idea of a shared community. Alden and Large further maintain that China is trying to

[442] "Interview: Zambian FM Hopes African Countries Could Be United on Ties with China," accessed April 18, 2017, http://www.focac.org/eng/ltda/dwjbzjjhys/t951998.htm.

move away from ad hoc participation in Africa's peace and security to "gradualist forms of engagement that include fomenting common Chinese-African values and re-imagining liberal norms on intervention"—which, according to the authors, makes China likely to become a norms-maker in Africa.[443] The FOCAC has thus great value for China's foreign policy in the continent: It grants them an exclusive platform where leaders have more manoeuvring space to push for China's own developmental model and its preferred norms (be they different and alternative to, or endorsing existing ones) and practices. The Forum offers the most potential for China to becoming a normative power.

I have further explored the construction of the security-development nexus within the existing discourse. In the context of China's Africa basic discourse, the nexus understands peace, security, and development as interconnected features of a desirable political environment. Since the inequality of the current world order represents a threat to both the development potential and the stability of countries in the Global South, it is *necessary* to address *both* in order to achieve a more equal and democratic international system. Since the concept entails a close link between the promotion of economic growth and social development and the achievement of stability and peace, growing security and military commitments appear legitimate and reasonable: As the country's foreign policy towards the continent shifted towards greater engagement with peace and security matters, this shift has not been accompanied by changes in the basic discourse (first layer), but rather by added new narratives (second to third layers). I have argued that rather than fabricating an entirely new discourse to justify and legitimise China's new security and military presence in the continent, they have instead built on the existing, basic discursive representations.

The success of the discourse depends not only on the coherence and longevity of its main representations, but also on the positive response these have found among African leaders. Using the concept of interpellation, I have argued that by and large, African elites have embraced the idea of China being a friend; when looking for potential trading and security partners, they are increasingly looking East; and they have developed a sense of belonging to a community of with a common destiny. The endurance of China's discourse for the last 18 years since the inception of the FOCAC has assured both sides that equal relations are maintained. To recall the arguments made in Chapter 2, such relations remain asymmetrical in economic nature, but they are supposedly beneficial to everyone involved. By constructing its own identity as a

[443] Alden and Large, "On Becoming a Norms Maker," 125.

fellow, benevolent developing country which is ready to 'assist' through thick and thin, China has also established its own interests. Simultaneously, by accepting and embracing such narratives, African leaders have found themselves comfortable in their identity as developing countries in need of assistance from a friend (not from a hegemon), and have thus established their interests too, in what is being described as a convenient win-win situation—at least for the elites involved.

Chapter 5 – The African Union as a security actor: What role for China?

Without its independence, Africa is nothing at all.
With its independence, it can be everything.
(Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AUC, January 2018)

5.1 Introduction

Admitting the AU as a full member of the FOCAC in 2011 was arguably aimed at aligning China-Africa cooperation with the AU's priorities and objectives, while simultaneously recognising the organisation's status as the major pan-African institutional actor on matters of peace and security.[444] Thus, alongside the Forum, China pursues its Africa policies via a dedicated partnership with the AU. Such partnership has taken different forms. In 2012, China built the AU's new headquarters in Addis Ababa as a 'gift' to the continent; in 2015, they established a diplomatic mission to the organisation, the third after the US and the EU; in the last few years, China stepped up its contributions to the AU peace and security budget. However, Beijing has also encountered a series of challenges in dealing with the organisation, which are partly inherent to the AU itself and partly depend on the peculiarity of Chinese diplomacy that relies heavily on government-to-government ties. Since China's institutionalised engagement with the AU is a recent phenomenon, this chapter does not have an extensive background section on China-AU relations like Chapters 4 and 6 have on China-FOCAC and China-UNSC relations respectively. Instead, I start by introducing the historical security context that prompted the creation of the OAU and subsequently the AU, and I describe the organisation's mandate and its internal challenges. These are crucial in understanding the dynamics that underlie the relations between the organisation and its external partners. Second, I delve into China's contributions to the AU's peace and security architecture, a topic which is yet understudied. As official documents and speeches directly touching upon such relations are somewhat limited, this chapter relies more heavily on fieldwork interviews than on written sources.[445] As part of the third analytical step, the aim of the chapter is to trace

[444] Charles Ukeje and Yonas Tariku, "Beyond Symbolism: China and the African Union in African Peace and Security," in *China and Africa* (Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018), 289–309.
[445] The paucity of material is due to several reasons: First, because the establishment of China's mission is quite recent, the website only provides a limited number of relevant documents. Second, the few China-related documents available on the AU website are only collected starting from 2014. Third, many references to China-AU relations are contained in FOCAC documents, and this is especially the case since the AU became a full member of the Forum in 2011. Since there is no dedicated China-AU repository per se, most of the texts used in this chapter are sourced from the FOCAC website.

how China's Africa discourse is maintained at the continental level. I find that some of the representations highlighted in Chapter 4 also appear in China-AU related documents, albeit with less frequency and less emphasis than elsewhere. I conclude with a section on UN-AU relations, which discusses the role of China as both a member of the UNSC and one of Africa's major partners and serves as a bridge between this and the following chapter, which focuses on the global dimension of China's Africa policies.

The African Union thus represents the second level in China's discourse on peace and security: Moving on from the FOCAC, which some say provides an "omnibus 'organizational' umbrella around which China's engagement with the AU is anchored",[446] the latter represents the institutional link between the regional and global levels. While being the locus of African agency *par excellence*, it still struggles with organisational and funding issues and some still question whether it is truly independent from external influence yet. As one of its major partners, China has the potential to contribute to promoting its agenda, but its path in this sense remains uphill, especially with respect to European countries.

5.2 Africa's security context

Understanding the African security context would be incomplete without reference to the colonial era and the anti-colonial struggles which followed and led to decolonisation. Since such a thorough historical reconstruction goes beyond the scope of this thesis, I limit my introduction to briefly presenting the African security context.

The disappointment at the conclusions of the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and the collapse of what Manela calls the "Wilsonian moment", acted as a trigger to the process that launched the transformation of the norms and standards of the international society, characterised by the demand of the colonised and marginalised to be recognised as sovereign and independent actors in world affairs.[447] The language of self-determination was hence adopted regardless of geographic confines or narratives, to the point that the ideology of nationalism evolved within an international context, which saw an escalation of resistance to imperial penetration and encroachment, exemplified, for instance, by the 1919 revolution in Egypt or the May Fourth movement in China, setting the stage for future anticolonial struggles. Between

[446] Ukeje and Tariku, "Beyond Symbolism," 290.
[447] Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment. Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

the 1950s and the 1960s, an international system that included legal overseas dependencies of European colonial powers—one whose normative framework was constituted by the rules of international law and diplomacy—was transformed into one where most colonies gained independent status.[448] However, for colonies to become sovereign states did not automatically represent the key to development and peace. Quite the opposite, once independent, many countries in the developing world did not have enough time to create viable political structures and conditions of poverty, underdevelopment, and resource scarcity limited their pursuit of developmental objectives. Furthermore, the spillover of many revolutions or separatist movements across national boundaries often caused regional instability.[449]

It is therefore not surprising that many authors tend to emphasise the colonial origins of most conflicts, as well as the role of decolonisation in shaping the African peace and security architecture. As they suggest that many postcolonial conflicts are indeed rooted in colonial conflicts, Nhema and Zeleza remain aware that the causes of African wars are complex and entail conjunctures of political, economic, social, and cultural factors that are borne out of specific historical experiences.[450] Henderson similarly stresses the effects of decolonisation on the newly independent states of Africa, which were often left without institutional support or specialists by colonisers to face the dual challenges of state-building and nation-building.[451] The desire for economic development also complicated the picture, and while that tends to reduce conflict in the long term, it may increase the likeliness of violence in the short term, as uneven growth in different sectors of an economy may lead to increasing inequality.[452] Williams is instead more cautious in blaming current conflicts on colonialism, which, he argues, is certainly an important underlying factor but not the main cause behind contemporary wars. He argues that armed conflicts in the post-Cold War era are rather a consequence of state-society relations coupled with the politics of regime survival in most countries across the continent, and he identifies five *ingredients* that the literature considers having played a major role in African conflicts: neopatrimonialism,

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[448] Robert H. Jackson, "The Weight of Ideas in Decolonization: Normative Change in International Relations," in *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change*, by Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane (Cornell University Press, 1993).
[449] Amitav Acharya, "The Periphery as the Core: The Third World and Security Studies," in *Critical Security Studies*, ed. Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).
[450] Alfred Nhema and Paul T. Zeleza, eds., *The Roots of African Conflicts. The Causes and Costs.* (Oxford: James Currey, 2008).
[451] Errol A. Henderson, Alfred Nhema, and Paul T. Zeleza, "When States Implode: Africa's Civil Wars 1950-92," in *The Roots of African Conflicts* (Oxford: James Currey, 2008).
[452] Ibid.

resources, sovereignty, ethnicity, and religion. In his view, "[d]iscriminatory and oppressive systems of governance which lacked effective means of resolving conflicts without resorting to violence were thus an important ingredient in every one of Africa's wars."[453] Hence, what becomes clear from this introduction to the African security environment, is that conflicts do not happen is isolation, but rather are complex social phenomena that are simultaneously local and global, and the degree to which every actor and cause vary in each conflict suggests that generalisation is not always possible when explaining warfare, and the different historical, political, social, and economic contexts always matter greatly.

5.2.1 The African Union: Shaping the APSA

Thus, as the continent tried to address such interrelated causes of conflicts, the concept of an African peace and security architecture started to emerge in the late 1990s. The APSA is meant to include all decision-making processes, structures and values aimed at "the prevention, management and resolution of crises and conflicts, post-conflict reconstruction and development in the continent"[454] Arguably, the AU is the APSA's main institutional platform. So far, however, its record is mixed at best. This section sketches its origins since the transition from the OAU to the AU, as well as internal and external responses to conflicts.

When the OAU was established in 1963, at its core lay the desire to liberate the continent from white rule and find a common Pan-African identity.[455] While security was indeed a major concern of the founders, the concept was understood strictly in terms of state interests—in the form of territorial integrity, state sovereignty, and the protection of state boundaries. This resulted in the organisation essentially acting as a "protection club" for statist values, often neglecting (or ignoring) human rights and the

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[453] Paul D. Williams, *War and Conflict in Africa* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), 226; For more background on the causes of African conflicts, see for instance: Christopher S. Clapham, *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival*, Cambridge Studies in International Relations 50 (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Sandra J. MacLean, "Fighting Locally, Connecting Globally: Inside and Outside Dimensions of African Conflict," in *The Roots of African Conflicts*, by Alfred Nhema and Paul T. Zeleza (Oxford: James Currey, 2008); Thomas Callaghy, Ronald Kassimir, and Robert Latham, eds., *Intervention and Transnationalism in Africa: Global–Local Networks of Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Elizabeth Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); William Reno, "Shadow States and the Political Economy of Civil Wars," in *Greed and Grievance. Economic Agendas in Civil Wars*, ed. Mats Berdal and David M. Malone (Boulder/London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000).

[454] "African Peace and Security Architecture. African Union's Blue Print for the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa," accessed July 30, 2015, www.peaceau.org.

[455] To be sure, while Kwame Nkrumah was one of the fiercest advocates of African unity on the basis of identity, the OAU did not embrace many of the concepts he articulated. See for instance Samuel M. Makinda and F. Wafula Okumu, *The African Union: Challenges of Globalization, Security, and Governance* (Routledge, 2008).

rule of law.[456] In the post-Cold war era, when Western powers shifted their attention from Africa to other regions (Eastern Europe, Southeast Asia, China), the UN was often over-burdened by requests to intervene in continental conflicts, and therefore started calling for increased regional engagement.[457] The OAU, which was expected to respond to these needs, was not able to provide strong leadership nor take significant actions to address conflicts, mostly because it was still inspired by Cold War institutions that became incompatible with post-Cold War realities.[458]

With the aim of performing the tasks the OAU could not handle and in the hope to create a stronger feeling of African unity, the AU took its place in 2002.[459] The organisation was institutionally modelled upon the EU and primarily seeks the unity of the continent, the promotion of a larger market to make Africa more competitive in international economy, and addresses the continent's plethora of security challenges.[460] The transition between the OAU to the AU and the emergence of the APSA, according to Williams, "occurred within a broader set of normative debates that took

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[456] Ibid., 20.

[457] P. Godfrey Okoth, "Conflict Resolution in Africa. The Role of the OAU and the AU," in *The Resolution of African Conflicts*, by Alfred Nhema and Paul T. Zeleza (Oxford: James Currey, 2008); For more background on colonisation and decolonisation, see for instance: Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays* (Grove Press, 1969); Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (Pluto Press, 1967); Clapham, *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival*; Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2000); Frederick Cooper, *Africa since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge University Press, 2002); Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Julian Go, *Patterns of Empire: The British and American Empires, 1688 to the Present* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[458] Okoth, "Conflict Resolution in Africa. The Role of the OAU and the AU."

[459] One of the biggest supporters of such transition was Libya's Muammar Gaddafi, who had been pushing for the creation of the United States of Africa since 1999, partly motivated by the will to seek recognition and respectability for his country, at the time under UN sanctions. See Kathryn Sturman, "The Rise of Libya as a Regional Player: Commentary," *African Security Review* 12, no. 2 (January 1, 2003): 109–12; An important step in the AU's efforts to maintain peace in the continent was the creation of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) in 2002, following the launch of the Pan-African Parliament the same year. At the decision-making level, on the one hand the PSC has become the centre of decisions concerning peace and security; on the other hand, the AU Commission (AUC) and its Peace and Security Department act as a major site for drafting APSA-related documents. Alongside the creation of the PSC, the Protocol established a Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), which is in charge of providing the Chairperson of the Commission with relevant information on potential conflicts and threats to peace. In addition to the PSC and the CEWS, the African Standby Force (ASF) and the Panel of the Wise (PoW) are two other crucial instruments in responding to crises. The former operates on three levels, namely the continental, the sub-regional, and the state levels, through five regional brigades of around 4,300 troops. The latter is composed of five members, representing Africa's five sub-regions (North Africa; East Africa; Southern Africa; Central Africa; and West Africa), which have made meaningful contributions to peace and security. The Panel of the Wise is in charge of preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. For more on the AU's organs and their functions, see for instance: Ulf Engel and João Gomes Porto, "Imagining, Implementing, and Integrating the African Peace and Security Architecture: The African Union's Challenges," *African Security* 7, no. 3 (July 3, 2014): 135–46; Jakkie Cilliers, "The Continental Early Warning System of the African Union. What Role for Civil Society?," in *The Resolution of African Conflicts*, by Alfred Nhema and Paul T. Zeleza (Oxford: James Currey, 2008); Williams, *War and Conflict in Africa*.

[460] See for instance Olufemi Babarinde, "The EU as a Model for the African Union: The Limits of Imitation," *Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series* 7, no. 2 (2007).

place in Africa (and beyond) about how best to respond to armed conflict and mass atrocities. In particular, the introspection that followed the 1994 Rwanda genocide was a major catalyst in prompting the subsequent shift in the normative climate of the African society of states."[461] In this regard, as stated in Article 4 of its Constitutive Act the Union has the right "to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity."[462] Recently, "the AU has departed from the passive policy of non-interference to the more proactive policy of *non-indifference* to issues of human [in]security."[463]

Besides regional and continental efforts from the part of the AU, the continent has also experienced several waves of foreign intervention, which Schmdit believes have exacerbated some African conflicts and harmed indigenous populations.[464] The history of foreign involvement in the continent has deep roots in the first commercial and cultural exchanges between Europe and Africa; this is mostly a history of loss and dispossession, which culminated in externally driven slave trades, to the point that the distinction between involvement and intervention often becomes blurred. Furthermore, the economic inequality between African and industrialised countries persisted after independence in a neo-colonial system, and when African nations turned to Western financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, their aid came with conditions attached.[465] Related, conflicts in the post-Cold War period generally saw a rise in negotiated settlements. [466] However, peacemaking in Africa is often affected by the lack of an official political doctrine and a roadmap on how to conduct mediation processes. Furthermore, the outcomes have not always been positive and cases such as Angola in 1992, Rwanda in 1993, Sierra Leone in 1999, and Darfur in 2006 serve as a warning that mediation can sometimes worsen crises. Power-sharing agreements have often been criticised as they rarely produce stable peace and lack transformative capacity: They tend to include all armed factions but simultaneously exclude ordinary citizens and civil society; and they incentivise violence by providing rebel factions with a share of power in negotiation processes, with the

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461 Paul D. Williams, "Reflections on the Evolving African Peace and Security Architecture," *African Security* 7, no. 3 (July 3, 2014): 147–62.
462 "Constitutive Act of the African Union / Legal Instruments / ACHPR," accessed July 21, 2017, http://www.achpr.org/instruments/au-constitutive-act/.
463 Festus B. Aboagye, ed., *Complex Emergencies in the 21st Century. Challenges of New Africa's Strategic Peace and Security Policy Issues*, ISS Monograph Series 134, 2007.
464 Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror*.
465 Ibid.
466 Williams, *War and Conflict in Africa*.

unwanted effect of encouraging other groups to take up arms against governments. The key challenge is instead to promote long-term stability by demilitarising politics[467] and marginalising groups that use violence to attain power.[468]

Similarly, peacekeeping operations produced mixed results in the continent, where over 60 missions took place between 1990 and 2009, with most operations prior to 2002 being conducted by sub-regional organisation, particularly the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). However, since regional organisations were not well prepared for such operations, they suffered from serious deficiencies. It was partly after the Black Hawk Down episode in Mogadishu in 1993, leading to a descaling of US humanitarian efforts in the region, that it became clear to leaders on the continent that African problems required African solutions. This rhetoric started to have great resonance, because it recalled anti-imperial and anti-colonial sentiments by representing "a normative defence of the pluralist conception of international society and a rejection of neo-colonial enterprises." [469] It has since then come to signal the desire of African institutions to lead conflict management activities, while still welcoming external assistance.[470]

The problem of financial ownership remains perhaps the most important. As the AU Peace and Security Department knows all too well, the "APSA still suffers from the absence of financial ownership by the AUC and [regional economic communities/regional mechanisms], and from a high dependency on donors and international partners. This problem is due to two main reasons: the Member States' contribution to Peace Fund is low and the APSA has attracted very limited additional funding from alternative sources of finance."[471] In the realm of peacekeeping missions, a new norm has established itself whereby African states provide the bulk of the personnel, while other (external) actors provide funding, training, logistics, and planning support—a practice that has been called 'partnership peacekeeping'.[472] As the AU recently committed to fund 25% of its own peace operations, the US proposed

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[467] See Alex de Waal, *Demilitarizing the Mind: African Agendas for Peace and Security* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2002); Terrence Lyons, *Demilitarizing Politics* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005).
[468] Williams, *War and Conflict in Africa*.
[469] Ibid., 237.
[470] Williams, 'Reflections on the Evolving African Peace and Security Architecture'.
[471] *African Peace and Security Architecture. APSA Roadmap 2016 - 2020* (African Union Commission, Peace and Security Department, 2015).
[472] See Williams, "Reflections on the Evolving African Peace and Security Architecture"; Arthur Boutellis and Paul D. Williams, "Peace Operations, the African Union, and the United Nations: Toward More Effective Partnerships," *International Peace Institute*, 2013.

to explore a standing UN commitment to support AU-led peace support operations that have been authorised by the UN Security Council. Such support would take the form of UN-assessed contributions and would cover 75% of the costs of the operations.[473] These partnerships are thus mostly carried out between the AU and the UN, the EU, the RECs, and other American and European institutions. China, on the other hand, has so far preferred to engage in bilateral relations with selected regimes.[474] And yet, as the next section explores, in the last few years Beijing has shown greater interest in embracing multilateralism to address peace and security issues.

While the AU has indeed committed to a process of comprehensive reforms, de Coning suggests that some of these will have direct impact on relationships with key partners, the extent of which depends on each specific context.[475] Two aspects of the reform package in particular are likely to directly impact partnership arrangements: The first proposal suggests "that instead of all the African countries meeting regularly with partners, such as during the … FOCAC, or the … [Tokyo International Conference on African Development] TICAD, only the Troika, the AUC Chairperson, the Chairpersons of the RECs and the Chairperson of [New Partnership for Africa's Development] NEPAD, should represent Africa at these bilateral summits. … The second proposal is aimed at reducing the presence of partners at the AU Assemblies. … This aspect of the reforms is intended to reduce the transaction costs of partnership summits as well as the impact of partner delegations at AU Assemblies."[476] While it is likely that a more nuanced formula will be agreed on, foreign countries may not have as easy access to AU's decisions as it has been the case so far.

Moreover, since the AU has become reliant on its multilateral and bilateral partners for its Peace Support Operations (PSOs) expenditure, "[t]he financial reform package is aimed at addressing the dependence on international partners by introducing an alternative financing model that is meant to generate self-sustainable funding for the Union and increase the ownership of its Member States."[477] Ownership of security and reform of the AU were also the central themes of this year's Tana High-Level Forum: African leaders agreed that lasting solutions have to be homegrown. The

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[473] Cedric de Coning, "Can the AU Finance Its Own Peace Operations, and If so, What Would the Impact Be?," *Complexity 4 Peace Operations*, March 28, 2017, https://cedricdeconing.net/2017/03/28/can-the-au-finance-its-own-peace-operations-and-if-so-what-would-the-impact-be/.

[474] Williams, "Reflections on the Evolving African Peace and Security Architecture."

[475] Cedric de Coning, "How Will AU Reforms Impact on Relationships with Key Partners?," *Complexity 4 Peace Operations*, April 25, 2018, https://cedricdeconing.net/2018/04/25/how-will-au-reforms-impact-on-relationships-with-key-partners/.

[476] Ibid.

[477] Ibid.

Chairperson of the AUC defined ownership as "the need for efficiency, innovation of responses, and sustainability of solutions locally sourced and fitting to the context of African problems".[478] During a meeting of the Eastern Africa Standby Force in July 2018, AU military chiefs have expressed concern over the involvement of foreign powers in regional conflicts and the growing number of foreign military bases.[479] AU leaders are aware that being able to finance their own security agenda will translate in reducing dependence on external donors and foreign intervention; as will be shown later in this chapter, this dependency and the intended reforms profoundly affect China-AU relations and the scope of Chinese normative power within the organisation.

Lastly, with respect to African ownership of conflict management, an important element is the fact that the AU and the RECs "are not living up to the political, financial, and military implications of their self-declared primacy in matters of African security cooperation."[480] The institutional development of such security cooperation, Franke and Gänzle argue, "seems to be sponsored by Western norms, ideas and templates for regional integration to a much greater deal than was anticipated."[481] What they identify is therefore a gap between the use of the discourse around African security and the failure to implement it. Increasingly, though, the regionalisation of conflict in the continent has contributed to the emergence of regional peacekeeping alongside the presence of the UN.[482] The new prominence gained by subnational actors, such as rebel groups and mercenaries, has led to the spread of new armed conflict practices; this, in turn, has influenced patterns of involvement and response to such conflicts, on the part of both external and subregional actors. Since many conflicts believed to be of a 'domestic' nature often spill over into neighbouring countries or create regional war zones, the UN has been weak in finding appropriate solutions and regional organisations have thus stepped in. From the early 1990s, with the first regional peacekeeping mission in Liberia led by ECOWAS and then the AU's missions in Burundi, Sudan, Somalia, and Comoros, the past two decades have seen increased

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[478] "Tana 2018: Outcomes Document," April 2018, 3, http://www.tanaforum.org/tana_2018/forum_documents/.

[479] Julius Bizimungu, "AU Military Chiefs Raise Red Flag on Foreign Military Bases," *The New Times | Rwanda*, July 27, 2018, http://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/au-military-chiefs-raise-red-flag-foreign-military-bases.

[480] Benedikt Franke and Stefan Gänzle, "How 'African' Is the African Peace and Security Architecture? Conceptual and Practical Constraints of Regional Security Cooperation in Africa," *African Security* 5, no. 2 (April 1, 2012): 89; 90.

[481] Franke and Gänzle, "How 'African' Is the African Peace and Security Architecture?", 89.

[482] Fredrik Söderbaum and Rodrigo Tavares, "Problematizing Regional Organizations in African Security," *African Security* 2, no. 2 (2009): 69–81.

regional peacekeeping intervention.[483] Hence, though originally born as economic formations, the RECs have become key actors in peace and security.[484]

Since continental organisations are at the forefront of efforts to promoting peace and security and building the APSA, they have also become essential platforms in defining norms on intervention and conflict management. Consequently, "both Western countries and China are trying to exert influence over the outcome of norm-formulation processes and specific conflict resolution initiatives in Africa. While the West has used its financial aid to shape Africa's regional security infrastructure, China has mostly provided diplomatic support in international forums."[485] The next section addresses China's contributions to the AU in more detail.

5.3 What role for China?

Whilst China's relations with African countries have traditionally relied on bilateral relations and, after 2000, on FOCAC meetings, changes in the multilateral political landscape of the continent have led China to adapt its preferred mode of engagement and step up its cooperation with regional organisations.[486] On the one hand, "China's interaction with regional bodies should not be overestimated. Above

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[483] Ibid. For a comprehensive list of all regional peacekeeping interventions see p. 71.

[484] IPSS, "AU Reform as a Gateway to Strengthened Relations with RECs," *Institute for Peace and Security Studies*, accessed September 27, 2017, http://www.ipss-addis.org/news/news_and_events/au_reform_as_a_gateway_to_strengthened_relations_w.php; According to Franke, the RECs are used by the AU not only as source of political legitimacy, technical capacity, and local expertise, but also as implementing agencies for continental policy. The AU, he argues, relies on regional organisations as essential building blocks and implementation agencies for its continental programmes and strategies, with the purpose is to fill in "the institutional gap between the UN, with its higher moral authority for ensuring international peace and security on the one hand, and the regional organisations with their perceived greater political will and executive power on the other hand", see Benedikt Franke, "Africa's Regional Economic Communities and the Multi-Level Logic of Security Cooperation on the Continent," in *Towards an African Peace and Security Regime*, ed. João Gomes Porto and Ulf Engel (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 84; While the "Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Area of Peace and Security between the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities and the Coordinating Mechanisms of the Regional Standby Brigades of Eastern and Northern Africa" signed in June 2008 represents an important step in building the APSA, several challenges remain in coordinating between the AU and the RECs on peace and security issues. During the last four years, a process of organisational and managerial revival has been put in place and closer coordination across different departments, as well as between the AU and the RECs has been initiated. Initiatives that encourage sharing relevant experience, such as the two-day workshop on civil-military coordination jointly organised by ECOWAS Standby Force and AMISOM in September 2017, are a good step in promoting closer ties across the continent's many organisations. For more background on the RECs and their relationship with the AU, see for instance Engel and Porto, "Imagining, Implementing, and Integrating the African Peace and Security Architecture"; "ECOWAS and AU Share Experience on Civil-Military Coordination," Text, *ReliefWeb*, (September 21, 2017), https://reliefweb.int/report/world/ecowas-and-au-share-experience-civil-military-coordination.

[485] Sara Van Hoeymissen, "Regional Organizations in China's Security Strategy for Africa: The Sense of Supporting 'African Solutions to African Problems,'" *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 40, no. 4 (2011): 109.

[486] For more background on China's relations with the OAU prior to 2000, see Ukeje and Tariku, "Beyond Symbolism."

all, the regional dimension of Chinese involvement in Africa does not come at the expense of bilateral relations, which is what China currently values most."[487] On the other hand, China does promote a greater role for African regional organisations in conflict resolution and it considers them better equipped to make judgments on the internal affairs of member countries.[488] China has found that increased engagement with regional organisations provides a good way of responding to international pressures and expectations, while simultaneously advancing its own views on peace and security.[489] Deflecting international criticism for entertaining relations with pariah states such as Sudan or Zimbabwe is easier for China when it aligns its policies to those of the AU or other organisations.[490] In this sense, its support for regional organisations can be seen as purely instrumental: it encourages their work and endorses regional solutions to conflicts to boost its image and protect its economic interests, and, increasingly, its citizens.[491] Yet, the South-South cooperation discourse still plays an important role both in China's policies towards the AU and the RECs and in the promotion of a 'Chinese way' of conflict management—for instance, by finding resolution models that respect state sovereignty.[492]

Increased involvement with the AU also brings about other benefits. As Benabdallah argues, "closer co-operation with the AU commission provides Beijing an opportunity to tap into the expertise of the African Union Peace and Security Council and its knowledge of the intricacies involved in different conflicts."[493] To be sure, challenges still remain, namely in the form of consensus-building and follow-up mechanisms. Managing the concerns and priorities of over 50 members is a daunting task and it is often hard to negotiate a unified multilateral agenda. Moreover, the lack of formal follow-up mechanisms makes it difficult to carry on project evaluation—neither does the AU have enough power to enforce implementation of such

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[487] Mariani and Wheeler, "China's Growing Role in African Peace and Security."
[488] Van Hoeymissen, "Regional Organizations in China's Security Strategy for Africa: The Sense of Supporting 'African Solutions to African Problems.'"
[489] Ibid.
[490] One might argue that another way of seeing China's alleged support for illiberal regimes is to look at the country's dislike for (economic) sanctions in general. In this sense, therefore, rather than supporting this or that pariah state, the PRC expresses its opposition to sanctions as a foreign policy tool, especially when unilateral (i.e. US-led). See for instance James Reilly, "China's Unilateral Sanctions," *The Washington Quarterly* 35, no. 4 (October 1, 2012): 121–33.
[491] Van Hoeymissen, "Regional Organizations in China's Security Strategy for Africa: The Sense of Supporting 'African Solutions to African Problems'"; Duchatel, Brauner, and Hang, *Protecting China's Overseas Interests. The Slow Shift Away from Non-Interference*.
[492] Van Hoeymissen, "Regional Organizations in China's Security Strategy for Africa: The Sense of Supporting 'African Solutions to African Problems.'"
[493] Lina Benabdallah, "AU-China Peace and Security Co-Operation: RECs, CSOs, and Think Thanks for the Win," *African East-Asian Affairs*, The China Monitor, no. 1 (June 2015).

mechanisms in member states.[494] Interestingly, as it emerged in one of my interviews, Chinese diplomats seemed to be under the impression that establishing a dedicated mission to the organisation and thus increasing their diplomatic presence there, would translate into the capacity to "catch two birds with one stone."[495]

Until a few years ago, China's support for the AU and RECs was limited to diplomacy, financial and logistical contributions, and military assistance at the bilateral level. In 2005, China appointed representatives to ECOWAS, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the AU, and SADC.[496] Strategic dialogues and multilateral consultation mechanisms have also been in place: the first AU-China Strategic Dialogue was held in Addis Ababa in 2008, while the last one took place in Beijing in February 2018.[497] As regards its financial contributions, mainly in the forms of ad hoc grants to the AU, these have been fairly limited with respect to traditional donors, especially the US and the EU. However, since 2012, China has increased its donations and the construction of the new AU headquarters in Addis Ababa in 2012, financed by the Chinese government with an investment of USD200 million, was a sign of the PRC's interest in strengthening relations with the organisation. It was unfortunate that the building came to be at the centre of renewed debates over China's influence, when the French newspaper Le Monde Afrique accused the country of data theft in January 2018.[498] According to the newspaper, data had been transferred from the headquarters' computers to servers located in Shanghai during nigh time, over a period of five years. Both the Chinese and the African sides have repeatedly denied the accusations, but the episode did represent a thorn in the side of China's otherwise smooth AU diplomacy record.[499]

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[494] Ibid.

[495] Interview with head diplomat at the EU delegation to the African Union, Addis Ababa, February 2017.

[496] Xu, "Talking Points for Director-General Xu Jinghu at the Consultation between the Secretariat of Chinese Follow-up Committee of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and African Diplomatic Envoys in China."

[497] "China-AU Strategic Dialogue Officially Launched," accessed July 21, 2017, http://www.chinaconsulatesf.org/eng/xw/t523999.htm.

[498] Joan Tilouine, "A Addis-Abeba, Le Siège de l'Union Africaine Espionné Par Pékin," *Le Monde Afrique*, January 26, 2018, http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2018/01/26/a-addis-abeba-le-siege-de-l-union-africaine-espionne-par-les-chinois_5247521_3212.html.

[499] Bukola Adebayo and Tim Schwarz, "China Denies Bugging African Union Headquarters in Ethiopia," *CNN*, last modified February 2, 2018, accessed February 6, 2018, https://www.cnn.com/2018/01/30/africa/china-denies-spying-au-building-intl/index.html What this episode tells us, and especially the fact that the alleged data theft was only revealed a year after it was discovered, is that, as the relationship between China and the AU grows, neither party is willing to compromise it.

Figure 3 The AU Conference Centre and Office complex built by China in 2012 in Addis Ababa; the picture is my own

In FOCAC documents, we find the first mention of security cooperation with the AU in the Addis Ababa Action Plan of 2003, under the 'Peace and Security' rubric:

> We are resolved to step up cooperation and work together to support an even greater role of the United Nations, the African Union and other sub-regional African organizations in preventing, mediating and resolving conflicts in Africa. … China will continue its active participation in the peacekeeping operations and de-mining process in Africa and provide, within the limits of its capabilities, financial and material assistance as well as relevant training to the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. In order to strengthen the capacity of African States to undertake peacekeeping operations, we look forward to the strengthening of China's cooperation with African States and Sub-regional organizations in the areas of logistics.[500]

We read similar statements in the 2006 Beijing Action Plan,[501] and, in 2009, the Sharm El Sheikh Action Plan states that

> The two sides applauded the important contributions made by the African Union … and sub-regional organizations in Africa to actively resolving African issues and promoting the African integration process as well as sub-regional economic integration and peace and development in Africa. The two sides noted with satisfaction that China and the AU have set up and launched the Strategic Dialogue Mechanism and agreed to exchange views on China-Africa relations and other major issues through this mechanism. They support the AU in playing a bigger role in regional and international affairs.[502]

[500] "FOCAC Addis Ababa Action Plan (2004-2006)."
[501] "FOCAC Beijing Action Plan (2007-2009)."
[502] "FOCAC Sharm El Sheikh Action Plan (2010-2012)."

In 2012, not only did China build the new organisations' headquarters, but it also committed RMB600 million in free assistance to the AU within three years starting from then.[503] In addition,

> To enhance cooperation with Africa on peace and security issues, the Chinese side will launch the "Initiative on China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security" and will provide, within the realm of its capabilities, financial and technical support to the African Union for its peace-support operations, the development of the African Peace and Security Architecture, personnel exchanges and training in the field of peace and security and Africa's conflict prevention, management and resolution and post-conflict reconstruction and development.[504]

In the 6th Forum Action Plan, it is argued that

> The Chinese side continues to support the African Union, its Regional Economic Communities and other African sub-regional institutions that play a *leading role in coordinating and solving issues of peace and security in Africa and further continues to support and advocate for African solutions to African challenges without interference from outside the continent*. The Chinese side will provide the AU with USD60 million of free military assistance over the next three years, support the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture, including the operationalization of the African Capacity for the Immediate Response to Crisis and the African Standby Force. The two sides will maintain the momentum of mutual visits by defence and military leaders, continue to deepen exchanges on technologies and expand personnel training and joint trainings and exercises.[505]

President Xi also reiterated continued support for UN peacekeeping missions and for capacity building in the areas of defence, counter-terrorism, riot prevention, customs, and immigration control.[506] Relations between China and the AU have thus predominantly been focusing on peace and security since the beginning. In 2014, when welcoming Premier Li Keqiang to the AU headquarters, the then chairperson of the AUC Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma made a statement that reflects the discourse around historical ties between China and Africa:

> This strategic and unique relationship is an expression of a *long, deep and enduring solidarity between Africa and China*. It was built in the long walk of Africa's struggles against colonialism and foreign domination, and Africa's pursuit for self-determination, freedom, justice, peace and prosperity. […] The Africa Union considers China's cooperation with Africa a model of a *win-win partnership, based on mutual respect and aimed at producing tangible results in areas of common interest*.[507]

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503 FOCAC, "The Fifth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Beijing Action Plan (2013-2015)."
504 Ibid.
505 "The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Johannesburg Action Plan (2016-2018);" emphasis added.
506 huaxia, "China Pledges 60 Mln USD Grant to AU in Security Cooperation," *Xinhua*, December 4, 2015, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-12/04/c_134886101.htm.
507 "Statement by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Her Excellency Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma on the Occasion of the Visit of Li Keqiang, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, to the African Union 5 May 2014," accessed July 24, 2017, https://au.int/en/speeches/20140505; emphasis added.

In June 2017, Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi met with Moussa Faki Mahamat in the Ethiopian capital. Together they identified five priority areas for future cooperation between China and the AU, among which are peace and security. The two also discussed the issues of military assistance, enhancing Africa's capability to address security concerns and peacekeeping operations, supporting African solutions to African problems, and continued promotion of the UN's role in advancing the cause of independent peacekeeping solutions "made in Africa".[508] Wang Yi stressed that such priority areas are "in full compliance with the current needs of Africa, in line with the urgent aspirations of the African people and the strategic direction mapped out in the AU 2063 Agenda."[509] In February 2018, the Chairperson of the AU visited Beijing and, in his speech, we find several representations of China-Africa from the first and second discursive layers:

> The two sides reaffirmed their commitment to *promote multilateralism* and the role of the United Nations against the backdrop of evolving and complex global challenges. They expressed the conviction that their partnership is an example of *solidarity among peoples based on mutual respect and benefits*, noting that Africa and China together represent more than one third of humanity and *share a history of external domination* – in this respect, the African Union Commission delegation reiterated its gratitude to China for its support to the liberation of the Continent. They agreed to proactively *work towards a better representation of Africa in the international system, including in the United Nations Security Council, as part of a new global governance system*.[510]

Soon afterwards in May 2018, Li Zhanshu, Chairman of the Standing Committee of National People's Congress of the PRC, visited Addis Ababa and met with ambassador Kwesi Quartey, deputy chairperson of the AUC. The two used the meeting to renew commitments to further promote multilateralism and deepen the AU-China strategic partnership.[511] Moreover, during the 7th FOCAC Summit, the AUC Chairperson formally launched the much-anticipated AU representational office in Beijing by unveiling a plaque inaugurating the mission.[512] The AU Chairperson also joined 37 African countries in signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with China

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[508] "Wang Yi Talks about Five Priority Areas of China-AU Cooperation," June 21, 2017, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1472730.shtml.
[509] Ibid.
[510] "Communiqué on the Visit of the African Union Commission Chairperson to the People's Republic of China," February 2018, https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20180209/communiqu%C3%A9-visit-african-union-commission-chairperson-peoples-republic-china.
[511] "African Union and China Renew Commitment to Advance Multilateral Cooperation," May 11, 2018, https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20180511/african-union-and-china-renew-commitment-advance-multilateral-cooperation.
[512] "AU Officially Launches Representational Office in Beijing," September 3, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-09/03/c_137439699.htm; the opening of an AU office in Beijing has been rumoured for a while; see for instance AfricaNews, "China to Support Establishment of African Union Office in Beijing," *Africanews*, February 2018, http://www.africanews.com/2018/02/11/china-to-support-establishment-of-african-union-office-in-beijing/.

expressing the intention to jointly develop the BRI and inject new impetus in China-Africa cooperation, as well as align the BRI with Agenda 2063, Agenda 2030, and the development strategies of African countries.[513] In general, the announcements made during the Summit pointed towards increased cooperation especially in fields of peace and security and capacity building. Alongside the commitments to peacekeeping mentioned above, China also pledged to help providing training "to improve African law enforcers' ability to safeguard the security of major domestic economic projects and protect the safety of Chinese nationals, Chinese companies and major projects."[514]

While these measures are mostly associated to specific Belt and Road security cooperation, other areas are also covered. Xi promised 50 security assistance programmes in the areas of law and order, fighting piracy, and combating terrorism. These will include more defense and military personnel training; sharing intelligence, technology, and experience; enhanced cooperation on military medical science; anti-corruption capacity building; provision of training and equipment for police forces and short-term law enforcement training courses; and the creation of a China-Africa Law Enforcement and Security Forum. While there are no indications whether these assistance programme will be carried out via the AU or through bilateral agreements, it is clear that the focus of China-Africa ties is shifting to more peace and security cooperation. Similarly, capacity building also has assumed a big role in recent years and will continue to be at the centre of future exchanges.[515] It is interesting to note that a recent report of the EU Court of Auditors has called for a refocusing of the EU's funding to the AU from supporting basic operational costs (mostly paying staff salaries) towards capacity building measures.[516] Questioning the effectiveness of EU's funding so far and its lack of clear priorities and long-term vision, the report recommends to shift to "well-targeted capacity-building programmes" and to link such support to improvements in the way in which the AU and sub-regional organisations work.[517] There are therefore signs that both China and the EU are looking into new ways of engaging the AU; it remains to be seen whether this is an area for potential future trilateral cooperation and what will be the real impact of the proposed AU reforms mentioned above.

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513 "推进中非'一带一路'合作走深走实," September 10, 2018, https://www.focac.org/chn/zfgx/jmhz/t1593607.htm; the full text of the MoU was not yet available at the time of submission.
514 "Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Beijing Action Plan (2019-2021)."
515 Benabdallah, "China's Peace and Security Strategies in Africa: Building Capacity Is Building Peace?"
516 European Court of Auditors, "The African Peace and Security Architecture: Need to Refocus EU Support," 2018.
517 Ibid., 34.

The narrative that China's support for the AU responds to the needs of the continent does not only emerge from documents but has also come up in my interviews with AU officials and Addis-based researchers. Some claim that while Washington "dictates" to African countries what to do in a father-figure fashion, China does not name-and-shame, but rather relies on quiet diplomacy.[518] On the one hand, no one denies that the Chinese have their own agenda (i.e. protecting their interests and citizens); on the other hand, they are often seen by Africans as providing a better alternative to the West because "they accept Africa as it is […] and Africans are not choosing which *master* is better, but rather which *partner* is better".[519] Many reject the Western criticism that China represents a somehow 'imposed' choice simply because it offers aid and investments without ties attached, and rebut that Africans are free to decide whom to partner with, based on the quality of a proposal rather than the conditionalities that come with it. A British diplomat from the EU delegation to Ethiopia insisted that Africans are not passive actors in negotiations with Chinese companies or government and are instead well aware of the opportunities *and* the risks that come with Chinese deals.[520] One AUC-UNECA adviser further pointed out that the African elite is increasingly sharing with China the belief that development leads to security in the long-term, another sign that the security-development nexus has started to being internalised by many policy makers in the continent. She also maintained that there is a sense of renewed confidence in Africa: the people believe that improvements need to come from within their own countries and that it can, and needs to, happen without support from the West.[521] One AU officer holds the opinion that China's engagement in the continent puts Africa in a better position in international affairs,[522] and AU's Ambassador Frederic Gateretse-Ngoga confirms the widely shared view that Africans are pursuing equal-to-equal relations and the AU is taking active responsibility in identifying and prioritising the areas where funding is needed, thus setting the course of the partnership. Though the Chinese may not be "the perfect partners", they are normally meeting the AU's expectations: the Africans,

[518] Interview with senior researcher and programme director, Institute for Peace and Security Studies, January 2017, Addis Ababa.
[519] Ibid.
[520] Interview with senior member of the EU Delegation to Ethiopia, February 2017, Addis Ababa. Ethiopia represents a good case, where the government, despite having adopted a Chinese-style, top-down approach to the country's economy and politics, has been good at pushing back on certain aspects of Chinese infrastructure projects that they deemed to be of low-quality standards. For instance, during the interview I was told that the government rejected initial proposals for the metro line because they judged some of the materials of low quality and demanded further negotiations.
[521] Interview with AUC-UNECA adviser, February 2017, Addis Ababa.
[522] Interview with senior political officer at the AUC, February 2017, Addis Ababa.

he said, are not accepting anything less and they do not feel like China is imposing anything on them.[523]

One senior officer at the Peace and Security Department argued that "we need to debunk the myth that China comes to Africa telling us what to do, that they are scoping around our natural resources, and that we are just passive in all of this."[524] While acknowledging that the AU still does not have enough power to set the norms on every aspect of peace and security and that a lot of activities are still negotiated at the bilateral level, he argued that it is the organisation which decides how to allocate Chinese funding and does not simply receive that without any agency. African governments are now increasingly pushing back on several issues: he mentioned, among others, requests to import less labour force from China and instead employ more local workers in infrastructure, and requests to improve the quality and standards of the work and products provided by Chinese companies involved in infrastructure projects. Another important point he made was that China had not shown interest in "improving" policy making in the continent—which is not to say that they have no influence on such matters; rather, he believes, they do it via quiet diplomacy and soft power. In giving the example of Confucius Institutes, this seemed to be his main concern: The quick spread of the Institutes may potentially represent an element of "cultural imperialism" paired with big waves of migration from China to African countries.[525] However, he also praised the AU and the RECs for taking "very robust instruments to deal with issues of governance, democracy, and human rights on the continent" and he did not think that Chinese investments were undermining those values. We also discussed the role of the AU vis-à-vis bilateral relations and his opinion was that peace and security is probably the area where multilateralism has been more successful. In this sense, he considers China's support for Africa's position at the UNSC a measure of such success (a point to which I return in the following chapter). In sum, he argued, China is unlikely to have either a positive or negative impact on the democratisation and institutionalisation processes that are already in place throughout the continent.[526] These views are also confirmed by recent statements given by the AUC Chairperson and the AU Chair for 2018. Addressing the 7th FOCAC Summit,

[523] Interview with Ambassador, Head of the Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Division at the AUC, February 2017, Addis Ababa.
[524] Interview with senior officer at the Peace and Security Department, AU, Addis Ababa, February 2017.
[525] There are currently 48 Confucius Institutes in Africa; see "HanBan Confucius Institute Class Room," accessed September 8, 2017, http://english.hanban.org/node_10971.htm.
[526] Interview with senior officer at the Peace and Security Department, AU, Addis Ababa, February 2017.

the AUC Chairperson said that the eight initiatives and the USD60 pledge announced were "concrete proofs of China's support to Africa" and added that "[we]e need to further create synergy between the AU's Agenda 2063 and the Belt and Road Initiative. The AU welcomes the Belt and Road Initiative."[527] In the same occasion, Rwandan President commented that China and Africa share a common aspiration for development and stability. He maintained that "China has been a supportive friend for Africa for a long time … *The reform should build our capacities and make the partnership more meaningful*. We are looking to China to strengthen us in this quest for unity, independence and efficiency."[528] And, responding to accusations of China creating a debt-trap for African countries, he argued that the concept was fabricated in an attempt to discourage relations between them and that "those criticizing China on debt give too little", while Africa needs the funding to build capacity for development.[529]

To be sure, some of my interviewees hold less positive views of China's support to peace and security via the AU. A senior researcher (1) from the ISS believes that the main problem with Chinese engagement is their preference for elite-to-elite relations; in his opinion, members of the Chinese government often bypass their own ambassadors on the ground and prefer to deal directly with the heads of African states instead.[530] Another issue he highlighted was the institutional weakness of the AU; even the commissioners, according to him, are only able to operate within the limits of what the member states allow for. Despite deepened cooperation, what he calls the "cultural take" still represents a barrier: Because of their lack of exposure to the continent, as compared to Western countries, the Chinese often do not understand the ethnic or religious roots of many conflicts; their knowledge of specific regions and their institutions is, he said, equally lacking.[531] Another senior researcher at the ISS, echoed his concern about the state-to-state character of China-Africa relations; in this sense, China's approach to the AU still needs to be defined and perfectioned.[532] As the Chinese mission to the AU was created to speed up the learning process of dealing with multilateralism effectively, it was a first step in such a direction. Bedzigui still expressed doubts about the non-interference policy: China's increased contributions will eventually lead to greater political engagement. However, he does not have the

[527] "AU Commission Chair Calls for More Development Synergy between China, Africa," September 4, 2018, https://www.focac.org/eng/zfgx_4/zzjw/t1591438.htm.
[528] "Rwandan President Says FOCAC Summit Comes 'at the Right Time';" emphasis added.
[529] Ibid.
[530] Interview with senior researcher 1 at the Institute of Security Studies ISS), February 2017, Addis Ababa.
[531] Ibid.
[532] Interview with senior researcher 2 at the ISS, February 2017, Addis Ababa.

impression that Chinese leaders and foreign policy makers have any policy priorities when it comes to Africa (as opposed to Western countries that have a more targeted and selective approach to their financial contributions).[533] One Western diplomat at the EU delegation to the AU shared a similar concern that the China model is mostly advantageous to the elites, whom, in turn, are slowly starting to realise that the Chinese approach has issues as much as the "Washington consensus".[534]

Hence, while views on China's engagement are varied (though mostly positive), it seemed that many shared a kind of wait-and-see attitude. Since the institutionalisation of the China-AU partnership is recent, no one was keen on drawing rushed conclusions. In general, it can be concluded that both documents and interviews point to an increasingly shared Chinese and African security-development model, which is simultaneously a product of independent initiative on the part of Africans and support from China in the form of assistance in the peace and security realm.

5.3.1 The UN-AU partnership: The China link

Finally, the last section of this chapter performs two roles: first, it addresses an important element of multilateral cooperation on peace and security and second, it acts as a bridge between this and the following chapter. Cooperation between the UN and the AU is another recent phenomenon, but one which is increasingly intensifying. According to Boutellis and Williams, the basis for such relationship lies in the mutual recognition of several facts, namely that peace and security challenges in the continent have occupied most of the UN agenda of the last decade; the recognition of the primary, but not exclusive, role of the UN in maintaining international peace; and related, the acknowledgment that no organisation can deal with such complex challenges alone.[535]

Formally initiated in 2006 by a framework agreement, UN assistance to the AU began as part of a Ten-Year Capacity-Building Programme.[536] Its main objectives were the enhancement of institutional and technical capacities, as well as cooperation between the UN, the AU, and the RECs.[537] Subsequent triennial reviews were carried out, generally acknowledging the positive impact of the UN on the capacity building

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[533] Ibid.
[534] Interview with senior officer at the EU delegation to the AU, February 2017, Addis Ababa.
[535] Boutellis and Williams, "Peace Operations, the African Union, and the United Nations: Toward More Effective Partnerships."
[536] "United Nations - African Union Cooperation, Department of Political Affairs," accessed September 26, 2017, http://www.un.org/undpa/en/africa/un-au-cooperation.
[537] "Ten Year Capacity Building Programme (TYCBP): Office of the Special Adviser on Africa," accessed September 26, 2017, http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/advocacy/capacity.shtml.

needs of the continent at various levels, but also the limitations of both institutions in addressing challenges effectively.[538] While the third triennial review is yet to be released and the Ten Year Capacity Building Programme (TYCBP) came to an end in 2016, the UNGA adopted a new UN-AU Partnership for Africa's Integration and Development Agenda (PAIDA) 2017-2027 as the successor framework of the TYCBP. PAIDA is supposed to serve as an overall platform for UN-AU cooperation as regards Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[539] The second AU-UN Conference held in Addis Ababa July 2017 further agreed on the continued promotion of the integration between the two agendas.[540]

PAIDA's mandate covers as many as thirteen thematic areas, among which is, not surprisingly, peace and security. On this regard, in April 2017, UN Secretary-General António Guterres and AUC Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat signed a framework to enhance cooperation between the two organisations.[541] Under the agreement, the UN and the AU are set to "collaborate from the earliest indications of conflict on the African continent" and, should preventive measures fail, "work together throughout the stages of conflict management".[542] The report echoes earlier calls for more systematic and strategic relations, including Secretary-General's report on strengthening the partnership between the UN and the AU on issues of peace and security in Africa, released in September 2016,[543] as well as previous UNSC resolutions.[544] Both organisations share the commitment to look for "sustainable

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[538] See "Implementation of the Declaration on 'Enhancing UN-AU Cooperation: Framework for the Ten-Year-Capacity Building Programme for the African Union (TYCBP),'" First Triennial Review (2006-2009) (UNECA and AUC, n.d.); "United Nations Ten-Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union," Second Triennial Reviews (2010-2012) (UNECA and AUC, April 2014); Boutellis and Williams, "Peace Operations, the African Union, and the United Nations: Toward More Effective Partnerships."

[539] "Expert Group Meeting on the Final Triennial Review of the Ten Year Capacity Building Programme for the African Union and the Transition Plan to the New Partnership for Africa's Integration and Development Agenda," accessed September 26, 2017, https://www.uneca.org/tycbp-au3; "Partnership on Africa's Integration and Development Agenda (PAIDA) | Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, OSAA," accessed September 26, 2017, http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/advocacy/paida.shtml.

[540] Catherine Benson Wahlén, "AU-UN Conference Focuses on Development, Peace and Security," July 18, 2018, http://sdg.iisd.org/news/au-un-conference-focuses-on-development-peace-and-security/.

[541] "UN and African Union Strengthen Cooperation in Peace and Security | United Nations Radio," accessed September 25, 2017, http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/english/2017/04/un-and-african-union-strengthen-cooperation-in-peace-and-security/#.WQgKJsklFE4).

[542] "Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security," April 19, 2017, 1.

[543] "Report of the Secretary-General on Strengthening the Partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on Issues of Peace and Security in Africa, Including the Work of the United Nations Office to the African Union (S/2016/780)," accessed September 25, 2017, https://reliefweb.int/report/world/report-secretary-general-strengthening-partnership-between-united-nations-and-african.

[544] "Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security."

political solutions in keeping with international standards and principles" and both believe that any peace and security effort should respect the fundamental principles of "the protection of civilians, the promotion of human rights standards and the prevention of human rights violations, as well as respect for international humanitarian law."[545]

Following the signing of the joint report, China hosted an open UNSC debate on "Enhancing African Capacities in the Area of Peace and Security" in July 2017; arguably, peace and security represents "[o]ne of the priorities of China's Council presidency".[546] The PRC sees itself as one of the major international actors in the efforts to build a stronger UN-AU relation. As argued by Mariani and Wheeler, China has always "put emphasis on the need for greater co-operation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organisations towards the maintenance of international peace and security."[547] According to Ambassador Wang Guangya, "regional organizations have unique advantages in dealing with problems in their respective regions …[and] we should strengthen mutual assistance and give prominence to Africa. Many issues on the Security Council's agenda relate to Africa. … The necessary financial resources and logistical and technical support must be provided with a view to strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and African regional and subregional organizations so that the peacekeeping and peacebuilding capacities of those organizations can be enhanced."[548]

This also reflects a broader rationale for China to engage in international collaboration and cooperation, after recognising that multilateralism can also be an instrument in safeguarding its interests.[549] Comments from the Chinese ambassador to the UN Liu Jieyi echo familiar elements of Beijing's position on issues of peace, security, and intervention: respect for the role of African countries in resolving "hotspot issues"; improvement of the cooperation mechanisms between the two institutions, especially in the key areas of conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict

[545] Ibid., 2–3.
[546] "Open Debate: Enhancing African Capacities in the Area of Peace and Security: What's In Blue," accessed September 25, 2017, http://www.whatsinblue.org/2017/07/open-debate-enhancing-african-capabilities-in-the-area-of-peace-and-security.php#.
[547] Mariani and Wheeler, "China's Growing Role in African Peace and Security," 59.
[548] "Statement by Ambassador Wang Guangya at the Security Council's Open Debate on 'Cooperation between the United Nations and Regional Organizations in Maintaining International Peace and Security,'" accessed November 13, 2017, http://www.china-un.org/eng/lhghyywj/smhwj/wangnian/2005/t217670.htm.
[549] Breslin, "China and the Global Order."

reconstruction; and sustained support for the AU's capacity building.[550] Furthermore, a greater role for China might be prompted by America's recent behaviour: As its contributions to the UN are being cut and preference is given to bilateral relations over multilateral commitments, according to De Carvalho and Connolly "the financing side of the AU-UN partnership is left without a UN Security Council champion."[551] While I address China's use of its UNSC permanent seat to support Africa's positions on international affairs in the next chapter, it will suffice here to say that its eagerness to take active part in such debates shows an interest in supporting multilateral efforts to tackle peace and security in the continent. Its increasing contributions to peace operations and the risks associated with them have raised awareness among the Chinese leadership of the challenges of financing and coordinating such complex missions, and I argue that China's self-positioning at the frontline of diplomatic efforts is an important element in its attempt to becoming a norms-maker in international peacekeeping and peacebuilding—an argument that I further explore in Chapter 7.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the second level of China's Africa diplomacy in order to identify the major elements of the cooperation between China and the African Union. I have traced China's Africa discourse and its main representations in AU-related texts and through my interviews, to unpack how the main narratives hold at the continental level. As argued earlier, the continental organisation is acknowledged both by China and other international partners as the chief actor in maintaining peace and security in the region. While it still suffers from several structural, organisational, and financial issues there is increasing consensus over a number of reforms that would make it less dependent on external partners and funding. China is following the footsteps of other countries, mostly from the EU, and is now attaching greater importance to its cooperation with the AU. Whilst the PRC traditionally prefers bilateral mechanisms, its support for the AU and the RECs has substantially increased throughout the last decade, motivated the belief that international cooperation can best serve the interest of both Africa and China. On the one hand, African elites share China's emphasis on the security-development nexus; the sense of belonging to the

[550] "Statement by Ambassador LIU Jieyi at the Security Council Briefing on the Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union," accessed September 25, 2017, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/zwjg_665342/zwbd_665378/t1477937.shtml.
[551] Gustavo De Carvalho and Lesley Connolly, "Turning Point for the AU-UN Peacekeeping Partnership?," *ISS Africa*, September 22, 2017, https://issafrica.org/iss-today/turning-point-for-the-au-un-peacekeeping-partnership.

same group of developing countries, the shared history of colonialism at the hands of the West, and China's central position in many diplomatic efforts to tackle conflicts in the last decade (i.e. in Sudan) give the PRC a (perceived) advantage other powers do not have. On the other hand, its engagement with the AU is relatively new and, as seen in some of the interviews above, most of China's AU initiatives are aimed at getting more familiar with continental security structures. While generous announcements and multimillion-dollar buildings make for catchy news headlines, it would take a lot more for this partnership to become truly effective. Furthermore, the programme of AU reforms ultimately aims to reduce financial and political dependency on external partners and could thus reduce foreign participation in AU's decisions in the long term. As Mehler puts it, "[a]lthough a majority of peace-keeping troops deployed in Africa's crises are from Asia or Africa, their mission is conceived somewhere else, most of the time in the United Nation headquarters in New York, in Brussels, or in Paris. This has impact on the way security is conceptualized."[552] It is thus significant that nowadays, conversations on African ownership over its peace and security provision are happening with increasing momentum across and within the continent.

Arguably, as Ukeje and Tariku suggest, maintaining a constant presence at the AU and engagement with its officials can prove decisive in developing stronger relations. For instance, they point out that Western experts are often found at the AU Peace and Security Department on relatively long-term posts: By working, and thus socialising, on a regular basis they are in a better position to develop shared values and practices. Exchanges and official visits between Chinese and African officials have indeed increased in number and frequency and this is a clear signal that the PRC does not wish to be left behind and is aiming for an 'upstream', norm-setting contribution to the conception, planning, and deployment stages of peace and security initiatives.[553] However, the status of partnerships and agreements with external actors is changing: While it is likely that they will not be altered substantially, they are undoubtedly evolving. For these reasons, I argue that China's normative power at the AU is limited, at least for the time being, as compared to its role at the FOCAC and at the UN Security Council, which the next chapter explores in more detail.

[552] Andreas Mehler, "Positive, Negative, or Ambiguous? Peace-Keeping in the Local Security Fabric," in *Towards an African Peace and Security Regime*, ed. Ulf Engel and João Gomes Porto (Ashgate, 2013), 155–56.
[553] Ukeje and Tariku, "Beyond Symbolism."

Chapter 6 – China's Africa discourse goes global: The United Nations Security Council

Peace is costly but it is worth the expense.
(Kenyan proverb)

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 is the last piece of the empirical puzzle that prompted this thesis. Here, I take China's Africa discourse to the global level and enquire into how it has been articulated at the UN Security Council, the chief multilateral organisation China uses to promote its foreign security policies. The chapter is divided into two parts. In the first, which serves as a background for China's engagement with the UN, I first give an overview of China's path into international organisations since 1971; second, I explore the crucial role of the Council in providing China with a global institutional platform for the promotion of its peace and security discourse; third, I briefly discuss the PRC's contributions to UN-led peacekeeping and peacebuilding, the two areas that are most relevant to its Africa policies. In the second part of the chapter, following the third analytical step as outlined in the Introduction to the thesis, I trace China's Africa discourse as it develops at the UN by looking at official documents and speeches, as well as practitioners' views as they emerge from fieldwork interviews in New York. The aim is to trace the three layers of China's Africa discourse as articulated at the global level, after having already examined the regional and the continental dimensions. I conclude by arguing that, not surprisingly, China's behaviour at the UN in the last two decades tends to be system-maintaining, supported by the stable "South-South cooperation" discourse. At the heart of the country's UN diplomacy lie the security-development nexus, respect for state sovereignty and non-interference (albeit flexible), and support for multilateralism and international institutions, which, as argued in Chapter 4, constitute essential tenets of its Africa discourse and policies. Simultaneously, the UN has seen a transformation of its peacekeeping and peacebuilding practices towards the 'sustaining peace agenda', which aims to prioritise prevention and sustainable development. Thus, the organisation's shift from a reactive to a proactive approach to conflicts has converged with China's aversion to interventionism. Such a convergence is the result of both ongoing debates at the UNSC and China's increased participation in such debates over the last few years.

6.2 China in international organisations

Since the 1980s, China has undergone a process of progressive opening up to international institutions, a feature that has become a key element of its multilateral approach to foreign policy, arguably marking a sharp departure from the isolationist policies adopted during the first few decades following the founding of the PRC.[554] Its foreign policy of intensified diplomacy and linkages with other states roughly began in the 1990s, mostly as a means to mitigating the damage created by the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre,[555] as well as a way of reaping the benefits of adopting a neutral stance on the Gulf War of 1991.[556] Since then, Beijing has developed relations with international regimes in three stages. First, avoidance and suspicion in the period between the founding of the PRC and the 1970s; an alienation which, Kent suggests, had more to do with UN members rejecting its role as the sole representative of China, than with the policy choices of the communist government.[557] Second, cautious and conservative opening to institutions, mainly of an economic nature (i.e. the IMF) in the 1980s. And third, post-Tiananmen and post-Cold war expansion of China's engagement with international institutions. A fourth, more recent phase that had begun in the 2000s, Lanteigne argues, involves sophisticated and confident use of institutions to advance its power in international relations.[558] From a slightly different angle, Kim interprets China's path within the UN in the 1970s in terms of its attitudes towards international regimes: First, China assumed a system-transforming posture in the 1960s, especially after its quest for international recognition vis-à-vis Taiwan had repeatedly failed and Chinese leaders called for a 'revolutionary' UN.[559] Such campaign reached its peak when Mao, in 1969 and 1970, openly declared he wished to improve relations with countries in the Third World as well as with the United States: This initiated a phase of 'ping-pong diplomacy', which included two visits of Henry Kissinger in preparation for the meeting between Mao and Nixon.[560] Second, throughout the 1970s China took on a system-reforming approach, when it treated the UN and other regimes mostly as an arena for the promotion of anti-hegemonic (read, anti-Soviet) struggles. Third, system-maintaining in the 1980s, when the leadership

[554] Lanteigne, *China and International Institutions: Alternate Paths to Global Power*.
[555] In China, the episode is mostly referred to as 'incident' instead.
[556] Lanteigne, *China and International Institutions: Alternate Paths to Global Power*, 2–3.
[557] Ann Kent, *Beyond Compliance: China, International Organizations, and Global Security* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).
[558] Lanteigne, *China and International Institutions: Alternate Paths to Global Power*, 145–46.
[559] Kim, *China, the United Nations, and World Order*.
[560] Kent, *Beyond Compliance: China, International Organizations, and Global Security*.

showed more interest in the benefits it could obtain towards its own modernization rather than in reforming the system.[561]

The most immediate impact of China's entry into the UN in 1971 was symbolic: On the one hand, its admittance served as a reminder of the end of Pax Americana in the organisation; on the other hand, within the UN system there was a general feeling of enthusiasm that the admission of China, representing one-fifth of humanity at the time, made the UN more representative and more able to deal with global problems.[562] Soon after joining the organisation, China was also recognised by a range of other IOs. First, in the years before 1978, its foreign policy seemed still inhibited by the Cultural Revolution, and the organisations it joined during those years were mostly technical, scientific, and educational (such as the International Labour Organization, ILO, and United Nations Environment Programme, UNEP). Second, between 1977 and 1983, the PRC saw an increase in its membership of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (including the International Committee of the Red Cross, ICRC, and the International Olympic Committee, IOC). The third phase was the one that truly saw the move towards full-scale participation, and China entered more politically sensitive bodies, such as the World Bank, the IMF, and the Conference on Disarmament.[563] Subsequently, China joined a diverse range of international bodies with different characteristics and scope, and the literature is rich in accounts of many of those.[564]

While some scholars suggest that Beijing cooperates with institutions in a conservative way and only under very specific circumstances (for instance, informality,

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561 Kim, "China and the United Nations."

562 Kim, *China, the United Nations, and World Order*, 104–5.

563 For a full list of the IOs China joined after 1971, see Kent, *Beyond Compliance: China, International Organizations, and Global Security*.

564 For more on security institutions, see for instance: Alastair Iain Johnston, "Learning Versus Adaptation: Explaining Change in Chinese Arms Control Policy in the 1980s and 1990s," *The China Journal* 35 (January 1996): 27–61; Evan S Medeiros, Bates Gill, and Army War College Institute, *Chinese Arms Exports: Policy, Players, and Process* (Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2000), http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/39164538; Evan S. Medeiros, *China's International Behavior* (RAND Corporation, 2009), https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG850.html; Ann Kent, "China and the International Human Rights Regime: A Case Study of Multilateral Monitoring, 1989-1994," *Human Rights Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (1995): 1–47; Ann Kent, *China, the United Nations, and Human Rights: The Limits of Compliance* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), http://www.upenn.edu/pennpress/book/4261.html; Chen Dingding, "China's Participation in the International Human Rights Regime: A State Identity Perspective," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 2, no. 3 (2009): 399–419; Joseph Fewsmith, "The Political and Social Implications of China's Accession to the WTO," *The China Quarterly* 167 (September 2001): 573–91; Pitman B. Potter, "The Legal Implications of China's Accession to the WTO," *The China Quarterly* 167 (September 2001): 592–609; Elizabeth Economy and Michel Oksenberg, "China's Accession to and Implementation of International Environmental Accords 1978-95," in *Engaging Countries. Strenghtening Compliance with International Environmental Accords*, ed. Edith Brown Weiss and Harold K. Jacobson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998).

lack of a clear mandate, compatibility with its own domestic interests),[565] these conclusions are being continuously challenged by recent Chinese behaviour towards international institutions.[566] To be sure, China's newcomer status in IOs required a steep learning curve in the last thirty years: the PRC normally prefers to use bilateral mechanisms for the resolution of interstate or intrastate conflict, and views international relations more from a realist than a liberal perspective.[567] Nonetheless, leaders in Beijing have gradually come to accept that IOs also provide a stage for the country to project its power; they constitute a source of prestige, status, and legitimacy at the domestic level; and they offer solutions to the problems created by globalisation.[568] They also serve as the global stage for China to dramatise its national role for domestic and international audiences; the government arguably sees the UN as the most suitable platform from which to project its world view and foreign policy line.[569] Kim goes as far as arguing that the UNGA was "the surest and shortest way to China's international forum shopping."[570]

In explaining why China has been such a strong joiner of international regimes starting from the 1990s, Nathan underlines that different interests and calculations have motivated Chinese policy makers: As regards economic-related regimes, the country supposedly joined them to reap the material benefits of membership; as regards arms control and disarmament, China would have thought the agreement to be beneficial to its security; and as regards the human rights regime, Chinese leaders must have understood that there was much to be gained from its position as a UNSC permanent member if China was also a member in all regimes closely associated with it.[571] Similarly to Kim, he also suggests that in joining the international system as a whole, the PRC gained access to and influence over it, as well as the opportunity to shape its rules and norms. As its power and diplomatic sophistication have increased, China has become not only a rule follower, but also a rule shaper. In examining its participation in the arms control and disarmament regime, Nathan finds that China does not display "a pattern of promoting a distinctive 'Chinese model' in the

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565 Thomas J. Christensen, "Chinese Realpolitik," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 5 (1996): 37–52; Elizabeth Economy, "The Impact of International Regimes on Chinese Foreign Policy Making: Broadening Perspectives and Policies... But Only to a Point," in *The Making of Chinese Foreign and Security Policy in the Era of Reform*, by David M. Lampton (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); Economy and Oksenberg, *China Joins the World: Progress and Prospects*.

566 Lanteigne, *China and International Institutions: Alternate Paths to Global Power*.

567 Kent, "China's International Socialization: The Role of International Organizations."

568 Ibid., 346.

569 Samuel S. Kim, "China's International Organizational Behaviour," in *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, by Thomas Robinson and David Shambaugh (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

570 Ibid., 408.

571 Nathan, "China's Rise and International Regimes: Does China Seek to Overthrow Global Norms?"

international normative system or an alternative vision of world order".[572] If anything, a pattern can be identified of resisting efforts by the US and its allies to shape regimes in an unfavourable way toward China and its allies.

Arguably, the need for peaceful coexistence and stability in China's large periphery has always been an underlying theme of Chinese foreign policy.[573] However, despite its borders being (relatively) safe, due to increasingly warm relations with both Russia and Southeast Asia, China has become more sensitive to perceived externally-based threats. Its security interests have shifted from traditional strategic concerns (state vs state and ideology-based warfare) to more diverse issues, such as economic security, arms smuggling, drugs, ethnic unrest, and separatism. It is therefore at the regional level that we register the most activity in joining and participating in institutions developed to counter threats and preserve stability. According to the 'new security concept', its security relations with neighbouring countries are aimed at the pursuit of common interest, peaceful dialogues, creating common security for all regional actors, and discouraging formal alliances or polarising unilateral policies.[574] Despite being more active in the region, Johnston observes that, beginning in the 1980s, the rate of increase in China's accession to international security institutions, especially multilateral arms control agreements, grew faster than that at which new security institutions had been created.[575] In contrast to the hard realpolitik ideology inherited from the Mao era, which was being reinforced by the narrative of Chinese victimisation, he argues that contemporary decision makers have shifted their understanding of participation in security regimes as a result of social interaction and as a product of dynamics of identity construction and differentiation.[576] As China has joined most international institutions that regulate interstate behaviour, so far it has not tried to undermine their functioning or purposes.

On the one hand, the profound effects that IOs have had on China are undeniable. Membership in international regimes has enhanced its power, secured its participation in globalisation and modernisation, conferred China prestige, status, and international and domestic legitimacy. On the other hand, China in turn makes normative contributions to IOs, such as strengthening peace and security, promoting

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[572] Ibid., 189.
[573] Lanteigne, *China and International Institutions: Alternate Paths to Global Power*.
[574] Ibid., 19.
[575] Johnston, *Social States. China in International Institutions, 1980-2000*.
[576] For an overview of the changes in how Chinese interests were characterised and how discourses were articulated, see ibid., 204–5.

dialogue between the 'North' and the 'South', as well as South-South cooperation.[577] Furthermore, as part of its limited 'reformist' goals, China has been attempting to empowering the UN as the sole legitimate decision making body to act upon translational issues or domestic state failure.[578] Related, the promotion of state sovereignty is also part of China's pursuit of a reform of the current world order. As Breslin notes, such defence is clearer in rhetoric than it is in practice: It seems that while Chinese leaders increasingly accept that there are grounds for the infringement of sovereignty and that the concept itself can be bent, what really seems to be at stake is rather regime change.[579] However, the recent case of Zimbabwe, among speculations of the role the Chinese leadership may or may not have played in the military coup that removed Robert Mugabe from office and brought Emmerson Mnangagwa to the presidency, perhaps suggests that as much as China dislikes coups, it is willing to turn a blind eye on them so long as the new government pledges its 'loyalty' to the PRC.

6.3 China and the United Nations Security Council

Of all UN organs and agencies, China has developed a special relationship with the Security Council, not the least because of its position as one of the five permanent members. According to Kim, "[b]oth the image and prestige of the Council have been substantially enhanced as a result of China's participation."[580] After its entry, the PRC adopted a diplomatic style that was focused on maintaining a low profile and being willing to learn the rules of the organisation. Hence, instead of defying or ignoring such rules, China attempted to master them for the sake of pursuing its interests and principles.[581] Thus, on the one hand, the PRC has made the Council more universal, representative, and relevant without making it politically ineffective at the same time. In sum, China has enhanced both the Council's political legitimacy and political stability.[582] Furthermore, the functional paralysis envisioned by many analysists that would result from China's overuse of the veto did not materialise.[583] While the use of

[577] Kent, *Beyond Compliance: China, International Organizations, and Global Security*.
[578] Breslin, "China and the Global Order."
[579] See Breslin for an explanation of how this was the case in China's veto on the resolution calling for ending violence in Syria: Ibid., 632–33.
[580] Kim, *China, the United Nations, and World Order* For a comprehensive overview of the Council's functions before China's entry, see pp. 179-194.
[581] Ibid., 196.
[582] Ibid., 199.
[583] Ibid., 200 Quite the opposite, its participation produced a 30.5% increase in all resolutions over the periods between 1967-70 and 1972-75, as well as a 35.7% increase in consensual resolutions, compared to the period when the Republic of China (ROC) had the Council's seat. See p. 201.

the veto did increase since its entry, China's record is one of the best among the Permanent Five (P-5).[584]

On the other hand, it is more difficult to assess the impact of the Council on China's diplomacy: Its behavioural characteristics suggest that such influence has been indirect and subtle. As Kim notes, Chinese policy in the 1970s revealed a discrepancy between verbal and voting behaviours: If one were to judge according to the voting behaviour, Maoist ideology would be seen as playing a marginal role. If, instead, one were to judge its policies according to verbal behaviour, then opportunist pursuit of national interests would become more prominent.[585] In a later work, discussing China's participation in the UNSC throughout the 1990s, Kim adds that "China has exerted considerable leverage, if not normative influence, not by hyperactive positive engagement but by following an indeterminate strategy vacillating between tacit cooperation and aloofness"[586]—a practice which has led to abstention becoming a sort of normative veto or principled opposition, reflecting what he calls a "maxi/mini diplomacy" aimed at maximising benefits while minimising financial responsibilities. Chinese representatives have arguably relied on the UN norm of consensus in exerting their diplomatic influence, especially within the UNSC, where China would normally hint at the dangers of the lack of consensus rather than wielding an outright veto. Importantly, though, its influence is also determined by how Beijing is being perceived by other member states in its role as a permanent member.[587] However, as Lanteigne notes, [i]n both economic and political regimes, China at the start of the twenty-first century appears to be slowly but perceptibly moving away from Kim's 'maxi/mini' principle of engaging institutions to gain the maximum number of rights while minimising the associated responsibilities.[588]

Wuthnow otherwise defines China's UNSC behaviour in the 2000s as "a study in contradictions".[589] While its voting was converging with other permanent members, ideological rhetoric almost disappeared, and its contributions to PKOs rose, China also proved to be a contentious actor in some negotiations on rogue regimes. According to him, there seemed to be a concern shared by policy makers in the US and Europe that China might be seeking to protect its interests by preventing the international

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584 Ibid., 204 For more details on such practices, see Ibid., Part II. see also Hughes, "China as a Leading State in the International System," 283–87.
585 Kim, *China, the United Nations, and World Order*, 239–40.
586 Kim, "China and the United Nations," 61.
587 Kim, "China and the United Nations."
588 Lanteigne, *China and International Institutions: Alternate Paths to Global Power*, 159.
589 Wuthnow, *Chinese Diplomacy and the UN Security Council*, 28.

community from exerting pressure on rogue regimes condemned for external or internal behavior subverting international norms, such as Myanmar or Zimbabwe. However, China has also been cooperative, or abstained from voting on resolutions that were taking measures against states where its interests are high, such as Libya in 2011 and North Korea in several instances, and the reality of its diplomacy regarding these and other countries has been much more nuanced, expressing a mix of interventionist and protectionist elements.[590]

This mixed approach should not be surprising. On the one hand, it is in China's interest to pursue cooperation through international institutions. As argued earlier, these provide the country with a chance to exercise its role as a responsible power, with the leadership responsibilities that come with it, and working within the structures of IOs reinforces multilateralism and discourages US unilateralism. On the other hand, interventionism directly challenges China's adherence to the norm of state sovereignty and its belief that coercion is not an effective means to settle international disputes. However, China has shown elements of pragmatism and adaptability that suggest a firmer stance in principle than in practice. Whether China's cooperativeness in the UNSC is assessed by looking at concessions and convergence, shifting preferences, or political pressure, Wuthnow's conclusion is that it is impossible to monolithically characterise the PRC as cooperative or confrontational: "impulses towards conservatism driven by concerns about sovereignty, the utility of force, and parochial interests in these regimes have been tempered by other factors that have led in the direction of cooperation." [591] Today, for instance, China has embarked on an unprecedented period of international advocacy motivated by the need to conduct foreign policy in a way that is commensurate with its economic standing, where Africa serves as a key testing ground.[592]

6.3.1 China's contributions to UN-led peacekeeping and peacebuilding

Although UN peace and security activities include a variety of initiatives, peacekeeping and peacebuilding are the two which are most obviously informed by the security-development nexus and to which China contributes the most, in terms of

[590] Reasons for China's often competing sets of priorities when taking position over UNSC resolutions are well documented in Wuthnow, *Chinese Diplomacy and the UN Security Council*; Kim, "China and the United Nations"; Kent, *Beyond Compliance: China, International Organizations, and Global Security*; Joel Wuthnow, "China and the Processes of Cooperation in UN Security Council Deliberations," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3 (2010): 55–77.
[591] Wuthnow, "China and the Processes of Cooperation in UN Security Council Deliberations," 76.
[592] Roque and Alden, "China and the UN Security Council: From Observer to Activist"; See also the preface in Alden and Large, *New Directions in Africa-China Studies*.

both its discourse and practice. In the 1960s, China's attitude towards UN peacekeeping operations was one of strong opposition. Chinese representatives described such operations as protecting the interests of imperialism and undermining people's efforts to achieving freedom and independence. Yet, after 1971 such opposition became more verbal than real. Generally, China's stance on peacekeeping and enforcement questions during those years exhibited some instances of contradiction and inconsistency.[593] The maxi/mini principle allowed China to "have it both ways": On the one hand, it would not participate in relevant votes, while on the other hand it cooperated in the form of non-interference, i.e. by non-vetoing resolutions.[594]

According to Kim, the change in the country's policy on PKOs was part of the PRC's renewed identification with Third World countries and the distancing from the US. Embarking on Deng's economic reforms also contributed to a shift that led to intensified participation in UN activities, including peacekeeping.[595] The change became clearer throughout the 1980s, Pang maintains, reflecting the fact that Chinese leaders' viewed PKOs through a less ideological and a more functional lens. In the 1990s, its interest in peacekeeping began to expand steadily, although China was initially uncomfortable with PKOs using peace enforcement measures with the aim of delivering humanitarian assistance and protecting civilians using "all necessary measures".[596] From the late 1990s, however, China became an enthusiastic supporter of, and contributor to, several kinds of UN-led missions.[597] Nowadays, the extent of China's contributions to PKOs reflects its prominent role in international affairs, as well as Xi Jinping's more assertive diplomacy and his aim to elevate China as a major actor in promoting international cooperation. It is noticeable that such increased commitment is also reflected in China's stance on PKOs doctrines, Karlsrud suggests, as China has started to even distinguish between 'bad' and 'good' interventions, placing UN peacekeeping in the latter category.[598] With regards to such change, it is

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[593] For a detailed analysis of China's attitudes towards peacekeeping missions and interventions during the 1970s, see Kim, *China, the United Nations, and World Order*, 217–29.
[594] Kim, "China's International Organizational Behaviour," 421.
[595] Pang, "China's Changing Attitude to UN Peacekeeping."
[596] Huang, "Principles and Praxis of China's Peacekeeping"; Li, "Norm Entrepreneur or Interest Maximiser? China's Participation in UN Peacekeeping Operations, 2001-2010."
[597] For more on China's engagement in peacekeeping from both a theoretical and empirical perspective, see for instance: Marc Lanteigne and Miwa Hirono, *China's Evolving Approach to Peacekeeping* (London: Routledge, 2013); Gill and Reilly, "Sovereignty, Intervention and Peacekeeping: The View from Beijing"; Alden et al., *China and Africa: Building Peace and Security Cooperation on the Continent*; Carlson, "Helping to Keep the Peace (Albeit Reluctantly): China's Recent Stance on Sovereignty and Multilateral Intervention."
[598] John Karlsrud, *The UN at War: Peace Operations in a New Era* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 40–41.

debatable whether this evolution can be explained in terms of utilitarian desire for diplomatic capital, processes of socialisation, or both.[599] Some scholars see PKOs as part of China's diplomatic "charm offensive" that also include debt relief, high-level exchanges, scholarships, and infrastructure development aid.[600] It has also been argued that participating in peacekeeping missions helps supporting China's self-characterisation as a responsible great power.[601]

By contrast, China's approach to peacebuilding is more cautious: While the PRC publicly expresses support for post-conflict reconstruction, it has repeatedly offered its own views on how such operations should be carried out, stressing that the primary task of peacebuilding should be restoring the administrative functions of a state whilst respecting the its rights to define its own priorities.[602] As I show in the next section, statements on peacebuilding tend to remain vague and have not taken an institutionalised form yet, thus translating into a limited direct role for China in peacebuilding missions, which represent a more controversial policy involvement than peacekeeping.[603] However, the PRC's increasing contributions to the Peacebuilding Commission and to the Peacebuilding Fund signal the intention to play a greater role in this area as well. Moreover, in 2016 China launched the UN Peace and Development Trust Fund, following its pledge to contribute USD200 million over a period of ten years.[604] China's contribution will be split evenly between supporting peace and security and implementing the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

To be sure, as the next section argues, China's contributions in terms of troops or equipment is far less impactful or even important than its discursive and normative one.

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[599] Wuthnow, *Chinese Diplomacy and the UN Security Council*, 27.
[600] See Wuthnow, *Chinese Diplomacy and the UN Security Council*; Robert B. Zoellick, "Whither China: From Membership to Responsibility?," (Remarks to National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, September 2005), https://2001-2009.state.gov/s/d/former/zoellick/rem/53682.htm; Joshua Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World* (Yale University Press, 2007).
[601] Yin He, "China's Changing Policy on UN Peacekeeping Operations," Asia Paper (Institute for Security and Development Policy, July 2007); Richardson, "A Responsible Power?"
[602] Lei Zhao, "Two Pillars of China's Global Peace Engagement Strategy: UN Peacekeeping and International Peacebuilding," *International Peacekeeping* 18, no. 3 (2011): 344–62; Chris Alden and Daniel Large, "On Becoming a Norms Maker: Chinese Foreign Policy, Norms Evolution and the Challenges of Security in Africa," *The China Quarterly* 221 (March 2015): 123–42.
[603] Alden and Large, "On Becoming a Norms Maker," 131–32.
[604] "The United Nations Peace and Development Trust Fund," accessed May 7, 2018, http://www.un.org/en/unpdf/index.shtml.

6.4 China's Africa discourse goes global

Against the backdrop of increased involvement in the activities of the UNSC, China has always advocated for extending African countries' representation in the Council (and in the UN system more broadly); it has been supportive of African positions on UN resolutions and agendas; and it has sided with the developing world in line with South-South cooperation and solidarity. While the China-Africa literature has indeed addressed this, to the best of my knowledge no study so far has delved into the discursive aspect of China's Africa policies at the UN level. Do the main representations and narratives of its Africa discourse appear here too? Is China contributing to shaping international norms on peacekeeping or peacebuilding? What is the PRC's attitude towards changing UN practices? These and other questions guide the remainder of this chapter. The relatively narrow focus of the previous chapters is somewhat expanded here: On the one hand, most PKOs are deployed in Africa; on the other hand, China's contributions have broader implications for its own relationship with the Council. Thus, while I maintain the emphasis on African issues in analysing official documents, the interviews expand on China's broader UN diplomacy.

In Chapter 4, I identified the main representations that populate China's Africa basic discourse, which I called the "South-South cooperation" discourse, as well as its second layer. To summarise, these include: the world system is imbalanced because of the technological and economic gaps between the 'North' and the 'South', causing the hegemony of Western powers who dominate international affairs; China and African countries are all-weather friends; their history dates back to the Ming dynasty and is one of shared colonial subjugation at the hands of Western powers; globalisation is a challenge for developing countries which are faced with specific policy priorities and are exposed to more risks than developed countries; China supports multilateral institutions, particularly the UN, as these can help reduce such gaps and promote 'democracy' (in the sense of a more equal participation of all countries in global decision-making); and a focus on the security-development nexus as the key to achieve international peace and security. These representations are also found in Chinese documents and speeches at the UN.[605]

For instance, China's construction of hegemony and democracy is often recurring. According to the main discourse, the domination of developed countries in

[605] I do not necessarily follow the same order in looking at such representations in UN documents, nor do I intend to suggest there is any hierarchy among the representations and narratives, except that the security-development nexus has come to occupy a somewhat special position in the discourse.

the current world order has led to the exploitation of developing countries, a group to which both China and African states belong. In this context, the role of the UN and multilateral organisations is essential, since these institutions are central in promoting democracy in international relations. China's permanent membership of the UNSC should serve to reassure developing countries that it will exercise its power to advocate for their (common) positions. Chinese leaders are not opposed to consultative-consensual practices as such; what they oppose is rather the tendency of such practices to be dominated by a superpower. It follows that the Chinese conceptualisation of consensual decision making is one in which participatory democracy means that all Council members are involved on an equal footing in the decision-making process.[606]

The representation of hegemony vs democracy takes the form of two main narratives in the discourse. First, China often expresses gratitude towards African and other developing countries for supporting its position in the UN. At the beginning of the 2000s, the PRC was still fighting against Western criticism of its human rights conditions at home. For instance, it is thanks to the support of Asian, African, and Latin American countries that China could fend off some "anti-China proposals" put forward by the West in the 1990s.[607] More importantly, African votes guaranteed China its seat in 1971, an issue which is often acknowledged by Chinese representatives. On this matter, in 2001 then foreign minister Tang Jiaxuan stated that

> China will never forget the unremitting efforts made by African friends for China's resumption of its legitimate seat in the UN, nor their support of China on the Taiwan and human rights issues. Though China and Africa are separated by far, *the hearts are close*. Since the last decade or so, Africa has always been the first stop of the annual visits abroad by Chinese foreign ministers, which is now a tradition for China's diplomacy. China will forever keep this practice.[608]

To be sure, such tradition has indeed been maintained throughout the years, as does the narrative of the two being geographically far, but spiritually close. Elsewhere we read that "[t]he Group of 77 and China is the largest consultation group in the world. Our countries may differ in their national conditions, but it is the *same historical experience*, pursuit of justice and fairness and aspiration for *common development* that have brought us closely together. We are united because we share mutual understanding."[609] Second,

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606 Kim, *China, the United Nations, and World Order*.
607 "White Paper: The Progress of Human Rights in China," 1995, http://www.china-un.org/eng/zt/rqwt/t28671.htm.
608 "Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan Held Banquet for African Foreign Ministers," 2001, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t27054.htm; emphasis added.
609 "Statement by H.E. Ambassador Liu Zhenmin on Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts at the Open Debate of the Security Council," 2007, http://www.china-un.org/eng/lmbf/WMdsjl/WANGminhuodong/t357122.htm; emphasis added.

the PRC strongly advocates for the enlargement of UNSC membership to include African countries:

> The *democratization of international relations* represents the trend of the times, which ought to be reflected in the Security Council. Developing countries, which make up over two thirds of the UN membership, are obviously underrepresented in the Security Council. China stands for an enlarged Security Council based on a broad consensus, and increased representation of developing countries, African countries in particular, thus giving more countries, especially the small and medium-sized countries greater access to its decision making. … we should pay closer attention to African concerns ... listen more attentively to the concerns and positions of African countries and take into full account their fervent desires for peace, development and cooperation so that the African people can truly benefit from the care and support of the international community.[610]

Similarly, China's calls for the UN to further focus its agenda on African countries abound. For instance, on the issue of the Council's reform, Ambassador Wang Guangya maintained that "[a]ny formula that does not address the concerns of Africa on the Security Council reform can hardly win endorsement of the whole UN membership and will not have the backing of China."[611] Ambassador Liu Zhenmin further stated that the "[s]tability and development of Africa constitute the pre-requisite for the establishment of a harmonious world with lasting peace and common prosperity. … Effectively assisting African countries to achieve stability, security and sustainable development is a common responsibility of the international community."[612] In China's position paper from 2010 the international community is encouraged to pay more attention to African development, while the PRC is presented as a country that has "always committed to peace and development in Africa."[613]

More in general, China has aligned with the African Union when voting on certain resolutions and it has been coherent in supporting the African position when conveyed by a unified group. Just to mention a few instances, China voted in favour of

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610 "Statement by President Hu Jintao of China at the Security Council Summit," 2005, http://www.china-un.org/eng/zt/shnh60/t212914.htm; emphasis added.

611 "Statement by H.E. Ambassador Wang Guangya at the 62nd Session of the General Assembly on Report of the Security Council and Security Council Reform," 2007, http://www.china-un.org/eng/lhghyywj/ldhy/ld62/t380703.htm.

612 "Statement by H.E. Liu Zhenmin, Ambassador and Acting Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations at the Forty-Eighth Session of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the Proposed Strategic Framework for the Period 2010-2011," 2008, http://www.china-un.org/eng/lhghyywj/smhwj/2008/t467104.htm; "Remarks by Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi at the High-Level Event on Africa's Development Needs," 2008, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t514161.htm.

613 "Position Paper of the People's Republic of China At the 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly," 2010, http://www.china-un.org/eng/zt/wjb65ga/t753577.htm; "Address by H.E. Ambassador Wang Min On Item 62(a), 62(b) and Item 12," 2010, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t761225.htm To be sure, this is historically not entirely accurate. In the years between 1966 and 1978 domestic turmoil and instability led China to focus mostly on itself, while Africa did not occupy a primary position in the PRC's foreign policy. However, as pointed out earlier in the thesis, narratives are important not so much because they provide an accurate description of events, but because of how they construct such events as part of a meaningful story.

resolution 2046 on Sudan and South Sudan in 2012, which called for an immediate halt to fighting.[614] In 2013, it voted in favour of resolution 2098 that authorised an 'intervention brigade' in the Democratic Republic of Congo.[615] In 2016, they voted in favour of resolution 2279 on Burundi, following consensus among the AU and the East African Community.[616] It then unsurprisingly abstained from voting on resolution 2304 on United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), complaining that the revisions suggested by China and other African countries were not fully incorporated in the adopted text.[617] Somewhat related to such emphasis on Africa, the representation of globalisation as both an opportunity and a challenge is recurring. As the first FOCAC meeting was held in 2000, Ambassador Chen Guofang stated that "[g]iven the opportunities and potentials brought about by globalization, it is a shame to see that the vast number of African countries have been excluded from globalization, marginalized, or even forced to bear the negative impact of the process, something that no one can accept with a peace of mind."[618] He then continued by arguing that "[o]n the one hand, African countries should bear the responsibility for their own prosperity, stability and development. On the other (sic), it is also a common task of the international community. The peace- and development-related problems in Africa have been inherited from the past, long-existing and deep-rooted."[619] Elsewhere, Vice Foreign Minister Wang Guangya affirms:

> Economic globalization is gaining momentum. The vast number of countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America and their people have to, on the one hand, get rid of the adverse influence left over from history by racism and colonialism and on the other, take up the challenge of the ever-widening "digital divide". Against this background, the international community and the developed countries, in particular, have both the duty and obligation to help developing countries get out of their plight.[620]

Coherent with the second discursive layer identified in Chapter 4, we find two familiar narratives: First, globalisation, which has become an opportunity rather than a threat, however presents greater risks for developing countries, some of which have been marginalised more than others. Second, and related, problems with African

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614 "Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Li Baodong after Adoption of Security Council Resolution on Sudan and South Sudan," 2012, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t928315.htm.
615 "Explanation by Ambassador Li Baodong Following the Vote on the Draft Resolution on the Democratic Republic of the Congo," 2013, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t1029607.htm.
616 "Statement by Ambassador Liu Jieyi at the Security Council after Voting on the Draft Resolution on Burundi," 2016, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t1360114.htm.
617 "Statement by Ambassador Liu Jieyi after Voting on the Draft Resolution on UNMISS," 2016, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t1390101.htm.
618 "Statement by Ambassador Shen Guofang at the 55th GA Session," 2000, http://www.china-un.org/eng/lhghyywj/smhwj/wangnian/fy00/t29036.htm.
619 Ibid.
620 "Statement by Vice Foreign Minister Wang Guangya at the World Conference Against Racism," 2001, http://www.china-un.org/eng/lhghyywj/smhwj/wangnian/fy01/t29142.htm.

peace and development constitute the inheritance of colonialism, and while Africans should be responsible for their own stability and development, the international community should take responsibility and act to address those issues through the work of the UN, among other IOs. Interestingly, China's appeals are normally directed to developed countries to help developing countries attaining economic and social development. And while the PRC self-identifies with the latter group, it also contributes generously to the UN budget and to Africa-related activities, thus producing some tensions in its self-positioning.[621]

Related, another representation often found in UN documents is endorsement of the 'African solutions for African problems' doctrine. Chinese elites believe that "nobody in the world knows better than Africans themselves as to how to seek a fundamental solution to African conflicts."[622] Similarly, African ownership is stressed while "rigid application of external models" is eschewed.[623] Regional organisations should take the lead in conflict prevention and resolution since "[a]s an embodiment of the will of African countries to achieve unity and self-reliance, [the] African Union is endowed with a unique political, moral and geographical advantage in handling conflict prevention and resolution in Africa."[624] Ambassador Li Baodong once remarked that "China always supports settlement of African issues in African ways by Africa. We stand for solidarity among African countries and appropriate settlement of their disputes through dialogue and negotiations. We hope the African Union and other regional organizations play a positive role in this regard."[625] Echoing him, Ambassador Liu Jieyi also maintains that

> Regional organizations like the AU, which was established in Africa and is led by Africans, have unique regional, historical and cultural advantages in conflict mediation and peacekeeping. The United Nations and regional organizations like the AU should explore ways of building various kinds of practical coordination and cooperation mechanisms on the basis of equal treatment and complementarity so as to strengthen

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[621] In 2017, the U.S. contributed to 22 percent of the total budget, Japan contributed 9.6 percent, and China contributed 7.9 percent, much more than any other P-5 (except for the U.S.) and more than other European countries such as Germany and Italy. See: "Assessment of Member States' Contributions to the United Nations Regular Budget for the Year 2017," 2017, http://undocs.org/en/ST/ADM/SER.B/955.

[622] "Statement by Ambassador Wang Yingfan, Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, at the 56th Session of the General Assembly on the Issue of 'the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa,'" 2001, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t27066.htm.

[623] "Statement by Ambassador Liu Zhenmin at the Security Council's Open Debate of 'Peace Consolidation in West Africa,'" 2006, http://www.china-un.org/eng/lhghyywj/smhwj/wangnian/2006/t266847.htm.

[624] "Statement by H.E. Ambassador Liu Zhenmin on Prevention and Resolution of Conflicts at the Open Debate of the Security Council."

[625] "Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Li Baodong after Vote on Draft Resolution on Additional Sanctions on Eritrea," 2011, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t884384.htm.

> coordination and cooperation in strategic planning, deployment, logistics management and support for peacekeeping operations.[626]

On a more general level, Chinese leaders believe in the role of the UN in maintaining international peace and security. As stated by Ambassador Liu Zhenmin,

> As the centre of our collective security mechanism, *the United Nations bears the primary and irreplaceable responsibility of maintaining international peace and security*. China supports the strengthening of peace keeping operations, attaches importance to preventive diplomacy, and encourages and supports the settlement of international disputes or conflicts through negotiations. We hope that the United Nations, while resolutely fighting terrorism, will help further enhance the mutual understanding among nations and civilizations, dismantle barriers of understanding, and avoid confrontation due to differences in history, social system and development model.[627]

As part of the efforts in keeping international peace, preventive diplomacy represents a priority area for China and reflects the country's traditional preference for diplomacy over intervention:

> Faced with the new circumstances and new tasks, we need to keep abreast of the times, increase input and inject new vigor and vitality into preventive diplomacy to ensure that it makes greater contribution to international peace and security. … Experience proves repeatedly that *emphasizing crisis management while neglecting prevention often gets half the result with twice the effort*. If we fail to take reasonable and lawful action and seek peaceful settlement of disputes through means such as mediation at the early stages of a crisis, we may have to spend much more time and energy on remedial measures after the outbreak of crisis. In recent years, the UN peacekeeping operations have grown in size, resulting in a huge mismatch between demand and supply. If we do a good job in conflict prevention, we will not only save peacekeeping resources and improve efficiency, but also keep numerous lives away from the scourge of war.[628]

Such discourse also reflects consensus among the Council members that the low costs of mediation make preventive diplomacy potentially a more powerful tool for conflict-management and that it could be more efficient and useful, as well as less risky, than military or peacekeeping operations.[629] However, China is also ready for more forceful interventions, when circumstances require so. In a recent debate over peacekeeping reforms, the Chinese representative emphasised that "the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter—as well as the basic principles of peacekeeping—must always be obeyed as a sine qua non for their success. Political solutions must always retain their primacy, and missions should be given realistic,

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[626] "Statement by Ambassador Liu Jieyi, Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations at Security Council Open Debate on the United Nations and Regional Partnerships in Peacekeeping Operations," 2014, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t1186941.htm.

[627] "Statement by H.E. Liu Zhenmin, Ambassador and Acting Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations at the Forty-Eighth Session of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on the Proposed Strategic Framework for the Period 2010-2011."

[628] "Statement of Amb. Li Baodong at Security Council Open Debate on Optimizing the Use of Preventive Diplomacy Tools: Prospects and Challenges in Africa," 2010, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t718026.htm; emphasis added.

[629] "Maintenance of International Peace and Security" (Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council, 2011), http://www.un.org/en/sc/repertoire/2010-2011/Part%20I/10-11.shtml.

achievable mandates that can be adjusted in accordance with needs on the ground."[630] He also endorsed the idea of forming a standing army and a rapid deployment force alongside the AU and sub-regional organisations' bloc, as well as providing more support for developing countries to build up their capacity in training and deployment. Importantly, China's support for the UN also goes hand in hand with its (contemporary) enthusiasm for multilateralism. In a 2004 position paper we read that

> Multilateralism is an effective way to meet mankind's common challenges, an important means to settle international disputes, a strong guarantee for sound globalization, and the best avenue to push for *democracy and the rule of law* in international relations. To put multilateralism on a more effective footing, it is essential to cultivate a global partnership based on *equality, mutual trust and cooperation* under the guidance of a *new security and development concept*. Being the most universal, representative and authoritative intergovernmental organization and the best platform for the practice of multilateralism, the UN has an indispensable role to play in this regard.[631]

The security-development nexus plays a central role in China's Africa discourse at the UN too. And, once more, a change is detectable as we move from the second to the third discursive layer, which focuses on the securitisation of development. During his speech at the 56th session of the UNGA, Ambassador Wang Yinfan suggested that

> Poverty, backwardness and economic underdevelopment stand as a *fundamental cause* for armed conflict and instability in relevant regions of Africa. It can well be said that the issue of Africa, in the final analysis, is a *development issue*. […] To realize durable peace in Africa, attention must be given not only to promoting solutions to hotspot issues but also, more fundamentally, to vigorously helping African countries to achieve development. […] The Chinese Government has all along attached importance and given support to African countries and peoples in their efforts to realize peace and development.[632]

A quasi-causal link is being created between underdevelopment and armed conflicts, backwardness, and instability, which thus calls for a more prominent UN role in promoting sustainable development across the continent. Furthermore, as a fellow developing country, China understands better than others such challenges and attaches great importance to the follow-up mechanisms of the FOCAC. Elsewhere, we read that "peace and development are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Prevention of and solution to the conflicts is an important guarantee for Africa's

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[630] "$7 Billion-Plus Annual Budget Must Achieve Best Possible Value on Ground, Delegates Stress, as Security Council Considers Peacekeeping Reform," September 12, 2018, https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sc13499.doc.htm.

[631] "Position Paper of China at the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly," accessed November 13, 2017, http://www.china-un.org/eng/zt/ld59/t162152.htm; "Work Together to Achieve Common Security and Development - Statement by H.E. Yang Jiechi Minister of Foreign Affairs of the PRC at the General Debate of the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly," 2012, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t975343.htm; emphasis added.

[632] "Statement by Ambassador Wang Yingfan, Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, at the 56th Session of the General Assembly on the Issue of 'the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa';" emphasis added.

development"[633]; and that "the trend toward a multi-polar world and economic globalization keeps growing and the main themes of our times continue to be peace and development."[634] A position paper also states that "[th]e essential solution to the conflicts in Africa is development."[635] Or else, "[t]he absence of peace and stability means the absence of any safeguard for development".[636] Ambassador Zhan Yishan argues that

> The prevention and resolution of conflicts are important guarantees for the development of Africa. […] the United Nations should play a bigger role in conflict prevention, peace making (sic), peacekeeping, and post-conflict construction and peace. […] We call on national governments to attach more importance to Africa, support the African countries in peace seeking efforts, increase assistance to enhance peace process and give priority to capacity building of African countries.[637]

A 2005 position paper states that "[r]eforms should be all-dimensional and multi-sectoral, and aim to succeed in both aspects of security and development. Especially, reforms should aim at reversing the trend of UN giving priority to security over development by *increasing inputs in the field of development* and facilitating the realization of the Millennium Development Goals. […] *Development* is the common pursuit of people from all countries and *bedrock for a collective security mechanism* and the progress of human civilization."[638] In 2008, Ambassador Liu Zhenmin linked peace and development by maintaining that "[w]ithout peace, development will be weak; likewise, without development, peace will be fragile. To strive for reduction and even elimination of

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[633] "Statement by H.E. Ambassador Zhang Yishan, Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations at the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Final Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the UN-NADAF," 2002, http://www.china-un.org/eng/lhghyywj/smhwj/wangnian/fy02/t29221.htm.

[634] "Background Paper: 'Reinforcing Efforts to Prevent Nuclear Proliferation: China's Perspective.' Speech by Ambassador Sha Zukang at the Wilton Park Conference," last modified 2002, accessed November 13, 2017, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t27989.htm; "Speech by H.E. Wang Guangya Vice Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China and Head of the Chinese Delegation At XIII Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement," last modified 2003, accessed November 13, 2017, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t28020.htm; "Position Paper of the People's Republic of China on the United Nations Reforms," last modified 2005, accessed November 13, 2017, http://www.china-un.org/eng/zt/gaige/t199101.htm; "Statement by President Hu Jintao of China at the High-Level Meeting on Financing for Development at the United Nations Summit," last modified 2005, accessed November 13, 2017, http://www.china-un.org/eng/zt/shnh60/t212916.htm; "Remarks by Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi at the High-Level Event on Africa's Development Needs."

[635] "Position Paper of China on the 58th Session of the UN General Assembly," 2003, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t28992.htm.

[636] "Statement by Ambassador Zhang Yishan at 44th Session of the Commission for Social Development on Review of the 1st UN Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (Item 3a)," 2006, http://www.china-un.org/eng/lhghyywj/smhwj/wangnian/2006/t234943.htm.

[637] "Statement by Ambassador Zhang Yishan at the 58th Session of the GA on Agenda Item 39 (a and b): New Partnership for Africa's Development and Causes of Conflict, Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa," 2003, http://www.china-un.org/eng/lhghyywj/smhwj/wangnian/fy03/t40034.htm.

[638] "Position Paper of the People's Republic of China on the United Nations Reforms," 2005, http://www.china-un.org/eng/zt/gaige/t199101.htm; emphasis added.

conflict in Africa bears on security and happiness of the African people."[639] In 2011, Ambassador Li Baodong started a speech by highlighting that "[s]ecurity and development are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. *Security is a prerequisite for development, and development is possible only in a peaceful and stable environment. Development is a guarantee of security. Sustainable peace is possible only through the maintenance of development momentum.*"[640] Ambassador Liu Jieyi also said: "peace and stability are the prerequisite for development […] poverty and under-development breed conflicts, disasters and humanitarian crises."[641] In 2015, Ambassador Wang Min further pointed out that "[s]ecurity, development and human rights are the three pillars of the UN, and efforts for economic and social development and protection of the environment and security are mutually complementary."[642] In 2016, Ambassador Wang Qun maintained that "[p]eace and development are the common aspiration of mankind. History has proven time and again that without peace, there will be no development, and without stability, there will be no prosperity. Today, human society has become an intimate community of common destiny with the security interests of all countries intertwined."[643] In the same year, Premier Li Keqiang argued that

> Sustainable development is first and foremost about development. Development underpins every human achievement. Without development, nothing can be sustainable. The lack of development is often at the root of many problems facing the world. *Be it poverty or the refugee crisis, war, conflicts or terrorism, they all could be attributed to insufficient development and none can be addressed properly without development. Only development can guarantee people's fundamental rights. Only development can root out the cause for global challenges.* And only development can advance human civilization and progress. Development must be sustainable. […] Development won't be sustainable if it is unbalanced, unequal and widens the gap between the North and the South and the rich and the poor. […] Development won't be sustainable if economic growth and social progress are not well coordinated.[644]

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639 "Statement by H.E. Ambassador Liu Zhenmin, Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, at the 63rd GA on Agenda Item 57: New Partnership for Africa's Development: Progress in Implementation and International Support," 2008, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t518278.htm.

640 "Statement by H.E. Mr. Li Baodong, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, at Security Council Open Debate Entitled Maintenance of International Peace and Security: The Interdependence between Security and Development," 2011, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t824189.htm; emphasis added.

641 "Statement by Ambassador Liu Jieyi at the Briefing by African Regional Economic Communities," 2013, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t1083969.htm.

642 "Statement by Ambassador Wang Min at the 53rd Session of the Commission for Social Development," 2015, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t1236114.htm.

643 "Statement by Ambassador Wang Qun, Director-General of the Arms Control Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, at the General Debate of the First Committee of the 71st Session of the UNGA," 2016, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t1408974.htm.

644 "Full Text: Chinese Premier Li Keqiang's Statement at General Debate of 71st Session of UN General Assembly," 2016, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t1401632.htm; emphasis added.

At this point, a certain definition of international security has started to emerge, one which is premised on the opposition between hegemony and democracy, the latter of which is understood as the equal participation of all countries in security regimes; emphasis on the primary role of the UN in maintaining international peace and security; preference for preventive diplomacy and mediation efforts over military intervention; trust in multilateralism as an effective way of promoting these priorities; and the centrality of the security-development nexus. Furthermore, as far as Africa is concerned, such definition also includes the need for the international community to bear responsibility for promoting peace and development in the continent, while recognising African agency in being responsible for their own stability; and the endorsement of the African solutions for African problems doctrine. All these elements are coherent with the new security concept discussed in Chapter 3, both in its more historical formulation and in Xi's own interpretation of it: Most of the features I just outlined match the concept's common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable dimensions. While Xi's security concept was initially thought in light of the Asian region, many Chinese officials have also been utilising it when referring to China's engagement in African security. In 2003, then Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing suggested that the international community should maintain security through cooperation, whilst disputes be resolved peacefully through dialogue; the use or threat of force should be avoided; and building one's own security at the expense of others should be rejected.[645] In 2009, Ambassador Sha Zukang elicited the promotion of "a new security concept featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation so as to bring about a win-win situation."[646] In the same year, then President Hu Jintao addressed the UNGA and maintained that

> We should view security in a broader perspective and safeguard world peace and stability. The security of all countries has never been as closely interconnected as it is today, and security now covers more areas than ever before. Traditional and non-traditional security threats are intertwined, involving political, military, economic, cultural and other fields. […] *Security is not a zero-sum game, and there is no isolated or absolute security*. No country can be safe and stable in the absence of world and regional peace and stability. We should embrace a *new security thinking of mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination*. *While maintaining one's own national security, we should also respect the security concerns of other countries and advance the common security of mankind*. We should adhere to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and seek peaceful solutions to regional hotspot issues and international disputes. There should be no willful use or

[645] "'To Enhance the Role of the United Nations, in Promotion of Peace and Development'. Statement by Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing at General Debate of the 58th Session of the UN General Assembly," 2003, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t29229.htm.
[646] "Background Paper: 'Reinforcing Efforts to Prevent Nuclear Proliferation: China's Perspective.' Speech by Ambassador Sha Zukang at the Wilton Park Conference," 2002, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t27989.htm.

> threat of force. We should support the United Nations in continuing to play an important role in the field of international security. We should follow the spirit of equality, mutual benefit and cooperation to preserve global economic and financial stability. And we should oppose terrorism, separatism and extremism in all manifestations and deepen international security cooperation.[647]

Importantly, the premises of China's understanding of international security as detailed above overlap with some of the latest developments in the UN's changing approaches to peacekeeping and peacebuilding. One expert from the SSRC confirmed that, especially since 2015, there has been increasing convergence between China's emphasis on the security-development nexus and shifting UN attitudes towards "putting all tools of diplomacy at work for prevention, a focus on the people as opposed to politics and governments, and the realisation that development is needed when the underlying conditions for peace are weakened".[648] According to her, the shift in conversations at the UN has happened in the last 5-6 years, during which many workshops and meetings have been convened between Chinese and UN representatives, as well as academics and practitioners, to facilitate and encourage China's expansive approach. The 'normative agenda' that emerges from these encounters seems to be one centred on the opposition to the use of force and military intervention; a 'soft' approach to conflict resolution; and the concept of 'sustaining peace'.[649] In 2015, the advisory group of experts conducted a review of the UN peacebuilding architecture and proposed using the expression 'sustaining peace' to refer to the broader understanding that it said was needed of peacebuilding.[650]

Not too long afterwards, and following the 2015 report of the High-Level Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (HIPPO),[651] another review was submitted, which had a tremendous impact on the UN, according to all my interviewees: the Santos Cruz Report on improving the security of peacekeeping forces. Focusing on ways to reduce the life-and-death risks increasingly facing peacekeepers, it "calls on peacekeeping actors to do more to: change our mindset; ensure that missions have the

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[647] "Statement by President Hu Jintao at the General Debate of the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly," 2009, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t606150.htm; emphasis added.
[648] Interview with senior researcher, SSRC, New York, March 2018.
[649] The 2017 MERICS report on China as a global security actor also mentions China's "normative security agenda"; however, as typical of many think-tanks' policy briefs, they fail to go into any detail in clarifying the theoretical and empirical underpinnings of such concept. This thesis, in contrast, delves into both the theory and the practice of normative power. Huotari et al., "China's Emergence as a Global Security Actor."
[650] "The Challenge of Sustaining Peace," Report of the advisory group of experts for the 2015 review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture, (June 2015), http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/review2015.shtml; Cedric De Coning, "Sustaining Peace: Can a New Approach Change the UN?," *Global Governance Spotlight* 3 (2018), https://www.sef-bonn.org/en/publications/global-governance-spotlight/global-governance-spotlight-32018.html.
[651] "Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations," *ReliefWeb*, July 16, 2015, https://reliefweb.int/report/world/report-high-level-independent-panel-peace-operations.

necessary capacity and capabilities; adapt mission footprints; and hold ourselves accountable for preventing fatalities."[652] The report was funded by the PRC through the new Peace and Development Trust Fund; for many, this is an indicator that while China has not come up with a "big normative agenda at the UN", in a way the decision to fund reviewing activities is in itself a feature of such normative agenda; this is even more relevant since, apparently, China was not too happy about the report's conclusion (essentially calling for deployed troops not to see the principles of peacekeeping as restrictions on the initiative and the use of force, something which China has always opposed).[653]

Two UN officers noted that extrabudgetary sources to fund 'quick' studies and reviews are traditionally the realm of middle power, especially the EU and Nordic countries. However, China is now increasingly contributing to extrabudgetary funding, especially to training, and this is in itself a sign of shifting attitudes and policies.[654] China is, therefore, trying to carve out a more autonomous role for itself in the Security Council to promote its security discourse.[655] This said, a consensus emerged from our conversations that there does not seem to be anything *especially* Chinese about their engagement with peace and security: Peacekeeping and peacebuilding are the areas where the PRC's approach is most conforming with existing frameworks. Perhaps, one suggested, an agenda can be identified in the interest to keep stability. And even if the Chinese did not have a normative agenda, is that not an agenda in itself?[656] Or, as Breslin suggests, "[i]f there is a normative position underpinning China's official approach to reform of global governance, it is perhaps that there should be no normative basis. … China is less interested in promoting a clearly articulated grand strategy and a new set of universal values than it is in finding pragmatic solutions: primarily solutions to problems that it itself faces, but also at times solutions to problems facing others."[657]

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[652] David Haeri, "Strengthening UN Peacekeeping: Placing the Santos Cruz Report in Context," *IPI Global Observatory*, February 28, 2018, https://theglobalobservatory.org/2018/02/strengthening-peacekeeping-cruz-report-context/.
[653] Interviews with several senior UNDPKO officers, New York, March 2018.
[654] Ibid.
[655] Huotari et al., "China's Emergence as a Global Security Actor," 92.
[656] Interview with senior officer 3, UNDPKO, Policy and Best Practices Service, New York, March 2018. This point reminds me of a China Africa Project podcast where hosts Eric Olander and Cobus van Staden discuss potential themes on the agenda for the next FOCAC, and the latter makes a point about China setting the G20 agenda during their 2016 presidency, by shifting the focus to Africa. Their flagship programme at the time was African industrialisation and it was the first time the G20 was paying attention to the continent in so much detail. I wonder if this could also be considered as norm-setting in a similar way. See 'The China in Africa Podcast'.
[657] Breslin, "China and the Global Order," 633.

6.4.1 The view on, and from, peace operations

As the PRC has considerably stepped up its contributions to PKOs, such missions are seen not only as an instrument to achieve desirable peace, but also as a way to strengthening multilateralism: "Peacekeeping operations are among the core means of the UN Security Council in fulfilling its duty of maintaining international peace and security. Intensified effort in this respect can help enhance the authority of the UN, give full play to the mechanism of collective security and push forward multilateralism."[658] In 2009, Ambassador Liu Zhenmin suggested that the UN should "exert greater efforts in the area of preventive diplomacy, make early interventions, and do its best to diffuse tension [… and] attach great importance to promoting the political dialogue and reconciliation process so that there is peace to keep for the peacekeeping operations."[659] He further calls for innovation but also adherence to basic principles (referring to the principles of respect for state sovereignty and non-interference). In 2014, Ambassador Wang Min maintained that

> It is very important to ensure the dovetailing of peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts and to consolidate the fruits of those efforts in order to ensure lasting peace and stability. In determining the mandates of peacekeeping operations, the Council should attach priority to the urgent need for security and stability, while focusing on long-term perspectives by taking into account the current realities of the country in question, strengthening coordination between peacebuilding and peacekeeping, and strengthening the country's capacities, while ensuring a smooth transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding through a realistic and practical exit strategy.[660]

Furthermore, Ambassador Li Baodong has called for abiding by the principle of "objectivity and neutrality" arguing that

> Host countries and regions in which there are peacekeeping operations often find themselves in a complicated political environment. Peacekeeping operations should abide strictly with the mandates of the Security Council, respect the will and choice of

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[658] "Position Paper of China at the 59th Session of the UN General Assembly"; "China's Position Paper at the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly," accessed November 14, 2017, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t512988.htm; "Statement by Ambassador Zhang Yishan At the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations," 2005, http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/securitycouncil/thematicissues/peacekeeping/t182269.htm.

[659] "Statement by Ambassador Liu Zhenmin at the Open Debate of the Security Council on UN Peacekeeping Operations," accessed November 15, 2017, http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/securitycouncil/thematicissues/peacekeeping/t577207.htm.

[660] "Statement by Ambassador Wang Min at the Security Council Open Debate on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations," 2014, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t1168830.htm; "Statement by Ambassador Liu Jieyi at the Security Council Briefing on UN Peacekeeping Operations," 2017, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t1480964.htm; "Statement by Ambassador Liu Zhenmin, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Chinese Mission to the United Nations, at the Fourth Committee of the Sixty-Fourth Session of the UN General Assembly on Item 33: Comprehensive Review of the Whole Question of Peacekeeping Operations in All Their Aspects," 2009, http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/securitycouncil/thematicissues/peacekeeping/t623231.htm.

> the people of host countries and become promoters and mediators in the political process and national reconciliation of host countries. While carrying out their mandate, peacekeeping operations should pay great attention to the views of the parties concerned in the host countries, respect the local culture and have the trust and support of the people of the host countries.[661]

Arguably, as contributions to PKOs grow, so does Chinese representatives' confidence: As China started to warm up towards peacekeeping in the early 2000s, the tone used in official speeches shifted from extremely cautious to increasingly confident and is now in line with the country's role as a major contributor to UN peace operations.

As mentioned earlier, while its participation in peacekeeping is increasingly aligning with that of more seasoned donors, with regards to peacebuilding, China admittedly does not have much experience and it is an area where it is has engaged to a limited extent. However, a growing alignment between the West, African countries, and China can be found around the goal of stability rather than liberal peacebuilding.[662] Ambassador Wang Guangya made the following remarks in 2008:

> How to ensure that conflicts do not re-erupt? How to enable the population to enjoy the peace dividend? How to transit from fragile peace to a harmonious society by the people and for the people? What role can the countries concerned play in peace building? How can the international community, the United Nations in particular, provide effective and timely assistance? To these questions, we do not have ready answers, nor do we have much experience to rely on.[663]

He further stresses that focus on African countries should take priority and praises "[t]he fact that the agenda of the Peace Building Commission is dominated by situations of African countries demonstrates the universal agreement of the international community about the special needs of Africa."[664] A position paper from the same year discusses peacebuilding as a crucial element of the security operations of the UNSC and suggests a focus on both short- and long-term measures, respect for the positions and opinions of recipient countries, and calls for the Peacebuilding Commission to step up coordination across relevant agencies.[665] In 2009, the issues of increasing funding for peacebuilding and the need for a comprehensive and systemic strategy addressing all aspects of peacemaking, peacekeeping, and post-conflict

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[661] "Remarks by Ambassador Li Baodong at the Security Council on the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations," 2012, http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/securitycouncil/thematicissues/peacekeeping/t966695.htm; "Statement by Ambassador Liu Jieyi at the Security Council Open Debate on UN Peacekeeping Operations and Their Potential Contribution to the Overarching Goal of Sustaining Peace," 2017, http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/securitycouncil/thematicissues/peacekeeping/t1491522.htm.

[662] John Karlsrud, "From Liberal Peacebuilding to Stabilization and Counterterrorism," *International Peacekeeping*, 2018, 15.

[663] "Statement by Ambassador Wang Guangya at the Open Debate of the Security Council on Post-Conflict Peace Building," 2008, http://www.china-un.org/eng/lhghyywj/smhwj/2008/t456160.htm.

[664] Ibid.

[665] "China's Position Paper at the 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly."

peacebuilding were also mentioned.[666] The commitment to the Peacebuilding Commission and to the Fund continues along the same lines in other position papers in following years.[667] In 2012, Ambassador Li Baodong listed peacebuilding priorities as follows: "[t]he priorities of post-conflict peace building are *stabilizing* the security situation, promoting political reconciliation, and strengthening the development of democracy. At the same time, root problems that threaten peace and security, particularly issues of social and economic development, should also be tackled."[668] Unsurprisingly, the security-development nexus appears to inform the narrative on peacebuilding too.

China's participation in UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities is also generally framed within another important representation of China in its discourse at the UN, which depicts the country as a responsible great power. Hence, in 2010 we hear then premier Wen Jiabao say that "[t]he Chinese people love peace, and China is a responsible member of the international community. As early as 2,500 years ago, the Chinese thinker Confucius said, 'Peace is the most valuable'. As a nation repeatedly plagued by the scourge of war, we fully appreciate the value of peace, and also the wisdom of 'Do not do unto others what you would not have others do unto you'".[669] This was echoed a year later by foreign minister Yang Jiechi, who maintained that "[o]ver the years, China has been dedicated to creating a peaceful international environment in which to develop itself. At the same time, it has contributed its share to enhancing world peace through its own development."[670] Such statements seem to coherently fit into the broader narrative of a "foreign policy of peace" that has been advertised widely, especially after the 19th Party Congress in November.[671]

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[666] "Statement by Ambassador Liu Zhenmin at Security Council Open Debate on Post-Conflict Peacebuilding," accessed November 15, 2017, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t575181.htm.

[667] See for instance: "Position Paper of the People's Republic of China At the 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly"; "Position Paper of the People's Republic of China at the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly," 2012, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t971887.htm; "Position Paper of the People's Republic of China At the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly," 2013, http://www.china-un.org/eng/zt/wangyi1/t1078851.htm.

[668] "Remarks by Ambassador Li Baodong at the Security Council Open Debate on Post-Conflict Peace Building," 2012, http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/securitycouncil/thematicissues/peacebuilding/t966335.htm; "Statement by Ambassador Liu Jieyi, Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations at Security Council Meeting on Post-Conflict Peacebuilding," 2014, http://www.china-un.org/eng/chinaandun/securitycouncil/thematicissues/peacekeeping/t1190378.htm.

[669] "Statement by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao at the UN Security Council Summit," 2010, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t757366.htm.

[670] "Statement by H.E. Yang Jiechi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, at the General Debate of the 66th Session of the UN General Assembly," 2011, http://www.china-un.org/eng/hyyfy/t862495.htm.

[671] See for instance "独立自主 崇尚和平（钟声:推动构建人类命运共同体)," November 23, 2017, http://world.people.com.cn/n1/2017/1123/c1002-29662344.html To be sure, China's foreign policy

As viewed by UN officers, China's approach does not do much to challenge the current system of peacekeeping. According to one, China is now in a position to increase their contributions to PKOs in a very deliberate way, but all within the existing frameworks: there is no clear "Chinese way" of sustaining peace that emerges from their statements.[672] As another officer pointed out, China wants to project its image as a responsible actor multilaterally and committing to peacekeeping is a tool for achieving that, although they have also used it to signal the rise of its (military) reach.[673] This does not mean that there is no material for disagreement, and human rights do remain a thorny issue—although, as one officer noticed, the "peacekeeping package comes with human rights and peacebuilding mandates, so as long as China contributes to PKOs, it contributes to all parts of it."[674] Hence, China is currently doing more peacekeeping and peacebuilding and it is doing so according to existing (liberal) frameworks. After all, as one officer argued, the UN's liberal concept of peace is not devoid of development; rather, the concept entails that the UN intervenes whenever and wherever such development has 'failed'; "what is at stake" he told me, "is the absence of the state, not so much a problem with whether either the liberal or illiberal model works or not; in other words, it is not the quality and kind of governance that prompt UN PKOs, but the absence of such."[675] The consensus among the interviewees seemed to be that China has not leveraged its financial influence in the same way as other countries have done at the Council; that is, the PRC has more power than what it is using if it wanted to further influence the organisation's course of action. As a matter of fact, my interviewees generally though that while there is some alignment between China and Russia on certain issues, Russia has a far more "negative and aggressive" agenda than China, both in terms of peacekeeping and peacebuilding.[676]

6.5 Conclusion

The analysis of the documents presented in this chapter confirmed the stability and coherence of China's Africa discourse across all three layers at the global level. In the Chinese discourse, hegemony and democracy are used in a quasi-oxymoron: So

is often less peaceful in its immediate neighbourhood, especially as regards issues such as the South China Sea and Taiwan's independence.

[672] Phone interview with senior officer, UNDPKO, Policy and Best Practices Service, April 2018.

[673] Interview with senior officer 3, UNDPKO, Policy and Best Practices Service, New York, March 2018.

[674] Phone interview with senior officer, UNDPKO, Policy and Best Practices Service, April 2018.

[675] Interview with senior officer 3, UNDPKO, Policy and Best Practices Service, New York, March 2018.

[676] Interviews with several senior officers, UNDPKO, New York, March 2018.

long as the international system is dominated by developed nations of the 'North', relations between countries can never be equal.[677] At the UN, such representation takes mostly two forms: China is grateful to developing countries for having guaranteed its accession to international organisations and is in turn supportive of Council's reforms that would grant African nations greater representation. Coherent with this stance, the PRC's policies at the UNSC tend to be aligned to the African position, especially when expressed via the AU or other regional blocs. Similarly, the issue of globalisation relates to such a systemic imbalance. Globalising economic, social, and political forces present developing countries in the continent with both opportunities and challenges. While these are often inherited from the colonial era, the international community can and should do more to boost their development, while respecting local solutions and promoting African ownership. The UN can play a crucial role both for China and for Africa: While the former can 'use' the organisation to promote its image as a responsible power and use its leverage to endorse South-South cooperation (and the related discourse), the latter can benefit from greater participation in international decision-making. China has become, in this sense, one of the biggest supporters of institutional multilateralism. Peacekeeping and peacebuilding have proved to be the most relevant UN activities to 'test' such assumptions, because both are crucial in assessing the success of the security-development nexus in the long term. And it is this nexus that is once more the protagonist in China's Africa discourse at the global level. Simultaneously, the UN has seen a transformation of its peacekeeping and peacebuilding practices towards the 'sustaining peace agenda', which aims to prioritise prevention and sustainable development. Thus, the UN's shift from a reactive to a proactive approach to conflicts has converged with China's aversion to interventionism. Such a convergence is the result of both internal debates at the UN and China's increased participation in such debates.

[677] As already mentioned on pages 113-114, the Chinese understanding of 'democratic' or 'equal' in this context indicates democratic negotiations.

Chapter 7 – China's normative power in practice

Power is domination, control, and therefore a very selective form of truth which is a lie.
(Wole Soyinka)

7.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the findings presented in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 and discusses them in relation to the notions of China's rise and normative power presented in Chapter 2. As mentioned earlier, scholars have claimed that China has never laid out an explicit grand strategy: It is often said that it does not have one regarding China-Africa ties, nor one for its approach to international peace and security.[678] Yet, the two white papers released in 2013 and 2015, and especially the latter, outline the main elements of Sino-African relations, albeit with the typical vague language of Chinese policy discourse.[679] Similarly, in the white paper on defence released in 2015, the Chinese leadership gives indications as to the future of the PLA's engagement abroad.[680] More importantly, since Xi Jinping took power in 2013, a series of initiatives including the BRI and the AIIB have prompted new debates over the existence of explicit foreign policy guidelines.[681] Other scholars hence conclude that while the definition of a Chinese grand strategy is ongoing, more prominent features have emerged under the rule of President Xi.[682] As the country's foreign policy line has become more active globally, so have its Africa policies. While these hardly match a US-style grand strategy,[683] I argue that it is possible to identify a coherent discourse around which China's long-term strategy is built. China's discourse on peace and security in Africa is structured along three discursive layers: first, are the main representations of what I called the "South-South cooperation" discourse; second, is China-Africa cooperation on peace and security as revolving around the security-

678 Wang, "International Relations Theory and the Study of Chinese Foreign Policy: A Chinese Perspective"; Gittings, "China's Foreign Policy: Continuity or Change?"; Wang, "China's Search for a Grand Strategy. A Rising Power Finds Its Way."
679 "China-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation (2013)," August 2013, http://english.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2014/08/23/content_281474982986536.htm; "China's Africa Policy White Paper," November 2015, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-12/04/c_134886545.htm.
680 "China's Military Strategy."
681 See for instance: Dingding Chen, "China Has a New Grand Strategy and the West Should Be Ready," *The Diplomat*, October 31, 2017, https://thediplomat.com/2017/10/china-has-a-new-grand-strategy-and-the-west-should-be-ready/.
682 Stanzel et al., *Grand Designs*; Friedberg, "Globalisation and Chinese Grand Strategy."
683 See for instance Paul D. Miller, "Five Pillars of American Grand Strategy," *Survival* 54, no. 5 (November 2012): 7–44, doi:10.1080/00396338.2012.728343; R.D. Hooker, "Understanding U.S. Grand Strategy," *Orbis* 59, no. 3 (2015): 317–30, doi:10.1016/j.orbis.2015.05.003.

development nexus, with a focus on the developmental dimension; third—and where change can be detected—is a discourse that adds to the previous two layers and is premised upon them, but emphasises the security dimension of the nexus and allows for increased securitisation of the relations. China's Africa discourse is further organised horizontally across three institutional levels: first, the FOCAC, an exclusive China-Africa platform created with the objective of negotiating, designing, and agreeing on common policies. It also provides China with the necessary spotlight to announce big and generous funding initiatives, thus strengthening its soft power appeal. The platform is the perfect example of China's attempt to create anti-hegemonic institutions with the aim of increasing China's influence abroad. Second, the African Union, a continental organisation originally created upon the desire to promote pan-Africanism and a common vision for the continent. Structurally modelled upon the EU and highly dependent on external funding, the AU still represents 'unknown' terrain for China to make explicit diplomatic moves. While Western countries, experts, and diplomats have been interacting with it for a long time, China only established a dedicated diplomatic mission in 2015 and has still much to learn on the organisation's internal dynamics. However, the PRC has signalled its willingness to be more involved in the organisation's activities and provide more funding for its operations. Third, the UNSC is China's global stage for advancing its (supposedly) alternative ideas on peace, security, and development and promoting the security-development nexus. There, China shares the stage with other major players in international affairs, chiefly the other permanent Council members. While African countries are not permanently represented, the PRC presents itself as the spokesperson of the developing world and a supporter of common African positions.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, these three levels are not consequential. While I started from examining recurring narratives at the FOCAC, which was created long after China had gained its seat at the UNSC, I did so because a coherent and more explicit vision for the country's engagement in African peace and security only starts to emerge as Sino-African ties are being consolidated through the Forum from the year 2000, as well as, subsequently, through the AU. Thus, the discourse is organised across the three institutions not so much according to a temporal sequence, but rather through a logical linguistic apparatus that helps China redefine its power relations with the other actors involved. Put differently, from the regional, through the continental, and to the global arenas, China is carving out normative spaces for its preferred norms and practices to be spread. Its normative power potential varies across the three

institutions examined here and it is especially outside of Western-dominated platforms that we may expect to find a more explicit norms-setting attitude. However, this potential can be realised more effectively through the combination of China's influence across *all* the institutional levels.

Despite China-Africa ties evolving and going through periods of disengagement as well as engagement, the discourse has not changed much internally: It consistently paints China and Africa as long-term friends united in an anti-hegemonic struggle against the domination of the 'West'. Simultaneously, the policies guiding Chinese involvement have shifted gradually but substantially, especially as regards peace and security, ranging from non-interference to growing military presence. The stability and coherency of the Chinese discourse aided China immensely, as it contributed to creating an image of a reliable partner, one which, according to the basic discourse and its narratives, respects Africa and its leaders and conducts relations on equal footing. In a way, therefore, China's increased contributions to the African security regime should not come as a surprise, not only because they respond to growing economic and geopolitical interests, but also because the discourse was already 'predisposed' for such a policy shift to happen. This is possible mostly thanks to the security-development nexus: While China's contributions so far have mostly focused on the developmentalisation of security—whereby development is considered a prerequisite for stability—in the last few years more emphasis is being put on the securitisation of development—whereby development can only be achieved in a peaceful and safe environment.

Hence, China's attempts to shape conceptions of peace, security, intervention, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding, are important not only in and of themselves, but also in relation to the broader change in policy which China's Africa discourse has enabled. The discourse and the related policies would not have been so successful, however, if they only depended on Chinese leaders' rhetoric abilities (or their money). Most importantly, the stability of the narratives has been maintained thanks to the response encountered from African elites. This goes both ways as China has gained the latter's trust thanks to a coherent discourse organised around ideas of South-South cooperation, dialogue, equal relations, mutual benefit, and shared destiny. Therefore, by presenting itself as a reliable partner and by being acknowledged as such across Africa, the Chinese model represents an attractive alternative to Western modes of engagement. Importantly, such a coherent set of strategies, goals, and policies are slowly being turned into norms. Perhaps the most striking feature is that Beijing seems

to be keener on promoting a Chinese vision of world order in which other countries can find alternative approaches to traditional external powers' and in which everyone can, and wants to, participate, than it is in branding such norms as a new system of international relations entirely. What does this vision entail for Africa? First, a focus on the security-development nexus; second, continued assistance in the fields of development, infrastructure building, trade, and investment, as well as increased militarisation and securitisation of foreign relations; and third, the promotion of Chinese preferred norms and practices via both existing organisations and new institutional arenas. In terms of practical policies, we are most likely to see an even bigger commitment to peacekeeping, increasing contributions to both the UN and the AU, and an emphasis on political mediation and diplomacy as the primary means to resolving conflicts. Another conclusion I draw is that soft and economic power concerns have led the way for China-Africa ties to develop to the point where now security occupies a central place in their interactions. In other words, had it not been for the successful use of Chinese soft power and the promotion of a model based on equal relations, coupled with considerable investments, it would probably be impossible to even discuss China in terms of normative power. This chapter addresses all parts of this argument by linking the findings to the theory and answering the research questions that motivated this study.

7.2 China's Africa discourse

The first questions I asked were: How is China's Africa discourse constructed and how have Chinese leaders gradually included increased engagement in peace and security within such discourse in the years 2000-2018? Is the shift in policies mirrored by a shift in the discourse? How could Chinese leaders justify such growing involvement without infringing the principles of state sovereignty and non-interference? How has the China-Africa discourse contributed to build China's image as a legitimate norms-maker in the continent? The empirical chapters have addressed these questions by exploring both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of China's Africa discourse on peace and security. I argued that it is possible to identify a coherent, basic discourse around which China's diplomatic and security strategy is built. The discourse is organised along three vertical discursive layers and three horizontal institutional levels; while its deeper layers have remained stable and coherent, it has allowed for a substantial shift (i.e. from non-interference to growing security and military engagement), thus simultaneously redefining China's foreign policies. The layered

discourse structure allows for explaining change within continuity. China's Africa discourse has been of paramount importance in creating a sense of belonging to the same group of developing, anti-hegemonic, Global South countries; consequently, it has proved essential in granting China the necessary recognition of its image and role as an aspiring norms-shaper. Throughout Chapters 4, 5, and 6, I have provided a comprehensive account of the discursive construction of the country's security policies in Africa across the relevant multilateral institutions. While bilateral relations undoubtedly still represent an important element in China's diplomacy, the PRC has turned its attention to multilateralism and international cooperation as another way to promote its interests and its worldview in Asia and beyond. In Chapter 4, I had two aims: first, to map the main representations constituting the discourse since the creation of the FOCAC in 2000; second, to unveil the layered structure of the discourse which, while first serving the purpose of reintroducing China as a major economic and aid player in the continent, has subsequently given way to increased securitisation of the 'developmental peace'. The basic discourse, which I called the "South-South cooperation" discourse, articulates China and Africa as fellow members of the Global South and fellow developing countries. As such, the discourse goes, China and Africa share a common past experience of colonialism and Western encroachment. The current international system perpetrates the asymmetry between the developed North and the developing South. Based on this, a number of different representations have come to define China-Africa relations. For instance, they are friends, brothers, and partners. Their friendship is a long-lasting one, dating back to the early Ming dynasty, and in the past Chinese and Africans civilisations used to be "splendid' and "distinctive", whilst in modern times these civilisations have been threatened by imperialism and have jointly mobilised against "subjugation". Since they share a history of colonialism, China and African countries are depicted as sympathetic members of the same community of developing countries with "common fundamental interests" and a "shared destiny". They are furthermore united in the fight against a hegemonic world order. The present world system is unjust, and its unfairness is rooted in the economic, scientific, and technological gap between the "North" and the "South". Hegemony, according to the discourse analysed here, consists of the domination of developed countries in the current world order, which are also responsible for practicing "power politics". China's proposal is to promote a "new world order" based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and the UN Charter. Indeed, globalisation represents both a challenge and a risk for developing countries,

particularly for Africa's. As the leaders' understanding of globalisation evolves, it eventually comes to be represented as an opportunity that developing countries need to seize and exploit together. As a sign of China's goodwill, the country does not only support the UN and other multilateral organisations, but also, and most importantly, Africa's position and representation in such institutions. Non-interference and respect for state sovereignty remain the fundamental pillars of China-Africa ties, as does the security-development nexus, which until recently has led to an emphasis on promoting development through (mostly) economic assistance and trade. Despite relations going through difficult times as much as successes, these two layers of the discourse have remained stable and coherent. Sustained by these representations, China-Africa ties have substantially expanded since the inception of the Forum, which serves as a platform to present and negotiate policies and deals. If the focus has traditionally been on trade and investment, infrastructure building, agricultural cooperation, extraction of natural resources and energy, and cultural and educational exchanges, peace and security have slowly become one of the major aspects of contemporary China-Africa ties. While the rhetoric has not remained entirely unchanged, most representations have been surprisingly consistent.

Thus, we now witness the emergence of peace and security as central elements to China's Africa policy without there being any major changes in the discourse; rather, existing narratives are being used to legitimise the security-development nexus and, more specifically, growing security and military activities in the continent. The introduction of the "new security concept", the emphasis on achieving security in order to achieve development, and on pursuing economic development with the aim of achieving stability and peace, make increased engagement in security seem reasonable and appropriate given a) the 'critical' condition of many conflict-ridden or unstable countries where China operates; b) Chinese grown interests in the continent; c) the need to protect these interests; and d) the benefit African countries will also reap from having a safer environment. Since security can only be achieved through development and development can only be reached in a secure environment, China is 'justified' in providing substantial economic aid to African countries as much as they will be 'justified' in scaling up their military presence.[684] Hence, an incremental change can be

[684] I recall what Weldes says about representations that state officials create and that posit well-defined relations among diverse objects. The importance of such representations in connecting diverse objects lies "not in their accuracy, but in their provision of 'warranting conditions' which 'make a particular action or belief more 'reasonable', 'justified', or 'appropriate', given the desires beliefs, and expectations of the actors." Weldes, "Constructing National Interests," 281–83 See also Chapter 1, 24-25.

observed as we move to the third layer of discourse, where priority is given to the securitisation of development.[685]

To summarise, although some elements of the discourse pre-exist the founding of the FOCAC, its inception has granted the narrative an institutionalised legitimacy and recognition that has no precedence in the history of China-Africa ties. Such a discourse pictures the two entities as long-term friends, united in the shared effort to redress the imbalances of a Western-centric international order. In constructing the discourse, Chinese leaders have mobilised a series of historical and political narratives that have contributed to socialise African actors into China's worldview, by creating a sense of belonging and common destiny. Moreover, I have suggested that while the policies have gradually shifted, ranging from non-interference to increased military and security engagement and financial contributions, the basic discourse has not changed. To be sure, while Chinese rhetoric has not remained entirely untouched through the ebbs and flows of China-Africa relations and there are still gaps between rhetoric and practice, China's discourse on Africa is consistent and is based on a set of logical supporting ideas; in other words, its coherency makes it credible and appealing to African elites.[686] Therefore, the success in establishing China's discourse and socialise other actors into it, depends not only on Beijing's ability, but also, and most importantly, on the positive response by African leaders and the recognition and respect they grant China. The discourse is reproduced across the three main fora examined in the thesis, namely the FOCAC, the AU, and the UNSC. I called this the horizontal dimension of China's Africa discourse and it indicates how the main representations informing China-Africa relations have been maintained and cultivated outside of the Forum at the continental and global levels.

Hence, in Chapter 5, I have looked for familiar representations in official documents on the China-AU partnership. While the organisation still highly depends on external funding, mostly from the EU, it can be considered the main locus of African agency on continental peace and security matters. Recent developments signal China's willingness to take on further responsibilities and increase their involvement with the AU, such as the establishment of a dedicated diplomatic mission in 2015, the promotion of institutional mechanisms to increase coordination, for instance through the China-AU Strategic Dialogue, and the creation of a China-Africa Peace and

[685] For a detailed breakdown of China's peace and security commitments in the years 2000-2018 see Appendix II.
[686] Strauss, 'The Past in the Present', 779-780. See also Chapter 3 for more on the coherence of China's rhetoric and Chapter 4 for further arguments and empirical material on the frames of its Africa discourse.

Security Fund. Chinese leaders have also shown willingness to learn from, and partner with, more experienced partners, especially on peacekeeping and peacebuilding. However, because Western countries' diplomatic and political presence is older and stronger while China's engagement with the AU is still relatively young, it seems that China is playing a marginal role for the time being. Nonetheless, such a role may be changing sooner than we think. Although relevant documents are scarce compared to FOCAC- or UN-related sources, the representations identified in Chapter 4 can be found in China's AU discourse too. It appears that China's approach is well received by AU officials, an impression that has been confirmed in my fieldwork interviews with AU and UNECA officers and diplomats, as well as with researchers from think tanks based in Addis Ababa. Perhaps counterintuitively, the recent controversy over the alleged data theft at the expense of the AU points to a relation bound to grow. While Chinese authorities were quick at denying the bugging of the organisation's headquarters, so was the chairperson of the AU, in a confident show of friendship and trust while Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi stood by his side during the 7th China-AU Strategic Dialogue held in Beijing in February 2018.[687] Indeed, as one of the AU's major partners, China does have the potential to contribute more not only financially, but also normatively. While such contributions remain so far limited and the proposed reforms to the organisation are likely to influence partnerships with external actors, I argued that the PRC's self-positioning at the frontline of multilateral diplomacy account for an important step in becoming a normative power, especially on issues of peace and security. In the words of an International Crisis Group report, "if China's steps are tentative, there is good reason. It is aware of its newcomer status to international peace and security efforts, particularly via multilateral institutions, and is careful not to overreach [...] But its considerable economic and political influence mean that, when it steps in, it inevitably brings leverage to the table that traditional mediation efforts […] sometimes lack."[688]

Finally, in Chapter 6, the discussion concerned the global level and I searched for the discourse's main representations in UNSC-related documents. Unlike the Forum, the UNSC is not an exclusive China-Africa space; it has a much broader scope

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[687] "China Denies Bugging African Union Headquarters in Ethiopia - CNN," February 2, 2018, https://edition.cnn.com/2018/01/30/africa/china-denies-spying-au-building-intl/index.html; AfricaNews, "A.U. Has No Secret Files, Nothing for China to Spy on - Faki Mahamat," *Africanews*, February 9, 2018, http://www.africanews.com/2018/02/09/au-has-no-secret-files-nothing-for-china-to-spy-on-faki-mahamat/.

[688] "China's Foreign Policy Experiment in South Sudan," *International Crisis Group*, July 10, 2017, ii, https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/south-sudan/288-china-s-foreign-policy-experiment-south-sudan.

than the AU; and it represents China's preferred international platform for promoting its worldview. Here, great and rising powers directly compete for the maintenance or dismantling of the current world order and for influence on global governance and its rules. Hence, China's Africa discourse is deeply linked to and forms part of a much broader international discourse that helps China promote its alternative developmental peace model. As it emerges from relevant documents and interviews, China's UN discourse presents a range of familiar elements. These include: the promotion of common African positions on Council resolutions, in line with South-South rhetoric; China's unique construction of hegemony vs democracy; the opportunities and risks associated with globalisation; endorsement of the "African solutions to African problems" doctrine; the primary role of the UN and other multilateral organisations in maintaining international peace and security; related support for multilateralism and international cooperation; and the security-development nexus. I argued that China's behaviour in the Council in the last two decades has been more system-maintaining than not and has been supported by such a stable discourse. To be sure, increased security contributions and military presence, ranging from the promised 8,000 peacekeeping troops to be deployed in the next five years to the building of the overseas military base in Djibouti, point to a change in priorities. Again, however, such a change in policies is not matched by a change in the basic discourse, because the discourse is already 'predisposed' for change alongside the security-development spectrum. Simultaneously, the UN has also witnessed a shift of peacekeeping and peacebuilding practices towards the "sustaining peace agenda", which prioritises prevention and sustainable development. This shift to a more proactive approach to conflicts has converged with a shift in China's policies and its aversion to interventionism. Therefore, if there is anything that looks like a Chinese 'normative agenda' at the UN, it would include opposition to the use of force and military intervention; a soft approach to conflict resolution; and support for the concept of 'sustaining peace'. However, no clear 'Chinese way' of doing peacekeeping and peacebuilding can be identified and while China is increasing its contributions in a deliberate way, it does so within the existing normative frameworks.[689] Lanteigne suggests that China's positive view of UN PKOs is motivated by a number of reasons, including "training personnel for [military operations other than war] MOOTW, furthering Chinese diplomacy in developing regions, and blunting international

[689] Such frameworks are defined, among others, by the principles and guidelines of peacekeeping missions. See "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. Principles and Guidelines," 2008, http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/capstone_eng.pdf.

perceptions about a 'China threat' as its military budget continues to grow and concerns about flashpoints such as the South China Sea and Taiwan persist."[690] He adds that its increased involvement in PKOs may be motivated by its interest in building an image as a "peacebuilder" who is aware of the link between underdevelopment and insecurity. I will add that China also aims to soften aspects of its international conduct that may be detrimental to achieving its broad aims of (peaceful) rise/development, whilst protecting the norms that serve those aims—such as state sovereignty—and supporting sufficient flexibility to adjust its practice when needed. Such an approach signals that neither China is proposing a whole set of new norms, nor it is entirely aligning with the existing order; instead, it aims to reshape it to make it a better fit for Chinese interests and policies.

To summarise, I have argued that it is possible to identify a coherent discourse around which China's diplomatic and security strategy is built. The discourse is organised along three vertical discursive layers and three horizontal institutional levels; while its deeper layers have remained stable and coherent, it has allowed for some substantial shifts (most notably from non-interference to more security and military engagement), thus simultaneously redefining China's foreign policy as well as power relations among actors within the three fora. As highlighted in Chapter 1, while the deeper structures of discourse are more difficult to change, they still allow for change: it remains to be seen "how much pressure is necessary, what degree of political cost can be tolerated in breaking a certain code."[691] In short, the more China 'rises' within one of the three organisations, the bigger the chances of success at socialising other actors into its preferred world view; the more it is being recognised as a reliable partner, the more likely it is that we will witness norms-making and norms-changing postures. The next section addresses these points by providing an answer to the second set of research questions.

7.3 What kind of power is China?

The second set of research questions asked: Can China be considered a normative power? Can it shape norms on peace and security in Africa (and beyond)?

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[690] Marc Lanteigne, *The Role of UN Peacekeeping in China's Expanding Strategic Interests*, Special Report (United States Inastitute of Peace, September 2018), 5; See also Fung for an explanation of China's deployment to UN PKOs based on identity-related concerns as key causal variables: Courtney J. Fung, "What Explains China's Deployment to UN Peacekeeping Operations?," *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 16, no. 3 (2016): 409–441.

[691] Waever, "Identity, Communities and Foreign Policy: Discourse Analysis as Foreign Policy Theory," 32.

Does China's security policy in Africa tell us something about what kind of international actor China is, or aspires to, becoming? In Chapter 2, I have explored the literature on both the rise of China and its socialisation into the international community of states and institutions. I have then proposed that looking at China as a rising normative power better helps us explain its foreign policy and international behaviour. After looking at how the discourse takes shape across the three institutions, it becomes clear that China's Africa strategy is a coherent and structured framework that guides action in a number of areas. Among these, peace and security have developed extraordinarily fast and have come to represent an essential element in China's contributions to the continent. While in the past China arguably lacked the confidence and resources to take on a leading role in international security, it has now shown willingness to expand on its material and normative power beyond Asia. Its position as a rising great power puts China in a more likely position to shape the way other countries think about security (among other topics). Since much of its security activities abroad is located in Africa and given the recent developments highlighted above, Africa occupies a central role in China's foreign policy strategy. Until recently, peace and security were not central in China's Africa policies, which privileged a focus on economic cooperation, trade, and infrastructure investment. However, since 2011-2012, we have witnessed increased attention to issues related to African peace and security, coupled with substantial funding to a range of security activities, including contributions to the AU, peacekeeping missions, and military training. We have thus witnessed a shift in China's foreign policies towards the APSA, which reflects a broader shift in the country's general foreign policy behaviour. Yet, such a shift in China-Africa relations does not seem to be mirrored by changes in the official basic discourse. The following two sections reflect on these issues and, building on the stability of China's Africa discourse, advance the idea that China can be considered a normative power.

7.3.1 Normative power China

The empirical chapters were aimed to explore whether concrete episodes of discourse, socialisation, and norms-setting in the context of China-Africa constitute empirical evidence for an analysis of China's rise in terms of normative power. The definition of normative power I use in this thesis is one which understands it as power-in-context. A normative power is one that is able to shape the "normal" in international relations.[692] Importantly, it is able to do so only so long as the other actors involved in

[692] Manners, "Normative Power Europe."

interactions recognise it as such, as long as they recognise its agency as such.[693] The targeted audience, therefore, is of paramount importance in determining a country's normative power status. In general, according to Breslin,

> The Chinese state frames itself (and its objectives) in different ways to different audiences/partners. To the established Western powers, it is a responsible partner in international politics and a responsible stakeholder within the existing system. To be sure, it is seeking reforms to democratize this system and increase its (and other developing countries') power. … To other emerging powers, it is a key partner in the search for such change. To developing countries it is also a key partner, representing and promoting their collective interests on a global scale, and acting as a new form of 'Great Power' that will not repeat the sins of previous emerging and Great Powers. And perhaps it is here that we see China's biggest impact on the international order. China's eschewal of political and/or liberalizing conditionalities to accompany economic relations might not have sounded the death knell of global liberalism just yet. But it does create alternatives for its partners and a political space within which they can manoeuvre.[694]

China's self-given identities are thus a fundamental element in the construction of its foreign policy narratives. Its engagement in Africa would not have been so successful if they had failed at portraying China as an ally and a friend. Similarly, should China fall short of the international community's expectations in organisations such as the UN or the AU, its credibility will be affected and with it, its normative power potential. In our case, Chinese leaders have gained their African counterparts' trust thanks to the stability of a discourse emphasising South-South cooperation, dialogue, equal relations, and mutual benefit. By presenting itself, and being recognised as, a reliable partner, China creates a valid alternative for countries in Africa that is, at least rhetorically, different from previous powers. China's self-positioning at the frontline of diplomatic efforts and multilateralism in the continent has proven fundamental in strengthening its reputation and promoting its role as a provider of public goods. This reflects the "relationship logic" that Womack suggests China applies to international affairs, through which it aims to stabilise beneficial relations for all parties involved.[695] Normative power is, therefore, "power in context" that emerges through interactions, and an actor's capacity to shape the normal depends on the recognition of such agency by target states.[696] China's socialisation efforts have been successful thanks to its emphasis on dialogue, which has contributed to promoting a vision of China's unique historical experience as something that should

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[693] Kavalski, "The Struggle for Recognition of Normative Powers: Normative Power Europe and Normative Power China in Context."
[694] Breslin, "China and the Global Order," 633–34.
[695] Womack, *China as a Normative Foreign Policy Actor*. See also Chapter 2.
[696] Kavalski, "The Struggle for Recognition of Normative Powers: Normative Power Europe and Normative Power China in Context."

not be imposed on others, but rather inspire them. This is made possible thanks to the power of attraction: So long as interactions are based on respect for the other, the perception of a win-win situation, and mutual benefits, China's attempts would most likely be successful, thus enhancing its normative power capacity.

Thus, recognition is the constitutive moment of such interactions: The viability of Chinese norms and practices of security and development does not only depend on Beijing's will and decisions, but, most importantly, it is contingent on how other actors interpret their agency and legitimacy. Breslin goes as far as arguing that "what makes dealing with China attractive is not so much a Chinese 'model' as the lack of projection of any model. And although it might sound counterintuitive, not being identified as the promoter of any specific normative position is in itself a normative position."[697] One of my interviewees at the UNDPKO expressed a similar idea when he suggested that not having a normative agenda is, after all, an agenda itself.[698] To be sure, this does not mean that China's approach is devoid of normative contributions. Quite the opposite, as argued above, what emerges from the dominant discourse is a rather coherent set of strategies and goals that China aims to transform into norms. It seems, however, that Beijing is less interested in projecting a clearly articulated grand strategy, than in promoting its worldview as an alternative system everyone can embrace and be part of—as long as Chinese positions are respected. Hence, together with recognition, respect is another essential element in China's foreign policy. China seems to have understood that "respect facilitates cooperation, while disrespect breeds conflict."[699] Respect, Wolf suggests, is important especially in light of the implicit acceptance it signals for an actor's rank. By confirming one's self-ascribed status, it promotes sympathy, trust, and cooperation. Respect and recognition are intimately related here: respectful behaviour is seen as an appropriate confirmation of one's status and position, while disrespectful behaviour is perceived as disregard for it.[700]

Respect has to go both ways, of course: China claims respect from, and gives respect to, its African partners and this guarantees the success of interactions. The

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[697] Shaun Breslin, "The 'China Model' and the Global Crisis: From Friedrich List to a Chinese Mode of Governance?," *International Affairs* 87, no. 6 (2011): 1338, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2346.2011.01039.x.
[698] See Chapter 5, 23. See also Breslin on the same page.
[699] Reinhard Wolf, "Respect and Disrespect in International Politics: The Significance of Status Recognition," *International Theory* 3, no. 01 (2011): 106, doi:10.1017/S1752971910000308.
[700] To be sure, Wolf and Ringmar disagree on the causes that lead struggles for recognition to escalate. For more on this, see: Ibid., 108-109. However, the debate over the effects of the concepts on cooperation or conflict goes beyond the purpose of this thesis, where I am more interested in the role recognition and respect play in China's foreign policy. For a discussion on how to move from interpersonal to international respect, see; ibid., 117-120. See also; Johnston, *Social States. China in International Institutions, 1980-2000*, chap. 3.

descriptive (rather than prescriptive) tendency of China's discourse helps in the process: By not imposing any normative agenda or behaviour on other countries' leaders, China grants them the respect they expect from the international community. In order to work, this needs to be reciprocated through, for instance, respect for the 'One China' principle or support for China's positions at the UN. It remains to be seen whether China enjoys the same level of recognition it does among leaders of African countries as opposed to leaders elsewhere, especially in the 'West'. It is generally more likely that the former will praise China for its contributions to international affairs more than the latter. It is by empowering African leaders and enhancing their perception that they are being respected as equals, that "definitions of the 'normal' gain their causal effects."[701] I reiterate the words of Adaye I mentioned in Chapter 5: China accepts Africa as it is and Africans are not choosing which master is better, but rather which partner is better.[702] However, if delivering credible commitments is a measure of respect, as long as Beijing fulfils its promises, there is a good chance that it would be recognised as a reliable partner by other actors too.[703]

Related, another distinction needs to me be made as to the extent of recognition and respect the country has garnered across the three institutions analysed in the thesis. Among Beijing's normative spaces, the FOCAC is arguably the most successful platform for the projection of its normative power. As seen in Chapter 4, not only African leaders seem to have bought into China's vision of peace and security, but sharing a vision was possible given the success of a discourse constructing China and Africa as friends with a future common destiny. It would be a mistake, however, to think that such a shared vision only encompassed a normative agenda: Chinese involvement in the continent is also motivated by economic and strategic interests. Similarly, African elites are attracted by the prospects of Chinese money and investments. Nonetheless, the success of the partnership cannot be explained by material interests only. As shown in Chapter 2, China-Africa relations and the rhetoric behind them are informed both by the material and the discursive:[704] Both these two

[701] Kavalski, "The Struggle for Recognition of Normative Powers: Normative Power Europe and Normative Power China in Context," 261.
[702] Interview with senior researcher and programme director, Institute for Peace and Security Studies, January 2017, Addis Ababa.
[703] For more on how to identify and measure (dis)respect, see for instance Wolf, "Respect and Disrespect in International Politics," 113; For new "alliances" against protectionism between Chinese and European leaders, see for instance: Thomas Escritt and Michelle Martin, "With Raft of Deals, China and Germany Swear to Keep Trade Free," *Reuters*, July 9, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-china/chinas-li-visits-berlin-with-trade-warning-for-trump-ambassador-idUSKBN1JZ0VM.
[704] Alden and Large, "China's Exceptionalism and the Challenges of Delivering Difference in Africa."

are important and constitutive of the China-Africa story, which would not be as successful if one of the two were missing.

The UNSC has similarly proven to be a reliable instrument in Beijing's pursuit of its normative agenda. Albeit in a less straightforward way than in the Forum, which is exclusively Chinese *and* African, the Chinese view of peace and security have found acceptance in the international organisation too. The simultaneous evolution of the Chinese and UN discourses in the last decade is one of the clearest examples of the concept of two-way socialisation explained in Chapter 2: Not only has China been socialised into the UN framework of rules and norms, but it is increasingly contributing to rewriting parts of such framework by actively proposing new norms or reshaping existing ones. The convergence between the liberal peace and the developmental peace I mentioned in Chapter 6, can be explained by looking at both ongoing debates within the Council and the involvement of China in those debates.[705] Since the mid-2000s, the UN has started to acknowledge that its current approach regarding security as a precursor for development has not worked; instead, it has been argued that "engaging in development and reconstruction efforts as soon as possible … could contribute towards securing peace and obtaining long-term political order and economic legitimacy."[706] At the same time, China has been a strong advocate of the security-development nexus and has repeatedly called attention to the "development issue" as the "fundamental cause for armed conflict and instability in relevant regions of Africa." Thus, not only has China become fully integrated into the Council's procedures, but by increasingly participating into its internal debates and sometimes driving the conversation, it has now reached a point where it is able to promote its normative agenda. While on the one hand China is now ready to securitise and militarise its foreign relations more, non-interference and non-intervention do remain central pillars of its foreign policy, albeit allowing for a degree of flexibility. In other words, although the tension between increased participation in peace and security and adherence to such principles remains unresolved, there still are limits to the extent China is willing to concede to more robust or unilateral interventionism.

Some say China's influence at the UN was obtained through less legitimate means. According to a recent report by Synopsis and Jichang Lulu, there is "a connection between the corruption cases in the United Nations and the rise of China's

[705] Interview with senior researcher, SSRC, New York, March 2018.
[706] Richard Gueli et al., "Developmental Peace Missions Theory" (Conflict and Governance Facility, 2006), 5.

"discursive power".[707] Arguably, the report focuses on human rights issues and China's efforts to embed its practice into "a new global 'human-rights' normal."[708] The CCP, they argue, "has made it a major goal of its UN work to maximise its 'discursive power' at the organisation, seeking to redefine 'human rights' and get Xi Jinping's pet initiatives institutionally endorsed by an international body. These goals, repeatedly stated by authoritative sources, are being pursued through both diplomacy and other means."[709] The report's point about human rights is in line with the findings from my my interviews: Of all topics discussed at the Council, human rights do remain the most striking issue where UN and Chinese priorities do no align.[710] This, however, does not prevent consensus on other issues to be reached, as we have seen is the case with the security-development nexus. A recent episode during a GA debate is indicative of such alignment between Chinese and UN language (and its critics). During the Assembly's 72nd session, the Group of 77 and China proposed a draft resolution on NEPAD, which contained the phrase 'win-win' cooperation. In a not too implicit criticism of China, the US representative noted that "since the elaboration of the Sustainable Development Goals, multiple parties have attempted to introduce the concept of 'win-win' … the term risks implying that a development partner expects something in return for development cooperation. The 'win-win' model could lead to the forfeiture of national assets that should be aimed at national development projects"; based on this, she argued that the US would not vote for the resolution if it included the phrase 'win-win' and proposed changing it to 'international' instead.[711] In response, the Chinese representative maintained that

> upholding win-win cooperation is a solemn pledge made by the entire United Nations membership in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is an *important building block and a basic principle for implementing goals and reaching targets*, *and must, therefore, be*

[707] "UN with Chinese Characteristics: Elite Capture and Discourse Management on a Global Scale" (Sinopsis and Jichang Lulu, June 24, 2018), https://chinadigitaltimes.net/2018/06/sinoposis-united-nations-with-chinese-characteristics/; See also: "The Costs of International Advocacy. China's Interference in United Nations Human Rights Mechanisms," *Human Rights Watch*, September 5, 2017, https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/09/05/costs-international-advocacy/chinas-interference-united-nations-human-rights; for a recent discussion of China's discursive power, see Kejin Zhao, "China's Rise and Its Discursive Power Strategy," *Chinese Political Science Review*, 2016, http://link.springer.com/10.1007/s41111-016-0027-x; Breslin also writes on China's discursive power as regards the field of human security; see Shaun Breslin, "Debating Human Security in China: Towards Discursive Power?," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 45, no. 2 (April 3, 2015): 243–65, doi:10.1080/00472336.2014.907926.

[708] "Sinopsis & Jichang Lulu."

[709] Ibid.

[710] Interviews with UN officers, New York, March 2018.

[711] "General Assembly Adopts 3 Resolutions, Including Texts on New Partnership for Africa's Development, Efforts to Control, Eliminate Malaria," September 10, 2018, https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/ga12048.doc.htm; after the proposed amendment was rejected, the US representative called for a vote on the entire draft resolution, which was then adopted by a recorded 159 votes in favour to 2 against.

> *safeguarded and adhered to, instead of weakened and undermined*. … China has always supported the efforts of African countries to develop new partnerships with stakeholders.[712]

The second resolution presented by the Group of 77 and China (on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa) received equal treatment. Yet again, the US representative challenged the phrases "win-win cooperation" and "shared future based upon our common humanity" describing them as "ideologically driven and likely to increase conflict rather than defuse it."[713] The Austrian representative, speaking on behalf of the EU, similarly critiqued both the "slogan" 'win-win' for not bringing the goal of sustainable development any closer and the resolution for not underscoring the important role played by the Peacebuilding Commission. As both resolutions were eventually passed without accepting the proposed amendments, a spokesperson from the Chinese MFA further remarked that "[t]he substance of the resolutions is consistent with the consensus reached during the China-Africa forum which showed clearly that 'win-win cooperation' and 'a community with a shared future for mankind' have won wide support from international community."[714] According to a Chinese scholar interviewed by the Global Times, this was "a positive response and recognition of China's achievement and idea in development."[715] Equally telling, and perhaps a more interesting sign of how China's discourse has started to spread at the UN, is the speech the UN Secretary-General gave at the opening ceremony of the 7th FOCAC Summit. He argued that:

> This Forum on China-Africa Cooperation is an embodiment of two major priorities of the United Nations: to pursue fair globalization and to promote development that leaves no one behind in the context of a rules-based system of international relations supported by strong multilateral institutions. … Together, *China and Africa can unite their combined potential for peaceful, durable, equitable progress to the benefit of all humankind*. … It is important that current and future development cooperation contributes to *peace, security and to building a "community of shared future for mankind.*" … The United Nations will continue to support the China-Africa Partnership and more broadly, South-South cooperation, so that all nations—in Africa and beyond—may enjoy sustainable and inclusive development.[716]

The convergence highlighted earlier thus seems to happen both at the discursive and policy level; it remains to be seen whether it will lead to China being even more

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712 Ibid.; emphasis added.
713 Ibid.; this amendment was also rejected by the GA.
714 Ibid.; Hui Zhang and Hailin Xu, "UN-Adopted Resolutions on Africa Consistent with FOCAC Consensus," September 12, 2018, http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1119409.shtml.
715 Zhang and Xu, "UN-Adopted Resolutions on Africa Consistent with FOCAC Consensus."
716 "Remarks to the China-Africa Cooperation Summit: United Nations Secretary-General," September 3, 2018, https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2018-09-03/remarks-china-africa-cooperation-summit; emphasis added.

socialised into UN practices, or whether the UN and international cooperation will increasingly bear "Chinese characteristics".

The African Union is, for now, less successful than the other two platforms in terms of China's power-in-context. While it is true that China is not an entirely new player in the continent, its experience does not equal that of Western powers that have engaged with the organisation and its mechanisms for much longer. While diplomatic and institutional links between the AU and some Western donors have existed for some time, China only established its dedicated mission in 2015. As argued earlier in the thesis, while this is a sign of its eagerness to learn and be engaged more, Beijing is still struggling with understanding continental dynamics. [717] China does, however, recognise the fundamental role and agency of the organisation in addressing peace and security in the continent, as well as aligning continental policies with global priorities. Thus, it has been an eager promoter of the AU-UN partnership, which constitutes an important link bridging the regional and global levels. While African elites tend to share China's understanding of the security-development nexus and a view of their relations as one among fellow members of the Global South, leaders in Beijing and diplomats on the ground have more work to do if the objective is to further socialise AU officers into shared practices. Furthermore, aware of its position at the organisations vis-à-vis Western countries, Beijing has been 'compensating' through other means, for instance by accepting the AU as a full member of the FOCAC; by building the AU's headquarters; by committing to financially support the African Standby Force and the African Capacity for the Immediate Response to Crisis through free military assistance; and by providing training and capacity building programmes. All these measures, I argue, are part of China's strategy to gain more influence and leverage through increased institutionalisation of its partnership with the AU. While it will take China some time to make up for decades of more structured and systematic Western engagement, its soft and economic power can go a long way into compensating for the lack of structural power.[718] As its position and legitimacy in the continent are changing and growing, so will its normative power within the institution, to the extent that AU leaders and member states will allow foreign players to explicitly participate in the organisation's decision-making.

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[717] Interview with senior researcher 2 at the ISS, February 2017, Addis Ababa.

[718] For more background on whether China does have structural power (or not), see for instance: Shaun Breslin, "Power and Production: Rethinking China's Global Economic Role," *Review of International Studies* 31, no. 4 (2005): 735–53; Matteo Dian, "Does China Have Structural Power? Rethinking Chinese Power and Its Consequences for the International Order," *The Journal of Northeast Asian History* 13, no. 2 (2016): 121–57.

Hence, to summarise, China's discourse has contributed to structuring its engagement and foreign policy by linking and bridging across different institutional levels. From the regional, through the continental, and to the global arenas, China is carving out normative spaces for its preferred norms and practices to be spread. These are the spaces where we can expect China's ability to shape the "normal" to play out the most, although its potential in this sense varies across the three, as China's norms-making has been more successful at the UNSC than at the AU. However, it is especially outside of those institutions, and thus, for instance, at the FOCAC, that we should look in order to find the most interesting manifestations of Chinese vision(s) of world order. Importantly, it is only through a combination of its influence at all levels, that its normative power potential can be fully realised. China's normative peace and security agenda may gain enough support only insofar as both its discourse and strategy remain coherent across all levels of engagement. It is not my intention to assign intentionality to China's approaches to security norms, nor to suggest that the country is following a pre-established path to attaining more power globally. However, based on my fieldwork interviews and the analysis of official documents, it is possible to identify a coherent strategy including both Africa and the rest of the world. Such a strategy entails: a focus on the security-development nexus, informed by China's domestic experience in the past three decades, which indicates continued development assistance, infrastructure building, trade, and investment, as well as increased securitisation and militarisation of foreign relations; and the promotion of Chinese preferred norms and practices both via already existing organisations and through the creation of new institutions 'controlled' by China. As regards security, on the one hand we are likely to see an even bigger commitment to peacekeeping and more contributions to the UN and the AU, both financially and in kind; furthermore, China's preference for diplomacy and mediation is already translating in a very active brokering agenda.[719] Peacebuilding, on the other hand, is potentially the area for multilateral international cooperation where China's agenda will differ more substantially from liberal states. It is true that as China adheres to UN principles, these include commitment to human rights and peacebuilding, as one of my interviewees suggested.[720] However, Beijing has long been pushing for a different understanding of human rights, which it sees first and foremost as economic rights. For instance, in

[719] See for instance Nyshka Chandran, "China Mediation Diplomacy in Focus as Xi Jinping Heads to Africa," July 20, 2018, https://www.cnbc.com/2018/07/20/china-mediation-diplomacy-in-focus-as-xi-jinping-heads-to-africa.html.
[720] Chapter 5, 26.

March 2018, China, together with Russia, successfully lobbied to cut funding for the Human Rights Up Front Initiative, a group created in 2014 by the Secretary-General to ensure continued attention to human rights in the organisation's daily operations.[721] A few months later, to the side of the 38th session of the UN Human Rights Council in July 2018, the Chinese special representative for African affairs Xu Jinghu explicitly linked the "improvement of people's livelihood and sustainable development in African countries" with the "overall development of the human rights cause", as a result of China-Africa cooperation.[722]

In the past, the tributary system worked as a measure of success in spreading the 'Chinese model'. According to Ringmar, it was through that system that "the validity of their worldview was internationally recognized."[723] It would seem that nowadays, such function is performed by adherence to Chinese-led initiatives and Forums, including, but not limited to, the BRI and the FOCAC. The quid pro quo is slightly different, though. While rulers of tributary states became sovereign in their respective countries only upon presenting tributes to the Emperor, today's relations between China and its partners are based (at least in theory) on a more equal footing, as opposed to the tributary system. And, if anything, China does not grant sovereignty, but rather investments, infrastructure, and aid. I am not suggesting that we should look for a parallel between the tributary system and contemporary Chinese foreign policy; the scholarly debate on the issue is rich and it is beyond the purposes of this chapter to discuss it.[724] What I am suggesting, instead, is that if we are looking for any empirical 'sign' of a coherent, alternative Chinese worldview today, it would be useful to start from near-equivalent Chinese initiatives such as those just mentioned. To be sure, such a China model or worldview are not static, as much as the liberal order is not.[725]

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[721] Colum Lynch, "At the U.N., China and Russia Score Win in War on Human Rights," *Foreign Policy*, March 26, 2018, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/26/at-the-u-n-china-and-russia-score-win-in-war-on-human-rights/; Julian Borger, "China and Russia Accused of Waging 'war on Human Rights' at UN," *The Guardian*, March 27, 2018, sec. World news, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/27/china-and-russia-accused-of-waging-war-on-human-rights-at-un.

[722] Yurou, "China-Africa Cooperation Helps African Countries Better Protect Human Rights: Chinese Envoy," July 4, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/04/c_137300241.htm.

[723] Erik Ringmar, "Performing International Systems: Two East-Asian Alternatives to the Westphalian Order," *International Organization* 66, no. 01 (2012): 4, doi:10.1017/S0020818312000033.

[724] For more on the debate as to whether the tributary system is a useful concept to describe China's past (and present) relations with its neighbours, see for instance: William A. Callahan, "Sino-Speak: Chinese Exceptionalism and the Politics of History," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 71, no. 01 (2012): 33–55, doi:10.1017/S0021911811002919; Peter C. Perdue, "The Tenacious Tributary System," *Journal of Contemporary China* 24, no. 96 (2015): 1002–14, doi:10.1080/10670564.2015.1030949; Yuen Foong Khong, "The American Tributary System," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 6 (2013): 1–47.

[725] For recent takes on the "myth" of the liberal order, see for instance Patrick Porter, "A World Imagined: Nostalgia and Liberal Order," *Cato Institute*, June 5, 2018, https://www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/world-imagined-nostalgia-liberal-order; Nick

China's position on, and attitudes towards, its own institutions adjust to changing circumstances and preferences. For instance, Chinese leaders recently started to be more cautious on the Belt and Road, raising concerns on lending to related projects and potential backlash.[726] Similarly, Made in China 2025 is now being downplayed by Beijing, if nothing else to push back on accusations that it represents a threat to WTO rules.[727] Hence, if a "Beijing Consensus" ever existed, it would be constantly changing and adapting. Or, as Breslin puts it, "what the China model is—what it actually entails—is less important than what it is not."[728]

7.3.2 The swinging pendulum of power

Lastly, I consider the interplay between military, economic, and soft power. In Chapter 2, I mentioned that normative and soft power are sometimes confused. Diez and Manners however argue that the two notions differ since the former is a theoretical concept, while the latter is an empirical one. Simultaneously, normative power may itself be underpinned by other forms of power, notably military and economic. Although the question of whether soft power can be considered a mechanism of normative power would be interesting to explore, I here only look at how China has used a combination of soft, economic, and military power to ensure the success of its narratives and discourse.

Debates over China's role in Africa have often focused on its use of soft versus hard power. On the one hand, China has a vast arsenal of powerful tools to attract others, including Confucius Institutes, training programmes, public diplomacy, technology transfers, health initiatives, and capacity building.[729] However, as also

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Danforth, "What's So Disordered About Your World Order?," *War on the Rocks*, June 20, 2018, https://warontherocks.com/2018/06/whats-so-disordered-about-your-world-order/; Graham T. Allison, "The Myth of the Liberal Order," *Foreign Affairs* 97, no. 4 (2018): 124–33; Paul, "Misreading the 'Liberal Order': Why We Need New Thinking in American Foreign Policy," *Lawfare*, July 29, 2018, https://www.lawfareblog.com/misreading-liberal-order-why-we-need-new-thinking-american-foreign-policy.

[726] Keith Bradsher, "China Taps the Brakes on Its Global Push for Influence," *The New York Times*, June 29, 2018, sec. Business Day, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/29/business/china-belt-and-road-slows.html.

[727] See for instance: "Made in China 2025"; Sidney Leng and Yangpeng Zheng, "Beijing Plays down 'Made in China 2025' as Trump Escalates Trade Row," *South China Morning Post*, June 26, 2018, https://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2152422/beijing-tries-play-down-made-china-2025-donald-trump.

[728] Breslin, "The 'China Model' and the Global Crisis," 1324. What he means by different is "alternative to the neo-liberal project that had come to dominated developmental discourses in the first part of the millennium."; See ibid., 1324.

[729] See for instance Drew Thompson, "China's Soft Power in Africa: From the 'Beijing Consensus' to Health Diplomacy," *China Brief* 5, no. 21 (2005); Kenneth King, *China's Aid & Soft Power in Africa: The Case of Education & Training*, African Issues (Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, NY: James Currey, Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2013); James F. Paradise, "China and International Harmony: The Role of Confucius

highlighted earlier in the thesis, some scholars seem to think that China is rather "uncool".[730] This is especially the case in the West, where many are concerned over China's global expansion. On the other hand, the Chinese model is more popular across the developing world. In particular, China's economic and development model, its rising prosperity, and its stability are attractive to many leaders and people in Africa. According to d'Hooge, "China's overall diplomacy and public diplomacy in Africa are intimately intertwined, as China's Africa policies can be considered a resource of soft power in Africa."[731] Is it thus also possible to view the security-development nexus, which the PRC is eagerly promoting abroad, as a soft power tool? Or does Beijing's attractiveness operate outside of the 'usual' confines of the concept?[732] As a matter of fact, according to Li Mingjiang, by and large Chinese leaders conceptualise soft power in a way similar to Nye's original formulation.[733] Yet, he points out, such a discussion within China has a wider scope too and encompasses not only the more traditional elements of culture, political values, and foreign policy, but also others including capability and effectiveness in mass communication; institutional power; the power of political institutions, norms, and credibility; the international community's acceptance of a nation's policies; and overseas assistance programmes. Kurlantzick similarly suggests that in the context of China the idea of soft power is usually fairly broad: It

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Institutes in Bolstering Beijing's Soft Power," *Asian Survey* 49, no. 4 (2009): 647–69, doi:10.1525/as.2009.49.4.647; Mingjiang Li, ed., *Soft Power: China's Emerging Strategy in International Politics* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2009); Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive*; Nye, "The Limits of Chinese Soft Power."

730 Gao, "Why Is China So ... Uncool?"; Wike, Stokes, and Poushter, "Views of China and the Global Balance of Power." See also: Carminati, "Pushing the Boundaries of Soft Power"; Liu, "China's Human Rights Record, Military Aggression Hit Its Soft Power."

731 Ingrid d'Hooghe, *China's Public Diplomacy*, Diplomatic Studies, volume 10 (Leiden; Boston: Brill Nijhoff, 2015), 210.

732 When Nye developed the concept of soft power in the 1990s, he meant to call attention to an often neglected but essential aspect of US strength and influence, namely attraction. According to him, the power of attraction is 'soft' because it does not find its expression in coercive means, but rather highlights the ability to shape what others want: Joseph S. Nye, "Soft Power," *Foreign Policy*, 1990; However, it has been argued that Nye himself has fallen short of inquiring into his own concept of attraction and that the latter relies exclusively on the analysis of American power, which, while not a problem per se, may lead to attempts at universalising the particular, thus making it unfit for other countries. Furthermore, his analysis does not address the historical processes through which particular (American) values have come to be considered 'universal' and 'right', whilst others are considered 'parochial' and 'less right'. See Pınar Bilgin and Berivan Eliş, "Hard Power, Soft Power: Toward a More Realistic Power Analysis," *Insight Turkey* 10, no. 2 (2008): 5–20; Thomas Barker, "The Real Source of China's Soft Power," *The Diplomat*, accessed January 25, 2018, https://thediplomat.com/2017/11/the-real-source-of-chinas-soft-power/; In her critique of Nye's formulation, Mattern wonders "what exactly is it that makes an idea attractive or appealing in the first place?" Mattern, "Why 'Soft Power' Isn't So Soft: Representational Force and the Sociolinguistic Construction of Attraction in World Politics," 584 To be sure, she acknowledges, Nye does explain how an actor can 'amass' soft power: The surest means to secure it is to spread social knowledge about one's values; communication thus lies at the root of soft power. See ; Joseph S. Nye and William A. Owens, "America's Information Edge," 1996, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/1996-03-01/americas-information-edge.)

733 Mingjiang Li, "China Debates Soft Power," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 2, no. 2 (2008): 287–308, doi:10.1093/cjip/pon011.

includes "not only popular culture and public diplomacy but also more coercive economic and diplomatic levers like aid and investment and participation in multilateral organizations—Nye's carrots and sticks."[734] There is also a rich debate within Chinese policy circles and academia discussing the extent to which China should develop "its own independent theoretical discourse on soft power that reflects its values, national conditions, and long-term interests."[735] In particular, since 2005, when China began a transition towards a more active international role, Chinese intellectuals have started to ask how can the country convert its economic power into more enduring political and cultural influence and, starting in 2006, Chinese leaders have started to use the term soft power themselves. Their interests in soft power indeed constitutes an important foreign policy shift: Not only does China need to "do more than develop the institutional soft power of the Confucius Institutes that teach Chinese language and culture around the world; it also needs to develop normative soft power in order to create and export its understandings of the world … that conceptualize globalization in new and different ways."[736] Therefore, I would argue against those scholars who do not see China as having 'enough' soft power and instead maintain that, because China's understanding of soft power is broader than traditional definitions and thus incorporates more tools and strategies, it has helped to pave the way for China into Africa, couple with equally attractive economic incentives. To be sure, sales of military equipment and training were part of China's support for Africa's liberation movements already in the 1950s throughout the 1970s. However, at the time, military ties were mostly based on ideology and the desire to counter first Western and, second, Soviet influence.[737] Thus, soft and economic power concerns seem to have led

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[734] Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive*, 7.

[735] Yingchun Sun, "Tradition, Cultural Modernization, and Soft Power," in *China in the Xi Jinping Era*, ed. Steve Tsang and Honghua Men (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2016), 233, http://link.springer.com/10.1007/978-3-319-29549-7_9; since this is not a central topic of the thesis, I do not engage in a detailed discussion on China's soft power or the internal debates; for more on this, see for instance: d'Hooghe, *China's Public Diplomacy*, chap. 3; Weiwei Zhang, "Improving Public Diplomacy with Chinese Characteristics," *China International Studies* 3 (2009); G. H. Huo, "Wenhua Ruanshili de Zhexue Fansi [Philosophical Reflections on Cultural Soft Power]," *Xueshu Yanjiu* 3 (2011); Yingchun Sun, "Zhongguo Guojia Xingxiang de Wenhua Jiangou. [Cultural Construction of China's National Image]," *Jiaoxue Yu Yanjiu* 11 (2010); Zhimin Chen and Lilei Song, "The Conceptual Gap on Soft Power between China and Europe and Its Impact on Bilateral Relations," in *Conceptual Gaps in China-EU Relations: Global Governance, Human Rights and Strategic Partnerships*, ed. Zhongqi Pan (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=1058368; Huning Wang, "Guojia Shili de Wenhua: Ruan Quanli [Culture as a Component of National Strength: Soft Power]," *Fudan Xuebao [Fudan University Journal]*, 1993, 91–96; Li, *Soft Power*; Sheng Ding, *The Dragon's Hidden Wings: How China Rises with Its Soft Power*, Challenges Facing Chinese Political Development (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008); Li, "China Debates Soft Power."

[736] Callahan, "Introduction: Tradition, Modernity, and Foreign Policy in China," 6.

[737] See for instance Shinn and Eisenman, *China and Africa: A Century of Engagement*; Alden, *China in Africa*; Taylor, *China and Africa Engagement and Compromise*.

the way for China-Africa ties to develop to the point where, today, security occupies a central place in their interactions.

As Ngangom suggests, therefore, and unlike other major powers which have traditionally used military might and economic coercion to pursue their geopolitical ambitions, until now China has mostly relied on skillful public diplomacy, development assistance, and education programmes, among other tools, to 'secure' its way to stable relationships.[738] It is thus through soft and, to an extent, economic power, that Beijing has advanced its interests abroad. This was mainly due to lack of experience, unwillingness to be involved in foreign conflicts, and a cautious attitude in the security realm as compared to other major powers. However, this is possibly changing. Given its recent commitments to step up its global security and military footprint, it remains to be seen whether such 'inverted' soft-to-hard power path will last. For instance, the 2015 defence white paper sets out ambitious goals for the country's military modernisation and expansion, and a growing role is envisioned for the PLA abroad.[739] In the continent, the most obvious sign of these aims is represented by the Djibouti military base, which is also connected to a free-trade zone and to the BRI more broadly. In general, China is now upgrading its security diplomacy to complement its international presence in other spheres; leaders have reoriented foreign and security policy "with a new sense of confidence and mission that builds on new capabilities and responds to new threats as well as domestic and international expectations." [740] Similarly, economic statecraft has always been enmeshed with its foreign and security policy calculus.[741] However, this has become more the case recently than it has been in the past. One scholar even argues that China "has converted big credits into political influence and even a military presence", while others are discussing how China is the leading practitioner of geo-economics.[742] In this sense, China may thus be considered the perfect example of successful use of "smart" power, understood as the ability to combine hard- and soft-power resources into effective strategies.[743] Could its normative

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738 Ngangom, "The Sharp Power of Development Diplomacy and China's Edge."
739 "China's Military Strategy."
740 Huotari et al., "China's Emergence as a Global Security Actor," 34.
741 Ibid., 69.
742 Chellaney, "China Ensnares Vulnerable States in a Debt Trap"; Robert D. Blackwill and Jennifer M. Harris, *War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2016).
743 On the former concept, see Sam Parker and Gabrielle Chefitz, "Debtbook Diplomacy. China's Strategic Leveraging of Its Newfound Economic Influence and the Consequences for U.S. Foreign Policy," Policy Analysis Excercise (Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Center, May 2018); On the latter, see Chellaney, "China Ensnares Vulnerable States in a Debt Trap"; Ronak Gopaldas, "Lessons from Sri Lanka on China's 'Debt-Trap Diplomacy,'" *ISS Africa*, February 2018, https://issafrica.org/iss-today/lessons-from-sri-lanka-on-chinas-debt-trap-diplomacy.

power also consist in the ability to (re)shape traditional understandings (or standards) of foreign policy tools as being utilised by countries other than the US or the EU? As Diez and Manners suggest,

> the more normative power builds on military force, the less it becomes distinguishable from traditional forms of power, *because it no longer relies on the power of norms itself.* Indeed, the imposition of norms through military force cannot be equated with changing the behaviour of other actors, which relies primarily on socialisation processes. Thus, in contrast to Nye's arguments about combining soft and hard power, *normative power invariably diminishes in the presence of military force*.[744]

Hence, that remains an open question and the following chapter outlines further research ideas on the interplay between normative and other forms of power.

7.4 What kind of international actor is China rising into?

It is arguably too early to answer the question of what kind of actor China is rising into with any degree of certainty. But the risk of sliding into hegemonic behaviour is real. If China pursues its policies of military and security expansion, it may still be able to set international norms, but its credibility and image as a reliable, peaceful partner would be in peril. The effects of China's rise on its engagement in Africa and, in turn, the effects of its presence in the continent on its rise could not be more relevant for understanding its global role. As a matter of fact, I argue that if China had not grown so confident on the world stage, its engagement in the continent would not have developed so fast. Similarly, its perceived success in cultivating win-win partnerships in most countries in Africa contributed to strengthening its global image in important ways. A number of 'roles' emerge from the empirical analysis.

First, China wants to be both more active and more responsible in international affairs, although perhaps not in the way analysts in the 'West' would consider responsible. This implies that, in order to retain its legitimacy in the medium- to long-term, China is likely to continue to abide by the rules of the international game. Importantly, as Lanteigne notes,

> The 'maxi-mini' idea can arguably imply that China's approach to international regimes is distinct to the Chinese case. In reality, a strong case can be made that any given state approaches an international institution first with the question of how the regime can benefit the state, and only secondly vice versa, if at all. Differences in state approaches to international institutions can be found in the degree to which each state maximises the benefits of cooperation while minimising the costs. China, being a great power and developing global one, is in a better position to do so than many other nations.[745]

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[744] Manners and Diez, "Reflecting on Normative Power Europe," 180, emphasis added.
[745] Lanteigne, *China and International Institutions: Alternate Paths to Global Power*, 159.

Therefore, in pursuit of more control and influence of international processes, Beijing will continue to push for new institutions and initiatives that directly respond to its preferences and interests. Therefore, if we are looking for an explicit and outward challenge coming from the PRC to the existing system, we may indeed not find it. In a memorable speech at the World Economic Forum in 2017, Xi elevated himself and the country as protectors of free trade and investment liberalisation.[746] To quote China historian Gewirtz, "Xi envisions China becoming a superpower with the Party firmly in control over all aspects of life. If he succeeds, China will be the world's largest economy, a global leader in technological innovation with a modernized military, and the major force in Asia and beyond. He sees this as restoring its historic stature, 'the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation' that only the CCP can produce."[747] And again, in his speech at the 2018 BRICS Summit, Xi argued that "[The BRICS] must work together at the United Nations, the Group of 20, and the World Trade Organization to safeguard the rule-based multilateral trading regime, promote trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, and reject protectionism outright."[748]

Second, however, the analysis of China's Africa discourse across multilateral institutions shows that China *is* competing with existing great powers for influence over global norms, economy, and security. Whether this ambition is always targeted at challenging/threatening the US or the 'West' directly matters less than the ambition in itself. Initiatives such as the BRI, the Made in China 2025, and the China's 2050 Plan are all examples of what a world order with Chinese characteristics may look like. Of course, successfully realising and implementing these initiatives is easier said than done. In order for such plans to be successful, they need to be premised not only on solid economics calculus and sustainability, but also on China's legitimacy and normative power—meaning that China needs to keep delivering on its promises, both at home and abroad. As far as Africa is concerned, its leaders generally hold a favourable view of China and have been eager to share the profits and benefits of Chinese-sponsored initiatives, money, and projects. The 2016 Afrobarometer survey conducted in 36 African countries, which enquired into people's attitudes towards

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[746] "Full Text of Xi Jinping Keynote at the World Economic Forum," January 17, 2018, https://america.cgtn.com/2017/01/17/full-text-of-xi-jinping-keynote-at-the-world-economic-forum.
[747] Bill Bishop, "The Big Picture: China's Reform and Opening Turns 40," *Axios*, July 27, 2018, https://www.axios.com/china-40-year-anniversary-of-opening-and-reform-6a8f8da2-9c3e-4b5e-aa55-26d83934ca3c.html.
[748] "Full Text of Chinese President's Speech at Plenary Session of BRICS Johannesburg Summit," July 26, 2018, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/topics_665678/xgswfcxjxgjmlqs/t1580849.shtml?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter_axioschina&stream=top-stories.

China, found that 63 percent of respondents held positive views of China's economic and political influence, mostly due to investments in infrastructure and business development.[749] Civil society and researchers educated in the 'West' instead tend to be more critical of Chinese influence.[750] Moreover, Bräutigam argues, "[i]n Washington, Republicans *and* Democrats generally look at China as a new imperial power in Africa: bad news for Africans. … But researchers who have explored China's role in Africa suggest that many of the things our politicians believe about Chinese engagement are not actually true."[751] Hruby further identifies three common misconceptions that often cloud Western analyses and opinions of China's engagement in Africa.[752] First, many believe that infrastructure financing is the only "game in town"; instead, China's commercial engagement with African countries has significantly broadened and deepened in scope. Second, the notion that all BRI projects in the continent are carefully orchestrated by top party officials in Beijing should be weighed up against the evidence that leaders do not even keep a central information repository on the loans extended as part of the BRI. And third, it is common to think that African governments are passive in negotiating contracts with the Chinese, whereas many have refined their tactics to better serve their interests in time.[753] To be sure, this does not mean that there are no negative episodes, incidents, misperceptions, or problems.[754] Nor does it mean that China should not strive to improve its standards and practices. But it means that perceptions matter: The continued success of Chinese diplomacy in the continent and elsewhere does not only depend on how well Beijing behaves, but also on how the actors involved perceive and understand China, and how these perceptions are managed.

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[749] Yi Dionne Kim, "Here's What Africans Think about China's Influence in Their Countries," *Washington Post*, October 28, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/10/28/heres-what-africans-think-about-chinas-influence-in-their-countries/ To be sure, they also found that positive assessments of China do not mean that the "West" has been displaced entirely. Many still see the US as being the most popular model for development in their country; many also saw former colonial powers as having the greatest influence compared to both China and the US. See also page 32-33.

[750] Interview with researchers in Addis Ababa, January-February 2018.

[751] Deborah Bräutigam, "U.S. Politicians Get China in Africa All Wrong," *Washington Post*, April 12, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/theworldpost/wp/2018/04/12/china-africa/.

[752] Aubrey Hruby, "Dispelling the Dominant Myths of China in Africa," *Atlantic Council*, September 3, 2018, http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/dispelling-the-dominant-myths-of-china-in-africa?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed:+new-atlanticist-blog+(New+Atlanticist).

[753] This also reflects what my interviewee from the EU delegation to Ethiopia said about the Ethiopian government. See Chapter 5.

[754] For one of the latest instances of tensions, see for instance a recent report from The Standard in Kenya: Paul Wafula, "Revealed: SGR Workers Treated Badly by Chinese Masters," *The Standard*, July 8, 2018, https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001287179/revealed-sgr-workers-treated-badly-by-chinese-masters.

Third, unlike other countries nowadays, what emerges from the empirical chapters is a long-term vision: The international community may not like what a world with Chinese characteristics looks like, but it is undeniable that Beijing is projected into the future and such a vision encompasses more than just Asia. As Axios' VandeHei puts it, "China is thinking long-term—and acting now, everywhere."[755] The current pace of China's engagement with international affairs thus suggests that Beijing has all the intentions to leave its mark on international relations in the decades to come.

Fourth, it becomes clear that as much as China constructs itself as a responsible great power in its discourse and narratives, its identity as a developing country is equally, if not more, important to retain, if friendly relations with others in the Global South are to be maintained successfully. Hence, it should not come as a surprise that Chinese leaders, in this case the President himself, claim that "*China will stay as a developing country no matter how it develops*, staunchly support the development of developing countries and be committed to building close partnerships."[756]

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of the empirical analysis and discussed them in light of the theoretical framework and the conceptualisation of normative power outlined in Chapter 2. I have argued that China can be considered a normative power if we take normative power to mean power-in-context: The extent of China's norms-setting and norms-making potential depends on the different institutions and the country's position within such institutions vis-à-vis other players. Importantly, the success at establishing a stable and coherent discourse was possible not only thanks to the country's soft power, coupled with generous investments, but most importantly thanks to the response it encountered from African elites. By being seen as a trustworthy and respectful partner, China has promoted its model of security-development and made it attractive to developing countries as an alternative to traditional Western forms of engagement.

Such normative power has implications both for China's global rise as a security actor (and beyond) and for China-Africa relations. On the one hand, the Chinese

[755] Jim VandeHei, "China Is the Greatest, Growing Threat to America," *Axios*, May 21, 2018, https://www.axios.com/china-united-states-future-2025-2050-infrastructure-trade-d7091849-235f-4aa1-b63c-e86477e9cfe6.html.

[756] Xuequan Mu, "Xi Calls for Expanding 'BRICS Plus' Cooperation to Address Common Challenges," July 28, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/28/c_137352893.htm; For the Chinese version, see "习近平出席'金砖+'领导人对话会-新华网," July 27, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/world/2018-07/27/c_1123188035.htm; emphasis added.

vision of world order entails, among other features, a focus on the security-development nexus; continued assistance to developing countries in the fields of development, infrastructure building, trade, and investment, as well as increased securitisation and militarisation of foreign relations; and the promotion of Chinese preferred norms and practices via both existing organisations and new institutional arenas. In terms of China-Africa relations specifically, an even bigger engagement in the continent's security regime is envisioned, not only bilaterally but also through multilateralism and growing contributions to institutions such as the UN and the AU, as well as a focus on political mediation and diplomacy as the primary means to manage and resolve conflicts.

I have further stressed how China's skilful use of foreign policy means such as diplomacy and propaganda, which have promoted a model of partnership based on equal relations, have been fundamental in cementing relations with leaders in developing countries and I have argued that Chinese soft power has been effective and attractive in cementing relations with African countries.[757] Its normative power also translates into a series of foreign policy postures which we are likely to see more often: China wants to be more active and more responsible in international relations, but it also wants to compete for influence over global norms, economy, and security more or less directly. Far from being exhaustive, these conclusions prompt new questions on both China's rise and China-in-Africa, and the concluding chapter aims to suggest what the future research agenda on such topics may look like.

[757] For a discussion of diplomacy and propaganda as soft power means, see for instance Christopher Hill, *The Changing Politics of Foreign Policy* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2003).

Chapter 8 – Conclusion

But their history can be exemplary for us because it permits us to reflect upon ourselves,
to discover resemblances as well as differences:
once again self-knowledge develops through knowledge of the Other
(Tzvetan Todorov, The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other)

8.1 Summary of the argument and main findings

This thesis was motivated by what I identified as two different but interrelated problems with the literature on China's rise and on China-Africa. First, while the rise of China now occupies a great part of ongoing debates in IR, these still tend to view the issue through unproductive binaries, such as revisionism versus status quo, or peaceful rise versus threat. Furthermore, these debates are often the product of anxieties and concerns in the 'West' and especially the US, where scholars and analysts worry that the country's rise will challenge the current liberal order. Questions over China's rising power have become increasingly relevant these days, especially given its active participation in multilateralism, its contributions to existing international institutions, and the promotion of new institutions with Chinese characteristics. Second, the study of China-Africa relations has proved to be one of the most prolific fields across a range of disciplines, including IR, international political economy, development studies, and anthropology. Yet, micro-analyses, while valuable, often miss the wider context and the comparative dimension of Chinese engagement in the continent. In addition to these, we also find macro-analyses, which are useful to get a sense of the breadth of China's footprint, but often fail to contextualise these relations into broader developments in both the country's foreign policy and international affairs. In particular, peace and security are still underexplored aspects of China-Africa ties in the literature, although they have slowly come to occupy the centre stage of their interactions. Thus, I have argued for the need to understand China's rise as a security actor globally and in Africa as two sides of the same coin.

In order to address these gaps, I proposed an argument that is both theoretical and empirical. Theoretically, I have argued that the concept of normative power, understood as the power to shape the normal in international relations, gives us more nuanced insights into China's preferred norms and practices, as well as the mechanisms through which the country is promoting its vision of world order. Given that Chinese leaders are actively promoting their strategies and policy preferences as alternative norms to existing standards, the concept of normative power promises to reveal much more of China's attempts to socialise others into its vision of world order.

Normative power is here understood as power in context—in other words, it is given by the contingent context of interactions between actors. The Chinese tend to understand normative actions as resting on the idea of sovereignty and collective rights based on equality and mutual respect; hence, they seem to focus on a 'logic of relationship', which is aimed to optimize relations that are not necessarily symmetrical or equal, but which require reciprocity. In such a process, recognition from the other actors involved in the relation becomes fundamental: An actor's capacity to shape the normal depends on whether it is recognised as such by the target audience(s). In the case of China-Africa, it is thanks to years of intense and skilful 'diplomacy of respect' that China has gained from African elites the respect and recognition that are necessary to become norms-shapers. In this sense, therefore, a normative power is able to shape the normal only so long as the other actors involved in the interactions recognise its power as such. To be sure, China's economic clout and its attractive investments are important components of its policies in Africa. However, it is important to also look at how the discourse has contributed to the progress of Sino-African relations and to building an image for China of a friendly and trustworthy ally.

Empirically, I have claimed that not only is China being socialised into the international system, but it also actively contributes to shaping it—what scholars have called a two-way socialisation. In particular, it acts as a security norms-shaper in Africa and does so by: 1) proposing new norms and concepts that are based on its history and domestic experiences, or re-elaborating on existing norms and concepts by adding 'Chinese characteristics'; 2) simultaneously acting inside and outside of typically Western-dominated institutions; 3) creating or co-constituting regional forums in the developing world; and 4) framing these efforts into a broader foreign policy strategy that acts at the regional, the continental, and the global levels. I have thus made two related claims. First, China increasingly acts as a security norms-shaper in the continent as African elites recognise it as such: The stability of what I called the "South-South cooperation" discourse granted China the reputation of a trustworthy friend and partner, one that delivers on its promises and commitments and acts in pursuit of win-win cooperation. This discourse articulates China and Africa as long-term friends united in an anti-hegemonic struggle against the domination of the 'West'. These narratives have remained stable throughout a long period of engagement mostly thanks to such positive response encountered from African leaders, who have been hailed into China's vision of world order, and to the security-development nexus. As the concept entails a close link between the promotion of economic growth and social

development and the achievement of stability and peace, growing security and military commitments appear legitimate and reasonable. China's Africa discourse is structured into three layers, which gradually make space for peace and security. Starting from the basic "South-South cooperation" discourse, the second layer allows for a number of representations to develop, such as China and Africa as friends, brothers, and partners, and focuses on the developmental aspect of the security-development nexus, whereby development is considered a prerequisite for stability. The third layer introduces a new aspect of China's engagement—the securitisation of development—which understands the latter as necessarily premised on a peaceful and secure environment. This change produced a shift in policies, ranging from non-interference to growing military presence—which now align with the country's broader grand strategy—but not a change in the first and second layers of discourse, which remains stable and coherent.

The second and related claim I have made is that, as China-Africa security cooperation develops predominantly through multilateral institutions, its normative power potential varies depending on the contingent institution. China's Africa discourse is organised horizontally across three multilateral platforms through which peace and security matters are negotiated, namely the FOCAC, the AU, and the UNSC, and China promotes its vision of world order and its normative security agenda across all three platforms. Such efforts have, in turn, encountered responses from regions of the Global South. While the coherency of dominant representations of China and Africa is maintained across the three organisations, it seems that China tends to conform to existing norms and maintain the normative status quo when it operates within existing normative frameworks (the UN and the AU); while it shows a more active norms-making approach when it operates within the framework of Chinese-led or co-constituted regional organisations (the FOCAC). However, the Chinese discourse and diplomatic language are increasingly appearing and are becoming naturalised in the context of the UN as well. Therefore, depending on the country's role in each of these institutions, the potential for China to effectively promote its preferred security and development norms varies greatly. Hence, analysing Chinese-led forums and agreements reveals more of the country's distinctive normative practices than exclusively focusing on the country's behaviour in already established institutions. In other words, China is carving normative spaces for its preferred norms and practices to be spread across all levels of engagement, showing pragmatism but

also a long-term vision that sees China at the centre-stage of international affairs in the decades to come.

The empirical chapters have thus mapped China's Africa discourse in official policy documents. Through this process, I have identified a coherent set of representations of China and China-Africa that articulate China's long-term strategy in the continent and that sustain its foreign policy strategy. Such representations are supported by a series of political and historical narratives, such as the China-Africa friendship, a shared history of colonialism and Western encroachment, and the need to address the imbalance of a world dominated by the industrialised and developed 'North' through strengthened South-South cooperation. Through increased promotion of the security-development nexus as an essential element of China's discourse, peace and security have gradually found their space in the China-Africa story, to the point of becoming a key component of their contemporary relations. The discourse is structured along three layers: Starting from the basic "South-South cooperation" discourse, the second layer allows for a number of representations to develop, such as China and Africa as friends, brothers, and partners, and focuses on the developmental aspect of the security-development nexus. The third layer eventually introduces a new aspect of China's engagement—the securitisation of development—which understands the latter as necessarily premised on a peaceful and secure environment. This change produced a shift in the relevant policies, ranging from non-interference to growing military presence, but not in the first and second layers of discourse, which remains stable and coherent. Since the security-development nexus entails a close link between the promotion of economic growth and social development and the achievement of stability and peace, growing security and military commitments appear legitimate and reasonable. By presenting itself as a reliable partner and by being acknowledged as such across Africa, the Chinese model thus represents an attractive alternative to Western modes of engagement.

The Chinese 'vision' that emerges from the empirical chapters is one which entails, among other elements, a focus on the security-development nexus; continued assistance in the fields of development, infrastructure building, trade, and investment; increased militarisation and securitisation of foreign relations; and the promotion of Chinese preferred norms and practices via both existing organisations and new institutional arenas. In terms of China-Africa relations specifically, we are likely to witness an even bigger commitment to peacekeeping, increasing contributions to both

the UN and the AU, and an emphasis on political mediation and diplomacy as the primary means to manage and resolving conflicts.

8.2 Implications for IR and beyond

These conclusions have three main implications for IR. First, one of the objectives of this thesis was to advance a more nuanced understanding of China's rise and its relations with Africa. As I have argued, most analyses tend to sound the alarm bell over China's ascent to great power status, but few explore how such a rise is playing out besides the peaceful versus threatening binary. Yet, by employing less dichotomous lenses, it is possible to capture more elements of the country's changing foreign policy. This does not mean giving up a critical approach which should be the foundation of any research effort. It means exploring the empirical and theoretical underpinnings of China's rise with the aim to obtain a more thorough understanding of how the country's foreign policy evolves, both domestically and internationally.

Second, IR and IR theory should commit to a more serious study of Africa and its countries' foreign policies. Admittedly, because of the specific focus of this thesis, I failed myself at giving the continent the space it deserves. Since my focus was on China, Africa only played a secondary, albeit fundamental role as a case study to understand how Chinese normative power works. I remain aware that African politics does not only bear importance in light of China's engagement, but also, and more importantly, because African agency has an impact on world politics in a way that perhaps the IR discipline does not fully appreciate yet.[758] As much as Chinese leaders promote their own understanding of peace and security, so do Africans, and it is time for their agency and voices to be recovered in future theoretical and empirical research alike.

Third, and related, one way to improve on the study of Africa in world politics would be to draw upon insights that other disciplines have to offer. As noted by Ashworth, on the one hand, IR has always been interdisciplinary and combined a rich variety of disciplines throughout its development; on the other hand, it has not been interdisciplinary *enough* and it has started to absorb new ideas from other approaches only late.[759] By now, scholars doing IR also draw on history, sociology, anthropology,

[758] On IR's neglect of Africa see for instance: Stephen Wright, ed., *African Foreign Policies* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1999); A. J. Dietz et al., *African Engagements: On Whose Terms? Africa Negotiating an Emerging Multipolar World* (Brill, 2011), https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/handle/1887/21982; Kevin C. Dunn and Timothy M. Shaw, *Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave, 2001); Tom Young, ed., *Readings in the International Relations of Africa*, Readings in African Studies (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015).
[759] Lucian M Ashworth, "Interdisciplinarity and International Relations," *European Political Science* 8, no. 1 (2009): 16–25, doi:10.1057/eps.2008.11.

geography, area studies, and more, but further work is needed in order for each of the disciplines to be fully enriched by the others. The topic of China-Africa is an especially good starting point for pursuing such cross-pollination: As the field grows, so do multidisciplinary approaches to it, and the challenge is to produce a less fragmented and more accurately theorised body of works.[760]

8.3 Future research agenda

While I have offered some tentative answers to the questions that motivated this dissertation, more inevitably arise from my conclusions. Whether the rise of China would eventually lead to a different and new international order altogether, or whether China, and its normative power, are rising more within or outside of Western-led institutions, are prescient and urgent questions. Since it is unrealistic to address them all here, I conclude by suggesting ideas for future research on both China's rise and China-Africa.

8.3.1 Whither Chinese power?

I have argued that China can be considered a normative power if we understand it as power in context and that the degree to which the country is able to shape the normal in international relations varies across regions and organisations. The first question that stems from this is whether China can become a normative power beyond Asia and Africa. In a way, its growing influence in the UNSC is a proof that its norms-shaping and norms-setting potential is expanding outside of the developing world. It remains to be seen whether other major powers will be comfortable with a system increasingly shaped according to Chinese visions of world order. China's normative power rests on a successful and stable discourse that constructs relationships with partners as equal and mutually beneficial; most importantly, it also rests on the fact that the targeted audience recognises China as such. Thus, new questions should be asked on the extent to which Western countries will allow China to further push for its preferred norms at the global level. Moreover, while I limited my analysis to the ontological dimension of China's normative power, it would be interesting to ask

[760] Alden and Large, *New Directions in Africa-China Studies*; Reports from a recent conference of the Chinese in Africa and Africans in China Group held in Belgium highlight how scholars working on the topic are now younger and more ethnically and geographically diverse than in the past—a positive sign in the evolution of the field which should be cultivated and encouraged. One of the conference organisers shared her thoughts in a China-Africa podcast: "The China in Africa Podcast: China-Africa Scholars Are Becoming Younger and More Diverse," July 14, 2018, http://chinaafrica-podcast.com/china-africa-scholars-are-becoming-younger-and-more-diverse.

whether Chinese leaders have a prescriptive, normative view of China's vision of world order and its preferred norms, and how much this is reflected in the gap between theorising about China and its foreign policy practices. I have also discussed the dangers of linking normative power to military power: While these two are not incompatible, they are indeed in tension.[761] Yet, as we have seen, China's contemporary foreign policy is coming with increasing securitisation and militarisation of its international practices; this begs interesting questions on how will its (normative) power evolve in light of these developments and what is the likelihood of the PRC sliding into a "pure self-interested hegemony".[762] At least in its relations with Africa, China has so far mostly relied on a combination of economic instruments and soft power tools to gain respect and recognition as a reliable partner to the continent; it remains to be seen whether this will change as China starts projecting its military power beyond Asia. According to Hughes, whether one interprets Chinese domestic dynamics as pushing the country towards hegemony or empire in the long run, depends to a large extent on how one understands these concepts. For him,

> It seems safe to say that 19th-century-style colonization is unlikely at the start of the 21st century. Yet much of the expansion of European and American power has involved the building of informal empires. In the most aggressive cases, these have often been driven by the need to put in place counter- cyclical measures to alleviate the domestic political pressure that arises from economic imbalances, rather than by the economic fundamentals of international trade and investment. It is not hard to see how China's policies of subsidizing export offensives, creating 'reserve markets' to absorb excess production, tying down natural resources, and ensuring that the nation has sufficient hard power at its disposal to protect overseas assets and supply lines fi t this pattern.[763]

In this respect, Lanteigne maintains that the PRC's foreign policy behaviour so far suggests unwillingness to engage in revisionist behaviour; although the country has indeed moved towards a more "extroverted" foreign policy and upgraded its military power and the projection of such power abroad, it has equally shown unwillingness to use force—unless its core interests, especially state sovereignty, were threatened.[764] Good steps in this sense have been taken by a number of scholars recently. For instance, Allan, Vucetic, and Hopf argue that existing theories predicting the rise of China to be either peaceful or violent overlook the important questions of how strong and resilient the current Western hegemonic system is and how likely it is that China will lead a

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[761] See for instance Diez on the US, where military force is considered legitimate because it is underpinned by the belief that American norms (or the norms America wants to propagate) are universally valid: Diez, "Constructing the Self and Changing Others," 623.
[762] Manners and Diez, "Reflecting on Normative Power Europe," 174.
[763] Hughes, "China as a Leading State in the International System," 294.
[764] Lanteigne, *China and International Institutions: Alternate Paths to Global Power*, 145; for him, problems may arise in the future when China's core interests, including Taiwan, access to the Pacific, and a larger share of global resources and markets, overlap with other countries' interests, particularly the US.

successful counterhegemonic challenge.[765] They identify two paths to hegemony, both of which would be difficult for China to pursue, and they call for the need to do more empirical research on the history of hegemony, on the processes and mechanisms an aspiring hegemon may use to form a counterhegemonic bloc, and on how an aspiring hegemon might cultivate a favourable distribution of identity in the international order. Andersen, Coleey, and Nexon have also enquired into challenges to hegemony by looking at how public-goods substitution may undermine the liberal order's rules and norms without directly challenging the power-position of the hegemon, and contributions to their volume examine China's potential at undermining hegemony.[766]

8.3.2 In search of an identity

Another aspect which I neglected in this thesis is the construction of China's identity through its foreign policy discourse. While I have looked at representations of China and China-Africa, I have not lingered much on the ways in which Chinese identity is being (re)defined in the process of articulating foreign policies. In its relations with the continent, China's identity as a developing country and fellow member of the Global South has proved essential to its normative power. However, China presents itself in different guises to different audiences and partners.[767] According to Wei and Fu, China can be said to hold four identities simultaneously.[768] First, as a developing country, with residual socio-economic problems domestically and victim of Western colonisation: This identity plays out in alliances such as the FOCAC. Second, as an emerging power, it seeks alliances with other 'dissatisfied' powers, such as the BRICS and the SCO, which are built on shared perceptions of marginalisation and under-representation in the current world order. Third, as a member of the UNSC, not only does it have the power and responsibility to deal with global issues, but it also decides on the norms and principles regulating such issues. Fourth, some see China as a quasi-superpower, which creates expectations that are not placed on other countries. Breslin adds a fifth identity to the list, as a regional power.[769] Thus, questions should be asked

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[765] Bentley B. Allan, Srdjan Vucetic, and Ted Hopf, "The Distribution of Identity and the Future of International Order: China's Hegemonic Prospects," *International Organization*, 2018, 1–31.
[766] Morten Skumsrud Andersen, Alexander Cooley, and Daniel Nexon, "Undermining the Hegemon Via a Thousand Paper-Cuts? The Logics of Asset Substitution in World Politics," forthcoming.
[767] See Chapter 7, section 7.3.1.
[768] Zonglei Wei and Yu Fu, "China's Search for an Innovative Foreign Strategy," *Contemporary International Relations* 21, no. 2 (2011).
[769] Breslin, 'China and the Global Order', 617; on China's national identity and the orientation of its grand strategy, see Honghua Men, 'China's Position in the World and Orientation of Its Grand Strategy', in *China in the Xi Jinping Era*, ed. Steve Tsang and Honghua Men (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2016), 299–325, doi:10.1007/978-3-319-29549-7_12.

on how do these identities and the related discourses change; against which *Other(s)* does China picture itself depending on the different context; how are these identities constructed in the official discourse; which identity will prevail in the future—that of a great power or a member of the Global South.

8.3.3 Human rights: The thorny issue

It was highlighted by most of my interviewees at the UN how human rights is the main issue which they see as remaining highly contentious in the years to come. Recent reports from scholars and journalists on the situation in Xinjiang have sparked the debate once again. As many as 1 million Uyghurs have been reported to disappear in "re-education camps" as part of the government's re-education campaign aimed to silence "dissent" and exert pressure on China's Muslim population.[770] These prompted a UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD) hearing in August 2018. Its vice-chair Gay McDougall said the Committee believed the reports were credible and invited China to answer questions on the matter.[771] Not surprisingly, the Chinese delegation denied such concerns and instead highlighted the improved living standards reached in China thanks to growing economic prosperity across all its provinces and regions.[772] A Global Times editorial also rebuked accusations and argued that the government had achieved peace and stability in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) and that such an achievement "has come at a price that is being shouldered by people of all ethnicities in Xinjiang."[773] The Ministry further rebuked criticism by arguing that "the UN Human Rights High Commissioner and her office should abide by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, respect China's sovereignty, fairly and objectively fulfill its duties, and not listen to and believe

[770] See for instance: Adrian Zenz, "'Thoroughly Reforming Them towards a Healthy Heart Attitude': China's Political Re-Education Campaign in Xinjiang," *Central Asian Survey*, 2018, 1–27; "'Eradicating Ideological Viruses': China's Campaign of Repression Against Xinjiang's Muslims," *Human Rights Watch*, September 9, 2018, https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/09/09/eradicating-ideological-viruses/chinas-campaign-repression-against-xinjiangs; Gerry Shih, "China's Mass Indoctrination Camps Evoke Cultural Revolution," *AP News*, May 18, 2018, https://apnews.com/6e151296fb194f85ba69a8babd972e4b.

[771] Stephanie Nebehay, "U.N. Says It Has Credible Reports That China Holds Million Uighurs...," *Reuters*, August 10, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-rights-un/u-n-says-it-has-credible-reports-that-china-holds-million-uighurs-in-secret-camps-idUSKBN1KV1SU; Jeremy Goldkorn, "Xinjiang in the Spotlight at Forthcoming UN Hearing," *SupChina*, August 13, 2018, https://supchina.com/2018/08/13/xinjiang-in-the-spotlight-at-forthcoming-un-hearing/.

[772] "UNPO: China: Beijing Denies UN CERD's Concerns over Tibetans and Uyghurs," August 14, 2018, http://unpo.org/article/21028.

[773] "Protecting Peace, Stability Is Top of Human Rights Agenda for Xinjiang," August 12, 2018, http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1115022.shtml.

one-sided information."[774] The Chinese also claim that Xinjiang enjoys social stability, sound economic development, and "harmonious coexistence of different ethnic groups … The series of measures implemented in Xinjiang are meant to improve stability, development, solidarity and people's livelihood, crack down on ethnic separatist activities and violent and terrorist crimes, safeguard national security, and protect people's life and property."[775]

Hence, the top 'human rights' priority for China in Xinjiang is to protect stability through the securitisation of people's daily lives. While it is yet to be seen whether there will be any follow-up actions on these reports and whether the Chinese government will change and adapt their narratives accordingly, there is momentum among both the institutional and academic communities for the discussion to continue, as tensions over diverging understanding of rights will likely remain central in relations between China and the West in the years to come. More research is thus needed in the field, although it is increasingly hard for journalists and scholars to freely report on the issue and many have been denied visas or expelled from China following critical essays.[776]

8.3.4 China in Africa: future trends

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the field of China-Africa studies is growing fast and so is the relevant academic literature. Detailing all the potential avenues for future studies of the entire field would require a PhD of its own; however, a number of questions arise in direct relation with the conclusions I advanced. First, some in the community of China-Africa experts and analysts have started to wonder whether we have reached "peak China-Africa" and argued that the Chinese model is "failing Africa."[777] They seem to believe that the outcome of the FOCAC 2018

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[774] "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang's Regular Press Conference on September 11," September 11, 2018, 11, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1594148.shtml; the UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet recently called on China to allow UN monitors into Xinjiang .

[775] "Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Geng Shuang's Regular Press Conference on September 10," September 10, 2018, 10, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1593756.shtml.

[776] Tom Phillips, "Ursula Gauthier: Foreign Media Must Fight China Censorship, Says Expelled Journalist," *The Guardian*, December 31, 2015, sec. World news, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/31/ursula-gauthier-foreign-media-must-fight-china-censorship-says-expelled-journalist; Emma Graham-Harrison, "China 'ejects' US Journalist Known for Reporting on Xinjiang Repression," *The Guardian*, August 22, 2018, sec. World news, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/22/china-ejects-us-journalist-known-for-reporting-on-xinjiang-repression; see also the recent report from Brookings on China's strategic approach at the Human Rights Council: Ted Piccone, "China's Long Game on Human Rights at the United Nations," Foreign Policy at Brookings (Brookings, September 2018).

[777] Luke Patey, "The Chinese Model Is Failing Africa," *Financial Times*, August 26, 2018, https://www.ft.com/content/ca4072f6-a79f-11e8-a1b6-f368d365bf0e; "Peak China-Africa" is just one

demonstrates that Africa now plays a diminished role in China's global agenda. However, based on the conclusions I offer in this thesis, Chinese engagement is more likely to becoming more diverse and span a wider range of sectors and countries, rather than diminish altogether, and we are yet to see how such diversification will impact Sino-African relations in the long-term. Thus, rather than unsubstantiated predictions, the field would benefit from more empirical and field analysis that explores the different patterns of Chinese engagement and how they vary in time and across countries. And second, the literature would benefit from more research on the effects of Chinese engagement on autocratic and corrupt regimes in Africa. While many have argued that China may be responsible for propping up autocracies, with a few exceptions there have not been many empirical studies in this sense yet.[778] During the 7th FOCAC, Chinese officials were asked about corruption in African countries and Chen Tao, former head of the MFA's Africa division and former ambassador of China in Mali and Morocco commented that it was unfair to blame China for supporting corrupt governments, as those governments were elected by the people in the first place.[779] While this rhetoric ignores the reality of the many cases of undemocratic elections across the continent, it fits into the broader shift in narrative identified earlier, with Chinese media and representatives now more eager than ever to defend China's conduct abroad and respond to criticism over loaning and financing practices.[780] Questions thus need to be asked as to whether China's illiberal politics may make it easier for corrupt leaders to hold on to power; how we can best measure such effects;

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of the several phrases in the latest media obsession with attaching "peak" to every aspect of Chinese politics these days, including "Peak Xi" and "Peak China."

[778] For more on charges that China's engagement contributes to corruption and autocracy, see for instance Moises Naim, "Rogue Aid," *Foreign Policy*, October 2009, https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/10/15/rogue-aid/; Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive*; for quantitative analyses of the impact of Chinese involvement on autocracies, see: Julia Bader, "China, Autocratic Patron? An Empirical Investigation of China as a Factor in Autocratic Survival," *International Studies Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (2015): 23–33; Julia Bader, *China's Foreign Relations and the Survival of Autocracies*, Routledge Explorations in Development Studies (London: Routledge, 2015); Julia Bader, "Propping up Dictators? Economic Cooperation from China and Its Impact on Authoritarian Persistence in Party and Non-Party Regimes: Propping up Dictators?," *European Journal of Political Research* 54, no. 4 (2015): 655–72.

[779] Ben Blanchard, "Corrupt Government? You Voted for Them - China Pushes Back at Africa Summit," *Reuters*, September 5, 2018, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-africa-summit-analysis/corrupt-government-you-voted-for-them-china-pushes-back-at-africa-summit-idUSKCN1LL0EV.

[780] For more on democracy and elections in Africa, see for instance: Cheryl Strauss Einhorn, "Undemocratic Democracies in Rwanda and Central Africa," *Council on Foreign Relations*, December 10, 2015, https://www.cfr.org/blog/undemocratic-democracies-rwanda-and-central-africa; Barbara Yoxon, "Why Elections Don't Always Equal Democracy: The Case of Kenya," *The Conversation*, November 30, 2017, http://theconversation.com/why-elections-dont-always-equal-democracy-the-case-of-kenya-88341; Nic Cheeseman, "These Are the Key Lessons We Learned about Democracy in Africa in 2017," *Quartz Africa*, December 12, 2017, https://qz.com/africa/1153821/africas-democracy-2017-kenya-south-africa-cameroon-zimbabwe-showed-democracy-is-still-developing/.

if and how China is having any negative effect on democratisation trends across the continent; and how are these accusations dealt with in the official foreign policy discourse in China.

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Annex I – List of Interviews

1. Interview with Professor, Peking University, Beijing, 01/06/2016
2. Interview with Professor 2, Peking University, Beijing, 02/06/2016
3. Phone interview with Former Special Representative for African Affairs at the MFA, 02/06/2016
4. Interview with senior researcher, SIIS, Shanghai, 06/06/2016
5. Interview with diplomat from Botswana, Shanghai, 06/06/2016
6. Interview with diplomat from Nigeria, Shanghai, 06/06/2016
7. Interview with diplomat from Liberia, Shanghai, 06/06/2016
8. Interview with senior researcher, CIIS, Beijing, 14/06/2016
9. Interview with diplomat from Somalia, Beijing, 15/06/2016
10. Interview with former Head of Policy on Peace Support Operations, AUC, London, 10/01/2017
11. Interview with senior researcher and Associate Academic Director, IPSS, Addis Ababa, 20/01/2017
12. Interview with, Professor, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, 31/01/2017
13. Interview with senior researcher 1, ISS, Addis Ababa, 02/02/2017
14. Interview with senior officer, UNECA, Addis Ababa, 03/02/2017
15. Interview with senior officer, AUC Peace and Security Department, Addis Ababa, 08/02/2017
16. Interview with diplomat, EU delegation to Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, 08/02/2017
17. Interview with senior British military officer, UN Peacekeeping training centre, Addis Ababa, 09/02/2017
18. Interview with senior officer, UNECA, Addis Ababa, 09/02/2017
19. Interview with diplomat, EU delegation to the AU, Addis Ababa, 10/02/2017
20. Interview with officer, AUC Peace and Security Department, Addis Ababa, 13/02/2017
21. Interview with senior officer, AUC Peace and Security Department, Addis Ababa, 13/02/2017
22. Interview with Ambassador, Head of conflict prevention and early warning division, AUC, Addis Ababa, 14/02/2017
23. Interview with senior researcher 2, ISS, Addis Ababa, 15/02/2017
24. Interview with former diplomat, MFA, Beijing, 14/04/2017

25. Phone interview with Former Special Representative for African Affairs at the MFA, 27/04/2017
26. Interview with senior researcher, CICIR, 03/05/2017
27. Interview with senior officer, UNDP, Beijing, 05/05/2017
28. Interview with Ambassador for FOCAC Affairs, MFA, Beijing, 01/06/2017
29. Interview with senior researcher, Understanding Violent Conflict Group, SSRC, New York, 27/03/2018
30. Interview with senior officer 1, UNDPKO, New York, 29/03/2018
31. Interview with officer 2, UNDPKO, New York, 29/03/2018
32. Interview with senior officer 3, UNDPKO, New York, 29/03/2018
33. Phone interview with senior policy officer 4, UNDPKO, New York, 18/04/2018

Annex II – Summary of FOCAC Peace and Security Commitments, 2000-2018

	FOCAC 2000	FOCAC 2003	FOCAC 2006	FOCAC 2009	FOCAC 2012	FOCAC 2015	FOCAC 2018
Peace and Security ($)					- RMB600 million free assistance to the AU within three years starting from 2012	- USD60 million of free military assistance to the AU over the next three years; - support operationalization of the APSA - support operationalization of the African Capacity for the Immediate Response to Crisis and the African Standby Force	- USD100 million in military assistance to support the African Standby Force and African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis - China-Africa Peace and Security Fund (but no indication of $)
Peacekeeping		- China considers intensifying participation	- Support the AU's leading role in resolving	- Intensified cooperation with African countries in peacekeeping	- Continued support to UN PKOs	- Continued support and participation in PKOs &	- Continued active role in PKOs - Considers sending more

		- Strengthen the capacity of African States to undertake PKOs - Logistical support	African issues - Take an active part in UN PKOs in Africa	theory research, peacekeeping training and exchanges and in supporting the building of peacekeeping capacity in Africa.		peacekeeping training	peacekeepers to Africa at the request of the UN - Support Africa's capacity-building for independent PKOs - Provide peacekeeping and police training - Support PKOs with force multipliers and enablers - Actively implement the US$100 million military assistance in support of the African Standby Force and African Capacity for Immediate

							Response to Crisis - Deployment of the first helicopter squad to UN PKOs in Africa - Appropriation of China-UN Peace and Development Fund to UN peacekeeping missions in Africa
Peacebuilding				- Strengthened cooperation with countries concerned in the UN Peace Building Commission - Support countries in their post-war reconstruction processes	- Personnel exchanges and training in peace and security and Africa's conflict prevention, management and resolution and post-conflict reconstruction and development	- Intensify communication and coordination with Africa in the UNSC - Strengthen capacity of regional and sub-regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in conflict prevention and	

						crisis management, and in post-conflict stabilization	
Anti-piracy and anti-terrorism	- Work together with Africa to improve cooperation in the fight against terrorism	- Supports of Africa's efforts to prevent and combat terrorism	- Agree to strengthen counter-terrorism cooperation - Explore ways of counter-terrorism cooperation with African countries	- Counter-piracy efforts in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia	- Counter-piracy efforts in the Gulf of Aden and in waters off the coast of Somalia - China is ready to strengthen cooperation with Somalia, the African Union and relevant African sub-regional organizations in this field. - Strengthen communication and cooperation on fighting all forms of terrorism - Holistic approach: addressing both the symptoms	- Strengthen information and intelligence exchanges and experience sharing on security - Share this information timeously to support mutual efforts in the prevention and fight against terrorism, in particular its symptoms and underlying causes. - Counter-piracy efforts in the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Guinea and in waters off the coast of Somalia	- Continued military aid to the AU - Support countries in the Sahel region and those bordering the Gulf of Aden and the Gulf of Guinea in upholding security and combating terrorism - Establish dialogue and cooperation with Afripol - Step up intelligence sharing and coordination of actions in fighting terrorism and

					and root causes of terrorism	- Strengthen cooperation on safeguarding the security of shipping routes in the waters concerned and peace and stability in the region	cross-border crimes - Work together to carry out training sessions
Role of the UN	- Highlight the primary role of the UNSC in safeguarding world peace and security - Efforts to push forward the reform of the UN and international financial institutions	- Step up cooperation to support an even greater role of the UN in preventing, mediating and resolving conflicts in Africa	- Increase the authority and efficiency of the UN through reform	- Continued support to the UNSC in playing a constructive role in solving conflicts in Africa	- Uphold the central role of the United Nations in international affairs and promote multilateralism and democracy in international relations	- Continued support the UN in its efforts to play a constructive role in helping resolve regional conflicts in Africa - Intensify communication and coordination with the UNSC	- Commitment to mutual support in international affairs, and to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, multilateralism, the authority of the United Nations, and the important role of the UN in international affairs

Support for Africa at UN	- Developing countries should be more adequately represented in the UNSC and international economic and financial institutions - Call for the recognition of the legitimate place due to Africa in the SC and other agencies	- China's commitment to stand by the African countries at the United Nations and other international fora and support proposals and positions of the African Union	- Reforming the UN SC to increasing the representation of developing countries, African countries in particular - Build a conference centre for the African Union	- Need for strengthening the role of the United Nations through its reform and, as a matter of priority, increasing the representation of African countries in the Security Council and other UN agencies	- Need for necessary reforms of the United Nations - Historical injustice against African countries should be redressed and priority should be given to increasing the representation of African countries in the UNSC and other institutions	- Strengthen coordination and cooperation on regional and international issues of common interests, - Safeguard the common interests of China, Africa and other developing countries	- Work with Africa to raise the voice and influence of developing countries in the field of UN peacekeeping
Security-Development Nexus & BRI	- The injustice and inequality in the current international system are incompatibl	- Destabilizing factors against world peace and security are on the rise, while the unfair and inequitable	- Imbalance in global development, widening gap between North and South, the combination of traditional	- A harmonious world of enduring peace and common prosperity would not be possible without	- We should promote peace and stability in Africa and create a secure environment for Africa's development - Jointly promote peace and	- Actively explore the **linkages between China's initiatives of building the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century**	- **Step up "Belt and Road" security cooperation** with particular focus on railway, industrial

	e with the trend of the times towards world peace and development, hinder the development of the countries of the South and pose threats to international peace and security - The establishment of a just and equitable new international political and economic order is indispensable for the democratisa	international order has not seen fundamental changes - Economic globalization, on the other hand, has reinforced interdependence among countries and regions, while at the same time bringing more challenges than opportunities to developing countries.	and non-traditional security threats as well as increasing factors of instability and uncertainty standing in the way of peace and development all pose a daunting challenge to developing countries in their pursuit of sustainable development. - Without peace and development in China and Africa, there will be no global	peace and development in Africa. We believe that **development is the foundation for peace in Africa**. - Conflict and poverty often come hand in hand and form a vicious cycle. If Africa is to achieve durable peace and stability, it needs to speed up economic and social development and let all the people share the benefits of development	development in the continent.	**Maritime Silk Road and Africa's economic integration and sustainable development agenda** - Seek more opportunities to promote common development and realize our common dreams	parks and major events - Step up the sharing of intelligence, technologies and experience - Increase joint exercise and training to **improve African law enforcers' ability to safeguard the security of major domestic economic projects and protect the safety of Chinese nationals, Chinese companies and major projects.** - Strong synergy between the

	tion of international relations and for the effective participation of developing countries in the international process of decision-making.		peace and development				BRI and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations, Agenda 2063 of the African Union (AU), as well as the development strategies of African countries.
Arms Control	- Pledge to fully cooperate at international fora to prevent and combat the problem of illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking		- Pledge to continue to support and take part in the humanitarian de-mining operations in Africa and the effort to combat illicit trade in small arms and		- Continued support to African countries' effort to combat illegal trade and circulation of small arms and light weapons		

	of small arms and light weapons		light weapons				
Non-Traditional Security		- Non-traditional security issues such as terrorism, small arms trafficking, drug trafficking, illegal migration, transnational economic crimes, infectious diseases and natural disasters have become new variables affecting international and regional security, posing new challenges to international	- New challenge to global peace and security posed by non-traditional security issues such as natural disasters, refugees and displaced persons, illegal migration, transnational crimes, drug smuggling and communicable diseases - New security concept with mutual trust, mutual			- Jointly manage non-traditional security issues and global challenges such as food security, energy security, cyber security, climate change, biodiversity conservation, major communicable diseases and transnational crimes	- Coordinated efforts to deal with both traditional and non-traditional security threats

		and regional peace and stability	benefit, equality and coordination at its core - Strengthen exchanges and cooperation in the non-traditional security field				
Cooperation with AU & Sub-regional organisations	- Step up cooperation to support an even greater role of the UN, the AU, and other sub-regional African organizations in preventing, mediating and resolving conflicts in Africa - Continued attention to	- Continued active participation in the peacekeeping operations and de-mining process in Africa - Provide financial and material assistance as well as relevant training to the Peace and Security Council of	- Continue to strengthen cooperation with the AU and sub-regional organizations and institutions in Africa - Support the AU"s leading role in resolving African issues - Take an active part in UN peace-keeping	- China expressed welcome to the establishment of an AU representative office in Beijing at an appropriate time	- China welcomes the African Union to establish a representative office in Beijing at an appropriate time - Launch the "Initiative on China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security" - Provide financial and technical support to the African Union	- Important role of the AU in safeguarding peace and stability in Africa, promoting the development of Africa, and advancing the integration process of Africa - Efforts and contributions made by China to support Africa's peaceful and stable development and integration	- Consolidate and strengthen the momentum of friendly exchanges between China and the AU and Africa's sub-regional organizations to enhance strategic trust and practical cooperation - China will continue to engage with the AU and

	the issue of African refugees and displaced persons - Continued active participation in the peacekeeping operations and de-mining process in Africa - Provide financial and material assistance as well as relevant training to the Peace and Security Council of the African Union	the African Union	operations in Africa - Build the AU convention centre in Addis Ababa		for its peace-support operations, the development of the APSA		sub-regional organizations of Africa through various consultations and dialogues to strengthen communication over the economic development of Africa and its sub-regions and important regional issues - China will continue to support the capacity building of the AU and Africa's sub-regional organizations

Military & Other Relevant Training			- China will provide financial and material assistance and related training for African countries within its capacity		- Personnel exchanges and training in the field of peace and security and Africa's conflict prevention, management and resolution and post-conflict reconstruction and development	- Deepen exchanges on technologies and expand personnel training and joint trainings and exercises	- 50 security assistance programs to advance China-Africa cooperation under the BRI, and in areas of law and order, UN PKOs, fighting piracy and combating terrorism - Expand defense and military personnel training - Deepen academic exchanges and cooperation among military academies and research institutes - Enhance cooperation

							on military medical science - One training session every year 2019 to 2021 to train 100 African anti-corruption officials - Establishment of **China-Africa Law Enforcement and Security Forum** - In the next three years, provision of police equipment, and short-term law enforcement training courses