Framing International Relations: Analyzing China-Africa Self-Identification Through FOCAC.

Meijer, Casper

Framing International Relations: Analyzing China-Africa Self-Identification Through FOCAC.

Name: Casper Meijer

Student Number: s1848860

University: Leiden University

Study Program: MA Asian Studies: Politics, Society and Economy.

Thesis Coordinator: Stacey Links

Date: 01-07-2022

Wordcount: 14997

Contents:

List of Abbreviations:

AU: African Union
BRI: Belt and Road Initiative
CCP: Chinese Communist Party
CCTV: China Central Television
FOCAC: Forum On China-Africa Cooperation
IR: International Relations
MOC: Ministry of Commerce
MOFA: Ministry Of Foreign Affairs
ODA: Official Development Assistance
SMEs: Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
UN: United Nations
WHO: World Health Organization

Abstract:

Image building within and about China-Africa relations play as major role in the way this growing international engagement is understood. Despite recognition for its important role in high level dialogue and policy creation, non-media platforms, such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, are often overlooked as an important image-building medium. Therefore, by questioning how Chinese and African officials frame their own relationship through official FOCAC-discourse, this thesis seeks to add to contemporary framing theory on China-Africa relations. Three case studies on written and visual framing processes within important FOCAC policy documents, photographs and speeches highlight the multiplicity of frameworks that contribute to the creation of a relational self-image. These analyses reveal how images of China-Africa relations are built on co-existing, but contrasting discourses, and how different framing mechanisms influence each other to shape a multiplicity of images.

Keywords: *China-Africa Relations, FOCAC, Framing, Relational Self-Identification, Image-Building.*

Ch. 1. Introduction

While reading news articles or browsing the internet, it is not rare to find polarizing statements about China's relationship with African countries. Titles such as "Why we should beware of China's 'new colonialism'", "African debt to China: 'A major drain on the poorest countries'", or "Corruption is China's Friend in its quest to dominate Africa" paint a distinct picture in the mind of readers (Martin 2018; New African 2019; Wheatley, Cotterill & Munshi 2020). At the same time, contrasting articles talk about "African opportunities in China-Africa Relations" or "Six persistent myths about China-Africa Relations" (Akahara 2022; Van der Lugt 2020). The historic south-south relation between China and Africa has seen large developments over the last three decades. Economic engagements through international trade agreements and investment projects have formed the basis for the prospect of tremendous developmental growth in both the African continent and in China (eg. Asongu & Aminkeng 2018; Gadzala 2015; Lahtinen 2018). During this process, China-Africa relations have also stimulated socio-cultural cooperation and the strengthening of diplomatic ties, especially after the initiation of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) in 2000 (Taylor 2011, 24). As indicated by the media titles above, although the prospect of strengthening bonds and economic development seem positive, China's engagement with African countries has also been met with intense scrutiny and criticism.

News media are not alone in addressing China-Africa relations with critique. Government officials, economists, and human-rights activists, all depict the nature of China-Africa relations in a variety of ways (Schoeman 2008, 403). Similarly, China-Africa relations are a contested issue amongst scholars in various fields. Neo-colonialism, economic exploitation, propaganda making, agency, and cultural interaction are for instance highly contested issues in attempts to explain the nature of China-Africa relations. Due to these various ways of portraying the relationship, discussions often focus on questions regarding which depictions are most representative of empirical reality (eg. Benabdallah 2014; Gabore 2020). A central theme for this discussion is therefore, the *images* which represent China-Africa relations.

Images are an important aspect of international relations, as most famously argued in Joseph Nye's soft power theory, and the many works/criticisms it inspired (eg. Albro 2015; D' Hooghe 2014; Ding 2008). National images and representations influence (and are influenced by) International Relations (IR) policies which, for instance, concern economic cooperation, diplomatic interaction, or other non-coercive interactions (Herrick, Gai, and Subramaniam 2016; Nye 2008). The 'success' of IR policy is therefore partially informed by the perception/image which diplomats, policy makers and the general public(s) hold of it (Dong 2008, 150-151). Similarly, the way international relations between countries is represented, such as in media-, or official-discourse, has the potential to affect the direction a specific relationship takes. General images of China-Africa relations, are especially prevalent in literature that discuss media-discourse. Through its influence on the worldviews of many

people, newspapers, television programs and web-forums form a large part of image-building power (Li 2016). As a result, news-media from Western sources are often compared to non-western news-media in order to highlight differences in discourse on China-Africa relations, or to see which is most representative of reality(eg. Benabdallah 2014, Gabore 2020). In other cases, images promoted by Chinese cultural initiatives are frequently discussed in terms of race, orientalism, and people-to-people engagements, processes which put emphasis on image-building of 'the other' within IR. As a result, image building as a joint effort by Chinese and African actors (eg. state officials or diplomats from international cooperative ventures like FOCAC or the African Union) is often left out of image-building research related to China-Africa relations.

Therefore, this thesis tries to move away from the East-West dividing, news-media based aspects of the image-building discussion. It does so, by looking at an important international cooperative platform through which the CCP and African governments jointly work on shaping IR policy and framing images of their relationship: The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). Analyzing official discourse through FOCAC allows for a look at image-building as a cooperative efforts by the Chinese and African governments involved, providing extra nuance in the current news-media focused academic image-building debate. This can highlight the currently often left out influence of African officials in creating image of their relationship with China. FOCAC discourse and policies also affect diplomatic, economic and cultural relations covering a wide area of China-Africa relations as opposed to IR between large Chinese and African companies or individual exchanges. Looking at an inside perspective through FOCAC allows for an in depth look into how Chinese and African official image-makers contribute to an influential, wide-spread, an most importantly, jointly-drafted self-identification of the relationship between its own members. Therefore, the central question of this thesis focuses on *how the Chinese Communist Party and African Governments frame China-Africa relations through official-discourse within The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation*? Specifically, how China's and African officials jointly frame their own capacities within China-Africa relations through FOCAC. In answering this question, more insight into the types of frames and framing processes that contribute to this image can be acquired. In turn, these framing processes can highlight (soft)power-dynamics between China and African countries in creating a self-image of China-Africa relations. This does not mean, however, that this thesis will focus on highlighting differences between Chinese and African official framing efforts within FOCAC. Researching how China and African state parties represent the relationship between them, official FOCAC discourses can help emphasize political biases present in FOCAC to see how these match up to media-biases.

The following chapter provides more clarity on key theoretic concepts which are prevalent throughout this thesis, such as framing and images. The chapter also gives an overview of ways in which these concepts are used in contemporary framing-studies on China-Africa relations. By doing so, a theoretical framework, and gaps within the body of literature can be identified and the way in which this thesis contributes to the larger debate becomes clearer. After the literature review and

theoretical framework, a chapter going over the methodology explains the approach for this thesis' research. By analyzing the framing processes used in official FOCAC discourse through written and visual representations in the form of photo exhibitions, FOCAC policy/action-plan documents, and official speeches on the FOCAC website, three case studies will be conducted. These case studies are then discussed in a dedicated chapter to highlight how the framing processes stand in relation to the question of China-Africa official image building through FOCAC. The conclusion that follows summarizes the main findings, clarifies the nuance they bring to general framing-theory, and discusses the potential for further research.

Ch. 2. Literature Review.

National self-identification and representation through discourse are well-researched fields of study within the academic sphere of International Relations. On a national official level for instance, representations and identifications of self are important to consider due to the influence they can have on actual political events or economic policies. By producing/supporting official images of a nation or partnership between nations, economic and political bonds can be strengthened or dampened (eg. Benabdallah 2014, Hodzi 2020). Works by Nye (2008) and D' Hooghe (2014) suggest that image making plays an important role in the soft power processes within public diplomacy, especially when backed up by actions that do not contradict this image. At the same time, some scholars highlight how self-identification and representation are complex processes, which are shaped and interpreted from the bottom-up as well (eg. Khan Mohammad 2014; Seiichi 2008). Although these bottom-up processes and lived experiences are not the focus of this thesis, it is an important way to highlight how self-identification and representations are not merely contained as propaganda or elite level issues. In order to make sense of self-identification processes in context of China-Africa relations, however, this literature review introduces a number of key-concepts within image-building theory. Thereafter, two major focus point within literature on self-identification within China-Africa relations will be highlighted including areas in which they are lacking.

Ch. 2.1. Conceptualizing National Self-Identification in International Relations.

When researching official national self-identification in context of IR, an often discussed topic is the international *image* of the parties involved in the engagement. Batchelor and Zhang (2019) explain that *images* in context of IR, are "the representations of a nation that people hold to be true" (4). They are the mental notes based on which people (or groups of people such as government bodies) perceive (other) nations, relationships between nations or groups which are closely affiliated with/run by another nation such as companies or cultural institutes (Batchelor and Zhang 2019, 4). These images can be influenced by state-actors and other influential entities such as media outlets in order to back up certain representations regarding one nation or another. In turn, these representations can be informed by, and/or contribute to a particular national self-image (eg. Kaplowitz 1990; Kunczik 1997).

Therefore, this thesis looks at the way in which image *makers*- government officials - try to shape public perception through images. More specifically, how the CCP and involved African governments try to do so through official channels such as FOCAC. In these group settings, it is possible for multiple image makers cooperate to shape a joint image. When referring to this phenomenon, this thesis uses the term *relational-identification.*

Self-images as produced by image makers do not exist in a vacuum. Especially within IR, the engagement between nations or their aforementioned sub-entities results in the imagining of not just 'us', but and 'them' as well. To demarcate this conceptual limitation, Beller and Leerssen (2007) make a distinction between *auto/self-images, hetero-images, and meta-images* (xiv). Hetero-images are the way in which nations imagine 'the other', whereas meta-images consist of how a nation thinks 'others' perceive them (Beller and Leerssen 2007, 344). Although these images often border stereotypes, the imaginary is regularly seen as "the fictional production of reality", which many hold to be true through one's own interpretations (Beller and Leerssen 2007, 346). Making a distinction between self, hetero, and meta-images allows for the necessary nuance needed to use images for discourse analyses. For example, relating Chinese self-images to Chinese hetero-images of 'Africa' within China-Africa relations helps clarifying important questions about self and other. Does China consider itself to be dealing with 'Africa' the continent, countries within Africa, or both (Batchelor and Zhang 2017)? Are elements of China's 'Africa-policy' such as educational exchange or economic development multifaceted depending on select African countries, or geared more generally towards Africa as a whole (eg. Hodzi 2020; King 2020)?

Questions such as these, highlight how the distinction between different images are very intertwined. For instance, Chinese self-images which the CCP communicates with a domestic audience in mind can be very distinct from the self-image they communicate to those abroad, since meta-images play a part the latter case (Batchelor and Zhang 2017, 5-6). Also, depending on international power-dynamics, hetero-images of one nation can influence another nations hetero, or self-image (eg. Fan Yang 2016; Nye 2008). This can be seen in the nation-branding campaigns of countries such as Japan in the wake of WWII for example, in which post-war self-images changed in order to regain international standing. Nation-branding campaigns, are often the result of governments undertaking action due to the meta-image they believe to have in the international sphere. If one's meta-image is negative, self-images can be affected in the hope of turning the meta-image more positive, or hetero-images can become negative if one considers the negative meta-image to be unjustified. The interplay between self-, hetero-, and meta-images is therefore complex, but can result in actual influence within IR policy making.

These examples highlight the strategic values and effort behind national images. However, this strategic value and the possibility to propagandize images opposes Beller and Leerssen's (2007) idea that image building is simply an attempt to convey reality. Batchelor and Zhang (2017) also note on this criticism, and argue that official image-building is comprised of strategic construction processes.

They argue that these strategic processes can be analyzed by researching the *frameworks* through which the images are shaped (Batchelor and Zhang 2017, 7). Frameworks are the way in which images are presented and communicated by image makers. These presentations use *frames* that help consumers to develop or change views regarding the issue that is presented (Chong and Druckman 2007, 104-105). Underlying this presentation are the processes of *selecting* which frames are included in the framework, and the *construction* of said frames (Borah 2011, 256; Gabore 2020, 305-306). The aim of these three processes (framing) is to make sure an audience is able to understand, identify or label the image to which the framework is tied (Ojo 2016, 42). Frames can therefore be used to relay certain causal interpretations of events, moral guidance, or recommendations for beliefs concerning a topic (Burgers, Konijn and Steen 2016, 410-411). In the next part, the way frames are constructed, selected and ultimately presented will be further explained using contemporary framing theory in context of China-Africa relations.

Ch. 2.2. Framing Theory in Context of China-Africa Relations.

As China-Africa relations have intensified over the past 30 years, so too have academic debates as to what this development entails. In this debate, image building has not been left out. The current state of literature on framing relational- and self-identification of China and Africa within their international engagements, has two major areas of research focus. Starting off with the most widely researched media-framing, this chapter discusses framing within *written* and *visual* media.

Ch. 2.2.1. Framing in Written Media.

The way in which written media sources (eg. newspapers, magazines and internet articles) can influence discourse through images surrounding China-Africa relations has (as will be discussed below) been researched extensively. By analyzing linguistic constructs, such as tone, rhetoric, metaphors, exaggerations, or patterns in words or themes, frameworks of different written media are compared and contrasted between each other. This way, frameworks are used to get a better understanding of way in which authors/publishers (including governments) use written articles to influence public discourse. As already hinted at by the news titles mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, images of China-Africa relations are often compared to Western engagements with Africa.

Juxtaposing Western media representations to their Chinese media counterpart, Benabdallah (2014) for instance, argues that Chinese China-Africa frameworks are often reactive of Western media rhetoric (36-37). Benabdallah (2014) explains that Chinese and Western media frame China's engagements in Africa very differently. Western media such as *The Economist*, regularly deploy metaphors to portray China as an all-consuming panda with an unquenchable hunger for recourses, or a riches-obsessed dragon to point out how close Chinese engagement in Africa is to colonialism (Benabdallah 2014, 33-34). Chinese media, on the other hand, concerns itself with frameworks that portray China as a good alternative to Western influence on the African continent, focusing on positive

interactions to counter Western claims of having a moral high ground (Benabdallah 2014, 36-38). In a similar vein, Gabore argues that sourcing, and the selection of which sources are used, becomes an important way in which consumers define themselves and others through framing processes (2020, 305). Media surrounding COVID-19 handling in Africa for instance, is described through African official, African non-official, and Western non-official sources by Western media, while Chinese media uses mainly African- and Chinese-official sources (Gabore 2020, 309-310). Depending on the sources used, the tone regarding COVID-19 prevention in Chinese and Western media was different. Comparative studies such as these show how Chinese or Western framing influences (and is influenced by) discourse surrounding China's engagement with Africa, especially the way they influence each other.

Although tone, rhetoric and sourcing are important factors in formation of a framework, other scholars argue that more nuance is necessary to relate the influence which similar and differing frameworks have on a dominant discourse. Ojo (2016) or An, Zhang, and Wang (2020), point out that even in cases in which various frameworks might seem similar in terms of their tone, rhetoric or general language used, these frames might not support the same public discourse. As such, Pan-African news magazines the *New African* and the *African Business* might share a framework that portrays China-Africa relations in frames with a positive tone, rhetoric of a shared history, while emphasizing benefits of engaging with China as opposed to the West, they do so to a very different extend (Ojo 2016, 43-50). *African Business* sketches a far more complex image of China's engagement with Africa then the more positive *New African*, while explaining the relationship more thoroughly and provoking readers to think about the relationship critically (Ojo 2016, 43-45). Ojo (2016) therefore argues that news frameworks are influenced by the audience of the written media as well, depending on factors such as socio-economic class, political engagement, or cultural norms (51). This point also highlights how image making strategies can differ depending whether the image-maker aims to affect self-, hetero-, or meta-images.

Furthermore, An, Zhang, and Wang (2020) emphasize the importance of audience interpretations of frameworks as well, when relating different frames to public discourse. Analyzing travelogues on one of China's most popular online tourist forums *Mafengwo (马蜂窝)*, one can find that Chinese tourist' comments on Africa are mainly conveyed through 5 thematic frames: exoticism, adventure, poverty, China's engagement, and affection (a want to support development of "*backward*" Africa) (An, Zhang and Wang 2020, 7-15). Although on the surface these frames might seem to show overlap with hetero-images promoted in geopolitical frames by the Chinese government (eg. mutual economic gains from development; shared suffering of economic hardships), An, Zhang and Wang (2020) argue that some of the frames on tourist forums are based on different conceptions. Tourists discuss the affection frame, for instance, mostly in terms of admiration for African places with a "Western lifestyle", featuring a mix of grandiose colonial buildings and modern architecture, activities

such as high-end shopping and food-culture (An, Zhang, and Wang 2020, 13-15). Consumer interpretations should therefore be considered as complex, changing and not always reflecting government frames.

Despite their critiques, scholars such as An, Zhang and Wang (2020) and Ojo (2016) still discuss framing predominantly in terms of media-discourse. They therefore join the other written-framing theory discussed above in their debate as to how framing processes influence this discourse (eg. rhetoric framing vs tone vs audience interpretations). Specifically, framing processes are often discussed regarding their influence on hetero- and meta-image building in written media from China and the West. As Beller and Leerssen (2007) argued however, images of the 'other' are not enough to give a complete picture of a discourse analysis. Self-images are needed in order to provide a more complete picture of the image building processes concerning China-Africa relations. Additionally, because of the current focus on news-media framing, in which Chinese and Western images are central discussion-points, African official image makers are often neglected as image-builders. Despite involvement of African governments in many influential international cooperative platforms, African agency within written-framing theory discussed above is mostly approached from a bottom-up process (eg. audiences and people-to-people interactions). Focusing on self-identification within official writing from both China and Africa, can therefore help highlight important components of China-Africa relations image-building processes that are missing from the academic framing debate.

Ch. 2.2.2. Framing in Visual Media.

The second major area of research on image-building concerning China-Africa relations is closely related to the first, but focuses on visual media instead. Through channels such as *Xinhua* or *CCTV-Africa*, the Chinese media and government engages with foreign audiences in a variety of ways. Online and TV channels allows for official- and media communication regarding current events, and the spreading of Chinese cultural products which are sometimes even dubbed in local languages (Li 2017, 116; Madrid-Morales 2019, 133-134). User-data analyses from platforms that are used to spread visual media outside of China (eg. YouTube, Twitter, Facebook) suggests that a large and increasing percent of users that view and react on videos are based in Africa (Madrid-Morales 2019, 141-142). Visual media is therefore regarded as an important tool for China's official public diplomacy and media-scape expansion, but also as an important factor of framing (Harrison, Yang and Moyo 2017, 25).

Like written media, visual media sources such as films, documentaries and cartoons/posters contain linguistic-constructs (eg. metaphors, tone, or rhetoric) which, in this case, can also be analyzed in visual terms. In a study on a Chinese government funded CCTV documentary concerning China-Africa relations for instance, Puppin (2017) shows how visual constructs can assist in presenting eventual images through official-discourse. The rhetoric of the documentary episodes is reminiscent of a Chinese revolutionary tone, showing how Chinese relationship with African countries is not like

Europe's relationship with Africa during colonial times. Switching scenes between African historic suffering, and Chinese hardships, the documentary shows a Chinese audience how to relate to African on an emotional level (Puppin 2017, 136-139). Similarly, showing unfamiliar scenes in combination with a voice over text that is familiar to a Chinese audience solidifies the framework of shared emotional experiences and nostalgia. Puppin (2017) argues, that rhetoric, scene order/tone, and voice-overs therefore contribute to a classic Chinese official discourse in terms of non-interference (colonial rejection), while at the same time adding a new element of revitalized social bonds between a Chinese and African audience (144-145). Analyzing visual-media frameworks, therefore adds a necessary layer of nuance that a pure analysis of written media misses. Visual self-, hetero- and meta-images are conveying official frameworks, and audience interpretations of these frameworks differently than through written media sources.

Although Puppin's (2017) example highlights how official-framing can be done in visual media, the frameworks that come out of these processes are not always as straightforward as may seem at first. Harrison, Yang and Moyo (2017) discuss various visual images (eg. postcards, political cartoons, magazine covers etc.) that portray 'Chinese living in Africa' throughout South-African history (29-41). In doing so, they show how local historical context influences the discourse surrounding these images, but perhaps more importantly, the ambivalence of the way in which these images are constructed. Sometimes, even contradictory images can be produces through similar visual cues. Stereotypes can for instance be visualized as both positive (humanizing) and negative (labeling) at the same time (Harrison, Yang and Moyo 2017, 42). Additionally, media consumption habits also lead to ambivalence in visual image making. CCTV-Africa might still lack a core audience abroad, compared to its news channel rivals such as CNN or BBC (Gorfinkel et al. 2014, 85-86). Gorfinkel et al. (2014) also point out that CCTV-Africa is making TV for a wide audience, taking both meta-images and hetero-images into consideration (83-84). As a result, different images are promoted at the same time, and consumers are comprised of African and non-African audiences simultaneously. These changes in framing however, do not take away from the strategic value of Chinese media and official image making. As Harrison, Yang and Moyo (2017) already showed, the impact which frames have on image-making changes over time as the context in which they are consumed changes as well.

One such important change, and also a criticism of the current visual media framing discussion, is the increasing importance of social media and the internet within China-Africa image building. Li (2016) argues that the large academic focus on CCTV-Africa is no longer fully representative of image-building strategies concerning China-Africa relations. Therefore, the struggles which official Chinese TV image makers face are supplemented by other means of reaching a wider audience. The important role which social media plays in the (re)distribution/presentation of frameworks also follows through in changes within China's or Western public diplomacy and news-media. The more general patterns, tone (eg. focus on win-win aspect of China-Africa Relations), or the rhetoric (eg. non-interference) of official frameworks highlight how images on social media are aimed

at creating a "widely enabling environment" as opposed to frameworks that help create more selective or personal images (Wu 2016, 84-91). Although the shift towards creating an 'enabling environment' within Chin-Africa image-building is a keen criticism, the research discussed in this chapter shows that many scholars do not focus on it. Similar to written media, visual media research highlight mostly differences in framing between Chinese, Western, and African media that is specifically focused on images of 'the other'. The joint Chinese and African 'self-image' of China-Africa relations is, despite increasingly close cooperation, not included.

Ch. 2.2.3. Official Framing in FOCAC as an Alternative Approach.

Although it is difficult to talk about a 'Chinese self-image' related to an 'African self-image', as both entities are vast in size and hold a wide variety of people, there is a large international cooperative platform that unites them through shared IR policies. FOCAC has become one of, if not *the* largest official platform through which China and Africa establish diplomatic, economic and cultural ties. Enhancement of trade relations, economic development, cultural exchange, in addition to rhetoric of political non-interference are central themes within FOCACs policy agenda (Taylor 2011, 24). Through its influential joint IR policy efforts and the ways in which these efforts are framed, FOCAC can be considered as a major contribution to joint image-building of China-Africa relations by both the CCP and African governments. Therefore, this thesis discusses self-images in terms of relational self-identification within FOCAC. The engagement between China and Africa has an image of its own, and the 'cooperation' in FOCAC suggests that this image is shaped through shared efforts. FOCAC thus becomes a platform through which Chinese and African image makers contribute important images about their individual capacities within FOCAC, and to the discourse surrounding China-Africa relations as a whole.

As influential as FOCAC is, much of the existing framing theory concerning China-Africa relations is not applied to framing within this large cooperative platform. Both written and visual media about China-Africa relations receive a lot of scholarly attention (eg. CCTV-Africa or newspaper analyses). And despite the fact that these media cover FOCAC stories and policies, this is done through application of an indirect media-framework. Additionally, framing literature about cultural exchanges and initiatives, which are often initiated through FOCAC, focus on framing aspects within very specific parts of FOCAC such as book donations or education (eg. Anshan and April 2013; Batchelor 2017; Gilbert 2017). Framing theory is not being used to analyze image building through other parts of FOCAC, such as official statements and visuals on its website, or action plans that do no center around cultural exchange. Academic focus on comparisons between FOCAC policy (plans) and US/Europe-Africa relations also discuss this topic mostly in terms of Chinese against Western actions. Although African influence on FOCAC policy making has seen a surge in research, African influence on framing processes within FOCAC is still often left out. Further exploration of the way in which FOCAC contributes to a relational self-image of China-Africa relations might therefore fill this gap in

the literature, providing more nuance through framing theory. With this theoretical framework elaborated through a review of contemporary framing literature on China-Africa relations in place, the next chapter provides a methodology to which this theory is applied in this thesis.

Ch. 3. Methodology.

This chapter provides an overview of the way research is conducted in this thesis. Within this thesis, framing theory discussed in the previous chapters, is applied through the use of discourse analysis to look further into an area of image-building research that current literature on China-Africa Relations is lacking. As has been established, the focus of this thesis therefore lies on framing processes in official FOCAC discourse as opposed to the widely discussed media framing and comparisons of Chinese- and Western-discourse regarding China-Africa relations. This is hoped to give insight into what type and how images are formed within official relations, as opposed to assuming these from a position external to the relationship.

FOCAC's main way of communicating the images it shapes is through its official website. On this website, Chinese and African officials publish policy documents, photos, videos, along with articles concerning development of China-Africa relations through economic, diplomatic and cultural engagements. This is done in English, French and Chinese. Analyzing frameworks through the official FOCAC website can provide more insight into official- discourse frames which are made easily accessible to a wide audience, while acknowledging the importance of audience variety. As Chang and Druckman point out, image-makers often keep varieties of audiences in mind when framing an image (2007, 117-118). Additionally, focusing on the FOCAC website as opposed to other ways FOCAC might provide insight into official discourse on China-Africa relations, can be fruitful because the internet has become an increasingly important/accessible platform through which people actively consume and discuss information (Li 2016; Madrid-Morales 2019, 141-142).

In the previous chapter, the shaping of frameworks has been pointed out to mainly consist of three components, namely, frame *selection*, frame *construction*, and frame *presentation*. To study the way in which framing is done through official FOCAC discourse on China-Africa relations, each of these components will be analyzed in context of the FOCAC website. Frame selection is looked at by analyzing the selection of topics/issues within the website frameworks, frames which are/are not discussed, and by looking at which sources are used when creating such frameworks. Frame construction is analyzed through visual and linguistic constructs such as emphasis, rhetoric, and tone, while frame presentation looks at the way they are organized and ultimately communicated. The literature review showed how the themes of a framework, highlights common frames which together make up the general idea of all frames combined and how these frames are being ordered. Within these themes, analyzing the tone of individual frames can further set apart which words, phrases or visual cues are used to provide this general idea (Gabore 2020, 306-310). Emphasis on certain themes and tones can in turn show which frames are dominant within the framing process (Batchelor 2019,

87-89). Lastly, rhetoric provides a narrative to the framework by indicating the interaction between framing themes, tones, emphasis and selection. Together, selection, construction, and presentation form the framing process. In order to highlight how FOCAC official discourse contributes to shaping a relational self-image between Chinese and African officials, this framing process will be analyzed in three case studies. Separating visual-, written-, and audio-written mediums, allows for a closer look into presentation differences in addition to more nuance into frame construction/selection in each of these mediums.

The first case study focuses on written frameworks. By analyzing the six official policy and vision documents, which the FOCAC website labels as 'important', a framing process can be linked to written official FOCAC discourse. In order to get an overview of contemporary discourse, these documents are selected to be published after 2018, following the 8th ministerial conference (in Dakar, Senegal) and the 7th ministerial conference (in Beijing, China) of the FOCAC. The second case study focuses on visual framing by analyzing framing processes through FOCAC produced photo exhibitions commemorating the success of China-Africa relations. In total, there are have been 4 exhibitions, with the latest two being held following the 4th and 6th FOCAC meetings. Because the French version of the FOCAC website only covers the exhibitions from the 2nd and 3rd FOCAC meetings, these earlier exhibitions will be discussed as well. After all, due to this exclusion, the contemporary discourse would potentially be framed differently to a French speaking website visitor. Lastly, the third case study analyzes public-speeches by FOCAC officials which the FOCAC website also promotes as 'important speeches' from the latest two FOCAC meetings onward. In order to narrow down the scope of this case, only speeches that were held at the FOCAC ministerial conferences themself will be discussed.

It should be noted that the FOCAC website is not limited to displaying the above discussed documents, photos and speeches. In addition, the website has many links to external media-websites on which articles, videos and other posts regarding China-Africa relations are featured. By focusing on official-framing (and not the framing done through these linked news-media), the case studies in this research will therefore only study a part of the overall website image-building processes. However, within this limitation, this part (the three case studies) does provide insight into the three major ways in which the FOCAC website channels frameworks by FOCAC officials directly. Secondly, because it is often left out of the academic framing literature, this research focuses on official discourse and framing. Despite the influence audiences can have on image-making (as discussed in the literature review), the scale and scope of this thesis therefore limits discussion of FOCAC website audiences. Similarly, due to the limited time frame, not all official framing on the website will be analyzed. Therefore, this thesis only focuses on policy documents, photo exhibitions and speeches from the two most recent ministerial conferences from which they were posted.

Analyzing the three case studies side by side, allows for a nuanced look into the various frameworks that official-discourse contributes to creating a joint self-image of China's and Africa's

relationship through FOCAC. By covering visual and written framing processes, common strategic themes, tones, rhetoric, and emphases can highlight which and how aspects of the framing processes contribute to this image, or reveal power relations between the parties involved. In turn, the relational self-image that is created through the combination of the frameworks discussed in each case study can add more nuance to images of China-Africa relations that often focus on meta- and hetero-images.

Ch. 4. Case Study on Written Framing through Official FOCAC Planning and Policy Documents.

Every three years, Chinese and African officials from FOCACs 53 African member states come together during a ministerial conference. These meetings result in the compilation of documents regarding the current state and future vision of cooperation between China and Africa through FOCAC, and declarations regarding policy steps FOCAC members will take towards reaching this vision. Once the documents are finalized, they are made public by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Chinese Ministry of Commerce (MOC) on FOCACs official website in Chinese, English and French. This case study highlights how FOCACs official discourse within the documents from the last two ministerial meetings (7th and 8th) contribute to the overall framing of China-Africa relations on FOCACs website.

Ch. 4.1. Beijing Action Plan and Declarations Towards Community and a Shared Future.

As their title might already suggest, The *Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Beijing Action Plan (2019-2021)* and *Beijing Declaration-Toward an Even Stronger China-Africa Community with a Shared Future* draft the future vision of FOCAC officials following the 7th FOCAC Ministerial Conference held in Beijing (MOFA 2018a). Each document discusses successful processes within China-Africa relations and areas of cooperation with potential for future improvement. By doing so, both documents frame their content along a rhetoric which mainly reinforces two ideas. Throughout the action plan and declaration, the strengthening of a China-Africa 'community' and the effort towards 'peace and development' are commonly framed as the major goals to be reached through international cooperation (MOFA 2018b). Within this rhetoric, these two shared aspirations are framed as the potential source of a mutually beneficial future of open and fair IR, in addition to common prosperity for all people involved (MOFA 2018a; MOFA 2018b). In order to highlight how China and African countries will work towards reaching their community-, peace- and development-goals, the two documents are spilt into different thematic frames. The opening and closing sections of both documents is thematically framed around political cooperation and FOCAC institutional mechanisms as driving forces behind current China-Africa engagements and the future development vision. In this example, International cooperation is not limited to FOCAC, but extends to engagements between FOCAC members and the UN, AU, or other inter/intra-regional platforms as well.

Despite these strong opening/closing themes, the two themes that are discussed to the largest extent are those about economic cooperation and social development cooperation. The Beijing Action Plan highlights areas of economic cooperation like trade, investment, financing, as well as infrastructure development and cooperation regarding agricultural development through which FOCAC members can stimulate development and mutual-benefits (MOFA 2018b). Development in thematic frames on economic cooperation, often show different areas of African economies which China will (further) aid/support through finance and investments, thereby leading to increasing economic sustainability and, for instance, production capacity or diversity. Social development, is commonly characterized by cooperation in medical care, education, or knowledge sharing on science and technology. Especially climate change, sustainable growth and increased training programs are examples of the way FOCAC frames joint research and knowledge sharing as social development in Africa. People-to-people exchanges, cultural cooperation and cooperation in peace and security issues form lesser thematic frames of the action plan.

Although these general themes fall in line with the rhetoric frames, a look at the tone and emphasis used in framing the documents reveals that FOCAC official discourse does not frame China-Africa relations in a completely coherent manner. As mentioned earlier, economic development and social development are emphasized as the largest areas of (future) cooperation within the thematic frames. When introducing these themes, FOCAC uses the term 'development' to indicate both the means and the ends to successful cooperation, a stronger sense of community and the mutual benefits that it brings to peoples from both China and African countries (MOFA 2018a; MOFA 2018b). At the same time, the tone that is used to highlight the practical cooperation plans to achieve this development, contradicts this rhetoric. Throughout the economic and social development thematic frames, 'development' is almost exclusively used to indicate African development through Chinese aid. Chinese training programs, technological upgrades, investments or workshops for example are planned to be provided to African company workers, hospitals and schools in order to improve African economies and social institutions. Points within the Action Plan often follow a structure in which China 'supports' while Africa 'appreciates'. "The two sides" do agree to cooperate on equal dialogue and combined efforts to put this support to effective use, but there remains an emphasis on developing Africa (MOFA 2018a; MOFA 2018b). As a result, China is indirectly framed to be either past the point of being a 'developing country' or at the very least in a later stage of development than their African partners.

Also following this diverging rhetoric, is the emphasis used when discussing 'mutual-benefits' or 'win-win cooperation'. There are two major ways through which mutual benefits and win-win cooperation are emphasized. Firstly, benefits that are framed as affecting both Africa and China most commonly occur when either documents discusses economic development or increasing efficiency of FOCAC mechanisms. For instance, the Beijing Action Plan mentions that Chinese investment into African infrastructure projects or production capacity can result in increased trade options between

China and Africa, while investment in sustainable growth or blue economy helps to tackle international issues like climate change or the reduction of biodiversity. Economic developments therefore take up a larger role within FOCAC rhetoric concerning mutual gains as a result from international cooperation between China and Africa. This is not to say, however, that these are the only benefits that gain textual attention, but mutuality of other benefits is much more unclear. While Chinese support for African medical care, education or peacekeeping is clearly to the benefit of African officials and people alike, it is never explicitly stated how China benefits. This is mostly exemplified by the often mentioned trainings and workshops by Chinese experts within Africa, framing a one-way stream from China to Africa. As a result, the second way mutual gains are emphasized, is how African benefits within certain thematic frames are much more explicitly mentioned than the Chinese benefits. The emphasis and tone used to address development and mutual benefits through the different thematic frames of IR adds nuance to FOCAC themes and rhetoric of community, shared development and peace is different from its rhetoric of practical cooperation.

Ch. 4.2. Dakar Action Plan, Declarations on Climate Change, Cooperation and a Vision for 2035.

FOCAC's 8th and most recent conference, is represented by four more 'important documents'. These include the *China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035,* the *Declaration on China-Africa Cooperation on Combating Climate Change,* the *Dakar Declaration of the Eight Ministerial Conference of the FOCAC,* and the *FOCAC Dakar Action Plan (2022-2024)* (FOCAC 2021). The rhetoric and themes that are discussed within the four documents have overlapping frames with the two documents discussed above. Similarly, the perspective from which the four documents are written is also that of FOCAC representatives from "the two sides", meaning Chinese and African officials.

Like the previously discussed Beijing Declaration and Action Plan, the introduction and closing statements of the four documents drafted after the 8th FOCAC Ministerial Conference commit to a vision of long term cooperation. Amongst the stated goals for China and Africa's shared future win-win cooperation, closer community and peace, through common development for people in all FOCAC member-states are again central (MOC 2021). With China being introduced as "the largest developing country" alongside Africa, the "content with the largest number of developing countries", both sides are framed to be in need of/benefit from this shared development (MOFA 2021b; MOFA 2021c). In this rhetoric, the past, current and future plans and actions to stimulate common development and other goals, is split into a number of thematic frames. Similar themes of economic and social development or comprehensive political cooperation are again discussed in length. Chinese support towards African economies through trade, investment and construction of work facilities/infrastructure for example, make up the bulk of economic development plans (MOFA 2021b). Medical support, educational assistance, and other human-resource cooperation plans frame the second largest theme of social development, while discussion of political cooperation themes still

center around creating trust and stronger policy coordination through high-level dialogue (MOFA 2021b). Other themes such as cultural and people-to-people exchanges, or peace and safety are again individually overshadowed compared to other themes.

However, the thematic framing is not completely the same as the themes discussed in regard to FOCACs 7th Ministerial Meeting. The first major difference, comes with the addition of a new thematic frame concerning *green-,* or *sustainable development*. As exemplified in China and Africa's Declaration of Combating Climate Change, the development of sustainable growth through international cooperation, is framed as a key addition/extension to the other themes of China-Africa relations (MOFA 2021a). To this end, China will supports African industries to lower carbon energy usage (eg. in the agricultural sector), promote clean and circular economy development (MOFA 2021a; MOFA 2021b). Additionally, China and African firms and governments will cooperate to develop an African blue economy, natural disaster prevention, and development of international mechanisms to successfully input eco-friendly policies (MOFA 2021a). Although sustainability can be considered as its own thematic frame, the examples mentioned above highlight the overlap it shares with other thematic frames, namely economic development plans. Secondly, within other themes as well, there has been a tonal shift towards development to help counter problems on a global scale. For instance, there is a stronger emphasis on medical assistance in order to fight the global COVID-19 pandemic within social development frames. Furthermore, international cooperative platforms such as the BRI, UN or World Health Organization, multilateralism, and inter/intra-regional cooperation between African and other governments see more mention throughout each of the four documents. Due to the role multilateral cooperation plays in fighting against international problems, the strengthening and development of mechanisms within these cooperative platforms fits into the advocated rhetoric of FOCACs sustainable growth plans.

Due to the addition of sustainable growth goals and cooperation in combating other mutual problems, the tone in which FOCAC discourse handles concepts such as development and mutual benefits has slightly shifted. Sustainable production, blue economy, and the support for a jointly created green growth model fall under a FOCAC dubbed "new development paradigm" of transformation and growth in Chinese and African industries (MOC 2021; MOFA 2021a). Therefore, economic development continues to emphasize frames of Chinese aid towards African economies, (eg. expansion of African export capacity through Chinese investments and trainings), but this aid is now also focused on green growth. Similarly, the inclusion of sustainable growth thematic frames have also changed the tone concerning mutual benefits. Whereas Chinese medical assistance was previously very vague about the mutuality of benefits, framing medical assistance as a joint effort against COVID-19 makes the win-win results more clear (MOFA 2021b; MOFA 2021c). In other themes, topics such as joint research, natural disaster alleviation efforts, and cyber security projects follow similar framing patterns (MOFA 2021b). Development of international cooperation mechanisms and multilateralism also put emphasis on the political and social benefits for both sides. Clearly stated

results include, for instance, increased influence on international equity and justice, contribution to international policy making, or the potential to be internationally heard and respected (MOC 2021; MOFA 2021c).

It should be said, however, that not all development is framed along the lines of the "new paradigm". The majority of the thematic frames retain a tone and emphasis that is similar to the one discussed earlier. China is still framed as a finance and knowledge/skill provider towards the development of the African members of FOCAC, and practical development is never explicitly used in relation to development in China. Apart from the joint Declaration on Combating Climate Change, transformative and green growth only make up a minor percentage of development goals in the other three documents (MOC 2021; MOFA 2021b; MOFA 2021c). Furthermore, although the Dakar Declaration on China-Africa Cooperation specifically calls out 'developed' countries to keep their Official Development Assistance (ODA) commitment towards developing countries. At the same time, China's support towards Africa falls directly in line with this same ODA. The introductory rhetoric framing of China as a developing country can therefore be pulled into question as well. Paired with the conclusion to the Dakar Declaration on China-Africa Cooperation in which FOCAC benefits both sides by building a "healthy", "industrialized", "interconnected", "bumper harvest", "digital", "green", "safe", "inventing" and "innovative" Africa, the way FOCAC contributes to 'building' China is left to the imagination (MOFA 2021c).

Ch. 5. Case Study on Visual Framing through official FOCAC Photo Exhibitions.

To commemorate the success of FOCAC, and to highlight the development of China-Africa relations, the FOCAC website has compiled a number of photo albums. The photos in these albums are those which were displayed in photo exhibitions following the 2nd (Addis Ababa), 3rd (Beijing), 4th (Sharm el-Sheikh), and 6th (Johannesburg) Ministerial Conference meetings of FOCAC members (FOCAC 2016). Following the official FOCAC introductory statement, the exhibition aims to show its viewers the successes of political engagement, mutually beneficial cooperation, people-to-people exchanges, peace, security, and the creation of diplomatic mechanisms within China-Africa relations (FOCAC 2016). Hereby, FOCAC aims to highlight strategic development, equality and friendship between China and Africa (FOCAC 2016). After being on display near each respective conference location, the photos are now available to the general public as informative images in the archives-tab on the Chinese, English and French versions of the FOCAC website. Each photo is also accompanied by a Chinese, English, and French description providing context to the images. In this case study however, the visual aspect of framing the photo albums stands central. By analyzing the visual themes, tone, rhetoric, and emphasis of framing, official FOCAC discourse within its relational self-image creation process can be highlighted.

Ch. 5.1. Photo Exhibitions As FOCAC Official Discourse: Framing Theme and Tone.

Thematically, the four combined exhibitions can be split into nine different framing themes. As can be seen in figure 1 and 2, diplomatic meetings and engagement through trade and investment form the thematic framing of the largest amount of photos within the albums. Other prominent themes are those concerning cultural exchanges, agricultural-, medical-, and educational-aid and development between China and African nations. People-to-people engagement, military operations and disaster aid make up the thematic frames of a smaller selection of photos, while unique events (eg. Beijing Olympics or the World Expo) form the themes of the remaining photos. Together, these themes show that China-Africa relations consist of various ways of engagement. Additionally, the large number of success story examples (eg. visualized solutions to problems like poverty and disease) that each theme contains, highlights the merits of IR between China and African countries. Although these general themes provide a broad sense of FOCAC's official discourse regarding China-Africa relations, analyzing the tone within each of the nine thematic framing categories provides further depth needed to nuance the image this discourse is framing.

Framing Thematic	Photos
Diplomatic Meetings	379
Agricultural Aid and Development	63
Medical Aid and Development	87
People-to-People Engagement	23
Trade and Investment	301
Cultural Exchanges	91
Educational Aid and Development	99
Military Operations and Disaster Aid	65
Single Event Showcases	23
Total Photos	1131

Figure 1: Nine Framing Themes and The Number of Photos.

Highlighting the various tones of the exhibition photos, figure 3 shows that a number of themes frame its photos differently compared to other photos within the same thematic framing. This way, the various ways through which FOCAC frames success in educational aid and development efforts, can for instance be shown (see Figure 3). Similarly, the 379 photos themed around diplomatic meetings can also be distinguished from one another. The tone of the photos shows that not all diplomatic meetings are between state officials. Official delegations also meet non-state officials at
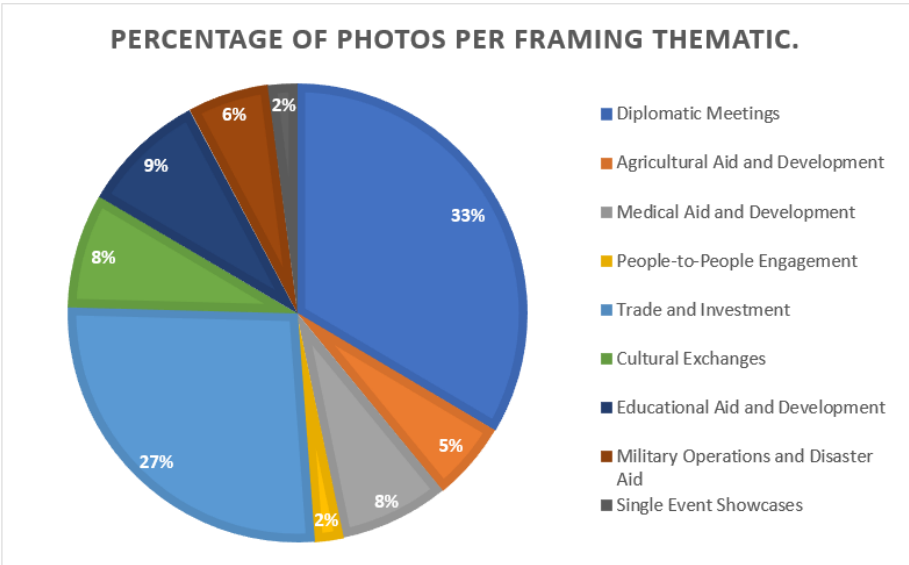

Figure 2: Percentage of Photos per Framing Thematic.

workplaces, or attend ceremonious events (eg. cultural exchange conventions or ribbon cutting at a newly built school) where they are portrayed as meeting with everyday people and diplomats simultaneously. Additionally, some photos also show diplomatic meetings between state officials that predate the formation of FOCAC (eg. Mao Zedong or Deng Xiaoping meeting former African leaders), setting the tone of diplomatic meetings as a historic custom.

Another example of tone providing more nuance to thematic framing, can be seen in the photos that have a central theme falling under the trade and investment category. Various ways in which the Chinese government and companies contribute to African economic development is seen in pictures of Chinese products and technologies being utilized in African factories, as well as buildings which are (being) built by Chinese firms. In addition to investment done in relation to Chinese construction work in Africa, Chinese-African joint ventures and investment done by African companies is stressed in photos as well (eg. Investment by South-African MIH-Group in Chinese corporation Tencent, or beer from South-African brewery being sold in Chinese stores). As a result, investment as being part of FOCAC's official discourse on China Africa relations is therefore framed as a process which is not exclusive to Chinese actors.

Framing Theme	Framing Tone	Photos
Diplomatic Meetings	Diplomatic Meetings between State Officials	241
	Official Delegation at Ceremonious Event	53
	Official Delegation at Workplace	24
	Chinese Officials Praising Aid by Chinese Workers in Africa	5
	African Officials Praising Aid by Chinese Workers In Africa	7
	Pre-FOCAC Diplomatic Engagement Between Chinese and African State Officials	49
Agricultural Aid and Development	Chinese Instructors Helping African Farmers	20
	Chinese Agricultural Aid Through Financing of Agricultural Equipment and Technology	22
	African Agricultural Products	21
Medical Aid and Development	Chinese Doctors Instructing African Medical Staff	31
	Chinese Doctors Helping African Patients	42
	Chinese and African Doctors Cooperating	14
People-to-People Engagement	Chinese Volunteering Work In Africa	8
	Sacrifices by Chinese People in Order to Aid African Development	2
	Youth Exchanges	13
Trade and Investment	Chinese Construction Work in Africa	149
	Chinese Products in Africa	18
	Chinese and African Workers, Working Side by Side	4
	African Products	3
	Chinese African Joint-Venture Between Companies	25
	Investment By Chinese Companies in African Production	18
	Investment By African companies in Chinese companies/products	2
	Economic and Technological Development Aid in Africa (Through Chinese Finance)	74
	Chinese-African Trade Development	8
Cultural Exchanges	Cultural Exchange (China->Africa)	49
	Cultural Exchange (China<-Africa)	42
Educational Aid and Development	Work Related Training and Workshops in Africa	39
	Scientific Research Cooperation	18
	Chinese Research on Africa	9
	African Officials who have Studied in China	5
	Elementary School Aid from China	10
	Chinese Teachers in Africa	11
	African Exchange Students in China	16
	Chinese Exchange Students in Africa	1
Military Operations and Disaster Aid	Chinese Military/peacekeeping Police in Africa	36
	Natural Disaster Aid and Moral Support	21
	China-Africa Navy Military Cooperation	8
Single Event Showcases	World Expo	13
	Beijing Olympics	9

Figure 3: Variety and Number of Framing Tones per Thematic.

As the tones within the thematic frames indicate, the exhibition frames China-Africa relations as an engagement that does not concern only state-officials. The relation between 'Africa' and 'China' is framed as a relationship between students and teachers, African companies and Chinese companies, volunteers and artists or workers as well. By doing so, a tone of success is set for the practical/visible ways in which FOCAC has supported community building between Chinese and African people throughout several themes.

Ch. 5.2. Emphasis and Rhetoric: an Extra Layer of Framing.

Although the tone used in framing China-Africa relations through the photo exhibition provides more context to common themes, emphasis plays an important role in the framing process as well. Through the emphasis of certain frames within the photo archive, FOCAC official discourse on China-Africa relations becomes mostly about two types of framing themes. As indicated in figures 1 and 2, diplomatic meetings, together with trade and investment make up around half of the themes and tones of the photo collection. Development and Aid regarding medical and education issues are also emphasized more than their agricultural counterpart, and people-to-people engagement joined by cultural exchange only make up around 10% of the themes of the photos. Furthermore, there is clear tonal emphasis within each thematic as well.

When looking at photos of diplomatic meetings, only around 63% of the photos concern diplomatic meetings between Chinese and African state officials. The photos framing trade and investment between China and African nations, predominantly consist of photos about African roads and buildings often completely funded and built by the Chinese government or Chinese construction companies. Similarly, photos framing economic and technological development largely center around Chinese products, better equipment and means of production which Chinese investors provided to African factories or other facilities (eg. libraries, schools, hospitals, etc.). The same goes for company investments. The frames that highlight Chinese-African joint ventures between companies, are offset by additional photos that emphasize the Chinese side of investment compared to frames emphasizing African investment in Chinese Companies. Although the thematic framing within the photo album has the potential to follow rhetoric regarding Chinese and African gains and benefits in each category, the tone and emphasis used to explain FOCACs success in these themes therefore suggests a different rhetoric. In this alternative, successful cooperation consists mostly of diplomatic interactions which lead to increasing Chinese investments, training, and products on the African continent. The benefits of this engagement are visually emphasized to concern mostly African economic development and aid (eg. better technologies, facilities or training), whereas China's benefits are left to be assumed in terms of visual representation.

Much like the way in which trade and investment frames emphasize certain tones, frames centering around aid and development also emphasize certain aspects of these processes more than others. Framing of medical aid and development, for instance, emphasizes the expertise of Chinese

medical workers in Africa above anything else. By showing Chinese doctors surrounded by assistants and trainees from African countries, or providing aid to African patients in need of medical attention, while Doctors of African origin occur noticeably less, emphasis is drawn to frames of Chinese skill and provision. Furthermore, frames of university or high school student and teacher exchanges, and agricultural aid and development also emphasize the provision of Chinese expertise, training and technology, while portraying African people as students and trainees. Agricultural developmental success is only shown through a combination of three frames. Firstly, frames that focus on Chinese government/company investment in providing African farmers with better equipment and facilities. Secondly, frames that emphasize Chinese experts and instructors showing African farmers or students how to optimally utilize these new tools. And lastly, the splendor of the African agricultural products that come out of these Chinese investments and knowledge. Whether these products also end up in Chinese supermarkets or African containerships towards China is not visible. As a result, the way aid and development frames are emphasized within the FOCAC exhibition framework of China-Africa relations highlights a one-sidedness of the engagement which mostly benefits Africa as well.

Due to the thematic emphasis on diplomatic, trade and investment frames, in addition to their tonal emphasis on official meetings, delegation and investment, the dominant discourse within the exhibition frames China-Africa relations mostly as an interaction between state officials. This is further strengthened by the tonal emphasis on Chinese government and company involvement in the lesser themes of aid and development. Despite the earlier statement about tones framing 'Africa' and 'China' as more than simply their governments, people-to-people interactions framed to represent the relationship between the two are overshadowed by frames that emphasize Chinese officials. Secondly, the frames that do focus on people (eg. doctors, farmers, students or youth) put emphasis on the benefits provided by Chinese people towards African people. By putting little to no visual emphasis on the Chinese side benefits of 'mutual-beneficial cooperation', the photo exhibitions rather support a rhetoric frame wherein China-Africa relations has seen successful cooperation that leads to Chinese aid and development in the African continent.

It is important to note however, that not all frame categories that make up the total official FOCAC visual framework follow this rhetoric through emphasis on diplomacy and China's investment successes. Photos framing cultural exchanges as part of China-Africa relations for example, show a well-balanced exchange of cultural events organized by, and set in both China and various African countries. The tone of these frames shifts away from official delegation towards artists and regular spectators/participators. Cultural products from both African countries and China also occur equally in photos. Other events like the World Expo and the Beijing Olympics also emphasize participants from- and engagement by African countries equally to Chinese engagement. Additionally, although Chinese military aid is framed as if there is no cooperation with African forces at all (eg. photos only show Chinese military units helping African local people without the presence of African military units), photos of Marine/Naval exchanges, natural disaster aid/support do not emphasize such

a one-sided operation. Instead, the tone of these frames suggests that equal effort is put into cooperation in these situations. Both Chinese and African volunteers are framed to contribute to disaster alleviation during disasters in China and Africa, joint-donation funds are set up, and official delegations pay respects to victims in both China and Africa.

Although no official sources of the photos within the albums are given, the preface/introduction poster for each exhibition suggests that they are presented by a combination of FOCAC committees and official departments of the government of the country hosting the ministerial conference (FOCAC 2016). Despite this mutual effort in compiling photos into several exhibitions, the overall selection of photos is taken in Africa, leaving only a handful of photos themed around the diplomatic meetings, cultural- and youth exchanges, natural disaster aid and a single African university exchange student to frame FOCAC success in China. This selectivity further supports the rhetoric mentioned earlier, in which African countries are framed as receivers of aid and investment, while China is framed as a source of development in Africa. Even though a rhetoric of successful cooperation and mutual gains is supported by an emphasis on successful and equal diplomatic efforts to reach this status, the photo exhibitions only focus on one side of the practical/visible result it reaps. Cultural cooperation and exchange could also support this rhetoric due to FOCACs frame selection of an even amount of benefits for Chinese people and those in African countries. However, the comparatively small amount of frames that these themes and tones contribute to the whole visual framework holds their influence back.

Ch. 6. Case Study on Audio-Written Framing through official FOCAC Ministerial Conference Speeches.

In addition to policy documents on future plans for cooperation and photo exhibitions displaying successes of cooperation in practice, FOCAC also releases speeches from official representatives, following each ministerial conference. In these speeches, Chinese and African government officials address the past and current state of China-Africa cooperation through FOCAC, along with visions of a shared future from both a personal standpoint, and that of a FOCAC representative. In order to highlight how these official speeches contribute to the framing processes of a relational self-image in FOCAC, this case study looks at the four most recent speeches that are promoted on the FOCAC website as 'important speeches'. The *Keynote speech by Chinese President Xi Jinping at opening ceremony of 8th FOCAC ministerial conference* (Xinhua 2021), and *Chinese President Xi Jinping's speech at opening ceremony of 2018 FOCAC Beijing Summit* (Xinhua 2018a) follow, as their name implies, the opening ceremonies of FOCAC meetings. The other two concern a *Report by State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi At the Eight Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation* (MOFA 2021d), and *Remarks by Xi Jinping at the Joint Press Meeting with the Former and New African Heads of State of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation* (Xinhua 2018b).

Ch. 6.1. Rhetoric and Themes of Community, Friendship and Development.

Despite the three year gap between the two pairs of 'important' speeches, all four speeches follow a similar rhetoric in regard to China-Africa relations. Firstly, both Xi Jinping and Wang Yi continuously express their appreciation and wish for a continued sense of community and friendship between China and Africa. In this rhetoric, friendship is both the effect and cause of historic long term engagements between China and the African continent. Xi explains it as being based on shared "struggle against imperialism and colonialism" (Xinhua 2021). Additionally, both Wang Yi and Xi Jinping draw upon multiple examples of more recent displays of diplomatic friendship through political support of each other's shared values such as openness, inclusiveness and justice in IR (Xinhua 2021; MOFA 2021d). Despite the callbacks to previous successes in forming friendship and community, all four speeches consider China's and Africa's current relations to be on the brink of a so called "new chapter" or "new era" of community building and development (Xinhua 2018a; Xinhua 2018b). This new era is the basis for a second strand of rhetoric framing in which FOCAC policy plans for future cooperation ought to lead towards common development, win-win benefits and revitalization of both China and African countries.

Building on the idea that past successes in practical cooperation, solidarity, and mutual assistance can stimulate future IR development between China and Africa, all four speeches share rhetoric frames that highlight policy plans regarding common-development. Xi and Wang address these plans for the new chapter of China-Africa relations in terms of several different themes. In addition to the aforementioned theme of friendship building, for example, Xi discusses economic development, sustainable development, diplomatic-, scientific- and military cooperation plans, and increasing cultural/people-to-people exchanges in his two speeches following the 2018 FOCAC meeting (Xinhua 2018a; Xinhua 2018b). Additionally, all of these themes share in another overlapping theme of multilateralism and globalization. According to Xi, multilateral- and global cooperation is important to pursue for developing countries. Not only does the world face international problems such as climate change and terrorism, mutual benefits such as economic growth, cultural understanding, and international political recognition are all issues related to mutual development within China and Africa (Xinhua 2018a). In line with this argument, Xi focuses for instance on sustainability and economic globalization when mentioning economic development plans within FOCAC, or multiculturalism and digital-globalization when discussing themes of cultural exchange and social development (Xinhua 2018a; Xinhua 2018b).

Similar themes are carried over to the speeches from the 8th ministerial conference. Trade, investment and construction continue to frame China-Africa relations through a theme of economic development (Xinhua 2021), and joint military exercises, research- and workshop panels, and strengthened international mechanisms for diplomatic cooperation also inform other common themes (Xinhua 2021). The less prominent theme of cultural- and people-to-people exchanges is also briefly

mentioned by both Xi and Wang (Xinhua 2021; MOFA 2021d). Lastly, the globalization/multilateralism theme is again intertwined with many of the other themes, but has been framed to reflect a more recent representation of global problems. Most noticeably for instance, many of FOCACs future plans are discussed in relation to COVID-19 and a pressing need to fight against climate change. Through rhetoric and thematic framing, Xi Jinping and Wang Yi contribute to an image of China-Africa relations through FOCAC, as a successful community-building and mutual development effort. By discussing development and cooperation in a variety of ways (eg. economic, diplomatic, militarily, etc.), while continuously relating China's and Africa's development to global issues and shared incentives (eg. historic shared experiences or strong positions in multilateral relations), Wang and Xi frame China-Africa relations as being mutually beneficial on a wide level. As a result, China and Africa's own capacities within their relationship are positively reinforced.

Ch. 6.2. Framing varied Images: Emphasis- and Tonal Framing.

The examples provided above highlight the prominence of community building and common-development goals within the rhetoric of all four speeches. Amongst the thematic frames that are prominent throughout Xi's and Wang's speeches, this rhetoric is supported through an emphasis on common themes of sustainable development and development of multilateral connections in the face of global problems. This is especially the case, because these two themes are interwoven with other thematic frames as well. Economic development for example, is not only discussed in terms of Chinese investments towards the growth of China-Africa trade (eg. increased production-capacity or better infrastructure for transport), but is now also placed in context of sustainable production and green economy (Xinhua 2018a; Xinhua 2021). Sustainable development to fight climate change, involvement and support in international diplomatic platforms to keep up with an increasingly globalizing political environment, with the addition of joint research to counter the COVID-19 pandemic, thus influence the tone throughout thematic frames that support a common-development and win-win rhetoric.

However, the tone that is used in the speeches about other heavily emphasized themes of economic- and diplomatic development does not always match this general rhetoric of mutuality in development and benefits. Despite the common theme of sustainable growth, many practical policy plans for economic development for instance are discussed in terms of African development in particular. For example, experience sharing on poverty reduction, or campaigns to help young entrepreneurship and Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) focus on African learning experiences (Xinhua 2021). Additionally, themes such as military- and educational-cooperation and exchange are emphasized through trainings, workshops, and monetary aid from China towards the promotion of "African efforts to find African solutions to African issues (MOFA 2021d). Chinese development to overcome Chinese issues, or the Chinese side of knowledge/experience exchanges are not emphasized.

Regarding development, Xi explicitly mentions this imbalance as intentional characteristic of China-Africa relations' new era of cooperation as he "Welcome[s] African countries aboard the express train of China's development" (Xinhua 2018a). Consequentially, Xi recognizes that "China follows the principle of giving more and taking less, giving before taking and giving without asking for return." (Xinhua 2018a). Not only do these statements set the tone in which China is a developed country rather than a developing country, they also go against the rhetoric of win-win cooperation and mutuality within development. Africa, in this case becomes a passenger on the train of China's independent development, falling in line with the emphasis on China's mentor/teacher role mentioned earlier. Even when Xi or Wang discusses COVID-19, they do so mostly by mentioning how FOCAC will focus on "Fighting COVID in Africa" (MOFA 2021d). Through Chinese monetary aid, medical expertise and vaccines, Xi explains FOCAC's plans for practical policies concerning the pandemic (Xinhua 2021). And although Wang states that African support for China has been "invaluable" in their battle against the virus, he does not state how so (MOFA 2021d). As a result and despite the emphasis on global issues, the tone of Wang's and Xi's speeches regarding common-development is distinct from their general rhetoric.

Similarly, emphasis and tone frame the rhetoric of community and friendship through FOCAC inconsistently. Whereas both Xi and Wang discuss community building in terms of sharing experiences (eg. militarily, culturally, or academic research) and people-to-people level mutual assistance in throughout their opening and closing statements, they frame them differently in the rest of their speeches (MOFA 2021d; Xinhua 2021). Friendship, for example, is rarely used to allude to people-to-people interactions within practical cooperation plans, instead it is used to describe diplomatic or other high-up relations that are stimulated through FOCAC (MOFA 2021d; Xinhua 2018a). Furthermore, the theme of cultural exchange, in which (personal) shared experiences are expressed to be key, only takes up limited space within each of the speeches compared to other thematic frames. And even within these exchanges, tone and emphasis highlights development goals over community-building goals. As such, the mentioning of exchanges are commonly related to teaching and trainings by Chinese experts towards the development of African work practices (eg. agricultural, medical or within business)(Xinhua 2018a). Tourism exchanges that are part of FOCAC plans for cultural exchange promotion for instance, are also mostly discussed in terms of economic incentives (MOFA 2021d; Xinhua 2021).

Finally, it is important to note that within the four speeches framing is exclusively done by FOCAC representatives that also represent China. Both Xi and Wang focus on policy actions China will perform/contribute to within FOCAC while rarely referring to practical policy plans by African countries. Through this selective mentioning, the tone of the framing within their speech leans towards their role as 'Chinese-official' rather than 'FOCAC-official'. In addition, even though one of Xi's speeches was given during a joint press conference, the active participation of South-African and South African and Senegalese presidents Cyril Ramaphosa and Macky Sall is omitted from

documentation within the website's 'important speeches' tab (Xinhua 2018b). In fact, almost every single fully recorded 'important speech' on the FOCAC website's tab is a speech by a Chinese-official. Because of this selective framing, images of China-Africa relations that are framed through 'important speeches' emphasize Chinese-official image makers within FOCAC over African image makers.

Ch. 7. Discussion.

The chapters above have provided an overview of a variety of frameworks within official discourse on the FOCAC website in context of China-Africa relations. Each case analyzes and highlights a different official medium through which framing takes place, and in combination they contribute to the creation of a joint self-image of China's and Africa's relationship. By comparing and contrasting the three cases, and the different frameworks within each case, a better understanding of how framing contributes to the self-image of China-Africa relations within FOCAC official discourse can be explained. In doing so, this discussion sheds more light on the question as to how framing through FOCAC official discourse creates a joint image of China's and Africa's capacities within their relationship.

When comparing different frameworks between the three cases, there are a lot of similarities. Firstly, the rhetoric and thematic frameworks are very consistent. All cases contribute to rhetoric frameworks in which the core of China-Africa relations consists of community and friendship building, paired with the goal of common-development and mutually-beneficial (practical) cooperation. Cases one and three continuously mention these terms (or synonyms of them) as for example plans for current/future IR as well as examples from the past, while in case two FOCAC visually highlights successes in following and applying this rhetoric framework. All three cases also support this rhetoric framework on the basis of shared experiences, the idea that China and African countries are all "developing countries", and the premise of the historic nature of China-Africa relations. Similarly, each case study shows how themes of economic, diplomatic, cultural/people-to-people, social and security cooperation and development make up both literary and visual thematic frameworks in a consistent manner. Albeit partially being at odds with the rhetoric framing, the emphasis that is used within these themes, in addition to the tone that is used throughout the discussed mediums, are also comparable in all three cases.

One important exception to the consistency in framing between the three cases, can be seen in the way visual frameworks emphasize, and build up thematic frameworks through extensive use of examples of practical cooperation. The cases that focus on written mediums also deploy examples of cooperation to build up themes and to emphasize successful IR between China and Africa, but these examples consist of plans, ideas, and concepts of cooperation rather than provide concrete examples of implementation of these plans. To clarify, cases one and three focus on examples of future policy plans, whereas case two mostly has examples of (visible) outcomes or plans being executed. Although

the photo exhibitions also highlights future policy plans (eg. through photos of diplomatic meetings), concrete examples of cooperation are more dominant (eg. FOCAC construction projects or Chinese medical personnel in Africa). Through this difference, visual framing provide a wide variety of tones to exemplify cooperation, while written media resorts to generalizations through umbrella terms. Despite continuity of emphasis and thematic frameworks between cases, these frameworks are therefore constructed in a different manner.

To a lesser extent, time-sensitive frameworks are the only other outlier if it comes to consistency when comparing cases. Although similar themes are discussed, more recent cases make use of time-specific context when building their frameworks. What is meant by this, is that cases one and three focus mostly on COVID-19 for example, whereas case 2 has a focus on general healthcare when framing medical development through FOCAC. Another instance can be seen in case three, which leaves out a lot of framing old-successes when discussing the 'new era' of China-Africa cooperation. Although this suggests that frameworks contribute to image-building in a different way as time moves on, the overall frameworks remain consistent between the three cases. One might therefore argue that the self-image that is created through these frameworks is also consistent and that a case comparison supports a singular image. In this self-image, the above discussed consistent rhetoric and thematic frameworks form the basis of the idea that China-Africa relations consist of a wide variety of engagements. Past successes are mostly framed through visual media, while written mediums uphold shared commitment to future plans of development, and community/friendship to the benefit of both parties.

However, as the individual cases already discuss in depth, if one compares the frameworks *within* each case, the idea of a singular self-image is challenged. Each of the cases repeatedly highlights how explicitly written or visualized rhetoric frames are inconsistent with, for example, underlying emphasis and tonal frames. This is especially noticeable through the way in which official discourse frames common-development and mutual benefits (two key terms in both rhetoric, emphasis, and tone frameworks). A self-image based on rhetoric framing portrays development within China-Africa relations as not only a main goals, but as an result of cooperation in both Africa and China. Thus, it is referred to as 'common' or 'mutual' development. Similarly, general benefits of cooperation are also framed as being 'win-win'. Emphasis and tonal framing on the other hand, suggest a self-image of China-Africa relations in which Africa is the party that is mostly subject to development. To this end, the case studies discuss how examples of African development, both past, present, and future, are emphasized by being explicitly shown or written about (eg. most photos from the exhibitions show Africa and policy plans focus on development of Africa). Examples of development or benefits that affect China are rarely presented and one is left to guess the implications of these two important rhetoric frames for the Chinese side of the relationship. The tone of the documents reflects this as well by framing China as an economic benefactor, teacher, or mentor to 'developing Africa' which takes the role of student or even 'passenger'. With the exception of Xi

Jinping's speech (Xinhua 2018a) explicitly mentioning this disparity as being part of China's foreign policy agenda, the general rhetoric framework support a different self-image of China-Africa relations than the one suggested by emphasis and tone.

Additionally, when comparing between cases, rhetoric framing does not suggest a discursive bias towards certain themes of cooperation and development within IR between China and Africa. However, the emphasis an tonal framing within each case shows that some themes are more dominant in their contribution to FOCAC's overall image of China-Africa relations. Themes of economic, political, and diplomatic sides of IR are dominant within all three cases, while other themes such as cultural or various social exchange themes (eg. scientific or military) receive less attention. These same dominant themes are also the topics most often mentioned when the medium in each case concerns 'development', 'win-win benefits' or 'community'. Therefore, these important components of rhetoric framing can be associated with a select few themes. The themes of sustainable development and multilateralism which overlap with other themes, even further limit the presence of less dominant themes as they also focus on *economic* sustainability and *diplomatic* benefits from multilateral engagements. With the emphasis on specific themes, the image that is created through the various mediums is one that stimulates thought of the dominant themes rather than the lesser ones. In the same sense, emphasis and tone also affect rhetoric framing. If for example economic and diplomatic themes are emphasized over cultural themes or people-to-people exchanges (as is the case in all three mediums), key rhetoric frames such as 'development' also become mostly related to these dominant themes. Similarly, case two also highlights how tonal frames can provide more context to broad themes. When a certain tone is prevalent within a theme, this tone affects the way this theme reflects the rhetoric framework. For instance, a tone framing Africa as the one mostly benefitting from economic benefits (eg. poverty reduction or investment) changes the way one sees a rhetoric of mutual-benefits. Even in cases in which tone and rhetoric seem to overlap (eg. mutually beneficial sustainability agenda), the aforementioned thematic emphasis contributes equally to a competing rhetoric of Africa focused economic sustainability. As a result, different type of frameworks influence other frameworks, and create a self-image of duality in which some aspects of official discourse contradict other aspects. The joint self-image becomes one in which China-Africa relations promote common-development/mutual-benefit goals, while at the same time support a discourse of Africa-centered development. It reinforces an image of China as both 'developing', and 'developer'. An image in which Africa is framed as a clear beneficiary of Chinese aid whereas Chinese gains are framed poorly. The relationship represents a shared future, but also a future in which China-Africa relations relates to outside parties within multilateralism and in a fight against worldly issues. Within the joint self-image, cooperation is framed to covers many themes, but it is also framed to be mostly focused economic and diplomatic cooperation.

Lastly, it is important to notice that the case studies indicate a slight bias towards Chinese image makers in influencing frame selection. Although the first and second case support the idea that

the photos and documents are jointly drafted by a variety of FOCAC officials and distributed (relatively) evenly across all language versions of the website, many of them have been posted by the Chinese MOFA or MOC. This means that Chinese officials have the final say in which material is posted, and whether it is uploaded as 'important' or as regular reading/viewing material. More importantly, the third case shows a clear choice for Chinese official speakers to represent FOCAC, while direct speeches from African speakers are left out. Although these Chinese speakers represent FOCAC, the framing within the speeches (especially tone) highlights how they also speak as national representatives to an almost equal degree. Notable instances of such framing can be seen in the frequent use of "China will" as opposed to "the two sides will" (joint perspective) when discussing future plans It is therefore not so much the exclusion of African speeches, as the frequent inclusion of framing of Chinese national representatives that shift the focus towards Chinese influence within framing China-Africa relations.

Ch. 8. Conclusion.

This thesis has provided insight into an area of image-building literature that is very under researched. It highlighted an alternative to news-media focused research, showing an inside perspective of image building surrounding China-Africa relations. Additionally this thesis put emphasis on the importance of joint-framing and self-identification within an academic debate that focuses hetero- and meta-images and 'the other' within IR. To this end, the central question as to how Chinese and African officials, frame China-Africa relations through FOCAC discourse, was posed and three case studies were conducted. The case studies in this thesis highlight frame construction, selection, and presentation that contributes to the making of a joint image of China-Africa relations by FOCAC official-image makers. Using important framing construction tools such as themes, tones, emphasis and rhetoric to compare how written-, visual-, and audio-written frameworks are constructed, selected and presented, the following conclusions can be drawn.

When comparing different mediums of presentation, discourse towards China-Africa relations remains very consistent across each medium. With the exception of example usage and time-specific topic discussion, the frameworks used to construct a relational self-images share commonalities in theme, rhetoric, emphasis and tone. Consistency within framing presentation across mediums therefore allude to a singular coherent self-image. However, analyzing differences between frameworks within each case, the research in this thesis shows that this singular image is challenged by additional underlying official-discourse. Depending on the frame construction aspect that is analyzed, discursive variety occurred. Rhetoric and thematic frameworks support a discourse in which China-Africa relations are centered around cooperation in many fields, with a joint dedication towards common-development, community-building and peace, leading to a mutually beneficial engagement. Emphasis and tonal frameworks on the other hand, contribute to ideas of Africa-centered development, non-mutual gains, and a concentration on economic, social and diplomatic IR above all other themes.

Furthermore, as it touches upon aspects on both discourses, overlap between frameworks (eg. sustainability and multilateralism) add additional ambiguity to official-discourse. As a result, relational self-images promoted through the FOCAC website support a multitude of images regarding China's and Africa's capacities within their relationship. These images do not always complement one another.

The framework comparisons within the case studies have also highlighted how each frame construction tool has its own influence on creating a multitude of images. Especially examples of emphasis and rhetoric framing showed how variations of official discourse can co-exist within a framing medium. Similarly, not all variations in framing processes between mediums necessarily lead towards different images. Contrasting example formatting, themes, or tones these themes might for instance still lead towards a similar image. Therefore, whether one of these tools constructs a more dominant self-image remains debatable. Additionally, this thesis has shown that framing selectivity is also important to notice regarding image-building on the FOCAC website. Not only do frameworks lean towards explicitly mentioning how Africa is affected by China-Africa cooperation, but exclusive sourcing and speaker patterns also suggest an imbalance in framing practice and selection within FOCAC. This imbalance should, however, not be overstated as the majority of framing mediums remain jointly drafted and differences between language variants of the FOCAC webpages are very limited.

Although the analyses and conclusions within this thesis provide additional insight into an under researched area of image-building literature, it cannot provide a full picture. As discussed throughout the earlier chapters, self-images do not exist within a vacuum. In the end, images that FOCAC produces (including self-, hetero-, and meta-images) are still susceptible to interpretation. This is especially the case when the images concerns non-singular and contradicting elements. Therefore, future research on audience interaction with FOCAC official discourse would elevate the current academic debate even further. This could also reveal more about the complex interactions between frameworks with different forms of image-presentation. Other research that could both benefit from the discussion within this thesis, and provide on it can potentially be on FOCAC follow up actions and practices. More comparative research on framing policy plans against implementation of these plans, or the widely discussed media-discourses would be fruitful expansions of the field of study. Additionally, other large international cooperative platforms, which are also based on joint image building, are currently not in focus within image-building research. Together with the analyses within this thesis, further study on framing might therefore be helpful for other inside perspectives on China-Africa relations. Because, in a relationship like the one between China and Africa, what is 'the other' without the self?

Bibliography.

Akahara, Ndidi. 2022. "African Opportunities in China-Africa Relations." *The Diplomat*, February 11, 2022. https://thediplomat.com/2022/02/african-opportunities-in-china-africa-relations/

Albro, Robert. 2015. "The Disjunction of Image and Word in US and Chinese Soft Power Projection." *International Journal of Cultural Policy : CP* 21, no. 4: 382–99.

An, Ning, Jiayin Zhang, and Min Wang. 2020. "The Everyday Chinese Framing of Africa: A Perspective of Tourism-Geopolitical Encounter." *Geopolitics* ahead-of-print, no. ahead-of-print (n.d.): 1–20.

Anshan, Li, and Funeka Yazini April. 2013. *Forum on China-Arica Cooperation the Politics of Human Resource Development*. Pretoria, South Africa: Africa Institute of South Africa.

Asongu, Simplice A, and Aminkeng, Gilbert A. 2013. "The Economic Consequences of China-Africa Relations: Debunking Myths in the Debate." *Journal of Chinese Economic and Business Studies* 11, no. 4: 261-77.

Batchelor, Kathryn. 2017. "Twenty-first century Sino-African cultural cooperation". In *China-Africa Relations: Building Images through Cultural Co-Operation, Media Representation and on the Ground Activities,* 75-97. New York: Routledge.

Batchelor, Kathryn, and Xiaoling Zhang. 2017. *China-Africa Relations: Building Images through Cultural Co-Operation, Media Representation and on the Ground Activities*. New York: Routledge.

Beller, Manfred, and Joep Leerssen. 2007. *Imagology*. Leiden: BRILL.

Benabdallah, Lina. 2014. "Political representation of China-Africa: the tale of a playful panda, or a threatening dragon?" *Africa Review* 7, no 1: 28-41.

Borah, Porismita. 2011. "Conceptual Issues in Framing Theory: A Systematic Examination of a Decade's Literature." *Journal of Communication* 61, no. 2: 246–63.

Burgers, Christian, Elly A. Konijn, and Gerard J. Steen. 2016. "Figurative Framing: Shaping Public Discourse Through Metaphor, Hyperbole, and Irony". *Communication Theory* 26, no. 4: 410-430.

Chong, Dennis, and James N. Druckman. 2007. "Framing Theory." *Annual Review of Political Science* 10, no. 1: 103–26.

D' Hooghe, I. 2014. *China's Public Diplomacy*. Leiden: BRILL.

Ding, Sheng. 2008. *The Dragon's Hidden Wings : How China Rises with Its Soft Power*. Lanham: Lexington Books

Fan Yang. 2015. *Faked in China : Nation Branding, Counterfeit Culture, and Globalization.* Global Research Studies. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

FOCAC. 2016. "Photos". Archives. Last modified February 2, 2016.

http://www.focac.org/eng/zywx_1/tpz/index.htm.

FOCAC. 2021. "Important Documents." Archives. Last modified December 22, 2021. http://www.focac.org/eng/zywx_1/zywj/

Gabore, Samuel Mochona. 2020. "Western and Chinese media representation of Africa in COVID-19 news coverage." *Asian Journal of Communication* 30, no. 5: 299-316.

Gadzala, Aleksandra W. 2015. *Africa and China : How Africans and Their Governments Are Shaping Relations with China*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

Gilbert, Catherine. 2017. "China corner: Chinese book donations to Africa". In *China-Africa Relations: Building Images through Cultural Co-Operation, Media Representation and on the Ground Activities*, 113-128. New York: Routledge.

Gorfinkel, Lauren, Sandy Joffe, Cobus van Staden, and Yu-Shan Wu. 2014. "CCTV's Global Outreach: Examining the Audiences of China's 'new Voice' on Africa." *Media International Australia Incorporating Culture & Policy* 151, no. 151: 81–88.

Harrison, Philip, Yan Yang, and Khangelani Moyo. 2017. "Visual representations in South Africa of China and the Chinese people". *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 29, no. 1: 25-45.

Herrick, Christopher, Zheya Gai, and Surain Subramaniam. 2016 *China's Peaceful Rise : Perceptions, Policy and Misperceptions*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Hodzi, O. 2020. "African Political Elites and the Making(s) of the China Model in Africa." *Politics & Policy* 48, no 5: 887–907.

Kaplowitz, N. 1990. "National Self-Images, Perception of Enemies, and Conflict Strategies: Psychopolitical Dimensions of International Relations." *Political Psychology* 11, no. 1: 39–82.

Khan Mohammad, Guive. 2014. "The Chinese Presence in Burkina Faso: A Sino-African Cooperation from Below." *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 43, no. 1: 71–101.

King, Kenneth. 2020. "China–Africa Education Cooperation: From FOCAC to Belt and Road." *ECNU Review of Education* 3, no. 2: 221–234.

Kunczik. M. 1997. *Images of Nations and International Public Relations*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Lahtinen, Anja. 2018. *China's Diplomacy and Economic Activities in Africa : Relations on the Move. Palgrave Pivot.* Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Li, Lianxing. 2016. "The Image of Africa in China: The Emerging Role of Chinese Social Media." *African Studies Quarterly* 16, no. 3-4: 149–60.

Li, Shubo. 2017. "Covering Ebola: a Comparative Analysis of CCTV Africa's Talk Africa and Al Jazeera English's Inside Story." *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 29, no. 1: 114–30.

Lugt, Sanne, van der. 2020. "Six Persistent Myths about China-Africa Relations." *Clingendael Spectator*, September 11, 2020. https://spectator.clingendael.org/en/publication/six-persistent-myths-about-china-africa-relations

Madrid-Morales, Dani. 2017. "China's Digital Public Diplomacy Towards Africa." In *China-Africa Relations: Building Images through Cultural Co-Operation, Media Representation and on the Ground Activities,* 129–146. New York: Routledge.

Martin, Wes. 2018. "Corruption Is China's Friend in Its Quest to Dominate Africa." *The National Interest*, September 12, 2018. https://nationalinterest.org/feature/corruption-chinas-friend-its-quest-dominate-africa-31242

MOFA. 2018a. "Beijing Declaration-Toward an Even Stronger China-Africa Community with a Shared Future." Important Documents. Last modified September 12, 2018. http://www.focac.org/eng/zywx_1/zywj/201809/t20180912_8079765.htm

MOFA. 2018b. "Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Beijing Action Plan (2019-2021)." Important Documents. Last modified September 12, 2018. http://www.focac.org/eng/zywx_1/zywj/201809/t20180912_7933578.htm

MOC. 2021. "China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035." Important Documents. Last modified December 10, 2021. http://www.focac.org/eng/zywx_1/zywj/202201/t20220124_10632442.htm

MOFA. 2021a. "Declaration on China-Africa Cooperation on Combating Climate Change." Important Documents. Last modified December 3, 2021. http://www.focac.org/eng/zywx_1/zywj/202201/t20220124_10632445.htm

MOFA. 2021b. "Forum on China-Africa Cooperation Dakar Action Plan (2022-2024)." Important Documents. Last modified December 22, 2021. http://www.focac.org/eng/zywx_1/zywj/202201/t20220124_10632444.htm

MOFA. 2021c. "Dakar Declaration of the Eighth Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation." Important Documents. Last modified December 22, 2021. http://www.focac.org/eng/zywx_1/zywj/202201/t20220124_10632443.htm

MOFA. 2021d. Report by State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi At the Eight Ministerial Conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. Important Speeches. Last modified December 6, 2021. http://www.focac.org/eng/zywx_1/zyjh/202201/t20220124_10632451.htm

New African. 2019. "Why we should beware of China's 'new colonialism'." *New African*, May 22, 2019. https://newafricanmagazine.com/18866/

Nye, Joseph S. 2008. "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1: 94–109.

Ojo, Tokunbo. 2020. "Through their Eyes: Reporters' Challenges in Covering China-Africa Relations." *Journalism Practice* 14, no. 10: 1179-1192.

Puppin, Giovanna. 2017. "Making space for emotions: exploring China–Africa 'mediated relationships' through CCTV-9's documentary AfricanChronicles (Feizhoujishi 非洲纪事)". *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 29, no. 1: 131-147.

Said, Edward. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Schoeman, Maxi. 2008. "China and Africa: Whose Challenge and Whose Opportunity?" *Africa Spectrum* 43, no. 3: 403–413.

Seiichi, Kondo. 2008. "Wielding Soft-Power: The Key Stages of Transmission and Reception." In *Soft Power Superpowers* by Yasushi Watanabe and David L McConnell, 191-206. Armonk, N. Y. : Routledge.

Taylor, Ian. 2011. *The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)*. London; New York: Routledge.

Wheatley, Jonathan, Joseph Cotterill, and Neil Munshi. 2020. "African debt to China: 'A major drain on the poorest countries'." *Financial Times*, October 26, 2020. https://www.ft.com/content/bd73a115-1988-43aa-8b2b-40a449da1235

Wu, Yu-Shan. 2016. "China's Media and Public Diplomacy Approach in Africa: Illustrations from South Africa." *Chinese Journal of Communication* 9, no. 1: 81-97.

Xinhua. 2018a. "Full text of Chinese President Xi Jinping's speech at opening ceremony of 2018 FOCAC Beijing Summit". Important Speeches. Last modified September 4, 2018. http://www.focac.org/chn/zywx/zyjh/201809/t20180904_7875883.htm

Xinhua. 2018b. "Remarks by Xi Jinping at the Joint Press Meeting with the Former and New African Heads of State of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation". Important Speeches. Last modified September 4, 2018. http://www.focac.org/chn/zywx/zyjh/201809/t20180906_7875886.htm

Xinhua. 2021. "Keynote speech by Chinese President Xi Jinping at opening ceremony of 8th FOCAC ministerial conference". Important Speeches. Last modified December 2, 2021. http://www.focac.org/eng/zywx_1/zyjh/202201/t20220124_10632446.htm