

RETHINKING CHINA'S PUBLIC DIPLOMACY EFFORTS IN AFRICA
ALONG THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

A Thesis
Presented to
The Faculty of Humanities of
Leiden University

In Partial Fulfilment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Asian Studies

by
Marit Bastiaansen
S2121786

under the supervision of
Dr. I.M.A. d'Hooghe

December 15, 2019

Total number of words: 14,991

© 2019
Marit Bastiaansen

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ABSTRACT

In this complex and interdependent world, China has learned that its image and projecting of soft power matters. Under the current leadership of President Xi Jinping, Beijing bets it all on the Belt and Road Initiative. Africa has emerged as one of the key and target areas of China's flagship foreign policy effort that in aggregate is increasingly used by the Chinese government as an instrument of public diplomacy. This thesis examines China's promotion of the Belt and Road Initiative in Africa in word and deed.

KEY WORDS: China, Belt and Road Initiative, Sino-African relations, Soft power, Public diplomacy, Country image, Nation-branding

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>ABSTRACT</u>	<u>II</u>
<u>TABLE OF CONTENTS</u>	<u>III</u>
<u>ABBREVIATIONS</u>	<u>IV</u>
<u>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION</u>	<u>32</u>
<u>BIBLIOGRAPHY</u>	<u>34</u>
<u>APPENDIX A: OVERVIEW OF SELECTED CHINESE GOVERNMENTAL SPEECHES FOR SPEECH CODING</u>	<u>41</u>
<u>APPENDIX B: OVERVIEW OF SELECTED NEWSPAPER ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN THE PEOPLE’S DAILY FOR NEWSPAPER ARTICLE CODING</u>	<u>44</u>
<u>APPENDIX C: CHINESE GOVERNMENTAL SPEECHES AND NEWSPAPER ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN THE PEOPLE’S DAILY CODING SCHEMES AND EXAMPLES</u>	<u>46</u>
<u>APPENDIX D: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED PROJECTS</u>	<u>49</u>

ABBREVIATIONS

BRF	Belt and Road Forum
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
FOCAC	Forum on China-Africa Cooperation
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SOE	State-Owned Enterprise
U.S.	United States

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In 2014, during the fourth plenary session of the Eighteenth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), President Xi Jinping, who had been anointed president of the People's Republic of China (henceforth China) the year before, announced that “We should increase China's ‘soft power’, give a good Chinese narrative, and better communicate China's messages to the world.”¹ Although his predecessor, Hu Jintao, had launched a publicity blitz and arguably abandoned the decades-long reticent “Hide and Bide” foreign policy strategy as stipulated by Deng Xiaoping, who was also the implementor of China's highly successful “Reform and Opening-Up” programme of 1978, Beijing's efforts to create attraction and soft power have intensified under President Xi. In addition to stepping up its investments for the modernisation of the People's Liberation Army and the securing of continued economic growth at a time when the engines of the economy are sputtering, the Chinese government recently annually invests tens of billions of dollars in a variety of public diplomacy instruments, both at home and around the world, to bring others' preferences in accordance with those of its own. Here, the practice of public diplomacy, above all, functions as a tool for or adjunct to the possibility of wielding soft power and, in the case of China, is becoming more and more intertwined with newly assertive foreign policy endeavours. In particular, the “Chinese Dream”, that has, at its core, achieving national rejuvenation from a “century of humiliation” is one such idea, which in conjunction with a flurry of public diplomacy, has been designed to polish up the country's long-held image of being a “red” economic juggernaut.

Unveiled in 2013, the “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI), formerly known as “One Belt, One Road”, is President Xi's two-pronged signature connectivity plan to partner with dozens of countries *en route* from Xi'an to Duisburg, creating the overland “Silk Road Economic Belt”, and from Fuzhou to Rotterdam, forming the basis of the “Twenty-first Century Maritime Silk Road”. The BRI, as of October 2019, touches 138 countries, most of them being located in Asia, Africa and Europe, altogether accounting for 61 per cent of the world's population and amounting to 36 per cent of Gross World Product.² China's flagship initiative is financed by Chinese state-owned banks, sovereign wealth funds, including the Silk Road

¹ Quoted in David Shambough, “China's Soft-Power Push: The Search for Respect,” *Foreign Affairs*, published August 13, 2015, accessed December 13, 2019, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2015-06-16/china-s-soft-power-push>.

² “How Will the Belt and Road Initiative Advance China's Interests?,” *ChinaPower*, published November 3, 2019, accessed December 13, 2019, <https://chinapower.csis.org/china-belt-and-road-initiative/>.

Fund, and multilateral financial institutions like the Beijing-based Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and is characterised by an array of hard infrastructure projects, such as the revitalisation of the deep-sea port of Gwadar in Pakistan and the proposed Budapest-Belgrade-Skopje-Athens-Piraeus railroad line. Despite the completion date being scheduled for the centennial anniversary of modern China in 2049, the Chinese government, in addition to being the biggest investor, has already committed significant technical, diplomatic and moral resources to the BRI. This is, for example, reflected in the organisation of the high-profile “Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation” (BRF) in May 2017 and the second edition thereof in April 2019. The BRI’s grandiosity but also its vague intentions have captured global headlines and are subject of a contentious scholarly debate. One of the key issues at stake in this debate is whether the BRI is a market-enlarging endeavour or a critical geostrategic undertaking that is motivated by the Chinese Dream. Beijing’s push to revive the ancient Silk Road has also come in for scholarly criticism, the most noteworthy example of this being the accusation that China through the BRI deliberately ensnares African countries and others in the developing world with debt dependences and then pulls them into its growing orbit.

Since the turn of the millennium and within the framework of the in 2000 founded Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), China, by positioning itself as the largest developing country in the world, has been deepening its relationship with Africa. On the surface, Chinese investments have spread across different regions in Africa and in all sectors, ranging from food processing to telecommunications. These investments, and China’s expanding footprint in Africa in general, have become central to an increasingly polarising “complementarity-dependency” debate: China is either a trade partner for or a new “coloniser” in Africa. Below the surface, some of the Chinese state-backed activities in Africa could be linked to image-building strategies aimed at boosting the country’s international standing. Hinged on cultural diplomacy and people-to-people relations, the Chinese government has, by way of illustration, set up fifty-four Confucius Institutes in Africa for the promotion of Chinese language and culture and established with twenty-seven counterparts the China-Africa Think Tank Forum in 2011. In considering the BRI to be the central instrument in China’s current public diplomacy arsenal, the sign up of forty out of Africa’s fifty-four officially recognised countries to the BRI signals a new era in the Chinese government’s soft power strategy and soft power efforts in Africa. Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to examine how the Chinese government, as the sending side of public diplomacy, promotes the BRI in Africa in word and deed. In so doing, this study seeks to come closer to a

more nuanced and realistic understanding of the BRI in Africa instead of pigeonholing China's activities in Africa as either "exploitive" or "beneficial".

The remainder of this thesis proceeds as follows. Chapter 2 provides a compact overview of previous literature and studies on the main purpose of the BRI, China's presence in Africa and the concepts of soft power and public diplomacy. In Chapter 3, the methodological approach and methods selected for this study are described and justified. The following chapter, Chapter 4, deals with the research findings. Chapter 5, the closing chapter, concludes this work with a brief summary, identification of the research limitations and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The objective of this chapter is to synthesise relevant previous research and critically evaluate the information gathered. The chapter begins with a discussion of the perceived impetus behind and motivations underpinning the BRI. It is followed by an overview of the contemporary debate on the impact of China's rapidly expanding trade and investment relations with Africa. Thereafter, the meaning and merits of the concepts of soft power and public diplomacy are identified.

2.1 Debating the BRI: A Market-Enlarging Endeavour or a Critical Geostrategic Undertaking Motivated by the Chinese Dream?

China's top leaders clearly regard the newly mooted BRI proposal as being of utmost importance, the most obvious person being President Xi, who even went as far in his keynote speech at the first BRF as to dub the BRI "the project of the century".³ But, after six years in existence, what is believed to be the main purpose of this century-defining connectivity plan?

According to a small group of "Western" commentators, the BRI should be seen as a confirmation of China's shift from "defensive mercantilism", which sought to protect the country's domestic market, to "offensive (neo-)mercantilism", meaning the strategic logic of securing new foreign markets for Chinese exports at a time when the end of the Chinese economic miracle of the last forty plus years seems to have come in sight.⁴ In other words, through, for example, enhanced access to Kazakhstan's emerging market as part of the China-Central Asia-West Economic Corridor, the BRI could be understood as a means for China to foster national economic prosperity and to reinvigorate the economies of its trading partners. This primarily *economic* line of thought has been well developed by Tim Summers, who in drawing on Arif Dirlik's understanding of the world's dominant spatial configurations through the metaphor of "nodes in global networks", by analogy with free-flowing global networks between metropolitan regions and as opposed to national spaces, puts forth the idea that the BRI is a platform for "the flows of capital, goods and people (as consumers, whether students or tourists)" throughout a network of major urban nodes.⁵ Along similar lines, Sean

³ Jinping Xi, "Work Together to Build the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Twenty-first Maritime Silk Road," keynote address, First Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, Beijing, China, May 14, 2017.

⁴ Although areas are constructs and fluid, "the West" in this thesis refers to the region comprising North America and Europe.

⁵ Arif Dirlik, *Global Modernity: Modernity in the Age of Global Capitalism* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2007): 24; Tim Summers, "China's 'New Silk Roads': Sub-National Regions and Networks of Global Political Economy," *Third World Quarterly* 37, no. 9 (2016): 1636.

Miner understands the BRI as a concrete manifestation of Beijing's desire to experience an economic upturn, help state-owned enterprises (SOEs) boosting their exports and accelerate the speed of the internationalisation of the renminbi.⁶ Seen from this perspective, the BRI is nothing more than an extension of China's "Going Out" strategy that was initiated in 1999 to encourage Chinese companies to invest and operate overseas so as to improve their competitiveness and attractiveness both within and outside the country.

The American William Callahan, most notably, and the vast majority of Chinese-language literature on the BRI underscore that the BRI was born out of the patriotic aspiration to weave the countries along the routes into a, in the words of Callahan, "Sino-centric network of economic, political, cultural and security relations" while simultaneously fulfilling the Chinese Dream of bringing about a great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, the national ethos President Xi continuously refers to.⁷ This *geostrategic* stance is, as Astrid Nordin and Maikel Weissmann describe, unsurprisingly emphasized by "national unit believers" who tend to deploy nation-branding language, as, for example, reflected in the resurrection of the "Middle Kingdom" narrative, in which the Middle Kingdom is the literal English translation of the Chinese name for China.⁸ In the long run, by proposing a modern-day adaptation of the ancient Silk Road, the Chinese government hopes, as Zhou Weifeng interprets, to alleviate the potentially destructive contradictions between itself and its "neighbours", reach a large degree of interregional consensus and, in turn, build its role as a normative power, ideally in an international order that is again intimately related to China and not to the United States (U.S.).⁹ In a similar vein, Zeng Lingliang and Zhao Xiaochun argue that the BRI, in particular, is critical for realising the Chinese diplomatic comprehensive vision of a "community of common destiny for the whole of mankind".¹⁰ This concept was first delivered by former President Hu Jintao in 2007 but has only been regularly advocated since the Eighteenth National Congress of the CCP of November 2012 and is, as Mardell expands

⁶ Sean Miner, "China's Belt and Road Initiative: Motives, Scope and Challenges," *Peterson Institute for International Economics Briefing* 16, no. 2 (2016): 13.

⁷ William A. Callahan, "China's 'Asia Dream': The Belt and Road Initiative and the New Regional Order," *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics* 1, no. 3 (2016): 231.

⁸ Astrid H. M. Nordin and Maikel Weissmann, "Will Trump Make China Great Again? The Belt and Road Initiative and International Order," *International Affairs* 94, no. 2 (2018): 236.

⁹ Weifeng Zhou, "Beyond Balancing: China's Approach Towards the Belt and Road Initiative," *Journal of Contemporary China* 27, no. 112 (2018): 490.

¹⁰ Lingliang Zeng, "Conceptual Analysis of China's Belt and Road Initiative: A Road Towards a Regional Community of Common Destiny," *Chinese Journal of International Law* 15, no. 3 (2016): 517; Xiaochun Zhao, "In Pursuit of a Community of Shared Future: Chinese Global Activism in Perspective," *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies* 4, no. 1 (2018): 32.

on, aimed at establishing a new, more equitable model of international relations by adding Chinese wisdom to the global governance model.¹¹

Although the BRI is only six years old and its full results could thus not yet be assessed, President Xi's signature effort has already become under increasing criticism. As Yujun Feng et al. from the Carnegie-Tsinghua Centre for Global Policy reveal, a part of the Chinese population has turned against the BRI for the reason that the scheme draws attention away from pressing domestic issues like the absence of an effective social safety net and for bringing everything, whether it is the construction of the sea-crossing Temburong Bridge in Brunei or the training of twenty-nine African journalists at the Renmin University of China under the umbrella of the BRI as there is no better way to demonstrate one's loyalty to and integrate oneself with the central leadership of the CCP.¹² Jacob Shapiro dismisses the BRI as an "ill-defined mirage" that has, to date, produced much noise and yielded few results.¹³ The BRI, furthermore, has become central to debates on "debt traps". The fact that, as Maria Carrai delineates, Sri Lanka's strategically located Hambantota Port has been handed over to the China Merchants Ports holding company on a ninety-nine-year lease in 2017 after it became clear that the Sri Lanka Ports Authority could not repay its China-sourced loans is often cited as evidence that the Chinese government deliberately practices "debt-trap diplomacy" through its BRI.

This thesis will be based on seeing the BRI, beyond calculations of concrete economic gains, as a central part of the programme of restoring China's lost greatness on the international stage and which potential outcomes would as claimed not only be beneficial for Chinese people but also for those within the community of common destiny. The BRI seems to integrate lessons learned from China's peaceful rise to superpower status and has summoned the country's most influential players, including state-run banks, SOEs and high-level diplomats, to join in this effort to subvert the U.S.-dominated rule-based world order. To put it differently, the Chinese government is heavily dependent on the BRI overall grand strategy. Focusing only on how the BRI is essentially driven by economic factors, as a small

¹¹ Jacob Mardell, "The 'Community of Common Destiny' in Xi Jinping's New Era," *The Diplomat*, published October 2017, accessed December 10, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/10/the-community-of-common-destiny-in-xi-jinpings-new-era/>.

¹² Yujun Feng et al., "The Belt and Road Initiative: Views from Washington, Moscow and Beijing," *Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy*, published April 8, 2019, accessed October 2, 2019, <https://carnegietsinghua.org/2019/04/08/belt-and-road-initiative-views-from-washington-moscow-and-beijing-pub-78774>.

¹³ Jacob L. Shapiro, "One Belt, One Road, No Dice," *Geopolitical Futures*, published January 12, 2017, accessed November 19, 2019, <https://geopoliticalfutures.com/one-belt-one-road-no-dice/>.

minority of the English-language commentary currently does, runs the risk of overlooking the point that these economic initiatives are motivated by President Xi's Chinese Dream.

2.2 Contextualising China's Presence in and Engagement with Africa

The growing footprint of China on the African continent and the undeniable emergence of China as "donor" to Africa have stimulated a vibrant and dichotomised debate both in the popular press and in academic scholarship at the heart of which lies the impact of China's trade relations with African countries. In reaching out more proactively to Africa, China promises, as enshrined in the government's 2006 and 2015 updated policy paper on Africa, to follow its guiding "South-South" mantra of "win-win cooperation".¹⁴ Some scholars, practitioners and even European and American politicians at high levels of government, amongst whom was former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, however, contend that Sino-African relations have plunged into a "win-lose" situation and that China has become the face of veritable neo-colonialism in Africa.¹⁵ In his article "Missing Links: Rogue Aid", Moisés Naím, for example, accuses China of offering "development assistance that is non-democratic in origin and non-transparent in practice" and whose "effect is typically to stifle real progress while hurting average citizens."¹⁶ The critics of this school of thought, popularly referred to as "dragon slayers", also voice the concern that China is pushing Africa into a debt trap and that China then tries to pay itself back through exclusive contracting, similarly to what has happened with the Hambantota port. An example of this is that, as Wade Shepard outlines, the Chinese-financed BRI-labelled railway line connecting its landlocked capital Addis Ababa to Djibouti, located at the mouth of the Red Sea and south of the Suez Canal, costed the Ethiopian government nearly a quarter of its budget for 2016 and keeps the debt-laden problems coming, even after it was renegotiated that the train would operate under a six-year contract by two of its Chinese contractors.¹⁷

¹⁴ "China's Africa Policy," *State Council*, published September 20, 2006, accessed November 24, 2019, <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zflt/eng/zgdfzcc/t481748.htm>.

¹⁵ Quoted in Andrew Quinn, "Clinton Warns Africa of China's Economic Embrace," *Reuters*, published June 10, 2011, accessed September 25, 2019, <https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-clinton-africa/clinton-warns-africa-of-chinas-economic-embrace-idUSTRE75962920110610>. For more on the "neo-colonialism with Chinese characteristics" stance see: Mark Langan, *Neo-Colonialism and the Poverty of "Development" in Africa* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 89-117; Ian Taylor, "China's Oil Diplomacy in Africa," *International Affairs* 82, no. 5 (2006): 937-959.

¹⁶ Moisés Naím, "Missing Links: Rogue Aid," *Foreign Policy* 159, no. 1 (2007): 95.

¹⁷ Wade Shepard, "What China Is Really up to in Africa," *Forbes*, published October 3, 2019, accessed November 25, 2019, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/wadeshepard/2019/10/03/what-china-is-really-up-to-in-africa/#2407c49f5930>.

On the other hand, others, sometimes nicknamed the “panda huggers”, are in agreement with current Rwandan President Paul Kagame that “China gives what Africa needs.”¹⁸ In the long term, as Arkebe Oqubay and Justin Lin maintain, China’s focus on investing in (rural) infrastructure and industrialisation in Africa will in all likelihood be vital for the further economic development of the continent, allow broader economic integration among African countries and facilitate a more expeditious exchange of information, goods and services between those countries.¹⁹ Besides these pro-poor and pro-growth investments, Horace Campbell expects that China’s meteoritic rise to the top as one of the world’s most innovative countries, technology spillover and high-tech ambitions will also help Africa accelerating its technological progress.²⁰ Scholars and practitioners at this end of the spectrum often tend to join the reversed-Orientalist pro-China chorus by pinpointing that traditional donors such as the U.S. and United Kingdom are themselves not immune from criticism on their aid flows to Africa, citing for example the econometrically unsatisfactory results of official foreign aid programmes in sub-Saharan Africa, where twenty-seven out the world’s twenty-eight poorest countries still are and the average poverty rate stands close to 41 per cent, despite the yearly U.S. disbursement of approximately fifty billion dollar.²¹

The discussion whether China exudes the qualities of a neo-colonialist menace in Africa or those of an equal trading partner for Africa presents valid arguments on both sides and has therefore not yet been concluded. Each strand of these competing interpretations contributes important information, sometimes contradictory, to obtaining a better grasp of China’s rapidly expanding trade and investment relations with Africa. However, what is missing from both the “neo-colonialist by nature” and “offering ‘win-win’ opportunities” perspectives is an attempt to identify the domestic Chinese political and economic forces that propel the country’s increased involvement in Africa, all the more so because many myths surround the nexus. Moreover, since the “China in Africa” debate is highly polarised, both camps should be careful not to become too pessimistic or overly optimistic on every aspect. It

¹⁸ “President Kagame’s Interview with Handelsblatt: ‘China Gives What Africa Needs’,” *Paul Kagame*, published October 12, 2009, accessed September 25, 2019, <http://paulkagame.com/?p=33>. Recommended further readings on the “pro-China” stance are: Diadié Diaw and Albert Lessoua, “Natural Resources Exports, Diversification and Economic Growth of CEMAC Countries: On the Impact of Trade with China,” *African Development Review* 25, no. 2 (2013): 189-202; Ward Warmerdam and Meine Pieter van Dijk, “China-Uganda and the Question of Mutual Benefits,” *South African Journal of International Affairs* 20, no. 2 (2013): 271-295.

¹⁹ Arkebe Oqubay and Justin Yifu Lin, *China-Africa and an Economic Transformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 160.

²⁰ Horace Campbell, “China in Africa: Challenging US Global Hegemony,” *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (2008): 100.

²¹ Miwa Hirono and Shogo Suzuki, “Why Do We Need ‘Myth-Busting’ in the Study of Sino-African Relations?,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 23, no. 87 (2014): 460.

is for these reasons that this thesis seeks to take a “myth-busting” approach in its aim to present a more nuanced and factually correct story of China in Africa as inspired by Deborah Bräutigam, one of the leading experts on Sino-African relations. In her most recent book *Will Africa Feed China?*, Bräutigam dispels, for example, the sensationalised media headlines about large-scale Chinese state-sponsored “land grabs” in Africa. In reality, as she finds out, “only” a total of 89,000 hectares of land were acquired between 2000 and 2014, which stands in stark contrast with the widely reported 5.6 million hectares.²²

2.3 The Concept of Soft Power and the Effectiveness and Limits Thereof

Before getting into the details of the phenomenon and practice of public diplomacy, it is worth exploring the concept of soft power, because, as Joseph Nye, the father of soft power, points out, public diplomacy is a mechanism through which attraction and soft power may be created.²³ Twenty-one years after he had coined the term and several elaborations later, Nye would in *The Future of Power* refer to soft power as “the ability to get what you want by the co-optive means of framing the agenda, persuading and eliciting positive attraction.”²⁴ Stated differently, soft power describes the utilisation of campaigns of persuasion as a way to obtain preferred outcomes and usually depends on the sender’s credibility. These senders have been varied, ranging from the ancient Chinese Taoist philosopher Laozi to modern-day food celebrity Jamie Oliver and from Frederick the Great, the longest-reigning king of Prussia, to the present government of Indonesia. For Nye, the idea of soft power started moving in the late 1980s when the U.S. seemed less powerful than in the aftermath of World War II but remained a leading global actor because, as he argues, it had more soft power than any other country, highlighting, for instance, the U.S. being the embodiment of the free market and its governance of intergovernmental organisations like the International Monetary Fund.²⁵ Back then, the effects of the U.S. being consistent with its values and in organisations dedicated to preserving peace and promoting all sorts of development were like, as Nye puts it, “the light shining from a city on the hill.”²⁶ By contrast with this passive variety of soft power, senders could also adopt an active approach to wield soft power through instruments such as public diplomacy and international broadcasting.²⁷ In Nye’s theorisation, the soft power of a country

²² Deborah Bräutigam, *Will Africa Feed China?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 78.

²³ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *The Future of Power: Its Changing Nature and Use in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2011), 100-101.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁵ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., “Soft Power,” *Foreign Policy* 80, no. Twentieth Anniversary (1990): 168.

²⁶ Nye, *The Future of Power*, 94.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

rests on the resources of “culture, values, legitimate policies, a positive domestic model, a successful economy and a competent military.”²⁸ By way of illustration, the Chinese government-funded Confucius Institutes, which totalled 535 centres in 149 countries as of November 2019, are the clearest physical places to date where China’s soft power resource of culture is attractive to others.²⁹

Nye juxtaposed soft power to “hard power”, that is, the use of militaristic, belligerent and economic forces, or “sticks” and “carrots”. Here, sticks are unpleasant sanctions, including the threat of military intervention, while carrots are inducements like the reduction of a trade barrier or the promise of bilateral aid. The U.S.-led invasion of Iraq for the prevention of further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in 2003 and the imposition of a comprehensive trade embargo by the U.S. government vis-à-vis Cuba since 1958 provide two prime examples of hard power. As could be seen from the above, some soft power resources may overlap with hard power currencies. China’s rejection of the “Washington Consensus” for crisis-wracked developing countries through an alternative “Beijing Consensus” has, for example, elevated the country’s model for economic growth as one to be emulated. In contrast, China’s economic strength is hard in the ongoing China-U.S. trade dispute as it imposes retaliatory tariffs on American soybeans, to take one example.

In parallel with the blossoming of the concept of soft power, Nye’s work attracted a significant volume of criticism. From public to academic circles and from heads of governments to journalists all have highlighted the elusiveness and ambiguity of the concept. To illustrate, Niall Ferguson, in discussing the soft power strategies of the U.S., asked himself how it is possible that children in the Islamic world enjoy CDs by the American Britney Spears and bottles of Coca-Cola from the eponymous American-based company but have a deep aversion to the U.S. in general.³⁰ This demonstrates, according to Ferguson, that true power does not reside in a country’s culture or that an attractive specific culture could exert influence.³¹ Steven Lukes finds fault with Nye’s theorisation of soft power inasmuch as he misses a distinction between the different modes in which soft power could be exercised and therefore proposes to draw distinctions between, first, “changing the incentive structures of agents whose (subjective) interests are taken as given, on the one hand, and influencing or shaping those very interests, on the other” and, second, “the conditions under which and

²⁸ Ibid, 99.

²⁹ “About Confucius Institute/Classroom,” *Hanban*, accessed November 27, 2019, http://english.hanban.org/node_10971.htm.

³⁰ Niall Ferguson, “Think Again: Power,” *Foreign Policy*, no. 134 (2003): 21.

³¹ Ibid.

mechanisms by which such shaping and influencing occurs.”³² Although Nye acknowledged the call for a lucid explanation of soft power and subsequently updated his work, among other things by combining the tools of both hard and soft power into “smart power”, neo-realists like Jason Davidson and Randall Schweller continue to hold the opinion that the hard material forms of power, meaning the military and economic capabilities of a country, trump soft power in the realm of international relations.³³ Their downgrading of the role of soft power in shaping events, as Pinar Bilgin and Berivan Eliş elucidate, is the logical consequence of the neo-realist somewhat more traditional bias for the tangible components of power.³⁴

In this thesis, however, soft power is regarded as an increasingly important element of a country’s power. This is in the first place because punishing or threatening other countries with methods of coercion would be tantamount to “self-stoning” in today’s interconnected and interdependent world. Following three waves of globalisation, subjected countries could easier than ever before escape from the threats of hard power and take refuge in numerous internationally or regionally supported “safe harbours”. In the second place, as Giulio Gallarotti and Jan-Philipp Wagner persist in, adequately incorporating soft power into a government strategy could bring about an effective long-term change in the attitude of a targeted country as this country would be approached and, hopefully, admire the sending country voluntarily.³⁵ In the third and last place, as Mark Leonard explains, while an inexhaustible arsenal of hard power utensils could be difficult to get for small and medium-sized countries, the obtainment of resources necessary to wield soft power depends less on the actual size of a country.³⁶ The international recognition of Norway, a relatively small and sparsely populated country, as a promoter of global peace proves that soft power is not exclusively reserved for the larger countries in the world. Thus, the increased international integration and the foundations soft power lays for developing dialogues and establishing long-term relationships have made it unpalatable for any country, despite having more

³² Steven Lukes, “Power and the Battle for Hearts and Minds,” *Millennium – Journal of International Studies* 33, no. 3 (2005): 487-491.

³³ Jason W. Davidson, *The Origin of Revisionist and Status-Quo State* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 17; Randall L. Schweller, “Rising Power and Revisionism in Emerging International Order,” *Valdai Papers*, no. 16 (2015): 4.

³⁴ Pinar Bilgin and Berivan Eliş, “Hard Power, Soft Power: Toward a More Realistic Power Analysis,” *Insight Turkey* 10, no. 2 (2008): 7.

³⁵ Giulio M. Gallarotti, “Soft Power: What it is, Why it’s Important, and the Conditions Under Which it Can be Effectively Used,” *Division II Faculty Publications*, no. 57 (2011): 11; Jan-Philipp N. E. Wagner, “The Effectiveness of Soft and Hard Power in Contemporary International Relations,” *E-International Relations Students*, published May 14, 2014, accessed September 30, 2019, <https://www.e-ir.info/2014/05/14/the-effectiveness-of-soft-hard-power-in-contemporary-international-relations/>.

³⁶ Mark Leonard, *Public Diplomacy* (London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2002), 53.

swords, bigger guns and the possibility of making financial support available, to let another country behave in its preferred manner solely through hard power strategies.

Returning to China, the Chinese government's gradual, but enthusiastic, adoption of soft power and the intensification of China's soft power efforts under President Xi as mentioned in Chapter 1 have brought to the fore a contentious debate about the returns on Beijing's soft power investments and the country's current appeals and potential to project attraction. As Nye himself endorses, China's pattern of economic growth, historically unprecedented efforts in poverty alleviation and traditional cultural values have made positive contributions to China's soft power.³⁷ "China managed to get well over one hundred million foreign tourists in 2015...and the number of international students stood at 3,97,365," says Vinayak Dalmia, adding that inbound tourism and educational exchanges programmes constitute two other major weapons in the country's soft power arsenal.³⁸ More recently, as the 2018 Soft Power 30 reports shows, President Xi's landmark speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2017, which echoed China's intention to defend free trade, and the widespread acceptance of Chinese companies and brands, including electronics manufacturer Xiaomi, have generated feelings of sympathy to China.³⁹ Out of all continents in the world, as Helge Rønning analyses, China's diverse soft power efforts have been most fruitful in the home continent and in Africa, where China nowadays holds, with some exceptions, the image of "a partner who sees Africa as a continent of the future, and does so at a time when the West sees Africa as 'The Hopeless Continent.'"⁴⁰

Other observers nevertheless remain doubtful whether China could produce sustained attraction and possess a great deal of soft power. Joshua Kurlantzick refers, for example, to countries involved in the South China Sea territorial dispute in which the threat of Chinese investments in a massive missile inventory and its subsequent militarisation of the disputed region far outweigh the marginal successes of its soft power activities.⁴¹ The Confucius

³⁷ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "Soft Power: The Origins and Political Progress of a Concept," *Palgrave Communications* 3, no. 1 (2017): 2.

³⁸ Vinayak Dalmia, "Will China Succeed in Its Soft Power Strategy?," *Observer Research Foundation*, published September 12, 2018, accessed October 3, 2019, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/43982-will-china-succeed-in-its-soft-power-strategy/>.

³⁹ "The Soft Power 30," *Portland Communications and the USC Center on Public Diplomacy*, published July 2, 2018, accessed October 3, 2019, <https://softpower30.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/The-Soft-Power-30-Report-2018.pdf>.

⁴⁰ Helge Rønning, "How Much Soft Power Does China Have in Africa?" in *China's Media and Soft Power in Africa: Perceptions and Promotions*, ed. Xiaoling Zhang, Herman Wasserman and Winston Mano (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 65-78.

⁴¹ Joshua Kurlantzick, "The Big Question: Understanding China's Soft Power," *National Endowment for Democracy and International Forum for Democratic Studies*, published June 19, 2017, accessed October 4, 2019, <https://www.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Understanding-Chinas-Sharp-Power.pdf>.

Institutes have most evidently been subject to bitter worldwide criticism and concerns. Starting in the early 2010s, several dozens of Confucius Institutes have been closed as they are more and more seen as foreign propaganda or spying outposts for the Chinese government, or in the words of Steven Mosher, as “Trojan horses with Chinese characteristics”.⁴² Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig, in taking China’s soft power one step further, draw attention to the authoritarian political system of China (not to mention Russia) that sophisticatedly controls “attractive systems of manipulating” in foreign open democracies and distracts other countries from its silencing of political opponents, and they for that reason suggest to rename the country’s soft power “sharp power” as it “pierces, penetrates, and perforates the political and information environments in targeted countries.”⁴³

Perhaps Chinese cultural customs and traditions are indeed the key in producing soft power for China but in making statements about the effectiveness of its resources and the impact of its soft power it should be kept in mind that one of the problems of soft power is that no satisfactory methods of measurement have yet been found. Because of the reciprocal relationship between sender and receiver, there could not be a uniform view of the sender’s soft power, which thus may differ from one receiver to the next. This means that the success of China’s soft power is controlled by the targeted country and also depends on the lens through which China as a whole is perceived. The government-driven rise of Han-centred Chinese nationalism, the Chinese government’s systematic repression of entire ethnic minorities and its imposition of limits on the freedom of speech and expression namely withhold China from projecting soft power in the West. For the West, another dramatic increase in Chinese government spending on public diplomacy instruments will not necessarily make China more beloved, because, as a matter of principle, it would be presented a menu of its (potentially) harmful shortcomings and illiberal propensities, first and foremost from the U.S. Seen from the African perspective, China offers steadiness, financial support, years of experience in poverty reduction, jobs and an alternative to Western conditional aid. Logically, as Rønning then notes, China has been appealing to a broad audience of African countries, especially to authoritarian-leaning ones and through its aid pledge, but there is also

⁴² Steven W. Mosher, “Confucius Institutes: Trojan Horses with Chinese Characteristics,” *Population Research Institute*, published March 28, 2012, accessed October 4, 2019, <https://www.pop.org/confucius-institutes-trojan-horses-with-chinese-characteristics/>.

⁴³ Christopher Walker and Jessica Ludwig, “From ‘Soft Power’ to ‘Sharp Power’: Rising Authoritarian Influence in the Democratic World,” in *Sharp Power: Rising Authoritarian Influence*, ed. Juan Pablo Cardenal, Jacek Kucharczyk, Grigorij Meseznikov and Gabriela Pleschová (Washington D.C.: *National Endowment for Democracy and International Forum for Democratic Studies*, 2017), 8-25.

“still a long way to go before China wields the soft power in Africa so many Chinese politicians and academics foresee.”⁴⁴

2.4 The Practice of Public Diplomacy

China’s embrace of soft power and its therewith associated strategies and activities have captured considerable scholarly attention. The same could not be said about the country’s conduct of the related concept of public diplomacy. Although the conceptualisation of public diplomacy has been undergoing substantial changes since Edmund Gullion coined the term in 1965 and there is no commonly accepted definition of public diplomacy, it is agreed that public diplomacy may be instrumental in creating soft power. What most public diplomacy scholars, furthermore, do agree on is that a paradigm shift has taken place in the Information Age and in the wake of “9/11” from state-centred traditional public diplomacy to, what Jan Melissen calls, “new public diplomacy”.⁴⁵ In describing the characteristics of both, James Pamment points out that instead of relying on mass-oriented one-way monologues from foreign ministries to foreign publics as traditional public diplomacy does, new, post-9/11 public diplomacy is about building partnerships and relationships through diplomatic engagement with a broad interconnected foreign audience, networking and two-way, symmetric communications, as managed by a wide variety of state and non-state actors, such as non-governmental organisations, think tanks and members of the diaspora. One of the most important drivers for this two-way form of communication with target publics within and across national borders has, of course, been the rise of new and social media. Hence, public diplomacy in this thesis is understood as the means by which, to quote Bruce Gregory, “states, associations of states, and some sub-state and non-state actors understand cultures, attitudes, and behaviour; build and manage relationships; and influence thoughts and mobilise actions to advance their interests and values.”⁴⁶ That is to say, public diplomacy has expanded beyond the realm of governments to include non-state actors and private individuals as active participants in the operational programme for the achievement of goals related a country’s foreign policy. The subsets, instruments and layers of public diplomacy will be discussed in the following chapter as they together form the analytical framework of this study.

⁴⁴ Rønning, “How Much Soft Power Does China Have in Africa?”, 77.

⁴⁵ Jan Melissen, “The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice,” in *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, ed. Jan Melissen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 3-23.

⁴⁶ Bruce Gregory, “American Public Diplomacy: Enduring Characteristics, Elusive Transformation,” *The Hague Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 3/4 (2011): 353.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter details out the research methods used and explains the operational choices that were made. It includes an overview of the guiding research question, type of research design, the three countries that would serve as case studies, what the criteria were for selecting these countries, the analytical framework and the data collection process.

3.1 Guiding Research Question

As pointed out in Chapter 1, this thesis explores the promotion by the Chinese government of the BRI in Africa in word and deed, and is therefore guided by the following research question:

How has China been promoting the BRI in Africa and whether and to what extent have its words been translated into deeds?

3.2 Research Design

Since the aim of this thesis is to accurately describe and analyse the relationship between word and deed in the China's promotion of the BRI in Africa between October 2015 and June 2019, a qualitative descriptive approach is chosen. Descriptive research is a widely cited research tradition and, as Helen Dulock underlines, has been identified as important for research determining the "what" of phenomena, especially when little research has so far been conducted on the topic.⁴⁷ To date, indeed, relatively little is also known about the non-economic aspect of the BRI and how the Chinese government mixes hard power tools with instruments of modern public diplomacy within the context of the BRI, ultimately resulting in this thesis mostly creating meaning and providing new insights. One fundamental characteristic of descriptive research is that researchers of this design draw on sources of original unaltered data, as do researchers, including the author of this thesis, who incorporate elements of a qualitative research approach.⁴⁸ Agreeing with Isadore Newman and Carolyn Benz's proposal of no longer seeing qualitative and quantitative research as two polar opposites, this thesis also *tends* to be qualitative based on the assessment that the guiding

⁴⁷ Helen L. Dulock, "Research Design: Descriptive Research," *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing* 10, no. 4 (1993): 154.

⁴⁸ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 1998), 35.

research question, first and foremost, requires textual information instead of numerical data, which is customary for the quantitative approach to research.⁴⁹

3.3 From Cairo via Nairobi to Pretoria: Case Selection for Multiple Case Study Analysis

With the central starting point of descriptive qualitative studies being real-world scenarios, this thesis uses three cases, that are Egypt, Kenya and South Africa, as “building blocks” in trying to offer a, to the extent possible, truthful picture of the BRI’s reality. Although developing multiple case studies may be cumbersome and time-consuming, in this thesis the limited use of three cases has advantages in terms of, first, as Alexander George and Andrew Bennett note, achieving “conceptual validity”, which appears to be complicated when (dissimilar) cases are being thrown together just to get a larger sample, and, second, as Robert Yin describes, being able to compare cases to each other and, in so doing, discover recurring patterns among or determine differences between cases.⁵⁰ Thus, by studying three different, but related, cases this thesis could put forward more reliable arguments.

As said, Egypt, Kenya and South Africa are delved into for cross-case analysis, each country of which being a single-subject study. These countries were carefully chosen from an, what Bent Flyvbjerg calls, “information-oriented perspective” to maximise possible variance and because prior expectations existed about the rich information of their participations in the BRI.⁵¹ Within information-oriented selection and to exhibit variation among case countries, the final decision on which countries to include in the analysis was made on the basis of the following specific selection criteria:

1. A variety of countries in terms of length of official participation and type of participation in the BRI;
2. A difference in absolute geographic location in Africa, but all cases being strategically located along the Twenty-first Century Maritime Silk Road;
3. Each country should individually be on the radar of the Chinese government, as indicated, for example, by President Xi or other representatives of the state having

⁴⁹ Isadore Newman and Carolyn Benz, *Qualitative-Quantitative Research Methodology: Exploring the Interactive Continuum* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998), 3.

⁵⁰ Alexander George and Andrew Bennet, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Science* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), 19; Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 1994), 199.

⁵¹ Bent Flyvbjerg, “Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 12, no. 2 (2006): 253.

paid a visit to the country, the Chinese government having sent a special envoy to the country or having received a delegation from the country in China, and this being reported in the Chinese media.

In total, five countries were found that all could provide enough information about their gives-and-takes of the BRI and pass the selection criteria, but Egypt, Kenya and South Africa became the cases to be included given their geographic dispersion and longer-term participations in the BRI. The remaining two, these being Tunisia and Ethiopia, were held in reserve.

3.3.1 Egypt

Being located in the northeastern corner of Africa, having nationalised the important Suez Canal, which connects the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, and seeking a new role in the adjacent Middle East, it has not been a question for the Chinese government whether or not to partner with Egypt under the framework of the BRI but rather when at the earliest. The actual participation of this newly industrialising country in the BRI became reality in January 2016, when President Xi met with his Egyptian counterpart, current President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, in Cairo, the second stop of his three-country tour to Africa and the Middle East. The two presidents signed at that time a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in which they agreed to work closely together and meticulously on the rollout of the BRI in Egypt. As an added sweetener, President Xi proposed to make Egypt a “hub” for the BRI and encouraged Chinese firms to assist in Egypt’s megaprojects, including upgrading the Suez Canal and the building of the country’s new capital to the east of Cairo. Egypt has since then been closely involved in the BRI with, among other things, senior-level participation in the first and second BRF and the hosting of the first round of the BRI Industrial and Commercial Alliance Conference in April 2017.

3.3.2 Kenya

Ever since President Xi assumed office, China has tried to strengthen its relationship with Kenya so as to seal a new type of partnership that, to quote Liu Guangyuan, the Chinese Ambassador to Kenya, “will be more magnificent than Mount Kenya and...broader than

Maasai Mara [a 668,500-hectare nature reserve in Kenya].”⁵² The country’s efforts are in line with the idea that the ultra-modern ports of Mombasa and Lamu, about halfway between the major ports of the Middle East and South Africa, are “gateways” to East and Central Africa. The capital city Nairobi, additionally, is considered to be a *rendezvous* point for businesses, start-ups and artists from all over sub-Saharan Africa, as it, for example, headquarters large airline companies. The dominant impression is that Kenya, at least in the person of current President Uhuru Kenyatta, has a mutual interest in co-operating, as is clear from his preference to officially visit China, the country’s biggest aid donor, earlier than the U.S. Relatively quickly after the unveiling of the BRI in 2013, Kenya signed tens of agreements on hosting infrastructure-related BRI-labelled projects in order to improve its poor infrastructure, such as an additional section to the infamous Chinese-funded Mombasa-Nairobi railway line. In May 2017, following the first BRF, the two countries entered a new phase in their relationship when Kenya became an official BRI country. Although it may seem all sunshine and roses at government level, critics, in drawing analogies with the Hambantota Port, have been questioning themselves if, for example, the Mombasa-Nairobi railway line is not another Chinese white elephant.

3.3.3 South Africa

In December 2015, during President Xi’s second trip to Africa and on the eve of the second FOCAC Summit, South Africa became the first African country to sign a MoU with China on official national participation in the BRI aimed at achieving cross-continental infrastructural development. The ongoing strengthening of bilateral ties between Beijing and Pretoria means, in effect, that the BRI is extending to the southernmost tip of Africa. What proves the *raison d’être* for this turn left down is that, as Sören Scholvin and Peter Draper emphasise, South Africa has long been heralded as an appropriate base of operations from which connections to the rest of Africa could be formed and China’s relationship with South Africa had earlier proven to be functional within the multilateral frameworks of the BRICS – a formal political grouping of the five major emerging national economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – and the FOCAC.⁵³ Under these frameworks and with the

⁵² Quoted in Sudarsan Raghavan, “In Snub to Washington Kenyan President Visits China, Russia in First Official Visit Outside Africa,” *The Washington Post*, published August 17, 2013, accessed November 2, 2019, <https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-clinton-africa/clinton-warns-africa-of-chinas-economic-embrace-idUSTRE75962920110610>.

⁵³ Sören Scholvin and Peter Draper, “The Gateway to Africa? Geography and South Africa’s Role as an Economic Hinge Joint between Africa and the World,” *South African Journal of International Affairs* 19, no. 3 (2012): 397.

added framework of the BRI, President Xi has held regular meetings with the former president of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, and the current one, Cyril Ramaphosa. Given South Africa's economic growth potential and preparation for the "Fourth Industrial Revolution", the Chinese government often makes digital industrialisation a subject of their meetings and, in this way, tries to step in this field in South Africa. In South Africa, too, the BRI has become a cause of concern for some people, who are wondering if the China-led BRI will not ultimately deliver a knockout blow to South Africa's foreign policy that is full of Pan-Africanist objectives, its influence in Africa as well as international standing.

3.4 Analytical Framework: The Subsets, Instruments and Layers of Public Diplomacy

A country's public diplomacy could consist of a number of different subclassifications and an array of instruments has been identified that could possibly be used for conducting public diplomacy. The analysis presented in this thesis relies on the arrangement of public diplomacy into four subsets and the classification of the wide range of possible public diplomacy instruments into five categories, as proposed by Ingrid d'Hooghe. On top of that, Geoffrey Cowan and Amelia Arsenault put forward three layers – monologue, dialogue and collaboration – that are essential tools in a country's public diplomacy arsenal and are therefore also subject to this study's analysis.⁵⁴

As d'Hooghe puts it in her book *China's Public Diplomacy*, public diplomacy comprises the following subsets: citizen diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, strategic communications and, to a certain extent, nation branding.⁵⁵ These subclassifications could best be described by using older practical examples from China. First, citizen diplomacy refers to the inclusion and participation of "unofficial China" in foreign policy making and emphasises the importance of people-to-people relations. Initial citizen contacts could be established, for instance, during a student's study abroad at Tsinghua University in Beijing and may be the first step towards rapprochement when government relations have been cooled. By definition, cultural diplomacy is, as Simon Mark expresses it, "the deployment of a state's culture in support of its foreign policy goals or diplomacy."⁵⁶ For instance, First Lady Peng Liyuan has sparked worldwide interest in Chinese (luxury) fashion brands by

⁵⁴ Geoffrey Cowan and Amelia Arsenault, "Moving from Monologue to Dialogue to Collaboration: The Three Layers of Public Diplomacy," *The Annals of the American Academic of Political and Social Science* (2008): 27.

⁵⁵ Ingrid d'Hooghe, *China's Public Diplomacy* (Leiden: Brill Nijhoff, 2015), 28-31.

⁵⁶ Simon Mark, "A Greater Role for Cultural Diplomacy," *Discussion Papers in Diplomacy*, no. 114 (2009): 1.

leaning into Chinese-designed costumes in international appearances and has so been helping the country to shed its long-held image as “factory of the world”. Third, as Nye comments, the subset of strategic communications bears a striking resemblance to concerted marketing or political campaigns, as these senders should also focus on a central theme and plan symbolic events and judicious communications.⁵⁷ For China, hosting the Summer Olympics in 2008 and the World Expo in 2010 are two examples of events which required proper, careful and lengthy preparations and whose outcomes have not been measured in hours or days but over years. Finally, as d’Hooghe writes, national branding could be considered a partial subset of public diplomacy in the sense that it like public diplomacy aims to build and promote a certain image.⁵⁸ The abovementioned Olympics Games, for example, were not only about sports, because, as Wu et al. expand on, with, among other things a dazzling opening ceremony, “China itself emerged as the most evitable and notable brand” of the Olympic Games.⁵⁹

According to d’Hooghe, the wide variety of public diplomacy instruments could be categorised into the following groups: (1) media, ranging from traditional newspapers to social networking sites like Instagram and WeChat; (2) events, anything from small-scale cultural events to giga-events such as the World Expo; (3) strategic communication projects, some of which are branding seminars and workshops; (4) people and institutions, including twin cities exchanges and tourism; and (5) publications and promotional materials, such as flyers and video clips.⁶⁰

Cowan and Arsenault, then, identified three layers that are all essential for effective public diplomacy. Monologue as a layer in a country’s public diplomacy refers to the use of one-way, “push-down” communication forms which are designed to reach large foreign publics and may take, for example, the form of speeches, press releases and movies. The second layer, dialogue, concerns two-way modes of communication and is about the exchange of ideas and information. The layer of collaboration should be understood as “initiatives and outreach campaigns that feature an effort by citizens of different countries to complete a common project or achieve a common goal”.⁶¹ The employment of these layers operationally depends, in part, on the characteristics of the target audience and therefore, as Nicolas Cull

⁵⁷ Nye, *The Future of Power*, 105.

⁵⁸ d’Hooghe, *China’s Public Diplomacy*, 31.

⁵⁹ Zhiyan Wu et al., *From Chinese Brand Culture to Global Brands: Insights from Aesthetics, Fashion and History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 78.

⁶⁰ d’Hooghe, *China’s Public Diplomacy*, 38.

⁶¹ Cowan and Arsenault, “Moving from Monologue,” 12.

argues, “listening” also forms a constituent part of a country’s larger public diplomacy strategy.⁶²

3.5 Data Collection Process

In this thesis, the gathering of appropriate data and analysis thereof was a two-stage process. All original data being worked with were published or made available over a period of three and a half years between October 2015 and June 2019. October 2015 was used as a starting point because in the run-up to the second FOCAC Summit, which was held in December 2015, the Chinese government unequivocally started to link its BRI with development strategies of several African countries. Moreover, shortly before and shortly after this summit, the Chinese government began to partner with some countries in Africa under the BRI. The case countries of Egypt and South Africa, for example, became official BRI countries in January 2016 and December 2015, respectively. June 2019 was set as the final month as it is believed to be the end of the immediate aftermath of the most recent major BRI-related event that had a lot of attendees coming from Africa and was widely covered in the Chinese media, namely the second BRF held in April 2019.

3.5.1 The Coding of Speeches and Newspaper Articles

In the first part of the data collection process, the author herself coded the transcripts of eighteen speeches given by a variety of high-level Chinese government officials over and twenty-seven news articles from the *People’s Daily* on the BRI in Egypt, Kenya and South Africa. The *People’s Daily*, importantly, is the official organ of the Central Committee of the CCP and thus, in addition to the speech-givers, another mouthpiece of the Chinese government. Within the limits of speeches online available and accessible and despite President Xi’s personal commitment to the BRI, an attempt was made to not only have his literal spoken words but also to include statements that were over the three and a half years given by other representatives of the state, such as sent out ambassadors (see Appendix A for all eighteen examined speeches). A complementary list of twenty-seven newspaper articles published online in the *People’s Daily* was drawn up by, first, having filtered out all irrelevant articles through reading the first two sentences of each article that in their headline had “BRI” and the name of one of the case countries in the newspaper’s digital archive and, then, by

⁶² Nicholas J. Cull, “Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past,” *CPD Perspectives on Public Diplomacy* 2, no. 19 (2009): 16-17.

having randomly selected every third article and at interval “seven” a second article for all years, except for the shorter year 2015 (see Appendix B for all twenty-seven analysed newspaper articles).

Instead of using preconceived coding categories to interpret the content of the speeches and newspaper articles, a so-called “inductive approach” was adopted, meaning that a new, original coding scheme was made based on an efficient number of self-made coding categories. This direct approach seemed to be the most obvious choice as the textual materials were not part of any pre-existing coding scheme. In the actual coding process, speech after speech and newspaper article after newspaper article were read from beginning to end while highlighting sentences, phrases and concrete words that appeared to describe the areas of the BRI on which the Chinese government focused and projects relating thereto. The initial coding categories were determined after the two oldest speeches and newspaper articles of each case country had been coded openly. The remaining materials were thereafter coded by using these initial coding categories and new categories were added when areas and or BRI-labelled plans or projects were encountered that could not fit into one of previously made categories. In the next step, the textual data first dealt with were re-read to check if they contained any relevant content that would fit into one of the later emerged categories. After all speeches and newspaper articles had been coded, it was calculated how often a coding category occurred in total per country and the illustrative plan and project examples that were mentioned throughout the texts were noted down per coding category and per country. Ultimately, the final coding categories were organised and grouped in eighteen meaningful clusters in three coding schemes, one for each case country, to which the columns “combined frequency” and “illustrative examples” were added (see Appendix C for these schemes).

3.5.2 The Analysis of Project Implementation

In the second part of the data collection process, all concrete BRI-labelled plans and projects as mentioned in the textual materials surveyed were first listed in tabular form, after which the latest information online available on the extent of their actual implementation was collected and added in a new column to this table (see Appendix D). It is worth noting that no distinction was made between, on the one hand, hard physical infrastructure and economic projects and, on the other hand, actions of a softer nature, given that this study takes the approach of seeing the BRI in aggregate as a public diplomacy tool. In sticking to the Chinese interpretation of the BRI, the information on the implementation of plans and projects was, at all times, derived from Chinese state-owned media and varied from the country’s official

press agency *Xinhua* to speeches already analysed, depending on the most recent date of publication. During the analysis of this information, specific attention was paid to the question of whether a plan or project has got off the ground, had been completed or perhaps even had been repeated.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Having developed the coding schemes and looked into the implementation of plans and projects mentioned in the textual materials, this chapter presents the research findings. The first section is devoted to showing the recurring priority areas of promotion in all Egypt, Kenya and South Africa and country-specific areas. The second section is about the relationship between word and deed in China's promotion of the BRI in Africa.

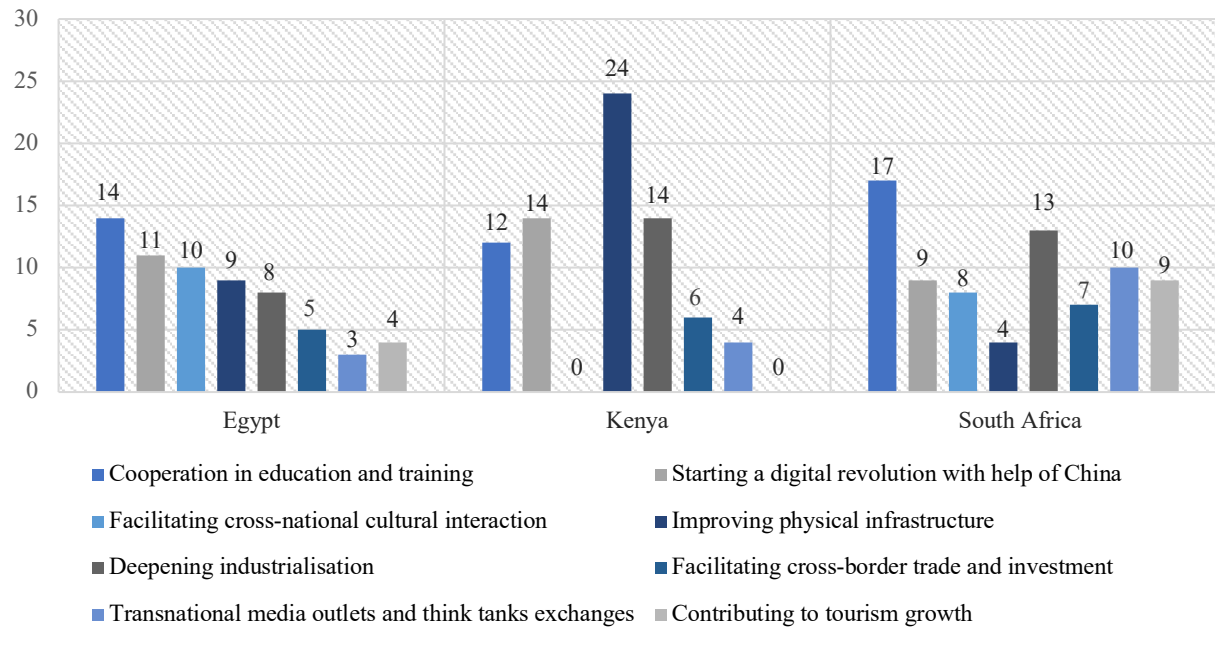
4.1 The Promotion of the BRI in Africa in Word and Deed

The African dimension of the Chinese government-initiated framework of the BRI encompassed a multitude of focus areas, which for a part corresponded to the subsets, instruments and layers to be possibly used in the execution of public diplomacy, ranging from counterterrorism to female empowerment and from industrialisation to aerospace. As could be seen in Figure 1, in which the five major focus areas of each case country are compared with those of the others even if they did not rank in a country's own top five, the Chinese government attached great importance to physical BRI-related infrastructure projects, placed special emphasis on BRI-labelled contributions to ongoing industrialisation processes, with frequently positioning the so-called "Digital Silk Road" as a fulcrum for rapid industrialisation and actively promoted people-to-people interactions and cultural exchanges in each case country. Contrariwise, Figure 1 also shows that, as expected from the socio-political differences between Egypt, Kenya and South Africa and the structural differences between their economies, the major focus areas of the Chinese government varied considerably among these countries.

4.1.1 The Focus Area of Infrastructure

Notwithstanding that the initial final goal of the BRI of boosting regional trade and economic growth in countries along its routes through better connectivity has been replaced by the diplomatic and strategic goal of knitting together a community of common destiny, the Chinese government continued to see infrastructure projects as an important link in the larger chain of its BRI in the three selected case countries. This is, in particular, reflected in the fact that in the six speeches and nine newspaper articles analysed for Kenya no less than twenty-one references were made to the construction of the BRI-labelled, from a Chinese perspective, rapturously acclaimed Mombasa-Nairobi railway line. It became furthermore apparent that

Figure 1: The Five Major Focus Areas of the Chinese Government Promotion of the BRI in Egypt, Kenya and South Africa



the Chinese government often presented the train running on this line, dubbed the “Madaraka Express”, as a key part in tackling Kenya’s pressing infrastructural needs. The indispensability of this train for Kenya’s economic development could, most notably, be read in the words spoken in 2018 by the then Chinese Ambassador to Kenya, Sun Baohong:

Under the framework of the BRI, the governments of China and Kenya, and more than 40,000 workers from both countries, have worked together to complete the 472-kilometre-long project within two and a half years, shortening the Nairobi-Mombasa trip from more than ten hours to five. The building of the railway line has driven Kenya's economic growth by 1.5% and created 46,000 jobs for local residents. Since it was launched on May 31st last year, the Madaraka Express passenger volume has reached 1.58 million and its freight trains have hauled 112,000 TEUs [112,000 standard-sized shipping containers], which has lowered down the freight cost by 79% and business cost by 40%.⁶³

Whereas the Chinese government in its statements concerning the infrastructure projects carried out in Egypt and Kenya as part of the BRI tended to look at the (possible) outcomes of these projects in terms of, for example, the total number of kilometres of expressways built or

⁶³ Baohong Sun, “No Traps and Prejudice on the Train of the Belt and Road,” In response to an earlier similarly titled article published in Kenya’s *Daily Nation*, Nairobi, August 2, 2018.

the predicted travel time reduction for a local employee, it did not focus on the content of BRI-related infrastructure projects conducted in South Africa, but rather on the Chinese funding thereof. As illustration, under the auspices of the BRI, it was announced during President Xi's visit to South Africa in December 2015 that the State Grid Corporation of China would grant loans to South Africa's cash-strapped Eskom, for, among other things, making the country's energy infrastructure more reliable.⁶⁴ One reason for this difference in promoted BRI activities may be that South Africa has a well-developed infrastructure, certainly as compared to the relatively underdeveloped infrastructures of Egypt and Kenya.

4.1.2 The Focus Area of Deepening Industrialisation

In the second place, the Chinese government gave the impression of having a large appetite for funding efforts that were made to narrow the industrialisation gaps of Egypt, Kenya and South Africa, each in their own ways, and labelling these efforts "BRI". To illustrate, Assistant Foreign Minister Chen Xiaodong stated that the Chinese government "under the new pattern of opening up", in referring back to China's embark upon the Reform and Opening-Up policy, would assist the Egyptian government in accelerating nationwide industrialisation and fuelling job creation, with the ultimate aim of increasing the overall well-being of the population, as addressed in Egypt's "Vision 2030".⁶⁵ There are, then, two projects within the framework of the BRI which, according to both governments, could contribute to the realisation of this long-term goal for Egypt: the Suez Canal Corridor Development Project, whose most important component is the Suez Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone, and the Digital Silk Road. Along similar lines, the Chinese government seemed to have committed itself to showing Kenya the way to industrialisation and a digital economy with a BRI-labelled special economic zone (SEZ) in Eldoret, which has been dubbed the "Pearl River SEZ", on the initiative of the Kenyan-based Guangdong New South Group, and ICT academies and the development of the Konza Data Centre and Konza Smart City by action of telecomgiant Huawei.⁶⁶ A recurring element in the official Chinese rhetoric on its BRI in Kenya was that the BRI would facilitate employment for a significant proportion of the Kenyan population. As then Chinese Ambassador to Kenya, Sun Baohong, pointed out

⁶⁴ "Eskom and State Grid Corporation of China to Co-Operate on Strategies," *People's Daily*, published July 6, 2016, accessed December 11, 2019, <http://en.people.cn/n3/2016/0706/c90000-9082214.html>.

⁶⁵ Xiaodong Chen, "Untitled," Speech at the First China-Arab States Forum on Reform and Development, Beijing, April 23, 2018.

⁶⁶ Baohong Sun, "Seize Opportunities, Expand Opening-Up and Create a New Era for China-Kenya Economic and Trade Cooperation," Speech at the China (Guandong)-Kenya Economic and Trade Cooperation Conference, Nairobi, August 6, 2018.

on the basis of expectations, the Pearl River SEZ alone would already employ 40,000 people.⁶⁷ Although the Chinese government focused less on the notion that a “catch-up effect” could occur through a series of BRI-related projects in its rhetoric on the BRI in South Africa, deepening industrialisation was also a key point of focus in the southernmost country of Africa, but rather in the context of enhancing South Africa’s international competitiveness through technological advancements and transforming its “brown economy” into a “green” one. For instance, the first Chinese-invested BRI-labelled wind farm on the African continent, named the “Longyuan Mulilo De Aar Wind Power Project” located in the province of Northern Cape, was marketed by the Chinese government as a positive first step in South Africa’s transition towards a green economy.⁶⁸

4.1.3 The Focus Area of Citizen Diplomacy Activities

In spite of the fact that bilateral relations between, on the one hand, China, and, on the other hand, Egypt, Kenya and South Africa have not been at all strained, the Chinese government regularly drew attention to Chinese individuals and groups using, either deliberately or inadvertently, the framework of the BRI from which to engage and share with people from these three countries and vice versa. A striking trend, which is evident in Figure 1, was that the Chinese government used the tool of citizen diplomacy more often in South Africa, where adequate infrastructure is in place and the government has hyped itself up for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and, to a certain extent, in Egypt, which has advanced towards industrialisation, than in poorer Kenya that has a structurally deficient infrastructure. In the latter country, the Chinese government positioned itself as a pioneer in offering Kenyan students the opportunity to study abroad as part of the “Education Action Plan for the BRI” issued by the Chinese Ministry of Education. These students, for example, could be placed at the Chang’an University in Xi’an, where they get specialised in large construction engineering and receive training from Chinese engineering companies that are participating in the BRI.⁶⁹ Within the domain of citizen diplomacy executed in Egypt, the Chinese government, above all, supported BRI-labelled exchanges between students, academics and media professionals as well as exchanges in the field of tourism. The value in the use of these exchanges has also repeatedly been stressed by the Chinese government in relation to its BRI

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ “First China-Invested Wind Power Project in Africa Starts Operation,” *People’s Daily*, published November 21, 2017, accessed December 11, 2019, <http://en.people.cn/n3/2017/1121/c90000-9295153.html>.

⁶⁹ Baohong Sun, “No Traps and Prejudice.”

activities in South Africa and was complemented by the facilitation of two-way youth exchanges, exchanges between think tanks and between women empowerment organisations. The Chinese government, moreover, in the person of the Chinese Ambassador to South Africa, Lin Songtian, often looked back on the recent successes achieved through integrating the practice of citizen diplomacy in the BRI:

People-to-people exchange has set up a good example in China-South Africa relations. With our growing cooperation in education, culture, science and technology, health, youth, women, media, and think tanks, the mutual understanding and friendship between our two peoples continues to grow and deepen. China has become an increasingly popular destination of study, work, and tourism for the South African youth.⁷⁰

The quotation above not only shows China's major departure from state-centred diplomacy to society-centric public diplomacy, it also demonstrates the many and diverse efforts the government makes within the confines of the BRI to create attraction and soft power for China.

4.1.4 The Focus Area of Cultural Diplomacy Activities

A final important element of the BRI that was strongly emphasised by the Chinese government in its communications were foreign publics' interactions with the, in many instances, unfamiliar Chinese culture. Like citizen diplomacy, the target audiences of the practice of cultural diplomacy consisted mainly of the local populations of Egypt and South Africa; the only difference was that cultural exchanges between China and Kenya had not yet been taken off, while contacts among their citizens were established. The accent of Chinese cultural diplomacy in Egypt within the framework of the BRI was on reciprocal film-related exchanges, reviving the values of the ancient Silk Road and promoting Chinese language and literature. One concrete example of a cultural diplomacy activity that has been carried out under the heading of the BRI in Egypt is the "Silk Road: That's China Bookshelf" in a bookstore in the centre of Cairo, which is completely dedicated to serving the local Chinese-reading community.⁷¹ The aim of this bookshelf is, in the words of its inventor, Jing Xiaomin, "to promote Chinese books of rich cultural reference, share stories about China with the

⁷⁰ Lin Songtian, "China-South Africa Relations Serve the Fundamental Interests of Our Two Countries and Two Peoples," Dialogue on the Twenty Years of China-South Africa Engagements, Pretoria, November 9, 2018.

⁷¹ "That's China Bookshelf" Helps Spread Chinese Stories along the Belt and Road," *People's Daily*, published August 28, 2018, accessed December 11, 2019, <http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/0828/c90000-9494695.html>.

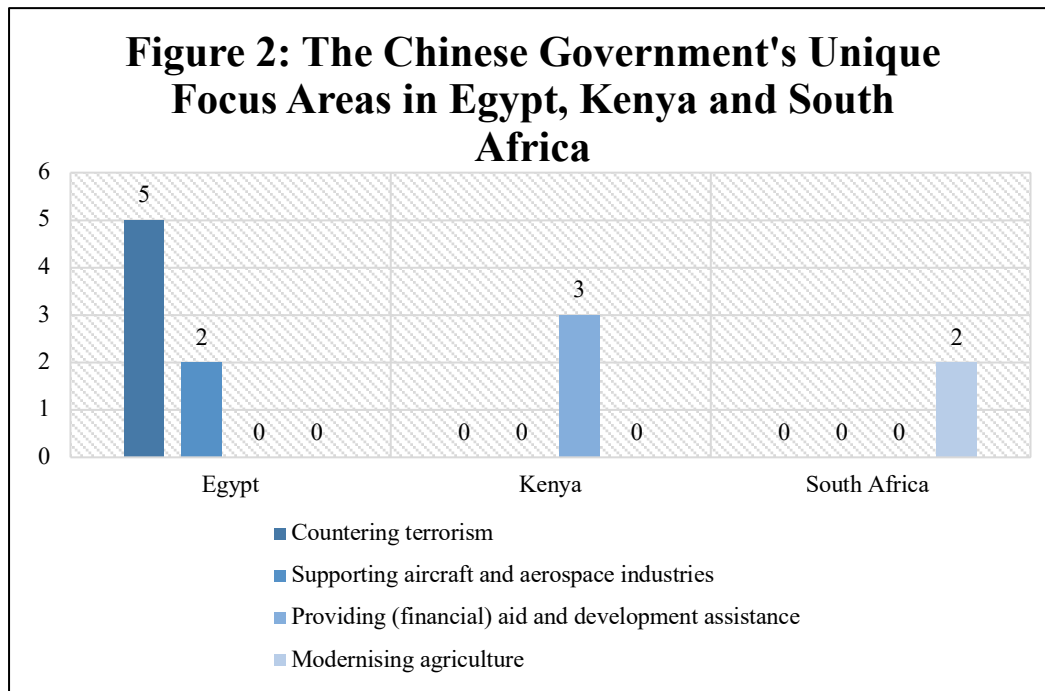
world, and provide readers in various countries a window to better understand China.”⁷² The Chinese government’s dedicated BRI-labelled investments in teaching Chinese to foreigners could also be found in South Africa, not only for the sake of expressing China’s culture and history, but also to inform business-minded South Africans about the different Chinese business culture, etiquettes and expectations their Chinese counterparts may have. The Chinese government-led cultural diplomacy activities in South Africa were furthermore characterised by Chinese-language book reviews, one of which was given by Lin Songtian, the Chinese Ambassador to South Africa, on the book *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, and seminars on Chinese history.⁷³

4.1.5 Unique Focus Areas in Egypt, Kenya and South Africa

Apart from the recurrent points of attention dealt with, the textual analysis revealed that the Chinese government also used the label “BRI” for non-cross-linked, country-specific focus areas, as shown in Figure 2. As for Egypt, the Chinese government uniquely emphasised counterterrorism as an important element of its BRI activities there, aimed at peacebuilding and consolidating that peace in the years ahead. Besides cooperating with the Egyptian government in the field of overland connectivity and on upgrading the Suez Canal as part of their agreements under the BRI, the Chinese government also made their close aviation and aerospace collaboration an integral and permanent feature in the BRI plans designed for Egypt. Not surprisingly given the country classification of Kenya in terms of economic performance and the steady increase in China’s foreign aid expenditures, the Chinese government, too, made aid pledge a strong part of its BRI but only in relation to Kenya, which is a recipient country of Chinese foreign aid. Finally, in line with the South African government’s caught in the hype of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the Chinese government uniquely brought the provision of innovative technologies for ICT-based and sustainable farming under the umbrella of its BRI in South Africa. The fact that these areas are markedly different in focus and closely linked to issues on three different national political agendas proves that the Chinese government has taken an individual, tailor-made approach to

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Songtian Lin, “Closing Remarks at the Seminar on Xi Jinping Thought and Xi Jinping: The Governance of China,” Book review of the book *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*, Pretoria, December 8, 2017.



the promotion of its BRI in each specific case study country, which complements its use of commonly recurring areas for the purpose of aggrandising the BRI.

4.2 The Translation of Words into Deeds

There seems to be a certain amount of truth in the criticism, that, as highlighted in Chapter 2, “BRI” has become a buzzword and that Chinese officials have used the label “BRI” excessively, because, respectively, 69, 58 and 67 per cent of the actively emphasised focus areas in Egypt, Kenya and South Africa could not be connected to a concrete manifestation, be it in the form of an ongoing or completed project, or a proposed plan, as mentioned in the textual materials surveyed. The actual implementation of BRI-labelled actions referred to varied enormously: some were only announced, some were completed and others appeared to have become recurrent. A salient trend, as could be seen in Appendix D, however, was that people-to-people interaction projects and cultural events on the theme of China were in all cases carried out or had taken place, whereas infrastructure and industrialisation-related projects were not always implemented yet.

In particular, the BRI-labelled projects in the examined textual materials for Egypt have come a long way, given that 88 per cent of these projects have got off the ground. For instance, a coalition between the Aviation Industry Corporation of China and the China Railway Group is constructing the railway line connecting Cairo to Egypt’s new, more easterly, administrative capital and Egyptian movies have been screened during the “Belt and

Road Film Week” as part of the Shanghai International Film Festival annually since 2017.⁷⁴ It is furthermore interesting to note that the first phase of the Suez Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone already commenced in 2008 and has been labelled “BRI” in retrospect.⁷⁵ A possible explanation could be sought in the zone being a well-suited execution of the Chinese government’s rhetoric salvos on the BRI. With regard to the implementation of the actively promoted BRI-labelled projects in Kenya, little close matches between the Chinese government’s words and deeds were found. A year and a half ago, Sun Baohong, the then Chinese Ambassador to Kenya, for example, announced the collaboration between companies from the Chinese province of Guangdong and Kenya on the rapid establishment of the Pearl River SEZ in Eldoret but no updates or plans about the further elaboration of the project were published since the announcement.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, the Chinese-built Mombasa-Nairobi train, which has been running since May 2017, seems to be, by many measures, a landmark achievement in the short history of the BRI and has subsequently also been promoted this way by the Chinese government. In an interview with the *People’s Daily*, the Kenyan Victor Onyango confirms that, as previously said, this train has reduced travel time significantly and adds that it almost halved transportation costs and even opened up new horizons for people who never had a chance to leave their hometown.⁷⁷ Finally, what is most interesting about the implementation of BRI-labelled projects in South Africa is that the Chinese government has taken practical action for placing two-way dialogue at the centre of its public diplomacy activities through the facilitation of citizen contacts and organisation of local cultural events at regular intervals.

In a nutshell, China’s official promotion of the BRI in Africa is a multi-layered strategy in which an emphasis is placed on the country’s investments in infrastructure projects, ongoing industrialisation processes and the partnering and collaborating of the government, as well as Chinese citizens, with African citizens. The general impression is that the Chinese government, furthermore, heavily relies upon a limited number of “success stories” as these are the only ones that have clearly visible and tangible results.

⁷⁴ “China’s BRI Boosts Egypt’s Development via Massive Infrastructure Projects,” *China Daily*, published April 5, 2019, accessed December 11, 2019, <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201904/05/WS5ca73058a3104842260b499d.html>; “Schedule List,” *22nd Shanghai International Film Festival*, accessed December 11, 2019, <http://www.siff.com/app/scheduleList.php?lg=english>.

⁷⁵ “China, Egypt Join Hands to Write New Chapter of Suez Canal Development,” *China Daily*, published November 18, 2019, accessed December 11, 2019, <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201911/18/WS5dd23667a310cf3e355781bf.html>.

⁷⁶ Baohong Sun, “Seize Opportunities.”

⁷⁷ “BRI a Catalyst for Kenya’s Infrastructure and Industrialisation,” *People’s Daily*, published April 22, 2019, accessed December 11, 2019, <http://en.people.cn/n3/2019/0422/c90000-9570695.html>.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

With the announcement that China should communicate a clear and captivating story about itself, the Chinese government, under the current leadership of President Xi, has launched a range of new visions and plans to shed the country's image as a "threat" and address its shortage of soft power. The closely interwoven Chinese Dream and the BRI, of which a majority of existing literature stresses that the underlying motivation is to construct an atavistic Chinese-led new global order, are symbolic of China's more assertive foreign policy and push boundaries in identifying areas from which to draw people into its growing orbit. One area where the Chinese government has set its sight on for enhanced strategic leverage is Africa. By using the BRI in aggregate as a public diplomacy tool instead of methods of coercion, Beijing ushered in a new era for image-building and reinvigorated soft power efforts on the African continent, which were not yet captured by scholars as strong elements of the BRI's reality in Africa.

This thesis, in putting aside charges that China's evolving behaviour in Africa is neo-colonial, therefore examined how the Chinese government has actually been promoting the BRI in Africa in word and deed. Departing from the cases of Egypt, Kenya and South Africa, this study found that the Chinese government has a tendency to emphasise investments in infrastructure projects, contributions to ongoing industrialisation processes, people-to-people linkages and cultural exchanges as part of the BRI in its wording. Apart from these recurring themes, the Chinese government tries to get itself noticed in Africa by labelling country-specific national priorities "BRI". The official Chinese narrative upholds the country's soft power trope of win-win cooperation and positions the BRI as an umbrella initiative that, with its span of activities in various areas, not only pursues economic development or supports infrastructure projects but also aims to create social links and boost cultural interactions. Yet, in practice, only a few concrete plans and projects from actively promoted areas could be described, but those that were described had almost always got off the ground, been completed or taken place. Considering that the largest portion of manifestations mentioned by name was implemented, it could be argued that China's words have been translated into deeds, but the fact that so little focus areas could be matched to a concrete plan or project makes the overall argument that the Chinese government's words only to a limited extent have been turned into action, which says a great deal about the development phase of the BRI as an instrument of soft power for China. Stated differently, China's promotion of the BRI in Africa has not yet been beautifully orchestrated.

The above, however, should be seen in light of some research limitations. Given that forty out of Africa's fifty-four countries have signed up to the BRI and that there are fundamental differences among these BRI-participating countries, including various types of relationships with China, a first important limitation of this study is that the research findings, based on three stand-alone case studies, are not completely generalisable to Africa as a whole, despite the attempt made to exhibit variation in the multiple case study analysis. Second, although the small number of six speeches and nine newspaper articles per case country enabled it to identify the areas of the BRI of Chinese government interest for the deployment of soft power, there are certainly key areas overlooked to which was just not referred to in any of the surveyed texts. The third and final major limitation is related to the attempt made to study the extent to which the specifically mentioned plans and projects as part of the BRI in Africa have so far been implemented. Because of time constraints and the specific focus on the Chinese government, the executive body of the BRI and the sending side of public diplomacy, mostly pro-Chinese news stories from tightly controlled Chinese news media were accepted as truth, but they may be prone to exaggeration so as to put China in a better light.

The most important remaining gap in the knowledge of China's promotion of the BRI in Africa that could be filled through and benefit from further research concerns the acceptance of the Chinese government's public diplomacy efforts by the targeted African audiences, especially considering the strong element of relationship-building in modern public diplomacy. Despite the fact that no satisfactory methods for soft power measurement have yet been found, studying the attitudes of these recipients would also help in better understanding African perceptions of China. Given the BRI's scale, it being China's flagship foreign policy effort, yet remaining a bit vague, it is, furthermore, recommended to conduct similar studies within the context of different locations, for example in Europe, in order to carefully unpack the BRI and rethink about China's public diplomacy efforts along the BRI also there.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- “About Confucius Institute/Classroom.” *Hanban*. Accessed November 27, 2019.
http://english.hanban.org/node_10971.htm.
- Bilgin, Pinar, and Berivan Eliş. “Hard Power, Soft Power: Toward a More Realistic Power Analysis.” *Insight Turkey* 10, no. 2 (2008): 5-20.
- Bräutigam, Deborah. *Will Africa Feed China?* New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- “BRI a Catalyst for Kenya’s Infrastructure and Industrialisation.” *People’s Daily*. Published April 22, 2019. Accessed December 11, 2019.
<http://en.people.cn/n3/2019/0422/c90000-9570695.html>.
- Callahan, William A. “China’s ‘Asia Dream’: The Belt and Road Initiative and the New Regional Order.” *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics* 1, no. 3 (2016): 226-243.
- Campbell, Horace. “China in Africa: Challenging US Global Hegemony.” *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (2008): 89-105.
- Carrai, Maria Adele. “China’s Malleable Sovereignty along the Belt and Road Initiative: The Case of the 99-Year Chinese Lease of Hambantota Port.” *Journal International Law and Politics* 51, no. 4 (2019): 1061-1099.
- Chen, Xiaodong. “Untitled.” Speech at the First China-Arab States Forum on Reform and Development, Beijing, April 23, 2018.
- “China’s Africa Policy.” *State Council*. Published September 20, 2006. Accessed November 24, 2019. <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/zflt/eng/zgdfztc/t481748.htm>.
- “China’s BRI Boosts Egypt’s Development via Massive Infrastructure Projects.” *China Daily*. Published April 5, 2019. Accessed December 11, 2019,
<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201904/05/WS5ca73058a3104842260b499d.html>.
- “China, Egypt Join Hands to Write New Chapter of Suez Canal Development.” *China Daily*. Published November 18, 2019. Accessed December 11, 2019.
<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201911/18/WS5dd23667a310cf3e355781bf.html>.
- Cowan, Geoffrey, and Amelia Arsenault. “Moving from Monologue to Dialogue to Collaboration: The Three Layers of Public Diplomacy.” *The Annals of the American Academic of Political and Social Science* (2008): 10-30.
- Creswell, John W. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five*

- Traditions*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 1998.
- Cull, Nicholas J. "Public Diplomacy: Lessons from the Past." *CPD Perspectives on Public Diplomacy* 2, no. 19 (2009): 1-61.
- Dalmia, Vinayak. "Will China Succeed in Its Soft Power Strategy?" *Observer Research Foundation*. Published September 12, 2018. Accessed October 3, 2019. <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/43982-will-china-succeed-in-its-soft-power-strategy/>.
- Davidson, Jason W. *The Origin of Revisionist and Status-Quo State*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- Diaw, Diadié, and Albert Lessoua. "Natural Resources Exports, Diversification and Economic Growth of CEMAC Countries: On the Impact of Trade with China." *African Development Review* 25, no. 2 (2013): 189-202.
- Dirlik, Arif. *Global Modernity: Modernity in the Age of Global Capitalism*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2007.
- Dulock, Helen L. "Research Design: Descriptive Research." *Journal of Pediatric Oncology Nursing* 10, no. 4 (1993): 154-157.
- "Eskom and State Grid Corporation of China to Co-Operate on Strategies." *People's Daily*. Published July 6, 2016. Accessed December 11, 2019. <http://en.people.cn/n3/2016/0706/c90000-9082214.html>.
- Feng, Yujun, Alexander Gabuev, Paul Haenle, Ma Bin, and Dmitri Trenin. "The Belt and Road Initiative: Views from Washington, Moscow and Beijing." *Carnegie-Tsinghua Center for Global Policy*. Published April 8, 2019. Accessed October 2, 2019. <https://carnegietsinghua.org/2019/04/08/belt-and-road-initiative-views-from-washington-moscow-and-beijing-pub-78774>.
- Ferguson, Niall. "Think Again: Power." *Foreign Policy*, no. 134 (2003): 18-22.
- "First China-Invested Wind Power Project in Africa Starts Operation." *People's Daily*. Published November 21, 2017. Accessed December 11, 2019. <http://en.people.cn/n3/2017/1121/c90000-9295153.html>.
- Flyvbjerg, Bent. "Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research." *Qualitative Inquiry* 12, no. 2 (2006): 219-254.
- Gallarotti, Giulio M. "Soft Power: What it is, Why it's Important, and the Conditions Under

Which it Can be Effectively Used.” *Division II Faculty Publications*, no. 57 (2011): 2-51.

George, Alexander, and Andrew Bennet. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Science*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005.

Gregory, Bruce. “American Public Diplomacy: Enduring Characteristics, Elusive Transformation.” *The Hague Journal of Democracy* 6, no. 3/4 (2011): 351-372.

Hirono, Miwa, and Shogo Suzuki. “Why Do We Need ‘Myth-Busting’ in the Study of Sino-African Relations?” *Journal of Contemporary China* 23, no. 87 (2014): 443-461.

Hooghe, Ingrid d’. *China’s Public Diplomacy*. Leiden: Brill Nijhoff, 2015.

“How Will the Belt and Road Initiative Advance China’s Interests?” *ChinaPower*. Published November 3, 2019. Accessed December 13, 2019. <https://chinapower.csis.org/china-belt-and-road-initiative/>.

Kurlantzick, Joshua. “The Big Question: Understanding China’s Soft Power.” *National Endowment for Democracy and International Forum for Democratic Studies*. Published June 19, 2017. Accessed October 4, 2019. <https://www.ned.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Understanding-Chinas-Sharp-Power.pdf>.

Langan, Mark. *Neo-Colonialism and the Poverty of “Development” in Africa*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.

Leonard, Mark. *Public Diplomacy*. London: The Foreign Policy Centre, 2002.

Lin, Songtian. “China-South Africa Relations Serve the Fundamental Interests of Our Two Countries and Two Peoples.” Dialogue on the Twenty Years of China-South Africa Engagements. Pretoria, November 9, 2018.

Lin, Songtian. “Closing Remarks at the Seminar on Xi Jinping Thought and Xi Jinping: The Governance of China.” Book review of the book *Xi Jinping: The Governance of China*. Pretoria, December 8, 2017.

Lukes, Steven. “Power and the Battle for Hearts and Minds.” *Millennium – Journal of International Studies* 33, no. 3 (2005): 477-494.

Mardell, Jacob. “The ‘Community of Common Destiny’ in Xi Jinping’s New Era.” *The Diplomat*. Published October 2017. Accessed December 10, 2019. <https://thediplomat.com/2017/10/the-community-of-common-destiny-in-xi-jinpings-new-era/>

- Mark, Simon. "A Greater Role for Cultural Diplomacy." *Discussion Papers in Diplomacy*, no. 114 (2009): 1-44.
- Melissen, Jan. "The New Public Diplomacy: Between Theory and Practice." In *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations*, edited by Jan Melissen, 3-23. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Miner, Sean. "China's Belt and Road Initiative: Motives, Scope and Challenges." *Peterson Institute for International Economics Briefing* 16, no. 2 (2016): 1-35.
- Mosher, Steven W. "Confucius Institutes: Trojan Horses with Chinese Characteristics." *Population Research Institute*. Published March 28, 2012. Accessed October 4, 2019. <https://www.pop.org/confucius-institutes-trojan-horses-with-chinese-characteristics/>.
- Naím, Moisés. "Missing Links: Rogue Aid." *Foreign Policy* 159, no. 1 (2007): 95-96.
- Newman, Isadore, and Carolyn Benz. *Qualitative-Quantitative Research Methodology: Exploring the Interactive Continuum*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998.
- Nordin, Astrid H. M., and Maikel Weissmann, "Will Trump Make China Great Again? The Belt and Road Initiative and International Order." *International Affairs* 94, no.2 (2018): 231-249.
- Nye, Joseph S. Jr. "Soft Power." *Foreign Policy* 80, no. Twentieth Anniversary (1990): 153-171.
- Nye, Joseph S. Jr. "Soft Power: The Origins and Political Progress of a Concept." *Palgrave Communications* 3, no. 1 (2017): 1-3.
- Nye, Joseph S. Jr. *The Future of Power: Its Changing Nature and Use in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2011.
- Oqubay, Arkebe, and Justin Yifu Lin. *China-Africa and an Economic Transformation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.
- Pamment, James. *New Public Diplomacy in the 21st Century: A Comparative Study of Policy and Practice*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- "President Kagame's Interview with Handelsblatt: 'China Gives What Africa Needs'." *Paul Kagame*. Published October 12, 2009. Accessed September 25, 2019. <http://paulkagame.com/?p=33>.
- Quinn, Andrew. "Clinton Warns Africa of China's Economic Embrace." *Reuters*. Published

- June 10, 2011. Accessed September 25, 2019. <https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-clinton-africa/clinton-warns-africa-of-chinas-economic-embrace-idUSTRE75962920110610>.
- Raghavan, Sudarsan. "In Snub to Washington Kenyan President Visits China, Russia in First Official Visit Outside Africa." *The Washington Post*. Published August 17, 2013. Accessed November 2, 2019. <https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-clinton-africa/clinton-warns-africa-of-chinas-economic-embrace-idUSTRE75962920110610>.
- Rønning, Helge. "How Much Soft Power Does China Have in Africa?" In *China's Media and Soft Power in Africa: Perceptions and Promotions*, edited by Xiaoling Zhang, Herman Wasserman and Winston Mano, 65-78. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
- "Schedule List." *22nd Shanghai International Film Festival*. Accessed December 11, 2019. <http://www.siff.com/app/scheduleList.php?lg=english>.
- Scholvin, Sören, and Peter Draper. "The Gateway to Africa? Geography and South Africa's Role as an Economic Hinge Joint between Africa and the World." *South African Journal of International Affairs* 19, no. 3 (2012): 381-400.
- Schweller, Randall L. "Rising Power and Revisionism in Emerging International Order." *Valdai Papers*, no. 16 (2015): 2-15.
- Shambough, David. "China's Soft-Power Push: The Search for Respect." *Foreign Affairs*. Published August 13, 2015. Accessed December 13, 2019. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2015-06-16/china-s-soft-power-push>.
- Shapiro, Jacob L. "One Belt, One Road, No Dice." *Geopolitical Futures*. Published January 12, 2017. Accessed November 19, 2019. <https://geopoliticalfutures.com/one-belt-one-road-no-dice/>.
- Shepard, Wade. "What China Is Really up to in Africa." *Forbes*. Published October 3, 2019. Accessed November 25, 2019. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/wadeshepard/2019/10/03/what-china-is-really-up-to-in-africa/#2407c49f5930>.
- Summers, Tim. "China's 'New Silk Roads': Sub-National Regions and Networks of Global Political Economy." *Third World Quarterly* 37, no. 9 (2016): 1628-1643.
- Sun, Baohong. "No Traps and Prejudice on the Train of the Belt and Road." In response to an earlier similarly titled article published in Kenya's *Daily Nation*, Nairobi, August 2, 2018.
- Sun, Baohong. "Seize Opportunities, Expand Opening-Up and Create a New Era for China-

- Kenya Economic and Trade Cooperation.” Speech at the China (Guandong)-Kenya Economic and Trade Cooperation Conference, Nairobi, August 6, 2018.
- Taylor, Ian. “China’s Oil Diplomacy in Africa.” *International Affairs* 82, no. 5 (2006): 937-959.
- “‘That’s China Bookshelf’ Helps Spread Chinese Stories along the Belt and Road.” *People’s Daily*. Published August 28, 2018. Accessed December 11, 2019. <http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/0828/c90000-9494695.html>.
- “The Soft Power 30.” *Portland Communications and the USC Center on Public Diplomacy*. Published July 2, 2018. Accessed October 3, 2019. <https://softpower30.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/The-Soft-Power-30-Report-2018.pdf>.
- Wagner, Jan-Philipp N. E. “The Effectiveness of Soft and Hard Power in Contemporary International Relations.” *E-International Relations Students*. Published May 14, 2014. Accessed September 30, 2019. <https://www.e-ir.info/2014/05/14/the-effectiveness-of-soft-hard-power-in-contemporary-international-relations/>.
- Walker, Christopher, and Jessica Ludwig. “From ‘Soft Power’ to ‘Sharp Power’: Rising Authoritarian Influence in the Democratic World.” In *Sharp Power: Rising Authoritarian Influence*, edited by Juan Pablo Cardenal, Jacek Kucharczyk, Grigorij Meseznikov and Gabriela Pleschová, 8-25. Washington D.C.: *National Endowment for Democracy and International Forum for Democratic Studies*, 2017.
- Warmerdam, Ward, and Meine Pieter van Dijk. “China-Uganda and the Question of Mutual Benefits.” *South African Journal of International Affairs* 20, no. 2 (2013): 271-295.
- Wu, Zhiyan, Janet Borgerson, and Jonathan Schroeder. *From Chinese Brand Culture to Global Brands: Insights from Aesthetics, Fashion and History*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Xi, Jinping. “Work Together to Build the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Maritime Silk Road.” Keynote address delivered at the First Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, Beijing, China, May 14, 2017.
- Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 1994.
- Zeng, Lingliang. “Conceptual Analysis of China’s Belt and Road Initiative: A Road Towards a Regional Community of Common Destiny.” *Chinese Journal of International Law* 15, no. 3 (2016): 517-541.
- Zhao, Xiaochun. “In Pursuit of a Community of Shared Future: Chinese Global Activism in

Perspective.” *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies* 4, no. 1 (2018): 23-37.

Zhou, Weifeng. “Beyond Balancing: China’s Approach Towards the Belt and Road Initiative.” *Journal of Contemporary China* 27, no. 112 (2018): 487-501.

APPENDIX A: OVERVIEW OF SELECTED CHINESE GOVERNMENTAL SPEECHES FOR SPEECH CODING

Table 1: Selected Chinese Governmental Speeches Given in or in Relation to Egypt

	Title of Speech	Presenter	On the Occasion of	Location and Date
1.	“Let China-Arab Friendship Surge Forward like the Nile”	President Xi Jinping	The president’s three-country tour to the Middle East and Africa	Cairo, January 19, 2016.
2.	“Chinese-Egyptian Partnership to Thrive in Coming Decades”	Vice Premier Liu Yandong	Her bilateral meeting with Egyptian President el-Sisi	Cairo, March 27, 2016.
3.	Untitled	Assistant Foreign Minister Chen Xiaodong	A seminar during the First China-Arab States Forum on Reform and Development	Beijing, April 23, 2018.
4.	“China-Egypt Ties Could Serve as a Model for Sino-African Cooperation”	Chinese Ambassador to Egypt Song Aiguo	Ahead of Egyptian President el-Sisi’s visit to China	Cairo, August 27, 2018.
5.	“China-Egypt Ties to Flourish”	Chinese Ambassador to Egypt Song Aiguo	The sixty-second anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Egypt	Cairo, August 30, 2018.
6.	“Remarks after His Meeting with President el-Sisi of Egypt”	President Xi Jinping	His bilateral meeting with Egyptian President el-Sisi prior to the second BRF	Beijing, April 25, 2019.

Table 2: Selected Chinese Governmental Speeches Given in or in Relation to Kenya

	Title of Speech	Presenter	On the Occasion of	Location and Date
1.	“Commissioning of the Mombasa-Nairobi Railway Shows Magnificent Power China-Kenya Unity and Cooperation”	Executive Vice Foreign Minister Zhang Ming	The completion and opening of the Mombasa-Nairobi Railway	Mombasa, May 31, 2017.
2.	“No Traps and Prejudice on the Train of the Belt and Road”	Then Chinese Ambassador to Kenya Sun Baohong	In response to an earlier similarly titled article published in Kenya’s <i>Daily Nation</i>	Nairobi, August 2, 2018.

3.	“Seize Opportunities, Expand Opening-Up and Create a New Era for China-Kenya Economic and Trade Cooperation”	Then Chinese Ambassador to Kenya Sun Baohong	The China (Guangdong)-Kenya Economic and Trade Cooperation Conference	Nairobi, August 6, 2018.
4.	“The Hope of Kenya and the Future of China-Kenya Friendship”	Then Chinese Ambassador to Kenya Sun Baohong	The 2018 farewell reception for Kenyan students on Chinese government scholarships	Nairobi, August 8, 2018.
5.	Untitled	Special Representative of the Chinese Government on African Affairs Xu Jinghu	The First Sustainable Blue Economy Conference	Nairobi, November 26, 2018.
6.	“Remarks at the Welcoming Dinner of the First Meeting of the Advisory Council of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation”	Executive Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng	The First Meeting of the Advisory Council of the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation	Beijing, December 16, 2018.

Table 3: Selected Chinese Governmental Speeches Given in or in Relation to South Africa

	Title of Speech	Presenter	On the Occasion of	Location and Date
1.	“Remarks at the Meeting with Media and Think Thanks”	Chinese Ambassador to South Africa Lin Songtian	The Nineteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China	Pretoria, November 1, 2017.
2.	“Closing Remarks at the Seminar on Xi Jinping Thought and Xi Jinping: The Governance of China”	Chinese Ambassador to South Africa Lin Songtian	A public book review of the book <i>Xi Jinping: The Governance of China</i>	Pretoria, December 8, 2017.
3.	“Joining Hands Towards a New Journey in China-South Africa Relations”	Chinese Ambassador to South Africa Lin Songtian	In response to an earlier similarly titled article published in South Africa’s <i>Independent Media</i>	Pretoria, January 2, 2018.
4.	“Remarks at the Opening Ceremony”	Chinese Ambassador to South Africa Lin Songtian	The Conference on Opportunities and Challenges of China-Africa Industrial Cooperation	Pretoria, June 15, 2018.

5.	“China and South Africa Achieve Greater Results in Ties”	President Xi Jinping	His official state visit to South Africa ahead of the tenth BRICS Summit	Pretoria, July 24, 2018.
6.	“China-South Africa Relations Serve the Fundamental Interests of Our Two Countries and Two Peoples”	Chinese Ambassador to South Africa Lin Songtian	The Dialogue on the Twenty Years of China-South Africa Engagements	Pretoria, November 9, 2018.

APPENDIX B: OVERVIEW OF SELECTED NEWSPAPER ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN THE PEOPLE'S DAILY FOR NEWSPAPER ARTICLE CODING

Table 1: Selected Newspaper Articles Published in the *People's Daily* in Relation to Egypt

	Title of Newspaper Article	Publication Date
1.	“China Ship Harbors in Egypt in Voyage to Promote ‘Belt and Road’ Initiative”	December 12, 2015.
2.	“Fresh Middle East and Africa Trip Broadens Path to Peace”	January 19, 2016.
3.	“China Plans 30 Nuclear Power Plants along Silk Route”	March 3, 2016.
4.	“China Signs Film Cooperation Deals with B&R Countries”	June 19, 2017.
5.	“China’s COSCO to Build Logistics Park in Egypt”	November 8, 2017.
6.	“‘That’s China Bookshelf’ Helps Spread Chinese Stories along the Belt and Road”	August 28, 2018.
7.	“China, Egypt Agree to Boost Development Cooperation”	October 29, 2018.
8.	“China Launches Monthly Salon in Egypt’s Capital to Promote Mutual Cultural Understanding”	March 30, 2019.
9.	“Digital Economy New Impetus for Belt and Road Construction”	April 29, 2019.

Table 2: Selected Newspaper Articles Published in the *People's Daily* in Relation to Kenya

	Title of Newspaper Article	Publication Date
1.	“Draw a New Blueprint and Embark on a New Journey”	December 3, 2015.
2.	“33 African Journalists Arrive in China for Training”	August 9, 2016.
3.	“Feature: China-Built Railway Engineering Course Opens New Frontiers to Kenyan Youth”	August 9, 2016.
4.	“Mombasa-Nairobi Railway Wins Acclaim from African Community”	May 12, 2017.
5.	“Spotlight: Chinese Infrastructure Capabilities Help Promote Regional Interconnectivity, Global Growth”	June 22, 2017.
6.	“China Replaces U.S. as Most Influential Partner in Kenya”	May 2, 2018.

7.	“AI Can Solve World Hunger, but Innovation Narrative Has to Change”	November 3, 2018.
8.	“BRI Drives Green, Sustainable Development”	April 20, 2019.
9.	“Belt and Road Drawing More International Students to Chinese Universities”	May 24, 2019.

Table 3: Selected Newspaper Articles Published in the *People’s Daily* in Relation to South Africa

	Title of Newspaper Article	Publication Date
1.	“Exclusive: Minister of Commerce of China Talk of China-Africa Economic Cooperation for People’s Daily”	December 4, 2015.
2.	“Eskom and State Grid Corporation of China to Co-Operate on Strategies”	July 6, 2016.
3.	“Maritime Silk Road Creates One Million Potential Jobs for SA”	September 23, 2016.
4.	“An Initiative to Hence SA-China Cooperation Strengthen Business Partnership”	May 14, 2017.
5.	“First China-Invested Wind Power Project in Africa Starts Operation”	November 21, 2017.
6.	“Mandarin Playing Key Role in Sino-South African Ties”	June 6, 2018.
7.	“Chinese Premier Meets South African President”	September 3, 2018.
8.	“How the ‘Belt and Road’ Is Making South Africans Study Mandarin”	April 27, 2019.
9.	“BRI Draws A Splendid Picture of People-to-People Bond”	April 27, 2019.

**APPENDIX C: CHINESE GOVERNMENTAL SPEECHES AND
NEWSPAPER ARTICLES PUBLISHED IN THE PEOPLE'S DAILY
CODING SCHEMES AND EXAMPLES**

Table 1: Coding Scheme for Egypt

	Thematic Codes	Combined Frequency	Illustrative Examples
1.	Regional defence cooperation and joint counter-terrorism operations	5 times	No concrete manifestation
2.	Continuing efforts to deepen industrialisation	8 times	Suez Canal Corridor Development Project; Suez Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone
3.	Establishing cooperation in the fields of energy and power	7 times	No concrete manifestation
4.	Eliminating existing bottlenecks to facilitate cross-border trade and investments	5 times	No concrete manifestation
5.	Improving physical infrastructure	9 times	Fully electrified railway line connecting Cairo to Egypt's new, more easterly, administrative capital
6.	Starting a digital revolution with help of China's "high-tech eyes"	11 times	Digital Silk Road
7.	Establishing cooperation in education and training, ranging from the teaching of science to exchanges aimed at developing entrepreneurial skills	14 times	No concrete manifestation
8.	Facilitating cross-border cultural interaction	10 times	Silk Road: That's China Bookshelf; The super trimaran "Qingdao China" in Alexandria; Egypt's participation in the 20th Shanghai International Film Festival; Monthly cultural salon dubbed "China in the Eyes of the Egyptians"; Luban workshops
9.	Handling public health emergencies	4 times	No concrete manifestation
10.	Protecting heritage sites and the environment	4 times	No concrete manifestation
11.	Providing (financial) aid and development assistance	-	-
12.	Supporting the sustainable development and growth of maritime-related industries	-	-
13.	Supporting the sustainable development and growth of the aircraft and aerospace industries	2 times	No concrete manifestation
14.	Strengthening understanding among media outlets and think tanks	2 times	No concrete manifestation

15.	Influencing the modernisation of agriculture	-	-
16.	Establishing cooperation to empowering and protect women	-	-
17.	Contributing to outbound and inbound tourism growth	4 times	No concrete manifestation
18.	Enhancing youth cooperation and initiating youth exchange programmes	-	-

Table 2: Coding Scheme for Kenya

	Thematic Codes	Combined Frequency	Illustrative Examples
1.	Regional defence cooperation and joint counter-terrorism operations	-	-
2.	Continuing efforts to deepen industrialisation	14 times	Pearl River SEZ;
3.	Establishing cooperation in the fields of energy and power	2 times	No concrete manifestation
4.	Eliminating existing bottlenecks to facilitate cross-border trade and investments	6 times	No concrete manifestation
5.	Improving physical infrastructure	24 times	Mombasa-Nairobi standard gauge railway line
6.	Starting a digital revolution with help of China's "high-tech eyes"	14 times	Huawei-initiated ICT academies and the development of the Konza Data Centre and Konza Smart City
7.	Establishing cooperation in education and training, ranging from the teaching of science to exchanges aimed at developing entrepreneurial skills	12 times	Providing scholarships to Kenyan students, Study/training abroad at Chang'an University in Xi'an
8.	Facilitating cross-border cultural interaction	-	-
9.	Handling public health emergencies	-	-
10.	Protecting heritage sites and the environment	2 times	No concrete manifestation
11.	Providing (financial) aid and development assistance	3 times	No concrete manifestation
12.	Supporting the sustainable development and growth of maritime-related industries	2 times	The Sustainable Blue Economy Conference
13.	Supporting the sustainable development and growth of the aircraft and aerospace industries	-	-
14.	Strengthening understanding among media outlets and think tanks	1 time	No concrete manifestation
15.	Influencing the modernisation of agriculture	-	-
16.	Establishing cooperation to empowering and protect women	1 time	No concrete manifestation
17.	Contributing to outbound and inbound tourism growth	-	-
18.	Enhancing youth cooperation and initiating youth exchange programmes	1 time	No concrete manifestation

Table 3: Coding Scheme for South Africa

	Thematic Codes	Combined Frequency	Illustrative Examples
1.	Regional defence cooperation and joint counter-terrorism operations	-	-
2.	Continuing efforts to deepen industrialisation	13 times	-
3.	Establishing cooperation in the fields of energy and power	4 times	State Grid Corporation of China granting loan to Eskom; Longyuan Mulilo De Aar Wind Power Project
4.	Eliminating existing bottlenecks to facilitate cross-border trade and investments	7 times	No concrete manifestation
5.	Improving physical infrastructure	4 times	State Grid Corporation of China granting loan to Eskom;
6.	Starting a digital revolution with help of China's "high-tech eyes"	9 times	Seminar titled "An Innovative Path of Growth Links"
7.	Establishing cooperation in education and training, ranging from the teaching of science to exchanges aimed at developing entrepreneurial skills	17 times	No concrete manifestation
8.	Facilitating cross-border cultural interaction	8 times	Lin Songtian's book review of <i>Xi Jinping: The Governance of China</i> ; Journalists went to China for a two-week media-training seminar; The Year of China in South Africa, the Year of South Africa in China
9.	Handling public health emergencies	1 time	No concrete manifestation
10.	Protecting heritage sites and the environment	5 times	No concrete manifestation
11.	Providing (financial) aid and development assistance	-	-
12.	Supporting the sustainable development and growth of maritime-related industries	5 times	No concrete manifestation
13.	Supporting the sustainable development and growth of the aircraft and aerospace industries	-	-
14.	Strengthening understanding among media outlets and think tanks	10 times	No concrete manifestation
15.	Influencing the modernisation of agriculture	2 times	No concrete manifestation
16.	Establishing cooperation to empowering and protect women	1 time	No concrete manifestation
17.	Contributing to outbound and inbound tourism growth	9 times	No concrete manifestation
18.	Enhancing youth cooperation and initiating youth exchange programmes	1 time	No concrete manifestation

APPENDIX D: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED PROJECTS

Table 1: The Implementations of Specifically Mentioned Projects in Egypt

	Thematic Code	Illustrative examples	Status	Source
1.	Continuing efforts to deepen industrialisation	Suez Canal Corridor Development Project	The first phases of the Suez Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone are open, further negotiations are ongoing and expectations are high	<i>China Daily:</i> http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201911/18/WS5dd23667a310cf3e355781bf.html
2.	Improving physical infrastructure	Railway line connecting Cairo to Egypt's new, more easterly, administrative capital	Under construction	<i>China Daily:</i> http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201904/05/WS5ca73058a3104842260b499d.html
3.	Starting a digital revolution with help of China's "high-tech eyes"	Digital Silk Road	Announced in early 2019, but no further steps have been made	-
4.	Facilitating cross-border cultural interaction	Silk Road: That's China Bookshelf	Fully carried out	<i>People's Daily:</i> http://en.people.cn/n3/2018/0828/c90000-9494695.html
5.	Facilitating cross-border cultural interaction	The super trimaran "Qingdao China" in Alexandria	The event had taken place, but appears to be a one-time event	-
6.	Facilitating cross-border cultural interaction	Egypt's participation in the 20th Shanghai International Film Festival	Egypt continues to participate in the festival: in June 2019, it participated in the "Belt and Road Film Week" as part of this year's Shanghai International Film Festival	<i>Official website of the Shanghai International Film Festival:</i> http://www.siff.com/app/scheduleList.php?lg=english
7.	Facilitating cross-border cultural interaction	Monthly cultural salon dubbed "China in the Eyes of the Egyptians"	Started in March 2019 and since then more salons have followed	<i>Xinhua Net:</i> http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-08/31/c_138352109.htm
8.	Facilitating cross-border	Luban workshops	In further development, a MoU was signed in March 2019 for the establishment	<i>Xinhua Net:</i> http://www.xinhuanet.com/e

cultural interaction		of an Egyptian Luban Workshop in Cairo	english/2019-04/01/c_137938806.htm
----------------------	--	----------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Table 2: The Implementations of Specifically Mentioned Projects in Kenya

	Thematic Code	Illustrative examples	Status	Source
1.	Continuing efforts to deepen industrialisation	Pearl River SEZ	No updates or plans drafted after the announcement	Speech given by then Chinese Ambassador to Kenya, Sun Baohong entitled “Seize Opportunities, Expand Opening-Up and Create a New Era for China-Kenya Economic and Trade Cooperation”
2.	Improving physical infrastructure	Mombasa-Nairobi standard gauge railway line	Completed and the train is running	<i>People’s Daily:</i> http://en.people.cn/n3/2019/0422/c90000-9570695.html
3.	Starting a digital revolution with help of China’s “high-tech eyes”	Huawei-initiated ICT academies	The project is ongoing and becoming bigger: more places and more students	<i>Xinhua Net:</i> http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-01/31/c_137790279.htm
4.	Starting a digital revolution with help of China’s “high-tech eyes”	The development of the Konza Data Centre and Konza Smart City	Announced in early 2019, but no further steps have been made thereafter	-
5.	Establishing cooperation in education and training, ranging from the teaching of science to exchanges aimed at developing entrepreneurial skills	Providing scholarship to Kenyan students	An average of 200 Kenyan students per year have received and continue to receive a scholarship from the Chinese government	<i>Xinhua Net:</i> http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-08/27/c_138343085.htm
6.	Establishing cooperation in education and training, ranging from the teaching of science to exchanges	Study/training abroad at Chang’an University in Xi’an	The example was mentioned in May 2019 and there have been no updates ever since	<i>People’s Daily:</i> http://en.people.cn/n3/2019/0524/c90000-9581436.html

	aimed at developing entrepreneurial skills			
7.	Supporting the sustainable development and growth of maritime-related industries	The Sustainable Blue Economy Conference	The first ever was in November 2018 but no new edition has been planned	-

Table 3: The Implementations of Specifically Mentioned Projects in South Africa

	Thematic Code	Illustrative examples	Status	Source
1.	Establishing cooperation in the fields of energy and power / Improving physical infrastructure	State Grid Corporation of China granting loan to Eskom	No specific China-related news since the announcement of the grant	-
2.	Establishing cooperation in the fields of energy and power	Longyuan Mulilo De Aar Wind Power Project	In operation	<i>People's Daily:</i> http://en.people.cn/n3/2017/1121/c90000-9295153.html
3.	Starting a digital revolution with help of China's "high-tech eyes"	Seminar titled "An Innovative Path of Growth Links"	The seminar had taken place, but appears to be a one-time event	-
4.	Facilitating cross-border cultural interaction	Lin Songtian's book review of <i>Xi Jinping: The Governance of China</i>	The book review had taken place, but appears to be a one-time event	-
5.	Facilitating cross-border cultural interaction	Journalists went to China for a two-week media-training seminar	The training had taken place, but appears to be a one-time event	-
6.	Facilitating cross-border cultural interaction	The Year of China in South Africa, the Year of South	So far only happened in 2018, the year in which the countries celebrated twenty years of formal diplomatic ties	-

		Africa in China		
--	--	--------------------	--	--