The Symbolism of Chinese Power: Understanding the Constructs of China in Africa and China’s Normative Foreign Policy

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Declaration of Originality

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Tom Harper, 29th August 2018
Abstract

The case of China’s engagement with the African states has been one of the key case studies of Chinese foreign policy in the Post-Cold War era. This has resulted in the creation of a vast body of literature studying these policies, with the American and Chinese depictions of China’s African policies being unified into two, coherent narratives by several recurring constructs. While examples of Chinese engagement with the African states have already been subject to extensive study, the knowledge on China in Africa has not been subjected to the same degree of examination, let alone the process of how it is created nor what it symbolises.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the constructs of China’s African policies from the established body of literature and to apply these concepts to the official discourses on China’s engagement with Sudan and Zimbabwe. This served to explore how the competing American and Chinese constructs were symbolic of the competition for the construction of China’s international identity as well as being reflective of two normative systems that seek to spread themselves to a wider context. By doing so, these constructs served to illustrate the nature and methodology of Chinese foreign policy, which has utilised the shared experience of European imperialism and national liberation to successfully cement China’s ties with the African states. This has also seen soft power enjoy an equal, if not greater, status to hard power in Chinese policy, which has been largely missing from the populist images of China’s rise which have focused chiefly on the augmentation of China’s military assets. Such a perspective has resulted in a skewed representation of Chinese strategies, which has led to the factors behind the success of Chinese foreign policy being ignored.
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The Symbolism of Chinese Power

Contents
Declaration of Originality .................................................................................................................. 2
Abstract ............................................................................................................................................. 3
Acknowledgements .............................................................................................................................. 4
Contents ................................................................................................................................................ 5
List of Tables ......................................................................................................................................... 9
List of Figures ......................................................................................................................................... 10
List of Abbreviations ............................................................................................................................. 11
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .............................................................................................................. 12
  1.1 From Revolution to Development: The Background of Chinese Policy towards Africa .... 13
  1.2 The Codification of China in Africa ............................................................................................. 15
  1.3 Research Issues ............................................................................................................................. 18
    1.31 Cultural Soft Power: Is it Truly Soft Power? .............................................................................. 18
    1.32 The China Model: Legitimising Authoritarianism or a New Paradigm for Development? .............................................................................................................................................. 23
    1.33 What is China and What is Africa? ............................................................................................. 25
  1.4 The Literature and Themes of China in Africa ........................................................................... 26
    1.41 The Themes of the Chinese Perception of China in Africa ......................................................... 27
    1.42 The Structures of Experience and their Influence on the Creation of the Perceptions of China in Africa .................................................................................................................................................. 28
  1.5 Research Objectives ..................................................................................................................... 30
  1.6 The Corpus .................................................................................................................................... 31
  1.7 Significance .................................................................................................................................. 33
  1.8 Summary ....................................................................................................................................... 37
  1.9 Thesis Structure and Chapter Outline .......................................................................................... 38
CHAPTER 2 THEORY AND METHODOLOGY .................................................................................... 40
  2.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 40
  2.2 Symbolic Power and the Habitus ................................................................................................. 42
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

2.3 Foucault’s Discourse and the Archaeology of Knowledge........................................44

2.31 Normative Chinese Power .........................................................................................47

2.32 How does This Tie into International Relations Theory? ........................................51

2.4 Research Methods .......................................................................................................57

2.5 Data ..............................................................................................................................66

2.51 Coding Phrases ........................................................................................................69

2.6 Concepts and Processes .............................................................................................73

2.61 Preliminary Terminology ........................................................................................74

2.7 Summary ......................................................................................................................76

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW ................................................................................77

3. Introduction to the Literature .......................................................................................77

3.1 Preliminary Themes and Constructs ........................................................................78

3.2 Introduction to the Anglophone Literature on Chinese Engagement in Africa ..........80

3.21 China as a Rival: The Threat Perception ................................................................80

3.22 China as an exploiter (the voracious dragon) ............................................................84

3.23 The Critique of Non-Intervention: China the Facilitator and China the Neo-Imperial
    Power .............................................................................................................................87

3.3 Introduction to the Chinese literature .........................................................................95

3.31: Mutuality ................................................................................................................96

3.32 Culture and Soft Power ............................................................................................97

3.33 China as a Role Model and the Beijing Consensus ..................................................102

3.34 From Communism to Confucianism: The Rise of the China Dream ......................104

3.4 The African Perspective on China in Africa ...............................................................108

3.5 Points of Contention ..................................................................................................113

3.6 Research gap ..............................................................................................................115

CHAPTER 4: THE CASE OF SUDAN ...............................................................................118

4. Introduction ................................................................................................................118

4.1 Background of Chinese Engagement in Sudan .........................................................119
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

4.2 Research Process and the Corpus ........................................................................... 120

4.2.2 Expectations from the Literature ......................................................................... 121

4.3 Results of the Coding Process ................................................................................ 124

4.4 The American Constructs of China’s Policies in Sudan ........................................ 125

4.4.1 China the Exploiter ............................................................................................ 128

4.4.2 China the Empire ............................................................................................... 131

4.4.3 China the Facilitator .......................................................................................... 135

4.4.4 China the Rival / Responsible stakeholder ......................................................... 139

4.5 The Chinese Constructs of China’s Policies in Sudan ............................................. 143

4.5.1 The China Dream .............................................................................................. 146

4.5.2 China the Role Model ....................................................................................... 149

4.5.3 Mutuality ........................................................................................................... 155

4.5.4 Cultural Soft Power ........................................................................................... 159

4.6 Summary ................................................................................................................ 164

CHAPTER 5: THE CASE OF ZIMBABWE ....................................................................... 166

5. Introduction .............................................................................................................. 166

5.1 Background ............................................................................................................ 166

5.2 Research Process .................................................................................................. 167

5.2.1 Expectations from the Literature .................................................................... 168

5.3 Results .................................................................................................................. 170

5.4 The Chinese Discourse ........................................................................................ 170

5.4.1 Mutuality .......................................................................................................... 173

5.4.2 China as a Role Model ..................................................................................... 178

5.4.3 The China Dream ............................................................................................. 182

5.4.4 Cultural Soft Power ......................................................................................... 188

5.5 The American Discourse ....................................................................................... 193

5.5.1 China the Facilitator ....................................................................................... 196

5.5.2 China the Exploiter ......................................................................................... 198
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

5.53 China the Empire .............................................................. 201
5.54 China the Rival ................................................................. 204
5.6 Summary ........................................................................... 207

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION .......................................................... 209
6.1 Introduction ......................................................................... 209
6.2 Summary of the Results ...................................................... 209
   6.21 The Chinese Discourse ..................................................... 212
   6.22 The American Discourse .................................................. 219
6.3 Limitations ......................................................................... 222
6.4 Normative Power and the Role of Experiences .................... 225
6.5 Implications ....................................................................... 227
6.6 Plans for Future Work ......................................................... 233
6.7 Towards the Future of the Constructs of China ..................... 236
6.8 Conclusion ........................................................................ 237

BIBLIOGRAPHY ........................................................................ 240
Primary Sources ........................................................................ 240
Secondary Sources .................................................................... 262
List of Tables

Table 1: Constructs and Coding Phrases for the Chinese Corpus ................................................. 69
Table 2: Constructs and Coding Phrases for the American Corpus ............................................. 71
Table 3: The Constructs of the Anglophone literature .................................................................. 94
Table 4: The Constructs of the Chinese Literature ...................................................................... 106
Table 5: Combinations of Constructs in the American Corpus .................................................... 126
Table 6: The American Constructs ............................................................................................ 142
Table 7: Construct Combinations in the Chinese Corpus ............................................................. 145
Table 8: The Chinese Constructs .................................................................................................. 163
Table 9: The Combination of the Constructs in the Chinese Corpus ............................................ 173
Table 10: The Chinese Constructs ............................................................................................... 192
Table 11: Combinations of the Constructs in the American Corpus ............................................ 195
Table 12: The American Constructs ............................................................................................. 206
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

List of Figures

Figure 1: The Frequency of the American Constructs’ Recurrence ................................................. 125
Figure 2: Coverage of the Reports in the American Corpus .......... Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 3: Coverage of the Statements in the American Corpus .......... Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 4: Coverage of the Speeches and Interviews in the American Corpus Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 5: The Frequency of the Chinese Constructs’ Recurrence .................................................. 143
Figure 6: The Coverage of the Chinese Constructs in the Reports ...... Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 7: Coverage of the Chinese Constructs in the Speeches .......... Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 8: Coverage of the Chinese Constructs in the Press Conferences Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 9: The Frequency of the Chinese Constructs ................................................................. 170
Figure 10: Coverage of the Chinese Constructs in the Reports .................................................. 172
Figure 11: Coverage of the Chinese Constructs in the Interviews and Speeches Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 12: Frequency of the American Constructs ................................................................. 193
Figure 13: Coverage of the American Constructs in the Reports ...... Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 14: Coverage of the American Constructs in the Statements and Interviews Error! Bookmark not defined.
List of Abbreviations

CI Confucius Institute

CNPC China National Petroleum Corporation

FOAC Forum of Africa China Cooperation

PLA People’s Liberation Army

PRC People’s Republic of China

SOE State Owned Enterprise

SPLA Sudanese Peoples’ Liberation Army

ZANU-PF Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The case of China’s initiatives in the African states has been one of the most examined areas of Chinese foreign policy outside of Asia. This has generated a vast body of literature and perceptions of these policies, whether it be the activities of Chinese companies in the continent or the rise of Chinese development initiatives in the African states (Kim, 2013, pg. 25). Most of these works have primarily focused on the economic dimensions of China’s African policies in line with its increasing centrality to the engine of global economic growth and have been dominated by several recurring themes and constructs (Gu, 2009, pg. 3). This means that while there has been a vast body of knowledge on China in Africa, there has been little consideration of how the knowledge on this subject has been created. In addition, the focus on the economic aspects of it has also eclipsed the other considerations behind Chinese foreign policy, most notably the more normative angle of it, something that appears to be out of step with the current developments in these policies. This has become an imperative as the current state of Chinese foreign policy has focused as much on China’s role in the wider world as it has done on the country’s development.

The purpose of my research is to explore the normative and causative factors behind the constructs of China in Africa throughout the Anglo-American and Chinese narratives and how the knowledge on China in Africa is created. This will entail an examination of China’s African policies from both the official Chinese and American corpuses to explore how the Chinese narrative and norms seek to challenge the dominance of these constructs and how this conflict serves as a codification of the normative power relations between China and the United States, particularly over the role models that both seek to spread beyond their original context (Aidoo and Hess, 2015, pg. 113). This will also reveal the more normative aspects behind China’s African policies that have been ignored in the established literature on this subject, often being depicted as being little more than the pursuit of economic development beyond all else. It is the creation of the knowledge, which, in the vein of Foucault’s theories in The Archaeology of Knowledge, is connected to political power. By examining the knowledge of China in Africa and its creation, this
project will fill in one of the gaps in the existing literature on Chinese engagement with Africa. While the literature has created several different constructs of China’s African policies as well and some authors, such as Hirono and Suzuki (2014, pg. 44) as well as Marton and Matura (2011, pg. 157), examine the Anglo-American constructs of China in Africa, comparatively little attention has been paid to how the Chinese constructs have been created. By examining the creation of the knowledge on China in Africa, it will be possible to understand how the discourses on China in Africa are created as well as the elements that serve to underpin this. The knowledge on China in Africa as well as China’s African policies themselves have also undergone several of changes over the past century, which are reflected in the constructs that have created it.

1.1 From Revolution to Development: The Background of Chinese Policy towards Africa

While the voyages of Zheng He are often alluded to in the Chinese literature (Sheng, 2011, pg. 297), the primary roots of current Chinese engagement in Africa can be found in the era of decolonisation in the developing world and the prevalence of Maoism in China (Large, 2008, pg. 48-9). During this period, Chinese foreign policy was ideological in nature in the form of military assistance to the anti-colonial movements throughout the former European colonies and the spread of the Maoist doctrine. The most notable examples of these policies can be seen in Chinese assistance to Mozambique during the Portuguese Colonial War and to Robert Mugabe’s ZANU Popular Front during its conflict with the government of Ian Smith in Rhodesia (Zhang, 2014, pg. 6). China also sought to spread its own ideological model as an example for the developing world to follow. This was reflected in the “Three Worlds Theory” (三个世界的理论) which advocated Chinese leadership of the Third World in opposition to the capitalist First World and the Soviet led communist bloc, labelled as the ‘Second World’. This theory would become particularly significant in the context of the Sino-Soviet split where China became the ideological competitor to the Soviet Union in the quest to spread Communism throughout the post-colonial sphere.

With the death of Mao and later the demise of the Soviet Union, there was an imperative for China’s foreign policy to change with the apparent failure of Communism and the prevalence of capitalism. Eventually, China decided to continue the pursuit of economic development initiated by Deng Xiaoping and later Jiang Zemin’s “going out phase” (走出去).
This new objective required the building of strong relations with economically crucial states, particularly those who were rich in natural resources essential for China’s development. Africa showed a great degree of promise for Chinese goals in the face of American and Russian disinterest in the continent at the end of the Cold War (Eisenman, 2012, pg. 45). This disinterest, alongside China’s earlier ideological ties to the African states, would serve Beijing well. It was also necessary for China to adopt a new set of means to build these relationships to achieve economic development. To win over hearts and minds in African states, China pursued the policy of cultural soft power. This was partially influenced by Joseph Nye’s depiction of soft power as well as the apparent success of American soft power since the Cold War (Nye, 1991, pg. 11). The core component of this policy was China’s traditional culture that had previously been suppressed by Mao and was epitomised in the initiatives pursued by the Confucius Institute across the globe. These policies indicated how the shifts in China’s identity changed along with the objectives and mechanisms of Chinese foreign policy, casting itself as the successor of five thousand years of Chinese civilization rather than the harbinger of Communist revolution in the developing world (Townsend, 2002, pg. 109).

As well as seeking to promote Chinese influence and the Maoist doctrine to the post-colonial world, China’s engagement with the African states was also part of China’s wider quest for diplomatic recognition. It was in these states where many of the Republic of China’s diplomatic allies were located, which incentivised further Chinese involvement in the continent to augment Beijing’s influence and legitimacy (Lanteigne, 2009, pg. 3). The most recent example of this struggle came in Gambia’s recognition of the PRC in 2015, a move that has often been attributed to Beijing’s ‘chequebook diplomacy’, a claim that has also been raised with China’s growing involvement in Latin America where many of the ROC’s few remaining diplomatic allies reside (Rich and Banerjee, 2017).

It is this depiction of China’s ‘chequebook diplomacy’ which raises the issue of the methodology behind Chinese foreign policy in the developing world. The popular images of these policies have depicted them as being little more than showering corrupt nations with Chinese money to buy influence in these countries (Tselichev, 2012, pg. 175). While this image has characterised the popular discourse of these policies, it largely overlooks how China has been able to cement its influence in the African states. It is this methodology that the research sought to explore by examining the discourses on China in Africa.
In addition, China’s push for diplomatic recognition also shows the flaws of the common depiction of Chinese initiatives in the African states as being little more than bribing the local elites. By invoking its support for anti-colonial movements during the post-colonial era, China has been able to form deep rooted ties with these elites, several of whom had been part of these movements (Jiang, 2009, pg. 592). In addition, these experiences have also meant that China has had a less contentious legacy in its relationship with the African states. This legacy has also been illustrated by Beijing’s diplomatic struggles with Taipei, a notable example of this being South Africa’s recognition of the PRC in 1998, a development that was partially attributed to the ROC’s support of the Apartheid regime that preceded the African National Congress (ANC) (Williams, 2018). It is this example that illustrates that there is more to China’s strategies towards the African states than the established images depict it as. This serves to render this issue a further imperative to examine how China has made its gains in the African states.

The literature on China in Africa, according to Shinn and Eisenman (2012, pg. 11-2), has been split into the categories of optimist and pessimist. The former often emphasises the potential that China’s policies have for the development of African states while the latter often cites the more unsavoury aspects of these policies, most notably the accusations of Chinese exploitation and neo-colonialism. In line with these categories, it appears that the Chinese perspective is optimist in nature while the American view is more pessimist in character. Both these views are also constituted by several recurring themes and choices of language throughout the literature. By exploring these themes, it is possible to show how China is depicted in these perceptions as well as the normative and causative reasons for this depiction.

1.2 The Codification of China in Africa

In recent years, China’s African policies have come under increasing scrutiny from the Anglophone literature. This has become particularly apparent as China’s hard power grows, which has potentially harmful consequences for China’s soft power drives as the threat perception is enhanced by the rise of China’s military strength. The Anglo-American view of China’s African policies can be traced to of the West’s experiences in Africa. Possibly the earliest examination of China in Africa is John Cooley’s 1965 book *East Wind over Africa.*
Cooley (1965, pg. 101) depicts China as a destabilising force in Africa that sought to undermine American and European interests in the continent by supporting anti-colonial movements as well as anti-American organisations in Africa. These policies were in line with the more ideological approach favoured by China during the Cold War, particularly in regards for Beijing’s support for anti-colonial movements, many of which were often hostile to American and European interests for ideological and historical reasons. The example of Cooley’s book illustrates how the dominant perspective is unified into a single, coherent narrative. This has been achieved by a set of recurring themes as well as the norms that influenced their creation (Gu, 2009, pg. 19). This is defined by the negative or pessimist depiction of China’s Africa policy that views China as an exploiter as well as a rival for American and, to a lesser extent, European interests in Africa. These themes show a degree of consistency for the established perspective, something that cannot be easily said for the Chinese response, with the themes remaining the same as they had been since Cooley’s time. This raises the question of how the more critical view of China’s approach to Africa has been created.

It is initially possible to attribute the more critical portrayal of China’s Africa policies as a mixture of causative and normative factors. One of the more obvious of these factors lies in the political framework of China itself as well as the more exploitive aspects of these policies. China has often been accused of being an exploitive power in Africa regarding the continent’s natural resources and labour (Cardenal and Araujo, 2013, pg. 66).

There are also some more normative factors in this depiction of China’s foreign policy. As earlier stated, the Anglophone literature on China in Africa focuses on the concept of China as a rival as well as an exploiter (Rotberg, 2008, pg. 2). This is notable in the fears over the emergence of the Beijing Consensus as symbolised by Stefan Halper’s book of the same name. Halper’s book claims that China’s economic growth is an example of a state achieving development without democracy (Economy, 2014, pg. 70-1). While this is appealing for several of developing states, it also appears to contradict the norm that economic development is impossible without the adoption of democracy (Patey, 2007, pg. 999). Chinese policy appears to contradict some of the established norms regarding development which provides a normative example of this negative portrayal of Chinese policy. It is this depiction that also serves to illustrate Africa as an example of the wider power relations between China and the United States. Both powers possess sets of norms and values which seek to spread themselves beyond their original context.
By exploring the question of why China is depicted this way throughout the Anglophone literature, I intended to gain a greater understanding of this normative rivalry as well as how the established literature codifies it. In doing so, I also hoped to explore the various factors behind the creation of the literature and how these contribute to the creation of the negative depiction of China’s Africa policies throughout the Anglophone literature as well as the ways in which the Chinese narrative seeks to challenge it with its own normative system. The case of China’s African policies is a binary created by two competing systems that seek to spread themselves to a wider context.

On the other hand, the Chinese perspective on these policies has undergone significant change due to the shifts in Chinese foreign policy and the Chinese perception of China’s wider role. One of the primary objectives of the Chinese response is to challenge these established norms with its own set of norms. This often manifests itself in the claim that the common interpretation of China as well as China’s Africa policies is fundamentally based on a misreading or misunderstanding of China’s approach to the region (Wang, 2008, pg. 261-2). The Anglophone literature is also often criticised for being hypocritical since many of the claims it makes are based on simplistic moral binaries and that there is little or no difference between Chinese policy and those policies followed by the other external powers in the region (Chen, 2001, pg. 603). The Chinese perspective is unified into a coherent narrative by several common themes. While the Anglophone literature is unified by its negative depiction of Chinese policies in Africa, the Chinese view paints a more positive depiction of China’s policy. These typically emphasise China as a potential role model for the economic development of the developing world in the light of the perceived failure of the dominant economic paradigms rather than simply being a facilitator of authoritarian norms as the Anglophone literature claims it is (Kim and Li, 2013, pg.28).

In its’ engagement with the African states, China is also presenting its own norms via the Chinese literature in a bid to challenge the perceived dominance of the American norms that have hampered China’s image abroad (Power and Mohan, 2010, pg. 462). It is as necessary to explore the Chinese response to the common depiction to understand how this codifies China’s challenge to the established norms as much as it is to explore the more negative depictions of China in the Anglophone literature. Both the American and Chinese viewpoints and their images of China’s African policies can be interpreted as being symbolic of the wider normative Sino-American rivalry. This raises several of key concepts and processes in the exploration of this wider phenomenon.
1.3 Research Issues

Over the course of reading the established American and Chinese literature on China’s African policies, there are several key concepts of frequent recurrence throughout this diverse body of literature. These are related to the recurring themes and choices of language throughout the American and Chinese narratives and how they regard several concepts. The primary issue that the research sought to explore is how the knowledge on China in Africa is created and what it symbolised. In addition, this also seeks to address the somewhat narrow focus of the depictions of China’s African policies, which have primarily focused on China’s economic and military power rather than the more normative elements of it. This can be seen in the case of China’s soft power initiatives in the developing world which have played an integral role in China’s foreign policy while challenging the established notions regarding this concept.

1.31 Cultural Soft Power: Is it Truly Soft Power?

An example of the research problem can be seen in China’s soft power offensive in the African continent. These strategies were influenced by Nye’s (2004, pg. 11) definition of soft power, which he asserted lay in a nation’s culture, political values and foreign policy. Nye (2004, pg. 16) claimed that one of the main differences between soft and hard power is that the former seeks to co-opt states while the latter is more coercive in nature and based primarily on military capabilities and coercive actions. The notion of soft power gained traction in the years after the Cold War due to the perceived limitations on the utility of hard power, which was tied into the wider questioning of the realist doctrine, with the collapse of the Soviet Union seemingly contradicting many of its assumptions (Lock, 2010, pg. 32). Such a limitation was emphasised by Nye (2004, pg. 20), who claimed that hard power had an adverse effect on a nation’s economic interests and soft power capabilities, a notion that has made its way into Chinese foreign policy.

While Nye’s concept has been influential in the Post-Cold War era, it has been subject to debate and criticism regarding what constitutes soft power and its limitations. One such issue was raised by Steven Lukes (2008, pg. 91), who claimed that there has been no distinction between the ways that soft power can co-opt subject nations and how it gains their acquiescence,
which renders it as a blunt instrument in achieving its objectives, little different to the coercive notions of power that Nye claims it is be distinct from (Lukes, 2008, pg. 95). The notion of a nation’s attractiveness described by Nye has been questioned over the definition of ‘right’ or ‘attractive’ values, most notably by Janice Bially Mattern (2008, pg. 101), who claims that this is poorly understood. In addition, the more normative dimensions of these policies are raised by Lock (2010, pg. 35) to claim that soft power is more about changing the policies of other nations rather than simply making a state attractive. From these questions, Nye’s definition is limited by the overlap between the capabilities of hard and soft power, which suggests that soft power retains some of the more coercive elements of its hard counterpart.

What has made soft power a difficult yet important concept, in relation to the issue raised by Bially Mattern, is the challenge of defining soft power and a nation’s capacities in soft power. While hard power can be measured in terms of a state’s economic and military capabilities, the same cannot be said about soft power despite its common depiction as a resource for states to use (Zahran and Ramos, 2010, pg. 25). A possible way to remedy this can be seen in the image of the nation and the meanings ascribed to it, since a nation’s image plays a notable role in making it attractive to others. Such a concept can be explored further by a more constructivist approach since states often react to others based on the meanings that they ascribe to them, and that China’s African policies are no exception to this rule (Reus-Smit, 2009, pg. 220).

It is from this context that China’s own soft power initiatives are rooted in. This resulted in Beijing perceiving the attractions of soft power as a strategic advantage rather than a moral imperative (Li and Rønning, 2013, pg. 1). While Chinese soft power initiatives were influenced by Nye’s theories, they have diverged from his definition in several ways. One of these is the emphasis on China’s model of development, which deviated from the original emphasis on a nation’s political values and foreign policy (Shambaugh, 2015, pg. 100). In addition, Nye’s concept of soft power has been increasingly sinicised with the advent of cultural soft power (文化软实力), which led to culture and soft power becoming synonymous in the context of Chinese foreign policy (Wu, 2018, pg. 765). It is this context that has seen soft power play an equal, if not greater, role to hard power in Chinese strategies, which illustrates the importance in examining this topic.

The concept of cultural soft power serves as one of the main components of China’s Post-Cold War foreign policy initiatives. This is an example of China’s wider global charm offensive intended to win the hearts and minds of economically crucial states. It is this concept
of cultural soft power that has been under scrutiny throughout the literature on China in Africa. This has been emphasised in the Chinese literature which depicts presents China as an alternative model for the developing world. The rise of cultural soft power can be seen as a manifestation of the more cultural bent of China’s perception of its role and identity, shifting to a perception more in keeping with its pre-revolutionary role and identity. It is this image that Chinese initiatives have sought to promote to a wider context.

As China’s hard power capacities grows, its soft power initiatives have been subject to increased scrutiny and criticism. This often takes the form of doubts over the overall effectiveness of China’s soft power (Burnan, 2008, pg. 134) with claims that as China’s hard power grows, its soft power is weakened due to the fears of the former’s growth. The overall success of China’s soft power itself has also been questioned by Lagadec’s (2012, pg. 160) claim that American soft power, while being arguably one of the most successful examples of such a policy, still failed to deter those who seek to defeat American policy initiatives. Lagadec outlines this with the example of Hezbollah guerrillas being ardent fans of American popular culture yet seeking to combat American foreign policy goals. While there is the question of whether Chinese soft power will be successful, there is equally the question of whether it will have any significant impact should it be successful or if this will translate into any meaningful support for Chinese policies.

In recent years, soft power has moved beyond the definition outlined by Nye. This has been apparent in the form of China’s soft power offensives throughout the African states, which has focused on the promotion of a Chinese discourse as it has on the spread of Chinese culture and language (Warner, 2018, pg. 153). In line with Daniel Bell’s depiction of ‘Asian values’, China’s soft power initiatives have disseminated Chinese norms and values alongside the traditional facets of soft power (Voci and Hui, 2018, pg. 3), which furthers the necessity to examine the role of norms in Chinese foreign policy, which have been expressed by the images of China’s activities in the African states as well as being spread by Chinese policy.

Another variation between China’s soft power initiatives and Nye’s original definition of soft power can be seen in China’s approach to the developing world. While the traditional definition of soft power has chiefly focused on the government and culture of a nation, China’s approach to soft power was focused on the Chinese model of economic development, as illustrated by Cho and Ho’s (2008, pg. 462) claim that the Beijing Consensus has become intertwined with Chinese notions of soft power. This has been the aspect of China’s soft power offensive that has been the most successful yet the most controversial since this entails
development without democratisation, a notion that can undermine the established norms regarding economic development (Kim, 2013, pg. 12). From these policies, it is possible to gauge the nature of China’s challenge to the established system, which has been of a normative character. This dimension can be further explored by the images of China’s engagement with the African states since they are a creation of the same norms and meanings that they are challenging.

The Chinese literature views these hurdles to Chinese soft power being a result of the negative perception of China resulting from the dominant norms. The purpose of China’s policy as well as its response to the Anglophone literature is to challenge these norms with another set of norms which reflects Bourdieu’s depiction of the Habitus, which will be explored in greater detail in the next chapter. In addition, this serves to illustrate the wider competing power relations between China and the United States in that both have a different view of what makes up the same concept. This is furthered by the idea of normative power.

Throughout the Chinese literature, China’s policies towards Africa have often been characterised as soft power. The intention of these policies raises the question over whether China’s concept of cultural soft power really is soft power after all. One such issue can be seen in how China seeks to replace the dominant democratic norms with one of its own making. Rather than being soft, it is equally possible to view these policies as being more normative in their approach. Normative power is defined by the actions that define what is deemed to be “normal” and is recognised as such by others. For such a resource of power to work, a state needs to be recognised as such by its peers. This appears to have parallels with Foucault’s (1977, pg. 17) illustration of the role of social norms in the creation of knowledge and power. From this, normative power is defined by the spread of a state’s set of norms to create a “new normal”.

Much of the Anglophone literature on China in Africa interprets Chinese policy as being more normative rather than soft power in its approach to Africa. This is codified in works such as the Beijing Consensus where Chinese political norms are often viewed as being spread alongside the Chinese model of development. While this raises the question of whether a state needs to adopt China’s political model for its economic model to work effectively, it can also be viewed as an example of China’s wider aspirations to define what is viewed as “normal” by others. As China engages with Africa, it seeks to challenge the dominant norms which raises the question of ultimately what is more important, the norms themselves or those who choose to follow these norms. In the case of the Western literature, the former is viewed as being the
more important since these are spread when their followers decide them to be “legitimate” (Sicarelli, 2012, pg. 23). The Chinese approach appears to favour the latter due to the overall challenge it poses to the dominant norms as well as the ways in which it seeks to change them. This question is reflective of the wider power relations between China and the United States. This raises the issue of how China and the U.S. can be defined in the case of China’s African policies.

When compared to the traditional definition of soft power, there are some notable variations between this and Chinese soft power initiatives. While Nye’s concept focused on the role that a nation’s culture, governance and foreign policy played in making it more ‘attractive’ to other states, Chinese initiatives have focused primarily on China’s economic prowess rather than the Chinese political model (Jiang, 2009, pg. 587). This has seen the promotion of the Chinese model of development, which has been possibly the most successful yet controversial part of China’s soft power initiatives. The controversy around the Chinese model can be attributed to the fact that China’s authoritarian political system has been one of the factors that made its rapid economic development possible and by promoting the Chinese model of development, Chinese initiatives are perceived to be spreading political authoritarianism (Halper, 2010, pg. 124). It is this aspect that represents the competing norms that have shaped the knowledge of China’s African policies.

The concepts of Chinese cultural soft power and the Chinese model are symbolic of China’s normative foreign policy as well as being an example of China’s wider challenge to the established paradigms. In the case of the former, this has questioned the nature of power in Chinese foreign policy, which has shifted beyond the common notions of economic and military power and towards a less coercive means to achieve Chinese objectives while the latter challenges the dominant assumptions regarding development (Lee, 2018, pg. 49). In addition, these concepts are also representative of the competition over the meaning ascribed to Chinese policies towards the African states and how the competing images of these policies are a codification of the competition between democratic and authoritarian norms.

In addition, it is the relationship between China’s soft power initiatives and the Chinese developmental model that illustrates how the constructs regarding China’s African policies are often interlinked. This serves to unify the constructs into a single image, which presents China as an alternative to the established norms and assumptions, in this case, how China is an alternative paradigm to the assumptions regarding development. This image has become increasingly pronounced in the Chinese foreign policy discourse, with China being depicted as
following a different path in the mould of Liu’s The China Dream. It is this image of China as an alternative that is indicative of the Chinese image of China’s global role as well as the wider normative challenge that Chinese foreign policy poses.

1.32 The China Model: Legitimising Authoritarianism or a New Paradigm for Development?

Another dimension of the research issue comes in the form of the Chinese model of economic development, more popularly known as the Beijing Consensus. This has been possibly the most successful aspects of China’s normative foreign policy but has also been the most controversial area, as expressed through Stefan Halper’s (2010, pg. 214) claim that this model promotes an authoritarian political system under the guise of economic development. This has most commonly been expressed through the image of China as a facilitator of authoritarianism throughout the developing world. This can also be interpreted as part of China’s wider efforts to spread its norms to a wider context, which furthers the view that these initiatives are more in keeping with normative rather than soft power.

As with the concept of soft power and China’s utilisation of it, the China model has also been subject to debate. The earliest use of this term came with Joshua Cooper-Ramo’s *The Beijing Consensus*. Ramo (2004, pg. 6) argued that the Chinese model gained traction in the developing world due to the perceived failings of the Washington Consensus in delivering economic development, which he blames on its inability to promote a nation’s social improvement as well as developing its economy. He (Ramo, 2004, pg. 61) defines the Chinese model as ‘state capitalism with Chinese characteristics’, which had been the system pursued by Singapore and has had a notable influence on China’s path to economic development. This has been most noticeable in how both combine capitalist development with authoritarian political norms, which has enabled them to achieve rapid economic development while raising questions about the established norms of capitalism and development.

The Chinese model has also been cited as a potential alternative to the established system by Daniel Bell in *The China Model*. Bell (2015, pg. 103) characterises the Chinese model as being based on meritocracy, a notion that evokes Voltaire’s admiration for China’s ‘scholar gentry’. The Chinese model is also furthered by Bell’s previous work, *East Meets West*, which has seen the utilisation of Confucianism to justify China’s political system under the guise of what Bell (2000, pg.57) terms as ‘Asian values’, which is presented as an alternative set of
norms to the democratic values of the Western world. Such a vision is in line with the more normative dimensions of Chinese foreign policy with the values described by Bell conflicting with the established democratic norms. It is this aspect that further underlines the research issue with the constructs of China’s African policies being the creation of two competing sets of norms.

It is these norms that are further alluded to in Halper’s examination of the Beijing Consensus, which he (Halper, 2010, pg. 215) describes as facilitating the rise of political authoritarianism under the pretence of economic development. This image has been a recurring theme in much of the critical literature regarding China’s African policies, which often claims that these policies have facilitated the excesses of the continent’s more authoritarian regimes as well as encouraging corruption and bad governance (Halper, 2010, pg. 32-3). While this image has been the result of Beijing’s laissez-faire approach to the developing world, it has equally been perceived as an attempt by China to promote its authoritarian political system to a wider context. It is this aspect that illustrates the more normative dimensions of China’s African policies in that these policies promote political norms as much as they promote Chinese interests in the African states.

The cases of China’s soft power initiatives and the China Model are indicative of the research issue since they are representative of the more normative dimensions of China’s African policies. This is due to their attempts to facilitate the spread of an alternative set of norms as well as being an important tool in Chinese foreign policy strategies, which has enabled Beijing to cement its foothold in the African states as well as providing a degree of legitimacy to Chinese initiatives in the continent, as initially demonstrated by Scott Kennedy (2011, pg. 27), who attributes the appeal of the China Model to the wider backlash against economic ‘shock as well as being a symbol of Chinese soft power initiatives. It is this aspect that the research sought to examine further since these have played a notable role in furthering Chinese objectives in the developing world as well as challenging the dominant paradigms, which is part of China’s wider challenge.
1.33 What is China and What is Africa?

In the vein of Alexander Wendt (1992, pg. 397), states often act based on the meanings that they give to objects and other states, in this case, what China’s African policies mean for the United States. It is these meanings that make it imperative to examine the images of China’s African policies since they form the basis of how states react to these policies. This can be seen in China itself is perceived. Traditionally, their view of China was state centric in nature, with China being depicted as a single, monolithic state actor with Chinese companies and state-owned enterprises being little more than Beijing’s arm in Africa. This depiction is also consistent with the more realist approach traditionally favoured by the American discourse, which was primarily state centric in its approach, which illustrates the initial meaning behind this image of Chinese policy (Power and Mohan, 2010, pg. 467).

In recent years, much of the literature has begun to move away from this original definition of China in Africa. Rather than there being one Chinese actor in Africa, there are now several Chinese actors, including Chinese companies and private citizens as well as the traditional state actor. Much of the recent literature on China in Africa has focused on the role of state-owned enterprises in Africa (Eisenman, 2012, pg. 802). These numerous different Chinese actors also illustrate some of the points of contention between Chinese foreign policy interests since what may benefit the interests of the Chinese state may not benefit those of Chinese companies and other non-state actors. This raises the question of whether to place political or economic interests ahead of each other since both do not necessarily complement each other. This conflict of interest has also been illustrated in the dominant perception in China in Africa, particularly in the criticism of China’s policy of non-intervention in Africa.
1.4 The Literature and Themes of China in Africa

The common perception of China in Africa has often been couched in zero sum terminology and has been the creation of several interlinking constructs that create a unified narrative. This is evident with the theme of China as a rival to American interests in the continent. Throughout much of the critical literature, China is often viewed as a potential competitor for resources and influence in Africa. This assumes that China’s gain is the United States’ loss as shown in the commonly held view that Chinese gains in Africa was the result of American disinterest in the continent at the end of the Cold War (Chan, 2013, pg. 5). Another of the core themes in the American depiction of China in Africa is what Marton and Mantura (2011, pg. 157) term as the “voracious dragon” motif. This image entails China, the “voracious dragon”, seeking to gain control of the “honey pot” that is Africa’s vast reserves of natural resources. The potential role of American norms in creating the perception of China in Africa can be seen in the theme of China as a facilitator of corruption and human rights abuses. Throughout the Anglophone literature, China has been criticised for its “no strings attached” aid policy (Brautigan, 2009, pg. 12) which is often perceived to be lacking in accountability. From a more normative approach, by spreading the Chinese model of development, China is encouraging the spread of authoritarian norms in keeping with its own (Naughton, 2010, pg. 448). By facilitating these more autocratic norms, it appears that there is a degree of normative as well as causative factors that explain this perception of China in Africa.

The common perception of China in Africa is unified by several frequently recurring themes despite covering several different aspects of China’s Africa policy. These themes are reflected in the choices of language made throughout the literature as well as the influences of norms upon their creation. All serve to create a negative depiction of China’s Africa policy, which is reflected in the commonly recurring themes. By exploring these themes and choices of language, it is possible to explore both the normative and causative factors behind the negative depiction of Chinese policy towards Africa. The more normative factors can also be an illustration of the wider normative conflict between China and the U.S. as it is these norms that China seeks to challenge to enhance its policy goals.
1.41 The Themes of the Chinese Perception of China in Africa

As with the Anglo-American perception of Chinese policy towards Africa, the Chinese viewpoint is also characterised by several commonly recurring themes present throughout the literature. These are different from the common themes found in the Anglophone literature. These often serve as a bid to counter the more negative depiction of China and its policies presented by the American viewpoint. These themes are also reflective of the changes in China’s domestic and international identity as well as the shifts in the goals of Chinese foreign policy. The most notable example of this is the rise of cultural soft power in the Chinese narrative as well as the role of China’s traditional culture. This has illustrated one of the ways in which China engages with Africa. The Chinese viewpoint also illustrates the case of China as a role model for Africa and the developing world. It depicts the Chinese economic system and model of development as an alternative paradigm for the developing world (Jiang, 2009, pg. 592-3). Confucian terminology is also a frequent recurrence throughout the Chinese literature. This serves to illustrate the changes in China’s post-Cold War identity and it is particularly notable over how these concepts are applied to the present international system.

Another common theme in the Chinese viewpoint is the concept of mutuality. Traditionally, this was applied to the shared experiences of China and the developing world, regarding their exploitation by the developed world. This served to strengthen China’s connections to Africa, which would become increasingly important with the shift in China’s foreign policy goals. In the present day, this concept is often utilised to illustrate the ways in which Chinese policy can be beneficial for African states and is often expressed in terms of mutual benefit and “win-win cooperation” (Tang, 2010, pg. 352). This theme can also be a potential response to the American viewpoint since it attempts to challenge the more negative perspective on Chinese policy with a more positive example of how Chinese policy can benefit African states.

It is these themes of frequent recurrence throughout the Chinese literature on China’s African policies that serves to unify its different components into a single narrative to challenge the established norms. These themes also serve to illustrate the changes in China’s perceptions of its identity in the post-Mao era as well as how China seeks to spread its norms under the guise of providing an alternative model to the dominant American system and as a potential remedy for its perceived failings (Wu, 2018, pg. 772). This illustrates that while there has been a vast body of literature on China’s African policies, there has been little or no exploration of
how the knowledge on China in Africa is created and the factors behind it, one of which are the assumptions influenced by the experiences in the African states.

1.42 The Structures of Experience and their Influence on the Creation of the Perceptions of China in Africa

While the perspectives on China in Africa are reflected in the choices of language throughout the established literature and the commonly recurring themes, it is possible to see these concepts as the legacy of several different experiences. In keeping with the constructivist approach utilised by the research, the meanings given to Chinese policy by the literature can be attributed to the role that the structures of experience have played in shaping their assumptions. These experiences are derived from the histories of both China and the U.S. and Europe. For the latter, this is often derived from the experiences of the Western powers in Africa. The great variations in the meanings prescribed by the American and the Chinese narratives can also be a product of these experiences.

There are two primary structures of experience that influence the American perspective on China in Africa. The first of these is the experience of the European empires in Africa during the 19th and early 20th centuries. During this period, the major European powers competed for slices of African territory primarily for reasons of political prestige rather than economic gain which characterised the earlier European empires in Asia (Smith, 1982, pg.76-7). This experience manifests itself in several ways. An initial example can be seen in the choices of language made throughout the Anglophone literature. This often refers to the process of colonisation and tries to draw parallels between the experience of European imperialism and Chinese policy today (Cardenal and Araujo, 2013, pg. 69-70). This often refers to the indirect economic means which China utilises in Africa, a criticism that echoes Kwame Nkrumah’s (1965, pg. 17) Neo-Imperialism. In addition, there have also been allusions to a new “Scramble for Africa” where China and the United States along with the other Asian powers compete for power and influence in Africa as the European Great Powers had done a century prior to this. This experience is also reflected in the prevalent themes throughout the Anglophone literature. Such an image can be seen in the motif of the voracious dragon where China seeks to exploit the continent’s wealth and natural resources as the European empires had done before them (Cardenal and Araujo, 2013, pg. 150). It is possible to see the influence of this experience in
the common criticism of China’s policy of non-intervention. This is notable in the depiction of the pressures on China to become a more proactive actor in Africa, which reflects the shift from informal to formal imperialism by the European powers. This perspective is partially based on the assumption that China will follow a similar path to the European empires in Africa which contributes to the more negative perceptions of Chinese policy.

The second experience that influenced the creation of the American perception of China in Africa is the power politics and ideological rivalry of the Cold War. As with many of the fronts of the globalised struggle between capitalism and communism, Africa saw itself become another battlefield for the proxy conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. It was this period that initially saw the emergence of the literature on Chinese engagement in Africa due to China’s provision of ideological and military assistance to the various anti-colonial movements throughout the continent in competition with the United States and later against the Soviet Union (Niu and Liu, 2016, pg. 272). The influence of the Cold War is reflective of the wider depiction of China itself in the American discourse. This is most evident in the common depiction of China as a rival to American interests in Africa since it appears to assume that Chinese policy will seek to undermine American and to a lesser extent European interests in the continent as the Soviet Union had done in the 20th century (Patey, 2007, pg. 1005). In addition, the assumptions from this experience were largely zero-sum in nature, with the perception that one power’s gains inevitably came at the expense of another, which has manifested itself in the common claims that Europe has ‘lost its’ back yard’ to China (Mahmoud, 2010, pg.196).

The Chinese perspective has changed with the shifts in Chinese foreign policy as well as the structures of experience that influence its creation. In an apparent overlap with the American structures of experience, China was primarily influenced by the Century of Humiliation (百年国耻) where China was humiliated by the European empires and later Japan during the Opium Wars and the subsequent problems that eventually led to the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911. This experience continues to influence the Chinese discourse since China’s great power ambitions can be interpreted as stemming from a desire to avoid a repeat of this dark chapter of China’s history (He, 2009, pg. 55).

China’s perspective of itself in the Post-Cold War era was influenced by an older structure of experience, which was expressed through the dual rise of cultural soft power and the revival of Confucian doctrine. This is particularly evident in the language utilised in the Chinese
literature where Confucian terminology is among the themes of common recurrence throughout
the Chinese discourse. The influence of China’s imperial past is particularly notable in Chinese
depictions of world order, the most notable being Zhao Tingyang’s (2006, pg. 31) concept of
Tianxiaism, which advocates a “moral international order” which was often utilised to describe
the Chinese tributary system that governed East Asia for centuries. The experiences that shape
the Chinese perspective on China in Africa are indicative of the norms that China seeks to
spread. Additionally, as with the case of Chinese foreign policy, the influence of China’s
imperial past is also indicative of the changes in China’s perception of its domestic and
international identity and has formed part of the canon for a Chinese approach to international
relations theory (Qin, 2011, pg. 14-5). It is these wider phenomena that the knowledge of
China in Africa is symbolic of that introduces the gaps that the project intended to fill.

1.5 Research Objectives

The primary objective of this project is to examine how the depictions of Chinese policy
towards Africa is symbolic of the wider power relations between China and the West and the
process by which it is created. This is evident in the differing views of Chinese policy towards
the continent as symbolised by the positive image of these policies created by the Chinese
discourse and the more negative image portrayed by the American narrative. It is the
competition of these depictions of China in Africa that also serves to reflect the more normative
dimensions of the relations between China and the U.S. as well as illustrating the shift away
from “hard” to “soft” power (Sicarelli, 2010, pg. 23).

There is also a more causative element of the discourses on Chinese policy as well as the
more normative aspects. This is particularly notable in the Anglophone literature on Chinese
policy towards Africa, whose themes are derived from the more negative aspects of Chinese
foreign policy, most notably the accusations of exploitation levied at Chinese companies and
China’s tacit support for authoritarian regimes and human rights abusers in the continent
(Hollslag, 2008, pg. 77). It will also be necessary to determine whether the discourses on China
in Africa are the result of causative as well as normative factors to better view how these
narratives are symbolic of the relations between China and the West.
Another objective of this project is to examine the factors behind the creation of the images of Chinese foreign policy. By examining the discourses on Chinese policy towards Africa, it is possible to explore a case of the normative interactions between China and the U.S. as well as examining the normative power relations between the two. The discourses of China in Africa are also symbolic of how norms and values are spread away from the context of their creation. By engaging with the African states, China has engaged its normative capabilities by establishing itself as an alternative to the established American norms (Campayo and Zhao, 2016, pg. 72). By exploring the discourse on China in Africa, it will also be possible to explore the question of whether this will become more substantial or whether this will simply be a ploy to achieve China’s economic policies rather than being part of China’s attempt to change the perception of its image abroad.

The exploration of the discourse on Chinese policies in Africa also raises the wider discursive issues. This is over the question of what is ultimately more important, the norms or those who choose to follow them. In the case of the Chinese discourse, it is the latter that is more significant since one of the goals of the Chinese discourse is to challenge the established norms and to replace them with its own set of norms. The question of how China responds to the American discourse is also indicative of the wider issue of what is deemed to be “normal” and how this can be changed.

1.6 The Corpus

To examine the constructs of China in Africa, it is necessary to examine a sample of the official discourses on China’s African policies. To achieve this, I examined statements from American and Chinese governmental sources concerning China’s African policies in the cases of Sudan and Zimbabwe, which would then be subject to the analytical framework of the research. I assembled several of statements and press releases taken from the websites of these sources, which served as representations of the two competing narratives regarding China’s African policies. The overall size of the sample varied due to the availability of the sources as well as the overall relevance they had for the research topic alongside developments within the countries examined. The proposed corpus came from the websites of several main sources.
1. The US State Department
2. The US Embassy in Khartoum
3. The US Embassy in Harare
4. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China
5. The Chinese Embassy in Khartoum
6. The Chinese Embassy in Harare

In line with the established literature on this subject, the corpus was organised into two categories for each case study, with the US sources being organised into the American discourse and the Chinese sources becoming the Chinese discourse. These were uploaded onto Nvivo 10 after being converted into PDF format and were examined systematically. As earlier stated, the primary interest of the research is to examine how the images of China’s African policies is reflective of the spread of two competing systems and the wider phenomena that they symbolise. As a result, the more local sources were not included in the corpus since these did not seek to spread their constructs of China’s African policies beyond the context of their creation nor were they reflective of a system that seeks to replicate itself beyond its original context. In this regard, the corpus served to reflect the interactions and power relations between China and the American world with the constructs serving as the vessels for the spread of these systems as well as being the symbol of their power relations.

To achieve this goal as well as to create a picture of the American and Chinese constructs of China in Africa, these texts were coded for phrases that served as a representation of the dominant constructs from the American and Chinese literature on China’s African policies. Such a framework operationalised both the theoretical framework of the research and created a measurable discourse to further augment the theoretical framework. These constructs will be defined in greater detail in the second and third chapters.
1.7 Significance

This project has several potential benefits regarding Chinese policy towards Africa. As earlier stated, much has been made about the case studies of Chinese policy but there has been little or no examination of the knowledge about China in Africa itself. By exploring the knowledge on China in Africa and its creation, I will be able to fill one of the primary gaps of the literature on Chinese policy in Africa. It is this subject that also illustrates another potential benefit of exploring this topic. As Foucault asserted, power and the creation of knowledge are interlinked, which illustrates the importance of an examination of the creation of the knowledge on China in Africa (Reus Smit, 2009, pg. 221). In this sense, power comes from the creation of knowledge on Chinese policy towards Africa which also illustrates the power relations between China and the West. It is these power relations that also illustrates another benefit for this field of research. The conflicting discourses on Chinese engagement are partially the creation of American and Chinese norms. These norms play a crucial role in the relationship between China and the U.S. since both seek to define what one deems to be ‘normal’. If one can gain an understanding of the discourses on China in Africa, one can also acquire grounding in the wider normative power relations of China and the West.

In more recent years, the gains of China’s engagement with the African states have been made more apparent in the case of Chinese involvement in Djibouti, which hosts China’s first military base in the African continent. This comes at a time where Western powers, in this case, France, have sought to push back against Chinese gains, citing the common fear of Chinese initiatives as ‘debt traps’ that render developing nations in Beijing’s power. Despite this common criticism, the current results of this pushback have been limited, with an aide to the Djiboutian president, Omar Guelleh, describing French proposals as possessing ‘no money and no strategy for the country’s future’, a criticism that has blighted many of the established external actors in the African continent (Fouquet, 2019). In contrast to this, China has been able to win over the country as well as much of the African continent with its vision for the continent’s future. It is the nature of this vision promoted by China and how it has been able to appeal to the African states that serves as both an expression of the research issue as well as the imperative to further pursue this issue.

The competing discourses on Chinese policy towards Africa are also indicative of the spread of the American and Chinese systems beyond their original context. Similarly, to
Bourdieu’s depiction of the habitus, which will be outlined in further detail in the next chapter, both the Chinese and American systems of norms seek to spread themselves on a global scale. This has come under the guise of universal values in the case of the American system, epitomised by the Washington Consensus, and as an alternative in the case of the Chinese system (Jing et al, 2016, pg. 25). By addressing the question of the discourses on China in Africa, one will be able to obtain a case study of the wider issue of the competing forms of globalisation.

Regarding the idea of the constructs of China in Africa as a codification of the power relations between China and the West, an examination of these constructs will help to explore the nature of power in Chinese foreign policy. Traditionally, China’s rise has often been couched in terms of hard power, focusing on the build-up and modernisation of China’s military capabilities (Christensen, 1996, pg. 20). By examining the more normative dimensions of Chinese foreign policy through these constructs, it will be possible to examine the role of soft power in Chinese foreign policy, which has become a notable influence in China’s foreign affairs. The research will be able to characterise the very nature of power in Chinese foreign policy. This notion has become of importance in recent years with the renewed rise of the perception of the China threat, epitomised by Graham Allison’s *Destined for War*, which warns of a ‘Thucydides Trap’ of Great Power conflict between China and the United States.

By engaging with the African states, China itself has created an alternative to the dominant American norms as well as providing a model of economic development for the developing world to aspire to. By exploring the discourse on China in Africa, one will be able to determine whether this alternative discourse will be spread as successfully as the American system or if it is merely a fig leaf to cover China’s desire for economic gain. While China’s foreign policy towards the developing world has often been perceived as primarily an economic venture in keeping with China’s post-Cold War objectives, the nature of these policies has changed alongside the Chinese discourse regarding these policies (Callahan, 2016, pg.10). This can be seen in the example of China’s cultural soft power initiatives, which were originally a means to achieve these objectives in the developing world, these have evolved into a part of China’s normative foreign policy. Rather than simply furthering China’s economic objectives, it has become a vehicle to promote the Chinese meaning of China to a wider context as well as being a means to spread Chinese norms to a greater context, which has also been furthered by the promotion of the Chinese economic model (Li and Rønning, 2013, pg. 3). It is these elements
that have played a role in formulating China’s normative foreign policy as well as contributing to Chinese gains in Africa and the developing world.

It is the nature of Chinese foreign policy and its evolution which suggests that such policies are not merely a fig leaf for Beijing’s economic objectives. This can be seen in the case of the China Dream, which has been seen as an expression of ‘Chinese exceptionalism’ and a move away from the idea of convergence between China and the Western world (Callahan, 2012, pg. 38). Such a construct is expressive of China’s wider foreign policy vision, which suggests that these policies have moved away from simply being a pursuit of economic objectives and now has a more ambitious vision for China’s global role. It is this aspect of the images of China in Africa that has been illustrative of the course of Chinese foreign policy.

It is the idea of China as an alternative to the established paradigms that has become increasingly pronounced by the rise of the ‘China Dream’ in the Chinese foreign policy discourse. Derived from Liu Mingfu’s (2015, pg. 218) book of the same name, this concept advocates China following a future that is uniquely ‘Chinese’ rather than seeking convergence with the Western world. As with the China model, this is indicative of the wider normative challenge posed by China in that it seeks to challenge the dominant norms as well as unifying the Chinese discourse in presenting China as an alternative system for states to follow. It is this aspect that illustrates one of the wider implications raised by the research issue in the form of the wider challenge that China poses as well as the evolution of both the Chinese foreign policy discourse and China’s perception of its global role.

Through the Chinese constructs, the alternative vision that the Chinese discourse promotes is characterised by what Ho Kwon Ping (2008) terms as ‘Neo-Confucian state capitalism’ with an emphasis on ‘shared prosperity’, which echoes the Confucian principle of mutuality. While this promoted and alternative vision for development and unifies the Chinese constructs, it is also expressive of the norms that underpin the Chinese corpus, which is also indicative of the Confucian revival in China since the 1980s (Billioud and Thoraval, 2007, pg. 4). In addition, it is these norms that are expressive of the wider challenge posed by China’s normative foreign policy since it is these norms that are competing against the democratic values of the established discourse by presenting this vision as an alternative to the hegemonic paradigms.

This wider vision has also been furthered by the presentation of China as an alternative model. This has been expressed in the form of the Chinese model of development, which presents China’s development as an alternative to the established norms and paradigms (Ho,
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

2008). While this has unified the Chinese constructs into a single image, it is how this vision has appealed to the African states and the developing world, with the local elites advocating the Chinese model just as much as the Chinese discourse has done (Pang, 2009, pg. 126). This development is illustrative of how the Chinese constructs have been spread to a wider context and how these constructs have been instrumental in furthering Chinese objectives in Africa and the developing world.

It is the vision of China as an alternative that has unified the Chinese foreign policy discourse, which presents China as following a largely different path to the established paradigms, as shown by the Chinese model of development. This also depicts the course of China’s future differing from that of the Western world, which has been articulated through the China Dream (Liu, 2015, pg. 457). In addition, it is the presentation of China as an alternative which is symbolic of China’s wider challenge, in this case, to the dominant assumption that democracy is the panacea for development as well as being a powerful tool in furthering Chinese interests in the developing world (Naidu, 2007, pg. 289). It is the appeal of this model that suggests how the Chinese image of China’s African policies with the Chinese model being increasingly advocated by the elites of the developing world as well as being indicative of how the Chinese vision has been able to win over many African states (Ngomba, 2011, pg. 59). It is these aspects that underline both the wider implications of the research issue as well as the imperative to examine this issue in that China is more than simply being an economic or military competitor as it has often been depicted as.

By presenting China as an alternative, the constructs present in the Chinese foreign policy discourse have been unified into a single image, which articulates China’s wider challenge. By presenting China’s model of development and its vision for global governance, these serve to challenge the dominant paradigms, which suggests that the presentation of China as an alternative is more than simply a fig leaf for Chinese economic objectives and that it has a coherent vision for the developing world. This has played a notable role in furthering China’s influence in the African states, which challenges the established image of these policies as being little more than showering corrupt African elites with Chinese money. It is for the chance to understand the wider normative power relations between China and the U.S. which serves as the main potential benefit for exploring this question.
1.8 Summary

The purpose of this research project was to examine the literature and knowledge on China in Africa as well as how it is created rather than examining the cases of Chinese policy towards the African states. By doing so, one of the main gaps in the literature on this subject will be filled since there has been little to no consideration of the process of the knowledge’s creation in this context despite the vast body of literature on China’s engagement with the African states. As well as filling in one of the main research gaps on China in Africa, such a study will also illustrate how the narratives on Chinese foreign policy reflects wider phenomena beyond the African states. This is in the form of the competing norms that make up the American and Chinese narratives on this subject, which is indicative of the wider conflict between democratic and authoritarian norms (Nathan, 2015, pg. 156-7). While there has been a great degree of study regarding China’s economic initiatives in the African continent, there has been little consideration for the normative dimensions of these policies and it is these dimensions that can illustrate how Chinese policy in Africa is an expression of wider developments.

These norms and values are codified by the negative image of China’s Africa policy of the American discourse and the more positive image advocated by the Chinese narrative on this subject. Such fears, while indicative of the wider struggle for China’s identity, also illustrates the normative dimensions of China’s policies towards the African states as well as for the wider world. This makes it necessary to examine the normative and discursive elements of China in Africa.

To carry out these aims, it was necessary to explore the context in which the knowledge of China in Africa is created as well as the themes and choices of language present in the two competing narratives. This will require an examination of the established literature on Chinese policy towards the African states as well as a discourse analysis of the social linguistic model. By doing so, it will be possible to explore the role of norms in the creation of the knowledge as well as how they codify the power relations between China and the West.
1.9 Thesis Structure and Chapter Outline

**Chapter 2** outlines the theoretical and methodological framework that will be applied to the case studies of China in Africa. This will outline Foucault’s Archaeology of Knowledge and Bourdieu’s Habitus as well as introducing the social linguistic discourse analysis framework since the project seeks to explore how the knowledge on China in Africa is created and what it symbolises, arguing that the competing discourses seek to spread two systems beyond their original context in a manner similar to Bourdieu’s habitus.

**Chapter 3** outlines the established literature on China in Africa. This will explore the dominant themes and constructs present in the American and Chinese literature on China’s African policies and will also serve as an introduction to the key constructs that I seek to apply to the case studies of Sudan and Zimbabwe. It is found that the common research gap in the established text is that there has been little exploration of how the differing forms of knowledge on China in Africa have been created or what it symbolises. In addition, there has also been more of a focus on China’s economic and military policies in the African states and little attention has been paid to the more normative dimensions of China’s foreign policies, which has enabled China to cement its ties with the African states.

**Chapter 4** applies the concepts from the previous chapters to the depictions of China’s policies towards Sudan. This will explore the Chinese and American corpus on Chinese foreign policy in Sudan as well as how the constructs in the literature are present in the official discourses alongside any possible variations between the literature and established discourse. This argues that China has utilised its experiences of economic development and the Chinese model to further Chinese interests in the country while the American perspective has emphasised China’s facilitation of human rights abuses in Darfur alongside the pressures that Chinese interests are under due to the security challenges in the country.

**Chapter 5** applies the framework to the case of China’s policies towards Zimbabwe. This will explore how the constructs from the American and Chinese literature manifest themselves in this case study as well as exploring any potential variations between the cases of Sudan and
Zimbabwe. It illustrates how China was able to utilise the shared experiences of imperialism and national liberation to further its ties with Zimbabwe while the American narrative highlights the apparent favouring of Chinese interests by Zimbabwe at the expense of other states.

Chapter 6 will be a discussion of the results from the case study chapters as well as the comparison of the results from the research process. This will also discuss the possible limitations in the research process as well as the wider phenomena that the knowledge on China in Africa is symbolic of. In addition, this chapter will also identify possible opportunities for future research and speculate on the possible future of this topic as well as drawing the research to a close. This argues that the constructs of China in Africa are symbolic of a competition between the American and Chinese systems which seek to spread themselves beyond the context of their creation, which is also a reflection of the power relations between China and the U.S. as well as highlighting the more normative dimensions of Chinese foreign policy.
CHAPTER 2 THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

The main part of my research focused on the constructs of China in Africa. This attempted to examine the images of Chinese policies in the continent and utilised concepts from literature in the field to chart the constructs of Chinese policies. To achieve this, theories and concepts that have traditionally been applied in largely different contexts were utilised to explore the images of China’s policies in Africa. One of the major issues of the research was the selection of an adequate theoretical and methodological framework which could explore how the knowledge on China in Africa is created and what it represents. To do so, it was necessary to select a more theoretical framework that focuses upon the creation of knowledge and what it is symbolic of.

The theoretical approaches of Foucault and Bourdieu were the most appropriate theoretical framework for exploring my proposed research questions for several reasons. Firstly, the research sought to examine the official narratives on Chinese engagement in Africa which often took the form of official discourses created from knowledge and power. The popular narratives on Chinese engagement are formulated by several influential factors, most notably the knowledge of China’s past for the Chinese discourse and how the traditional predominance of the English language has helped the American or Western narrative gain legitimacy in the way that Chinese engagement is perceived (Carmody, 2013, pg. 18). To better understand these themes better, it is necessary to examine the Chinese and American narratives via an approach that accounts for both the normative and causative factors behind the depictions of China in Africa.

Secondly, to explore the various themes of the differing Chinese and American discourses, it is necessary to pursue an “archaeology” of their knowledge and creation. This will require an examination of the choice of language utilised in these statements as how this language creates their depictions of Chinese engagement in Africa. To better understand how Chinese
and American discourses contrast against each other, it was necessary to examine the language they use and code the appropriate themes and phrases.

It is the perceived symbolic power of a discourse that also serves to augment the overall power and acceptance of it. Such an analysis may be of use when exploring the various symbiology utilised in the discourses, such as the “voracious dragon” motif commonly utilised in the Anglophone discourse on the subject. The concept of symbolic power is useful in exploring how this is given meaning in the Anglophone and Chinese discourse on the subject.

Regarding the application of Bourdieu’s concepts to an alternative context, the concept of symbolic power can be applied to the context of Chinese policy towards Africa for several reasons. Firstly, the concept of a “legitimate” narrative can be seen in the apparent dominance of the American narrative on the study of Chinese foreign policy thanks to the dominance of the English language and the pursuit of soft power. The legitimacy of the established narrative can also be seen in the rise of so called “universal values” which some view as being simply American or Western values spread over to another context (Bell, 2000, pg. 57). It is through this process that we can see how symbolic power seeks to replicate itself on a global scale. If Bourdieu’s symbolic power can determine the rules of power relations between social fields, it can equally be used to set the rules of power relations between states. This can be seen in the apparent rivalry between the United States and China, something that is particularly common in the established discourse on Chinese engagement in Africa. Both states ascribe to different norms and values and have differing interpretations of the existing world order in the case of the United States and the future ideal of one in the case of China (Jacques, 2009, pg. 321). It is the codification of the rules of power that serve to augment the overall utility of the concept of the habitus in exploring this case, since the differing constructs of China in Africa are representative of the power relations between the two as reflecting two competing systems that seek to spread themselves beyond their original context.

Bourdieu’s analysis is also of use when addressing the question of a narrative’s legitimacy. As with the case of the art world, a discourse is granted legitimacy by the creator’s position in the field of power. In the context of foreign policy, it may appear that the American narrative is often perceived as being the “legitimate” narrative due to the Eurocentric nature of the common interpretations of the international system as the dominance of the English language and American soft power (Lagadec, 2012, pg. 160). To explore how the Chinese and American discourses react to each other, it is necessary to first explore what is deemed to be the “legitimate” narrative. It is for these reasons outlined that I will seek to explore the official
Chinese and American discourses on Chinese engagement in Africa in order to further explore the research questions outlined earlier.

In addition, this framework can achieve this objective since it works in concert with the theoretical grounding of the research, which also examines how the discourse is created as the ways in which it seeks to promote the system that created it. This is reflected in the two cases of Sudan and Zimbabwe, which are symbolic of the continuity and change within the American and Chinese narratives on China in Africa as the popular images of Chinese foreign policy. In the case of Zimbabwe, this is expected to become even more notable in the light of the recent coup that ousted the veteran leadership of Mugabe and much of his inner circle. This development is also related to the increasing Chinese military presence in Sudan as Beijing becomes increasingly willing to utilise stronger measures to protect its interests abroad, which provides an overarching element to the images of an increasingly assertive China. Just as China perceives itself as a competitor to the United States, a notion furthered by Allison (2016, pg. 137), it is fitting that the American and Chinese narratives should be examined to explore the more normative dimensions of this rivalry as both sides seek to promote their own system, values and images to the African continent.

2.2 Symbolic Power and the Habitus

If the concept of the archaeology of knowledge is the central component of Foucault’s analysis, Bourdieu’s theories are dominated by the two concepts of symbolic power and the habitus. As with the concept of the discourse, both these ideas entail the role of language and knowledge alongside their relationship with power, something that Bourdieu’s works seek to illustrate. By utilising these theories, it is possible to explore how the constructs of China in Africa are created as how they seek to spread themselves beyond their original context.

The Chinese constructs regarding China in Africa, through the lens of Bourdieu’s theories, can be interpreted as seeking to gain a form of legitimacy by seeking to replicate themselves beyond their original context as well as utilising China’s experiences to further legitimise these projects. As with Foucault, Bourdieu also emphasises the role of knowledge in the creation of power. Bourdieu (1996, pg. 265) utilised a Marxian approach towards this concept, labelling knowledge as “cultural capital”. In line with the Marxist tradition, Bourdieu (1992, pg. 41)
cites the importance of social relations in the creation of cultural capital in his depictions of what he labels as “bourgeois” art, which highlights the binary of refined and vulgar, the former associated with the dominant political and social class. One of the main features of symbolic power is the ways in which it deconstructs the common interpretations of power relations. This primarily manifests itself in a structure’s desire to replicate itself beyond its original sphere. The theme of power relations continues in that symbolic power also outlines the challenges that one structure may pose to another (Osbourne, 2008, pg. 107). As with the relationship between knowledge and power, the concept of symbolic power serves to codify the rules of power relations between discourses and was suited to exploring how two different narratives compete. It is this theme of one’s position in the existing social hierarchy that played a crucial role in Bourdieu’s (2004, pg. 23) hypothesis.

To better analyse the narratives on Chinese engagement in Africa, it was important to determine the extent to which symbolic power constitutes a narrative and the extent to which this is perceived to be the “legitimate” depiction of a narrative. This is shown by the supposed “universality” of the dominant system, something that retains a degree of legitimacy to be perceived as such. The purpose of Bourdieu’s analysis here is to deconstruct these ideas to show how alternative narratives seek to challenge the hegemonic narrative. Bourdieu’s concept of symbolic power highlights the previously concealed ties between language and power. In the vein of Gramsci, Bourdieu (1992, pg. 46) claimed that the idea of a “linguistic community” is a product of political domination codified by its institutions, particularly educational establishments, that seek to replicate the existing social structure for future generations. This replication of the existing system also proves, in Bourdieu’s (1992, pg. 140) perspective that the concept of an “independent” language is an illusion since one’s power is determined by the extent to which they have access to the official language, thus the very use of language is also an expression of power. While Bourdieu’s theories have been confined to the domestic sphere and the art world, it is possible to apply such an approach to an international context. In the case of Chinese engagement in Africa, it is necessary to explore the language utilised in the various discourses on the subject to determine how such a narrative is created as examining the context that lead to its creation. Bourdieu’s approach can be useful in examining the internationalisation of one narrative which renders it as the “legitimate” discourse on the subject.
By examining Bourdieu’s concept of legitimacy, it was possible to see the centrality of one’s position in a social or political field to his theories. Bourdieu (1998, pg. 30) views the current system as being hierarchical in nature and is governed by an individual’s participation in the field of power, which is one of the few fields that remains consistent. This presented legitimacy as a conservative phenomenon in that it since it sought to maintain the status quo by protecting what it deemed to be the “legitimate” system, which is often the previously established field. In the case of the discourses on Chinese policy, Bourdieu’s theories can be used to explore what is deemed to be the “legitimate” narrative on Chinese engagement in Africa. Traditionally, the more Eurocentric and exceptionalist approaches has viewed the American or Western narrative as being the most legitimate due to the dominance of the English language and the traditional centrality of the U.S. to the international habitus. This has been subject to several challenges posed by alternative narratives grounded in different experiences that seek to challenge the overall universality of the dominant narrative. Bourdieu’s theories are of utility in exploring how these competing discourses respond to one another and how they seek to replicate themselves beyond the context of their origin.

2.3 Foucault’s Discourse and the Archaeology of Knowledge

The composition of the images of China in Africa can also be viewed through Foucault’s ‘archaeology of knowledge’ which outlines the relationship between the process of knowledge creation and political power. It is through this concept that we can see the subtler exercises of power and its role in shaping the commonly accepted narrative which serves to marginalise anything that does not conform to its standards. This serves as a potential means to explore the wider normative conflict that the competing images of China’s African policies have been symbolic of as well as the factors that have influenced the creation of these images. This shifted the focus away from what was said to examining how it was said or the type of language utilised for such a purpose. According to this concept, discourse is created by several key factors, one of the most prominent of these being language (Foucault, 1977, pg. 14). Foucault asserts that language is utilised to construct the known world and that the author of this is central to this discursive function. As with the concept of discourse, the utilisation of the language that creates this knowledge is also subject to change over time as shown in Foucault’s
Discipline and Punish where the rhetoric for punishment shifted from torture to surveillance in line with the political and social changes over time. It is the language of a discourse that deems what is acceptable or what is the “truth”.

By exploring the processes behind the creation of power and knowledge, the purpose of Foucault’s archaeology of knowledge was to deconstruct the power relations that influence the creation of a form of knowledge. This can be seen in the subject of a discourse which Foucault (1972, pg. 50) asserts reflects the dominant power structure behind its creation. If Chinese engagement in Africa is the subject of a discourse, it is an illustration of the dominant power relations between China and the United States as shown by their competing narratives on the same subject. Rather than simply seeking to exclude the Chinese discourse, the Chinese narrative is itself a part of these relations and it also seeks to pose the main challenge to this form of knowledge.

The other objective of Foucault’s analysis is to explore how several different statements are organised into a single, unified discourse. This often depends on the use of language as one of the key organisational tools for the organisation of several statements which is limited by one’s overall access to the dominant language. This framework is also aided by the process of resemblance (Foucault, 1970, pg. 21) to press differing statements into a single unified discourse. It would initially appear that the American and Chinese discourses are also constituted by several varying statements which are unified by common themes and language. This provides a degree of classification albeit in a very loose sense. In a similar vein, the process of resemblance may also be initially seen in the American narrative’s attempts to draw parallels between the West’s own experiences in Africa to Chinese policy today to place the two different contexts into a single coherent process (Burnan, 2008, pg. 197). Language plays a significant role in shaping discourse, particularly in the role a discourse plays in constituting the known world. This leads one to examine how knowledge is created rather than simply examining what the knowledge outright states. To initially apply these theories to the American and Chinese discourses on the subject, it is necessary to examine the language used rather than what the discourse states to understand how Chinese engagement is depicted as to examine the extent to which they conflict with each other.

Discourses have also been interpreted as a set of rules and norms that a society expects individuals to follow. As with the case of language, this is also subject to changes over time along with a society’s norms. The power of this is in how a society can marginalise and exclude those who do not match this idealised image the discourse creates. This can be seen in
Foucault’s *Madness and Civilization* where the “mad” were defined against a society’s norms and were excluded from participating in it in the same way that a leper was excluded from the healthy (Foucault, 1985, pg. 36). As with the case of punishment, this was also subject to the change in norms over time as the method of exclusion changed from exile to confinement.

To deploy Foucault’s analysis to the case of the constructs of China in Africa, it is necessary to determine what the established norms in the discourse on Chinese engagement in Africa are for both the American and Chinese narratives on it. By doing so, it will be possible to examine how the alternative Chinese discourse responds to the claims made by the established American discourse and how it reacts to the established norms in this subject. These norms that the Chinese discourse seeks to challenge are also creations of the experiences of the American world. By exploring these norms, it is possible to establish the possible experiences that create the American discourse as how the Chinese narrative seeks to challenge them with its own set of norms.

The other core component of Foucault’s discourse is that of knowledge. As with the case of language, knowledge also has a relationship with power and is, as with the case of language and norms, also subject to change over time. The exploration of how this is formed required the “archaeology of knowledge” where the process behind its formation is what one should endeavour to examine rather than what the knowledge entails. The main purpose of Foucault’s discourse is to set the rules that one follows in a structure. This involves defining what is “normal” from what is “abnormal” (Foucault, 1977, pg. 35). The pre-eminence of one discourse at the marginalisation of others appears to be just one of these rules rather than simply being a matter of excluding those that do not conform to its standards. To gain greater power, the dominant narrative will seek to compete with others and attempt to marginalise them to maintain its hegemony. Foucault’s methodology will be utilised to explore how the discourse on China in Africa reflects the challenge that China poses to the established Eurocentric narrative.

If this concept were to be applied to the case of the discourses on China’s policies towards Africa, it appears that the American and Chinese narratives are engaged in a competition to marginalise the other in a bid to become the dominant discourse on Chinese engagement in Africa. This can be seen in the differences between the Chinese and American discourses on the same phenomenon, as shown by the American assertion that China’s policy of non-intervention facilitates the worst excesses of some African regimes (Large, 2008, pg. 96) while China claims that this policy is in respect of national
sovereignty (Chen, 2011, pg. 603). The concept utilised by Foucault is useful in examining the creation of the Chinese and American discourses.

It is also the question of competing discourses that raises the issue of the norms that created the original discourse in the first place. While Foucault’s work examined domestic norms and society, it can be possible to reapply his methodology on a grander scale than it was initially intended. This may be seen in the concept of an “international community”, which gained traction at the end of the Cold War. The norms of this perceived community are often interpreted as liberal democracy and human rights, which are perceived as being American values on a global scale (Nathan and Schobell, 2012, pg. 319). China’s policies and domestic make up are a violation of these perceived norms which illustrates the conflict between the American and Chinese narratives as one of the influences that creates the perception of China in Africa created by the European and American discourses.

To better understand the Chinese and American discourses, it is necessary to examine how these narratives are formed rather than what they say about Chinese engagement in the continent. By applying this to the Chinese discourse, it is possible to determine how China’s previous experiences have played a role in shaping China’s response to the American discourse, which reflect themselves in the themes prevalent in the established discourses, which reflects the fraught power relations between China and the United States. It is for these reasons that an analysis based on Foucault’s pattern in conjunction with the theories of Bourdieu is the most appropriate for this form of research since both methods focus on how structures are created as how they are spread beyond their original context. This raises the more normative dimensions of Chinese foreign policy that the research sought to explore.

2.3.1 Normative Chinese Power

There is also a more normative dimension to China’s African policies alongside the typical political and economic dimensions to it as previously depicted in the established literature on China in Africa. Alongside the role of symbolic capital in Chinese foreign policy, the more normative aspects of China’s approach to Africa illustrates how the perceptions of these policies are created by the Chinese and American narratives, particularly the pursuit of soft power initiatives by Beijing as the issues over the perception of China’s image in the continent and the wider world and highlighting the more normative aspect of China’s African policies.
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

(Wang, 2008, pg. 258). This serves as the primary mechanism for the spread of the Chinese constructs beyond their original context

While the policy of soft power has often been interpreted as Beijing’s attempt to win African hearts and minds to further China’s economic objectives, it also has a normative significance for Beijing. One of the main criticisms of the policy of cultural soft power is that these policies are not so much soft power, but rather normative power (Lagadec, 2012, pg. 163). This is due to these policies being aimed at combatting what Beijing perceives to be the negative image of China, which is blamed for the limitations in the overall effectiveness of achieving Chinese foreign policy goals (Shambaugh, 2015, pg. 99). It is this battle for China’s global image that is symbolised by the competing images of China’s African policies since these are the result of two normative systems that seek to spread themselves beyond the context of their origins as being reflective of two systems that seek to spread themselves beyond the context of their creation.

Alongside the promotion of China’s traditional culture, these policies have often been claimed to be promoting Chinese norms as much as they promote Chinese culture (Nye, 2012, pg. 151). This is related to combatting the perceived negative image of China to enhance China’s ability to achieve foreign policy goals. It is possible to see the discourse on Chinese engagement in Africa as being one of the many fronts of the battle for China’s identity waged by the American and Chinese discourse, rendering Beijing’s soft power initiatives as being more about the pursuit of normative rather than soft power since these are intended to modify the existing social norms. This is illustrative of the more normative considerations behind China’s African policies as the wider issues that it symbolises.

In keeping with the depictions of Chinese cultural soft power initiatives as an expression of normative power, it would also appear that the purpose of the discourses themselves are to spread a set of norms beyond the context within which they were created. This appears to be in line with the replicating structures epitomised by Bourdieu’s concept of the habitus, with the educational institutions and the future generations raised to replicate this system being replaced by normative role models and nations respectively, as China and the American world seek to replicate their normative systems on a global scale. This is the wider issue that the competing knowledge on China in Africa serves as a representative of.
The role of these norms that codifies the power relations between China and much of the American world. In line with the theories of Bourdieu, the American and Chinese discourses seek to spread their norms on a wider scale to gain further legitimacy as promoting a role model for other states to follow. This has often been couched in terms such as universal values in the American discourse or in the case of the Chinese discourse an alternative to these values. In the case of the latter, this can be interpreted as an example of the more normative dimensions of Chinese foreign policy as China seeks to challenge the dominance of the American narrative.

The spread of Chinese norms as the more normative aspects of Chinese foreign policy, can be seen in the spread of the Chinese model of economic development. This has often been interpreted as the promotion of economic development along with political authoritarianism, the latter of which appears to conflict with the established norms regarding development (Cooper Ramo, 2004, pg. 63). It is this idea of development without democracy that illustrates the crux of the challenge that the Chinese discourse poses, since it was commonly assumed that development was impossible without the adoption of democratic values. It is the normative dimensions of China in Africa that reflects the power relations between China and the West, which clash over the spread of their respective norms and systems.

By examining the normative as the symbolic aspects of China’s approach to Africa, it is possible to view the developments and shifts in Chinese foreign policy. This can be seen in the more exceptionalist stance taken by the Chinese narrative, which has manifested itself in the discourse. Such a development can be seen in the example of the China Dream, which is one of the more recent developments in the Chinese discourse as in the Chinese approach (Liu, 2015, pg. 63). This has suggested another path for China to follow, rooted in its imperial past, as opposed to the traditional notion of convergence with the West. By following the normative dimensions of China’s policy in Africa, it is possible to examine the developments in Chinese foreign policy as the changes in China’s identity, both of which appear to have a relationship. In addition, this illustrates the image of China that China seeks to portray to the wider world, which serves as another reflection of how the Chinese system seeks to replicate itself beyond its original context.

It was possible to engage with the norms that shape the discourses on these policies since the structures of experience that influence their creation. In the case of the Chinese discourse, this has seen a shift away from the communist norms that had dominated the Chinese narrative during the twentieth century to a more cultural identity based on concepts from China’s imperial past (Wang, 1999, pg. 24). While this indicates a shift away from the project to turn
China into a more political actor, it also indicates how the structures of experience that influenced the creation of the Chinese discourse too has changed, which is reflected in the more normative dimensions of Chinese foreign policy since this image is the one that China seeks to promote to the wider world.

The more normative dimension also suggests a change in the Western perception of China. Traditionally, the American or Western discourse on China was shaped by the phenomenon of the Yellow Peril, which was grounded in the European imperial experiences in China during the nineteenth century and the ideological conflict of the Cold War. This approach was largely binary in nature in seeking to differentiate China as the ‘barbaric East’ against the ‘civilised West’ and later as the communist enemy alongside the Soviet Union against the capitalist and democratic American world. Such depictions served to underline the differences between China and the United States (Frayling, 2014, pg. 23). While these binaries continue to persist in the American discourse, most notably in the depiction of an authoritarian China against a democratic West, there has been a shift in the way that China has been perceived, suggesting that China will follow the path of the great powers of the previous century. This has manifested itself in the assumptions that China is under the same pressures as the European powers in Africa to become an imperial power as drawing parallels between the policies of these powers and China (Shinn and Eisenman, 2012, pg. 179).

The centrality of norms to the research issue is raised by how the competing images of China in Africa are an expression of two competing sets of norms. This can be seen in how the established image of these policies have been an expression of democratic norms reacting against the more authoritarian dimensions of Chinese policy while the Chinese image is a creation of Confucian or ‘Asian’ values as outlined by Bell. The latter is also representative of China’s wider challenge, which includes its push back against democratic values and human rights, which has been expressed through the promotion of Chinese norms in the form of the China model and the China Dream. It is the role of norms that raises the necessity to utilise the framework of Foucault’s theories regarding the creation of knowledge to explore the role that norms play in the creation of the competing images of China in Africa and the wider issues they signify, most notably the normative challenge that China poses.

In addition, the theoretical framework and the research issue were linked by their challenge to the established norms and assumptions. In the case of the former, this comes in the form of the wider critique of the dominant, realist assumptions that were perceived to have lost their credibility at the end of the Cold War. This has been expressed through the criticism of power
being synonymous with hard power as well as the zero-sum assumptions that had once dominated international relations theory. For the latter, it is in how China’s normative foreign policy has challenged the dominance of the established paradigms regarding capitalism and development, as expressed through the China Model and the China Dream. It is these issues that unify both the theoretical framework and the research issue, which further underlines the utility of the selected methodology.

2.32 How does This Tie into International Relations Theory?

While the theories of Foucault and Bourdieu have their origins in the field of sociology, they have been applied to the field of international relations. In the case of Foucault, this can be seen in Michael Hardt and Antonio Neigri’s utilisation of his concepts to explore American hegemony in the post-Cold War world in *Empire*. This depicted American hegemony as a superstructure in the vein of Foucault’s theories. Bourdieu’s concepts have been applied to this field by Vincent Pouliot (2013, pg. 53) as part of a wider criticism of the established theories in international relations, most notably the liberal and realist doctrines. Pouliot views the latter as being reductivist in character alongside the claim that states act towards others based on the meanings that they give to other states rather than the inherent logic of power politics.

Alongside the concept of soft power, the constructivist approach to international relations was a product of the Post-Cold War era, which sought to criticise the perceived limitations of the more established theories (Grieco, 2008, pg.65). This sought to criticise the more rationalist approaches to international relations, most notably the realist doctrine, which was viewed as being of limited utility in exploring the strategies and behaviour of nations (Fordham, 2009, pg.251). As with the concept of soft power, the constructivist approach questioned the nature of power in international relations, which was furthered by the decreasing utility of hard power, the common measure for power and state capacities (Lock, 2010, pg. 32). Instead, this approach sought to explore the role of identity and meaning, aspects that had previously been overlooked by the more established approaches to international relations, asserting that a state’s behaviour is dictated by its identity and the meaning that it ascribes to other states (Reus-Smit, 2009, pg. 223). Such an approach is reflective of the images of China’s African policies since these images can influence the way that states react to Chinese foreign policy.
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

The roots of the constructivist approach can be seen in Alexander Wendt’s *Anarchy is What the State Makes it*. Wendt (1992, pg. 395) critiques the common perception that the international system is characterised by a Hobbesian anarchy, which had been one of the primary assumptions of the realist approach. Rather than the system being anarchic, Wendt (1992, pg. 398) asserts that power politics are socially-constructed and that states act based on the assumptions of international anarchy since that is the meaning that they ascribe to it rather than the system being anarchic. In line with the theories of Foucault, this approach explored the relationship between the social construction of knowledge and social reality, since state behaviour is determined by these (Ruggie, 1992, pg. 858). In addition, this approach emphasised the role that a state’s identity played in shaping its foreign policy, an example being the assumption that democratic states will always be hostile to authoritarian nations, since they stand against democratic values (Reus Smit, 2009, pg. 223). It is this assumption that can render this doctrine of utility in exploring the images of China in Africa and what they represent.

It is these claims that tie the theories of Foucault and Bourdieu to the Constructivist approach towards international relations. This can be seen in how Constructivism focuses primarily on how objects and systems are created, such as Wendt’s (1992, pg. 395) depiction of the international anarchy cited by realists, which he prescribes to states and their behaviour towards each other rather than being the inherent logic behind power politics. This was critical of the zero-sum approach behind the assumptions regarding Great Power politics, which has gained a degree of traction due to the popularity of the ‘Thucydides Trap’, which has shaped the established image of Chinese foreign policy being a result of this logic.

Alongside its connection to the theories of Foucault and Bourdieu, the constructivist approach is of utility for several reasons. Firstly, this approach focuses on the role of identity and meaning in international relations, with both being of note in shaping the image of China in Africa. This illustrates the necessity of exploring how the meaning of China’s African policies have been created by the images of these policies since states are likely to act towards Chinese foreign policy based on the meanings that they give to these policies. It is these meanings that renders the research problem of importance and the utility of the constructivist approach in exploring it.

The constructivist approach is also useful due to it being one of the most significant developments in the Chinese approach to international relations. This can be seen in how Chinese adherents to this doctrine have created the image of ‘China’s peaceful rise’, which has served as part of the challenge to the established image of the China Threat (Qin, 2011, pg. 52).
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

234). It is this image that is reflective of the research problem regarding the images of Chinese foreign policy as well as being a part of the Chinese theory of international relations, which underlines the utility of the constructivist approach towards the research problem.

The case of Chinese constructivism is also of utility in exploring the nature of the challenge that China poses via the images of China’s African policy. This again can be seen in the image of China’s peaceful rise, which illustrates the Chinese perceptions of China’s role and identity and the relationship between the constructivist doctrine and Chinese foreign policy (Qin, 2011, pg. 234). While this has been largely superseded by the China Dream in the Xi era, the dynamics of these images have been similar in that both are a creation of Chinese norms and seek to challenge the established image of China. This serves as a codification of the normative power relations between China and the United States in their battle for China’s image.

The constructivist approach can be used to explore the logic and meanings behind the images of China’s African policies. In the case of Wendt (1992, pg. 397), this can be used to examine the logic derived from the experiences that have shaped the discourses on China in Africa, such as the experiences of the European powers and the U.S. in the African continent and China’s own experiences, which serve to further the meanings they prescribe to Chinese foreign policy. This is shown in how the zero-sum approach derived from the experiences of the 20th century has shaped the constructs of Chinese foreign policy. Such a framework is furthered by Power and Mohan’s (2010, pg. 466) depiction of international relations as an ‘American science’, which is suggestive of the context within which the established images of Chinese foreign policy were created. By following this approach, it is possible to explore how these experiences have influenced the meanings prescribed to Chinese foreign policy, which further emphasises the necessity to explore their role upon the creation of these images. In addition, this also can potentially avoid the pitfalls that have befallen other readings of Chinese foreign policy, most notably in the notion of the Thucydides Trap that has drawn upon the Great Power politics of the 20th century.

The question over the nature of power also links the theories of Bourdieu to the concept of normative power and the research issue. As with the theories of Foucault and the concept of soft power, this also focuses on the less coercive dimensions of power, as expressed through Bourdieu’s depiction of power as a means of legitimising a system as well as how it is spread to a wider context. Such a process is echoed by the attempts made by the Chinese discourse to legitimise Chinese initiatives in the African states by promoting it to a wider context (Zhao, 2010, pg. 422). This has been illustrated by China’s soft power offensive in the developing
world as well as the promotion of the Chinese model of development as an example for
developing nations to follow. In addition, it is these initiatives that strive to legitimise Chinese
involvement in the African states by invoking China’s experiences of anti-colonialism and
development, aspects of Chinese foreign policy that has enabled China to cement its influence
in the continent (Shinn, 2009, pg. 87).

The application of the constructivist doctrine to cases of China’s international relations have
also rendered this theory of utility to the case of the knowledge on China’s African policies.
This is illustrated by Peter Katzenstein’s (2016, pg. 3) depiction of the West as an Anglo-
American civilisation which closely fits the idea of a Western civilizational other that China
defines itself against. The ideas that China can bring to this doctrine can be seen in Jeffrey
Legro’s (2007, pg. 524) claim that China’s development has seen the integration of Chinese
ideas and history, both of which play a role in how China prescribes meaning to its foreign
policy. Such an approach also illustrates how the Chinese narrative is spread, such in Erik
Ringmar’s (2012, pg. 20) depiction of the Sinocentric world order, from which China’s
approach to international relations has been derived. These applications also suggest a research
gap in that these concepts have not been applied to the case of China’s African policies, which
the research can cover.

It is the example of the hostility that democratic states have towards authoritarian nations
that initially illustrates how the constructivist approach can be of utility in exploring the images
of China’s African policies. This can be seen in how the established images of these policies
often emphasise the authoritarian character of the Chinese political system, which has been
notable in the common image of China as a facilitator of authoritarian norms in the African
states (Keenan, 2009, pg. 85). Such an image is indicative of the more normative aspects of
how these perceptions are created since Chinese foreign policy appears to contradict the
democratic norms behind the images of Chinese foreign policy. This is rendered of further
importance since these assumptions shape the way that states react to Chinese foreign policy,
which furthers the utility of this framework as well as the necessity to explore the formation of
the images regarding China’s African policies.

The rise of soft power in Chinese foreign policy also furthers the utility of a more
constructivist approach. As stated in the previous chapter, it is difficult to gauge the capacities
and resources of soft power compared to the traditional indicators of a state’s capabilities such
as its military and economic strength (Lukes, 2008, pg.83). Through the constructivist
approach, soft power can be perceived as an attempt by a nation to spread its identity and the
meaning that it ascribes to it to a wider context in a bid to change the perceptions of other states. By doing so, China’s soft power offensive in the African states is an attempt by Beijing to alter the established meanings attributed to Chinese foreign policy and to China itself (Jing et al., 2016, pg. 3), which underlines the more normative competition between China and the United States. This notion can be explored by a more constructivist approach since this can gauge China’s capacities to implement its’ attempts to alter the meanings ascribed to Chinese foreign policy. It is this development alongside the importance of soft power in Chinese foreign policy that renders this approach of utility since it can explore the capacities of soft power and the dimensions of Chinese foreign policy that had largely been overlooked in favour of the focus on its economic and military capabilities.

The question over the nature of power also links the theories of Bourdieu to the concept of normative power and the research issue. As with the theories of Foucault and the concept of soft power, this also focuses on the less coercive dimensions of power, as expressed through Bourdieu’s depiction of power as a means of legitimising a system as well as how it is spread to a wider context (Lee, 2018, pg.50). Such a process is echoed by the attempts made by the Chinese discourse to legitimise Chinese initiatives in the African states by promoting it to a wider context. This has been illustrated by China’s soft power offensive in the developing world as well as the promotion of the Chinese model of development as an example for developing nations to follow. In addition, it is these initiatives that strive to legitimise Chinese involvement in the African states by invoking China’s experiences of anti-colonialism and development, aspects of Chinese foreign policy that has enabled China to cement its influence in the continent (Alden and Hughes, 2009, pg. 569).

Regarding the meanings that states give to others, the constructivist approach is of use in exploring China’s capabilities. The neoclassical realist approach often claimed that states base their views on others on its interpretation of their capabilities (Lobell, 2009, pg. 45). Such an approach reflects the role of meanings in state behaviour, since a nation’s interpretation of another state’s capabilities is part of the meaning that they ascribe to another state. In the case of Chinese foreign policy, this can be seen in the perception of the China threat, which has been the result of the interpretation of China’s economic and military capabilities (Van Standen, 2018, pg. 3). This has often led to China being perceived as a threat in recent years, gaining it the label of a revisionist power. By exploring how this image is created, it is possible to explore how states react to Chinese foreign policy and to explore China’s other capacities, which have largely been overlooked.
The theoretical framework and the constructivist approach to international relations are unified in their interpretation of power and their criticism of the traditional notions of power as an inherently coercive force. This can be seen in Foucault’s depiction of power as being a means of governance and exclusion by norms, which is suggestive of the non-coercive dimensions of power. It is this dimension of power that is linked to the notion of soft power, which focuses on building consent rather than achieving objectives more forcefully. The question of power illustrates one of the wider issues of the research question in that it raises the question over the nature of power in Chinese foreign policy, where soft power appears to have a greater status than the more coercive forms of power, a fact that has often been overlooked by the established focus on China as an economic or a military rival (French, 2014, pg. 262).

Foucault’s theories regarding the creation of knowledge and political power also overlaps with the constructivist approach’s focus on the role of meaning in international relations. This is illustrated in how states react to others based on the meaning that they attribute to others, which echoes Foucault’s depiction of the role that a hegemonic discourse and norms play in the acquisition of political power. As with the less coercive dimensions of power, this also overlaps with the role of soft power in Chinese foreign policy since these initiatives seek to promote the Chinese discourse to a wider audience to reshape the established meanings attributed to China by other nations (Shambaugh, 2015, pg. 100). By doing so, these policies seek to reshape the established meaning of China to one that is more in keeping with Beijing’s image of China’s role which also influences the reaction of other states to a more favourable approach. It is this aspect that connects the theories of Foucault to the constructivist approach and the research issue.

The theories of Foucault and Bourdieu are closely linked to the constructivist approach towards international relations. This is due to their shared focus on the role that norms, identity and meaning play in the interactions between states as well as how they sought to challenge the established assumptions in this field. It is due to this shared focus alongside the reasons outlined earlier that render this framework of utility to the case of the images of China’s African policies and what these images symbolise.
2.4 Research Methods

To operationalize the theoretical framework outlined in this chapter, it is necessary to select an appropriate methodology. This is required to examine the corpus outlined and to use choices of language as a measurement. To explore these questions, a social linguistic discourse analysis coupled with a content analysis was the most appropriate framework since this form of analysis explores the creation of narratives as the context behind their creation which illustrates the challenge that the Chinese narrative poses to the American discourse, serving to illustrate the relations between the two discourses as how these discourses promote their own systems via their images of China in Africa (Georgakopoulou and Goutsos, 2004, pg. 53). By doing so, it was possible to illustrate how the creation of the knowledge on China in Africa and the constructs of it is expressive of wider phenomena and how Chinese policy has a normative dimension.

The research framework utilised was qualitative in nature and focused primarily on the measurement of the language utilised in the corpus as well as the context within which it was created (Barker et al. 2008, pg. 273). This required the choices of language to be operationalised as the primary unit of measurement to test the theoretical framework outlined earlier in this chapter. In the words of Neil Mercer (2004, pg. 138), a methodology serves as the interface between the theory and the research question, which requires the selection of an appropriate methodology to serve as a connection between the two. In this case, the discourse analysis served as a connection between the knowledge on China’s African policies and the theories of Foucault and Bourdieu regarding the process of knowledge creation. To better apply these theories, two case studies on China’s policies towards the African states were selected to which the concepts outlined in this chapter and the literature review were applied. This methodological framework has several advantages in the exploration of the research problem.

I have selected this form of research design due to the overall size of my proposed research question and that it will enable me to utilize the theories outlined in this chapter. This is particularly useful when examining the different discourses since there are numerous different interpretations of China’s Africa policy within both the established American and Chinese literature on this subject. By utilizing this design, I will be able to use several of these interpretations as how this form of methodology and the selected theoretical framework complements each other. I sought to create a theoretical design supported by empirical data.
By examining documents, I was able to access a subject which was largely difficult to reach by other methodological frameworks (Joslyn and Reynolds, 1992, pg. 263)

There are several reasons why I have selected a social linguistic discourse analysis for my research design which relates to how it will fit my research questions. Firstly, since this type of research focuses on the context behind the creation of a source, it was possible to determine and explore the structures of experience behind the creation of the American and Chinese discourses on China in Africa. This was better reflected by exploring the phrases or recurrence throughout the Chinese and American discourses. Secondly, by focusing on the document as the context in which it was created, it is possible to explore the themes and choices of language present in the discourse on China in Africa (Johnstone, 2012, pg. 94). By utilizing this research design, it is possible to explore the process and experiences behind the creations of the American and Chinese discourses as understanding how the Chinese discourse responds to the claims made in the American discourse and how it then seeks to challenge them.

By codifying these common constructs and choices of language, it was possible to examine how the American and Chinese discourses conflict over their depictions of Chinese policy in Africa which serve as an example of the wider power relations between China and the United States, both of which are symbolic of two competing systems that seek to spread themselves beyond their original context. This raises the question of how China will seek to develop an alternative narrative to the perceived dominance of the American narrative. It is this alternative narrative that enabled the framework to explore the questions of how attractive the authoritarian model pursued by China is in the developing world as whether it will be successful in Africa.

Such a design will also make it possible to identify the norms that create the American and Chinese constructs of this subject. These norms were of importance since the purpose of the discourse is to sanction those who do not follow the norms that created it. By identifying the norms that create the American and Chinese discourses, it was possible to explore the more negative depictions of China in Africa throughout the American discourse alongside how the Chinese discourse seeks to challenge these with its’ own set of norms. It is these sets of norms that illustrated the conflict between the American and Chinese discourses over their depictions of China in Africa. This is particularly useful in the context of Bourdieu’s (2008, pg. 36) theories since this conflict raises the question over the legitimacy of a narrative, illustrating the underlying power relations between China and the United States. It is for these reasons that a social linguistic discourse analysis was the most appropriate methodology for my research questions.
The selected methodology has enabled the framework to examine the ways in which the Chinese discourse has legitimised China’s African policies through the use of shared experiences, which have come in the form of China’s assistance to anti-colonial movements during the Mao era and its four decades of economic development since the reforms of the Deng era (Shinn and Eisenman, 2012, pg.45). These experiences have granted China an advantage that few other external actors possess, with Chinese policies being promoted by the presentation of China’s experiences of development as an alternative framework for the African states to follow and in how the shared experiences of post-colonialism has played an integral part in China’s cultivation of its relationships with the African elites (Jiang et al, 2016, pg.4). Both experiences are an example of the more normative mechanisms that China has deployed to further its objectives in the African states that has largely been overlooked by the established literature.

In addition, the methodology in utilising the approach established by Foucault’s *Archaeology of Knowledge* made it possible to explore the role that norms played in the creation of the competing images of China in Africa. These images were a codification of the wider competition between democratic and authoritarian political norms, which has become increasingly notable as China seeks to present its system as an alternative as well as presenting itself as following a largely different path to the Western world. It is this aspect that shows how the research was able to underline the wider challenge that China poses in that it challenges the dominant paradigms, which has been a notable feature of the Chinese foreign policy discourse which has often been overlooked by the established focus on China as an economic and military challenger.

Regarding coding, a content analysis can help to further augment the discourse analysis outlined. One of these advantages is that such a framework will enable the research design to examine the themes prevalent in the American and Chinese discourse to explore the creation of their depictions of China in Africa. By doing so, it is possible to explore how these differing narratives serve to codify the power relations between China and the United States symbolized by the interactions and challenges they pose to each other. The content analysis will seek to code for phrases that were relevant to the themes of the American and Chinese discourses on China in Africa. Since the themes and language utilized in each discourse are different, this required the utilisation of two different sets of coding phrases. Examples of these included references to exploitation and conflict in the American sources along with Confucian terms in the Chinese discourse, the significance of which will be outlined in the next chapter. In terms
of software, I utilised Nvivo 10 to create a more concrete illustration of my collected data as grounding my research questions. In addition, such software enabled me to organize my data more efficiently than simply coding by hand. This may not be possible for Chinese language sources. By utilizing this software, I was able to code a larger number of sources than doing so manually. The utility of Nvivo 10 is furthered by its availability at Surrey which enabled me to receive further training in its use. To explore how these phrases have been developed, it was necessary to examine the established literature regarding China’s African policies.

To better achieve the research objectives discussed in the previous section, a more theoretical framework was used. The underlying rationale can be found in the fact that the question of the conflict between Chinese and American discourses is one that cannot be adequately addressed by a more empirical framework. This is due to the processes of the constructs of Chinese policy are often explained by more discursive theories rather than just being a question of independent and dependent variables which are better suited to narrower questions. Since the concept of discourse and symbiology is abstract, it was necessary to carry out a detailed review of the established literature to compare the various themes prevalent in the American and Chinese discourse. The theories of thinkers such as Bourdieu was one of the best ways to explore the discourse on Chinese policy in Africa as this sort of analysis examines how a response is worded and created rather than what it contains. Since discourse theory examines the creation of the common narratives, it is an essential tool in excavating the context in which the common American and Chinese constructs are created and ties into the methodology that I utilized (Johnstone, 2012, pg. 6).

As outlined in Chapter 1, I utilized two primary corpuses to explore the research question, which came in the form of American and Chinese governmental sources. The statements from these sources will be subject to a content analysis which coded for language that reflect the constructs of the American and Chinese discourse outlined in the literature review as the structures of experience that influence their creation. This sought to explore the meanings of these constructs as expressed through the choices of language in the corpus (Johnstone, 2012, pg. 263). Preliminary examples of these phases were references to Confucianism and culturalism in the Chinese statements and references to exploitation and proxy conflict in the American statements. I have chosen these phrases since they occur frequently throughout the American and Chinese discourse on China and Africa as reflecting the dominant themes of these respective discourses. As the research progresses over time, these categories may be subject to change which required a revised codebook.
In terms of case studies, I utilised the case studies of Sudan and Zimbabwe. The selection of these case studies is due to their popularity with much of the established literature on of China in Africa as it appeared to epitomize the excesses of Chinese policy as following the common constructs of China in Africa from the Anglophone literature, most notably those of China as a competitor and exploiter of Africa’s resources (Shambaugh, 2013 pg. 109). It is due to the popularity of this case study that provided a potentially greater amount of useful materials from the American discourse. The case of Sudan appeared to reflect the image of China as a reluctant Great Power in the region, which reflects the American constructs raised in the previous chapter (Large, 2009, pg. 612). It is for these reasons that the potential Chinese response to these claims was of great interest to my research questions.

The case Sudan served as a representation of the more recent developments in Chinese African policy and the Chinese discourse, which could be a point of comparison with the example of Zimbabwe to get a wider depiction of the constructs of China’s African policies. This has been particularly notable with the more interventionist stance taken by China in recent years, which appears to be in line with some of the constructs outlined in the established literature on China in Africa, most notably the constructs of China as a reluctant empire and as a facilitator of authoritarian norms (Halper, 2010, pg. 43). By exploring this case study, I hoped to explore the American images of China in Africa as how the recent shifts in Chinese foreign policy have manifested themselves in the Chinese narrative on China in Africa.

The case of Zimbabwe served as an example of the longer-term relations between China and the African states, since it was rooted in the post-colonial era. It was also an example of the earlier phases in China’s African policies, in this case, the provision of ideological and military assistance to the anti-colonial movements of the African continent during the Mao era. I used this to determine the continuity between the Chinese narrative of the Mao era and today, regarding the experiences of the time, in this case, the mutual experiences of imperialism that cemented the ties between China and the African states (Shinn and Eisenman, 2012, pg. 45). This can serve as a point of comparison between the Chinese approach of the past and the present and furthering the exploration of the images of China in Africa. In addition, the cases of Chinese policy in Sudan and Zimbabwe are examples of China as a dominant actor in an African state, with comparatively little competition from other external actors, whether it be due to the comparative unpalatability of these states or the lack of interest in them (Reiser, 2008, pg. 28). By using these cases of China as a dominant external actor in an African state,
I expected a more comprehensive image of Chinese foreign policy from both the American and Chinese sources on China in Africa, since China is a central actor to both Sudan and Zimbabwe.

Both the cases of Sudan and Zimbabwe illustrate the more controversial examples of Chinese foreign policy as reflected in the Anglophone literature, whether it be the exploitive practices of Chinese companies in resource rich states or the apparent facilitation of authoritarian regimes in the African continent. This was intended to reflect the themes in the more critical depictions of Chinese policy, which will enable a more compatible application of the framework to these cases. In addition, it is also these more controversial aspects of Chinese foreign policy that will render a Chinese response of interest to the research issue.

The methodology utilised entailed several steps. With the potential sources of data that was outlined earlier, I created two sets of coding phrases which required finding a meaning of the data (Georgakopoulou and Goutsos, 2004, pg. 5). Such phrases were related to the constructs of China in Africa, an example being the references to Chinese support and arms sales to the regimes in Sudan and Zimbabwe being reflective of the construct of China as a facilitator of authoritarianism. These were derived from the common constructs outlined in the literature review chapter. This entailed the coding of several official Chinese and African statements to explore how China responds to comments about its Africa policy by coding for several phrases. The proposed sources were primarily in English which serves as a reflection of the intended audiences for these sources, since English is one of the primary languages of these case studies as serving as part of China’s bid to spread its constructs beyond. Sources were coded separately and were divided by their origin. In addition, I determined the extent to which the data is relevant to my research questions based on the frequency these phrases occur in the sources.

For this analysis to be feasible, it was necessary to create a set of recurring phrases which were related to the overarching topic. The coding phrases consisted of common terminology in Chinese foreign policy discourse such as “mutual benefit” and “win-win scenario” as Confucian terminology such as “harmony” and “benevolence” which are also popular in Chinese discourse. The codebook attempted to find phrases that could refer to China’s experience of imperialism. Possible examples of these may refer to “exploitation”, “shared experience” and “Tianxia” (天下), the latter two serving as references to China’s experience as an empire and as the victim of other empires (Xu, 2011, pg. 165). All serve to apply the constructs defined in the literature review to the cases of Sudan and Zimbabwe.
For the official American discourses, it was necessary to utilize a different codebook since I will be coding for different phrases from the Chinese discourse. This included phrases that imply the unsavory nature of some of China’s policies such as exploitation and human rights abuses. I have selected phrases along these lines since these make up the bulk of common American accusations made against Chinese policy in the region (Olende, 2014, pg. 33). These phrases will also reflect the themes prevalent in the American discourse which serve as a reflection of the process where the American constructs were created. By implementing a discourse analysis, I intended to depict how China responds to the comments made against its policy towards Africa by promoting its own constructs of these policies. This will serve to explore how China responds to the accusations made in the American discourses as to further explore how China’s experiences of imperial rule and exploitation have shaped its response towards it. Finally, the themes were reviewed to determine how the conflicting discourses are an underlying theme in China’s Africa policy as other potential themes which will be examined in less detail. This was determined by how the small amount of empirical data that I seek to utilize forms a coherent pattern in line with my questions.

Possibly the most significant advantage that this framework has is its ability to act as a strong interface between the theoretical framework and the research questions. This can be seen in how the methodology focuses on the corpus and the circumstances within which it was created in (Hook, 2001, pg. 522). Such an approach fits closely with Foucault’s archaeology of knowledge, which explored the role of social norms and the context of a discourse’s creation to examine the relationship between political power and the process of knowledge creation. This enables the research framework to explore forms of knowledge that have often been taken for granted, which is of utility in furthering the research problem.

In the vein of the constructivist approach, the selected framework is of utility in exploring the meaning that the images of China in Africa ascribe to Chinese foreign policy (Scollon, 2003, pg. 174). Such an approach has been applied to a more political context, most notably in Ruth Wodak’s (2007, pg. 3) exploration of the meanings of anti-Semitic political discourse in post-war Austria. It is this example that illustrates the utility of such a framework in exploring political rhetoric and the meanings behind it, in this case, the meanings that have been ascribed to China’s approach to the African states, which influences the way in which other states react to these policies.
There are also several advantages to the utilisation of case studies to support the methodological framework. One of these is how case studies are less vulnerable to concept stretching than a more statistical analysis is, which can be of utility when applying the theoretical and methodological frameworks outlined in this chapter (Greene and Bennet, 2004, pg. 19). This renders case studies as a useful example of the wider issues that the images of China’s African policies symbolise. In addition, the research can be bolstered by the careful selection of case studies, which can both test the theories outlined as well as exploring the wider issues they are examples of.

One advantage in the utilisation of case studies to explore the research question is its ability to contextualise knowledge (Burnham et al, 2008, pg. 80). This enables the case study to serve as a method to test the hypothesis of the research question, which can be of use when exploring the images of China’s African policies, since it is possible to use these cases to provide a context for the broader knowledge regarding China’s African policies. In addition, case studies are also flexible in nature which is an advantage but also means that it is necessary for the case to be clear in its purpose just as a discourse analysis is vulnerable to becoming a ‘non-analysis’ (Gerring, 2007, pg. 37).

Another advantage of the use of case studies is in how it can be of utility in exploring the external factors that affect them (Gerring, 2009, pg. 39). This is of utility when exploring the research issue since the knowledge and images of China in Africa are a wider issue, of which the case studies serve as a representation of. To achieve this goal, the cases needed to be representative of this issue, which required a careful selection of case studies (Burnham et al, 2008, pg. 95). It is necessary to select cases that can serve as representative examples of the knowledge on China in Africa rather than simply utilising them based on their comparability.

Despite these advantages, there are some issues with the utilisation of this framework to study the research issue. A discourse analysis can be rather broad and vague in nature, which has earned it several detractors (Gasper and Apthorne, 1996, pg. 6). As a result, it is necessary to clearly define the nature and scope of the analytical framework to avoid falling into the pitfall of the analysis being too vague. This also required the analysis to be both concrete and transparent in nature, most notably regarding the texts and language utilised, which can serve to further ground the analysis.

Another issue with this form of research design is in how a poorly defined discourse analysis can become a ‘non-analysis’. This is alluded to by Antaki et al (2003, pg. 6) in their depiction of the six ‘non-analysis’ that a discourse analysis can potentially become, which vary
from under examining sources to simply spotting phrases. These are the result of the misconception of discourse analysis as an ‘anything goes approach’, which also illustrates how the framework has earned its’ share of critics. To prevent this, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the framework and to examine the meanings within the corpus rather than simply repeating what the corpus claims. In the vein of the archaeology of knowledge, it was necessary to examine how a statement is said rather than simply focusing on what the statement says.

The utilisation of case studies also has several issues. These include the scope of the case study, which can be potentially be either too broad or too narrow in focus alongside the issue of the case’s context (Greene and Bennet, 2003, pg. 25). This can be seen in how issues from one case study may not necessarily be applicable to the wider phenomenon that it serves as an example of (Flyvbjerg, 2006, pg. 223). As a result, it was necessary to have more than one case study to serve as a balance to this and to serve as an example to compare the first case study against.

Another possible issue comes in the form of the choice of cases, particularly over whether the choice of the cases is truly independent (Greene and Bennet, 2003, pg. 33). While this issue is a potential problem for the research design, it was possible to avoid this through the selection of strong case studies that tests the theories and explores the wider issues that they represent. In this case, this can be found in the examples of Chinese foreign policy provided by the cases of Sudan and Zimbabwe, which served as examples of the more recent developments in China’s African policies and the more established examples of it.

One of the issues regarding the utilisation of case studies lies in the question of interpretation. This comes in the form of ‘Galton’s Problem’ of a value-free interpretation of case studies, which is a result of too many variables and not enough cases (Burnham et al, 2008, pg. 83). Such an issue can potentially afflict the wider methodological framework, as illustrated by the six forms of ‘non-analysis, which required a more concrete approach to utilising this method to avoid creating a value -free analysis (Antaki et al, 2003, pg. 14).

Another issue is the form that a case study can take. This can be seen in Burnham et al’s (2008, pg. 87) assertion that a case study needs to be either comparable to each other or compatible. This further raises the necessity to carefully select relevant case studies to effectively explore the research issue. To address this issue, the research utilised the cases of Chinese activities in Sudan and Zimbabwe as a representation of the recent and more long-term developments in China’s African policies respectively. Such an approach can resolve the issue.
of comparability and whether these cases are compatible since the differing length of Chinese engagement with each country means that it is possible to explore developments that would otherwise have been overlooked if the research only used one case study.

Despite the potential issues of this framework, I believe that the utilisation of a discourse analysis with two case studies was the most appropriate framework to explore the images of China’s African policies for several reasons. This is due to it serving as an appropriate interface between the theory and the research question since the units of its analysis closely fit with those of the theoretical framework, such as that of language and meaning. In addition, two strong case studies can be of utility by serving as a method to test the theoretical and methodological frameworks and being examples of the phenomena that the research sought to explore.

2.5 Data

In terms of data, I used several different sources to produce a more balanced and possibly more diverse picture of Chinese Africa policy. I sought to use data from Chinese and American sources to create a balanced result although it was more difficult to access these sources due to issues over access and transparency. By using these three primary sources of data, I sought to explore the two perspectives that I have outlined although I am also aware of the limitations of this approach. Since my proposed research aims to explore the official discourse on China in Africa, it was necessary to explore official sources, particularly governmental statements. This was due to them reflecting the official narratives on China in Africa as providing a potential opportunity to explore the underlying points beneath these statements. The corpuses were taken from timeframes in line with the change of administrations to examine how the constructs and rhetoric evolved over time, an example of this being the prevalence of the construct of the China Dream becoming the mission statement of the Xi era. In contrast to other sources, their overall utility is further augmented by their ease of access and availability, thus building a more comprehensive illustration of the respective discourses. It is the selection of these sources of data that illustrates the first steps for the operationalization of the concepts from the literature review, so they can be applied to the case studies.
For the American discourse, I used statements from American governmental bodies, which ties into the perception of the West and the United States being synonymous, which has been a common image that the Chinese perception often measures itself against. One such source was statements from the Department of State regarding Chinese policy in Africa. This was particularly useful in exploring the official American narrative on Chinese foreign policy and providing examples of the possible norms that create the American discourse which will be of note in reference to the common American norms of democratic values and human rights concerns. In a similar vein, I also examined statements from the American embassy and consulates in Sudan as any other potential regions of interest. While this is in line with the statements created by the State Department, it can be possible to identify possible variations between the two. These were more case specific which served to explore the case study of Chinese foreign policy in Sudan. I have selected this source as the U.S. has been the most vocal critic of Chinese foreign policy, serving to represent the Western world in the Chinese mind (Wang, 2008, pg. 265). By approaching it from this way, it was possible to operationalize the Anglophone literature and to explore a more unified narrative on this subject.

I also used several Chinese sources of data. It was necessary to explore official Chinese sources in parallel to those of the United States to further explore how the constructs created in the official Chinese discourse respond to those created by the American narrative. An initial example can be found in the policy statements of the Chinese Foreign Ministry. These statements were of utility when contrasted against the American sources on the same subject, thus providing an initial example of the power relations reflected in the discourse on China in Africa. By utilizing sources from parallel institutions, I intended to explore the ways in which the binaries on China in Africa present in the established literature were present in the official narratives.

Over the course of the research process, a sample of the two corpuses were subjected to the coding process. In the case of Sudan, the American corpus was larger than its Chinese counterpart, consisting of 59 reports, 9 statements and 4 interviews, while the available Chinese corpus only consisted of 8 reports, 5 speeches and 24 press conferences. The period from which these texts were taken from was between 2006 to 2016, which includes two different administrations in both countries. This period also explains the larger size of the American corpus due to the context of the Darfur crisis, which drew criticism from Washington at the time. While the selection of this period was a result of the availability of the sources, it was of significance in this case study since the shift in governments in both China and the U.S. enabled
me to chart the shifts in their images of China’s African policies. This period also includes two of the most notable events in Sudan’s recent history, the Darfur crisis and South Sudan’s secession from the north. The former drew international criticism of Khartoum, and by extension, Beijing, over China’s support for Sudan during the crisis. By taking this approach, it is possible to explore the creation of the knowledge on China in Africa and how they are influenced by events in Sudan alongside the changes over time. In the case of Zimbabwe, each corpus only consisted of two types of text. For the American corpus, this came in the form of reports and speeches. The overall size of the American corpus in this case study has been smaller than that of the previous case study, consisting of 37 reports and 9 statements. On the other hand, the Chinese corpus has had a greater number of texts in the form of 48 reports and 20 speeches. The discrepancy in the overall size of the Chinese sample of texts can be attributed to the long-standing ties between China and Zimbabwe. These texts were taken from the same period as those from the case of Sudan to explore any possible shifts in the depictions of China’s activities in Zimbabwe as well as to examine any similarities and variations with the case of Sudan.

To explore China’s response to the accusations made in the American corpus, I attempted to utilize a discourse analysis on official Chinese statements on Chinese foreign policy in Africa. This was subject to a social linguistic approach in that the research design will primarily focus on the response and the context in which it was created. This analysis explored the context of the accusation of imperialism and China’s experience of imperialism along with the Chinese response to these statements to explore how China responds to these statements as how this response is created. In all, I will utilize several different sources of primary data to better ground the work and to support the three perspectives outlined. I am also aware of the difficulty of obtaining these sources of data, particularly those from China and Africa, as factors that could have hampered the overall utility of my proposed sources.

The sample size has also been expressive of several elements in the cases of China’s African policies. This can initially be seen in how the smaller sample size of the American corpus regarding China’s engagement with Zimbabwe can be seen as being illustrative of how the African states have largely been overlooked in the Post-Cold War era, which created a vacuum that China was able to fill. On the other hand, the larger sample of the American corpus regarding the case of Sudan is indicative of the factors within the case studies that affect the corpus, in this case, the controversy regarding China’s ties to Sudan during the Darfur crisis. In addition, the sample size has also been representative of the depth and duration of China’s
relationships with the African states, with the larger Chinese corpus in the case of Zimbabwe reflecting China’s long-standing ties with the country compared to China’s more recent engagement with Sudan. It is these aspects that have influenced the availability and size of the sample as well as the form that the constructs take in each case study, which affected the shape that the corpuses would take in each case study.

2.51 Coding Phrases

To explore the constructs present in the Chinese literature and to apply them to the official Chinese corpus, it was necessary to create coding phrases that could be operationalized as shown by Table 1. These were derived from the constructs and choices of language present in the literature on China’s African policies, with several phrases representing a single construct, with language serving as the primary unit of analysis for the research framework in line with the theories of Foucault. It was also expected that there will be a degree of variation in the form that the constructs will take in the case study as well as in the phrases utilised to describe them. An example of this can be seen in the concept of the China Dream, which has been one of the recurring constructs in the Chinese literature on this subject as for the wider discourse of Chinese foreign policy and identity. In keeping with this alongside Liu Mingfu’s concept of the China Dream, it is expected that this construct will appear in references to rejuvenation as seeking to differentiate China from the construct of it created by the established Anglophone literature which is reflected in its attempts to define a ‘Chinese’ future (Callahan, 2012, pg. 11).
Table 1: Constructs and Coding Phrases for the Chinese Corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Coding Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China the Role Model</td>
<td>Experiences of development, Reference, Set a good example, Contribution to development, Harmonious world, Helping other countries, Development model, Economic rejuvenation, National development, African Dream, China’s role, Trained in China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutuality</td>
<td>Mutual benefit, Mutual experiences, Cooperation, Bilateral relations, Coordination, Friendship, Win-win cooperation, Partnership, All weather friend, Good brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China Dream</td>
<td>China Dream, Chinese Dream, Revitalising the Chinese nation, Masters of their own destiny, New starting point, Socialism with Chinese characteristics, 5000 years of civilisation, Chinese ideas, Chinese solutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Soft Power</td>
<td>Cultural soft power, Chinese language, Chinese arts, Civilisation, Chinese concepts, Confucius Institute, Long history</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 Constructs and Coding Phrases for the American Corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Coding Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China the Exploiter</td>
<td>Oil, Exploitation, Investment, Treatment, Conditions, Natural Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China the Facilitator</td>
<td>Supply of weapons, Non-intervention, Human rights abuses, Atrocities, Authoritarianism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China the Empire</td>
<td>Intervention, Defence of interests, Threats, Protect, Pressure, Stability, Reluctant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China the Rival</td>
<td>Proxy conflict, Anti-American/Anti-American, Rivalry, Opposing Sides, Hostile, Competition, Conflict</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 2 shows, there have been several constructs of China’s African policies within the Anglophone literature on this subject. Each of these phrases as the constructs that they reflect are derived from the established Anglophone literature outlined in the previous chapter. It is from these sources that the coding phrases were created to apply the concepts and constructs from the literature on China in Africa to the case studies of Sudan and Zimbabwe. An example of this can be seen with the construct of China as a reluctant empire, the coding phrases for which refer to the security challenges and pressure on China as calls for China to do more, all of which have been common claims in the Anglophone literature with the security challenges of the continent posing a threat to Chinese interests. (Parellilo Plesner, 2015, pg. 20). This has also been the case for the other constructs, with the image of China as an exploitive power being utilized in reference to China’s exploitation of natural resources or to Chinese practices. In the case of China the facilitator, the phrases are a reference to China’s support for authoritarian states through means such as military support as well as the facilitation of authoritarian practices. It is this process that has been applied to the other constructs present in the Anglophone literature on China in Africa.
Examples of the coding phrases that were applied to the official corpuses can be seen in two paragraphs from the established literature. The first of these is an example of the Chinese literature’s response to the claims made by the established narrative while the second is an example of the established meanings given to China’s African policies.

“Therefore, in our case instead of negating the neo-colonialist frame usually used for Sino-Africa cooperation in the western media; the best strategy is to use and emphasize other frames that actually define Sino-African Relations, like “Win-Win Cooperation” or “Mutual Benefit Relationship” (Campayo and Zhao, 2016, pg. 72)

“Other authoritarian regimes have looked to China’s management of the Internet as a model. Beijing so far has reaped the benefits of rapidly employing information technology without suffering the political consequences that many commentators predicted were inevitable”.

(Nathan, 2015, pg. 159)

Examples of how the coding phrases were selected are illustrated by the quotes taken from Campayo and Zhao alongside that of Nathan. In the case of the latter, this can be seen in the frequent references to authoritarian norms and how Chinese policy facilitates them, which has been one of the common themes in the Anglophone literature on China in Africa. For the former, the common construct has been the idea of mutuality, which has been expressed in terms such as ‘win-win cooperation’ and ‘mutually beneficial relationship’, which have been of frequent recurrence in the Chinese literature. The former also raises the utility of the theoretical framework in exploring the research issue in their reference to other frames, which is reminiscent of the theories of Bourdieu. Both quotes are expressive of the frequently recurring themes and choices of language throughout the established literature, which served as the template for the corpus. To explore the constructs of China in Africa, the concepts and images from the established literature on this subject will be operationalized and measured by the coding phrases presented in the tables above. By doing so, it will be possible to apply the concepts from
the literature review as to further explore the question of how these concepts are created and what they are symbolic of.

2.6 Concepts and Processes

The research model utilised two primary theoretical frameworks to explore the process of how the knowledge on China in Africa was created and what it was symbolic of. The first of these was Foucault’s archaeology of knowledge which involves an examination of how knowledge and discourses are created, in this case, how the different constructs on China in Africa are created. Through the conceptualization of this subject, we can see the primary components of this concept, which included the ideas of norms, values and the choice of language, all of which serve as the phenomena typically examined by such a process. By defining these ideas and values, we can see the role of discourse as the ideas previously outlined. This is of use since discourse, along with norms and language, were the primary units that the proposed research model used to explore the creation of the American and Chinese narratives alongside how the two narratives respond to each other.

Through the process of translation, it was possible to further narrow down these values into three measurable units. One of these units were the prevalent themes throughout the discourse which serves to highlight the possible influences on the creation of this narrative. In a similar vein, the values expressed in the discourse also furthered the exploration of the creation of these narratives, such as the American values of democracy and human rights contrasting against the Chinese emphasis on stability and non-intervention. Finally, this was codified and scored by the choice of phrases in the Chinese and American discourses which reflect the values outlined. The second primary theoretical concept that I utilised was Bourdieu’s concept of the habitus. If Foucault’s archaeology of knowledge can be utilized to explore the factors that influence the creation of the discourses on Chinese policy towards Africa, the concept of the habitus can be utilized to explore how the Chinese discourse responds to the claims made in the American discourse and how these two narratives conflict with each other over their depiction of China in Africa. In addition, this concept can also illustrate how the narratives are reflective of two different systems that seek to replicate themselves beyond their original context.
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

By translating these values, it was possible to obtain some measurable units. As outlined regarding Bourdieu’s concept of the habitus, this can be measured by the norms outlined in the discourses. Bourdieu’s concept can also be measured by the points of contention between the American and Chinese discourses and the ways in which these narratives overlap. By measuring these units, it is possible to explore how China responds to the American discourse and how the two discourses conflict with each other over their differing depictions of Chinese policy. The period from which the data was taken from also sought to explore the evolution of these discourses over the changes of government in both states, to determine whether these changes coincided with shifts in these images. An example of this can be seen in the recurrence of the China Dream in the present Chinese discourse, which had largely been absent prior to 2013 as well as the case of the Darfur crisis in Sudan influencing the image of China as a facilitator of human rights abuses. It was through the utilization of these two primary theoretical concepts that the research design explored the research questions outlined earlier in the research proposal. By deploying Foucault’s methodology to the case of China in Africa, the proposed research aims to show how the different structures of experience serve to create the American and Chinese discourses which serve to reflect the greater theme of Sino-American power relations.

2.61 Preliminary Terminology

Since the selected research design entailed the utilisation of a content analysis alongside a social linguistic discourse analysis, it was necessary to establish a preliminary set of coding phrases. As earlier stated, these phrases were intended to explore the themes that serve to unify the discourses as to examine the context in which they were created in. The terminology may be subject to change over time due to the potential changes to the research question as discovering phrases during the development of the research which may reflect the observed phenomena better than the original phrases can. To achieve this, it will be necessary to create two different sets of coding phrases for the American and Chinese discourses on China in Africa. The former is a result of the American centric international norms that became prevalent after the end of the Cold War (Bell, 200, pg. 26). References to how Chinese foreign policy contradicts these norms will be of interest, especially in the accusation that these policies facilitate human rights abuses and bad governance, both of which go against American norms.
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

This attempted to outline the influences that help to formulate the American discourse as identifying the unifying themes. This coded for phrases that refer to exploitation and the criticism of non-intervention as potential references to proxy conflicts between the US and China in Sudan. By doing so, it was possible to code for the influence of Europe and the United States’ experiences in Africa on the creation of the American discourse in Africa. On the other hand, the Chinese discourse is a different creation to the established American narrative. Due to the perceived dominance of the American discourse, the Chinese discourse was likely to conceive itself against the American narrative (Cho and Ho, 2008, pg. 453). It was necessary to code for references to the American discourse, particularly since many of these references may illustrate the power relations between the United States and China codified in the discourse.

It was also necessary to code for phrases that relate to China’s identity as for China’s foreign policy. Due to the rise of ‘cultural soft power’ (文化软力量) in Chinese foreign policy, it was necessary to code for references to China’s traditional culture and language, since China’s traditional, and possibly current identity, are cultural in nature. In addition, this will also code for Confucian terminology such as harmony (和谐) and benevolence (仁) due to the resurgence of Confucianism in China as the popularity of Confucian phrases in the Chinese discourse, making these phrases recur frequently throughout the Chinese discourse (Yan, 2011, pg. 25). This reflects the experiences that influenced the creation of the Chinese discourse as the changes in Chinese foreign policy and Chinese identity, which influences the construct of China that China seeks to promote to the wider world. The content analysis sought to code for these phrases due to their possible reflection of the context that created the discourses as how they codify the underlying power relations between the two discourses. By doing so, the content analysis was in a better position to augment the discourse analysis, thus furthering the objectives outlined in the previous chapter.
2.7 Summary

The research utilised the theoretical frameworks of Foucault and Bourdieu, which was connected to the constructivist approach to international relations. This was utilised to explore the research question regarding the creation of the knowledge on China in Africa and the wider implications of this process. This also sought to explore the meanings that were ascribed to China’s African policies, since these meanings played a notable role in shaping the reactions of other states to Chinese foreign policy. Such a framework was also of utility in examining the more normative elements of Chinese foreign policy, most notably the case of cultural soft power, which is the representation of the Chinese meaning of China’s role and identity as well as being a method to spread the Chinese system and norms to a wider context in the vein of Bourdieu’s habitus.

To support the theoretical framework, the methodology took the form of a socio-linguistic discourse analysis to act as an interface between the theoretical framework and the research issue. This was applied to the corpus covering China’s initiatives in Sudan and Zimbabwe, which were selected as representations of the recent and long-term developments in China’s African policies. To operationalise the concepts in the theoretical framework, the methodology used coding phrases derived from the themes and choices of language throughout the established literature on these policies. These were used to test the theories and to determine the form and presence of the constructs from the Anglophone and Chinese literature on China in Africa. These constructs will be explored further in the next chapter, which covers the established literature regarding China’s African policies.
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

3. Introduction to the Literature

This section will discuss and review the primary literature in the field of China’s engagement in Africa to explore the common overlapping constructs of China’s African policies which also provided the structure of this chapter. These were later applied to the case studies of the corpus on Chinese policies towards the African states. In addition, this also identified the research gaps that the project can fill. Such an objective is in line with the objectives of the research, which sought to explore the knowledge of China’s African policies. The literature served as an initial representation of the knowledge on China’s African policies. There is a vast amount of existing literature on the topic. While this provides a solid basis for an exploration of this subject, it also makes it difficult to provide a unified, consistent discourse of what Chinese engagement entails. To resolve this issue, it is necessary to review some of the main works on Chinese engagement from several different discursive traditions.

While I have examined several journal articles in this chapter, a notable section of the literature has come in the form of books. This is due to how this medium can provide a wider, more long-term picture of China’s African policies rather than simply focusing on a single case of it as shorter articles often have. Such an approach can also create a more detailed sample of the images of China’s activities created by the literature and can complement the focus of the journal articles by providing the wider background against which the cases take place. This is in keeping with the focus of the research topic which examines how these cases tie into the wider phenomena of the images of China’s African policies and the construction of the global perception of China.
3.1 Preliminary Themes and Constructs

From my initial reading of the established narrative, there are several preliminary constructs that were examined in the literature review on the American and Chinese discourses. These serve as a method to explore how the competing forms of knowledge on China in Africa serve as a reflection of wider issues. These initial constructs often vary with the origin of the discourse and have formed the basis of the assumptions regarding the official corpus, which is rooted in the established literature on this subject. It is these constructs that were applied to the two case studies.

In the Anglophone discourse on Chinese engagement, I have identified several potential constructs of China’s African policies. Due to the apparent universalisation of American values at the end of the Cold War, the themes and language of democracy and human rights were expected to be prevalent in much of the American discourse. The constructs related to the depiction of China in the Anglophone discourse are often related to the more dubious actions of Chinese foreign policy in Africa. China has often been perceived as an exploitive power in its approach towards Africa and acts as a facilitator of despotic regimes in their abuse of human rights throughout much of the Anglophone literature on the subject (Paradise, 2009, pg. 651). This stands against the prescribed American and Western values of human rights and democracy which China ignores or abuses. It is these perceptions that play a notable role in the creation of the American constructs of China in Africa.

A result of this focus on the less palatable aspects of Chinese policy is the construct of China as a rival for influence and economic objectives in Africa. This is often portrayed in the terms of a zero-sum game where one state’s loss is another’s gain. When this construct is invoked, it is often to encourage nations to challenge China’s influence in the continent. It is this very idea of conflict and rivalry that also raises the primary experiences that influence the creation of the American narrative on this subject. The first of these is the experience of 19th century European imperialism, which is reflected in terms such as the “new scramble for Africa” and what Said (1994, pg. 24) terms as the “Heart of Darkness” mentality. This initial choice of words that highlights the influence of this experience on the creation of the American constructs in that perceptions of Africa are couched in language and terminology from this era. It is possible that this form of discourse perceives China to be a neo-imperial power in Africa since the American experience of imperialism assumes that others will follow the same path as
the European empires. The second experience that also influences the creation of the American narrative on Chinese policy in Africa is that of the Cold War. This contributes to the zero-sum interpretation of this competition since this approach was dominant in the political and strategic discourse of the era (Klare and Vohan, 2006, pg.305).

In the Chinese narrative on the subject, there are several different themes. This depicted Chinese engagement as being a mutually beneficial equal partnership as opposed to the American construct of Chinese exploitation. The claim over the exploitive nature of Chinese policy made in the American narrative is a potential response to the American constructs in the Chinese discourse. It is the construct of China as an exploiter and the Chinese construct of mutuality which serve as an illustration of the interaction between the two different types of construct regarding China’s African policies (Pang, 2009, pg. 126). As opposed to the American ideals of universal rights, other key themes in the Chinese discourse include respect for state sovereignty as well as justifications for China’s policy of non-intervention.

The Chinese discourse was influenced by different events and historical experiences. Firstly, the discourse on China’s foreign policy strategies in Africa is partially influenced by those followed by imperial China along with the associated ideological totems from this era. This can be seen in the prevalence of culturalism in Chinese soft power strategies as well as the revival of Confucianism in modern Chinese discourse. The influence of the latter can particularly be seen in the choice of language made in the Chinese discourse that contains Confucian terminology (Li, 2011, pg. 42). China in the Chinese discourse is perceived to be the latest manifestation in the unbroken line of Chinese civilisation as opposed to the harbinger of communist revolution in the Maoist era. The second experience that influences the creation of the Chinese discourse is China’s experiences of the “Century of Humiliation”. It is this period that contributes to the theme of a mutual experience between China and Africa since both were victims of American imperialism, something that China has been able to utilise to cement its ties with the African states (Hannover and Morris, 2014, pg. 58).
3.2 Introduction to the Anglophone Literature on Chinese Engagement in Africa

The established narrative on Chinese engagement in Africa paints a negative picture of China’s approach towards Africa. This section is chiefly taken from an Anglo-American standpoint and is unified by its critical presentation of China’s African policies. This negative image of Chinese policy is reflected in the themes of the Anglophone literature and the structures of experience through which the American discourse is created. These are expressed in the constructs of China as a rival, China the empire, China the facilitator and China the exploitive power. To understand the creation and apparent predominance of the American narrative as well as how it depicts China in Africa, it is necessary to explore the themes in the established American discourse.

3.2.1 China as a Rival: The Threat Perception

Possibly the one of most widespread image in the literature of China’s rise as well as its African policies has been the construct of China as a rival. The form of this construct comes in two primary variations. The first of these is the perception that China poses a threat to the interests of other nations, a notion that has gained traction in recent years with the increasingly confrontational relationship between China and the United States. This stems back from Cooley’s (1965, pg. 7) depiction of Maoist China as a destabilising force over its support for anti-colonial movements in the African states during the Cold War. This serves as one of the longest-standing constructs in the Anglophone literature on China’s African policies as well as being one of the dominant images of these policies. The second form of this construct is the result of the more zero-sum logic in the Anglophone literature, which perceives China’s gains in the continent coming at the expense of American interests.

The zero-sum logic behind the image of China as a rival is invoked by Mohammed and Omar Eno (2014, pg. 21) who claim that the United States was caught off guard by Chinese initiatives in the African states. This ties into the perception of China’s gains in the African continent as coming at the expense of other external actors in the African states, which is one of the meanings that has been ascribed to Chinese African policy. Such a perception is reinforced in their (Eno and Eno, 2014, pg. 26) claim that Africa was neglected by the wider world, which ties into the common claim that China was able to exploit the disinterest in the
African states after the Cold War. This perception is criticised by Eno and Eno (2014, pg. 21) when they claim that the issue of a Sino-American rivalry is a loaded issue based on the geopolitical context of containing a rising China. It is from this context that the meaning of China as a rival is ascribed to China’s African policies although how this image is created has not been covered here, which raises one of the primary gaps in the literature.

The underlying logic of the Anglophone narrative that underlines the construct of the China threat can also be seen in Henning Melber’s (2013, pg. 111) claim that China made its gains in Africa due to American apathy towards the continent in the Post-Cold War era. This resulted in Europe losing control of its “back yard” to China, another reference to the theme of competition between China and the West. Melber (2013, pg. 112) attributes China’s gains to the fact that Chinese interests better correspond with African interests than those of the United States and Europe do. This follows the common patterns utilized in many studies of Chinese Africa policy. This includes the common fears about this phenomenon and the more realist approach towards it. It appears that these fears are a result of the common perception of Chinese gains appearing to come at the expense of American interests. This is reflected in the perception that China is a threat in the Anglophone literature as well as illustrating the possible structures of experience that helps create the established perceptions of China in Africa. This perception is also suggestive of the logic behind the American constructs of China in Africa.

The more realist analysis of Melber provides an example of the common images of Chinese policy in the region, which raises one of the gaps in the literature. This is regarding how this perception of China as a challenge to American interests is created, something that has been subject to comparatively little coverage in the established literature. In this sense, the primary research gap regarding the construct of China as a rival here is the way in which the zero-sum assumptions of Melber’s work contribute to the creation of the construct of the China threat.

The image of the China threat appears to be present in Lucy Corkin’s *China’s Infrastructural Investments in Africa*. Corkin (2008, pg. 135) claims that China’s pursuit of African oil was due to American control of the Middle East’s oil supplies. This implies that China is engaged in a rivalry with the United States over natural resources and that Africa is a front of this competition. Corkin (2008, pg. 134) asserts that China needs African raw materials to maintain its economic growth. The common motifs of competition and China’s thirst for resources is continued in Corkin’s analysis, which furthers the common construct of Chinese foreign policy being little more than a mercenary venture. She (Corkin, 2008, pg. 157-9) emphasizes the role of Chinese loans and state-owned enterprises in Africa. Her depiction of
the state-owned enterprises contrasts against much of the American narrative which have commonly depicted China as a monolithic state entity with its overseas business interests being little more than the tentacles of a larger entity. Corkin’s analysis appears to be in line with the common American viewpoints on Chinese policy towards Africa, particularly in the possible threat it may pose towards American interests. While Corkin’s work provides an example of the image of the China Threat and how this image is created by the focus on China’s economic activities, she does not address how this image is created, which reinforces the gap in the established literature.

A similar focus can be seen in the work of David Shinn and Joshua Eisenman. They (Shin and Eisenman, 2012, pg. 7) claim that one of the goals of Chinese policy in Africa is to protect the shipping lanes from Africa to the Middle East, something that reflects the experiences that influence the creation of the Anglophone literature. Shin and Eisenman (2012, pg. 45) assert that China’s gains were due to a lack of American interest in Africa which continues the perception of Chinese gains coming at the expense of American influence. Shin and Eisenman continue construct of China as a threat to American interests that needs to be countered by greater American engagement in the continent. This highlights the logic behind the American constructs of China in Africa.

While Shin and Eisenman again continue to follow the common themes and constructs established earlier, they also highlight another feature of this field, the critique of China’s policy of non-interventionism. While this is cited as being part of China’s complicity in human rights issues in Africa, it is also criticized as being a policy that China will not be able to pursue in the future due to political pressure to play a more direct role in Africa. In relation to the research topics, Shin and Eisenman’s analysis has some use in exploring this field. This can be seen in how Chinese gains are depicted as fundamentally being at the expense of other external actors and it is this apparent depiction of American disinterest which illustrates how China is portrayed as a threat to American interests in the region. It appears that the idea of the China threat is one of the central influences on the creation of the American discourse on the subject as well as being one of the main American constructs of China in Africa.

Another recurring theme in Anglophone writings on China’s Africa policy is China’s quest for natural resources which forms one of the common reasons given for the perceived Sino-US rivalry. This can be seen in Daniel Yergin’s The Quest. Yergin (2009, pg. 203) attributes current Chinese policy to the “go out” phase under Deng Xiaoping and later Jiang Zemin. He (Yergin, 2009 pg. 211) describes China’s policy as being “mercantilism backed by military
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

power”, which echoes Paul Kennedy’s (1989, pg. 8) view that economic and military power are interconnected. He (Yergin, 2009, pg. 211) also attributes China’s focus on African oil to fears of a world oil market which the US has a strong influence over. Yergin (2009, pg. 232) has the commonly held view of China being an alternative to the United States which he terms as “playing the China card”. This serves to further highlight the role the competition between China and the U.S. plays in the American narrative, fulfilling the motif of the “voracious dragon”.

Yergin follows the common American perception of Chinese policy, particularly the more strategic analysis of it. He also shows another key theme in American accounts of Chinese policy, which is the role natural resources play in formulating the creation of Chinese foreign policy which is often attributed as one of the primary reasons behind China’s renewed diplomacy in the continent. By describing Chinese policy as being “mercantilism backed up by military power”, Yergin shows why China is accused of being an imperial power by American observers since this policy may echo the imperial policies followed by many European nations in the past. This illustrates how the perceived threat of Chinese engagement is created. It is from this that it is possible to see how the American discourse depicts China as a threat towards the U.S. and Africa. Yergin’s analysis also illustrates the experiences through which the American discourse on China in Africa perceives what it is observing.

The issue of China’s economic interests and the rivalry with the United States is furthered by Michael Klare and David Vohan. Klare and Vohan (2006, pg. 297) claim that Africa had been traditionally a low priority for American foreign policy, which again serves to further the zero-sum nature of the competition between China and the United States. They (Klare and Vohan, 2006, pg. 303) also appear to depict a growing rivalry between China and the United States with American aid to Djibouti and Kenya being motivated by fears that China is a competitor and that China may be able to gain a stranglehold over African resources. They (Klare and Vohan, 2006, pg. 304) claim that Chinese and American approaches are the same and that there is no moral superiority for either side. This highlights the possible flaws in the common binaries of the American discourse on the subject, which is subject to criticism in the Chinese discourse on the subject. The rivalry over control of Africa’s resources continues to be illustrative of the common American narratives on the subject. It is this competition over resources that illustrates the perceived rivalry towards China in the American discourse.

The view that China is engaged in a proxy conflict with the United States is furthered by Luke Anthony Patey’s State Rules. Patey (2007, pg. 998) asserts that China gained a
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

stranglehold over Sudanese oil and that this was due to China’s lack of concern for human rights and having little or no competition in Sudan with the departure of Chevron. He (Patey, 2007, pg. 1006) depicts a possible proxy conflict between China and the United States in the region when he claims that the US supports the SPLA and Sudan’s regional rivals to counter Chinese support for Sudan. By utilizing the case study of Sudan, Patey is highlighting the negative aspects of Chinese engagement which serves to formulate the American perceptions of China’s Africa policy as well as justifying the use of Sudan as a case study in the project. By examining the ways in which the constructs of Chinese policy in Sudan conflicts with that of the United States, it is possible to view the theme of the rivalry between the U.S. and China over regional influence and natural resources.

It is from this initial exploration of this theme that poses a possible gap in the literature. While there are often references to this theme in the Anglophone literature, there has not been an examination of how this construct is created or what it symbolises. It illustrates the influences upon the creation of this section of the literature, most notably the perception of China as a revisionist power. This depicts the logic behind the creation of this construct which also influences the image of China’s African policies created by the American constructs. The creation of this construct in the established literature has been a result of the focus on the augmentation of China’s economic and hard power capabilities, which furthers this image of China as a challenger to the established international system. It is for this reason that this construct will be one of the concepts that will be applied to the American corpus on China in Africa to explore its presence in the official narrative as well as the wider issues that it is symbolic of.

3.22 China as an exploiter (the voracious dragon)

The accusation that China is an exploitive power has become one of the notable constructs in the Anglophone literature covering Chinese foreign policy in the African continent. Alongside the construct of China as a neo-imperial power, this construct depicts China exploiting the African states for its own gain, something that has been notable in the depiction of China’s relations with the resource-rich states of the African continent. It is this perception that is one of the forms this construct takes, which depicts China’s relationship with the African states as an unequal one of domination by China. This construct focuses on the exploitive
practices of Chinese firms in the African continent and their promotion, which appears to be a reaction to the spread of Chinese norms and the Chinese system to a wider context.

This theme is outlined by Chris Alden (2007, pg. 6-8) who claims that natural resources and economic gain are the primary motivations behind Chinese policies in Africa. Alden (pg. 12) asserts that Africa has become increasingly central with the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) controlling approximately 40% of Sudan’s oil supplies. It is China’s approach towards Sudan that has generated many of the themes in the American discourse on the subject. This has been chiefly related to the darker elements of China’s activities in the continent, which this case serves as a symbol of. It is possible to examine the common constructs of the American discourse on China in Africa. This can be seen in how many of the common themes in the Anglophone literature are interconnected and are often derived from the same sources. It appears that the American discourse is ordered around a set of overlapping constructs of China’s African policies, which further its image of these policies.

The theme of China’s desire for natural resources can also be seen in Edward Burnan’s *China: The Stealth Empire*. As with, Alden, Burnan (2008, pg. 198) asserts that China provides technical assistance to Africa in return for natural resources such as copper, ore and oil. It appears that Burnan continues to follow the common American narrative that Chinese engagement in Africa is solely motivated by China’s economic gain at the expense of the continent’s well-being. Burnan appears to follow the established constructs in the Anglophone literature on Chinese foreign policy in Africa. Burnan’s work illustrates one of the gaps in the literature in that he does not focus on how the image of China as an exploitive power is created or the other ways in which Chinese policy is perceived to be exploitive.

The theme of the more exploitive aspects of Chinese policy can be seen in Steven Hess and Richard Aidoo’s exploration of anti-Chinese sentiment in Zambia and Ghana. Both writers (Hess and Aidoo, 2013, pg. 130) address Peter Hitchen’s view that China is a “slave empire” in Africa which is related to the “dragon in the bush” analogy which is a popular motif with American views of China in Africa. They (Hess and Aidoo, 2013 pg. 136) attribute the rise of Sinophobia in Zambia to the direct competition between Chinese and Zambian tradesmen as well as cultural and linguistic barriers. While the authors appear to explore the more negative aspects of Chinese policy in Africa, they also critique the common American motifs of this phenomenon by highlighting the somewhat hysterical nature of these claims. Hess and Aidoo address the more exploitive aspects of Chinese policy by asserting that this is the primary reason for the rise of Sinophobia in the continent. They also highlight how China is perceived.
as an exploitive power in the continent, in this case, how Chinese firms undermine their local competitors. It is possible to assert that this negative perception of Chinese policy may partially be due to the prevalence of the American discourse as well as the economic competition between China and Africa. Hess and Aidoo’s analysis also raises the potential gap in the literature on China in Africa as well. Firstly, while they explain some of the accusations made against Chinese policy they are not clear about how this construct is created or what it symbolises.

China’s pursuit of economic objectives can again be seen in Juan Pablo Cardenal and Heriberto Araujo’s *China’s Silent Army*. Cardenal and Araujo (2013, pg. 69-70) claim that China follows the British imperial model which they describe as being “your raw materials for our products”, which highlights the common experience through which the established narrative views Chinese engagement. They (Cardenal and Araujo, 2013, pg. 7) claim that Chinese products often have little or no competition in Africa and that China exploits the political situation in states such as Angola and the Congo for economic gain (Cardenal and Araujo, 2013 pg. 123). It is this depiction of the common narrative that makes their work of some use to this field of research. The similarities between Chinese and American policies highlighted by Cardenal and Araujo also renders their work of use when exploring the different constructs on Chinese engagement in Africa. Cardenal and Araujo highlight the process of the creation of the American constructs on China in Africa, which is reflected in the image of Chinese foreign policy that they have created. It is this utilization of these experiences which underlines one of the gaps in the literature in that they do not cover the influence of the American experiences upon the creation of the knowledge on China in Africa.

While Cardenal and Araujo claim that China is following the British imperial model, Elizabeth Economy and Michael Levi (2014, pg. 4) claim that China is in fact following the Japanese model of subsidized resource exploration. They (Economy and Levi, 2014, pg. 169-71) suggest that China may take a more forceful and proactive policy in Africa with the assertion that China needs to protect its shipping lanes and that increased military projection has enabled China to send a fleet to the Gulf of Aden. This image shows how China is perceived through a lens grounded in the experiences of the Occident in that it appears to assume that what applied to Western nations in the past will apply to China as well, which plays a significant role in shaping the American constructs of China’s African policies as well as the logic behind the creation of these constructs. It is this process construct that serves as part of the American image of China’s African policies and the research gap.
Alongside the construct of China as a threat to American interests, the motif of China as an exploiter is a result of the American perception of Chinese policies in the continent. There has been comparatively little attention paid to explaining how this perception is created nor is it approached from a more discursive standpoint. This illustrates a possible gap in the existing literature. If the perception of the China threat highlights the influence of the Cold War on the American discourse, it is equally possible to argue that the theme of China as an exploiter illustrates the legacy of European imperialism in the continent. Both themes assume a linear progression between the American and Chinese experiences since what applied to the European powers in the continent is assumed to still be applicable to China today. All serve to create a construct of China’s African policies in the Anglophone literature. It is this construct that will be applied to the American corpus regarding China’s African policies. As with the case of China the rival, there has been comparatively little focus on how this construct has been created or if it is symbolic of the wider issues in Chinese foreign policy.

3.23 The Critique of Non-Intervention: China the Facilitator and China the Neo-Imperial Power

The area of Chinese policy that has been the greatest subject to criticism in the Anglophone literature has been the policy of non-intervention. As with the theme of Chinese exploitation, this policy has often been utilised as an example of the darker aspects of Chinese engagement in Africa, regarding China’s relations with the more autocratic regimes in Africa such as Sudan and Zimbabwe. The critique of China’s policy of non-intervention is split into two primary claims. The first of these claims is the assertion that by following this policy, China is facilitating corruption and bad governance as well as human rights abuses (Economy and Levi, 2014, pg. 70-1). This particularly goes against the values emphasised in the Post-Cold War American discourse, most notably the idea of universal human rights. By facilitating these abuses, China is perceived as going against the norms of the American discourse. The policy of non-intervention has also been criticised as a sign that China is seemingly unwilling to play a more proactive role in the continent in the face of the growing security threats to Chinese interests and citizens in the region (Holslag, 2008, pg. 75), which suggests a linear progression from American to Chinese policy. As with the previous themes, this criticism also serves to unify the common American discourse on the subject as well as codifying the conflict between
American and Chinese values. This serves to further the idea of the competing constructs of China in Africa as a method to spread these values beyond their original context.

Another form of this criticism comes in the construct of China as a neo-imperial power, which has been one of the dominant American constructs on China’s African policies. This is chiefly based upon the assumption that China will follow a similar path to the European empires in the continent, which has been one of the dominant American experiences in Africa. This construct comes in two main forms. One of these is the perception that China will seek to exploit and dominate the African continent as the European empires once did. The second of these views China as being under increasing pressure to become a more formal power in the African states as its interests come under attack. Both forms of this construct have been a notable feature of the Anglophone literature on China in Africa.

The pressures on China to abandon its policy of non-intervention can be seen in Shin and Eisenman. They suggest that there is pressure on China to abandon its’ policy of non-interventionism and to adopt a more proactive policy. The reason given for this increasingly assertive stance is over how Chinese citizens in Africa become exposed to security risks such as political instability and piracy (Shin and Eisenman, 2012, pg. 179). If the critique that China is a facilitator of human rights abuses is a sign that China is not holding its African partners to account, the second critique is an example of how China needs to protect its citizens. It appears that both claims are united by the assertion that China needs to play a more interventionist role in her approach to Africa. This suggests an example of how the American discourse attempts to fit Chinese policy into a single linear pattern since what applied to Western nations in the past may also be applicable to Chinese policy as well, which also plays a role in shaping the American constructs of China in Africa.

The common view of Chinese foreign policy in Africa as being largely non-interventionist in nature is criticised by Hess and Aidoo (2015, pg. 109), who assert that Chinese foreign policy has become increasingly diverse in its approach to the African states. They (Hess and Aidoo, 2015, pg. 110) suggest that this policy has deeper roots as one of the principles of the Bandung conference rather than simply being China’s reluctance to play a more proactive role in the African states that might jeopardise its economic interests. This approach has enabled China to differentiate itself from other external actors in the African continent, which ties into its’ lack of colonial baggage, which has hampered the approach of the European nations. It is through this issue that Hess and Aidoo (2015, pg. 118-120) describe the methodology of Chinese foreign policy by depicting Chinese aid as a tool for influence and the flexibility of
China’s responses to backlashes against Chinese initiatives. In addition, Hess and Aidoo (2015, pg. 132) question the overall sustainability of this approach as it becomes increasingly imperative for Beijing to protect its interests in the African states. It is this image that contributes to the depiction of China as being under increasing pressure to become a more interventionist power, although the logic and assumptions behind the creation of this image have not been addressed.

The possible motivations behind the policy of non-intervention and the question of its future in Anglophone writings on China in Africa policy is seen in Jonathan Hollslag’s (2008, pg. 75) claim that any military intervention by China would threaten Chinese business interests in the continent. He (Hollslag, 2008, pg. 81) reiterates the view that China is a facilitator of authoritarian rule when he asserts that China opposed sanctions on Sudan which may have threatened its economic interests in the region. This reflects the common American narrative of China as a facilitator of autocratic rule in Africa that is willing to sacrifice its citizens abroad to protect its economic interests. By facilitating authoritarian regimes, it is possible to see a darker aspect to the concept of China as a role model for Africa which remains a common theme in the American discourse. It is how the Chinese system is spread to a wider context which raises one of the gaps in the literature here since this construct is often utilized regarding China’s support for authoritarian regimes rather than the more normative implications of these policies.

The theme of non-intervention is also raised by Economy and Levi, who utilize the commonly held view that Chinese policy in Africa benefits dictators and encourages corrupt practices due to its “no strings attached” nature. They (Economy and Levi, 2014, pg. 70-1) appear to acknowledge that Chinese aid does not necessarily encourage corruption by claiming that it can also encourage good governance and that corruption isn’t inevitable. They are ambiguous about whether Chinese engagement is beneficial which contrasts against the more negative image of China as a facilitator of Africa’s worst excesses. Many of the common motifs in American accounts of Chinese policy in Africa are also present, particularly China’s policy of non-intervention which, like Shin and Eisenman, they claim is under increasing strain. As with these authors, this raises the gap of how this image of China’s African policies is created as well as what it symbolizes.

An alternative critique can also be seen in Brautigan’s *The Dragon’s Gift*. While Brautigan is not as overly critical of Chinese policies as much of the American discourse, the policy of non-intervention has been singled out for criticism. Brautigan (2009, pg. 24) claims that
China’s policy of non-interventionism has hampered the overall effectiveness of Chinese aid which reflects the common criticism made in the American discourse, although this is for a different reason. It appears that the common critiques of China’s policy of non-intervention are unified by the claim that China needs to do more in Africa.

The concerns over the rise of the Beijing Consensus expressed throughout the Anglophone literature on China in Africa is raised by Nicholas van de Walle (2016, pg. 161) who claims that the Chinese model of development has granted authoritarian powers a notable advantage in economic development. It is this assertion that is suggestive of the challenge that Chinese foreign policy poses, in this case, its model of authoritarian capitalism contradicting the common norms regarding development in illustrating that development can be achieved without the adoption of democracy. Van de Walle (2016, pg. 163) asserts that China’s involvement in the African continent has shifted the attitudes of other external actors present in Africa, who he claims have adopted the Chinese approach to aid. This suggests that the Chinese system has influenced the approach of other external powers as well as for the African states themselves, which raises the issue of the spread of the Chinese system and developmental model and whether this facilitates the rise of authoritarian political norms through these policies.

This threat is also raised by Tobias Broich (2017, pg.3), who appears to criticise this idea by claiming that there is a weak relationship between the autocracy level of a recipient and the amount of Chinese aid it receives. Such a view is critical of the common assumptions that democratic states have no truck with authoritarian partners, a view that has often been raised regarding China’s involvement with recently democratised states, which have been perceived as coming at the expense of Chinese interests (Miller, 2017, pg. 134). Despite this criticism, Broich (2017, pg. 7-10) asserts that Chinese aid does encourage authoritarianism due to the Chinese approach to development, which ties into the construct of China as a facilitator of political authoritarianism in the African states. It is this view that suggests the question of whether the Chinese model facilitates authoritarian norms under the guise of economic development, which illustrates the more normative elements behind the common images of China’s African policies, something that has largely been overlooked in the established literature.

The image of China as a supporter of authoritarian states in the African continent is also raised by Patrick Keenan’s (2009, pg. 97) claim that Chinese aid supports and emboldens rogue actors in the African continent, such as Sudan and Zimbabwe. This is due to how Chinese aid projects has changed the way that human rights and democratic norms can be employed in the
African states, most notably in the way that China acts as an alternative source of aid to the United States and Europe, who are often perceived as attaching conditions to their aid (Keenan, 2009, pg. 85). Keenan (2009, pg. 93) attributes China’s gains in the African states to its willingness to deal with greater risks than other external actors are, which ties into the common image of Chinese firms conducting business with states deemed too unpalatable or unstable for other firms. As a result, Keenan (2009, pg. 103) advocates European and American firms to take greater risks in their dealing with the African states, citing the case of Sudan, where China appears to have little to no competition thanks to Beijing enabling Sudan to bypass sanctions via arms sales (Keenan, 2009, pg.100). While Keenan’s depiction illustrates the common image of China as a facilitator of authoritarianism and how it has been able to cement its gains in the African states, he does not explore whether these initiatives are part of a wider push of authoritarian norms or are simply the pursuit of economic objectives. Keenan’s analysis still serves as an initial illustration of how China has been able to achieve its objectives in the African states without attributing it to simply being the transfer of resources and investment to corrupt regimes.

The fears over Chinese foreign policy facilitating political authoritarianism are invoked by Andrew Nathan (2015, pg. 156), who expresses concern over how China’s economic rise has put it in a position where it can oppose democratisation across the world. This is furthered by Nathan’s (2015, pg. 158) assertion that China perceives democratisation as an effort to weaken its interests, which suggests a wider conflict between democratic and authoritarian norms. Nathan (2015, pg. 160-1) also accuses Chinese soft power initiatives of promoting authoritarianism since they conflate the values of Confucianism with those of the CCP alongside China’s propping up of authoritarian regimes. These images, particularly those regarding a conflict between democratic and authoritarian norms suggest an overlap with the image of China as a rival and raises the spectre of the Cold War. While Nathan describes the wider issues that the research sought to explore, a gap is raised in that he does not connect this issue to the case of China’s foreign policy in Africa, which the research addressed.

China’s facilitation of corrupt practices and authoritarian rule in the African states is described by Power and Mohan (2010, pg. 463) who describe the image of China as a ‘rogue creditor’ which has gained traction with the more hawkish critics of Chinese foreign policy. Power and Mohan (2010, pg. 463) dismiss the threat posed by the Chinese model by claiming that this concept lacks coherence since it has several different meanings. In the vein of the constructivist approach, they (Power and Mohan, 2010, pg. 466-7) are critical of the application
of the traditional theories of international relations to the policies China follows in the African states, labelling it as an ‘American science’ and that the state-centric approach denies the African states any form of agency. This is consistent with the common criticism regarding the depiction of China as a single unitary actor in the African continent, which has been one of the themes in the Chinese literature on the subject. In addition, Power and Mohan (2010, pg. 486) illustrate how Chinese policy has sought to separate itself from those followed by the other external actors in the continent in its approach to development aid alongside the use of shared experiences to justify these policies. This serves to justify the utilisation of a more constructivist approach to the images of China in Africa although the wider implications of these images are not addressed, which serves to further underline one of the primary research gaps.

The critique of non-intervention is divided between the views that China is a facilitator of bad governance and that she is willing to put the safety of her citizens at risk for the sake of economic interests. These claims are often utilized to advocate a more proactive Chinese approach in the continent which suggests a reflection of the common American experiences in the discourse on the subject. This is due to the assumption that the security threats pressuring China to become a more formal power in Africa are the same as those faced by the European empires in the continent as well, continuing the apparent assumption of linear progression between the American and Chinese experiences in the continent. It is this linear progression which raises another gap in the Anglophone literature as they do not consider whether this image of China under pressure to become a more formal power has been influenced by the experiences of the European powers and the U.S. in the African continent. In addition, the factors behind the creation of this image have also been subject to comparatively less attention in the established literature, which illustrates one of the recurring gaps in the literature.

The concept of China the facilitator has been given meaning by the binary of democracy/autocracy, which invokes the conflict between capitalism and communism that dominated the continent and much of the wider world during the Cold War (Mei-Ting Schwartz, 2018, pg. 21). While this has been utilised as a geopolitical tool, it is suggestive of the meanings that are ascribed to China’s African policies by this section of the established literature, which has come in how these initiatives appear to further authoritarian political systems in the continent, which inevitably come into conflict with more democratic external actors. It is this binary that expresses the roots behind this meaning, which can be seen in its similarity to the logic behind the previous paradigm of the Cold War. This raises a gap in the
literature in that the relationship between this meaning for Chinese foreign policy and the experience of the Cold War has not been directly made.

As Table 3 illustrates, the more critical literature regarding China’s African policies consists of several primary themes and constructs. In line with Foucault’s theories, these serve to unify the literature into a single narrative and are a product of the norms and logic behind the literature as well as being a causative reaction to it. This has been most notable regarding the image of China as a facilitator and China the rival, which have been products of the norms and logic respectively. It is this dimension that will be examined in the case studies of China’s African policies.

In recent years, there has been a tendency to criticise the established images of China’s African policies due to China’s gains in the African states. This has been illustrated by the criticism of the image of China as a facilitator, most notably in how there has been little correlation with a state’s level of autocracy and the amount of Chinese aid it receives, alongside China’s willingness to conduct business with both democratic and authoritarian states in the African continent. In addition, this has also seen what had traditionally been perceived as the weaknesses of Chinese policies as strengths, which was expressed by Keenan’s advocacy of other external actors to take greater risks to compete with China. It is this need to reconsider Chinese strategies expressed through the images of these policies that the research explored.
Table 3: The Constructs of the Anglophone Literature

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Forms</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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| **China the Exploiter** | 1. China exploits the African states for its own benefit.  
2. Chinese policy encourages the emergence of exploitive practices in the African states | China’s relations with the African states are an unequal relationship weighed heavily in China’s favour.  
Response to the spread of the Chinese economic model to the African states.  
China exploits Africa’s resources and population. |
| **China the Facilitator** | 1. Chinese policy encourages the rise of corruption and bad governance due to its ‘no questions asked’ approach to economic aid.  
2. China promotes authoritarian norms in the African states by supporting autocratic regimes in the country. | Chinese foreign policy is challenging the norms that dominate the American discourse by encouraging authoritarian norms.  
A causative and normative reaction to the spread of the Chinese system.  
One of the common criticisms of the laissez-faire approach deployed by China |
| **China the Empire** | 1. China will seek to dominate the African states as the European empires once did.  
2. China is under pressure to adopt a more interventionist policy as its interests come under attack from the security threats in the African states. | Reflective of the logic behind the American constructs, most notably the experiences of the Western powers in the African continent.  
Critiques the non-interventionist policies utilised by China |
| **China the Rival** | 1. Chinese policy poses a threat to the interests of the Western powers in Africa.  
2. China’s gains come at the expense of the West | Suggestive of the populist images of China’s rise.  
Reflection of the more zero-sum approach deployed by the Anglophone literature. |
3.3 Introduction to the Chinese literature

As opposed to the more negative depictions of Chinese policy in the American discourse on the subject, the Chinese literature seeks to counteract these claims by creating a more positive depiction of Chinese policies towards Africa. This is further aided by the utilisation of different themes from the American discourse along with alternative structures of experience that help shape the Chinese narrative, which defines itself in opposition to the dominant American discourse. This section of the literature is unified by its support for China’s African policies and its more positive depiction of these policies although the authors in question are not necessarily Chinese themselves. While some of the authors from this section of the literature are not necessarily Chinese, they are unified by presenting a more positive image of China’s African policies as well as being more critical of the Anglophone images of it, a perspective that is also shared by the African literature on these policies. In addition, this section of the literature is also unified by their shared constructs and themes, which largely differ from the more critical readings of these policies and present a largely different image.

An initial example of the Chinese response to the established images of China’s African policies can be seen in Jixia Lu’s (2017, pg. 123) claim that these policies cannot be characterised as a single ‘silent army’ of monolithic Chinese labourers, which seek to build a Chinese empire in Africa. Such an assertion serves as a response to the claims made by Cardenal and Araujo in their depiction of Chinese actors as a single, faceless entity. Lu (2017, pg. 125) attributes this image to the focus on the activities of Chinese state actors and State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), which results in depicting Chinese policies as being more unified than they really are. While Lu does not cover the more normative elements behind this image, it is still an initial indication of how the images of Chinese activities in the African states are created, in this case, the focus on state entities and the apparent neglect of non-state actors. It is this focus that is an indication of the process behind the creation of the knowledge and images of Chinese foreign policy.
3.31: Mutuality

One of the initial Chinese constructs that has been of significance in the established literature has been that of mutuality. This construct serves as an integral part of the Chinese images of China’s African policies, which attempts to depict these initiatives as being part of an equal partnership between China and the African states as opposed to the domination of these states by China, which has been one of the common American depictions of these policies (Li, 2011, pg. 42). The form of this construct has been utilised in two different ways. The first of these is regarding the benefits of Chinese policies and initiatives for the African states, which is often depicted as being of mutual benefit for both China and the African nations. The second form comes in the shared experiences of China and Africa, which have often been invoked to justify Chinese policies towards the African states and has played an integral role in cementing China’s ties with the African states since the Mao era (Zhao, 2010, pg. 43). This construct serves as an illustration of the Chinese depiction of China’s African policies as well as underlining the policies themselves.

The role of shared experiences is alluded to by Zhang Chun (2014, pg. 5-6), who traces the roots of China’s relationship with Zimbabwe to the Rhodesian Emergency during the 1960s. Zhang (2014, pg. 11) attributes China’s gains in Zimbabwe to several factors, such as the Soviet Union’s indifference to the ZANU-PF movement and how China has been able to act as an alternative partner for Zimbabwe under Mugabe’s ‘Look East’ policy, which saw the abandonment of the country’s relations with the Commonwealth that had been the bedrock of Zimbabwe’s international trade. The former ties into the common perception of how China was able to exploit American and Russian indifference to the African states, particularly after the end of the Cold War, while the latter is indicative of an overlap with the image of China as a role model for Zimbabwe to follow, a connection that Zhang does not follow. It is these issues along with how Zhang has not explored the way in which the shared experiences between China and Zimbabwe have been utilised which is suggestive of a research gap in the established Chinese literature.

The role of mutuality in China’s ties with the African states can be seen in Jing et al’s examination of Chinese state capitalism. They (Jing et al, 2016, pg. 25) claim that Chinese initiatives benefit from China’s close ties with the African elites, citing the example of the Wujin agricultural development project in Zimbabwe, which was achieved by the Chinese state’s ties with the Zimbabwean Ministry of Defence (Jing et al, 2016, pg. 29). In addition,
they (Jing et al, 2016, pg. 24) address the established image of China’s African policies by describing this image depicting China as a ‘self-interested benefactor’ and claiming that Chinese firms are not necessarily arms of the Chinese state, both being aspects of the popular depictions of China’s African policies. While this is an expression of the Chinese response to the established image of China in Africa, it also raises the question of how these mutual ties have been formed, particularly regarding the role of shared experiences between China and the African states.

Another example of the Chinese response to the established image of China’s African policies can be seen in Maria Barbal Campayo and Zhao Changfeng’s (2016, pg. 67) reference to the recurring question of whether China’s initiatives can be viewed as a form of neo-imperialism, an accusation that they dismiss as largely hypocritical. They (Campayo and Zhao, 2016, pg. 70) raise the concept of mutuality by describing Sino-African relations as being based on ‘win-win cooperation’ and a ‘no strings attached’ approach to development assistance, both of which are common phrases in the Chinese narrative. Regarding the established images of China’s African policies, Campayo and Zhao (2016, pg. 72) claim that China’s power in Africa is primarily economic in nature and assert that these images are a result of the waves of coverage of Chinese projects, which has created a flawed reading of these policies. A response to this can be seen in the spread of Chinese media to the African states, which ties into the pursuit of cultural soft power by China (Campayo and Zhao, 2016, pg. 70). It is this issue that raises the issue over whether these competing images are symbolic of the power relations between China and the United States and how they are representative of the wider competition for the construction of China’s global image.

3.32 Culture and Soft Power

China’s soft power and cultural diplomacy have become integral tools in China’s diplomatic arsenal, a development that has been reflected in the Chinese literature regarding Chinese engagement with the African states. This primarily comes in the form of the promotion of China’s language and traditional culture, which has played a notable role in promoting the Chinese constructs of China’s identity and international role. Another form of this construct has been in the utilisation of China’s past as a source of pride alongside Confucian terminology, which reflects the revival of the Confucian doctrine in the Post-Cold War era. While this construct serves as a reflection of the image that China seeks to promote,
it is also illustrative of the developments within Chinese identity, which has seen the renewed emphasis on a more cultural identity as opposed to the ideological form of the 20th century (Billiard and Stores, 2007, pg. 52). This construct serves as a method to replicate the Chinese system and norms to a wider context, which emphasises the more normative dimension of Chinese foreign policy strategies.

The roots of China’s soft power offensive are traced by Li Shubo and Helge Rønning (2013, pg. 1) to the aftermath of the Tiananmen crisis in 1989, where China’s leadership saw liberal values as a pragmatic advantage rather than a moral imperative, which influenced the formulation of the Chinese approach to soft power. They (Li and Rønning, 2013, pg. 2) claim that the purpose of these policies was to combat the images of the China threat and the depiction of Chinese policies in the developing world as neo-colonialism, both of which have been prominent constructs in the established images of Chinese foreign policy. This has seen Chinese soft power initiatives become a strategic soft power roadmap, which suggests that these policies are more complex than simply serving as a way of achieving Chinese economic goals. Li and Rønning (2013, pg. 3) outline one of the key facets of this strategy, which comes in the form of Chinese involvement in the African media, which provides a means to spread the Chinese discourse to a wider context. They (Li and Rønning, 2013, pg. 4) also claim that these policies have become an integral part of Chinese strategies towards the African states alongside serving as an expression of China’s commitment to the African states. It is these ideas that reflect the nature of power in Chinese foreign policy, which is connected to the normative dimensions of these policies, something that has largely been overlooked in the established literature on China’s African policies.

The role of China’s soft power initiatives is described by Zheng Xiaoling (2016, pg. 3) who claims that there is no concrete definition of soft power. Unlike the traditional images of this concept, Zheng (2016, pg. 4) asserts that Chinese soft power projects utilise China’s experiences of economic development alongside Chinese culture to appeal to the developing world rather than with its political values, this has come primarily in the form of Chinese developmental assistance, which Zheng (2016, pg. 11) terms as ‘economic soft power’. Zheng also alludes to the increasing role that China has played in the media of the African states, which suggests China’s attempts to spread the Chinese discourse to a wider context although this connection is not made by Zheng. It is this issue alongside the question of whether China’s economic soft power initiatives can be interpreted as a promotion of the Chinese model, which raises further gaps in the established literature on China in Africa.
The more cultural dimensions of China’s soft power initiatives are raised by Zheng Yue and Wei Xinyi (2018, pg. 2) who claim that China’s traditional culture and language are the primary focus of these policies. In their study of the depictions of these initiatives in the American and Chinese media, they (Zheng and Wei, 2018, pg. 4) claim that the African states are the primary focus of the coverage of China’s soft power projects despite possessing fewer of these projects than in Europe and the United States. This is attributed to the African states being targets for Chinese trade and developmental policies. Such a claim is illustrative of how the images of China’s African policies have been created, which has contributed to the depiction of these policies as being little more than tools to achieve China’s economic goals. This raised the issue over whether China’s soft power initiatives are simply a pursuit of these goals or if they are symbolic of wider issues regarding the construction of China’s international image, which has largely been overlooked here.

The cultural dimensions of China’s soft power is also raised by Wu Yan (2018, pg. 763), who claims that culture has played an important role in Chinese soft power initiatives. About Nye’s concept, Wu (2018, pg. 764-5) asserts that the established definition of soft power has been sinicised, with culture and soft power becoming synonymous. It is this claim which suggests that China’s soft power initiatives are not soft power in the sense of Nye’s definition of the term, which raises the issue over whether these policies can truly be soft power at all. Wu (2018, pg. 766) attributes the philosophical roots of these initiatives to the Confucian doctrine, which ties into the present Chinese perception of China’s role and identity alongside the revival of Confucianism since the 1980s. In addition, Wu (2018, pg. pg. 767-772) outlines the methodology of these initiatives, describing the Chinese language as a ‘charm tool’ and cultural activities as a method to promote China’s image abroad. This was connected to the more normative dimensions of Chinese foreign policy in that these policies seek to promote Chinese values and the Chinese system to a wider context. While this illustrates how the Chinese constructs seek to challenge the established meanings of China’s African policies, it also raises the issue over whether these moves symbolise a wider competition for the construction of China’s image abroad as well as the relationship between the Chinese perceptions of China’s identity and the shifts in Chinese foreign policy.

The traditional focus of the established literature on China’s African policies is described by Jing et al (2016, pg. 1) as being primarily drawn to the economic aspects of these policies. This serves as part of the image that the Chinese discourse seeks to push back against. Jing et
al (2016, pg. 2) describes Chinese soft power strategies in relation to China’s role in the African media, which seeks to instil a more positive image of China into African journalists as well as providing training programmes for them. In addition, they (Jing et al, 2016, pg. 7) depict Chinese soft power initiatives as being more than simply a tool to achieve Chinese economic objectives, describing them as a gamut of power strategies. It is this idea that Chinese soft power initiatives are suggestive of wider issues which illustrates the research problem, which is further underlined by how Jing et al do not examine the wider normative implications of these policies, which furthers the gap in the established Chinese literature regarding China in Africa.

This theme can be seen in Ashley Kim and Li Xing’s *Beyond Debating the Differences*. Kim and Li (2013, pg. 23) claim that China makes up a crucial part of overseas aid to Africa and that there is widespread African support for Chinese policy. This implies a degree of success on the part of China’s pursuit of African hearts and minds via soft power. They (pg. 40) also mention the promotion of Chinese culture via Chinese aid packages, such as the initiatives of the Confucius Institute. They (Kim and Li, 2013, pg. 41) assert that China has eclipsed the European powers in Africa which has been one of several fears over China’s Africa policy held by several nations and theorists. It is the utilization of Chinese culture that has enabled the success of Chinese policy in the continent. The depiction of China’s cultural diplomacy by Kim and Li raises a gap in the Chinese literature regarding the wider phenomena that these policies symbolize. This is due to how they do not consider these policies as part of the more normative dimensions of Chinese foreign policy but rather a means to achieve economic objectives with little beyond it. It is China’s experience of culturalism that manifests itself in cultural soft power which serves as an influence in the creation of the Chinese discourse.

The emphasis on soft power is also raised by Wang Yiwei. Wang (2008, pg. 260) claims that China’s domestic situation influences the formulation of Chinese foreign policy. He (Wang, 2008, pg. 261–2) attributes American fears over China’s policy to the image of China’s regime, which has limited the impact of China’s soft power. In contrast to many Chinese writers, Wang (2008, pg. 269) claims that soft power is overrated as its effects are limited by a large language gap and negative perceptions of China in Africa. It is these negative perceptions of Chinese engagement that show the conflict between the two discourses as well as the implications they have for Chinese engagement in Africa. While Wang raises the issue of the negative image of China abroad and the attempts of Chinese soft power initiatives to remedy this, he also does not explore the wider issues that these policies symbolize. In this case, it is
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

how the two competing images of China serve as a codification of the power relations between China and the West.

Another common theme in Chinese theories is the utilization of traditional Chinese philosophy in formulating Chinese policy and its objectives. This can be initially seen in Jerry Liu’s (2013, pg. 49) claim that the Confucian ethos of paternalism and harmony plays a role in formulating China’s approach to Africa. Liu (2013, pg. 54) raises the accusation that China’s approach to Africa is neo colonial in nature. The concept of Confucianism plays a significant role in the Chinese discourse as a replacement for the communist ideological ethos of the Mao era. Liu’s emphasis on Confucianism reflects an underlying theme of Chinese foreign policy since the Chinese world order was shaped by Confucian doctrine. This is also illustrative of the shifts in these constructs as well as for China’s perceptions of Chinese identity. It is these shifts that the Chinese constructs are symbolic of.

The centrality of China’s soft power initiatives to China’s African policies is raised by Sheng Ding. Sheng (2011, pg. 299), highlights the rise of Mandarin language classes in African schools and universities which is an expression of Chinese soft power. Sheng (2011, pg. 298) claims that it is important to create a “foreign policy with Chinese characteristics” and achieve political credibility. This idea reflects the Chinese discourse’s attempts to separate Chinese policy from that of the West. It is this creation of a new Chinese theory that illustrates the desire of the Chinese narrative to challenge the common American misconceptions about Chinese engagement. It is this creation which is also suggestive of how the constructs of China in Africa are representative of two systems that seek to spread themselves beyond their original context which Sheng’s work does not appear to address.

From this initial examination, it is possible to see several common elements when discussing the theme of culture in the Chinese discourse on China in Africa. This manifested itself as Mandarin language classes as well as other educational mechanisms that China utilizes to achieve its’ policy goals in Africa. The literature itself is divided over the success of this policy with some claiming that Chinese policies are widely supported in Africa while others assert that the overall utility of culture and soft power is hampered by linguistic and cultural differences as well as the negative perceptions of Chinese policy partially created by the American narrative. It is the latter claim that serves as one of the key points of conflict between the Chinese and American discourses on the subject as well as illustrating the wider phenomena that the constructs of China in Africa are symbolic of.
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

The Chinese literature regarding China’s soft power initiatives in the African states have provided two main forms of it. The first comes in the form of the official definition of cultural soft power that emphasises China’s traditional culture, which is the promotion of the Chinese image of China’s role and identity. The second is in the form of China’s economic soft power, which overlaps with the image of China as a role model by promoting the Chinese experience of economic development. While this suggests a divergence between Chinese soft power initiatives and Nye’s concept of soft power, these serve as an expression of China’s normative foreign policy which has largely been overlooked due to the common focus on China’s economic and military initiatives in Africa and the wider world.

3.33 China as a Role Model and the Beijing Consensus

The construct of China as a role model has emerged from China’s experiences of economic development in the Post-Mao era, which has been viewed as a potential model for the African states to follow for their development. This has been amplified by the perceived failings of the Washington Consensus, something that the Chinese constructs have been keen to exploit. The most prominent form of this construct has come in the promotion of the Chinese model as a paradigm for development, which appears to promote Chinese norms as much as it does for economic development (Perking, 2013, pg. 17). Another variation of this construct comes in the depiction of China’s assistance to the development of the African nations alongside the invocation of China’s three decades of economic development. As with many of the Chinese constructs, this serves as an illustration of the Chinese depiction of China’s role and identity as well as being one of the means to spread these constructs to a wider context.

The idea that China can serve as a role model for African development has been present in both the American and Chinese literature on China in Africa. Kim and Li appear to illustrate the case of China as a possible alternative to the American model of development as well as the growth of Chinese influence. Unlike these theorists, Kim and Li appear to view these developments in a more positive light which again is a key theme in the Chinese discourse on the subject. Regarding the creation of the perception of the ‘China threat’ in the Anglophone literature, it appears that this perception is partially derived from the alternative model of development that China poses which the Chinese discourse seeks to challenge, in line with China’s apparent aspirations to alter the current international system.
Jing and Burton (2012, pg. 1) also raise the issue of China as an alternative role model for African states to emulate, a notion that Beijing has been keen to promote. They (Jing and Burton, 2012, pg. 1) attribute the success of these policies to the erosion of the colonial linkages between the European and African states. While Jing and Burton illustrate the centrality of Chinese soft power initiatives and their initial successes in the African states, they do not explore how these initiatives promote the Chinese perception of China’s image or how this reflects the changes in China’s image.

This shift in the Chinese discourse can be seen in Bo Zhiye’s (2011, pg. 25) claim that Chinese policy has shifted from the political goals of the Mao era to the pursuit of economic development resulting from Jiang’s “go out” phase in Chinese policy which again illustrates the shift in ideological totems from political to economic goals. Bo (2011, pg. 28) claims that China is in fact becoming a responsible stakeholder in Africa and that this is reshaping the world order. This initially shows one of the themes of the Chinese discourse where China is an equal, responsible partner as opposed to the threat it is made out to be in the American discourse. The idea of China as a role model also reflects one of the key cornerstones of traditional Chinese policy in that China provides a superior cultural and economic model for others to emulate. It is from this viewpoint that we can see how the two discourses perceive the same phenomenon in radically different ways. Bo’s analysis establishes some of the key themes in the Chinese discourse on Chinese policy in Africa. Bo’s use of Confucian concepts illustrates the influences on China’s response as well as illustrating the Chinese perceptions of China’s identity. Bo’s analysis also raises the issue of the research gap. While it is useful in exploring the Chinese constructs, Bo does not address how these constructs are created, which establishes a binary between the Anglophone and Chinese literature on the subject. It is this binary that the research framework will explore via the American and Chinese corpuses on China in Africa.

From this, it appears that the Chinese and optimist literature is partially unified by its positive depiction of the Beijing Consensus. This serves to challenge the common perceptions of Chinese policy made in the Anglophone literature as well as to address the perceived failings of the dominant American model of development. It is these different depictions of the same phenomenon that initially underlines the power relations between China and the U.S. regarding their models of development. While this serves as a point of contention between the discourses, there is a degree of overlap regarding this since both appear to acknowledge that Chinese gains in Africa were due to American indifference to Africa at the end of the Cold War.
3.34 From Communism to Confucianism: The Rise of the China Dream

As stated earlier, the Chinese perception of China’s role and identity has undergone several changes since the Post-Cold War era. This has primarily come in the form of the move towards a more culturalist identity rather than the ideological constructs of the 20th century. These changes have entered their latest phase with the rise of the China Dream, which is possibly one of the youngest constructs in the Chinese discourse. This construct has been derived from Liu Mingfu’s work of the same name, which has had a notable influence on the policies and rhetoric of Xi’s governance of China. In keeping with Liu’s concept, this construct has been couched as China’s return rather than China’s rise, which ties into Liu’s call for the ‘rejuvenation of the Chinese nation’. This construct serves to separate Chinese policy from that of the West, which reflects the advocacy of a ‘Chinese destiny’ based on concepts from China’s past rather than convergence with the U.S. and Europe (Callahan, 2012, pg. 12). It is this purpose that shows how this construct is reflective of the wider changes in Chinese identity and foreign policy in the form of what Callahan terms as ‘Chinese exceptionalism’. This phenomenon is also one of the wider issues that the Chinese constructs of China in Africa are symbolic of, in this case, the shifts in Chinese foreign policy and identity.

In relation to the pursuit of soft power and Chinese culture, another key theme in the Chinese discourse is that of Confucianism. As earlier stated, Confucianism, along with the emphasis on Chinese culture has replaced Maoism as the primary ideological mechanism in the Chinese discourse, serving the Chinese narrative in the same way that liberalism and realism does in the American discourse. This typically manifests itself in the choices of language made in the Chinese discourse as well as references to Confucian concepts. This plays a role in formulating the Chinese constructs of China in Africa.

An example of this utilization of traditional Chinese philosophy in formulating Chinese policy and its objectives can be seen in Jerry Liu’s (2013, pg. 49) claim that the Confucian ethos of paternalism and harmony plays a role in formulating China’s approach to Africa. The Confucian doctrine plays a significant role in the Chinese discourse as a replacement for the communist ideological ethos of the Mao era. The Chinese discourse is shaped by its own unique philosophy rather than solely being a reiteration of the “White Man’s Burden” of the European colonial era, the lens through which the American discourse views this subject.
Liu’s emphasis on Confucianism reflects an underlying current of Chinese foreign policy since the Chinese world order was shaped by Confucian doctrine. China’s imperial past continues to influence the formulation of Chinese policy, which illustrates how the shifts in these policies and China’s perception of its role are inter-connected. It is this relationship that raises one of the gaps in the Chinese literature since Liu does not appear to draw a connection between the revival of this doctrine and the current state of Chinese foreign policy.

The utilization of Confucian terminology can also be seen in the work of Li Anshan. Li (2011, pg. 42) claims that Chinese scholars have a positive view of Chinese policies in Africa while American scholars have a more negative view of it, which reflects the literature outlined in this review. Li (2011, pg. 45-52) invokes Chinese philosophy when he describes the concepts of ren (仁), shu (恕), xin (信) and ping deng (平等) to depict China’s policy of medical aid, interest free loans and mutual benefit. These concepts serve to further highlight the influence of Confucianism as a philosophical and ideological totem in the Chinese discourse on the subject. By utilizing Chinese philosophical concepts, Li shows how China’s past is an underlying dynamic of its discourse on Chinese foreign policy since such concepts were also utilized to maintain the Chinese tributary system as well as serving to illustrate how this experience influences the creation of the present Chinese discourse and the Chinese constructs of China in Africa. In addition, Li’s reference to the phrases commonly utilized by Chinese theorists and policy makers may also serve to illustrate the possible responses towards accusations towards Chinese foreign policy in the region, although this is not directly referred to by Li.

The use of China’s experiences as a guideline for Chinese foreign policy strategies is raised by Alastair Ian Johnston’s Cultural Realism, which examines the influence of the Ming Dynasty’s strategies in countering the threats posed by the Mongols upon current Chinese foreign policy approaches. Johnston (1995, pg. 64) claims that these strategies emphasise stability rather than strength, with Chinese strategies being influenced by a strategic culture that has its roots in China’s traditional culture. In contrast to the populist depictions of Chinese foreign policy as an expansionist venture, Johnston (1995, pg. 113) claims that China’s approach is made up of accommodative and defensive strategies alongside more expansionist approaches. While Johnston’s work does not cover China’s engagement with the African states, it nevertheless indicates the common flaws in the reading of Chinese foreign policy in that Chinese foreign policy follows a strategic culture that is based on a largely different precedent to the previous Great Powers. This has been notable in the presentation of China as a revisionist
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

power, which perceives China as being primarily an economic or a military challenge, which leads to a flawed reading of Chinese strategies and overlooks how these have been able to cement China’s gains in the continent. It was this issue that the research sought to address by examining the more normative approaches favoured by China.

The emphasis on Confucianism is again raised by Wang Yiwei. In the vein of many Chinese writings on China in Africa, Wang (2008, pg. 260) claims that China’s domestic situation influences the formulation of Chinese foreign policy. Wang (2008, pg. 261-2) addresses American fears over China’s policy and attributes this to the image of China’s regime, which has limited the impact of China’s soft power. As is the case with many Chinese theorists, Wang (pg. 263) claims that power comes from morality and that morality comes from nature which reflects Confucian ethos. Wang (2008, pg. 269) claims that soft power is overrated as its effects are limited by a large language gap and negative perceptions of China in Africa. It is this claim that raises the question over the nature of Chinese soft power initiatives, which in turn is of possible utility in exploring the Chinese constructs.

It is these negative perceptions of Chinese engagement that show the conflict between the two discourses as well as the implications they have for Chinese engagement in Africa. The utilization of Confucian concepts and terminology in the Chinese literature is often utilized in conjunction with the depiction of China’s pursuit of soft power as well as the resurgence of cultural diplomacy in modern Chinese policy. While the concepts and terminology of Confucianism are referred to in these works, they do not make the link between Confucianism and the creation of the Chinese narrative which exposes another potential research gap.

As Table 4 shows, the Chinese literature regarding China’s African policies has been dominated by four primary constructs. These often overlap to create a more positive image of China’s activities in the continent, emphasising the benefits of Chinese foreign policy and how China’s experiences of economic development can serve as an example for the developing world to follow. In addition, the Chinese literature’s constructs also show the shifts in Chinese foreign policy and identity, most notably in the construct of the China Dream. In this sense, the Chinese literature is expressive of a normative system that seeks to spread itself to a wider context and seeks to present the Chinese perception of China’s role and identity.

Table 4 The Constructs of the Chinese Literature

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<th>Construct</th>
<th>Form</th>
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106
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| **Mutuality**                  | 1. Refers to the shared benefits of Chinese initiatives in the African states.  
                                 | 2. Invokes the shared experiences of China and the African states.  
                                 | Aims to depict China’s ties with the African states as an equal partnership.  
                                 | Invokes the experiences of imperialism and national liberation to cement Chinese relations with the African states.  
                                 | A response to the claims made about Chinese policy by the American narrative. |
| **China the Role Model**       | 1. China serves as an example for the African states to follow for their own development.  
                                 | 2. Invokes the Chinese experiences of rapid economic development.  
                                 | Illustrates the Chinese perception of China’s role.  
                                 | One of the means to spread Chinese norms to a wider context.  
                                 | Continuity within the Chinese images of China’s international role. |
| **China Dream**                | 1. Rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.  
                                 | 2. Pursuit of a ‘Chinese destiny’  
                                 | Aims to separate Chinese foreign policy from that of the West.  
                                 | An example of ‘Chinese exceptionalism’.  
                                 | Invokes concepts from China’s past.  
                                 | Illustrative of the recent shifts in China’s identity and foreign policy. |
| **Cultural Soft Power**        | 1. Spread of Chinese culture.  
                                 | 2. Use of Confucian concepts.  
                                 | Expresses China’s identity and the shifts in has undergone.  
                                 | Means to spread the Chinese constructs.  
                                 | Suggestive of the more normative dimensions of Chinese foreign policy |
3.4 The African Perspective on China in Africa

While the Anglophone and Chinese literature are representative of a binary regarding the depiction of China’s African policies, the African literature covering these policies can be seen as the middle ground in this competition over the construction of the meaning of Chinese foreign policy. This can initially be seen in how some aspects of it have been somewhat welcoming of Chinese initiatives but have equally been critical of the more controversial dimensions of these policies. In addition, while this perspective utilises constructs from both the Anglophone and Chinese perspectives, it has also been critical of these images and has illustrated the similarities between Chinese policy and those followed by the more established Western actors in the African states. One of these criticisms comes in the issue of the agency of the African states, with the established perspectives seemingly depriving African nations of this, which creates a more coercive image of China’s African policies, an image that the African perspectives have been critical of.

The African perspectives on Chinese engagement with the African states is outlined by Barry Sautman and Yan Hairong (2009, pg. 729), who claim that these perspectives are less negative towards these policies than the critical perspective has been. They (Sautman and Hairong, 2009, pg. 732) assert that sub-Saharan African states perceive China as a partner, a view that is reinforced by the apparent overlap between the interests of China and the African states. This assertion invokes the construct of mutuality which has been a prominent theme in the Chinese literature on this subject. Yan and Sautman (2009, pg. 746) also outline the advantages of China’s approach by claiming that such projects are still viewed as being largely positive even in states that have been held up as examples of the darker side of Chinese policies in Africa by the Western media. It is this reference to the Western media that indicates the more discursive elements of China’s African policies, reinforced by their assertion that the view of Africa as a ‘disaster zone’ is the hegemonic image of the continent despite its many flaws (Yan and Sautman, 2009, pg. 747). It is this hegemony and the advantages of China’s normative foreign policy that raises the research issue since it is necessary to examine how China was able to make its gains in the African continent through these normative mechanisms.

In their examination of the African perspectives regarding China’s African policies, Yan and Sautman raise the implications of the hegemonic image of Africa in the popular discourse. It is this image of Africa that can be seen as the latest incarnation of what Said termed the
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

‘Heart of Darkness’ motif. While this image has been dominant, it is flawed, which means that an approach based on this understanding will be flawed as well. This notion can also be applied to the images of China’s African policies which have been based on an equally simplistic image of these policies, which means that a hegemonic discourse does not necessarily translate into an effective response to China’s African policies. It is this issue that raises both a gap in the literature and a further imperative to pursue the research issue to explore how China’s vision for the African states has been able to build support for Chinese initiatives in the continent.

The constructs present in the more critical literature regarding China’s African policies are alluded to by Teke Ngomba (2011, pg. 57), who cites China’s provision of radio jamming equipment to Zimbabwe during the demonstrations against ZANU-PF’s rule. This is in keeping with the image of China as a facilitator of authoritarian regimes in the African continent although the question of whether this is part of a wider promotion of authoritarian norms is not addressed here. Ngomba (2011, pg. 59) also raises two of the constructs that have been present in the Chinese literature by referring to China’s attempts to win the hearts and minds of African nations as well as the example that China provides to the African media. These can be interpreted as an allusion to the constructs of cultural soft power and China as a role model respectively with the former serving as how China has attempted to build support for its African policies and the latter being a means to further legitimise these policies. While Ngomba identifies the more normative dimensions of China’s African policies, he largely overlooks the central role they have played in furthering Chinese objectives as well as how they are representative of China’s wider challenge.

Another example of the African perspective on China’s African policies can be seen in Kwesi Anning (2010, pg. 145), who describes these policies as ‘influence without interference’. This echoes the common depiction of these policies as being non-interventionist in nature, which has been frequently criticised by the Western perspective, although Anning is not as critical of these policies. Instead, Anning (2010, pg. 147) depicts these policies as being characterised by cooperation, which is reminiscent of the construct of China’s African policies as being mutually beneficial, which has been a prominent construct in the Chinese perspective of China’s African policies. Anning (2010, pg. 152) also raises the research issue in claiming that China has been active in states that Western nations have largely been absent from, which furthers the idea that the end of the Cold War left a vacuum in Africa that China was able to fill as well as the perception that China is willing to take greater risks by conducting business in states deemed too unstable for other actors. It is the role that these have played in furthering
Chinese objectives alongside the more normative dimensions of these policies that the research sought to explore.

The constructs present in the Chinese literature are raised by Fantu Cheru and Cyril Obi (2011, pg. 72), who claim that the Washington Consensus has largely been rejected in the African states. Such a claim is reminiscent of the construct of China as a role model, which is also referenced by their assertion that China’s experiences of development can act as a guide for African development. They also raise the concerns regarding Chinese neo-imperialism in Africa, although Cheru and Obi (2011, pg. 75) claim that such an approach will be through consent rather than coercion. This depiction raises the issue regarding the agency of African states, which has been a prevalent theme in the African perspectives on China in Africa. Another common element is in Cheru and Obi’s (2011, pg. 74) assertion that the majority of the criticisms of China’s African policies can also be applied to the policies of other external actors present in the African states. It is these sentiments that reflect how the African perspective has been critical of both the Western and Chinese images of China in Africa.

The constructs present in the more critical literature are raised by Dot Keet (2008, pg. 80), who claims that China’s African policies are largely concerned with the exploitation of African resources, which echoes the construct of China as an exploitive power. Keet (2008, pg. 81) also alludes to the common image of Chinese initiatives as ‘debt traps’ in claiming that Chinese loans serve to further African nations into Beijing’s debt, which is reminiscent of Chinese projects as an exercise in neo-imperialism. It is this motif that raises the issue of African agency, with these initiatives being furthered by the consent from the African elites rather than through coercion. This indicates how the constructs present in the literature have been subjected to greater criticism in the African perspective since these overlook the role of African agency. These constructs are also criticised by Keet (2010, pg. 21) in her assertion that the accusation of China being a neo-colonial power is somewhat hypocritical, which further underlines the flaws in the established images of China’s African policies.

The idea of the African literature as the middle ground between the Western and Chinese literature is raised by Dambisa Moyo (2012, pg. 5), who claims that while Chinese policies can be perceived as neo-imperialist, it is less territorial than that of the European empires of the 19th century. The differences between the two are further emphasised when she (Moyo, 2012, pg. 156) asserts that Chinese foreign policy differs from those of the Western powers since it is less reliant on military force and does not have the missionary tendencies of these nations. Such a claim echoes Huntington’s (1996, pg. 70) depiction of Western civilisation as a
‘missionary civilisation’ in *The Clash of Civilisations*, although this overlooks how China has promoted its own vision and norms through its soft power initiatives. This raises the research issue in how the Chinese constructs have been spread to a greater context through these initiatives. In addition, Moyo (2012, pg. 85) raises the construct of mutuality in claiming that China’s ties with the African states is based on mutual benefit, which has been one of the core components of the Chinese image of China’s African policies. It is this aspect that is illustrative of the spread of the Chinese constructs to a wider context.

Constructs from both the Western and Chinese literature on China’s African policies are also raised by Lloyd Sachikonye’s (2008, pg. 124) depiction of China’s long-standing relationship with Zimbabwe. Sachikonye (2008, pg. 125) identifies part of the methodology behind Chinese foreign policy, by citing the role of the close ties between China and the elites of African nations in furthering Chinese influence in the continent, which invokes the construct of mutuality. This claim also goes against the established images of China’s African policies which have often presented these ties as little more than China bribing the African elites to further its economic objectives. It is this issue that further raises the necessity to explore the research problem to examine how China was able to make its gains in the African states. Sachikonye (2008, pg. 127) also cites the potential for China to be a role model for the development of the African states and the issue of China as a facilitator of authoritarian norms by claiming that the economic success of China’s system has an appeal to an economically stagnant Zimbabwe. While this shows how the African perspective utilises constructs from both the Western and Chinese images of China in Africa, it also raises the issue of China’s wider challenge through the Chinese economic model, which is not fully explored here.

The means by which China made its gains in the African states is illustrated by Ndubisi Obiorah (2007, pg. 39), who attributes this to the perceived lack of conditions on Chinese aid. This is in line with the common image of these policies as being of shared benefits, which has been frequently expressed throughout the Chinese literature in the construct of mutuality. Obiorah (2007, pg. 51) also raises another of the constructs present in the Western literature in his depiction of the threats to Chinese interests in the Niger Delta, which is in line with the common criticism of China’s non-interventionist approach to the African states. This further illustrates how the African perspective has utilised constructs from both the Western and Chinese literature, which reinforces this perspective’s role as the middle ground between the two. In addition, Obiorah (2007, pg. 36) also raises the research issue in his allusion to the support for Chinese initiatives from the African states, although he does not fully explore how
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

China was able to build support for its projects in these states beyond lacking the contentious legacy that has hampered similar initiatives from the Western nations present in Africa.

China’s gains in the African states are also depicted by John Blessing Karumbidza (2007, pg.87), who claims that China saw these nations as opportunities as opposed to the more hegemonic image that has depicted the African states as being riven by conflict and disaster. It is this image that is initially suggestive of how China has been able to make inroads into the African nations although this issue is not fully examined here. Karumbidza (2007, pg. 88) asserts that China’s laissez faire approach cannot last, which also echoes the criticisms of Chinese policy throughout the Western literature on this subject. On the other hand, he (Karumbidza, 2007, pg. 92) raises the construct of China as a role model and as a facilitator of authoritarian norms by claiming that China provides an example for the African states to follow, which is an image that the Chinese literature has promoted. The methodology of Chinese initiatives depicted in the form of Chinese classes in the African states, which he (Karumbidza, 2007, pg. 100) claims have steadily risen throughout the continent. While this is reminiscent of the construct of cultural soft power, it also raises the research issue regarding the nature of power in Chinese foreign policy, which Karumbidza largely overlooks.

In all, the African perspective regarding China’s African policies consists of constructs and themes that have been present in both the Western and Chinese literature on this subject. The form that these constructs have taken has differed from the previous two sections of the literature and have been subjected to greater criticism, with neither the Western nor the Chinese image being fully supported. This perspective has also been unified by its depiction of the role of African agency, which has largely been absent in the established literature, which has depicted these nations as being more passive in the face of Chinese initiatives. By serving as the middle ground between the Western and Chinese perspectives, the African viewpoint is suggestive of the potential audience for the constructs as China seeks to alter the meanings that the African nations attribute to China to one that is more favourable to Chinese objectives, which has been one of the recurring elements of the research issue.
3.5 Points of Contention

The Anglophone and Chinese literature regarding China’s activities in the African states create two images of these policies. Both images are created by several overlapping constructs which create a unified image of these policies. While the American and Chinese discourses on China in Africa are different in their portrayal of Chinese policy and in the constructs they utilise, there are several areas in which they overlap. This is in how they provide two vastly different interpretations of Chinese policy towards Africa. These interpretations create several points of contention between the American and Chinese discourses on the same subject.

The first of these points, as seen in the previous literature, is the debate over China as a potential role model for African states to follow. The American narrative paints a critical picture of this model of development since it is often perceived to be a legitimization of authoritarian ideals as well as providing a potential challenge for American interests in the region (Halper, 2010, pg. 143). The Chinese discourse seeks to challenge this assertion by claiming that the Chinese model codified by the Beijing Consensus provides an alternative model of development from the dominant Washington Consensus. This often portrays the Chinese model as a possible solution to the perceived failings of the traditional American models of development previously followed by many African states (Pang, 2009, pg. 128). The Beijing Consensus is a recurring theme in both the American and the Chinese literature albeit couched in different terms. This provides a point of contention between the two discourses as well as a possible example of how the American and Chinese discourses conflict with each other. It is this theme which illustrates the more normative dimensions of Chinese foreign policy since this model appears to promote Chinese norms as much as it does for economic development. While this is illustrative of the contention between the two forms of literature, it is also a reflection of how the constructs symbolise two normative systems that seek to spread themselves beyond the context of their origin.

Another point of contention is China’s policy of non-intervention and the separation of political and economic interests. Throughout the Anglophone narrative, this policy has been criticised for facilitating authoritarian regimes and human rights abuses. It has also been described as a sign that China is unwilling to play a more proactive role internationally and that this policy is coming under increasing strain from China’s citizens who want to see a more robust response to threats towards Chinese nationals in the continent.
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

The Anglophone perspective on these policies has also been criticised in the Chinese literature that views the policy of non-intervention as respect for state sovereignty. This is intertwined with the Chinese assertion that African states are equal partners with China and are not simply “victims” in need of salvation (Sheng, 2011, pg. 297). This point of contention also illustrates the influence of the imperial experience on both the Western and Chinese narratives. This is due to the former appearing to apply the logic of the European empires to modern Chinese foreign policy. It is equally possible to claim that the Chinese discourse also shows signs of this since it is this experience of imperialism that has provided a rallying point for China and Africa as well as China’s desire to avoid comparison with the European empires.

In addition, another point of contention can be seen in the common motifs and themes utilised in the Anglophone discourse. These have often been targeted for criticism by the Chinese narrative. In one of the few instances where the Chinese discourse directly addresses the critical narrative, the common tropes are often deconstructed as simply being the result of a misinterpretation of Chinese policies as well as a creation of American moral exceptionalism. It is these points of contention that serve to codify the power relations and rivalry between the United States and China over China’s Africa policies. In this sense, it is the competing discourses created by American and Chinese sources that serve to illustrate these relations and show how power relations come from within the discourse rather than from an external challenger. This will be explored by an examination of the official statements from these sources.

The Chinese literature has also been unified in its criticism of the state-centric approach taken to China’s African policies, which has depicted the Chinese state and Chinese firms as a monolithic actor (Gu, 2009, pg.4). Instead, there are allusions to several Chinese actors present in the African continent, which includes smaller Chinese enterprises alongside the Chinese state and SOEs, whose interests do not always align. This is illustrative of how the Chinese perspective ascribes a different meaning to Chinese units in Africa in contrast to the more state-centric approach taken by the Anglophone literature.
3.6 Research gap

Overall, the established literature outlined in this section can be unified by several common factors. The Western discourse is unified by its negative image of Chinese policy towards Africa while the Chinese discourse unifies its statements through a positive depiction of China in Africa. The two forms of literature regarding China’s African activities can be characterised as a binary, symbolised by the conflicting images of Chinese initiatives as neo-imperialism and of them being of mutual benefit (Mei-Ting Schwartz, 2018, pg. 25). It is these images that are reflective of the wider battle for the construction of China’s image abroad and as a codification of the power relations between China and the United States. These issues and their relationship to the images of China in Africa have not been directly connected by the established literature, which reveals one of the main research gaps in the literature on China’s African policies.

It is from a preliminary reading of the established literature that it is possible to identify several potential research gaps. One of these can be seen in how none of the established literature attempts to define the connection between the past experiences of the U.S. and China with the discourses on Chinese policy towards Africa. The research project will attempt to fill this gap by exploring the possibility that such a relationship is present as well as how it serves to influence the creation of the American and Chinese discourses on the subject.

Another potential gap in the literature emerges over the question of the commonly used methodologies utilised here. From the examples of the Anglophone literature, most of these works are empirical in nature and examine a single case or phenomenon in Chinese policy, providing a detailed snapshot rather than a grand overview. The Chinese discourse appears to provide an overall depiction of China’s approach to Africa but seldom provides a concrete case study for it. In this sense, the proposed research will attempt to fill this gap by occupying the ground between these two different approaches. Both the Anglophone and Chinese approaches are unified by the fact that both forms examine what is being said rather than who is saying it. By applying a more theoretical and less empirical approach as favoured by Bourdieu and Foucault, to explore the creation of the discourses on Chinese policy towards Africa along with the factors that influence their creation.
Regarding the discourse on the Chinese approach to Africa, it is again possible to identify another potential research gap. As previously illustrated, the works that explored the influence of China’s past upon modern Chinese strategy tended to explore Chinese policy as a whole. This focuses on strategies rather than utilising particular case studies of how these strategies are implemented abroad. It is possible to identify several points of overlap and contention between the two narratives. The first of these is the perceived rivalry between China and the United States over Africa. While the American discourse views this through the experiences of the European empires and the Cold War, the Chinese literature insists that this is simply a misconception about Chinese policies on the part of the Anglophone literature. It would initially appear that the two discourses observe the same subject rather differently.

Another point of contention between the two narratives has been the idea of the Beijing Consensus and China as a possible role model for Africa. This has often been perceived negatively in the American discourse since it poses a possible challenge to the “legitimate” American model as well as serving to potentially undermine American influence in Africa. On the other hand, the Chinese literature shows the Beijing Consensus more positively, serving to remedy the perceived failings of the American model of development. This can be seen as an example of how discourses serve to codify power relations in this regard.

In addition, while the established literature presents the common themes and images of Chinese activities in the African states, they do not cover how these images are created nor what they are reflective of. This raises the issue of how the knowledge on China in Africa is created and what it is symbolic of, which serves as one of the primary issues that the research will fill by applying the methodology outlined in the previous chapter to the corpus on this topic.

The other point of contention between the Western and the Chinese literature are the very policies followed by China in Africa. This can be seen in the example of China’s policy of non-intervention which is viewed in the Anglophone literature as facilitating bad governance and human rights abuses or as a reflection of China’s reluctance to play a more proactive role abroad due to the possible threat that this may pose for Chinese economic interests. On the other hand, China views this policy as respect for state sovereignty and the need to keep economic and political concerns separate. While most of the literature depicts the reasons why China is often accused of being a negative force in Africa, the majority, with the exception of a small number of Chinese theorists, do not explore how China responds to this accusation. This shows another gap in the literature that I intend to plug via a discourse analysis of official
Chinese statements on China’s activities in Africa. To achieve this, my proposed discourse analysis will seek to underline particular phrases in the official Chinese discourse on this topic, particularly terms such as “mutual benefit” and references to Confucian concepts, particularly that of Tianxia, in order to determine how China’s experience of imperialism influences its approaches towards Africa as well as how it responds to the accusations made in the common American narrative.

In all, the established literature from both the American and Chinese sources have several commonly occurring constructs and themes, which reflect the images of Chinese foreign policy as well as of China itself. These are often overlapping which serves to create a unified image of China’s African policies in the literature on this subject. These constructs are what I seek to explore in the cases of the American and Chinese discourses on China’s African policies to explore how these are reflective of the constructs of the images of China abroad as well as how they are illustrative of two competing systems that codify the normative power relations between China and the West. It is this aim that raises the issue of how these constructs can be operationalized and applied to the corpus that I seek to examine.
CHAPTER 4: THE CASE OF SUDAN

4. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to apply the concepts explored in the previous chapters to one of the two case studies of Chinese engagement in Africa that I have selected. In this chapter, these concepts will be utilised to explore the American and Chinese discourses on China’s approach to Sudan to explore how the narratives portray this as well as how the two discourses conflict over their differing pictures of Chinese policy towards Sudan. As with the case of China’s policies towards Zimbabwe, the constructs illustrated earlier were present in this case study as well.

Alongside Chinese engagement in Zimbabwe, China’s involvement in Sudan has been one of the most popular case studies in the Anglophone literature on Chinese policy towards Africa. It has also been one of the most controversial areas of Chinese foreign policy in the light of the Darfur crisis and the excesses of the Bashir regime which China is often accused of enabling (Patey 2007, pg. 998). Another purpose of this chapter is to apply the concepts and constructs outlined in the earlier chapters to explore the research issues outline earlier. These issues are primarily related to the more normative aspects behind China’s African policies. This echoes Bourdieu’s assertion that a system will attempt to replicate itself beyond the context of its creation. The criticisms made about Chinese policy in the American narrative is also expected to be a result of Chinese foreign policy contradicting American norms, which is also in keeping with Foucault’s depiction of discourses as a set of standards that govern a society, by establishing the binaries of abnormal and normal. In this case, the former is authoritarianism while the latter is the democratic values of the United States and the Western world.
4.1 Background of Chinese Engagement in Sudan

While Chinese involvement in Sudan is often cited to date back to 1955, when the African state was one of the first nations to recognise the People’s Republic of China, any meaningful Chinese engagement in Sudan has been comparatively recent. An initial indication of the turn which Chinese policy took in the oil rich state could be seen in 1996, when Sinopec took control of the Sudanese oil fields that had once been administered by Chevron, the previous major actor in the state (Rupiya and Southall, 2010 pg. 181). Alongside Angola, Sudan has been one of China’s primary sources of African oil. China’s policy in Sudan is motivated by the goal of continuing China’s economic growth by building relations with economically crucial states as well as furthering China’s international influence. This contributed to the depiction of Chinese foreign policy as being little more than an economic venture, since it appears to be motivated by little beyond the pursuit of economic objectives (Burnan, 2008 pg. 198). In recent years, this has been further complicated by the secession of South Sudan which provides a potential stumbling block for Chinese policy due to its initial support of the Sudanese regime, against whom the new state had fought a bloody civil war with. This appears to illustrate the limitations of Chinese foreign policy’s apparent preoccupation with economic goals, which has also been criticised in the Anglophone literature on China’s engagement with the African states (Shin and Eisenman, 2012, pg. 179)

To gain access to Sudanese oil, China has provided support for Sudan in several ways. This has come largely in the form of infrastructure development projects as well as Chinese loans, both of which are notable features of Chinese engagement in the continent (Patey, 2007, pg. 999). More controversially, this has also manifested itself in the sales of military equipment to Sudan, which has been utilised in its war with the SPLA as well as in the atrocities in Darfur. There has also been a domestic outcry in China itself over the death of three Chinese peacekeepers in South Sudan over the allegations that a Chinese made weapon was used in the attack that resulted in their deaths. This depiction appears to be illustrative of the critique of the lack of Chinese political intervention in the continent as well as the construct of Chinese foreign policy as a facilitator of political authoritarianism and human rights abuses (Hollslag, 2009 pg. 78). This renders Sudan as an example of the more critical depictions of China’s Africa policies created by the American discourse
4.2 Research Process and the Corpus

I applied the concepts and structures outlined in the theory and methodology chapter, which were derived from the literature review, to the perceptions of China’s policies towards Sudan. The texts from those sources came in several different types. While the source and subjects of these texts were different, they shared a similar purpose in promoting their image of China’s African policies as well as to reflect a sample of the official discourse on this subject.

Building on the theories of Foucault and Bourdieu, a socio linguistic discourse analysis was applied to the corpus of the American and Chinese texts on China’s policies towards Sudan. This was derived from Foucault’s theories on the creation of knowledge and discourse alongside Bourdieu’s habitus to explore how the texts in question are reflective of the competing systems of norms that seek to spread themselves beyond their original context via their constructs of China’s African policies. It was expected that the constructs of China’s policies towards Sudan symbolised the wider issue of the constructs of China’s international identity. In line with this, the framework also sought to illustrate how the two different forms of knowledge on China’s African policies served to codify the power relations between China and the U.S. This is initially reflected by the constructs represented by the choices of language present in the established literature on the subject. The purpose of the framework was to apply the constructs derived from the literature to the official corpuses on China’s policies towards Sudan.

The American and Chinese corpus regarding China’s policies towards Sudan consisted of several core elements. The majority of the texts came in the form of reports on Chinese activities in the country. While it was initially expected that there would be a degree of variation between the texts from the embassies and governmental bodies, there was a large degree of consistency in their stance towards Chinese policy in the country as well as in their overall depiction of these policies. The length of the texts was also subject to a degree of variation with some texts only consisting of three to four paragraphs while others could be longer than twenty pages. This was expected to affect the overall coverage of the constructs although the significance of each construct was also based on the frequency of its recurrence as well as the coverage of it
The Chinese corpus also largely took the form of coverage of events taking place in Sudan as well as chiefly depicting Chinese activities in the country. These reports have often been more detailed regarding Chinese activities than their American counterparts have. The primary focus of these reports is on the relations between the Chinese and Sudanese. These reports also covered Chinese initiatives in Sudan, most notably those of the Confucius Institute as well as Chinese projects in the country. This focus is suggestive of the more elitist nature in China’s foreign relations, which again focuses upon the personal ties between the Chinese and Sudanese elites. While the American discourse appears to be partially a creation of the American interpretation of the local press, it’s Chinese counterpart is largely a creation of a more Chinese context, thus presenting a more unified narrative.

Another common feature of the corpus from this case study is the speeches and remarks made by officials and spokespeople. I explored how the constructs of China in Africa manifested themselves in the official narratives as well as to examine what they were symbolic of in their meanings alongside examining any possible overlap and deviation from the established American and Chinese literature on this subject. These texts served as a sample of the official narratives on China in Africa, to which the concepts from the previous chapters will be applied to. This has several expectations for the constructs present in both the American and Chinese discourse which have been derived from the established literature on this topic.

4.22 Expectations from the Literature

One of the initial expectations is the idea that China serves as a role model for the African states to follow for their own economic development. Such a construct has been one of the recurring features of the Chinese literature as illustrated by Bo’s (2009, pg. 29) depiction of the Chinese model. This was expected to promote the Chinese experiences of economic development as a reference point for Sudan to follow, which serves as one of the potential means for the Chinese constructs to spread themselves beyond their original context as well as reflecting the system that they seek to promote. In addition, it is also expected that the shifts in administrations will also influence the constructs present in the two corpuses. Initial examples include the assumption of development leading to the rise of democratic norms alongside the more exceptionalist stance taken by Xi in recent years (Shambaugh, 2015, pg.
These shifts are expected to interact with each other along with the developments within Sudan.

Since the Chinese constructs of China in Africa seek to promote the benefits of Chinese policies for the African states, it was also expected that the concept of mutuality and ‘win-win cooperation’ will also be present in this case (Sheng, 2012 pg. 297). Due to the comparatively recent nature of China’s deeper ties with Sudan, it is expected that this construct will seek to depict China as an equal partner and that Chinese policies are of mutual benefit rather than being utilised to refer to any shared experiences. This serves as part of the image of Chinese foreign policy that the Chinese constructs seek to promote.

The construct of cultural soft power was expected to be another feature of the Chinese discourse on China’s policies towards Sudan as well as serving as one of the potential means to spread the Chinese constructs of China’s identity. China’s cultural diplomacy has been one of the primary tools in China’s foreign relations, with it being of equal if not more importance to the traditional notions of hard power in Chinese strategy (Warall, 2012, pg. 149-51). The potential presence of this construct is expected to serve as a reflection of the developments in Chinese foreign policy and the perceptions of China’s identity as well as one of the vessels to spread these perceptions.

Due to both the established literature and Xi’s continued endorsement of this concept, the construct of the China Dream is also expected to be present in this case study. As with the construct of cultural soft power, this construct is expected to reflect the shifts in Chinese foreign policy and identity in recent years (Zhang, 2013, pg. 51). Should this construct be present, it will further reinforce the idea of the case of Sudan as a reflection of the more recent developments in China’s African policies as well as serving as part of the Chinese projections of China’s image, something that the Chinese narrative is expected to spread beyond the context of its origin.

I also expected that many of the constructs outlined in the Anglophone literature to be present in the American corpus on Chinese engagement in Sudan. As outlined in the introduction, China’s assistance to the Sudanese regime is an example of the apparent facilitation of authoritarian norms and human rights abuses in the continent. This has largely manifested itself in the form of Chinese military assistance to Sudan. This is particularly appropriate for the perception of China as an enabler of the worst excesses of Africa’s dictatorships as well as the apparent rise of authoritarian norms in the continent on the back of
Chinese policy. Such a notion has been prevalent in the form of the criticism of China’s non-interventionist policies such as Hollslag’s (2008, pg. 80) assertion that China is willing to sacrifice its citizens for economic objectives.

As with many resource rich African states, it was expected that the construct of China as an exploitive power will also be present in the American corpus on Sudan as well. This is due to China’s pursuit of African natural resources which also raises another common claim made against Chinese policy in the region. In this case, it is the assertion that China is willing to pursue its economic goals regardless of the potential political costs that this may bring, a notion that has led to the common depiction of Chinese foreign policy as being little more than the pursuit of economic objectives with little beyond it, as symbolised by Alden’s (2008, pg.6) claim that China’s African policies are chiefly motivated by access to natural resources.

In keeping with much of China’s foreign policy, the question over China’s apparent lack of political intervention is also expected to be present in the American discourse on Chinese engagement in Sudan. In this case, it is possible for both elements of the critique of non-intervention to be present. At first, the lack of Chinese intervention can be interpreted as tacit support for the Sudanese regime’s abuses as well as the facilitation of autocratic norms, which appears to be connected to the construct of China as a facilitator (Taylor, 2009, pg. 943). It was also possible to perceive this as a lack of will on China’s part to become a more formal power as Chinese interests come under attack, partially because of this lack of intervention being perceived as support for Khartoum, which raises the construct of China as a reluctant empire. Both constructs are indicative of the possible causative and normative factors behind the creation of the American image of China’s African policies.

Regarding the possible structures of experience that may influence the creation of the American discourse on Sudan, the legacy of the Cold War may have the greatest influence. Just as China supports Khartoum, the United States has also been accused of supporting the SPLA, which echoes the proxy conflicts of the Cold War era, as depicted by Patey’s works on China’s approach to Sudan. In this regard, the American discourse presents China as a rival to American interests as well as an exploiter and facilitator of authoritarian rule. The security challenges to Chinese interests in Sudan can also be an example of the shift from informal to formal power in the continent as well, which is expressive of the legacy of European imperialism’s influence upon the creation of the American narrative on China in Africa.
The factors behind the creation of the American discourse on Chinese engagement with Sudan are primarily a mixture of causative and normative factors. The former is a result of Chinese facilitation of the Bashir regime’s excesses, particularly towards Darfur, as well as the exploitation of Sudan’s natural resources (Cardenal and Araujo, 2014, pg. 140). The more normative elements come from the idea that Chinese engagement presents an authoritarian challenge to the established American discourse via these excesses. The same phenomenon can be perceived in both causative and normative terms. While the former serves as the American narrative’s reaction to Chinese policies in the African continent, the latter is the wider phenomena that the competing narratives are symbolic of.

4.3 Results of the Coding Process

As the graphs illustrate, several constructs have been the most frequently recurring factors within the American and Chinese narratives, which have been outlined earlier. In several cases, more than one construct was present in the same text while others only possessed one of the constructs. What this section will attempt to implement how these constructs manifested themselves in the respective discourses as well as how they are compared to their expected forms outlined earlier in this chapter. This found that the presence of the constructs had been largely consistent, but their manifestations had several variations from their presence in the established literature.

For the American discourse, the governmental and the embassy sources have been largely consistent in their depiction of Chinese foreign policy towards Sudan, although a notable portion of the US embassy’s corpus were republished sections from the international media. This made the pursuit of the American corpus along the lines defined by Chapter 1 of limited difficulty. Its’ Chinese counterpart has also been consistent as well, with its constructs following the established Chinese literature. The Chinese sources also made their own reports regarding China’s activities in the country rather than republishing sources from the media, which made the pursuit of the Chinese corpus of greater ease than the American discourse was.
4.4 The American Constructs of China’s Policies in Sudan

The American corpus consisted of 59 reports, 9 statements and 4 interviews. This also had several prevalent constructs that had previously been expressed in the established academic literature on Chinese engagement with Africa, although the manifestation of these constructs has been somewhat different when compared to the established literature. The most prevalent constructs in this case study have been China as an exploitive power as well as the perception of China as a neo-imperial power. In line with the American perception of the Beijing Consensus, the construct of China as a facilitator of authoritarianism and corruption has also been a prevalent concept as well. There has also been a degree of variation between the official discourse and the academic literature particularly regarding the perception of China as an imperial power in Africa.

Figure 1: The Frequency of the American Constructs’ Recurrence

As Figure 1 illustrates, the American discourse on China’s approaches to Sudan consists of four main constructs. The most dominant of these is the depiction of China as a facilitator. This came in two different forms, most notably the idea that Chinese policy facilitates corruption and bad governance or that it is encouraging the rise of authoritarian norms in the country. The presence of this construct is part of China’s wider facilitation of the spread of authoritarian rule as well as being a result of the context of the Darfur crisis, where China
provided military support for Khartoum. This is also one of the results of China’s normative foreign policy, in this case, how Chinese initiatives have facilitated the spread of authoritarian political norms. The second most dominant construct and possibly the greatest variation from the initial hypothesis for this case study has been the construct of China as a reluctant empire in Sudan. The more established depictions of China as a neo-imperial power focus on the more exploitive aspects of Chinese policy. Instead, the case of Sudan showed the American narrative encouraging further Chinese participation rather than discouraging it. Another dominant construct appears to be that of China as an exploitive power in Sudan. This has been connected to Chinese involvement with Sudan’s vast oil reserves. In addition, there has been an overlap between the presence of China as a reluctant empire and China as an exploitive power, both of which are unified by the wider criticism of the lack of Chinese political intervention in the country as well as perceiving China’s ‘no questions asked’ approach as facilitating corruption and poor governance. As with the construct of China the facilitator, the construct of China as an exploitive power is also a result of the context of the case of Sudan, with much of the corpus focusing on China’s activities in the country’s oil and petroleum sectors, where Beijing enjoys a near monopoly on these resources. The depiction of China as a rival has been largely absent from the American discourse on this case study. Instead, the corpus called on China to become a responsible stakeholder, which is expressive of the assumptions behind the corpus of the era, in this case, the perception that China’s development will result in a greater convergence between China and the West rather than competition.

Figure 2: The American Constructs over Time

The Constructs in the American Corpus

- China the Exploiter (2009-)
- China the Exploiter (2006-2009)
- China the Facilitator (2009-)
- China the Facilitator (2006-2009)
- China the Rival (2009-)
- China the Rival (2006-2009)
- China the Reluctant Empire (2009-)
- China the Reluctant Empire

0 5 10 15 20 25 30
As Figure 2 shows, the presence of the constructs within the American corpus has been subject to change over the two periods of time. This can initially be seen in the prevalence of the construct of China as a reluctant empire in the first period, which can partially be attributed to the internal situation in Sudan as well as the logic behind this construct. In this case, it has been the result of the threats to Chinese interests in Sudan due to the security challenges in the country. In a similar vein, the presence of the construct of China as a facilitator has also been prevalent in this period, with Chinese assistance to the Bashir regime coinciding with the atrocities of the Darfur crisis. It is these constructs that echo the common criticism of China’s laissez-faire approach to African affairs that has been present in much of the critical literature on China’s African policies as well as the influence of the case and period of time on the form that the constructs take.

In the second period, there has been an uptick in the presence of China as an exploitive power. Such an image is due to China’s involvement in the Sudanese oil sector, a sentiment that is reflective of the works of Patey on the subject. In keeping with the more critical literature, this image can be interpreted as a result of China’s willingness to conduct business with states deemed too unpalatable or unstable for other firms and nations as well as its’ ability to take greater risks as alluded to by Keenan. This image also overlaps with the construct of China as a facilitator with China’s tacit support for Khartoum being part of this approach.

The construct of China as a rival has largely been absent in both periods, which illustrates possibly the greatest variation between the established literature and the official corpus regarding China’s African policies. The absence of this is partially the result of the depiction of China as a ‘responsible stakeholder’ rather than as a rival to American interests, as illustrated by the criticism of the lack of Chinese intervention, which is illustrative of the norms behind these constructs as well as their evolution over time.
Table 5: Combinations of Constructs in the American Corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct Combination</th>
<th>Number of Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China the Exploiter and China the Empire</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China the Exploiter and China the Rival</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China the Exploiter and China the Facilitator</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China the Facilitator and China the Empire</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China the Facilitator and China the Rival</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China the Empire and China the Rival</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 5 illustrates, there has been an overlap between the common constructs present in the American corpus. This has been characterised by the apparent overlap between the constructs of China the facilitator and China the reluctant empire, which is illustrative of the common criticism of China’s ‘no questions asked’ approach to foreign policy. It is this criticism which is suggestive of how the American corpus is unified into a single image of China’s activities in Sudan, in this case, how China’s approach facilitates authoritarian norms while being under pressure to adopt a more interventionist policy in light of the security challenges in the country.

4.41 China the Exploiter

One of the most prominent constructs in the American discourse on the case of China’s engagement with Sudan has been the perception of China as an exploitive power. This often depicts China exploiting the African states for its’ own development. This is reflective of the common depiction of China’s African policies being a largely economic venture with little beyond that (Economy and Levi, 2014, pg. 54). The presence of this construct has chiefly been utilised regarding China’s economic activities in Sudan. This has often been used to depict China’s activities in Sudan’s oil industry. Such a depiction is in line with the motif of the ‘voracious dragon’ outlined by Marton and Mantura (2012, pg. 157), which has been one of the common constructs in the Anglophone literature. An example of this can be found in the 2013 Investment Climate report on Sudan which suggests that the:
“Chinese government and the state-owned China National Petroleum Corporation have come under severe international criticism for their involvement in the Sudanese petroleum sector (2013 Investment Climate Report-Sudan).”

The construct is present in the report’s assertion that China has come under ‘severe international criticism’ for its involvement in Sudan. This also appears to reflect the common image of China’s willingness to conduct business in states deemed too unstable or unpalatable for other nations and firms (Mahmoud, 2010, pg. 186). In addition, this criticism overlaps with the construct of China as a facilitator in Sudan since China’s involvement here comes at the price of tacit political support for Khartoum (Large, 2009, pg. 615). The accusations here reflect both the construct of China as an exploitive power as well as the common image of Chinese policy as being little more than a mercenary venture. This overlap is continued with the depiction of Chinese access to Sudanese oil as the motivation behind Chinese support for Khartoum, with access to these resources being perceived as the core issue for Chinese interests in the country (Shinn, 2009, pg. 89). This suggests a degree of consistency between the literature and the discourse on China’s policies towards Sudan. Another aspect of the recurring issue of Chinese involvement in Sudan’s oil reserves is also present here with the perception being that China will exploit these resources for its own benefit. It is these interests that have unified the constructs present in this case study, which presents an image of Chinese policies in the country as being little more than the pursuit of Sudanese oil, which has often been characterised as being a ‘no questions asked approach’. Such an image has been a recurring theme in the established literature on China’s African policies, which further illustrates a degree of continuity between the literature and the established discourse.

The more exploitive aspects of China’s initiatives in Sudan, regarding both Chinese exploitation of Sudan’s resources and Chinese practices in the country is raised in an interview with Radio Free Africa, which asserts that:

Chinese company or an Indian or a Brazilian – any company that does business in Africa I hope adheres to the highest standards of how workers are treated, how the environment is protected, how the benefits from the investments are not just going to the elites in countries but more broadly spread across the population. (Interview with Baruani Muhuza of Radio Free Africa)
While many of the references to China as an exploitive power have primarily been utilised to depict China’s exploitation of Sudanese oil, the interview focuses on the exploitive practices of these initiatives rather than simply focusing on the exploitation of Sudanese resources. This overlaps with the construct of China as a facilitator, with Chinese initiatives facilitating the rise of exploitive practices and conditions as well as authoritarian political norms (Halper, 2010, pg. 241). The norms that underpin this section of the corpus are also alluded to in the reference to standards, with Chinese practices seemingly contradicting these values. This depiction is expressive of both the spread of Chinese practices and the reaction to them, which is illustrative of China’s wider challenge, as expressed through the construct of China as a role model in the Chinese corpus.

A reference to the more normative considerations behind the American constructs of China in Africa can be found in the references to ‘standards’ throughout the American corpus in this case study. An example of this can be found in the from a State Department briefing that:

“African nations should hold China to the same kinds of standards that they hold American, British, German, American European, and Japanese companies to when they come in to the marketplace.”
(Background Briefing En Route Dar es Salaam)

As with the statement referring to ‘Olympic standards’ regarding the construct of China as a facilitator of political authoritarianism and human rights abuses, the reference to standards here is present in the form of the call for standards to be applied to Chinese activities in Sudan. Here, the construct of China as an exploiter is a result of how Chinese policies do not adhere to the standards outlined in the interview, which has been reflected in the common depictions of China’s African policies (Patey, 2007, pg. 999). This is suggestive of the norms behind the creation of the American constructs and the implication that Chinese policy towards Sudan is a contradiction of these norms. Such a reference is also in keeping with Foucault’s (1979, pg. 83) depiction of the role of norms in distinguishing the ‘normal’ from the ‘abnormal’, which is related to his depiction of the relationship between power and the creation of knowledge, which in this case is expressed through this construct of China’s African policies. The construct of China as an exploitive power in this section of the corpus is a suggestion of both the causative and normative factors behind the creation of the American constructs of China in Africa.
The construct of China as an exploitive power in Sudan has been one of the dominant constructs in the official American discourse on Chinese engagement with Sudan. The presence of this construct serves to reinforce the traditional image of Chinese foreign policy and illustrates how the European imperial experience continues to influence the perceptions of China’s African policies in the American discourse. This has overlapped with the other constructs present in the American discourse which serve to unify its varying statements into a single narrative. This serves as a further reflection of how the competing constructs of China’s African policies serve as a codification of the power relations between China and the U.S.

4.42 China the Empire

Another prominent construct in the American discourse on China’s policies towards Sudan has been the construct of China as an imperial power in the African state. Such a depiction has also been one of the primary motifs in the established Anglophone literature and assumes that Chinese policy is either in the mould of the European empires or is under pressure to take a more interventionist stance in the African continent. The presence of this construct within the American discourse is indicative of several elements present within the American narrative and serves to symbolise the continuity and change within the American perceptions of Chinese foreign policy and identity.

The presence of the construct of China as an empire is often linked to the construct of China as an exploitive power in Sudan, as with many of the cases of Chinese involvement in the continent. It is the connection between these two constructs that suggests a degree of linear progression within the American discourse on this subject since this again largely assumes that China is exploiting the African continent in the way that the European empires once did before it. This also comes in the form of China’s desire to protect its interests in the continent, as shown by the claim that China has sent a force to Sudan ‘to protect its’ oil interest’ in a report on the humanitarian situation in South Sudan. The construct of China as an empire reflects the continued presence of the imperial legacy as well as highlighting the consistency within the American discourse.

This construct largely assumes that China is under increasing pressure to adopt a more interventionist stance in unstable states as the security challenges present there begin to threaten Chinese interests in the country. This has also been part of the established Anglophone
literature on China’s African policies where it has often been utilised to criticise the ‘no questions asked’ approach favoured by Chinese foreign policy makers for much of the post-Cold War era (Brautigan, pg. 24). This can be seen in a briefing on the situation in South Sudan from the embassy website, which claims that

“Chinese, along with the Russians, have joined us recently in a demarche to say that we all think that there should be some UN presence in the North as well as the South (Humanitarian Situation in South Sudan)”

This claim alludes to the threats posed to Chinese interests by the security challenges within Sudan by referring to the ‘threats and security challenges’ in Sudan. Such a claim is also reflective of the image of China as a facilitator in that both constructs have been critical of the hands-off approach favoured by China in the African states. The report is illustrative of the logic and assumptions underpinning this image of Chinese foreign policy, in this case, the assumption that China will seek to protect its interests militarily as they come under threat (Rupiya and Southall, 2010, pg. 181). It is this image that unifies the constructs into a single image as well as demonstrating how the context of the case study influences the form that the constructs take. The depiction of China’s support for a further UN presence in Sudan is reflective of the construct of China as a reluctant empire with increasing pressure upon China to take a more interventionist approach towards Sudan which has come in the form of the security threats emanating from the conflict and instability in the country compelling China to abandon its laissez faire approach (Carmody, 2010 pg. 27). This has been discussed in the State Department (pg. 5) document Humanitarian Situation in South Sudan, where China is described as sending a special envoy to ‘protect its oil interest’ in the country. Such a perception would perceive this support as a confirmation that China is gradually moving towards further involvement in line with the assumptions made regarding Chinese policy in the Anglophone literature. This claim is reflective of the pressures upon China to become a more interventionist power which is an illustration of the construct of China as a reluctant empire.

In the case of Sudan, it is the perception of China as an imperial power which suggests that the American discourse does not always depict Chinese foreign policy as a purely economic venture as the established perceptions of it often have done. This comes in the form of the common criticism over the lack of Chinese intervention in the African continent. While the American narrative has often criticised these policies as an example of Beijing’s
encouragement of political authoritarianism and bad governance, in the case of Sudan, this appears to call upon China to take a more proactive approach to the African continent. This is also in line with the accusations that China is a free rider in the international system, which has led to it being labelled as a ‘reluctant Great Power’ (Shin and Eisenman, 2012 pg. 179).

The image of China as a reluctant empire in the case of Sudan is further illustrated in an interview with the then US ambassador to Sudan, Princeton Lyman, who outlines the pressures on Chinese policy in his response to a question over China’s oil interests in Sudan

“As you know, both China and India have significant investments in the oil sector. And as a result, they both have an interest in a stable and peaceful relationship between the two countries because, as you know, much of the oil is in the south, the infrastructure to export it in the north. So, we have been in touch on many occasions with the Chinese, and then – and I’ve been in touch with the new Chinese envoy.” (Humanitarian Situation in South Sudan)

The question and the answer here also appear to reflect the recurring claim that China needs to protect its interests in Sudan. This is expressed through the ‘significant interests in the oil sector’ that China possesses in Sudan. The presence of this construct continues to overlap with the construct of China as an exploitive power as well as being one of the common characterisations of China’s African policies. As with the previous statement, this appears to further emphasise the pressure upon China to protect its interests in Sudan as they come under threat. It is these threats to Chinese interests in Sudan which underlines the construct of China as a reluctant empire in Africa as well as the wider accusation of China being a ‘free rider’ in international affairs (Alden, 2007, pg. 25). It is this depiction of China as a reluctant imperial power that continues to illustrate the logic behind this construct. This is due to the depictions of the pressures that the security threats present in Sudan pose to Chinese policies, which often leads to the claim that China will eventually have to intervene to protect its economic interests, as seen by the frequent claims of China sending forces to ‘protect its oil interests’ in a report on the Humanitarian Situation in South Sudan. This assumes that China will behave in a similar manner to the European powers before it, in that China will become a more interventionist power as its interests come under attack, a notion advocated by Shinn and Eisenmann (2012, pg. 179).
The recurring theme of China’s oil interests in Sudan has also played a role in influencing the form that this construct has taken in this case study, with these interests often being cited as the primary motivation for Chinese involvement in Sudan. This is alluded to in a briefing on the humanitarian situation in Sudan which claims that:

China has sent it (a special envoy) a few months ago to protect its oil interest. (Humanitarian Situation in South Sudan)

By referring to China’s oil interests, the briefing illustrates the form that the constructs present in this section of the corpus have taken as well as showing how these constructs are unified by the recurring theme of Chinese interests in Sudanese oil (Eisenman, 2012, pg. 798). This can be seen in the way that this construct overlaps with the image of China as an exploiter, which also emphasises these interests as being central to Chinese foreign policy. Alongside the criticism over the lack of Chinese intervention in the country, these constructs also overlap in their presentation of China’s African policies as being primarily an economic pursuit, with these policies appearing to be motivated by Chinese access to Sudanese oil with little beyond these policies. It is this aspect that presents the different constructs as a single image. Over the course of the American discourse in this case study, there have been numerous references to ‘Chinese interests in Sudan’. China’s interests in the country have been a notable feature of the American constructs of China in Africa, whether it be China’s exploitation of Sudan or Chinese political support for the Sudanese regime in exchange for furthering Beijing’s economic goals. The depiction of the pressures upon China are furthered by the claims that ‘China as sent a force to protect its oil interest in South Sudan’ during the country’s separation from Sudan. While a notion such as this has been common in the established literature on the subject, it appears to stand apart from this body of work by depicting increasing Chinese involvement in Sudan as a necessary process rather than a move towards Chinese neo-imperialism as some of the literature has often claimed it to be.

In relation to the established literature, the official American discourse appears to follow the wider perceptions of China’s African policies, most notably the image of the pressures on China’s African policies depicted by Shinn and Eisenman (2012, pg. 179). This can be seen in references to UN deployments to South Sudan which again are depicted as being related to a desire to protect Chinese interests in the country. The spread of the construct of China as a
reluctant empire is rooted in the assumption that China will follow the same logic as the European powers in the continent. There appears to be an assumption of linear progression between the imperial experience and present Chinese foreign policy in the same areas, which appears to be a result of an attempt to draw parallels between China’s African policies and those of the imperial powers of the nineteenth century.

The presence of China as a reluctant empire is illustrative of how the constructs of China in Africa are reflective of China’s wider power relations since this apparent reluctance has been utilised as an example of China’s role in the wider world, particularly in the charge that Beijing is a free rider in international affairs. Such an assumption is likely to gain further traction as Beijing seeks to play a more expanded role in the international system, particularly in the light the perceived absence of American leadership because of Trump’s election and his America First policies. This development can provide China with the onus to play this role, something that was initially reflected by this construct within the American narrative. The presence of this construct is illustrative of the influence of the experience of imperialism upon the American discourse in that its depiction of the pressures upon China to become a more interventionist power in the African states is reminiscent of the path from informal to formal imperialism taken by the European empires in the African continent.

4.43 China the Facilitator

Another notable construct in the American discourse on Chinese policy towards Sudan has been that of China as a facilitating power. This has often depicted Chinese foreign policy encouraging corruption and bad governance (Economy and Levi, 2014 pg. 70-1). This construct manifests itself in several different ways. The depiction of China as a facilitator has been both a causative reaction to China’s policies in Sudan and a more normative response to the apparent spread of the Chinese model of development as well as being one of the common critiques of China’s African policies, most notably the view that China enables the excesses of some of the continent’s worst regimes. This is further reinforced by the claim that:

“Sudan now receives most of its military equipment from China” (Country Profile: Sudan, US State Department, December 2008).
This report directly refers to the most common form of the construct of China as a facilitator in this case study. This comes in the form of China’s support to the Bashir regime in the form of arms sales, which is in keeping with the perception of China as a facilitator for some of Africa’s worst regimes (Naughton, 2009, pg. 445). Chinese arms sales have also been a theme in the Document Background Briefing on Sudan (2009, pg.4) where Chinese and Russian arms shipments to Sudan are discussed. While this appears to be a causative reaction to China’s support for Khartoum during the Darfur crisis, it shows that China is also the facilitator of authoritarian norms through this support, which serves as a contradiction of the norms behind the creation of the American constructs of China’s policy towards the African states as well as illustrating the norms that Chinese policy is appearing to promote. This suggests the more normative dimensions behind Chinese foreign policy.

Possibly the most dominant manifestation of this construct has been the depiction of China as a facilitator of human rights abuses in Sudan. Along with the established literature, this has largely come in the form of Chinese arms sales and military assistance to Sudan which has often been accused of encouraging human rights abuses, as shown by an interview with the American special envoy to Sudan, J. Scott Gration, which asks:

During your recent travels, you visited China. Would you say that was the key stop in your travels and that’s because you need commitments on military supplies from them or to stop the supply of military weapons to Sudan, and that they’re key to resolving both the conflict that could re-emerge in Abyei and also in Darfur? (J. Scott Gration on the Current Status of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and His Recent Travels, June 17, 2009)

This depicts the most common form of this construct in the case of Sudan, which is in the form of Chinese military aid to Khartoum, which furthers the image of Chinese foreign policy facilitating human rights abuses. This comes at the time of the Darfur crisis, where Chinese involvement with Khartoum came under greater scrutiny and criticism (Shinn, 2009, pg. 89). Such a depiction is in line with the perception of China as a promoter of authoritarian norms which is another construct that has been present in both the established literature and the discourse regarding Chinese policy in Africa. This also furthers the image of China as a supporter of some of the continent’s worst regimes alongside the apparent willingness of China to do business with states deemed too unpalatable for other nations and companies (Keenan, 2009, pg. 110). By providing this assistance, China appears to not only facilitate the excesses
of the more autocratic regimes in the African continent but also encourages the rise of political authoritarianism in the continent. It is this aspect that illustrates the wider implications of the depictions of China in Africa in that they codify the wider competition between democratic and authoritarian norms.

The construct of China as a facilitator is also illustrative of another aspect behind the American discourse which differs from the established literature on the subject. This largely comes in the form of the calls upon China to use its influence in Sudan to end the abuses that it has facilitated, as illustrated by the report, America Helping the People of Sudan, which asserts that

“The U.S. has also encouraged China to use its influence with Khartoum to work for a peaceful political settlement”. (America Helping the People of Sudan)

This call is in line with the common criticism of China’s largely non-interventionist policies, which has also been a common feature of the construct of China as a reluctant empire in Sudan. The American constructs of China in Africa appear to reflect the common criticisms of Chinese foreign policy, in this case, the laissez faire approach of Chinese engagement encourages the rise of political authoritarianism and human rights abuses (Plattner, 2015, pg. 160). Such an image is also reflective of how Chinese policies have often been perceived as tacit support for the established regimes in African states, which appears to further the image of China as a facilitator of these regimes’ excesses.

The construct of China as a facilitator has also been utilised to depict Chinese policy as a facilitator of political authoritarianism. This again also comes in the form of China’s tacit support for the Bashir regime which is largely in keeping with the perception of Chinese foreign policy as a facilitator of authoritarian regimes in the African continent as well as in the wider world, a notion illustrated by the US embassy’s newsletter from the 22nd July 2008, which asserts that China ‘voiced its support to Sudan’ as well as resisting ‘any attempts to arrest President Al-Bashir by exercising its right at the UN Peace and Security Council to veto the decision’. Such a perception is also utilised about China’s actions at the United Nations, where it has vetoed many possible resolutions aimed at Sudan. China’s facilitation of authoritarianism is the price that it pays for its quest of economic development in Sudan, which furthers the image of China as a facilitator for the Sudanese regime’s excesses.
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

The construct of China as a facilitator is also symbolic of the common perceptions of China’s Africa policies as shown by the claim that ‘China’s interests with the U.S. will not interfere with its support for Sudan’ as well as the claim from the State Department’s profile of the country of ‘Sudan now receives most of military equipment from China’. This is largely in the depiction of Chinese policy being little more than a mercenary venture with little to no consideration for the political implications behind these policies.

While many of the American constructs of China’s African policies have partially been a result of a causative reaction to China’s engagement with the African states, the construct of China as a facilitator of political authoritarianism is also illustrative of the more normative dimensions behind these constructs. This appears to be in line with the common assertion that Chinese policy ‘promotes political authoritarianism under the guise of economic development’ (Nathan and Scobell, 2012, pg. 320). Such a notion appears to reflect the darker aspects of the construct of China as a role model present in the Chinese discourse on the subject. This is suggestive of how the American and Chinese discourses interact via their differing constructs of China’s African policies in the form of China as a role model. This construct is also symbolic of the more normative considerations behind China’s African policies since this appears to be a reaction to the attempts by the Chinese constructs to spread Chinese norms beyond the context of their creation as well as how these norms contradict those of the American constructs on the same subject.

If the construct of China as an exploiter has often been utilised about China’s involvement with Sudan’s natural resources, the construct of China as a facilitator has equally been used about Chinese military aid to Sudan. Both perceptions of China’s policies towards Sudan serve to emphasise the common depiction of Chinese foreign policy in that it seeks to exploit Sudan’s natural resources to fuel China’s economic growth while facilitating the rise of authoritarian norms and human rights abuses in the African continent via Beijing’s tacit support for Khartoum to gain access to these resources.

On the other hand, the perception of China as a facilitator also appears to symbolise Chinese foreign policy to spread autocratic norms as well as highlighting the more normative power relations between China and the U.S. Alongside the construct of China as a role model in the Chinese discourse, both the American and Chinese discourse in this regard depict Chinese foreign policy as promoting Chinese norms alongside economic development as illustrated by the Beijing Consensus (Halper, 2010 pg. 76). In the case of the American discourse, this has been interpreted as the spread of political authoritarianism under the guise of economic growth,
with the latter serving to legitimise the former. This depiction illustrates how the discursive power relations between China and the U.S. are symbolic of the current contest between democratic and authoritarian norms.

4.44 China the Rival / Responsible stakeholder

The construct of China as a rival has not had as great a presence in the official discourse as it had in the literature. The apparent absence of this construct as well as the dominance of the other constructs is suggestive of several issues in the American constructs of China’s policies towards Sudan as well as for the wider perception of China’s image. Possibly the most obvious aspect about the absence of this construct is the contrast of its notable presence in the literature on China in Africa. This suggests a move away from the more popular images of China as a revisionist power that has been a notable construct in the more populist depictions of Chinese foreign policy. The absence of this construct is suggestive of the variations between the established discourse and the literature on China’s policies towards Sudan and the wider African continent.

Rather than depicting China as a rival or a challenge, as it has commonly been described in the established literature, the corpus instead portrays China as needing to become a ‘responsible stakeholder’. This is symbolised by Robert Zoellick’s 2006 speech, Whither China, which made a direct reference to this concept. It is this idea that has also been expressed through the wider criticism of China’s non-interventionist foreign policy throughout this chapter as well as being expressive of the assumptions behind this construct. In this case, it has been the perception that capitalism and democracy are inherently linked, a notion that has been challenged by the Chinese corpus (Halper, 2010, pg. 47). In addition, it is this depiction of China as a ‘responsible stakeholder’ that indicates one of the ways in which China’s African policies have been misread, which has been furthered by the constructs of China as a role model and the China Dream in the Chinese corpus, which presents China as following an alternative path which contradicts the established norms and assumptions. It is this aspect that is indicative of China’s wider challenge as well as the issues that rise from the misreading of Chinese foreign policy.
One of the possible reasons for this variation comes in the logic behind the official discourse as well as that behind the literature on China’s African policies. For the former, these policies have largely been couched in zero-sum terms, viewing China’s gains in the African continent as coming at the expense of the other external powers in Africa, a notion that has not had the same presence in the official discourse, which appears to emphasise the pressures on China to become more involved politically in the country (Eno and Eno, 2014, pg. 23). This suggests that the official discourse is based on a largely different set of assumptions to the literature which has manifested itself in this construct. The variation between the official corpus and the established literature is alluded to in a 2013 report regarding the investment climate in Sudan which claims that:

“China is indeed a reality and a presence, Kim, in Africa. I think that the Secretary was highlighting the desire of everyone to see China behave as a responsible trading partner and citizen as it deals with Africa, and that African nations should hold China to the same kinds of standards that they hold American, British, German, Western European, and Japanese companies to when they come in to the marketplace.” (Background Briefing En Route, Dar Es Salaam)

While this claim appears to acknowledge China’s growing role in Sudan, it does not necessarily label China as a rival, which is indicative of the variation within this section of the corpus during the previous administration compared to the current administration which has directly labelled China as a revisionist power. Instead, it calls for China to behave as a ‘responsible trading partner and citizen’, which echoes the call for China to be a responsible stakeholder as outlined in Zoellick’s speech. This is also illustrative of both the assumptions that underpin the image and the approach to China during this period, which assumed that China’s capitalist development would lead it on a more liberal path (Halper, 2010, pg. 47). As with the construct of China as a reluctant empire, this serves to further unify the image presented by this section of the corpus as well as the assumptions behind this image, most notably the idea that capitalism and democracy are interconnected, a notion that has been challenged by the Chinese constructs.

The absence of the construct of China as a rival also appears to raise the issue of the nature of the China threat itself, most notably whether the popular idea of it exists at all. This is because many depictions of the potential threats that China poses are largely focused on
China’s hard power assets, such as its military modernisation and build up, which has led to the common image of China as a revisionist power, recently epitomised by the rise of the Thucydides Trap, which has seen a direct labelling of China as a ‘revisionist power’ in recent years (Allison, 2016, pg. 113). In this case, the absence of this construct in the official American discourse is illustrative of the underlying flaws in the perception of the China threat as well as the nature of Chinese power in Africa and the wider world, which emphasises soft power more than hard power, with the former serving as the way in which the Chinese constructs as well as the Chinese system is spread beyond the context of its origin. It appears that the absence of this construct is symbolic of the flaws in the American perceptions of the China threat as well as suggesting the nature of Chinese power in the continent.

As Table 6 illustrates, the American corpus regarding China’s African policies has been dominated by four main constructs. These have chiefly been reflected in the language utilised throughout the corpus, which has indicated both a degree of continuity with the established literature on China in Africa as well as some variations. The nature of these depictions have been subjected to change as a result of changes in administrations and events within Sudan.
### Table 6: The American Constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China the Reluctant Empire</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>China is under pressure to become a more interventionist power in Sudan as its interests come under attack. This appears to follow the path established by the American powers in the African continent.</td>
<td>Chinese leaders, along with the Russians, have joined us recently in a demarche to say that we all think that there should be some UN presence in the North as well as the South (背景下情，目前南苏丹) China has sent it a few months ago to protect its interest. (人道主义情况，目前南苏丹)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China the Explorer</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>China exploits Sudan’s oil reserves to fund its own economic growth largely at the expense of Sudan. Depicts the Sino-Sudanese relationship as a largely unequal one of domination.</td>
<td>Chinese government and the state-owned China National Petroleum Corporation have come under severe international criticism for their involvement in the Sudanese petroleum sector. (2013 Investment Climate Statement Sudan) African nations should hold China to the same kind of standards that they hold American, British, German, African, European, and Japanese companies when they come in to the marketplace. (background briefing en route Dar es Salaam, Tanzania) Chinese companies or an Indian or a Brazilian company that does business in Africa should adhere to the highest standards of how workers are treated, how the environment is protected, how the benefits from the investments are not just going to the elite in countries but more broadly spread across the population. (Interview with Banharn Muller of Radio Free Africa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China the Facilitator</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>China promotes political authoritarianism as well as corruption and bad governance. Comes largely in the form of China’s assistance to the Bashir regime as well as the ‘no questions asked’ approach of Chinese foreign policy.</td>
<td>China has promoted political authoritarianism as well as corruption and bad governance. Comes largely in the form of China’s assistance to the Bashir regime as well as the ‘no questions asked’ approach of Chinese foreign policy. commitments on military supplies from them or to stop the supply of military weapons to Sudan (Special Envoy on CPA) Chinese say they’ve been shipping arms. Do you want to see an end to those arms shipments? (Background Briefing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China the Rival</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>China is a competitor and a threat to American interests in Sudan. Often perceived as a largely zero-sum concept.</td>
<td>China is indeed a reality and a presence, Khu, in Africa. (background briefing en route Dar es Salaam, Tanzania)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5 The Chinese Constructs of China’s Policies in Sudan

Figure 3: The Frequency of the Chinese Constructs’ Recurrence

Overall, the Chinese corpus consisted of 8 reports, 5 speeches and 24 press conferences. As Figure 3 illustrates, there have been four dominant constructs within the Chinese discourse on China’s engagement with Sudan. These have been the constructs of mutuality, China as a role model as well as China’s cultural soft power. While the construct of the China Dream has not had the same degree of presence as these three constructs despite being the third most commonly occurring construct, it is more noticeably apparent in the more recent statements within the Chinese discourse on China’s approach to Sudan. These dominant, largely interconnected constructs serve to unify these statements into a single, coherent narrative while symbolising the primary shifts in China’s foreign policy and global aspirations. This serves to underline the more normative dimensions of Chinese foreign policy alongside the established economic elements of it. In addition, the presence of these constructs is also expressive of the structures of experience that created them as well as spreading Chinese norms. Regarding the periods from which the Chinese corpus was taken, the shifts in governments have expressed themselves via the prevalence of certain constructs. This has been particularly notable in how the China Dream has been a feature of the texts after 2013, which indicates the influence of this construct upon Xi’s governance. In addition, the construct of cultural soft power appears to be more prevalent in the first period, since many of the texts that cover this often focus on the establishment of these initiatives, which can be traced to the Hu era.
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

The composition of the Chinese corpus has been chiefly dominated by press conferences given by embassy and foreign ministry spokespersons, which made up 24 of the texts within the Chinese corpus. These were comparatively brief in nature and covered China’s relations with Sudan rather than focusing on a single aspect or policy regarding these ties. The second largest type of text within the Chinese corpus were reports covering Chinese initiatives in Sudan as well as the activities of Chinese officials in the country. The smallest number of texts were speeches made by Chinese officials, which were longer in length than the reports and press conferences, which were often made in commemoration of the creation of China’s ties with Sudan or the founding of the PRC.

Figure 4: The Chinese Constructs over Time

As Figure 4 illustrates, there has been a shift in the constructs present in the Chinese discourse in the administrations of Hu and Xi. This can be seen in the absence of the China Dream prior to 2013 and the uptick of this construct after 2013. Such a development is reflective of the shifts in Chinese foreign policy towards the developing world under Xi’s administration and the Chinese perception of China’s global role, which has seen Beijing take on a more exceptionalist approach to its foreign relations. This underlines the influence of Liu’s concept on the Chinese discourse as Beijing seeks to pursue the path advocated by him. It is the uptick of this construct that also furthers the use of Sudan as an example of the more recent developments in China’s African policy.
While the construct of mutuality has continued to be one of the most prevalent Chinese constructs in this case study, it has experienced an uptick between the Hu and Xi eras. This also underlines how this case study has been an example of China’s more recent relations with the African states, with China and Sudan lacking the long-standing relationship and shared experiences present in cases such as Zimbabwe. As a result, it is this aspect that has influenced the form that this construct has taken, which will be discussed later in the chapter.

The construct of China as a role model has also seen an increase over time alongside the other Chinese constructs. This is interlinked with the concepts of mutuality and the China Dream. In the case of the former, this has been utilised to build support for Chinese initiatives through China’s experiences of economic development rather than the post-colonial struggles of the previous century. For the latter, this is suggestive of the path that this model can take, which moves away from the assumption of convergence with the Western world. It is this aspect that is illustrative of the normative dimensions of China’s African policies in that it challenges the dominant norms regarding development and capitalism, which suggests that the images of China’s policies are governed by two competing sets of norms.

Table 7: Construct Combinations in the Chinese Corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct Combination</th>
<th>Number of Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mutuality and Cultural Soft Power</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutuality and China Dream</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutuality and China the Role Model</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Soft Power and China Dream</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Soft Power and China the Role Model</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China Dream and China the Role Model</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 7 shows, there has been an overlap between the constructs present in the Chinese corpus regarding China’s activities in Sudan. The biggest overlap has been between the constructs of mutuality and China the role model. This is illustrative of the image that the Chinese corpus seeks to present to the wider world and the method by which it is spread. In addition, there has also been an overlap between the constructs of the China Dream and China the Role Model, which is suggestive of the changes in China’s stance in the Xi era.
4.51 The China Dream

The construct of the China Dream has been one of the most notable constructs in the Chinese discourse on China’s engagement with Sudan. This is largely since the degree of Chinese involvement with Sudan has been a recent development in Chinese foreign policy which is reflective of China’s growing confidence on the international stage as well as the increasingly exceptionalist stance taken by Beijing in recent years (Callahan, 2012, pg. 11). It was also expected that the presence of this construct in the Chinese narrative illustrates how Chinese foreign policy is more than the largely mercenary venture that the Anglophone literature has often portrayed it as. This suggests an evolution of Chinese foreign policy in recent years between the administrations of Hu and Xi. In keeping with the more recent developments in Chinese foreign policy, it is fitting that the notion of the China Dream has been one of the notable constructs in the Chinese discourse of China’s policies towards Sudan. This notion has become particularly notable in the years after 2012 with the increased advocacy of this concept by Xi’s premiership (Liu, 2015, pg. 16), which was further reinforced by the nineteenth Party Congress in 2017.

One of the notable manifestations of this construct has been the conflation of the China Dream with the aspirations of Sudan, as symbolised by the ideal of the ‘Sudanese Dream’. An example of this conflation can be seen in the claim of the Chinese ambassador, Luo Xiaoguang in a speech on the 64th anniversary of the founding of the PRC, that the Chinese Dream is ‘closely linked with the dreams of other peoples around the world’. This intended to depict China as a partner for Sudan rather than an exploiter of the country as claimed in the American discourse on this case study which is a response to the claims made about Chinese policies towards Sudan by the American narrative (Kim and Li, 2012, pg. 28).

It is also this conflation of the aims of China and Sudan that is indicative of how the Chinese discourse is symbolic of the stance of China’s foreign policy in recent years. This stance has taken a more aspirational bent as well as the increasingly exceptionalist viewpoint of it. Such a stance is in line with the Chinese discourse’s attempts to separate Chinese foreign policy in Sudan from those of the U.S. in the continent (Wang, pg. 524). While the American discourse attempts to draw parallels between Chinese foreign policy and the moves of the European
imperial powers, the Chinese narrative seeks to separate the two. This notion is also expected to gain further traction because of the stance of Chinese foreign policy taken by Xi.

In keeping with Xi’s vision, another purpose of this construct is to separate Chinese foreign policy from that of the United States. This can be seen in references to ‘Chinese characteristics’ and ‘Chinese solutions’. While the former statement predates the construct of the China Dream, particularly regarding the concept of ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’, it neither the less serves the same purpose of differentiating Chinese policy and its constructs from that of the American world (Lai, 2012, pg. 85). This again serves as an illustration of the wider image that the Chinese narrative seeks to promote via its constructs of China’s African policies.

The construct of the China Dream is illustrative of the image that China seeks to portray to the wider world. This has been particularly apparent in the references to the ‘great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation’ made by several Chinese officials such as Luo Xiaoguang and Li Lianhe, with the latter claiming that:

“Chinese people are looking forward to realizing the “two centenary goals”, We are full of confidence in realizing the “Chinese Dream” of the great renewal of the Chinese nation. (Speech at the Reception Celebrating the 66th Anniversary of the Founding of the People’s Republic of China by Ambassador Li Lianhe)

The statement fit into Liu Mingfu’s concept of the China Dream, which also advocated a similar process of rejuvenation. As well as making a direct reference to Liu’s (2015, pg. 338) concept by claiming that the China Dream is the ‘Great Renewal of the Chinese nation’, which is indicative of the evolution of the Chinese vision of China’s role. This has become increasingly pronounced in the more recent section of the Chinese corpus, which reflects one of the notable changes in the Chinese discourse in the Xi era. Such an image is illustrative of how China perceives its international role as the return to the status it once held prior to the nineteenth century, as shown by further references to the ‘great renewal’ of the Chinese nation, which has been one of the core tenets of the China Dream. Alongside the construct of China as a role model, the construct of the China Dream has furthered the perception that China possesses an alternative vision, which seeks to pursue a course different from that of the West. This reflects the shifts in China’s post-Mao identity (Yan, 2010, pg. 99). Liu’s concept is further referenced, in the allusion to the ‘great renewal of the Chinese nation’. In addition, it is this reference to a ‘great renewal’ that furthers another construct of China’s role, which is the idea of China’s return rather than the rise of China, which ties into the influence of concepts
from China’s imperial past upon the China Dream in its attempts to chart a uniquely ‘Chinese destiny’ for China (Zhu, 2013, pg. 1).

At the same time, the construct of the China Dream is also connected to the other constructs present in the Chinese discourse. This can be seen in Luo’s assertion that:

“In Sudan, the Sudanese people also have the "Sudanese Dream" of national peace, stability and development, and the Sino-Sudan friendly cooperation is the important bridge between the "Chinese Dream" and "Sudanese Dream ". In recent years, Sino-Sudan friendly cooperation relationship of all-dimension, multi-level and wide-range has been continuously moving forward, we further enhanced political mutual trust, deepened economic and trade cooperation, continued to expand cultural exchanges.” (Speech at the Reception of the 64th Anniversary of National Day)

The reference to a ‘Sudanese Dream’ in line with the construct of the Chinese Dream is also suggestive of the construct of Chinese policy in Sudan being of mutual benefit, which is evident in the reference to Sino-Sudanese cooperation being the ‘important bridge between the Chinese Dream and the Sudanese Dream’. By citing the idea of the ‘Sudanese Dream’ alongside the China Dream, the statement conflates China’s goals with those of Sudan, which illustrates an overlap with the construct of mutuality (Niu and Liu, 2016, pg. 273). This serves to unify the Chinese constructs into a single image as well as furthering China’s vision for the future of the African continent. In addition, the claim that the ‘dreams of both nations’ as being ‘mutual peace and stability’ is a continuation of the previous image of ‘China’s peaceful rise’ as well as the influence of the case study upon the form that the constructs take, with the idea of mutual peace being a reference to the conflict in the south of the country. This is expressive of China’s foreign policy stance as well as overlapping with the construct of mutual benefit, which indicates an overlap between these constructs (Zhao, 2011 pg. 67). The relationship between these two constructs is suggestive of how the images invoked by the Chinese discourse are unified to create a single coherent depiction of Chinese foreign policy. The overlap between the two constructs is also furthered by the depiction of the China Dream as being through economic development, which furthers the image of China as a role model as well as being a possible response to the common construct of the China threat, a notion that Beijing seeks to combat through the spread of Chinese constructs and norms.

Along with the utilisation of China’s experiences of economic development, the presence of the China Dream is also symbolic of the shifts in the structures of experience within the Chinese discourse as well as the changing Chinese perceptions of China’s identity. This again
is largely reflective of China’s desire to return to its previous identity as a role model for other states to follow, which has been a consistent construct throughout the various incarnations of the Chinese discourse, something that is furthered by Luo’s claim that China ‘sets a good example for the worldwide bilateral relation’.

In keeping with the Chinese constructs as a reflection of the developments in Chinese foreign policy, the China Dream also serves as an expression of the aspirations that China is currently pursuing. This has been reflected in the frequent references to rejuvenation within the Chinese discourse as well as how the very concept of the China Dream itself, which promotes the idea of a separate ‘Chinese’ destiny. Such a notion ties into the depiction of ‘Chinese exceptionalism’ from Callahan’s *Sino Speak* which is also suggestive of a move away from the initial aim of convergence with the American world. The presence of the construct of the China Dream in the case of Sudan is illustrative of several factors within the Chinese narrative as well as symbolising several wider issues within China’s foreign policy and identity. This serves as part of the construct of China’s identity and foreign policy that China seeks to promote as well as an attempt to separate Chinese policy from that of the U.S. This is also symbolic of the changes in Chinese foreign policy and identity, in this case, the rise of an increasingly aspirational and exceptionalist foreign policy under Xi’s leadership.

4.52 China the Role Model

One of the most prevalent constructs in the Chinese discourse on China’s policies towards Sudan has been the construct of China as a role model for Sudan’s development. While the presence of this construct indicates continuity between the official narrative and the established academic literature on this subject, there is a degree of variation between the two regarding the manifestations of this construct. The presence of this construct is indicative of several factors within the Chinese discourse as well as symbolising the changes in Chinese foreign policy and identity. It is this idea of China as a role model that serves as one of the ways in which the Chinese system seeks to replicate itself via the constructs of China in Africa and reflects the Chinese system itself.

The presence of this construct has largely been utilised regarding the Chinese model of economic development. This depicted China as an example for Sudan to follow for its own economic development, which has been one of the most consistent constructs in the Chinese
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

discourse as reflected by the statements regarding China’s development by Luo. Throughout the official Chinese discourse on China’s policies towards Sudan, there have been numerous references to the potential for China’s model of economic development to serve as a paradigm for Sudan to follow (Kim and Li, 2012, pg. 23). This has been particularly notable in references to ‘joint contributions to development’ by Hong as well as report taken from the Chinese embassy covering a meeting between the charge d’affaires of the Chinese embassy and the Sudanese minister for tourism that claims Sudan can:

“Study and use for reference the good experience and good practice of Chinese tourism to constantly enhance the Sudanese tourism”. (Charge d’affaires of the Chinese Embassy Met with the Sudanese Minister of Tourism)

This statement alludes to China being a role model for Sudan to follow by referring to China as a reference for ‘good experience and good practice’. This reflects the image that China seeks to promote as well as being how China perceives its role in the African continent and in the wider world (French, 2017, pg. 263). By invoking China’s past experiences, the document attempts to portray China as an example for Sudan to follow. This is part of the Chinese discourse’s attempts to legitimise Chinese initiatives in the country by invoking China’s past experiences, which has often been overlooked by the established literature, and has been one of the key aspects of China’s normative foreign policy. While the construct of China as a role model seeks to promote the Chinese image of China, it also serves as an example of how the Chinese constructs respond to their American counterparts, in this instance, the claim that China will enhance Sudan rather than exploit it. It is this depiction of China as a reference point that is illustrative of how the Chinese constructs as well as the Chinese system itself is spread which serves to further reflect the more normative elements of Chinese foreign policy since this construct promotes Chinese experiences and norms through the Chinese model.

The presence of this construct is also intended to present a more benevolent image of Chinese policy in Sudan, in response to the common American depictions of Chinese initiatives as facilitating exploitation and authoritarian norms. It is this response that suggests a discursive conflict between the systems promoted by the American and Chinese discourses. The role model provided by China serves to promote Chinese norms as much as it promotes the Chinese model of economic development. This can be seen in the ambassador, Luo Xiaoguang’s speech on the anniversary of the founding of the PRC, which claims that that China ‘provides relevant resources to achieve well-being for the Sudanese people’. Such an image appears to be a
response to the common construct of China’s African policies being largely exploitive in nature (Southall, 2010, pg. 13). The image of China as a role model serves to promote the Chinese constructs of China in Africa in competition with their more established American counterparts. These notions are also furthered by the claim that:

“China is committed to helping other countries, developing countries, with their development while achieving development of its own. The development of China will bring opportunities to other countries, other than challenges and threats.” (Speech at the Reception of the 64th Anniversary of National Day of the People’s Republic of China by Ambassador Luo Xiaoguang)

This illustrates the overlap between the constructs of China as a role model and that of mutual benefit as well as the developments within Chinese foreign policy. Such a notion is evident in the claim that China is ‘helping other developing countries’ while ‘achieving development of its own’. This is a possible response to the common construct of China’s African policies being largely unequal and exploitive as well as promoting the Chinese constructs of China’s foreign policy. Such a notion is furthered by the claim that China’s development ‘will bring opportunities for other countries, other than challenges and threats’. The depiction of ‘challenges and threats’ are a possible reference to the claims made about China’s African policies by the American constructs, particularly those of China as an exploiter and a facilitator of authoritarian rule (Zeng and Williamson, 2007, pg. 91). There is an overlap between the construct of China as a role model and that of mutuality in the claim that China helps other states with their economic development, which serves to promote the image of these policies as being mutually beneficial. This has also seen the utilisation of China’s experiences of development as an example for other states to follow, which illustrates the variation between this case study and the longer standing examples of China’s African policies, such as the case of Zimbabwe, which have invoked the experiences of the anti-colonial struggles in the continent alongside China’s development. It is this assistance for development that furthers the construct of China as a role model which is in keeping with the image that China seeks to project to the wider world which serves to further the notion of the Chinese constructs as being reflective of the normative dimensions behind Chinese foreign policy.
The image of China as a paradigm for the developing world is furthered by The Right to Development, which claims that the Chinese model:

Integrates the principle of universal application of human rights with the country’s reality (The Right to Development)

This document also furthers the image of China as a role model by stressing the adaptability of the Chinese model, which is one of the reasons for the appeal of this model to developing nations. In addition, the role of norms can be seen in the reference to rights, which is expressive of how the Chinese model promotes Chinese norms just as much as it promotes China’s experiences of development. It is this aspect that is reflective of the wider implications of China’s normative foreign policy, which has played a notable role in the attempts to legitimise Chinese initiatives in the African states (Li, 2016, pg. 152).

The Chinese role model has not been expressed in purely economic terms. Regarding China’s pursuit of cultural soft power, the official Chinese discourse makes many references to the initiatives of the Confucius Institute in Sudan, in keeping with the utilisation of China’s traditional culture and language to win African hearts and minds. The cultural dimensions of the Chinese role model are indicative of the changes in Chinese foreign policy since the end of the Cold War alongside the changes of the objectives that China seeks to achieve (Hughes, 2008, pg. 2). This has been expressed by the opening of a Confucius Institute at the University of Khartoum, which provides ‘culture lectures and Chinese calligraphy training’ alongside Chinese language classes (Confucius Institute at the University of Khartoum). The more cultural dimensions of this are an expression of the influence of China’s past upon the creation of the Chinese narrative, with these notions appearing to be reminiscent of the utilisation of China’s culture as a source of authority (Wang, 2011, pg. 23). By promoting Chinese culture, these initiatives promote Chinese norms and experiences as well as the Chinese economic model.

Regarding the construct of mutuality, the image of China as a role model for other states to follow can also be a part of China’s attempt to build stronger ties with Sudan. This is chiefly due to the lack of a long-standing mutual experience between China and Sudan, as opposed to the anti-colonial struggles that forged the ties between China and Zimbabwe. As a result, the
Chinese discourse has drawn upon its experiences of economic development to further China’s ties with Sudan as well as to gain support for Chinese policies in the country.

The dominance of China as a role model in the Chinese discourse is part of an attempt to portray Chinese policies as being more than simply a money-making venture as the American narrative often depicts it as. This is illustrated in the depiction of Chinese policy serving as a paradigm for Sudan to follow rather than simply exploiting Sudan for its own benefit. Such a view can be interpreted as a response to the claim made in the American discourse that the ties between China and Sudan are largely unequal in nature and that China is an exploitive power in Sudan which has been expressed in works such as Patey’s (2007, pg. 999) *State Rules*. It is this response, highlighted by the claims of Chinese officials such as Lu Kang that such accusations are largely hypocritical, that highlights the discursive power relations between the American and Chinese narratives on China in Africa as well as illustrating the structures of experience that influence the creation of the Chinese discourse on China in Africa.

Regarding these experiences, it is the presence of the ideal of China as a role model in the Chinese discourse on China in Sudan that illustrates the shift in the experiences within the Chinese narrative. While this construct in the case of Zimbabwe has largely overlapped with the more ideological role model that China had once provided alongside the anti-colonial struggle, the case of Sudan is more in keeping with China’s traditional role as a paradigm for other states to follow (Dessin, 2014, pg. 65). It is the developmental role model that China provides which is the primary manifestation of this construct. At the same time, the utilisation of China’s traditional culture in the case of Chinese policy in Sudan is somewhat indicative of the legacy of China’s previous role as a cultural role model, which is in keeping with the culturalist shift in the Chinese perceptions of China’s role and identity, which has often been played up by the claim that “Chinese culture and Chinese people have carried on for thousands of years of development” made by the then ambassador Lin Lin at a Confucius Institute Day. The presence of this construct is also indicative of how the Chinese discourse symbolises the changes in China’s identity as well as the shifts in Chinese foreign policy in the years after the end of the Cold War.

The shifts in Chinese foreign policy reflected in the construct of China as a role model are reflected in the Chinese Foreign Ministry’s Spokesperson, Hua Chunying’s, claims at a press conference in March 2015 that
“China will continue to work with the international community, strengthen cooperation, promote exchanges of experience, and make its due contribution to further increase the level of development of all peoples of the world and build a community with shared future for mankind.” (Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying’s Regular Press Conference, March 2015)

The allusion to the international community here is indicative of the source’s potential audience as well as that for the Chinese constructs, which is reflective of the image to whom the Chinese constructs seek to project. China’s experiences of economic development are referenced here in the claim that the two parties will ‘exchange experiences’, which furthers the image of China as a paradigm for Sudan’s development. In addition, it is the reference to a ‘shared future’ that is indicative of the vision that the Chinese discourse seeks to promote to the African states, which has been part of China’s attempts to win over the African states (Foquet, 2019). This is furthered by the allusion to ‘shared prosperity’ which is reflective of Ho’s (2008) depiction of China’s vision as ‘Neo-Confucian state capitalism’, which overlaps with the construct of mutuality to present a more coherent image of China’s vision. The construct is reflected in the ‘due contribution’ that China will make for ‘all peoples of the world’, which suggests both the Chinese construct of China’s African policies and their potential audience.

The reference to a ‘shared future’ appears to reflect the more aspirational bent of Chinese foreign policy in recent years as well as furthering the constructs of China’s image. Such a depiction is in keeping with China’s more recent attempts to portray itself as the vanguard of globalisation, presenting a greater opportunity to spread the Chinese system of norms as well as the Chinese constructs of China’s identity to a wider audience. These changes can also be seen in Luo’s claims that China has ‘actively pushed forward to build a more responsible and fairer global governance system’. Such a notion appears to reflect China’s aspiration to change the current system of global governance, which it often perceives as being dominated by the Western powers and the United States. This is also illustrative of the more recent stance in Chinese foreign policy in the light of the adoption of the China Dream as well as being somewhat reminiscent of Zhao Tingyang’s (2006, pg. 33) ‘moral international order’. The idea of China as a role model alongside this development is reflective of the more normative aspects of China’s African policies as well as the more aspirational bent it has taken under Xi’s premiership and its wider aspirations.
As stated earlier, Chinese foreign and developmental policies have often been viewed as promoting Chinese values and norms under the guise of economic development. While much of the established literature has examined the aspect of economic development entailed in these policies, it is the more normative dimension of it that is illustrative of the changes in China’s perception of its role and identity as well as presenting the image that it seeks to promote to the wider world. The construct of China as a role model for Sudan to follow thus serves as one of the dominant images in the Chinese discourse on China in Africa as well as being an illustration of the means to spread the Chinese constructs beyond their original context.

4.53 Mutuality

Possibly the most frequently recurring construct in the Chinese discourse on China’s policies towards Sudan has been the construct of mutuality. There have also been a few variations in the presence of this construct between the established literature and the official Chinese discourse on this subject. This refers to the benefits that Chinese foreign policy can bring for Sudan and the shared experiences of the two countries, although the latter features less prominently due to the comparatively recent nature of these ties (Alden and Hughes, 2009, pg. 569). This reflects the image of China as an equal partner to Sudan, an image that the Chinese narrative seeks to promote in competition with the American construct of China’s African policies as being largely exploitive and based on a largely unequal Sino-Sudanese relationship.

In line with the dominant construct of China as a role model, the purpose of the construct of mutuality is to create an image of Chinese foreign policy towards Sudan. This is intended to create a more positive image of Chinese engagement with Sudan in a bid to counter the perceptions of Chinese foreign policy created by the American discourse on this subject (Wang, 2008, pg. 257). Throughout the Chinese discourse on the case of Sudan, there have been numerous references to “mutually beneficial cooperation”, such as the claims made about China’s policies in the country by Chinese spokespeople such as Hong Lei and the Chinese ambassador to Sudan, Li Lianhe, with the former claiming that:
“China has long been providing assistance to Africa in good faith as its capacity allows. We will continue to strengthen cooperation with Africa to draw the world’s greater attention and help to Africa.” (Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei’s Regular Press Conference on June 3, 2013)

This quote presents the image of China’s African policies that the Chinese narrative seeks to promote, most notably the idea that these policies are largely benevolent in nature and that China seeks to develop the African states rather than exploit them as the American constructs depict it as doing. The construct of mutuality in this statement comes in the claim that China ‘provides assistance in good faith’, which reflects the form of this construct emphasising the mutual benefits of Chinese initiatives rather than mutual experiences. This underlines the comparatively recent nature of China’s involvement in Sudan. The depiction of these policies as a partnership is also raised here by the references to cooperation, which furthers the image of China as an equal partner to the African states (Zhao, 2010, pg. 434). The dimensions of Chinese foreign policy are also raised by this quote with the claim that the cooperation between China and Sudan will ‘draw the world’s greater attention and help to Africa’. While this appears to fit with the Chinese construct of mutual benefit, it is also suggestive of the apparent disinterest in the African continent at the end of the Cold War, which left a vacuum that China was able to fill (Kim and Li, 2013, pg. 41). It is this aspect that illustrates how China was able to gain a foothold in the African states, which underlines the methodology of China’s African policies. China could exploit to further cement its ties with the African states. The construct of mutuality is expressive of the image that China seeks to promote and the developments in Chinese foreign policy.

Such a move can be seen in the attempts by the Chinese discourse to present Chinese initiatives in Sudan as being mutually beneficial for both China and Sudan, as outlined by the frequent reference to ‘friendly and mutual beneficial cooperation’ used by the Chinese narrative to describe Sino-Sudanese ties, an example of this being the common claim that China is a ‘an important cooperative partner’, which was used in a Chinese Foreign Ministry report on a Chinese delegation’s supervision of Sudanese elections. This is intended to counter the common assertion in the American discourse on this case study that Sino-Sudanese ties are largely unequal in nature and that they are primarily for China’s benefit rather than for Sudan’s, a claim that has often manifested itself in the construct of China as an exploiter (Mei-Ting Schwartz, 2018, pg. 12). The conflict between these two constructs can thus be an example of the wider discursive conflict between the American and Chinese discourses on China in
Africa, which are an example of how these narratives serve as two competing habituses for the control of the legitimate discourse.

In a similar vein, the construct of mutuality is often utilised regarding the cooperation between China and Sudan. As with the other elements of this construct, this is again intended to depict Sino-Sudanese ties as an equal partnership rather than China being a dominant partner over Sudan. This is again intended to serve to challenge the claims made in the American discourse on China in Africa. The concept of mutuality is utilised as the crux of the Chinese discourse’s response to the claims made about Chinese foreign policy by the American narrative. Such a notion also ties into the wider issue of China’s image and how the Chinese discourse seeks to challenge the image created by the American discourse on this subject. This can also be seen in Li Lianhe’s speech, which claims that:

“Chinese people and Sudanese brothers are greatly inspired by the establishment of strategic partnership between two countries. we are full of confidence in the future of bilateral friendly cooperative relations.” (Speech at the Reception Celebrating the 66th Anniversary of the Founding of the People’s Republic of China by Ambassador Li Lianhe)

While the description of China and Sudan as “brothers” appears to further the construct of Chinese engagement with Sudan as a mutually beneficial partnership, it also appears to echo the post-colonial solidarity between China and the developing word during the Mao era. This again serves to further the image of these ties as being mutually beneficial, which is a response to the claims made about Chinese policy by the American constructs as well as promoting the image of Chinese policy that Beijing perceives it as (Zhen and Zhang, 2012, pg. 23). In this case, it is the allusion to mutual benefit that is reflective of the competition between the differing constructs of China in Africa, which is also an illustration of the wider competition for the perceptions of China’s image in the wider world. In addition, such an image places a greater emphasis on consent rather than coercion, which is also indicative of the nature of the methodology behind Chinese foreign policy. It is this aspect that ties into the nature of power in Chinese foreign policy, most notably the role of cultural soft power in building African support for Chinese initiatives as well as the issue of the agency of the African states, which has been a prevalent theme in the African literature regarding these policies.

This construct has also been utilised for more case specific aspects on Chinese policy towards Sudan. This can be seen in the depictions of the Sudanese conflict, with the Chinese narrative portraying China as a possible mediator or balance for it as shown by the description
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

of Vice Foreign Minister, Zhang Ming’s meeting with the South Sudanese leadership being China’s commitment to ‘establish the transitional government at an early date and promote South Sudan for early restoration of peace and stability’. The possible motivation for the presence of this construct is the desire to present China as a responsible power, which can be interpreted as a response to the common criticisms over the lack of Chinese intervention in the African continent, most notably the claim that China is a ‘free rider’ in international affairs as well as the assertion that Chinese policy facilitates Sudan’s worst excesses (Naughton, 2010, pg. 445).

Another case specific aspect of the construct of mutuality here is China’s role in the Sudanese conflict at the time, or rather the potentially positive role it could play in it, which is cited by another foreign ministry spokesperson, Lu Kang, who claims that:

“This China will work with the international community including IGAD and continue to play a constructive role in advancing the peace process of South Sudan.” (Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang’s Regular Press Conference on July 11, 2016)

This claim reflects the case specific aspects of the construct of mutuality in Chinese policies towards Sudan, in this instance, the conflict in Sudan. By claiming that China will play a ‘constructive role’, the construct of China’s policies being of mutual benefit is present by depicting China as playing a role in the peace process. Lu continues to depict the Sino-Sudanese relationship as an equal partnership by emphasising the role of ‘mutual cooperation’. This further emphasises mutual benefit rather than mutual experiences, which illustrates both the image of Chinese policy that the corpus seeks to promote as well as the recent nature of Chinese engagement with Sudan when compared to the case of Zimbabwe. The reference to the international community is suggestive of the potential audience for the Chinese constructs, in this case, the wider world. This furthers the idea that the spread of the Chinese constructs is reflective of the wider issue of the constructs of China’s identity in that this constructive role is an example of the image that the Chinese constructs seek to promote (Zhang, 2016, pg. 11). This statement also serves as a potential response to the claims made by the American constructs, most notably the common image of China as a facilitator of human rights abuses and authoritarian norms as well as that of China being a reluctant Great Power or a ‘free rider’ in that China appears to be willing to play a greater and more positive role in Sudan.
Regarding the other constructs present in the Chinese discourse on China’s engagement with Sudan, the idea of mutuality has also been utilised to refer to the common experiences between China and Sudan. In this case study, the idea of mutual experiences has been comparatively recent in line with the increase of China’s involvement in the country in the mid 1990’s. This has seen the utilisation of China’s experiences of economic development in a bid to legitimise Chinese policies in Sudan as well as to further the image of China as a role model for Sudan to follow for its own economic development (Niu and Liu, 2016, pg. 277). It is this intended image that serves as an example of the continuity within the Chinese discourse to the perception of China as an example for other states to follow as well as illustrating the changes within the Chinese discourse on China in Africa.

The dominance of the construct of mutuality is indicative of several factors present in the Chinese discourse on China in Sudan. This is largely a part of the efforts by the Chinese narrative to depict China as an equal partner for Sudan, possibly in a bid to counter the claims made by the American discourse on the same subject (Wu, 2018, pg. 767). The utilisation of this concept has primarily been in the form of the benefits of Chinese policy for Sudan as well as the experiences between China and Sudan. These highlight the continuity and changes within the Chinese discourse with the case of Sudan serving as an example of the more recent policies pursued by China in Africa. It is the response of the Chinese discourse to the claims made by the American narrative that can be interpreted as an example of the conflict between the discourses on China in Africa, which symbolises the power relations between China and the United States. While this image serves as part of the response to the American constructs of China’s African policies, it is also symbolic of how China perceives its role in the African continent as well as the image that it seeks to project.

4.54 Cultural Soft Power

The presence of the construct of China’s cultural soft power initiatives has been a notable presence in the Chinese discourse on China’s policies towards Sudan. As with many of the constructs present in the Chinese narrative, this construct is symbolic of the changes that Chinese foreign policy has undergone as well as for the perceptions of China’s identity. As with the construct of China as a role model, the construct of cultural soft power has been one of the means to spread the Chinese constructs as well as being one of the constructs of the
Chinese discourse itself. The most notable manifestation of this construct can be seen in the depictions of Chinese cultural soft power initiatives in Sudan presented by the Chinese discourse. This chiefly comes in the form of the programmes initiated by the Confucius Institute, particularly in the promotion of Chinese language and culture, as illustrated by the culture exchanges between China and Sudan as well as the rise of classes in Chinese language and culture, which are described as:

“Overseas students from both sides were dispatched to study language and culture, which promoted the culture exchange between the two countries”. (Culture Exchanges between China and Sudan)

The study of language and culture alluded to here is suggestive of how the Chinese constructs of China’s identity are spread beyond their original context, which serves to further the notion of Chinese soft power initiatives being as much exercises in normative power as they are in soft power. The emphasis on Chinese culture is reflective of the more culturalist bent of China’s identity in the post-Mao era (Guang, 2012, pg. 497). The construct of cultural soft power here is illustrative of the Chinese constructs of China’s African policies as well as how they are spread. The statement is indicative of the methodology of Chinese foreign policy in the African states, which has emphasised soft rather than hard power. This is also illustrative of the appeal of China’s vision, with China becoming the most popular study destination for students from the Anglophone nations of Africa. It is this aspect that illustrates some of the initial gains made by China’s normative foreign policy in the African states, which has furthered Beijing’s attempts to build its influence in the developing world. In addition, it is through the mechanism of cultural soft power that the Chinese meaning of China is spread to a wider context, which illustrates China’s attempts to influence the foreign policies of other states.

While these initiatives have often been interpreted as merely a means to achieve China’s economic objectives in the African continent, it is illustrative of how the changes in the Chinese discourse are indicative of the shifts in Chinese foreign policy objectives since the end of the Cold War, which was to utilise soft power to achieve foreign policy objectives in the African continent. The concept of cultural soft power is also suggestive of the shifts in the constructs of China’s identity towards a more cultural perception and the more recent utilisation of China’s culture and imperial past as a source of national pride (Chan, 2008, pg. 146). It is the spread of this image that is symbolic of the spread of Chinese norms and the Chinese system
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

beyond their original context, further underlining the more normative dimensions behind Chinese foreign policy, which are depicted in *The Right to Development* as:

> “The Chinese government endeavours to restructure China's cultural system, free and develop cultural productivity, to create equal opportunity for all citizens to enjoy benefits of cultural development and to have access to cultural development opportunities and ensure realization of their right to cultural development.” (The Right to Development)

This statement alludes to China’s cultural diplomacy in the form of ‘cultural development’, which overlaps with the construct of China the role model. It is the depictions of the access to these opportunities for cultural development that are illustrative of how the Chinese system as well as its’ norms and constructs are spread beyond their original context. There is an overlap between the construct off cultural soft power and some of the other constructs present in the Chinese corpus which has been expressed through the reference to ‘cultural development’, which overlaps with the construct of mutuality. The reference to development is also suggestive of the construct of China as a role model, which has been a notable part of China’s soft power offensive as well as being part of China’s appeal to the developing world. It is the overlaps between these constructs that demonstrates how the Chinese constructs are unified into a single image that articulates China’s vision for the African states, which has played a notable role in furthering Chinese influence in the developing world.

This perception of China’s identity is also connected to the more dominant construct of China as a role model. Both constructs are symbolic of China’s perception of Chinese identity, which has largely seen a reversion to the more cultural identity from China’s imperial past (He, 2009, pg. 60). The parallels between these two constructs are symbolic of the shifts in China’s identity and foreign policy. It is the idea that China’s cultural soft power initiatives seek to spread Chinese norms that further underlines the normative considerations behind China’s African policies. This has been emphasised in the constructs detailed throughout the case study as well as being one of the aspects of Chinese foreign policy that the research sought to cover. China’s soft power initiatives are as much an exercise in normative power as they are in the concept of soft power defined by Nye (2012, pg. 151).

The presence of this construct is indicative of the structures of experience that influence the creation of the Chinese discourse. This has come in the form of the legacy of China’s experiences as an empire in East Asia, which can be seen in the utilisation of Chinese soft
power initiatives, which serve a role like how Chinese culture was once one of the cornerstones of imperial authority (Guang, 2009, pg. 488). This illustrates the continuity and change within the Chinese discourse as well as the views of China’s present identity. It is this depiction of China that highlights the role of China’s experiences as an imperial power in East Asia upon the Chinese discourse as well as illustrating the shifts in the experiences between the Maoist discourse of the past and the Chinese narrative of today.

In all, while the construct of cultural soft power may not have the same prevalence as the other dominant constructs in the Chinese discourse on Chinese policy towards Sudan, it is nevertheless an indication of several factors present within the Chinese narrative. The most significant of these is how the Chinese narrative is symbolic of the changes in Chinese foreign policy as well as those of the Chinese perceptions of China’s role and identity. It is these changes that suggest a move towards a more culturalist identity since the shift in Chinese foreign policy objectives in the closing days of the twentieth century.

As Table 8 shows, the Chinese corpus regarding China’s activities in Sudan has also been dominated by four primary constructs. These constructs have often overlapped to create a more unified image of China’s African policies, which has been chiefly expressed in the language utilised in the Chinese texts. The presence of these constructs has also been affected by the shifts in Chinese administrations, as illustrated by the presence of the China Dream during the Xi era, which reflects the shifts in Chinese foreign policy alongside the Chinese perceptions of China’s role and identity.
### Table 8: The Chinese Constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Mutuality          | 36        | The benefits that China policy can potentially bring to Sudan as well as the shared experiences between China and Sudan, particularly regarding economic development serves to portray China as an equal partner for Sudan.  
We will continue to strengthen cooperation with Africa in order to draw the world's greater attention and help to Africa (Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hong Lei's Regular Press Conference on June 3, 2013)  
The two sides agreed to carry through traditional friendship, consolidate political mutual trust, and promote practical cooperation (Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lu Kang's Regular Press Conference on July 11, 2016)  |                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| China the Role Model | 22        | How China's model of economic development can serve as an example for Sudan to follow. Also, an example of the spread of the Chinese system and constructs as well as the continuity within the Chinese discourse  
China integrates the principle of universal application of human rights with the country's reality (Full text: The Right to Development China Philosophy, Practice and Contribution)  
China is committed to helping other countries, developing countries in particular, with their development while achieving development of its own (Speech at the reception of the 94th Anniversary of National Day of the People's Republic of China by Ambassador Luo Xianggang) |                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Cultural Soft Power | 11        | The means utilised to spread the Chinese narratives beyond the context of their creation, as well as a reformer of the shifts in China's foreign policy and identity  
Overseas students from both sides were dispatched to study language and culture, which promoted the culture exchange between the two countries. (Cultural Exchanges between China and Sudan) |                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| China Dream        | 15        | One of the recurring constructs in the more recent Chinese discourse. Serves as an expansion of "Chinese exceptionalism".  
We are full of confidence in realizing the “Chinese Dream” of the great renewal of the Chinese nation. (Speech at the reception celebrating the 94th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China by Ambassador Li Lianhe)  
China is committed to achieving "Chinese dream" through peaceful development (Speech at the reception of the 94th Anniversary of National Day of the People's Republic of China by Ambassador Luo Xianggang) |                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
4.6 Summary

The American and Chinese discourses on China’s approach to Sudan create two different images of Chinese foreign policy. Both depictions were constituted by several primary, often interacting constructs which are derived from the respective sets of norms that govern the discourses and the literature on the subject. This has led to the creation of two conflicting images of China’s African policies, which has been as much a creation of the norms behind these images as they have been a causative reaction to Chinese activities. It is these conflicting images alongside the norms that influenced their creation that has underlined how they are reflective of two systems that seek to spread these norms to a wider context. These competing images also reflect the wider issue of the construction of China’s international identity, which has been notable in the construct of cultural soft power, which sought to spread the Chinese perception of this to challenge the established image of China (Jing et al, 2016, pg. 2). In the vein of Foucault, the knowledge regarding China’s activities in Sudan demonstrates the relationship between knowledge creation and political power via the competing images of these activities. While the dominant constructs have remained somewhat consistent with the initial expectations for this case study, there have been many notable variations between these expectations and the findings for this case study.

The image of Chinese policy towards Sudan created by the American discourse has been characterised by the depiction of China as a facilitator of authoritarian political norms in Sudan as well as being a reluctant imperial power. The former is both a causative reaction to China’s support for the Bashir regime as well as being a more normative one to the attempts by the Chinese constructs to spread themselves to a wider context, in this case, by promoting authoritarian norms (Power and Mohan, 2010, pg. 478). Such images have reflected the shift in administration from the assumption that China’s development would facilitate democratic norms to the perception that the Chinese developmental model is spreading authoritarian norms itself. This has been a deviation from the expected image of China as a rival for American interests in the African continent. Such an image is likely to be of further significance as China begins to enhance its military presence in the African continent. It is possible that the furthering of China’s presence in the continent may amplify the perception of China as a rival as it begins to be perceived as coming into conflict with the interests of the other external powers in the continent. This also shows how the experiences of the European powers in the continent has influenced the American discourse on China in Africa.
The Chinese discourse has depicted China as an example for Sudan to follow. This depiction has largely been tied with the mutual experiences of China’s economic development, which highlights the comparatively recent ties between China and Sudan. In addition, this emphasises the cultural dimensions of China’s identity, which has emerged with the shifts in Chinese foreign policy. This conflicts with the negative image of Chinese foreign policy created by the American narrative which also highlights the normative conflict between the two narratives over their depiction of China in Africa since this is again an attempt by the American and Chinese discourses to spread their systems and norms beyond the context of their creation. This also serves as the construct of China’s identity that the Chinese constructs seek to spread. The emphasis on this construct serves to illustrate how the Chinese constructs are reflective of the shifts in Chinese foreign policy, in this case, the adoption of cultural soft power initiatives to further Chinese foreign policy goals in Sudan. It is this emphasis on soft power that reflects the nature and methodology of Chinese foreign policy, something that has been subject to misinterpretation by the populist images of Chinese strategy, which have largely focused on China’s hard power capabilities (Eno and Eno, 2014, pg. 26).

The more normative dimensions of these images have also underlined aspects of Chinese foreign policy that have been largely overlooked in the established literature regarding China in Africa and have been symbolic of the wider issues of the research. This has chiefly come in the form of China as a role model, which illustrates the more normative challenges that China poses, most notably in the ability to achieve economic development without the adoption of democratic norms (Van de Walle, 2016, pg. 161). The invocation of this model, alongside China’s experiences of economic development, has been one of the sources of Chinese prestige as well as enabling Beijing to get a foothold in Sudan. This has also illustrated the nature of power in Chinese foreign policy through the construct of cultural soft power. This shows how soft power enjoys an equal if not greater emphasis to hard power in Chinese foreign policy. Such a notion has often been overlooked in the more established images of Chinese foreign policy, which have often emphasised China’s economic and hard power capabilities, which has led to a certain image of China, most notably the common image of the China threat.
CHAPTER 5: THE CASE OF ZIMBABWE

5. Introduction

To provide a more comprehensive picture of the American and Chinese discourses on China in Africa, a second case study was required. China’s policies towards Zimbabwe have also been a popular case study in the Anglophone literature on China in Africa, which fuels the perception of Zimbabwe as an example of the darker aspects of Chinese engagement. This has been utilised regarding China’s connections with the ZANU-PF regime as well as to the greater degree of Chinese involvement in the African state’s economy and development (Lowe, 2008, pg. 480). It is the degree and length of Chinese involvement in Zimbabwe that has rendered this case of interest in studying the knowledge on China in Africa. Chinese activities in Zimbabwe can be traced back to Chinese aid to Mugabe’s ZANU-PF during its war with the Smith government during the Rhodesian Emergency, several decades before the escalation of China’s involvement in Sudan (Alden and Hughes, 2009, pg. 569). Chinese engagement has also become increasingly central to Zimbabwe in the face of its isolation and increasingly antagonistic relations with the Western world rooted in the legacy of European imperialism in the country. It is due to these experiences that has made the case of Zimbabwe of interest here.

5.1 Background

As with much of the developing world, China’s relations with Zimbabwe were chiefly based on anti-colonialism and the spread of Maoist doctrine to the post-colonial sphere. This could be seen in Chinese assistance to the ZANU PF against the Ian Smith government during the Rhodesian conflict. As with much of China’s policy of this time, Chinese aid was ideological and military in nature, coming in the form of Chinese arms (Warral, 2010 pg. 142). As with many of the African states, Zimbabwe became particularly important for Chinese economic objectives in the post-Cold War era when the continent appeared to be ignored by
the United States and Russia. It is this fact that illustrates the constructs and themes covered throughout the research process. China’s involvement in Zimbabwe is perceived as an example of China as a facilitator of human rights abuses as well as highlighting the problematic nature of China’s non-interventionist approach towards Africa. In the case of the latter, this is often interpreted as tacit support for the established regime (Rupiya and Southall, 2010 pg. 174).

5.2 Research Process

As with the previous case study of China’s engagement with Sudan, the socio-linguistic discourse analysis framework will also be applied to this case study. This was again through the theoretical lens of Foucault’s archaeology of knowledge as well as Bourdieu’s habitus. This was to examine the constructs present in the official discourses on China in Africa as well as what their presence symbolises. As the previous chapter illustrated, the American and Chinese constructs on China’s policies in Sudan were symbolic of the attempts by the Chinese system to utilise the Chinese constructs to spread itself to a wider context as well as promoting an image of China’s African policies and of China itself in line with the research purposes. While the overall intention of the research framework is the same as it was in the previous chapter, it was also intended to utilise the case of Zimbabwe as a potential point of comparison with the previous case study. Any possible variations in this case study are expected to be due to the context of Zimbabwe, primarily the relative brevity of China’s relationship with the country. While the case of Sudan is reflective of the more recent developments in China’s African policies, the case of Zimbabwe is expected to be an example of the longer-term relations between China and the African states.

A similar corpus to the previous chapter was subjected to examination by the research framework. This examined American and Chinese governmental sources as well as the embassies of those nations in Zimbabwe. As with the research process in the previous case study, this came in the form of statements and interviews as well as the coverage of Chinese activities in Zimbabwe. The corpuses have several characteristics that distinguish them from each other and from the corpuses of the previous chapter. Unlike the case of Sudan, there has been a larger Chinese corpus covering China’s activities in Zimbabwe while the American corpus has been smaller than in the case of Sudan. The greater size of the Chinese corpus is
chiefly related to the brevity of China’s ties with Zimbabwe, which stem back to the 1970s as opposed to its more recent ties with Sudan. It is the comparative sizes of the two corpuses that suggests an initial variation between the two case studies as well as for the corpuses themselves.

In terms of the texts examined for this case study, many of the Chinese texts had a primarily elitist focus. This is due to its coverage being largely focused on the activities of Chinese ambassadors and officials in Zimbabwe, something that characterised much of the Chinese corpus alongside China’s activities in the country. This reflects the role of personal ties between the Chinese and African elites in furthering China’s objectives in the continent. This was of in the emphasis on ‘win-win cooperation’ and the depiction of China as an ‘all weather friend’, which reflects the construct of mutuality in the Chinese corpus.

In contrast, the American corpus was smaller in size, but its texts were of comparatively greater length than its Chinese counterparts. The primary focus of these texts was on the investment climate of Zimbabwe, with much of the corpus being dominated by annual updates on this subject. Another subject of these texts was the conditions within Zimbabwe, which was primarily characterised by reports on human trafficking within the country. It is this focus that initially suggested the constructs present in the American corpus on China’s activities in Zimbabwe, in this case, the possible presence of the constructs of China as a facilitator of bad governance in the country and of China as an exploitive power.

5.2.1 Expectations from the Literature

As with the case of Sudan, I had several expectations for the manifestation of the American and Chinese constructs of China in Africa in the case of Zimbabwe. The constructs from the American and Chinese literature on China in Africa will be applied to the case of Zimbabwe to explore their potential presence and what they symbolise. In keeping with the expectations from the previous chapter, it is expected that the shifts in administrations will interact with each other regarding the depictions of China’s activities in the country alongside the developments within Zimbabwe.

Regarding the American discourse, the construct of China as a facilitator was expected to be present in the case of Zimbabwe as it was for Sudan. This is also expected to come in the form of Chinese support for authoritarian regimes, in this case, China’s support for Zimbabwe’s authoritarian government. It was expected that the construct of China as a facilitator will be in
keeping with both the literature and the case of Sudan since they both emphasised China’s assistance for the excesses of autocratic regimes in Africa, which can be interpreted as the facilitation of authoritarian norms. The construct of China as an exploitive power was also expected to be present as well. This is expected to emphasise the unequal nature of China’s ties with the African states and the image that China exploits the African states for its own development. It is also expected that there will be a degree of variation between the form that this construct will take here and the one it took in Sudan, since Zimbabwe lacks the natural resources of Sudan. Alongside these constructs, the construct of China the empire is also expected to be in the case of China’s policies towards Zimbabwe. While the construct of China as an empire is expected to be present, it is expected to vary from that of China as a reluctant empire (Klare and Vohan, 2006, pg. 305). Regarding the construct of China the rival, it is less certain that this construct will be present in this case study, due to its somewhat minimal presence in the previous case study, where it had been expected to play a greater role. At the same time, there is potential for this construct to be present should China’s support be interpreted as an example of Chinese assistance to regimes hostile to American interests in the African continent.

The Chinese constructs are expected to have a similar presence in the case of Zimbabwe as they had in the previous case study. It was expected that the construct of mutuality will be present, which is expected to refer to both the benefits of Chinese initiatives as well as the shared experiences of China and Zimbabwe. Due to the long-standing ties between China and Zimbabwe, the concept of mutuality was expected to refer to the shared experiences of the two countries rather than to the benefits of Chinese policies (Zhao, 2011, pg. 63). The construct of China as a role model was also expected to be one of the main Chinese constructs in the case of Zimbabwe as well. Since the construct of the China Dream served as one of the core aspects of the Chinese perception of China’s role and foreign policy, it is also expected that this construct will be present in the case of Zimbabwe. This is expected to be in line with Liu’s concept of the China Dream as well as its presence in the previous case study. As with the construct of China as a role model, the construct of cultural soft power is also expected to be present in the Chinese discourse in this case study both as a construct and as the means to spread the Chinese constructs beyond their original context.
5.3 Results

There have been several dominant constructs in both the American and Chinese corpus regarding China’s policies towards Zimbabwe. The presence of these constructs indicates of a degree of consistency as well as variation between the previous case study and the literature on China in Africa. The presence of these constructs was indicative of the wider issues that the knowledge on China’s African policies are symbolic of.

5.4 The Chinese Discourse

In this case study, the Chinese corpus has had a greater number of texts in the form of 48 reports and 20 speeches. From my analysis of the Chinese corpus on China’s policies and relations with Zimbabwe, several themes have been present throughout the official Chinese narrative. While this appears to be in line with the themes anticipated throughout this paper, there is a degree of variation between them. What has been different in this case study as opposed to the previous chapter is the coverage of these constructs as well as the way in which they appear. This can initially be attributed to the variations of this case study, most notably the longer ties between China and Zimbabwe, which has resulted in a greater number of texts to examine than in the case of Sudan.

Figure 5: The Frequency of the Chinese Constructs
As Figure 5 illustrates, the most frequently occurring construct has been that of mutuality. This fits with the expectations for this case study, since the longer length of China’s ties are expected to involve a frequent invocation of the shared experiences between China and Zimbabwe. The construct of China as a role model has been the second most frequently recurring construct, which is suggestive of the image of China’s role that the Chinese constructs seek to promote and how they are spread. The construct of cultural soft power has also been a notable construct since many of China’s initiatives in the African states have been characterised by soft power initiatives while the China Dream has been subject to less coverage than it received in the previous chapter. In addition, there has been a degree of continuity regarding the texts from both periods with mutuality being the most frequently recurring construct in both periods. Possibly the greatest variation has been the greater presence of the China Dream in the second period, which reflects the shifts in Chinese policy in the Xi era.

The Chinese corpus on China’s engagement has taken a largely similar form to that of the previous chapter albeit with several variations. Most of the Chinese corpus was made up of reports regarding Chinese initiatives and the activities of Chinese officials in the country. This was also complemented by speeches and interviews made by Chinese officials regarding China’s ties with Zimbabwe, which retained the broad focus that characterised them in the previous chapter. These were also chiefly raised in the commemoration of China’s ties with Zimbabwe, which fits into the long-standing relationship between China and Zimbabwe and the shared experiences between them. Unlike the case of Sudan, texts regarding press conferences were largely absent which is one of the primary variations between the Chinese corpus in the case of Zimbabwe and that of Sudan. The coverage of the Chinese corpus has also varied based on the types of text present within the corpus.
Figure 6: The Chinese constructs over time

As Figure 6 shows, the presence of the constructs within the Chinese corpus has varied between the administrations of Hu and Xi. The most notable shift can be seen in the uptick of the China Dream, which coincides with a similar increase in the presence of China as a role model for Zimbabwe to follow. This is illustrative of the changes in Chinese foreign policy discourse under Xi as well as the changes in China’s wider vision, seeking a uniquely ‘Chinese’ future as advocated by Liu. It is this overlap that is suggestive of one of the wider implications of the constructs depicting China’s African policies, in this case, the rise of ‘Chinese exceptionalism’ as detailed by Callahan in Sino Speak, as expressed through the proliferation of the China Dream as well as China’s wider challenge to the dominant norms regarding capitalism and development. This is also demonstrative of Beijing’s increased efforts to present China as an alternative system as well as the norms and shifts behind Chinese foreign policy.

It is the consistent presence of the construct of mutuality that furthers the case of Zimbabwe as an example of the continuity within China’s African policies. While the image of mutual benefits and ‘win-win’ cooperation has been part of the image that the Chinese discourse seeks to promote to a wider context, it also illustrates how China has utilised shared experiences to build support for its initiatives in the developing world, which has been a significant factor in furthering Chinese influence in the continent.
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

Table 9: The Combination of the Constructs in the Chinese Corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct Combination</th>
<th>Number of Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mutuality and Cultural Soft Power</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutuality and China Dream</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutuality and China the Role Model</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Soft Power and China Dream</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Soft Power and China the Role Model</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China Dream and China the Role Model</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 9 shows, the Chinese corpus regarding China’s activities in Zimbabwe have also seen an overlap between the dominant constructs. The overlap between the constructs of mutuality and China the role model has been one of the most common combinations in this case study as it had been in the previous chapter, which illustrates the continuity between the Chinese corpus alongside the image that the Chinese constructs seek to promote. In addition, the overlap between mutuality and cultural soft power has been equally notable, which serves to further underline the more normative dimensions behind Chinese foreign policy.

5.41 Mutuality

The most commonly recurring Chinese construct in the case of Zimbabwe has been that of mutuality. In line with the previous case as well as to the established Chinese literature on China in Africa from which this construct was derived, the construct of mutuality serves as a depiction of the benefits of Chinese foreign policy as well as being a reference to the shared experiences of China and Zimbabwe, both of which serve to further the image of Chinese foreign policy that Beijing seeks to promote (Melber, 2009, pg. 111). The presence of this construct is suggestive of several elements within the Chinese discourse as well as how the Chinese constructs are representative of an attempt to spread the Chinese system as well as an image of Chinese policy.
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

The motivation for the prevalence of this theme stems from China’s desire to depict the Sino-Zimbabwean relationship as one between two equal states rather than a stronger nation dominating a weaker one. This is often utilised as one of China’s responses to the claim that China exploits Africa in that China is an equal partner to Zimbabwe rather than its exploiter (Chen, 2011 pg. 603). It is also this approach that illustrates a degree of variation between the American and Chinese approaches to Africa. The idea behind the theme of mutuality is to illustrate an equal partnership rather than one of domination and exploitation, an idea that carries the connotations of the imperial experience in Africa (Scott, 2012, pg. 42). An example of the presence of this construct can be found in a report covering a reception at the Chinese embassy commemorating the 57th anniversary of the founding of the PRC. This construct is alluded to in several ways here:

“China's progress is intimately linked to the world. It requires peaceful international environment and friendly cooperation with the rest of the world. Within China, we will focus our attention on national development and building a harmonious society; outside China, we will work with other countries to build a harmonious world. China's development will not pose any threat to any one; on the contrary, it will only bring opportunities to others.”. (Address at the Reception of the 57th Anniversary of the Founding of the People’s Republic of China)

The primary reference to the concept of mutuality here comes in the claim that China’s development ‘will only bring opportunities’ and ‘will not pose any threat to any one’. This is a reference to the theme of mutual benefit as well as being a response to the common fears regarding China’s African policies, with the reference to the perceived threats of China’s development being an allusion to the American constructs of China in Africa (Lui, 2012, pg. 85). The mutual benefits of Chinese policy are furthered by the description of China as a ‘staunch force for world peace and common prosperity’. In addition, the reference to a ‘harmonious society’ is suggestive of the Chinese perceptions of China’s identity and the shifts it has undergone, with these claims illustrating the revival of the Confucian doctrine in the post-Cold War era, which also reflects the promotion of ‘Asian values’ by Chinese policy (Callahan, 2013, pg. 26). The statement alludes to the long-standing ties between China and the African states by referring to ‘struggles over the past 50 years’, which reflects the duration of these ties and the shared experiences of the two countries. These experiences are also described as being similar in the claim that China and Zimbabwe ‘share similar historical experiences.’ It is these experiences that influence the form that the construct of mutuality takes in this case study rather
than alluding to the shared benefits of Chinese initiatives which has been a recurring theme in the previous chapter. In addition, it is the utilisation of these experiences that illustrates the ways in which the Chinese discourse attempts to gain greater legitimacy for Chinese initiatives in the country, which has been one of the notable aspects of China’s normative foreign policy.

The Chinese discourse on China’s policies in Zimbabwe made frequent references to ‘mutually beneficial cooperation’ as illustrated by the then ambassador, Lin Lin’s allusion to ‘China-Africa cooperation’ throughout a speech at the Fourth FOCAC Legal Forum. This serves to illustrate the potential benefits that Chinese initiatives have for Zimbabwe as well as depicting Sino-Zimbabwean ties as being a cooperative partnership (Taylor and Xiao, 2009, pg. 720). By emphasising the benefits of China’s African policies, the construct of mutuality serves to further the Chinese perception of China’s identity which is also the image that China seeks to promote to the wider world.

Possibly the greatest variation of the manifestation of this construct between the case of Zimbabwe and Sudan has been the fact that this concept has been used as much to refer to the shared experiences of China and Zimbabwe as it was for the benefits of Chinese policy. This is due to the longer roots of China’s engagement with Zimbabwe, which date back to China’s assistance to ZANU-PF during the Rhodesian Bush War. These experiences have frequently been referred to in the Chinese sources, as shown by Lin Lin’s citing of the ‘traditional friendship’ between China and Zimbabwe as well as a claim made by a report on the fiftieth anniversary of China’s African ties that China and Zimbabwe ‘share similar experiences’ (Zhang, 2013, pg. 43). An example of these references can be seen in a report from the Chinese embassy commemorating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of China’s ties with the African nations, which claims that:

“China and Africa, sharing similar historical experience, have all along sympathized with and supported each other in the struggle for national liberation and forged a profound friendship. Over the past half a century, China and Africa have enjoyed close political ties and frequent exchange of high-level visits and people-to-people contacts. China has provided assistance to the best of its ability to African countries, while African countries have also rendered strong support to China on many occasions” (Africa China Usher in 50th Anniversary of Sincere Cooperation)

In this speech, the construct of mutuality is utilised to refer to the shared experiences of China and Zimbabwe, as shown by the claim that China and Africa share ‘similar historical experiences’ and have ‘supported each other in the struggle for national liberation’. This is an
illustration of the roots of China’s African policies and is being suggestive of the image that the Chinese constructs seek to promote. The reference to these experiences are also illustrative of the initial success of China’s cementing of its ties with the African states as well as the continuity with the Mao era, since the experiences of the post-colonial world played a notable role in furthering China’s post-Cold War ties with the African nations alongside the apparent disinterest shown towards the continent by the other major external actors of the time (Melber, 2009, pg. 111). The presence of the construct of mutuality here is expressive of the roots and the developments within China’s African policies as well as the image that the Chinese constructs seek to promote. This reflects the methodology of Chinese foreign policy since these experiences played a notable role in cementing China’s relations with Zimbabwe and the African states in the post-Cold War era, something that enabled a degree of success for China’s initiatives in the continent alongside the lack of an imperial ‘baggage’ that hobbled many of the European nations in the continent (Brautigan, 2009, pg. 37).

The construct of mutuality as well as the response to the established images of China’s African policies is raised by a report titled ‘All Weather Friendship’, which claims that:

It is plain for everyone to see that China-Zimbabwe cooperation is equal footed and mutually beneficial (All Weather Friendship between China and Zimbabwe Beats the Slander)

As with the previous case study, the concept of mutuality is presented by the statement’s depiction of Sino-Zimbabwean ties as an equal partnership. This is further alluded to in the statement’s emphasis on ‘shared prosperity’, a notion that echoes Ho’s depiction of the Chinese model as ‘Neo-Confucian state capitalism’, which also emphasises this characteristic. It is this image that is expressive of China’s vision for its role in Africa as well as being the image that the Chinese constructs seek to spread to a wider context.

The legacy of the shared experiences between China and Zimbabwe are indicative of the continuities between the various incarnations of the Chinese discourse on China in Africa. This can be seen in how these experiences were also utilised by the Maoist discourse of the Three Worlds era (Shambaugh, 2012, pg. 83). Both the Maoist and modern Chinese discourses utilise the mutual experience of European imperialism regarding Chinese policy towards Zimbabwe although they have been utilised for somewhat different purposes regarding Chinese foreign policy although these are unified by the aim to gain greater support and legitimacy for Chinese
foreign policy in the continent, which is alluded to further in one of the Chinese responses to the American constructs which claims that:

“China and Zimbabwe are good friends, good partners and good brothers who have stood together through thick and thin. Our traditional friendship goes way back to the days of Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle in the 1960s, when China provided moral and material support, training about 15,000 freedom fighters and 240 military officers for Zimbabwe. Since the independence of Zimbabwe, we have witnessed steady and smooth growth of China-Zimbabwe relations with fruitful achievements in practical cooperation across the board. President Robert Gabriel Mugabe and President Xi Jinping exchanged visits in such a short period of time which highlights the special importance of China-Zimbabwe relationship.” (All-Weather Friendship between China and Zimbabwe Beats the Slander)

This continues the theme of the shared experiences of China and Zimbabwe, illustrated by the reference to China’s ‘traditional friendship’ going back to the ‘days of Zimbabwe’s liberation struggle in the 1960s’. The allusions to China’s provision of ‘moral and material support’ to ZANU-PF also serves as a reference to the roots of Chinese engagement with Zimbabwe and how these ties were furthered (Zhang, 2014, pg. 7). The construct of mutuality in this sample of the Chinese corpus is used to refer to the shared experiences of China and Zimbabwe and the image of China’s African policies that the Chinese constructs seek to spread to counter the image created by the American constructs of this subject.

It is this idea of shared experiences that indicates the variations between the two case studies of Chinese engagement in Africa. Due to the relative longevity of Chinese policy towards Zimbabwe, the common experiences between China and Zimbabwe, the imperial legacy has often been utilised in this case study as opposed to the experiences of China’s economic development that has been dominant in the case of Sudan (Pang, 2009, pg.126). The experiences of China’s development have also gained a notable presence in the discourse on Chinese engagement with Zimbabwe, providing an economic paradigm to follow where it had once been an ideological example for Zimbabwe to follow. This also suggests a degree of overlap between the cases of Sudan and Zimbabwe as well as the variations between the two case studies.

As with the case of Sudan, the shared experiences between China and Zimbabwe have also been used to refer to China’s economic development as well as the struggles of the post-colonial era. This can be seen in the claim that China and Zimbabwe ‘belong in the developing world’ made by a document titled China’s Foreign and Defence Policy taken from the Chinese corpus on the subject. This echoes the depiction of Chinese foreign policy from the ‘Three
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

Worlds Theory’ that once advocated Chinese leadership of the post-colonial sphere during the Cold War era (Chen, 1979, pg. 15). It is suggestive of an overlap with the construct of China as a role model, since the experience of China’s development has often been utilised as an example for the African nations to follow as well as furthering the image of Chinese policy that Beijing seeks to promote. This overlap serves to unify the Chinese constructs into a single coherent image.

The dominance of the construct of mutuality is reflective of several elements within the Chinese discourse on China’s relations with Zimbabwe. This has been utilised to refer to the benefits that Chinese foreign policy can bring to Zimbabwe as well as the shared experiences between China and Zimbabwe as well as the developments within Chinese foreign policy. These experiences have been of importance in this case study, since this has illustrated how the Chinese discourse utilised them to legitimise Chinese initiatives in the country. The theme of mutuality in the official Chinese discourse serves to unify several differing themes in the Chinese discourse as well as providing a response to the claims made in the American discourse on Chinese policy towards Zimbabwe. While this construct has been expressive of China’s wider vision just as it had been in the previous chapter, it is indicative of how China’s post-colonial experiences have been a notable tool in Chinese foreign policy. These experiences have played a notable part in China’s cultivation of its relationships with the African elites, which challenges the common assumption that these ties are created by the bribing of corrupt elites by Beijing to buy influence. In addition, it has also been indicative of the earlier, more ideological incarnation of Chinese engagement with the African states, which has been deployed to further China’s Post-Cold War objectives.

5.42 China as a Role Model

The construct of China as a role model for the African states to follow was also present in the Chinese discourse on China’s policy towards Zimbabwe. This has often been utilised to illustrate the cooperation between China and Zimbabwe as well as the sharing of mutual experiences between the two. The most obvious example of this theme in the Chinese discourse is how the Chinese model of economic development can serve as a role model for Zimbabwe to follow for its own development. This is in line with the wider perception of China’s identity as an example for other states to follow, something that was present in both.
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

the imperial and communist perceptions of China (Horner, 2012, pg. 21). The presence of this construct appears to be in line with the common theme of the Beijing Consensus covered in the American and Chinese literature on the subject, although there is a divergence between the two over the benefits of this depiction.

This construct is an illustration of the Chinese perception of China’s policies towards the African continent as well as being the means to spread these constructs beyond their original context. Unlike the case of Sudan, the construct of China as a role model is also indicative of a degree of continuity within China’s African policies in that the Chinese ideological model was also promoted in Zimbabwe during the Rhodesian conflict (Lanterigue, 2009 pg. 133). The presence of the construct of China as a role model in this case study is illustrative of both the recent developments and the continuity within China’s African policies as well as being both the image that the Chinese discourse seeks to promote and the means to spread it. This can again be seen in the address commemorating the 57th anniversary of the founding of the PRC:

“China's development will not pose any threat to any one; on the contrary, it will only bring opportunities to others. China is and will always be a staunch force for world peace and common prosperity” (Address at the Reception of the 57th Anniversary of the Founding of the People’s Republic of China)

As with the construct of mutuality, the speech for the reception of the 57th anniversary of the founding of the PRC is another source for the Chinese constructs, in this case, the image of China as a role model. This chiefly comes in the form of the Chinese economic model, which can be seen in the references to the opportunities that China’s development can bring to the African states as well as to ‘common prosperity’ (Ho, 2008). The presence of this construct here serves as both the image of China’s African policies that the Chinese constructs seek to promote and how this image is spread to a wider context. The construct of China as a role model in this statement overlaps with the construct of mutuality by claiming that ‘China’s progress is linked to the world’s’. Alongside the allusion to shared prosperity, this is expressive of China’s wider vision through the Chinese model of economic development as well as furthering the depiction of China’s ties with Zimbabwe as an equal partnership.

Unlike the Anglophone literature on the subject, which often depicts this as an example of Beijing’s spread of authoritarian norms, the Chinese discourse often depicts this as being a more benevolent example. This is often combined with China’s own experiences of
development, which is often utilised as an example for Zimbabwe to follow to achieve its own economic development. This is also indicative of how the Chinese discourse often presents China as an alternative to the established American model, which has often been perceived as having failed to achieve development for the developing world (Alves, 2008, pg. 72). The idea of China as a role model is alluded to in the report, *China’s Economic Miracle*, which claims that:

“He noted that China would strive to maintain and improve its economic prosperity since the rest of the world now depends on China for its own development. “If China is stable, the world is also stable,” he said, adding that any negative socio-economic developments in China would have a huge impact across the whole world.” (China’s Economic Miracle)

The construct of China as a role model here is initially alluded to in the title of this part of the corpus, *China’s Economic Miracle*. The presence of this construct is also furthered by the claim that ‘the world now depends on China for its own development’. While this serves as another example of the image of China as a paradigm for other states to follow, the perceived centrality of China to global economic growth is also another aspect of the Chinese perception of China’s role in the African states and the wider world (Zhao, 2011, pg. 67). This image is furthered by the claim that any developments in China ‘would have a huge impact across the whole world’, which furthers the image of China’s growing role in the wider world. This is illustrative of how China perceives its wider role beyond the African continent in line with the shifts in Chinese foreign policy (Yan, 2010, pg. 99). This serves as part of the wider phenomena that the Chinese constructs are symbolic of. China’s experiences of economic development are utilised as an example for Zimbabwe to follow for its’ own development in this statement, which furthers the presentation of China as a role model for economic development. These experiences have played a notable role in furthering the appeal of China’s vision of development to the African states as well as serving as part of the attempts to legitimise Chinese projects in the African states (Zhao, 2011, pg. 67). It is these experiences that have played a notable role in furthering Chinese objectives, which has often been overlooked by the established literature.

As illustrated throughout the previous chapters, it is this apparent alternative posed by China that poses the crux of the Chinese discourse as well as the challenge that China poses to the established norms. As opposed to the American perception of this challenge, which often highlights the more authoritarian norms and practices that China is accused of promoting, the
Chinese perspective presents this as a mutually beneficial proposition. This often refers to China utilising the experiences of its past development to assist Zimbabwean development (Lagadec, 2012, pg. 163). The primary aim of this is to further present China as an alternative model of development for Zimbabwe to follow and to differentiate China from the other external actors in Africa. The Chinese discourse is utilising the theme of China as a role model to differentiate Chinese policies from those followed by the Western powers in the continent.

Alongside the construct of mutuality, the depiction of China as a role model in Zimbabwe has also come in the form of the shared experiences between China and Zimbabwe. This manifestation can be attributed to the comparative length of China’s policies towards Zimbabwe, which are alluded to in a report on the ambassador, Lin Lin’s, visit to the China-Africa symposium published on the Chinese embassy’s website, which claims that:

“With the funding from China, Zimbabwe is now able to utilize its abundant resources to recover the economy and improve people's livelihood. As the former ambassador to China, Mr. Mutsvangwa said that Africa can learn a lot from the experience of rapid development of China in the past three decades.” (Ambassador Lin Lin Attends China-Africa Symposium)

In this report from the Chinese embassy’s website, the construct of China as a role model is present in the depiction of China’s assistance to Zimbabwe which is referred to as ‘recovering the economy and improving people’s livelihoods’. The construct of China as a role model is also alluded to in the ‘experiences of rapid development of China in the past three decades’ and how the African states can learn from it. This illustrates how the Chinese discourse utilises China’s experiences of economic development as a mean to further legitimise Chinese projects in the country, which underlines how China has utilised its past experiences as a foreign policy tool (Lagadec, 2012, pg. 163). The appeal of the Chinese model can also be seen here with the Zimbabwean elites citing China’s example, which is indicative of the appeal of the Chinese vision with the African elites citing this vision just as much as the Chinese corpus has done. It is this aspect that illustrates how the normative mechanisms of Chinese foreign policy in the African states has been instrumental in furthering Chinese objectives as well as underlining the wider challenge that China poses through its’ paradigm of development. While this serves as an example of the Chinese perception of China’s role in the African states, it is also illustrative of how this perception is spread, which is symbolic of the attempts to spread the Chinese system as well as Chinese norms to a wider context (Shambaugh, 2015, pg. 103).
It is also the frequent references to the shared experiences throughout the Chinese perspective that also underlines how the construct of China as a role model promotes the Chinese constructs as well as the Chinese system itself, which reflects the more normative considerations behind Chinese foreign policy. This can be seen to the allusion to China’s three decades of development to justify China’s policies in the country, which serves as an example for Zimbabwe to follow (Kurlantzick, 2007, pg. 97). By using these experiences to promote the Chinese model, the construct of China as a role model promotes Chinese norms and experiences, seeking to replicate the Chinese system under the guise of the shared experiences and economic development. This underlines the use of shared experiences by China to further its foreign policy goals, continuing to illustrate how the Chinese constructs are reflective of the methodology behind Chinese strategies.

The recurring presence of the construct of China as a role model is indicative of the Chinese constructs of China’s role and identity as well as how the Chinese system is spread. While this has been in line with its manifestation in the case of Sudan, the most notable variation in this case has been the role of experiences in promoting this construct of China’s African policies, which is suggestive of how the Chinese system is replicated beyond its original context as well as the role of the long-standing ties between China and Zimbabwe in the Chinese discourse as well as in Chinese foreign policy itself. The utilisation of these experiences reflects the processes behind the creation of the Chinese constructs of China in Africa as well as being part of the way these are spread, furthering the idea of the Chinese constructs as a self-replicating system in line with Bourdieu’s habitus. As with the previous chapter, this construct has unified the corpus into presenting a vision of China as an alternative paradigm for the development of the African nations. Unlike the previous case, the presence of this construct in the case of Zimbabwe has also been demonstrative of the continuity and change within China’s African policies, with the ideological paradigm of the Mao era giving way to the Chinese model of economic development.

5.43 The China Dream

A more recent development in the Chinese perspective on China’s engagement with Zimbabwe as well as for the Chinese discourse is the emergence of the theme of the China Dream. This theme has been particularly prevalent in the perceptions of China’s future, which
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

suggests a shift to what Callahan (2012, pg. 9) terms as ‘Chinese exceptionalism’. In keeping with the theme of mutuality, this is intended to build a common linkage between China and Zimbabwe, a theme that has long since been present in the Chinese discourse. This furthers the depiction of China as an equal partner for Zimbabwe rather than being its exploiter. As with the previous case of Sudan, the presence of this construct in the Chinese perspective on China’s engagement with Zimbabwe is an expression of the image that the Chinese constructs seek to promote to a wider context as well as being illustrative of several elements within these constructs and in the methodology of Chinese foreign policy.

The China Dream serves as part of the image of Chinese policy and of China itself that the Chinese constructs seek to promote. The presence of this construct in the case of Zimbabwe is also in line with the concept of it defined by Liu Mingfu (2015, pg. 10). This concept is referred to in the report, China’s Foreign and Defence Policy, from the Foreign Ministry’s website, which refers to ‘rejuvenating the Chinese Dream’, which appears to be similar with both its presence in the previous case study and Liu’s definition of it. This is furthered by a report on a speech made at the 64th Anniversary of the founding of the PRC published on the Chinese embassy’s website, which asserts that the China Dream involves ‘seeking national growth and promoting mutual economic development’. The presence of this construct in a similar form to that of the previous case study is symbolic of the influence of Liu’s concept upon the Chinese constructs which is reflective of the recent developments in the Chinese perceptions of China’s identity.

As with its presence in the case of Sudan, the China Dream in this case study is also indicative of the more aspirational bent of Chinese foreign policy in recent years. This has come in the form of how China is the master of its own destiny and that the nation is now on a “new starting point in history”. Such claims appear to be in line with the rise of Chinese exceptionalism, which has been furthered under Xi’s leadership (Voci and Hui, 2018 pg. 5). This again serves to illustrate how the Chinese discourse serves as a reflection of the developments within Chinese foreign policy as well as China’s identity. The nature of this construct is elaborated on in an interview with Tian Xuejun for the Wall Street Journal, where a definition of this construct is given:

“The Chinese Dream is a concept proposed by the new Chinese leadership. What are the contents of the Chinese Dream? To be simple, it is for the prosperity of the country, the rejuvenation of the nation and the happiness of the people. The Chinese Dream is an open dream; it's a dream for win-win cooperation. Against the background of globalization, the Chinese people need the understanding and support of the international community to realize the Chinese dream. We cannot...
realize the dream without exchanges and cooperation with the rest of the world, including Africa.”

(H.E. Ambassador Tian Xuejun Interviewed by the Wall Street Journal)

In this interview, Tian Xuejun’s description of the China Dream is in keeping with Liu’s concept of it as well as its presence in the previous case study as shown by the numerous references to the ‘rejuvenation of the nation’. The ambassador further references Liu’s concept by describing the China Dream as being ‘the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation’. This is indicative of the influence of Liu’s work upon the present state of the Chinese foreign policy discourse, which has expressed China’s vision of its global role. While the presence of this construct is suggestive of the image that the Chinese constructs seek to promote, it is also illustrative of the wider implications that this construct symbolises in its references to globalisation (Yan, 2011, pg. 88). The spread of this construct is reflected in the claim that China ‘needs the understanding and support of the international community to realise the Chinese Dream’. This is reflective of the more normative dimension of Chinese foreign policy since it is the ‘international community’ that the Chinese constructs seek to promote their image of Chinese policy to. The references to globalisation here have become particularly notable in recent years in the light of the Chinese vision of this concept, which can potentially provide the Chinese constructs with a greater opportunity to spread themselves to a wider context (Zhao, 2010, pg. 33). In addition, the interview also indicates another overlap between the constructs present in the Chinese corpus with the reference to ‘win-win cooperation’ overlapping with the construct of mutuality. This illustrates how the Chinese constructs are unified in expressing the Chinese image of China’s African policies as well as China’s wider vision.

It is also this idea of a new starting point that also suggests the changes in the Chinese perception of China’s role as well as a possible response to the claims made about Chinese policy in the American discourse on China in Africa. As with the legacy of the imperial experience, the manifestation of the China Dream here is to separate Chinese policy from those followed by the Western powers. In this case, it is not so much that China will avoid the path taken by the European imperial powers than China’s destiny is ultimately different to theirs, which further echoes Liu Mingfu’s (2015, pg. 400) concept.

The presence of this theme also suggests the course that Chinese foreign policy is likely to take in recent years. Previously, the discourse on globalisation focused on the convergence between China and the United States. This shifted towards a future grounded in China’s past, something that is likely to gain further traction in the light of the backlash against the traditional
model of globalisation that the Western world was once a staunch defender of. This development could enable the Chinese discourse to gain further control of the narrative on globalisation (Kavalski, 2009, pg. 14).

In relation to the other themes present in the Chinese discourse on China’s engagement with Zimbabwe, it appears that there is an overlap between the China Dream and the theme of mutuality. This comes in the form of how the China Dream is utilised in conjunction with the Zimbabwean Dream, which attempts to depict the aspirations of both states. Such a depiction is reminiscent of the mutual benefits that Chinese policy is claimed to have for Zimbabwe. This is in line with the idea of China as a role model since China’s aspirations are presented as an example for Zimbabwe’s ambitions (Pang, 2009, pg. 126). The China Dream serves as another example of the Chinese discourse’s attempts to generate local support for Chinese foreign policy in the African continent. This theme is also indicative of China’s wider aspirations. This often refers to concepts such as a harmonious society, a theme that is rooted in the golden age of China’s imperial past. Such a theme is indicative of the more exceptionalist stance taken by Beijing in recent years, particularly over China’s role in the present international system (Cai, 2012, pg. 40). Additionally, this is also an example of the Chinese approach to this system, as symbolised by Zhao Tingyang’s (2012, pg. 33) concept of Tianxia, as well as illustrating the experiences that influence the creation of the Chinese discourse on China’s policy towards Zimbabwe.

It is also the emergence of the Chinese dream that serves to illustrate the developments that the Chinese discourse has undergone since the end of the 20th century as well as the changes in the perceptions of China’s identity. As earlier stated, this has manifested itself in the more exceptionalist stance advocated by Liu and Zhao based on China’s past rather than the traditional experiences of the American world. Such a change is in line with the more assertive stance that China has taken under Xi’s leadership (Van Standen, 2018, pg. 2). The presence of the China Dream in the Chinese discourse serves to continue this expression of Chinese exceptionalism.

The Chinese discourse on China’s policies towards Zimbabwe also indicate how the China Dream symbolises the change in the structures of experience that influence the creation of the Chinese discourse. While the revolutionary era is often referenced to draw upon the mutual experiences of China and Zimbabwe, the China Dream suggests another experience has as much influence upon the creation of the modern Chinese narrative. This has come from China’s imperial past, concepts from which have influenced the idea of the Chinese Dream.
The case of Chinese policy towards Zimbabwe also illustrates the changes in the influences upon China’s identity as well as how China views its role in Africa (Power and Mohan, 2010, pg. 468-9).

The purpose of this construct illustrates the attempts by the Chinese constructs to separate Chinese foreign policy from those of the West. This is again in line with the attempts by this concept to pursue a ‘Chinese’ future away from the previous notions of convergence. As with the case of Sudan, this can again be seen in the references to ‘Chinese characteristics’, in this case, in the same speech, which claims that ‘China is exploring major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics’. This construct again serves to separate Chinese policy and its image from those created by the American constructs by attempting to create an approach based on ‘Chinese characteristics’, an example of which can again be seen in the speech regarding the founding of the PRC:

“The Chinese nation has stood up and ushered in a new era when the Chinese people became masters of their own destiny. China is standing now at a new starting point of history”. (Address at the Reception of the 57th Anniversary of the Founding of the People’s Republic of China)

As with the other constructs, the presence of the China Dream is an illustration of the Chinese perception of China’s identity as well as being the image that the Chinese constructs seek to promote. This can be seen in Xin’s remarks on Chinese language learning and China’s development that China is a ‘five-thousand year old civilisation’ and that it is the ‘only surviving one of four ancient civilisation’. These remarks are reflective of the more culturalist identity adopted by China in the post-Cold War era which has been further amplified by the use of China’s past as a source of national pride in recent years (Hellendorff, 2014, pg. 147). The presence of the China Dream is illustrative of the Chinese perception of China’s identity that the Chinese constructs seek to promote as well as the changes that they have undergone. In claiming that China has ‘stood up’, the statement indicates a degree of continuity within the Chinese corpus, with this image echoing Mao’s claim that China had finally stood up in 1949. This furthers Zimbabwe as an example of China’s long-term relations with the African states. In addition, the perception of the China Dream as a form of ‘Chinese exceptionalism’ as outlined by Callahan (2012, pg. 21) is also present in the claim that China is at ‘a new starting point in history’. This idea of a new starting point is in line with the path advocated by Liu, which furthers the perception of China following a path different from that of the Western world as well as furthering the image of China as an alternative. It is this vision that is
expressive of the wider challenge posed by China in that it challenges the dominant paradigms, which illustrates the implications of these constructs as well as the changes in the Chinese corpus under Xi.

The concept of the China Dream and the common themes behind it is also raised by a speech commemorating the 64th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China, which claims that the:

Chinese dream is the dream of our nation, and the dream of every Chinese; it is a dream of inclusiveness, of seeking national growth while promoting mutual development. It is a dream that belongs to China as well as the rest of the world. (Reception for the 64th anniversary of China Embraced 600 Guests)

The direct reference to the China Dream is illustrative of the influence of Liu’s work upon the current Chinese foreign policy discourse as well as the changes it has undergone over the past five years. In addition, there is also an overlap with the construct of mutuality in the claim that the China Dream also entails ‘mutual development’. While this unifies the Chinese constructs, it is also expressive of the Chinese vision for the African states and the factors that has influenced it, which comes in the form of Confucian norms, as expressed in the reference to mutual development. This characterises China’s vision as one of ‘Neo-Confucian state capitalism’ as depicted by Ho (2008). It is this aspect that is indicative of the wider issues that the Chinese corpus is expressive of in that it presents China's wider vision and the evolution of the Chinese discourse.

The presence of the construct of the China Dream in the case of Zimbabwe is symbolic of the image of China that the Chinese constructs seek to spread as well as reflecting of the changes that the Chinese perceptions have undergone in recent years. It is the attempts by this construct to spread this image to a wider context that illustrates how the constructs of China’s African policies serve as a reflection of the wider competition for China’s identity, which again serves to underline the more normative dimensions of Chinese foreign policy in that China seeks to promote an image of itself alongside the Chinese system and norms. These are related to how the Chinese discourse serves as an expression of Chinese foreign policy and the changes it has undergone, most notably the move towards a more exceptionalist stance in recent years. This is also suggestive of how China perceives its role and future, which it attempts to separate

187
from the path of the Western powers. The theme of the China Dream is symbolic of the more recent developments in Chinese foreign policy and identity.

5.44 Cultural Soft Power

The third most prominent Chinese construct in the case of Zimbabwe has been that of cultural soft power. As with its appearance in the previous case study, this construct has been both one of the constructs of China’s image as well as how this image is spread beyond its original context. In line with the previous case study, the presence of this construct in this case study is also symbolic of several elements within the Chinese constructs of China in Africa as well as symbolising wider phenomena, most notably the attempts to spread the Chinese system to a wider context.

The presence of the construct of cultural soft power is symbolic of the Chinese perception of China’s role and identity in the African continent as well as for the wider world. This can be defined as a shift towards a more cultural identity and how Chinese culture plays an increasingly important role in China’s foreign affairs (French, 2014, pg. 180). Such a depiction is also furthered by another Chinese ambassador, Lin Lin, who encouraged Zimbabwean students to ‘work hard in learning the Chinese language and other courses’ in another report from the same source. While the presence of this construct is an illustration of the shifts in China’s African policies, the references to the promotion of the Chinese language is also illustrative of how the construct of cultural soft power serves to spread the Chinese constructs to a wider audience.

The methodology symbolised by these initiatives is alluded to in the report on the 50th anniversary of China’s ties with the African nations, which claims that:

“Chinese culture is becoming popular in Africa. China has set up the Confucius Institute, an institution to teach foreigners Chinese language and culture jointly with Kenya, South Africa, Rwanda and Zimbabwe in their countries. Statistics from China’s Ministry of Education show there are over 8,000 African students learning Chinese and the number is on the rise. Nearly 120 schools in 16 African countries had opened Chinese courses by July 1, 2005, and to meet the increasing need of African students, China has sent nearly 200 teachers to Africa.” (Africa China Usher in 50th Anniversary of Sincere Cooperation)
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

The allusion to Chinese culture becoming popular in the African states here is a reference to how the Chinese constructs are spread to a wider context. This is furthered by the references to the initiatives of the Confucius Institute in the African states as well as the claim of ‘over 8,000 African students learning Chinese’ and the 120 schools in 16 African nations that have started teaching Chinese (Kurlantzick, 2009, pg. 166). These references also serve to highlight the methodology of Chinese foreign policy in the African states, in this case, the emphasis of soft over hard power. The construct of cultural soft power here serves as an illustration of the nature of Chinese foreign policy as well as how the Chinese constructs are spread. The reference to the popularity of Chinese culture in the African states is indicative of both China’s influence in the African continent and the methodology of Chinese foreign policy. This also serves to underline the nature of power in Chinese foreign policy by placing a greater emphasis on the less coercive dimensions of power. In addition, the gains made by these policies are also alluded to by the depiction of African students studying in China, which reflects the popularity of China as a study destination for students from the Anglophone nations of Africa such as Zimbabwe (Cheng, 2009, pg. 113). It is this aspect that illustrates how China’s normative foreign policy was able to cement Chinese gains in the African states.

This image is further reinforced by Lin Lin’s speech at a Confucius Institute Day, where he claims that:

“Chinese culture and the Chinese people have carried on for thousands of years of development and with the inspiration of Ambassador Lin’s speech could find their own dreams of Zimbabwe’s prosperity and the deepening of the profound friendship between the two countries”. (Ambassador Lin Lin Attends Confucius Institute Day)

In this part of the Chinese corpus, the construct of cultural soft power reflects the Chinese perception of China’s identity, referenced in the claim that ‘Chinese culture and the Chinese people have carried on for thousands of years of development’. This echoes the previous references to five thousand years of Chinese civilization, which has been a recurring theme in the Chinese constructs in this case study (Dessein, 2014, pg. 66). As with the construct of China as a role model, the allusion to China’s culture and development here is also utilised as an example for Zimbabwe to follow, as reflected in the claim that China’s culture and history can inspire Zimbabweans to ‘find their own dreams of Zimbabwe’s prosperity’. This statement is illustrative of the Chinese vision of China’s identity in the claim that ‘China’s culture and people’ have developed over ‘a thousand years’, a claim that echoes the common depiction of
China as the inheritor of ‘five thousand years of civilisation’. This statement also illustrates the overlap between this construct and the other constructs present in the Chinese corpus, with the reference to ‘shared prosperity’ echoing the construct of mutuality, and the reference to development being an allusion to the image of China as a role model. It is this overlap that unifies the constructs into a single image that articulates China’s wider vision as being a model of ‘Neo Confucian state capitalism’. If the legacy of European imperialism is an indication of China’s utilisation of mutual experiences to build support for Chinese policies, the case of culture and history is an example of China’s attempts to win African hearts and minds in the post-Cold War era. This serves as an example of how the changes in Chinese foreign policy objectives and initiatives are communicated within the Chinese narrative.

The role of soft power in China’s African policies is depicted in a report on cultural activities at China’s embassy in the country, which depicts these activities as:

Two volunteers from the Confucius Institute taught them the basics of Chinese language. The students were eager to learn Chinese and full of longing for China. (Chinese Embassy Women's Club Held Experiencing Chinese Language Day at Bindura Primary School)

This depiction raises the methodology of Chinese foreign policy by emphasising soft rather than hard power, which illustrates the nature of power in Chinese foreign policy. It is these policies that serve as how the Chinese constructs are spread as well as contributing to the image that these policies seek to spread (Kurlantzick, 2009, pg. 166). In addition, this has also been suggestive of the appeal of China’s vision to the African states, which is alluded to in their ‘longing for China’, an aspect that has played a notable role in furthering China’s gains in the African states.

The construct of cultural soft power is also reflective of the developments and the nature of Chinese foreign policy towards the African states. This has seen a focus on soft power assets rather than those of hard power, as reflected by the allusion to the ‘29 Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms in 22 African states’ in a report by the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. While Chinese soft power initiatives have often been perceived as simply a means by which to achieve economic objectives (Carmody, 2013, pg. 18), it is also suggestive of the nature of power in Chinese foreign policy as well as further underlining the more normative considerations behind China’s African policies, which often has implications for the
other dimensions of China’s foreign affairs. The construct of cultural soft power is symbolic of the nature of Chinese foreign policy and its methodology. By promoting the Chinese constructs of China’s identity and foreign policy, the construct of cultural soft power is symbolic of the wider competition for China’s image abroad, which often has implications for the achievement of Chinese foreign policy objectives. This has also illustrated the nature of power in Chinese foreign policy, with its focus on soft power over hard power assets (Li and Rønning, 2013, pg. 4). By serving as part of the Chinese perception of China’s identity as well as the methods by which they are spread, the construct of cultural soft power serves as part of the symbolism of Chinese power in the African continent and in the wider world.

As Table 10 illustrates, the construction of the Chinese image of China’s activities in Zimbabwe have been created by several overlapping constructs. This has chiefly been invoked in the choices of language as well as the experiences the texts invoke to justify Chinese policies in the country. While the presence of these constructs has remained consistent, their manifestation in this case study has been different, most notably in the construct of mutuality, which refers as much to the shared experiences of China and Zimbabwe as it does for the benefits of Chinese policy.
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

Table 10: The Chinese Constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mutuality</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>The shared experiences between China and Zimbabwe in the post-colonial era.</td>
<td>Over the past 50 years, China and Africa have supported each other in safeguarding national dignity and sovereignty. (Address at the Reception of 57th Anniversary of the Founding of the Peoples Republic of China)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The potential benefits of Chinese foreign policy for Zimbabwe</td>
<td>Sharing similar historical experiences (Africa China usher in 50th anniversary of sincere cooperation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>It is plain for everyone to see that China-Zimbabwe cooperation is equal footed and mutually beneficial (All Weather Friendship between China and Zimbabwe Beats the Slander)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China the Role Model</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>China serves as a role model for Zimbabwe’s economic development.</td>
<td>China's progress is intimately linked to the world. (Address at the Reception of 57th Anniversary of the Founding of the Peoples Republic of China)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>China’s experiences serve as an example for Zimbabwe.</td>
<td>Mr. Mutsvungwa said that Africa can learn a lot from the experience of rapid development of China in the past three decades (Ambassador Lin Lin Attends China-Africa Symposium)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The construct that China seeks to promote as well as being the means of doing so.</td>
<td>We come to the African continent to share our experiences and help build the continent (China's economic miracle: What lessons for Africa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Soft Power</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Reflects the construct of China’s identity that China seeks to promote as well as the means to do so.</td>
<td>Chinese culture is becoming popular in Africa. Statistics from China’s Ministry of Education show there are over 8,000 African students learning Chinese (Africa China usher in 50th anniversary of sincere cooperation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Also symbolic of the developments in Chinese foreign policy and the normative dimensions behind it.</td>
<td>Chinese culture and the Chinese people have carried on for thousands of years of development (Ambassador Lin Lin attends Confucius Institute Day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Two volunteers from the Confucius Institute taught them the basics of Chinese language: The students were eager to learn Chinese and fall in love with China. (Chinese Embassy Women's Club Held Experiencing Chinese Language Day at Bindura Primary School)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China Dream</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Part of the Chinese constructs of China’s identity that Beijing seeks to promote.</td>
<td>Since then, the Chinese nation has stood up and ushered in a new era when the Chinese people became masters of their own destiny (Address at the Reception of 57th Anniversary of the Founding of the Peoples Republic of China)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>An example of the recent developments in China’s foreign policy stance</td>
<td>The Chinese Dream is a concept proposed by the new Chinese leadership. What are the contents of the Chinese Dream? To be simple, it is for the prosperity of the country, the rejuvenation of the nation and the happiness of the people (H.E. Ambassador Tian Xuejun Interviewed by the Wall Street Journal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese dream is the dream of our nation, and the dream of every Chinese; it is a dream of inclusiveness, of seeking national growth while promoting mutual development. It is a dream that belongs to China as well as the rest of the world. (Reception for the 64th anniversary of China Embraced 600 Guests)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.5 The American Discourse

The overall size of the American corpus in this case study has been smaller than that of the previous case study, consisting of 37 reports and 9 statements. After examining the statements from the official American perspective on Chinese policy towards Zimbabwe, there has been a degree of continuity and variation between the official discourse and the established academic literature on China in Africa. Unlike the case of Sudan, there have been comparatively fewer sources concerning Chinese policy towards Zimbabwe. What has been written about these policies has several of the themes that have been outlined in the Anglophone literature on Chinese engagement with the African states. As with the case of Sudan, the themes of China as an exploiter and a facilitator have been the most predominant themes in the American discourse on this subject and that the experience of European imperialism appears to again play a notable role in this case as well.

As Figure 7 shows, there have been several constructs present in both the official discourse and the established literature on China in Africa. This has come in the form of China as an exploitive power as well as the accusation that Chinese policies facilitate corruption and bad governance as well as promoting authoritarian norms alongside the perception of China as a neo-imperial power in Africa. While these themes were expected to be present in the established discourse due to their presence within the Anglophone literature on Chinese engagement with Africa, there is a certain degree of variation within the manifestations of this theme in the official discourse. In addition, there is also a degree of continuity between the case of Chinese policy towards Zimbabwe and that of the case of Sudan.

Figure 7: Frequency of the American Constructs
As with the Chinese corpus in this case study, the American corpus has also been subject to both consistency and variation when compared to the corpus from the previous chapter. The American corpus is also primarily made up of both reports and statements, although the overall size of the American corpus is comparatively smaller to the one from the case of Sudan as well as the Chinese corpus for this case study. As with the previous chapter, China’s initiatives in Zimbabwe are not the primary focus for much of the American corpus, although it has been a notable presence in it. In line with the previous corpuses, the American constructs in the case of Zimbabwe have been subject to a degree of variation in the different parts of the American corpus in this chapter.

Figure 8: The American constructs over time

As Figure 8 shows, there has also been a variation in the recurrence of the American constructs present in this case study over the two periods. This has initially come in the form of the lack of the depiction of China as an imperial power, which can partially be attributed to the variation between the internal situation of Zimbabwe and that of Sudan. Such a development illustrates the influence of the cases of China’s African policies upon the image presented of it as well as the impact of the time from which the corpus was taken. This has also seen a slight uptick in the construct of China as an exploitive power, although it does not have the same prevalence as it had in the previous case study. This construct has also taken a
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

different form in this case study to that of the case of Sudan, which further illustrates the variation between the two cases.

In contrast, there has been a greater recurrence of the construct of China as a facilitator between the first and second periods. This illustrates the continuity of the constructs present in both cases and periods, as well as being indicative of the wider image of China’s African policies. In addition, it is the continued presence of this construct is also an example of the wider normative competition between democratic and authoritarian norms, the latter being the ‘Asian values’ outlined by Bell in *The China Model*. It is this aspect that is indicative of the wider implications regarding the constructs of China’s African policies as well as the normative dimension of Chinese strategies.

Table 11: Combinations of the Constructs in the American Corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct Combination</th>
<th>Number of Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China the Exploiter and China the Empire</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China the Exploiter and China the Rival</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China the Exploiter and China the Facilitator</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China the Facilitator and China the Empire</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China the Facilitator and China the Rival</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China the Empire and China the Rival</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 11 illustrates, there has been a degree of overlap between the dominant constructs in the American corpus regarding China’s activities in Zimbabwe. The most notable overlap has been between the constructs of China the exploiter and China the rival. This is illustrative of the common depiction of China’s economic activities in the African states and is suggestive of the logic behind the constructs here. There has also been a notable overlap between the constructs of China the facilitator and China the exploiter which is in keeping with the apparent spread of Chinese practices to the African continent. It is this spread that is illustrative of the more normative considerations of Chinese foreign policy in the African states and the norms behind the American corpus in this case study.
5.51 China the Facilitator

Possibly the most dominant American construct in the case of Zimbabwe has been that of China as a facilitator. This has also been a notable construct in the previous case study as well as being part of the image of China’s African policies in the Anglophone literature on China in Africa. As with the other constructs present in this case study, the presence of this construct is suggestive of the image of China’s African policies promoted by the American constructs which the Chinese constructs seek to challenge. This reflects several factors present within the image of China’s African policies as well as illustrating the wider phenomena that the constructs are symbolic of.

The construct of China as a facilitator has been utilised to describe China’s support for authoritarian regimes in the African continent. In this case, this construct has been used to depict China’s support for ZANU-PF and the former Mugabe regime (Lowe, 2008, pg. 480). This is alluded to in the 2016 Human Rights Report for Zimbabwe, which quotes Mugabe’s claim that:

“The government needed to stop “abuses on the internet” and would emulate China in the use of security measures to regulate access to certain websites.” (2016 Human Rights Report)

The presence of this construct here is suggestive of the consistency within the American constructs of China in Africa as well as reflecting part of the American image of China’s African policies. In this case, it is China’s system of control that acts as an example for Zimbabwe to follow. China’s facilitation of authoritarian rule in this statement comes in the form of Zimbabwe’s abuses of the internet, which depicts this as following the example of the ‘Great Firewall of China’ that has been held up by the Zimbabwean elites as a paradigm for the country to follow. This is linked to the wider claim that Zimbabwe is emulating China’s authoritarian political system, which furthers the construct of China as a facilitator of authoritarian norms (Sicarelli, 2010, pg. 23). It is this aspect that is symbolic of China’s wider challenge in that it illustrates the conflict between democratic and authoritarian norms, which has been codified by the competing discourses on China’s African policies. This is also an example of the darker aspects of the Chinese model promoted by the Chinese constructs, where it appears to promote authoritarian norms just as much as it does economic development (Nathan, 2015, pg.165).
While the presence of this construct in the report is a causative reaction to China’s support for authoritarian regimes, the claim that Zimbabwe seeks to emulate China is also reflective of the more normative elements behind this construct. By emulating Chinese policy, in this case, the Great Firewall, it appears that China’s engagement with Zimbabwe is promoting the rise of authoritarian norms as well as supporting authoritarian regimes in the African continent (Lowe, 2006, pg. 487). As with the construct of China as an exploitive power in this case study, the presence of the construct of China as a facilitator appears to be a result of the reaction of the American constructs to the spread of the Chinese system to a wider context as well as contradicting the norms behind the American constructs.

As well as facilitating the rise of authoritarian political norms, the presence of the construct of China as a facilitator in this case study is utilised to refer to Beijing’s enabling of corruption and bad governance. This image has been another common construct in the Anglophone literature on China in Africa, where it had often been used to criticise Beijing’s ‘no strings attached’ approach to development, which has often been perceived as showering corrupt regimes with Chinese money to further Beijing’s foreign policy goals (Olande, 2012, pg. 35). An example of China’s apparent facilitation of corruption and bad governance can be seen in a depiction of the country’s mining sector and the apparent reluctance of American firms to conduct affairs in the country being blamed on:

“The reason why companies from all over the world are not coming is because they can’t get their money out”. (US Pragmatic about Zimbabwe’s Future)

Such a depiction serves to reinforce the image of China’s willingness to conduct business in states deemed too corrupt or unstable for American interests, which also furthers the common image of Chinese foreign policy being little more than the pursuit of economic objectives. This image is also likely to be subjected to greater challenges in recent years particularly regarding the 2017 coup that ousted Mugabe as well as the developments within Chinese foreign policy (Pigou, 2017, pg.2). It is expected that this image will also change alongside the shifts in Chinese foreign policy. The interview appears to raise the implications of China’s laissez faire approach to the African states as well as the implications for other external actors in the country, referred to as ‘countries from all over the world’. This ties into the perception that Chinese policy facilitates corruption and bad governance, which has been
one of the recurring themes in the established literature. In addition, this also appears to illustrate China’s willingness to take greater risks as depicted by Keenan, which is indicative of how China has been able to make its gains in the African states.

The dominant presence of the construct of China as a facilitator is reflective of the image of China’s African policies created by the American constructs as well as illustrating the consistency of this image between the case studies and the Anglophone literature on China in Africa. This construct has been utilised to depict China’s ‘no questions asked’ approach to Zimbabwe as facilitating authoritarian norms as well as corruption and bad governance. Both were recurring constructs in the literature on China’s African policies. The presence of this construct is also a normative reaction to the attempts by the Chinese constructs to spread the Chinese system to a wider context alongside their perceptions of China’s identity, which serves as a reflection of the wider competition for the construction of China’s international identity as well as codifying the normative power relations between China and the U.S.

5.52 China the Exploiter

From the comparatively small sample of the American narrative that was available for this case study, the construct of China as an exploitive power has been the second most prevalent American construct in the American corpus regarding China’s policies towards Zimbabwe. This has been typically utilised regard the behaviour of Chinese firms in the African states, particularly in the more resource rich states of the continent (Rotberg, 2008, pg. 9). How this theme would manifest itself in a state that is bereft of such resources was of interest since the common assumptions regarding China’s African policies assume that these initiatives are solely motivated by economic gain. This illustrates how there is more to Chinese policy that a simple pursuit for financial gain, as it often has been interpreted as being in the populist depictions of Chinese foreign policy as well as being symbolic of several elements within the American image of Chinese foreign policy towards the African continent.

In line with the established literature, this theme has often manifested itself in response to the behaviour of Chinese firms in Zimbabwe. This has been utilised in depicting the working conditions of Chinese companies in Zimbabwe as well as the ways in which they exploit the country’s labour (Naughton, 2010, pg. 445). An example of this could be seen in the depictions of violence against striking workers at Chinese owned concessions in Zimbabwe. It is the
references to these conditions which suggests that Chinese exploitation in Zimbabwe is related to human as well as economic capital as opposed to the focus on natural resources in Sudan (Halper, 2010, pg. 99). While the references to this theme have been somewhat brief, it is neither the less evident that this theme is an integral part of the American discourse on Zimbabwe, particularly regarding the spread of the Chinese economic model to Zimbabwe. The American discourse depicts the Chinese model as promoting exploitive practices and human rights abuses under the guise of economic development, an accusation that has been made throughout the established Anglophone literature on China in Africa. An example of this is alluded to in an interview published on the embassy’s site, where a member of the audience asks:

“What can a strong, powerful country like the United States of America do to persuade other strong countries like China to do business in Africa, with a consciousness that we must also demand from our leaders’ good governance?” (Townterview Hosted By CNN and KTV at the University of Nairobi)

It is the references to exploitive practices by Chinese firms in Zimbabwe that appears to mirror the Chinese constructs that have been present in this case study. In the established Anglophone literature, the Chinese model of economic development has often been viewed as the spread of Chinese working conditions as well as the promotion of economic development, which is often interpreted as promoting exploitive working practices in line with the race to the bottom (Burgis, 2015, pg. 147). The spread of these practices appears to overlap with the construct of China as a facilitator, with constructs serving as a response to the attempts by the Chinese constructs to spread the Chinese system to a wider context. The calls to alter Chinese behaviour in this case is illustrative of the presentation of China as a responsible stakeholder rather than a competitor. This indicates a degree of continuity with the image presented in the case of Sudan as well as depicting the previous image of Chinese foreign policy prior to the shift to that of a ‘revisionist power’. In addition, the norms that influence this section of the corpus can be seen in the allusion to ‘good governance’, which is contradicted by China’s African initiatives (Liu, 2013, pg.54). It is this aspect that illustrates both the normative dimension of China’s African policies and the wider challenge that China poses to democratic norms.
In addition, the reference to Africa as a resource rich continent is a reference to the commonly cited motivation of China’s policies in the continent, which has been to gain access to these resources. This illustrates a degree of continuity with the presentation of this construct in the previous case study. In addition, the reference to good governance can be seen as an overlap with the construct of China the facilitator, with Chinese policies seemingly enabling the rise of corruption and poor governance alongside authoritarian political practices. It is this aspect that highlights the wider challenge posed by China as well as unifying the constructs present in this section of the corpus.

In keeping with the previous construct, the image of China as an exploitive power in this case study serves as part of the established image of China’s African policies created by the American constructs. This continues the depiction of the Sino-Zimbabwean relationship as an unequal one which benefits Chinese policy objectives more than for Zimbabwe (Eisenman, 2012, pg. 798). Such an image appears to be in line with the previous depiction of China’s ties with Sudan, which were also perceived as being exploitive in nature. The initial presence of this construct in the case of Zimbabwe is illustrative of the consistency within the American depiction of China’s foreign policy as well as being in line with the images of Chinese policies created by the established literature on this subject.

As outlined in the themes that were expected to be present in this case study, the presence of the theme of China as an exploitive power is indicative of one of the primary structures of experience that influence the creation of the American discourse on this subject. In the case of Zimbabwe, it is again the legacy of the imperial experience in Africa. This is a result of the assumption of linear progression between this experience and present Chinese policy in that China will exploit Zimbabwe in the way that the European colonial powers of the past had done before (Cao, 2013, pg. 61). From this, it appears that the legacy of European imperialism has initially played a greater role in the creation of the American discourse on Chinese policy towards the African states than the Cold War had.

The theme of China as an exploitive power in Zimbabwe is indicative of several elements within the American discourse on China’s African policies. One of these is the variations between the cases of Chinese policy in Zimbabwe and Sudan, with the former being related to the exploitation of the country’s population as well as the exploitive practices and working conditions of Chinese concessions in Zimbabwe. It is also the focus upon these practices that reflects the view that Chinese policies and initiatives encourage bad practices, which is in line with the American perspective on the Chinese developmental
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

model (Nathan, 2015, pg. 156). This connects the construct with that of China as a facilitator of authoritarianism as well as furthering the more negative perception of China created by the American discourse the presence of this construct serves as an expression of the wider phenomena that the competing constructs of China’s African policies are a reflection of, most notably the competition over the construction of it as well as the construct of China’s image as a whole. This also serves as an illustration of the power relations between China and the U.S. as well as underlining how the two differing images of China’s African policies are representative of two normative systems that seek to replicate themselves beyond their context of origin.

5.53 China the Empire

As outlined in the initial expectations for this case study, the theme of China as an imperial power in the African continent has been present in the American discourse on Chinese policy towards Zimbabwe. Unlike the previous case study, this has not been as frequently recurring as it has been in the previous chapter nor has the form of this construct been the same either. As with many of the constructs present in this comparatively small sample that was available for the case of Zimbabwe, the construct of China as an empire is illustrative of several factors within the American depictions of China’s African policies as well as illustrating a degree of variation between the case studies of these policies. This is also reflective of the wider American perspective on Chinese foreign policy as well as of China’s role in the continent.

Possibly the greatest variation between the presence of this construct in this case study and that of the previous chapter is the form it has taken. While the construct of China as an empire in the case of Sudan took the form of China as a reluctant empire facing increasing pressure to protect its interests in the country, its presence in the case of Zimbabwe has been somewhat different to this image. This has come in the form of the more exploitive aspects of Chinese policy towards Zimbabwe, which appears to overlap with the construct of China as an exploitive power in the African states (Hess and Aidoo, 2015, pg. 110). It is the apparent overlap here that serves as a representation of the American image of China’s African policies. In keeping with the established literature on China in Africa, the construct of China as an imperial power in the case of Zimbabwe is utilised to refer to China’s economic initiatives in the country. This is in line with the traditional focus on the build-up of China’s economic and
military capabilities, which has dominated much of the Anglophone literature on China’s African policies as well as shaping the American constructs of China’s identity and foreign policy. This in turn manifests itself in the form of China as an exploitive power seeking to use the African nations for its own benefit in a manner reminiscent of the European powers that once dominated the African continent.

As with the constructs from the case of Sudan, the construct of China as an empire in this case study continues to depict China’s ties with the African states as being unequal and weighed in China’s favour (Cardenal and Araujo, 2014, pg. 66). This is expressed in references to China as a ‘strong country’ in the African states, which implies that the African states are weaker than China in this relationship. In the same source, this quote appears to suggest that it is the US rather than the African states that needs to persuade China to follow certain practices which serves to underline the unequal nature of the Sino-Zimbabwean relationship. This stands in contrast to the attempts by the Chinese constructs to depict these ties as an equal partnership based on mutual benefit.

The depiction of China as a neo-imperial power in the African states in this case study is again raised in the claim that:

So I was wondering, especially in relation to conflicts and competition over resources on this planet, what can a strong, powerful country like the United States of America do to persuade other strong countries like China to do business in Africa, with a consciousness that we must also demand from our leaders good governance? (Townterview Hosted by CNN and KTN at the University of Nairobi)

This statement also appears to overlap with the construct of China as an exploitive power in the reference to Africa’s resources. Such an image reinforces the perception that China’s African policies aim to exploit the African continent just as the European empires had done (Liu). This is indicative of the logic and structures of experience that have influenced the creation of this image in this section of the corpus, as well as presenting an overlap between the corpus and the established, 2013, pg. 54 literature. In addition, it is the overlap between the constructs that serves to unify them into a single image that presents Sino-Zimbabwean relations as an unequal relationship based on the domination exercised by the former over the latter.
In addition, the presence of this construct here is suggestive of the influences behind the creation of the American constructs of China in Africa. This can be seen in the references to ‘conflict and competition’ over the resources of the African continent. Such an image is reflective of the logic behind the American constructs on China’s African policies, in this case, the more zero-sum approach to international affairs, which often emphasises the competition between states as well as the view that one state’s gains come at the expense of another. These assumptions have also been present in the more populist depictions of China’s foreign policy as well as of China’s rise, which appears to overlap with the common motif of the China threat (Allison, 2016, pg. 12).

It is also the presence of this theme alongside the depiction of China as an exploitive power that continues to highlight the imperial legacy as the primary structure of experience that influences the creation of the American discourse on China in Zimbabwe. This has manifested itself in the assumptions of that era as with the case of China’s policies in Sudan. This also serves to illustrate the continuity and change within the American narrative in that the imperial experience continues to influence the American discourse although it is the manifestation of this influence that has changed. Such a depiction serves as an attempt to chart the path of China’s African policies by utilising the experiences of the European empires in Africa rather than depicting China as an exotic ‘other’ (Leslie, 2016, pg. 162). The presence of the imperial legacy in the form of the depiction of China as a neo-imperial power is indicative of how the American discourse creates an image of Chinese foreign policy based on the experiences of the European powers in the continent as well as assuming a degree of linear progression between the European and Chinese experiences in the continent.

In all, the presence of the construct of China as an imperial power in the case of Zimbabwe is reflective of the image of Chinese foreign policy created by the American constructs, which is both a causative and normative reaction to Chinese policy as well as being a creation of the logic underpinning these constructs although it has not been as prevalent as it had been in the previous chapter. This serves as part of the dominant image of China’s African policies as well as of China itself that the Chinese constructs seek to combat with their own image of these policies, which serves to codify the normative power relations between China and the U.S.
Possibly the greatest variation between the expectations for this case study and the results has been the presence of the construct of China as a rival for American interests. As earlier stated, it was expected that this construct would have a greater presence in the case of Sudan, where it has been absent despite being a notable part of the image of China’s African policies conveyed by the Anglophone literature. It was expected that it would have little or no presence in the available sample of the American corpus available for the case of China’s policies towards Zimbabwe. As with the other constructs present here, the construct of China as a rival is illustrative of several factors within the American discourse as well as being part of the image of Chinese policies in the African states created by the American constructs.

The initial presence of this construct is suggestive of an overlap with the established literature on China’s African policies, from which this construct was derived. This ties into the common perception of Chinese foreign policy as a threat to American interests in the African continent, a depiction that echoes that of Cooley’s (1965, pg. 11) *East Wind over Africa*. While the presence of this construct appears to illustrate the continuity between the literature and the American corpus on Chinese engagement with the African states, it also suggests a continuity within the American images of Chinese foreign policy and of China itself, which is unified by the perception of China as a threat.

The presence of China as a rival to American interests is suggestive of the logic behind the creation of these constructs and their image of Chinese policies in the African continent. This can be seen in the Towinterview published by the State Department, which discusses the ‘potential the US is worried about’ African nations building ties with China. The reference to these concerns appears to reflect the zero-sum nature of the assumptions behind this construct in that the furthering of Sino-African ties is perceived to come at the expense of American interests in the continent. This also appears to suggest a degree of continuity between the official corpus and the Anglophone literature in that this statement is reminiscent of Shinn and Eisenman’s (2012, pg. 45) claim China was able to exploit the post- Cold War situation in Africa for its own gain. The presence of this construct is illustrative of the image of Chinese policy towards the African states created by the American constructs as well as being reflective of the process behind the creation of this image. This is alluded to in the 2013 Investment Climate Report for Zimbabwe, which claims that:
“Under this "Look East" policy, some Asian investors have been offered access to reserved sectors, sometimes at the expense of local or established foreign investors”. (2013 Investment Climate Report)

The presence of this construct is also suggestive of the wider issue of the construction of China’s international image as well as that of China’s foreign policies. Alongside the other constructs present in this case, the image of China as a rival is connected to the wider perception of the China threat, an image that has dominated the mainstream images of Chinese foreign policy (Tselichev, 2012, pg. 175). It is this image that serves to unite the differing constructs of China’s African policies present in the American perception of these policies and in the Anglophone literature into a single, coherent image. The reference to ‘Asian investors’ can be seen as an allusion to Chinese involvement in Zimbabwe, which has benefitted from the government’s ‘Look East’ policy, which illustrates China’s gains in the country. There is a suggestion that China’s gains in the country have come at the expense of other external actors in the country, with the claim that the policy ‘favours Asian investors over other local and foreign firms’. This is indicative of the zero-sum logic that underpins these images of China’s African policies. The presence of this construct here serves as an illustration of the wider phenomena that the constructs of China in Africa are symbolic of, in this case, the competition over the construction of China’s image abroad (Brautigan, 2009, pg. 30). The presence of this construct illustrates both the competition over this image, which also serves as a symbol of the normative power relations between China and the U.S.

This construct is part of the American image of China’s African policies as well as reflecting the wider American construct of China’s identity itself. It is the issue over the construction of China’s image that serves as a codification of the power relations between China and the U.S. and reflects the attempts by two competing systems to spread themselves beyond the context of their origin.

As Table 12 illustrates, the American image of China’s policies towards Zimbabwe has also been created by four primary constructs. While these have been the same constructs from the previous chapter, the presence of them has been different. The most notable variations has been the diminished presence of China the Empire and the greater presence of China the Rival, with the former being one of the dominant constructs of the previous case study. Alongside the language utilised in the texts, the constructs have been suggestive of the logic and
experiences behind the creation of this image, most notably the assumption that China’s gains in the country come at the expense of other nations present in Zimbabwe.

Table 12: The American Constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China the Empire</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chinese foreign policy is a neo-imperial venture.</td>
<td>So I was wondering, especially in relation to conflicts and competition over resources on this planet, what can a strong, powerful country like the United States of America do to persuade other strong countries like China to do business in Africa, with a consciousness that we must also demand from our leaders good governance? (Townview Hosted by CNN and KTN at the University of Nairobi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assumption of linear progression between Chinese foreign policy and those of the European powers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China the Exploiter</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>China is exploiting Zimbabwe for its own economic development.</td>
<td>But the concern over China was the fact that here we are in a continent that is extremely rich. Africa is not a poor continent. Anything you want in the world is on this continent. It’s like the gods were on our side when the world was being created. (Applause.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese policy encourages the rise of exploitive practices</td>
<td>Yet we are considered among the poorest people on the planet. There’s something seriously wrong. And one of it, of course, is good governance. (Townview Hosted by CNN and KTN at the University of Nairobi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The report also notes that “there are continuous reports of Zimbabwean women lured to China and the Middle East for work where they are vulnerable to trafficking (US calls for tougher action against human trafficking)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China the Facilitator</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Chinese policy supports authoritarian regimes in the African states.</td>
<td>On April 3, the government-controlled <em>Sunday Mail</em> newspaper quoted President Mugabe as saying the government needed to stop “abuses on the internet” and would emulate China in the use of security measures to regulate access to certain websites (2016 Human Rights Report Zimbabwe)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese policy promotes authoritarian norms</td>
<td>There has not been proper management of agriculture. President Mugabe himself listed how many millions and billions of dollars have gone missing in mining. That wasn’t the United States who said that. That was President Mugabe. (US Pragmatic about Zimbabwe’s Future)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China the Rival</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Chinese gains come at the expense of other external actors in Zimbabwe</td>
<td>“Under this ‘Look East’ policy, some Asian investors have been offered access to reserved sectors, sometimes at the expense of local or established foreign investors”. (2013 Investment Climate Report)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.6 Summary

As in Chapter 4, the Chinese and American corpuses create two different images of China’s activities in Zimbabwe. While these images remain somewhat consistent regarding the dominant constructs present, there have been differences in the form that they have taken. These forms, alongside the shifts in administrations, served as the greatest variation between the results and the initial expectations. If the case study of Chinese engagement with Sudan illustrates the more recent changes in the constructs of China in Africa as well as the shifts in Chinese foreign policy, the case of Zimbabwe serves as an example of the continuity within the discourses on the same subject. This is due to many of the elements that had been present in the previous incarnations of the respective narratives, most notably the more ideological elements from the Maoist era, retain a presence in the current versions of the American and Chinese narratives on China in Africa (Campayo and Zhao, 2016, pg. 67). This shows how China has been able to utilise shared experiences in the African continent to cement its ties with the African states, which highlights the methodology of China’s African policies as well as China’s foreign policy worldwide.

The Chinese discourse on China’s engagement with Zimbabwe has been dominated by the theme of mutuality. This illustrates the continuity between the various incarnations of the Chinese narrative as well as in Chinese foreign policy. This has been in the form of the mutual experiences between China and Zimbabwe as well as the benefits of Chinese foreign policy. In this case, while the same themes remain dominant, the manifestations of them are somewhat varied between case studies. It is these mutual experiences that highlight the primary structure of experience within the Chinese discourse on Zimbabwe as well as the length of the ties between China and Zimbabwe (Li, 2016, pg. 150). This continuity is furthered by the theme of China as a role model. While this has been used to refer to China’s model of economic development serving as a template for Zimbabwe’s development, it also has a precedent in the ideological model of the Maoist era. The Chinese model serves as the means to spread the Chinese constructs of China’s image to a wider context as well as spreading Chinese norms to a wider context. The presence of these constructs serves to illustrate the nature and methodology of Chinese foreign policy. It is this approach that has enabled Beijing to gain a degree of success in the African states, an aspect that has been ignored by the mainstream images of Chinese foreign policy.
In comparison to the case study of Sudan, there have been fewer sources regarding China’s approach to Zimbabwe. This is due to the comparative lack of American interest in the country as well as the fact that the American presence in Zimbabwe is smaller than that of China. The recent changes in administration has also made accessing these sources more difficult in contrast to the Chinese sources. At the same time, there have been references to Chinese policy in Zimbabwe although this is often couched in a wider condemnation of Zimbabwe as a whole. The prevalent theme in the American discourse regarding China’s policies towards Zimbabwe are consistent with the case of Sudan. The most dominant theme in this case has been the depiction of China as a facilitator in the country. This often refers to China’s support for political autocracy, in this case, by supporting the Mugabe regime. While this is indicative of the causative factors within the American narrative, it is also illustrative of the more normative elements within it. This is due to how China’s support for the ZANU-PF regime is seen as part of a wider promotion of authoritarian norms in Africa as well as for the wider world. Another of the major themes has been the perception of China as an exploitive power in Zimbabwe. While the case of Sudan focused on China’s exploitation of Sudan’s natural resources, the case of Zimbabwe focuses on the exploitation of Zimbabwe’s population. The spread of these conditions is an example of the wider spread of authoritarian norms by China in the African continent as well as in the wider world. While the presence of these constructs has been consistent with the case of Sudan, it is the form that they have taken here that is the most notable variation between the two case studies.

The American and Chinese discourses on the case of Chinese policy in Zimbabwe illustrate the continuity within the two narratives while Sudan is an example of the recent changes that they have undergone. This case is also indicative of how the American and Chinese narratives utilise similar concepts for different purposes. This comes in the form of how the American constructs react to the Chinese constructs’ attempts to spread Chinese norms as well as their image of China’s African policies to a wider context. These serve as an illustration of how these constructs reflect the competition for the construction of China’s identity as well as how these images are a symbol of the attempts of two competing systems to spread themselves to a wider context as well as illustrating the wider competition for the construction of China’s image. In addition, these images reflect the shifts in Chinese foreign policy and the methodology utilised, both of which have enabled China to further its foothold in the African continent. This has come from the more normative aspects of Chinese strategies, which reinforces the importance of this dimension that had previously been overlooked.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The final chapter will provide a summary of the results from the previous chapters as well as discussing how it has answered the research problem outlined in Chapter 1. This will involve a discussion of the flaws encountered during the research process as well as plans for future research on this subject, since the power relations between China and the United States, whether they be causative or normative, extend far beyond the case study of Africa. As stated at the beginning of Chapter 1, the purpose of this research was to examine the constructs of China in Africa as well as the wider phenomena that they are symbolic of, such as the competition for the construction of China’s international identity alongside how these constructs serve as a symbol of two competing systems that seek to replicate themselves beyond the context of their creation. The case studies illustrated have shown that there have been several dominant constructs in both the American and Chinese discourses on China’s engagement with the African states. This highlighted the more normative aspects behind China’s African policies, most notably the wider issue over the construct of China’s global identity, codifying the power relations between China and the United States as well as illustrating the nature and methodology of China’s foreign policy.

6.2 Summary of the Results

If the American discourse can be perceived as a combination of causative and normative factors, the Chinese response to it has been more normative in nature, reflecting China’s perception of its identity and the role it plays in the international system. This is particularly evident in the consistent construct of Chinese cultural soft power initiatives in the continent, which reflect China’s wider quest to combat the more negative perceptions of China in the wider world (Leslie, 2016, pg. 165). While this is cultural in nature, this policy also reflects
the more normative aspects of the Chinese discourse in that China seeks to challenge what is
deemed to be ‘normal’.

It was China’s response to these constructs that indicates how some of the common
centers of the discourse on China in Africa are American constructs. This can most notably
be seen in the idea of the “Beijing Consensus”, which was an American term created to refer
to the Chinese role model, which is seldom referred to in the Chinese discourse (Halper, 2010,
pg. 83). The idea of China as a role model has itself been a prevalent construct throughout the
Chinese narrative, most notably in terms of economic development. Such a perspective
illustrates a degree of continuity between China’s previous incarnations since China is now an
economic role model in the way that it once was a political one during the Cold War and a
cultural role model during the imperial era.

China’s traditional culture has also played a role in tandem with the perception of China as
a role model. Throughout the Chinese corpus, there have been numerous references to China’s
soft power initiatives which highlights the more normative dimensions of the Chinese narrative
(Lu, 2017, pg. 122). It is the prevalence of this concept alongside the utilisation of Confucian
terminology that highlights the shifts in China’s identity. These changes are indicative of the
wider shift towards a more historical identity to gain greater legitimacy.

The research has drawn a connection between the meanings ascribed to Chinese foreign
policy by the images of China in Africa and how these images have shaped the responses to
these policies. By exploring how these images were created and what they symbolised, it was
possible to show how the competing images serve as a case of the wider competition for the
construction of China’s global image which codifies the normative power relations between
China and the United States. The constructs present in the competing discourses covering
China’s African policies have also underlined the common flaws in the assumptions regarding
these policies. This has chiefly come in how China has been able to cultivate its relationships
with the African states, which has often been interpreted as the bribery or coercion of these
nations by Beijing as well as stripping the African elites of agency. This ties into the hegemonic
image of these policies alluded to by Sautman and Yan (2009, pg. 747), which often presents
a simplistic view of these policies that overlooks how Beijing has utilised its normative foreign
policy to carefully cultivate its ties with the African states.
By using the selected methodology to explore the research question, it was possible to examine the norms that played a crucial role in constructing the competing forms of knowledge concerning China’s African policies through the applications of the theoretical frameworks outlined by Foucault and Bourdieu. In doing so, it was possible to explore the more normative dimensions of Chinese foreign policy towards the developing world, most notably the competition between democratic and authoritarian norms, which was symbolised by the competing images of China as a role model and China as a facilitator of authoritarian norms, which had largely been overlooked by the established literature on these policies (Van de Walle, 2016, pg. 163). This aspect illustrates the wider issues of the research problem, in this case, the normative challenge that China poses to the established norms regarding development. The images of China as a role model and a facilitator of authoritarianism present throughout the corpuses of the case studies have demonstrated this challenge by illustrating that a capitalist China is not necessarily a democratic China and that its development was made possible by its authoritarian political system, which the constructs seek to spread as China is held up as an alternative framework for the developing world (Kurlantzick, 2009, pg.166). It is this aspect that indicates the wider challenge that China’s development poses, which suggests that it is more than an economic or a military challenger as the more established works have presented it as.

In returning to the recent example of China’s gains in Djibouti, as illustrated in Chapter 1, it has been possible to explore how China’s vision was able to win over the African elites. This has been in how China has promoted itself as an alternative to the established political and economic paradigms, which have been expressed through the construct of China’s model of development and the invocation of both the shared experiences of the post-colonial struggles and China’s experiences of development (Wang, 2008, pg. 264). These have played a significant role in cementing China’s relationships with the African elites and in building support for Chinese initiatives in the African states. It is through these normative mechanisms that China’s vision for the African states has been able to appeal to many of these nations. In addition, it is this vision that is expressive of China’s wider challenge in that it presents China as an alternative paradigm that challenges the hegemonic norms and assumptions.

In addition, the research has also questioned the common assumptions regarding China’s African policies as being little more than bribing corrupt African elites and that Chinese objectives have been primarily the pursuit of economic goals. Instead, China has carefully cultivated its’ ties with the African elites by utilising shared experiences, which has most
notably been present in the case of Zimbabwe, where these experiences were frequently invoked to justify Chinese initiatives in the country. It is these experiences which have been a notable part of China’s normative foreign policy as well as granting Beijing an advantage that few other external actors possess, which has furthered China’s attempts to legitimise its initiatives in the African states.

6.21 The Chinese Discourse

In both the cases of Chinese engagement in Sudan and Zimbabwe, the construct of mutuality has been the most commonly recurring construct in the Chinese narrative. This has been commonly used to foster a sense of unity between China and the African states to further Chinese policy objectives in the continent. This sought to depict China as an equal partner for Sudan and Zimbabwe rather than an exploiter. In the case of Sudan, the construct of mutuality was often used to describe the cooperation between Beijing and Khartoum (Chen, 2012, pg. 603). This served to depict the Sino-Sudanese relationship as a mutually beneficial one between equal partners. Such a depiction created a more positive image of Chinese policies in Africa as well as responding to the claims in the American discourse that China is ultimately an exploitative power in the continent. This was in line with the depiction of Chinese foreign policy as being one of mutual benefit depicted by Li (2011, pg. 52).

With the exception to the references to the Chinese experience of economic development, there have been few references to any shared experiences between China and Sudan. This is due to there being fewer long-standing experiences shared between China and Sudan, since Chinese policy in Sudan has been a comparatively recent development (Shinn, 2012, pg. 95). There is instead a greater focus on the cooperation between China and Sudan as well as China’s experiences of economic development. This is often used to describe China’s role in the mediation of the conflict between the Bashir regime and South Sudan as well as serving to depict China as an ‘all-weather friend’ of Sudan. It is the Chinese experience of development that illustrates the continuity within the Chinese narrative by continuing the depiction of China as a role model for Sudanese development. This was part of the image of China that Beijing seeks to spread across the wider world as well as challenging the established perceptions of China’s identity.
The construct of mutual experiences has been particularly prevalent in the Chinese discourse on China’s engagement with Zimbabwe. This is due to the long-standing Chinese engagement with the country, which dates back nearly four decades since China’s assistance to Mugabe’s ZANU-PF in its war with the Smith government (Zheng, 2014 pg. 15). This experience highlights the continuity within the Chinese discourse since the mutual experiences of imperialism were often utilised to cement the common ground between China and much of the developing world during the period of decolonisation and the Cold War. It was these experiences that were vital in securing further ties with the developing world in the years after the end of the Cold War. The case of Zimbabwe served as an example of how China has been able to utilise the ties formed during the post-colonial era to further Chinese objectives as alluded to by Zhao (2016, pg. 72).

The mutual experiences of China have also been utilised to respond to the claims made in the American discourse. This is linked to the legacy of European imperialism in the continent, which has been prevalent in the case of Zimbabwe than in Sudan. While this construct was utilised to illustrate the perceived hypocrisy of American concerns over Chinese policies, it has also served to separate these policies from those followed by the Western powers (Zhao, 2006, pg. 434). This has manifested itself in the claim that China ‘will not make the mistakes of the imperial powers’, illustrating the degree to which the legacy of imperialism continues to influence both the American and Chinese narratives. The Chinese narrative uses this experience to differentiate Chinese policy from those of the European empires while the American discourse attempts to draw parallels between the two (Lagerkist, 2010, pg. 182). This depiction portrays China as an equal partner for Sudan and Zimbabwe whose policies are of mutual benefit. Such an image aimed to separate Chinese policy from those of the Western powers (Mazimhaka, 2013, pg. 91). It is this response that symbolises the conflict over the discourse on China in Africa as well as the wider battle for China’s image.

Alongside the shared experiences of post-colonial struggles, China’s experiences of economic development have been a significant part of these policies. This element has been expressed through the presentation of these experiences as a framework for the developing world to follow, as illustrated by the Chinese corpus in the case of Sudan as well as through the construct of China as a role model. The experiences of China’s development have been utilised to legitimise Chinese interests in the African states, which has gained traction in the developing world as well as being in line with the Chinese discourse’s attempts to portray China as an alternative model. It is the image of China as an alternative that has unified the
Chinese discourse into a single image, which has been part of the wider meaning of China that it has been keen to promote. As illustrated throughout the case studies, the constructs present within the Chinese corpus has been unified to articulate China’s wider vision for the African continent. This has presented China as an alternative paradigm, which has been a notable aspect of China’s appeal to the developing nations as well as the norms that underpin it, which has also been expressive of the shifts in the Chinese perspective of China’s global role (Naughton, 2010, pg. 439). It is the issue regarding the appeal of the Chinese paradigm that is indicative of China’s wider challenge which has often been overlooked by the established depictions of China as an economic or military challenger.

In addition, the corpus has also been expressive of the misreading of China’s African policies, which has been demonstrated by the image of China as a neo-imperial power. Such an image has been flawed in how it has largely ignored the agency of the African elites, instead depicting them as passive victims of Chinese ‘debt trap’ diplomacy (Yan and Sautman, 2009, pg. 747). As with the popular images of China’s African policies, this depiction overlooks the ways in which the more normative dimensions of Chinese foreign policy have cemented China’s influence in the continent, which has chiefly come in the form of China’s vision for African development appealing to these states alongside the utilisation of China’s experiences of development and anti-colonialism to legitimise Chinese projects in the continent. It is these aspects that have granted China an advantage that few other external actors possess, which has been instrumental in furthering Chinese objectives in the developing world.

The second most prominent construct in the Chinese discourses on China’s engagement with Sudan and Zimbabwe has been the depiction of China as a role model for their economic development. This has furthered the image of Chinese policy that the Chinese narrative seeks to portray to the wider world as well as the influences of the structures of experience upon the creation of the Chinese discourse on China’s policies towards the African states. The construct of China as a role model has often taken the form of China’s experiences of economic development serving as a paradigm for the development of the African states (Kennedy, 2010, pg. 27). The presence of this construct is illustrative the identity that China seeks to portray to the developing world in that China is an example for other states to follow.

The presence of this construct indicates the continuity between the different depictions of China’s identity as well as for the Chinese discourse on China in Africa. While China currently presents itself as an economic role model for the African states to follow, it had previously presented itself as an ideological role model during the Maoist era and as a source of cultural
authority during China’s hegemony in East Asia prior to the mid nineteenth century as depicted by Jing and Burton (2011, pg. 12). While the example that China sets has changed from communist revolution to capitalist development, it is nevertheless consistent in continuing China’s previous role as a paradigm for others to follow.

The construct of China as a role model is also indicative of the more normative dimensions of Chinese engagement with the continent. This is in line with the idea that Chinese policy promotes Chinese norms as well as China’s model of economic development. This construct illustrates how China’s African policies are also seeking more normative goals alongside the traditional focus on economic development, which Chinese policy has been viewed as (Jing et al, 2016, pg. 1). The depiction of China as a role model for African development codifies the normative power relations between China and the United States. The depictions of Chinese engagement in the continent is a competition between two differing depictions of Chinese involvement created by differing sets of norms and values. This can be seen in the conflict between the depiction of China as an economic role model and the American fears that this model encourages the rise of authoritarian norms, in line with the construct of China as a facilitator in the American narrative (Bell, 2000, pg. 57) which is the nature of the challenge that China poses. It is these competing depictions that serve as a symbol for the power relations between China and the U.S. as well as the more normative elements of Chinese engagement in Africa.

As well as projecting the image of China that Beijing seeks to portray to the wider world, the construct of China as a role model is also a reflection of the challenge to the established American depictions of China to further Chinese foreign policy goals in the continent (He, 2008, pg. 144). It is the desire to amend this image that is illustrative of the more normative dimensions of China’s foreign policy in Africa, which illustrates how Chinese policy is more than just a pursuit of economic goals abroad by Beijing. The Chinese discourse is reflective of China’s pursuit of normative goals as well as economic ones. As with the other constructs present in the official Chinese discourse, the idea of China as a role model serves to unify the Chinese narrative due to its overlap with the construct of mutual experiences as well as being an expression of how China perceives its current international role.

While the construct of the China Dream was not as prevalent in the Chinese discourse on Sudan and Zimbabwe, its presence within the Chinese narrative is still of significance. As shown throughout the Chinese literature, the ideal of the China Dream reflects the more exceptionalist stance taken by Beijing in recent years, particularly under Xi’s leadership, who
has been influenced by Liu’s concept. (Voci and Hui, 2018 pg. 5). Despite the comparatively smaller presence of this construct when compared to that of mutual experiences and China as a role model, it is expected that this construct will gain greater prominence within the Chinese discourse in line with the policies and stance taken by China in recent years and may have a greater presence in the future Chinese discourse on this subject. The presence of this construct has also been consistently present in the Chinese discourse on both the cases of Sudan and Zimbabwe. It has been the third most prevalent construct in the case studies, behind the construct of mutuality and China as a role model. As with many of the constructs present within the Chinese discourse, the China Dream creates a more positive image of Chinese engagement (Power and Mohan, 2010, pg. 474). This suggests a more aspirational aspect within the Chinese discourse on China in Africa which is indicative of the challenge that China poses for the American discourse as well as for the established international system (Horner, 2012, pg. 116). It is this aspiration that had largely been overlooked in the established literature on China in Africa and is likely to influence the future shape of Chinese foreign policy.

This construct also indicates the utilisation of concepts from China’s imperial past to present an image of China as well as of China’s future. While this is in line with the move away from convergence with the American world and towards a form of Chinese exceptionalism, it is also indicative of the shift of the structures of experience that influence the creation of the modern Chinese discourse (Scott, 2012, pg. 50). China’s past has always played a crucial role in the Chinese discourse, although this was primarily in the form of the experience of European imperialism. The structure that has the most influence on the Chinese narrative has shifted to the peak of Chinese power and prestige rather than the Century of Humiliation which played a crucial role in the Maoist Chinese perspective (Horner, 2012, pg. 78). Such a change is in line with the idea of China’s return rather than its rise, which has been a notable feature of the present Chinese foreign policy rhetoric.

The construct of the China Dream sought to separate Chinese engagement from that of the other external powers in the continent. This has been of significance in the case of Zimbabwe where this construct was often utilised in conjunction with the idea of the ‘Zimbabwean Dream’. Such a notion is connected to the construct of China as a role model for the development of the African states, which furthers the Chinese narrative’s response to the assertions made by the American discourse as well as unifying the statements of the Chinese discourse into a single narrative (Aidoo and Hess, 2015, pg. 118). The China Dream serves as a reflection of the developments within Chinese foreign policy. This can be interpreted as an expression of the
more exceptionalist stance taken by Beijing in recent years as well as illustrating the changes in the structures of experience and of China’s perception of its identity. This serves to create a unified image of Chinese engagement within the Chinese narrative that is separate from the American image of such policies.

The construct of cultural soft power has also been a notable and consistent presence in the Chinese discourse on both case studies as well. As earlier stated, this construct shows how the Chinese constructs are spread as well as how China perceives its role and identity in the African continent and the wider world (Yan, 2013, pg. 62). This has been achieved by the promotion of China’s traditional culture and language, which is suggestive of the more culturalist shift in China’s post-Cold War identity as well how this more cultural perception of China’s identity is spread to a wider context. It is this image that the Chinese constructs seek to promote as depicted by Wang Yiwei (2008, pg. 261-2).

The consistent presence of this construct has also been reflective of the nature of Chinese foreign policy and the methodology it utilised in the African continent. This has seen soft power enjoy an equal, if not greater, status in China’s African policies than China’s hard power assets have. The nature of power in Chinese foreign policy here further highlights the more normative considerations behind Chinese strategies as well as standing in contrast to the focus on hard power that has dominated the more mainstream images of Chinese foreign policy in recent years. By promoting the Chinese constructs, the case of cultural soft power as well as the other constructs present in the Chinese discourse has been illustrative of the wider construct of China’s identity as well as raising issues over whether China’s cultural diplomacy can be defined as soft power (Li and Rønning, 2012, pg. 4). In spreading this image alongside the Chinese system, these constructs are more in keeping with normative rather than soft power, which renders it more akin to Bourdieu’s habitus rather than the concept of soft power defined by Nye. The construct of cultural soft power symbolises the spread of the Chinese system beyond its original context and the competition for the construction of China’s international identity.

While Chinese soft power initiatives have largely deviated from Nye’s original concept, one aspect from these theories that it has retained is the role these initiatives have played in building consent for Chinese initiatives in the African states. This has come in the ways that the Chinese corpus has promoted China’s model of development as well as China’s vision, both of which have played a notable role in acquiring the consent for Chinese projects from the African elites (Yan and Sautman, 2009, pg. 746). By doing so, China’s approach to the African
states is more than simply bribing corrupt states to further Chinese objectives and further challenges the common assumption that the African states have little or no agency as well as being passive victims of predatory Chinese initiatives.

In addition, the research also highlighted the nature of power in Chinese foreign policy as expressed through the construct of cultural soft power. This has seen Chinese strategies place a greater emphasis on soft power rather than the traditional notions of power being synonymous with the more coercive means of economic might and military capabilities. It is this focus on soft power that has enabled me to examine the often overlooked aspects of Chinese foreign policy in the developing world which have been significant in cementing Chinese influence. The construct of cultural soft power has also questioned the traditional definition of soft power established by Nye by seeking to alter the established meaning of China by facilitating the spread of a Chinese narrative in a bid to alter the foreign policies of other nations to a stance that is more favourable to Beijing rather than simply getting these nations to desire the same outcomes as China desires (Shambaugh, 2015, pg. 100). By doing so, the Chinese corpus has attempted to acquire a degree of legitimacy for Chinese initiatives through the presentation of China as a role model as well as utilising the shared experiences of China and the African states. In this sense, the purpose of China’s more normative foreign policy mechanisms is to influence the reaction of other states to China by altering the meaning ascribed to it by other states to influence their reactions to China.

By examining the Chinese constructs regarding China’s African policies, it has been possible to chart the evolution of the Chinese foreign policy discourse, which has been integral in exploring how China perceives its’ global role. This has been expressed throughout the research, most notably by the presence of the China Dream, which has presented China as following a path that is largely different to that of the Western world. Such an image furthers the presentation of China as an alternative, which has also been promoted through the image of China as a role model, which serves as an example of how the constructs present a unified image of China’s role as well as further illustrating China’s wider challenge to the established norms and assumptions.

The Chinese corpus on China’s African policies has been expressive of China’s wider vision for the developing world. This most notably came in how the construct of mutuality was indicative of China’s vision of ‘Neo-Confucian state capitalism’, which unified the Chinese corpus as well as expressing the norms that have influenced this image (Ho, 2008). It is this vision that has illustrated the appeal of the Chinese policies to the African elites, which
has been furthered by China’s experiences of economic development. The appeal of this vision has also played a notable role in furthering the legitimacy of Chinese initiatives in the African states, which has been aided by China’s ability to gain the consent of the African elites through this vision. Regarding France’s return to the African states seemingly being hampered by lacking both money and a strategy for Africa’s future, it would appear that China has been able to win over the African elites by possessing both financial resources and a vision for Africa’s development that has had an appeal to the African states (Fouquet, 2019). This has been of further significance in that the African elites have advocated this vision just as much as the Chinese corpus has done. It is this aspect that suggests how China’s relations were built on the utilisation of China’s vision for development rather than being little more than bribing corrupt states with Chinese money, instead selling a vision of development that has appealed to the African elites.

6.22 The American Discourse

As with the Chinese constructs of China’s African policies, there have been several core constructs present in the American discourse in both the case studies of Sudan and Zimbabwe. In line with this, the manifestation of the constructs has also varied between case studies as well as possessing a several similarities and differences to the constructs established from the literature on China in Africa. Their presence is also symbolic of the wider issues of the constructs of China’s role and identity as well as indicating the more normative dimensions behind China’s African policies.

In keeping with the established literature, the construct of China as a neo-imperial power in the African states has been present in the American discourse in both the case of Sudan and Zimbabwe, although it has had a greater presence in the former than in the latter. In the case of the former, China was depicted as a reluctant empire. While this construct was present in the literature on the subject, such a construct stood in contrast to the other depictions of Chinese neo-imperialism being exploitive and domineering in intent (Arnold, 2012, pg. 980). An explanation for this variation may come in the context of Sudan itself, where Chinese interests have been threatened by the instability of the country (Shinn and Eisenman, 2012 pg. 181). This raises the assumptions behind this construct, which came in the references to China’s need to protect its interests in Sudan, which is illustrative of Hollslug’s depiction of the issue.
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

presence of this construct in this form is a result of the context of Sudan as well as the assumptions behind the constructs of China in Africa.

Throughout the American corpus on China’s African policies in both cases, the most prevalent construct was that of China as a facilitator of authoritarianism and bad governance. In both cases, this was partially a creation of the American response to China’s support for the Bashir regime in Sudan and the then Mugabe regime in Zimbabwe, both of which serve to further the image of China as a supporter of authoritarian regimes in Africa as well as in the developing world (Nathan, 2015, pg. 165). This has often been interpreted as a case of Beijing lending its tacit political support for Africa’s regimes in exchange for furthering its economic goals, a notion that has been prevalent in the American constructs as well as furthering the image of China’s African policies being little more than an economic venture (Cardenal and Araujo, pg. 123).

While this construct has partially been a causative reaction to China’s policies in Sudan and Zimbabwe, there is also a more normative dimension to this. By supporting these regimes, the American constructs portray China as a facilitator of authoritarian norms as well as of autocratic regimes, which stands against the norms behind the constructs as well as reflecting how the constructs of China in Africa are spread (Mei-Ting Schmitz, 2018, pg. 21). This is representative of two competing systems that are promoted by these constructs, which reflects the wider issue of the construction of the perceptions of China’s role and identity (Mohan, 2015, pg. 48). In addition, this is an illustration of the more normative considerations behind China’s African policies in that these policies promote norms just as much as China’s objectives in the continent. It is these fears over the spread of Chinese practices that echo Halper’s warning from the Beijing Consensus.

The construct of China as an exploiter has also been a consistent presence in both the literature and the discourse as well as in both case studies of China’s engagement with the African states. As with the construct of China the empire, the manifestation of this construct has also varied between case studies, as illustrated by its reference to China’s interests in Sudanese oil and to the conditions of Chinese firms operating in Zimbabwe (Hannover and Morris, 2009, pg. 56). This construct served to further the image of China’s African policies as being economic initiatives with little consideration for the factors besides them. This serves to depict China’s ties with the African continent as being unequal in nature and weighed heavily in China’s favour (Large, 2009, pg. 51). The variations in the manifestations of this construct is the result of the context of the case studies themselves, with Sudan’s natural resources and
China’s economic influence in Zimbabwe furthering these perceptions of China as an exploitive power in the African continent.

As with the construct of China as a facilitator of authoritarianism, the construct of China as an exploitive power, particularly in the case of Zimbabwe, is also an illustration of how the Chinese system is spread beyond the context of its origin. It is the idea that Chinese initiatives in the African states encourages Chinese economic practices, which have often been perceived as exploitive in nature (Economy and Levi, 2014, pg. 47). This serves as part of the more normative elements behind the American constructs of Chinese policies towards the African states in that these constructs are a promotion of the Chinese system of development, in line with the construct of China as a role model in the Chinese perspective. The constructs are symbolic of the normative reaction to the spread of the Chinese system by the Chinese constructs of China in Africa. In addition, this construct has overlapped with that of China as a facilitator since both reflect concerns over the spread of Chinese norms to a wider context, which further underlines the nature of the challenge that China poses.

Possibly the greatest variation between the established literature and the discourse in the case studies of Sudan and Zimbabwe has been the construct of China as a rival. While this construct has been a recurring presence in the literature, it has been absent from the official corpus on China’s African policies. It is also the absence of this construct that suggests a degree of variation in the perceptions of China in Africa, with China moving away from being the destabilising force of the Cold War to becoming a major external actor in the African continent, promoting its norms and system where it had once spread its own version of the communist doctrine. In the case of Zimbabwe, the presence of this construct has primarily been in the apparent favour that Chinese firms enjoy in the country, which is perceived as coming at the expense of other external actors in the country (Eno and Eno, 2014, pg. 27). This is illustrative of the common logic behind the established images of these policies which assume that China’s gains in the African states come at the expense of the interests of other external actors, which has been prevalent in the established literature regarding these policies. Such an approach has dominated the established images towards Chinese foreign policy and is likely to become more prominent under the Trump administration, which has taken a largely zero-sum approach to China in recent years.
The American constructs of China in Africa have been reflective of the established image of China as well as serving as both a causative and normative reaction to China’s African policies. This illustrates what the Chinese constructs perceive to be the negative image of China that has had consequences for China’s policies in the African continent and the wider world. It is this image and the Chinese response to it that serves to illustrate the normative dimensions of Chinese foreign policy as well as being a codification of the power relations between China and the United States alongside being an expression of two competing systems that seek to spread themselves beyond the context of their origin.

Another of the implications of the research, most notably in Chapter 4, has been the ways in which China’s African policies have often been misread. This has been expressed in the image of China as a responsible stakeholder, which has been a creation of the dominant norms and assumptions, most notably the perception that capitalism and democracy are interlinked. Such an image overlooked the challenge posed by the Chinese model of development, which presented a model of authoritarian state capitalism that largely contradicted the democratic norms behind this image. It is this image that has seen the depiction of Chinese foreign policy change from one as a responsible stakeholder to being that of a ‘revisionist power’. While this new image seems far removed from the previous depiction of Chinese foreign policy, it makes similar mistakes in presenting China as primarily an economic or military challenger, which overlooks the wider, normative challenge posed by China. It is this aspect that has been illustrative of some of the wider implications of the constructs of China’s African policies.

6.3 Limitations

While the research process for both the case studies achieved the objectives that were set out in Chapter 1, there have been a small several limitations to the overall implementation of the research process as well as the potential for the research to have undergone a somewhat different turn to the conclusion that it arrived at. These will be outlined here alongside the potential for additional features to the research process that were ultimately not included here. One of the main limitations to the research process has been the sample of the American corpus for the case of Zimbabwe. Through my search of the official sources, there was comparatively little coverage of Zimbabwe in the American discourse as well as of China’s engagement with
the country. While it was possible to get a sample of the American corpus to work with, the available volume of it was somewhat limited in the case of Zimbabwe as opposed to the larger volume of material available for the case of Sudan.

A possible explanation for this limitation comes in the form of the US’s interests in the African continent. Due to its instability and resources, it appeared that Sudan was of greater interest for the official discourse than Zimbabwe has been, although it is expected that there will be an uptick in this in the light of the coup that ousted Mugabe in 2017 as well as the allegations of Chinese involvement in this affair, something that I wrote about for the China Policy Institute. This is compounded by the comparatively smaller presence in Zimbabwe, particularly in the light of the country’s anti-Western stance in the later years of the Mugabe era.

While the research covered what it was intended, there was still the potential for the study of more cases of China’s activities in the African continent as well as the possibility of alternative discourses on these policies. By utilising more cases of Chinese involvement, it would have been possible to create a more detailed picture of the constructs of China’s African policies as well as the variations between these cases. This was not feasible due to the time restrictions of the project as well as how the cases of Sudan and Zimbabwe covered the common aspects of China’s African policies. While further cases would have been of some interest, they were not a necessary addition to the research design.

In addition, I also initially intended to compare the English language Chinese corpus with its original Chinese language form. This could potentially have led to a comparison between the sources intended for a Chinese audience and those for an international audience as well as the possible variations of the constructs present in the two. While this may have been of some interest, such a task is more in keeping with the field of linguistics rather than international politics and the overall purpose of the research design was to explore how the Chinese constructs were spread beyond their original Chinese context. It was for this reason that this avenue of research was not followed although it is of potential interest for future research projects that will be detailed later.

Another variation comes in the forms of the constructs derived from the established literature and their subsequent application to the corpuses. While there was an overlap between the Chinese literature and the Chinese corpuses from both case studies, there was a greater variation between the Anglophone literature and the American corpus. This most notably came
in the case of the construct of China as a rival, which was depicted in the official corpus as the apparent advantages that China enjoys in the continent rather than portraying China as a threat to American and European interests as the literature has often depicted it as. The application of these constructs was also challenged by the fact that Chinese activities were not the primary focus of this section of the corpus. Nevertheless, it was possible to see a degree of consistency between the American corpus and the established literature although the manifestation of these constructs were subjected to a degree of variation.

Regarding the theoretical framework, while the selected theories largely achieved the objectives of exploring the process of how the knowledge on China in Africa was created, there were other theories concerning the relationship between knowledge and political power that could have been utilised. One of these was the concept of hegemony outlined by Gramsci which could possibly be utilised to explore how a narrative is accepted by its audience, which would have been of utility regarding how the competing discourses on China in Africa. In addition, the post-colonial doctrine could also have served as an alternative framework for the research, particularly regarding the influence of the legacy of imperialism upon the images of China’s African policies. This would have been useful in exploring how the mainstream images of Chinese foreign policy in Africa were created, most notably in how the depictions of the activities of Chinese firms in the African states appear to echo Nkrumah’s (1965, pg. 35) concerns in *Neo-Imperialism* alongside how the experience of imperialism has been of utility for China’s African policies. Despite this issue, the selected framework was able to achieve the research objectives since it explored both the process of knowledge creation and what this process was symbolic of.

In addition, there were two methodological frameworks that were possible alternatives to the framework that was selected. One of these was the longitudinal approach, which would have been utilised to trace the process behind the knowledge of China in Africa, which would have encompassed the shifts in the Chinese perception of these policies from the Mao era to the present day (Uncles, 1988, pg. 8). Another framework that was also of potential utility was the semiotic approach, which would have been of utility in exploring how the corpuses promote their image of China’s African policies. In their possible application, these approaches were limited regarding the exploration of China’s normative foreign policy as these frameworks largely overlooked the role of norms and language, something that was achieved by the selected methodology.
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

The sample and the several case studies as well as the potential to utilise Chinese language sources are the key limitations to the research design and would be taken into further consideration if this research design were to be carried out again. Despite these issues, the research design was able to achieve the objective of examining the constructs of China’s African policies as well as the systems that they seek to spread beyond their original context. While these potential additions could have been of some utility, the framework utilised was able to carry out the research questions without their addition.

6.4 Normative Power and the Role of Experiences

As the official Chinese discourse on China’s foreign policy has illustrated, the narratives on China’s engagement with the African states are reflective of the changes in the perceptions of China’s role in the present international system as well as the image of China that Beijing seeks to project to the wider world. These have particularly been expressed by the official Chinese narrative on the cases of China’s engagement with Sudan and Zimbabwe. While this phenomenon has been expressed as a shift in the Chinese discourse as well as for the perception of China’s identity, it is also a reflection of the factors that remain somewhat constant in the Chinese discourse. The shift in this perception can most notably be seen in the move from Mao to Zheng He as a symbol of Sino-African friendship and cooperation. While this change is symbolic of the move away from the ideological aspects of the Chinese discourse of the previous century, it is also indicative of the global role that China currently seeks to play. The motif of Zheng He is concurrent with the recent utilisation of China’s traditional culture and imperial history as a source of national pride (Horner, 2012, pg. 45). Such a change is also in line with China’s perceived desire to return to the power and prestige it had once held prior to the twilight years of the Qing dynasty and the rise of the European empires. It is this sentiment that has remained a constant within the Chinese narrative.

It is the use of China’s past as a source of national pride that is indicative of the more culturalist and nationalist dimensions of the Chinese discourse as well as the changes in China’s identity after the fall of communism in the closing years of the twentieth century. This has been symbolised by the utilisation of cultural soft power, which has promoted this culturalist and more civilizational identity to a wider audience. By following this with the rise of the
China Dream, these changes illustrate how the Chinese narrative on China in Africa is symbolic of China’s growing confidence as well as the move towards a more cultural identity in line with China’s imperial past rather than the ideological projects of the twentieth century.

The idea of mutual experiences has also undergone several changes in the post-Cold War era. As illustrated throughout the examination of the Chinese narrative, the Maoist discourse of the Cold War was primarily dominated by the legacy of European imperialism in China and the African states (Zhao, 2010, pg. 431). The shift in the structures of experience within the Chinese narrative suggests that Chinese policy has considerations besides that of pursuing economic development or simply being a reaction to concerns in the domestic sphere. While the pursuit of economic growth may have been an initial source of legitimacy for Beijing, it is the moves utilised to achieve this goal that suggests China’s wider aspirations that have grown out of this pursuit. With this shift, it is apparent that the Chinese perception of China’s identity has changed yet remained somewhat consistent in the face of these changes. Such a move has been symbolised by the Chinese perception of China’s African policies, which utilised the experiences of China’s imperial past as well as the traditional experience of European imperialism and revolution that had dominated the Chinese discourse for much of the previous century. It is due to these changes that China’s policies towards the African states are reflective of the more normative aspects within Chinese foreign policy as well as pursuing economic objectives aimed to secure Beijing’s post-Cold War legitimacy (He, 2009, pg. 54).

Another development that both the American and Chinese discourses on China in Africa have illustrated is how the experiences of China and the U.S. have shaped the perceptions of Chinese foreign policy in the African states. This has been particularly notable regarding the continued influence of the imperial legacy upon the American perception of China in Africa. The influence of these experiences has shaped the assumptions made about Chinese policy towards the African states, most notably the view that China will behave in a similar manner to the European imperial powers in Africa or that it is under increasing pressure to become an imperial power in the African continent (Aidoo and Hess, 2015, pg. 132). This serves to create an image of Chinese foreign policy which is grounded in the experiences of the European powers in Africa.

This shift in the structures of experience has also been symbolic of China’s recent ambitions. This has come in the form of Chinese aspirations for leadership, a point underlined by China’s approach to the Paris treaty in the light of the American withdrawal from it. Developments such as these have been reflected by the return of the Chinese imperial experience in the
Chinese discourse on China in Africa as well as in the Chinese perceptions of China’s identity as a symbol of these aspirations. This continues the idea of the discourse on China in Africa serving as a reflection of the developments within the perception of China’s role as well as that of Chinese foreign policy.

6.5 Implications

The conclusion of the research process has unveiled several factors which have implications for the topic of China’s African policies as well as for the wider study of China’s foreign relations itself. Firstly, by examining the American and Chinese constructs of China in Africa, there is a more normative dimension to China’s foreign policy that has been overlooked by the established literature on Chinese engagement with the African states in light of their primary focus on China’s economic initiatives in the continent, a focus that has contributed to the view of Chinese foreign policy being little more than a pursuit of economic development (Southall, 2010, pg. 13). This normative dimension has been an increasingly important part of China’s engagement with the wider world, most notably in Beijing’s bid to challenge what it perceives to be the limitations on Chinese foreign policy due to the negative image of China abroad. It is these limitations on Chinese objectives alongside China’s cultural diplomacy that serves to underline the importance of the more normative considerations of Chinese foreign policy, primarily regarding how they affect the other factors behind these policies.

It is China’s cultural diplomacy and soft power that illustrates the nature of Chinese policy towards the African states as well as for the wider world. This has seen China place an equal if not greater emphasis on soft power as it has for the more traditional notions of hard power, which has been the traditional focus for the more established American perceptions of China alongside the power politics of the past (Billiard and Stores, 2007, pg. 52). While this realist focus has already been subject to a degree of criticism in the past, it nevertheless continues to retain a notable influence in the more populist constructs of China’s rise, as illustrated by the common depictions of China as a revisionist power and a challenger to American hegemony. By examining the constructs of China’s African policies, it is possible to determine the nature of China’s strategies towards the wider world as well as underlining the flaws of the assumptions behind the image of the China threat. The implication is that the question that
should be asked regarding the perception of the China threat is not how the perception is flawed but rather why such a flawed approach continues to influence the perceptions of Chinese foreign policy and identity.

Another aspect of Chinese foreign policy that the research also has implications for is China’s cultural diplomacy and soft power initiatives and the degree of success that these policies have achieved. While the overall impact of these projects has often been perceived as being limited by China’s authoritarian political system (Shambaugh, 2015, pg. 100), these initiatives have allowed China to become one of the primary educators of the African continent, something that has largely been overlooked by the traditional focus on China’s economic and military growth. The possible successes of China’s soft power offensive can be seen in the country becoming the most popular study destination for students from Anglophone Africa (Amtaika, 2013, pg. 248). This development provides a greater opportunity for the Chinese system to spread itself beyond its original context, further invoking Bourdieu’s depiction of elite education on a greater scale. It is these gains that are suggestive of the methodologies of Chinese foreign policy as well as some possible successes in China’s global charm offensive, which comes at a time when Nye (2017) has warned that the Trump administration has eroded American soft power capabilities alongside the administration’s increased focus on hard over soft power.

The recent call for a ‘hard power budget’ in a bid to curtail China as a ‘revisionist power’ serves to further underline how the populist American images of Chinese foreign policy has largely misread China’s strategies. This is due to the focus on China’s economic and hard power, which has led to the simplistic images of Chinese foreign policy either being little more than a pursuit of economic objectives or as a revisionist power as it has recently been described as in the US National Security Strategy (Gill, 2018). These images ignore the other methodologies by which China has been able to build its influence abroad as well as focusing chiefly on hard power assets, which will ultimately hamper any attempt to respond to these strategies.

As illustrated in Chapter 1, the research determined that the constructs of China’s engagement with the African states is symbolic of two competing systems that seek to spread themselves beyond their context of origin. Referring to China’s policies of cultural soft power, these constructs characterised China’s approach to the African continent as well as towards the wider world as being more normative in nature rather than being an exercise in soft power. While this reinforces the more normative considerations behind China’s African policies as
underlined by the research objectives, it also raises the question of whether China’s policies of cultural soft power can truly be labelled as the concept of soft power defined by Nye. This reflects the nature of power in Chinese foreign policy as well as raising the issue over whether the concept of soft power can be applied to Chinese policies, since by representing a system that seeks to replicate itself to a wider context, these policies promote the Chinese constructs of China’s identity and Chinese norms as much as they promote Chinese language and culture.

The American and Chinese constructs of China in Africa have also served as an illustration of the wider battle for the construct of China’s identity. The more normative dimensions of Chinese foreign policy have affected the other considerations behind it, as reflected by the pursuit of cultural soft power to challenge the more established image of China abroad (Cheng, 2012, pg. 113). While Chinese foreign policy aspirations have often been characterised as a desire to revise the current international system, it also seeks to revise the established image of China itself by challenging the norms and assumptions behind this image. This serves as a codification of the normative power relations between China and the West, which illustrates the wider phenomena that the constructs of China in Africa are symbolic of.

The American constructs of China in Africa are also reflective of the changing image of China in the popular consciousness. As with the perception of the China threat, this has seen these constructs shift alongside the assumptions behind their creation, which has led to a perception of linear progression between China and the Great Powers of the past (Allison, 2016, pg. 220). The case of the constructs of China in Africa have seen the image of China move from being the other to American civilisation to an empire or Great Power in the mould of those that dominated the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as illustrated by the construct of China the neo-imperial power.

The success of the Chinese model appears to have been noticed by the U.S. and other external actors present in the African states, with their approaches towards overseas development increasingly resembling the blueprint that China has followed since the end of the Cold War (Broich, 2017, pg. 10). From this development, it is possible to see how a degree of success in Chinese foreign policy in that others are now following a similar pattern to China’s African policies. This indicates a shift in the image of these policies going from being a facilitator of authoritarian norms to a model that other external actors need to emulate to compete with China (Keenan, 2009, pg. 102). From this, it appears that China has become a model for other external actors to follow in their approach towards the African states as it is for the development of the African states themselves.
By exploring how the different forms of knowledge on China in Africa have been created, the research filled in a gap left by Hirono and Suzuki’s examination of how the common images of China in Africa were created, by examining both the optimist and pessimist approaches to the subject. In doing so, it was possible to explore how the competing forms of knowledge regarding China’s activities in the African states have been symbolic of the competing power relations between China and the United States. It is this normative rivalry that illustrates the wider implications of the research beyond the case of China’s policies towards the African continent.

The constructs themselves also have several wider implications. This has been particularly notable in the case of the China Dream, which has provided a case study of the application of Liu’s concept in the discourse of Chinese foreign policy. This is likely to gain further traction with the influence of the China Dream upon Xi’s governance since it indicates the present course of Chinese foreign policy, which has come in the form of a more exceptionalist approach (Wu, 2018, pg. 772). It is this idea of Chinese exceptionalism that has provided a case of what Callahan explores in Sino-Speak as the Chinese discourse attempts to separate Chinese foreign policy from that of the United States and Europe.

The more normative dimensions of Chinese foreign policy towards the African states has also been symbolic of China’s wider challenge to the established paradigms and norms. This has been expressed through the constructs of China as a role model and the China Dream, which have been unified in presenting China as an alternative paradigm. The challenge that this image poses is to the assumption that democratic norms and capitalism are interlinked and that economic development is impossible without the adoption of democratic values. This has also been codified by the image of China as a facilitator of authoritarian norms, which has been the established discourse’s reaction to the attempts by the Chinese corpus to present China as an alternative, which contradicts these norms. From this, the competing images of China in Africa are an expression of the wider competition between two self-replicating systems akin to Bourdieu’s habitus as well as being a product of the underlying norms of the two corpuses. The challenge posed by this is in how the corpuses have illustrated that a capitalist China is not necessarily a democratic China, which has embarked on a path that deviates from the initial expectations for the course of China’s future.

The wider implications of the competing forms of knowledge regarding China’s African policies has come in the competition between norms. This is a case of the wider competition between Western democratic and Chinese norms, which has been expressed through the
constructs of China as a facilitator of authoritarian rule and of China as a role model for economic development. Both constructs are a depiction of how China has sought to spread its norms and system to a wider context as well as being an expression of the norms behind these images. While this underlines the more normative dimensions of China’s African policies, it also illustrates how the wider competition with China is not merely an economic or military rivalry but one of competing norms and paradigms, with China’s vision of Neo-Confucian capitalism challenging the democratic values of the U.S. and the Western world, with the latter perceiving the former as inherently authoritarian. This challenge has been furthered by the shifts in the Chinese foreign policy discourse, most notably in the construct of the China Dream, which challenges the established paradigm by suggesting that China will follow a largely different and more authoritarian path to the democratic West, which challenges the established assumption that capitalism and democratic values are interlinked.

One of the wider implications of the research issue has been in the flawed approach taken to China’s African policies, which has been informed by a flawed image of these policies. This flawed image, as alluded to by Yan and Sautman (2009, pg. 732), has overlooked the ways in which China has made its gains, most notably in how China perceives the African states as an opportunity while other external actors have often seen them as crisis zones. It is this aspect that illustrates the implications that the dominant images of these policies have had on the responses to China’s initiatives in Africa since by following a flawed image of the African states and Chinese activities in these states, these responses are ultimately flawed.

The overall implications of this research were to highlight the more normative aspects of Chinese foreign policy as well as the wider issue over the constructs of China’s identity. These dimensions have become of increasing importance due to the developments within Chinese foreign policy in recent years, due to its changing stance under Xi’s leadership. It is also this dimension that serves as an illustration of the wider implications that the constructs of China’s African policies are representative of.

The competing images of China’s African policies have been expressive of the wider challenge that China poses as well as the flaws in the established images of these policies. In the case of the former, this has come in the form of the China Model, and to a certain extent, the China Dream, which has challenged the established assumptions regarding capitalism and development, most notably the perceptions that capitalism and democracy are interlinked and that democratic norms are a panacea for economic development. This has been furthered by the promotion of China as an alternative paradigm for development, which has had an appeal
for developing nations for whom the values of the Washington Consensus has seemingly failed. This also raises the flaws in the hegemonic images of China in Africa in that it overlooks how China has been able to appeal to the African elites, which highlights the flaw of stripping the African states of agency as well as misreading China’s African policies.

It is these misreadings of China’s African policies that have become increasingly pronounced in recent years as the result of calls for the U.S. to counter China’s African policies, most notably in Bolton’s address to the Heritage Foundation. Such calls have been critical of Chinese initiatives but are often lack any coherent alternative to these initiatives. This further illustrates the flaws in the common assumptions of China’s African policies, since these often present a simplistic interpretation of how China was able to make its gains in the African states and it is upon this assumption that these more recent calls to counteract China in Africa are based upon. This again means that this response is ultimately flawed.

The overarching implication of the research has been in the ways that the Chinese narrative has sought to present China as an alternative paradigm. While this has often been in the form of China as an alternative model for economic development, it is also demonstrative of China’s wider vision, which has been expressed through the China Dream, which furthers the image of China as an alternative. Such a vision has become increasingly pronounced in recent years through China’s recent global initiatives such as the BRI and the AIIB, which has presented China’s vision for global governance as well as seemingly presenting an alternative to the established international system. Alongside the challenge to the dominant norms and assumptions regarding capitalism and development, the presentation of China as an alternative is a symbol of China’s wider challenge as these institutions present the vision of the Chinese corpus on a wider scale. In this sense, the wider implication of China’s African policies is that the presentation of China as an alternative, that had been prevalent in the developing world, has now passed beyond these states.
6.6 Plans for Future Work

Over the course of the research, there have been several potential avenues for future research that I encountered. Some of these were derived from ideas that were ultimately not included in the project as well as the applications of the theory and concepts of the research to other cases of Chinese foreign policy in Africa and the wider world. In addition, several potential research topics have also emerged from an examination of the constructs and constructs themselves.

Regarding the other cases of Chinese foreign policy, the case of Chinese involvement in Central Asia and the post-Soviet sphere is of interest for future research. This has been underlined by the rise of the Belt and Road initiative (一带一路), which has often been perceived as being the genesis of a Chinese grand strategy as well as being the centrepiece of Xi’s foreign policy. As with the case of China’s approach to the African continent, this development also suggests that there is more to Chinese foreign policy than the simple pursuit of economic goals that it has often been perceived as (Miller, 2015, pg. 56).

There are several reasons why this avenue of research is of interest. Firstly, many of the constructs and constructs present in the discourses of China’s African policies can be applied to this case of Chinese foreign policy, since much of the literature on this case follows a somewhat similar precedent to it. The experiences that shape these constructs also vary, with the legacy of the Great Game and the conflict in Afghanistan playing a potential role in shaping the American constructs and the experiences of the Silk Road shaping their Chinese counterparts. While some of the constructs of China’s Africa policies appear to be present in the depictions of the BRI, most notably the accusation that the project is a potential form of empire building by China, it is expected that such a topic will provide a contrast with the case of Chinese engagement with the African states (Miller, 2015, pg. 244). This will serve to illustrate the common threads in Chinese foreign policy and how it has become increasingly coherent in line with the claims of an emergent Chinese grand strategy.

In addition, the case of Chinese policy towards Central Asia also raises the potential for exploring three discourses on the subject. The third potential discourse comes in the form of the region’s traditional hegemon, Russia. A Russian discourse on China’s approach to the post-Soviet sphere can serve as a potential point of comparison with the American and Chinese discourses as well as how to explore the Sino-Russian relationship. While the American and
Chinese discourses were symbolic of the power relations, the Chinese and Russian discourses are expected to serve as a codification of the conflict and cooperation between the major external actors in Central Asia in the context of the closer ties between the two (Rachman, 2016, pg. 193). This is expected to have its own constructs and experiences in the region, which stand alongside China’s long history in the region, symbolised by the Silk Roads (Frankopan, 2016, pg. 517).

The region also provides a several potential case studies that would be of interest for future research. This is further underlined by the nations which encompass the six proposed land corridors of the BRI. These include resource rich former Soviet republics, most notably Kazakhstan, where Chinese initiatives are seen as potentially clashing with more established Russian projects in the country as well as in Central Asia as a whole. The route will also cross the ‘arc of instability’ of Afghanistan and Pakistan, the latter of which is another example of China’s long-standing foreign relations. This is of note in the light of American suspension of military aid to Pakistan over its ties with extremist groups, a move that is likely to push the country further into China’s orbit. At the same time, the region’s instability and security issues also raises China’s need to protect its interests abroad, which echoes the construct of China as a reluctant empire in the case of Sudan (Shinn and Eiseman, 2012, pg. 179). This raises the wider issues in Chinese foreign policy that China’s African ties served as an example of.

In relation to the case of China in Africa, the other cases of Chinese involvement in the continent can also serve as another avenue for future research. A several African nations are also of interest here, one of these being the case of China’s relations with Angola. As with the case of Zimbabwe, Angola serves as another example of China’s long-standing ties with the African states, which is also another case of China’s early support for the anti-colonial movements in the continent, in this case, its support for UNITA during the Portuguese Colonial War and the subsequent civil war (Niu and Liu, 2016, pg. 271). In addition, the country also serves as one of China’s largest suppliers of African oil, which alongside the long-standing Sino-Angolan relationship, serves as another point of contrast between the cases of Sudan and Zimbabwe. In addition, the cases of Nigeria and Zambia also serve as two other notable cases of Chinese engagement with the African states. The former also raises the issue of China’s quest for resources as well as the security challenges to Chinese interests while the latter has also been subject to a degree of controversy, as illustrated by the late Michael Sata’s election in 2011 on a wave of anti-Chinese populism over the fears of Chinese initiatives and companies.
in the nation. It is this development that renders this case study of potential utility for future research on China in Africa.

Another area of interest for future research comes in China’s engagement with Latin America, which has received a greater deal of attention due to the current political crisis in Venezuela, where China has a significant interest in the country’s oil reserves, which echoes the motif of the ‘dragon and the honeypot’ as depicted by Marton and Matura (2011, pg. 157). It is this aspect that raises the parallels between China’s more established initiatives in the African continent and China’s more recent involvement in Latin America, where the foreign policy blueprint established in the African states has seemingly been deployed to other regions of the developing world. One possible research topic comes in the application of the research design utilised in the thesis to the case of China’s involvement in Latin America. The American corpus will be of interest in this case with the increasingly contentious state of Sino-American relations as well as the region being geopolitically controversial due to the Monroe Doctrine. I have already written several articles regarding China’s relations with Brazil and Venezuela, which would form the basis of a more comprehensive examination of China’s growing influence in Latin America.

The case of the various American and Chinese constructs of China in Africa also raises another potential avenue for future research as well. As earlier stated, the flaws with the perception of the ‘China threat’ has led to the issue over whether this image is a true reflection of the challenges that China’s rise poses as well as how this image continues to influence the more populist perceptions of Chinese foreign policy. In relation to this, the construct of soft power and the Chinese perceptions of China’s role and identity also raises another issue. One of these is an exploration of the nature of power in Chinese foreign policy, since this appears to place as great an emphasis on soft power as it does for hard power, which suggests a potential limitation in the traditional notion of the China threat (Li, 2016, pg. 150). The presence of the China Dream also raises the issue of the possible relationship between the changes in China’s identity and the shifts in Chinese foreign policy (French, 2017, pg. 11). This has been of significance in line with the Chinese perception of the West as a single civilisation led by the United States, which it defines itself against. All serve as potential angles for future research.
6.7 Towards the Future of the Constructs of China

The American and Chinese constructs, while consistent in nature, are expected to undergo several changes over the course of China’s policies towards the African continent. The speed of these expected changes is in line with the rapid pace of China’s policies towards the African continent, which have made a notable impact on the African states in a comparatively brief period. It is the pace of these changes as well as the nature of them that makes any speculation over the future of this phenomena particularly difficult. Despite the pace of these changes, it is possible to spot some trends that are likely to make a notable impact on the future shape of China’s African policies as well as the constructs of them.

Over the course of the research process, there have been two main developments in China’s African policies that are likely to have a notable impact on the constructs regarding these policies and China’s identity. One of these has been the increase in China’s military presence in the African continent, underlined by the acquisition of China’s first military base in Africa, which opened in Djibouti (van Standen, 2018, pg. 3). This comes at a time where China has increased its participation in peace keeping operations in Africa, most notably in South Sudan and Mali. While these developments have already made an appearance in the constructs of the American perspective, most notably in the construct of China as a neo-imperial power, this also has implications for the nature of power in Chinese foreign policy in the African states. While soft power currently enjoys a greater status in Chinese foreign policy, the increased build-up of China’s hard power assets are likely to have an adverse effect on China’s carefully cultivated soft power initiatives. This is due to this development being perceived as fears that China is becoming an imperial power or a threat to the interests of other external actors (Rachman, 2016, pg. 67). This requires a delicate balance between China’s soft and hard power assets and furthers how these constructs reflect the developments in China’s African policies.

The second notable development has come in the form of the 2017 coup that ousted Mugabe’s long reign in Zimbabwe. One of the murkiest aspects of the coup was the allegations regarding China’s role in the affair, being the major external actor in the country. This was underlined by the fact that many of the plotters behind the coup, most notably the now president Emmerson Mnangagwa and General Chiwenga, have had long standing ties with China as many of the country’s ruling elite have had, with the former receiving training there during the Rhodesian conflict. The latter’s connections with China has been subject to a notable degree
of attention due to Chiwenga’s visit to China prior to the coup, where he met senior figures in China’s military (Pigou, 2017, pg. 2). While the nature of this visit is still unclear, it has already raised the spectre of the darker chapters from the continent’s past, echoing the actions of previous external actors in Africa. As with China’s increased military presence in the African continent, this development is likely to serve as an apparent confirmation of the American construct of China’s African policies being those of neo-imperialism.

While the focus of the study on Chinese foreign policy appears to be drifting away from China’s African policies and towards the Belt and the Road Initiative, the constructs from these policies are expected to be present in the wider implications of China’s role and identity. This can be seen in the apparent backlash against globalisation in much of the American world, most notably due to the increasingly protectionist stance taken by the Trump administration (Rachman, 2016, pg.53). This has seen the abandonment of a concept which the US was once a staunch advocate of in favour of an ‘America First’ foreign policy. By casting itself as the vanguard of globalisation, China now has a greater opportunity to spread its constructs as well as the Chinese system to a greater context than was initially possible. Recent development may see a greater spread of the Chinese constructs, which has implications for the battle over China’s identity.

The future of the constructs of China in Africa are likely to bring both challenges and opportunities for the Chinese system’s attempts to spread itself to a wider audience due to the recent developments in China’s African policies. Wider developments have also provided the Chinese constructs with a greater opportunity than it initially had to replicate the system beyond its context of origin. It is these developments that characterise the nature of these constructs as well as the wider battle for China’s identity.

6.8 Conclusion

The images of China in Africa serve as a representation of a wider normative rivalry between China and the West. This has been reflected in the competing images of China in Africa created by the American and Chinese narratives, which have been the creation of the norms and values that govern the discourses on this subject. This conflict emerges from the discourses’ attempt to spread their values beyond the context of their creation. The conflicting
images of China in Africa are an example of two competing systems advocated by constructs. In line with these ideas, the depiction of China in Africa is also illustrative of the competition between democratic and authoritarian norms. Such a conflict is symbolised by the recurring constructs of China as a role model in the Chinese narrative as well as the image of China as a facilitator of authoritarian norms in the American discourse. These images also have implications for the ideals of globalisation in the face of the apparent American backlash against these ideals. This shows how the narratives on China in Africa are reflective of China’s normative challenge to the established democratic norms.

Another aspect of Chinese foreign policy that the research has also highlighted is China’s cultural diplomacy and soft power initiatives and the degree of success that these policies have achieved. While the overall impact of these projects have often been perceived as being limited by China’s authoritarian political system, these initiatives have allowed China to become one of the primary educators of the African continent, something that has largely been overlooked by the traditional focus on China’s economic and military growth but has nevertheless been a significant factor in furthering Chinese influence in the African states. This development provides a greater opportunity for the Chinese system to spread itself beyond its original context. It is these gains that are suggestive of the methodologies of Chinese foreign policy as well as some possible successes of it. This serves to further underline how the populist images of Chinese foreign policy have misinterpreted China’s strategies. This is due to the focus on China’s economic and hard power, which has led to the simplistic images of Chinese foreign policy either being little more than a pursuit of economic objectives or as a revisionist power as it has recently been described as in the US National Security Strategy (Gill, 2018). These images ignore the other methodologies by which China has been able to build its influence abroad as well as focusing chiefly on hard power assets, which will ultimately hamper any attempt to respond to these strategies.

The competing discourses and constructs of China in Africa have been reflective of phenomena that goes beyond the context of China’s policies towards the African continent. By examining the knowledge on China in Africa, the more normative elements of Chinese foreign policy have been explored. These have largely been overlooked by much of the established literature on the subject but have been a significant part of Chinese strategies, which has enabled China to achieve its goals with a degree of success. It is this dimension that has been suggestive of the challenge that China poses, which has been notable in the form of the Chinese economic model and the utilisation of shared experiences, which has enabled China
to cement its ties with the African nations. As a result, any response to these policies that has been chiefly informed by a focus on economic and hard power will ultimately be lacking since this ignores how China has been able to build its influence in the developing world as well as how the challenge that China poses is a normative one as well as being an economic and military rival to the dominant international system. It is this aspect that characterises China’s wider challenge.
The Symbolism of Chinese Power

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274
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275
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